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Securitization of Migration in Hungary: The Soros Plan

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Abstract

This master thesis discusses the securitization of the issue migration in Hungary. I argue that in 2017 the securitization discourse surrounding migration changed and the issue was reframed as a threat to the political security sector rather than a social and economic one. It focuses especially on the Soros plan and on the way the Hungarian government exploited this narrative to justify the country illiberal turn by creating a bridge that connected it to the issue of migration and how in turn this affected the protection of liberal freedom and rights in the country of Hungarian citizens and not citizens alike.

INTRODUCTION

Fidesz is only one of the numerous right-wing parties that have slowly gained traction in Europe. The start of the war on Terror, the increase of economic insecurity that followed the 2009 economic crises, the increase of migration towards the continent and the overall inability of the EU and state governments to deal with the implication of a globalized world provoked widespread discontent towards the political establishment. Populist parties all across the continent jumped at the opportunity and exploited this climate of tension to gain support and push forward their nationalist agendas. (Dawson and Muir, 2012; Tallis and Sayer, 2018) While in Western Europe the support for nationalist and populist parties greatly increased, in the majority of cases, they yet have to have the chance to govern. The same cannot be said for Eastern European countries, (Rupnik, 2018; Pehe, 2018; Przybylski, 2018) such as Hungary. In Hungary, Fidesz overwhelming majority in parliament has given them the chance not just to govern but to turn its political vision into reality: turning Hungary into an illiberal democracy (Orbán, 26th July 2014). This is in stark contrast with the policies implemented by previous post-communist governments, which strove to be recognized as full-fledged liberal democracies and economic powers and regain their rightful place in Europe and in the West. (Vachudová, 2005; Cottey, 2009; Dangerfield, 2014)

In 2006, the numerous scandals that invested the socialist government - led by the MSZP (BBC, 2006; Balogh, 2006), and the 2008 economic crises (Darvas, 2008), created an atmosphere of distrust in the establishment fueling people's anger. Through a nationalist and populist discourse Fidesz was able to channel people's discontent and gain support. In 2010, the Fidesz-KDNP coalition, led by Viktor Orbán, won the parliamentary elections in a landslide (Than, Szakacs, 2010) and was able to draft a new constitution that reflected the party's values (Balogh, 25th Apr. 2016): a proud Hungarian nation built on the Christian values of equality and freedom. Freedom of self-determination of a people granted by mutual respect between Christian nations that consider each other as equals, granting a peaceful coexistence. As a consequence, this narrative automatically labels cultures that are not rooted in Christianity as dangerous because they do not share its intrinsic quality of tolerance (Kormay.hu, 15th Mar. 2019). As such, this narrative is inherently intolerant and discriminatory, as this political view denies any possibility of coexistence. Yet, Orbán explained and publicized his vision of a Christian Europe in numerous articles, (Orbán, 2008) public speeches (Orbán, 8th May 2014 & 1st Oct. 2017, Reuters in Budapest, 2018) and interviews (miniszterlnok.hu, 25th May 2018) ignoring its shortcomings. Ever since

its election the government has adopted this strategy to foster its political position and delegitimize its opposition. (Fekete, 2016; Cohen, 2018)

In 2015, the inability of the EU to manage the migration crises, joined to the atmosphere of fear in the aftermath of the terroristic attack in Paris, offered the perfect chance for the Hungarian government to strengthen its political position by fabricating a link between illegal migration and Islamic terrorism (The Orange Files, 19th May 2015). This narrative perfectly fits within the Christian framework as the religious element behind the terroristic attack seems to prove that the interaction with non-Christian cultures can only foster violence. Therefore, to 'protect' the country the government strengthened border control through specific legislations as well as the construction of a fence. (Associated Press Budapest, 2015; Balogh, 25th Aug. 2016) While these policies have been implemented in the name of security, they heavily impacted rights and freedom, and are incompatible with EU treaties such as ECHR (Juhász, 2016). Over time the government narrative surrounding migration evolved to include the Soros plan. (Divininský, 2017) The Soros plan, according to the Hungarian government, is a plan devised by George Soros and Brussel elites to promote migration and implement their political vision of an open and pluralistic society in the continent, effectively erasing European identity to increase profits (Balogh, 1st Oct 2017, The Orange Files, Sept. 2017). This conspiracy theory purposefully misinterprets Soros statements on the migration crises. (Szalai, Góbl, 2015; Boksor, 2018) It became a mean to exploit the alleged alliance between Brussel and Soros as a way to delegitimize EU criticisms, which reached its peak in 2018 when the European Parliament was called to vote upon the activation of Art.7 of the TEU (NewsEuropeanParliament, 2017). Simultaneously promoting an atmosphere hostile to an open political debate, and offering a justification for its violations of liberal freedoms and rights. (Majtényi, 2019) Moreover, scholars discuss the deterioration of the Hungarian democracy (Batory, 2010 & 2015; Kornai, 2015; Buzgany, 2017) as well as the impact of securitization had on freedom and rights protection in the country. (Szalai, Góbl, 2015; Boksor, 2018)

It can be argued that since 2010 then Hungarian government has deviated from the previous liberal political vision, that characterized the Hungarian democracy since 1989. While the EU, had been monitoring the Hungarian situation closely, it was only in 2018 that it took serious measures to tackle the situation. It can be argued that the final rupture with the EU had been caused not only by the inhumane migration policies implemented by the Hungarian government, but by the impact that the government policies had on the Hungarian state and Hungarian citizens. The Sargentini report condemns government policies in relation to the issue of migration, on the violation of liberal rights and

freedom and on the state of democracy. I argue that Hungary received an ultimatum not when it violated EU values, but when its policies started to affect what is considered the basic requirement of belonging to the EU; when the violation of rights and freedom became symptomatic of the structural change of the Hungarian state: when it started to question liberal democracy. As I identified a rupture with the EU, I adopt the definition of freedom and right in accordance to EU core values (Europe.eu).

I argue that since 2017, the securitization of migration shifted from representing an economic and social threat, to political one. Therefore, given the current political situation in Hungary, these violations should be considered as the result of a sovereign momentum rather than of social or economic insecurity: an attempt of the Hungarian government to reclaim part of its sovereignty from the EU. Therefore, the Hungarian government political narrative exploited the issue of migration to trigger people existential insecurities to justify the violation of liberal freedom and individual rights. These violations are the inherent collateral damages of the securitization process initiated by the government to reorganize state priorities according to its political vision.

To support this claim, I analyze the securitization process. As securitization theory is part of the body of theory produced by the Copenhagen school it underwent the deepening and broadening process advocated by Critical Security Studies. It expands the traditional interpretation of security which is limited to military issues, to include political and social issues as well as economic and environmental ones. (Peoples and Vaughan-Williams, 2010: 75-88) These categories were developed by Buzan, Weaver and Wilde (1998), which contributed to the creation of a large body of theory within CSS. This process shifts issues from the normal political realm to that of security, leading to the organization of state priorities through the construction of an existential threat that justifies the use of emergency mechanisms. (Williams, 2003: 512)

As this body of theory has been criticized due to the prevalence of the linguistic dimension over other means (Dauber, 2001: 209), I bring numerous examples on how the Hungarian government propaganda machine went beyond the linguistic dimension through the use of advertisement, National Consultations and mediatic campaigns. Other scholars argued that securitization did not focus enough on the audience agency and relegated its role to the background. (Balzacq, 2005: 173) In regards to this criticism I extensively discuss its agency as well the socio-economic context and the country historical precedents shaped their understanding of the threat. (Emerson, 2017)

I decided to focus on the narrative surrounding Soros plan as it attacks the three elements that caused the rupture with the EU. It affects both citizens (Keszthelyi, 2017) and non-citizen alike (The Orange Files, 11th Nov. 2017, June 2018) and it looks for legitimization outside the existing system, questioning the current political order– e.g. through a national consultation (The Orange Files, Sept. 2017) and political propaganda (Novak, 2017). While, the violation committed by the Hungarian government are not limited to controversies related only to the Soros plan, analyzing the further securitization of migration ties this issue to the shift in the government aim - within the limits of this essay.

Weaver argues that the securitization process is initiated through a ‘Speech Act’, which equates the utterance of the word security by an authority figure (speaker) with the enactment of a series of emergency mechanisms designed to tackle the newly emerged threat, creating a rupture with the status quo (Williams, 2003: 513). Therefore, I use the 2017 State of Nation Address speech given by the PM Viktor Orbán (Orbán, 10th Feb. 2017) as the Speech Act, as it was given with the intention to discuss the challenges of the year to come and a promise to tackle them. In this speech, Orbán identify Soros and Brussel as a threat to the Hungarian society, foreshadowing the countermeasure that the government has since then taken to tackle the problem.

To explain how the government exploited the issue of migration to reorganize state priorities in accordance to its political aim, I analyze its political discourse and actions through the felicity conditions. These conditions can increase – though they offer no guarantee - the likelihood of success of a securitization move. (Peoples and Vaughan-Williams, 2010: 76). This allows me to simultaneously analyze the political discourse and support the thesis that the government has securitized the issue of migration and place it within its specific sector of security and its consequences on the state.

The first felicity condition says that the speech act must efficiently promote the existence of an existential threat to legitimize the use of extraordinary measures. (2010: 79) I use this condition to argue why the fear provoked by the threat to group identity can be classified as an existential threat, legitimizing the use of emergency measures and the violations that they ensue. The second felicity condition states that the securitizing actor must hold a position of authority and has enough political and social capital to back his claim and therefore result convincing to his/her audience. (2010: 79) Therefore, I use it to analyze the narrative adopted by the Hungarian government to mobilize support and the resources at its disposal. I use nationalist and populist literature to understand which mechanism are used to limit the audience agency and foster an atmosphere of silence and coercion, as

well as the relationship of enmity that creates to identify which groups are affected by these violations and why. The third felicity condition prescribes the existence of historically rooted relationships of enmity to contextualize the threat and render it understandable. (2010: 79) To counter the political critique that naturally arise as a consequence of a securitizing move, the securitizer needs the audience support which can only be granted if they recognize the threat as such. (Emerson, 2017: 7) Therefore, to complete the analysis I contextualize the relationships of enmity that emerge from the analysis of the government political narrative.

In conclusion, in this essay I argue that in 2017 the issue of migration triggered securitization dynamics related to the political sector of security which negatively affected the protection of liberal values in the country. In the first chapter I discuss the development of the securitizing discourse and if it follows the internal logic of threat construction or not and place it within the political sector of security. In the second chapter, I focus on the government political narrative and on the government attempt to find an alternative source of legitimization to disqualify criticism.

CHAPTER 1: Threat Construction

In this essay, I argue that the political narrative of the Hungarian government has created a justification for freedom restrictions and right abuses in the country through the securitization of the issue of migration. Initially, this narrative framed migration as a social and economic threat and it was not actively exploited by the government to defend the illiberal turn the country was undergoing. I argue that the government narrative exploited the Soros plan to shift the issue of migration from the economic and social sector to the political sector of security. The Soros plan, according to the Hungarian government, exposed George Soros and Brussels' scheme to exploit migration for profit at the expenses of the EU member states. This narrative labels Brussel as subservient and corrupted and aims to disqualify EU criticisms of government policy. It questions EU intervention and simultaneously defends the government actions, framing the issue as part of the political sector of security which deals with questions of legitimacy.

In this chapter, I position the government narrative on the Soros plan within the Hungarian securitization discourse on the issue of migration and I categorize it as a threat related to the security of and against, supranational, regional integration. (Buzan et. al, 1998: 157)

Evolution of the securitization of migration in Hungary

While, security is defined as "the alleviation of a threat to cherished values" (Williams, 2013 :1) Securitization is a process that concerns threat construction, as it shifts a 'normal' political issue into the realm of emergency politics. This process presents an issue as an existential threat and therefore requires exceptional means to address it. Ultimately, reorganizing state priorities around the newly emerged security agenda. (Vaughn-Williams, 2010: 76) The key aspect of securitization theory is that security must be interpreted as a Speech Act. This concept equates the utterance of the word security by an authority figure (securitizing actor) with the initiation of a process of securitization. According to this logic, the securitizing actor political aim and vision impact the process of threat construction, and needs to be taken into account. (Williams, 2003: 513) Yet, the role played by the audience in the securitization process should not be underestimated as the securitizing move is bound to fail without its support. (Balzacq, 2005; Emerson, 2017) In conclusion, when discussing security, it becomes fundamental to contextualize the threat. (Baldwin, 1997: 12-18) Therefore, when I discuss the

securitization of migration in Hungary, I discuss a process of threat construction in light of the political vision and aim of the reference object as well as by the country socio-economic and historical context.

In the book *Security. A new framework of analysis* (1998), Buzan, Weaver and Wilde expanded the sector of security in which a threat can fall. They argue that the traditional understanding of security as military issues is limited and expanded it to include the environmental, social, political and economic sector of security. The political sector of security is characterized by interactions that are related to the political unit, political processes and institutions. In this sector a threat is perceived as such when it questions the legitimacy of the political order or the ideas that constructs it, which in turn could threaten the state territorial integrity as well as its autonomy. (1998: 141-162) Therefore, when I argue that the securitization of migration pertains to the political sector of security, I am arguing that it is a tool used by the government to reclaim sovereignty from the EU. Then, the power struggle between Hungary and the EU can be categorized as a threat to the security of a state against a supranational institution. This type of threats are a subcategory of the political sector of security and tend to emerge when the goals of supranational institution – such as the EU – diverge from those of member states. At the same time the state rejection of the integration process poses a threat to the legitimacy of the supranational institution. This creates a power struggle that evolves over time, in which the actors involved questions the values upon which the other is built. (Buzan et. al, 1998: 157) Therefore, I analyze the evolution of the securitization discourse in the country and use it contextualize the Soros plan to identify whether or not such narrative constitutes a rupture with the past and how this rupture should be interpreted.

The anti-immigration campaign in Hungary sparked in 2015 due to the drastic increase in the migration flows towards the country and the terrorist attack in Paris and Hungary was no exception. Fidesz created a narrative that erased the distinction between legal and illegal migrant, and created an overlap between the meaning of migrant, Muslim and terrorist. The migrant became a dangerous figure that threatened society and the country economic stability. This narrative was used by the government to justify its political shortcomings, gain popularity and enforce border control through the construction of a border fence. (Glied & Pap, 2019; Bockso, 2015) Initially, the Hungarian government securitized the issue of migration framing migrants as a social and economic threat. The securitization process resulted in the criminalization and dehumanization of the migrant, through the use of nationalist and populist rhetoric that claimed absolute incompatibility of Christian and non-Christian culture. Division became synonym of survival, as integration in this optic, could only lead to the annihilation of the Christian

culture. Therefore, this narrative was used to redraw social borders and justify the erection of physical ones. (Thorleifsson, 2017, Nagy, 2016a) The resulting discriminatory dynamics affected migrants as well as Hungarians. (Kallius et al., 2016: 34) It is important to notice that the securitization of migration was not unique to Hungary, but it is part of a wider European trend (Wodak, 2015) and that while the development of the Hungarian border policy eventually resulted in a rupture with EU norms, (Kallius, 2016; Juhász, 2016) it is simultaneously the produce of the European discourse. (Kallius, 2016) Nonetheless, the blatant violation of humanitarian principles, joined to the country illiberal turn - exemplified by the restriction of freedom of information and the weakening of the Hungarian Constitutional Court, (Batory, 2010 & 2015; Kornai, 2015) - led the EU to take action against Hungary and to question the legitimacy of specific government policies. (Pogány, 2013)

In September 2018, the European Parliament voted to sanction the country due to the state violations - listed in the Sargentini report (Sargentini, 2018) – of the liberal values that compose the core of the EU ideological system. The report raises numerous concerns regarding the independence of the media, freedom of expression, association, information, and academic freedom, favoring a climate of silence of coercion. Moreover, it raises concerns on the effectiveness of constitutional protections of minority rights and freedom of religion to prevent discrimination. Especially, in light of the rise of anti-Semitism, anti-Roma and Islamophobic sentiments in the country. It also includes concerns on the state of the Hungarian democracy due to the weakening of the system of check and balances produced by the reform of the judiciary and the systematic bypass of Constitutional Courts ruling by the Parliament, which instead of modifying unconstitutional laws elevated them to the Constitutional rank thanks to Fidesz overwhelming majority. While Orbán fully denies all the accusations moved against his government, ascribing them to a desperate attempt of pro-migration forces to punish Hungary's righteous opposition to the EU's unreasonable requests (Daily News Hungary, 2018); the Sargentini report is not the only source that questions the conduct of the Hungarian executive. NGOs - such as Human Right Watch (HRW, 2015) and the Freedom House (FreedomHouse.com), the Hungarian civil society (Peto, 2018), and the Venice Commission (venice.coe.int), moved similar accusations against the government. In response the Hungarian government started a slandering campaign against the EU and questioned the validity of its intervention. (Majtényi, 2019) The attacks against the EU assumed various forms: they ranged from billboard campaigns (Agence France-Presse, 2017; Brunning, 2017) and the use of National Consultations to influence the public opinion, (Spike, 2017; Novak, 2017) to open attacks against the EU policies and rejection of criticisms. (Visegradpost.com, 2018; Orbán, 23rd Oct. 2017, The Orange Files, 2018, Oct. 28th)

As the Sargentini report criticized the Hungarian government illiberal shift and its consequent detachment from EU core values, it automatically questions the ideological basis upon which the Fidesz government has built the Hungarian state. As a matter of fact, the report does not only criticize a set of specific laws, but the newly redacted constitution in and of itself. Therefore, it is questioning the very basis upon which the Hungarian state has been built. While the European Parliament voted on the Sargentini report only in 2018, the EU had already criticized the government Constitutions and policy through the Venice Commission (CDL-AD (2011)001; CDL-AD (2013)012). Moreover, the EU parliament had issued legal counsel from the Venice Commission that can be directly reconducted to the anti - Soros campaign: the NGOs Law (CDL-AD (2017)015), the Lex CEU (CDL-AD (2017)022) and the STOP Soros Law (CDL-AD (2018)013), reflect the government illiberal turn as they impact freedom of association, information and education, as well as its nationalist stands due to their intolerant and discriminatory nature. As a consequence, the EU stance represents a threat to the Hungarian political order and Hungary represents a threat to the EU political order. Therefore, the Hungarian government is facing a situation that can be classified as a threat to security of a state against a supranational institution.

The Soros Plan

In this section, I discuss the role played by the narrative that surrounds the Soros plan and the government violations of freedom and right abuses in the country. In 2017 the government started to openly attack George Soros, (Tamkin, 2017) a Jewish Hungarian-American entrepreneur and philanthropist renowned for his business expertise and involvement in numerous humanitarian causes, (georgesoros.com) described by Orbán as speculator at the head of a mafia network. (Rovó, 2017) Therefore, I draw a distinction between the securitization of migration before and after 2017, as it went from being a societal and economic threat to a political one in response to EU attacks. Moreover, the Soros plan is used to create a further rupture with the norm as it reflects the government refusal to correct its policies. This rupture is exemplified by the 2017 State of Nation Address.

On February, 10th 2017, the Hungarian PM Viktor Orbán addressed the parliament to lay out the government priorities for the upcoming year. As the Speech Act equates the utterance of the word security by an authority figure with the initiation of a process of securitization (Williams, 2003: 513), I argue that this speech fits this description, as it set an agenda of issues that require the government

intervention and foreshadow a set upcoming policies in the name of security. As a matter of fact, in the State of Nation Address Orbán discusses the difficult situation that the Europe is facing, as external forces are threatening to destroy the continent Christian culture. He claims that in 2016 people rose to demand a world in which they felt safe. A world of nations that offered protection to their homeland and identities against globalism, Islamic fundamentalism, and from future economic crisis. He argues that the 'open society' corrupted liberal democracy imposing political correctness over straight-forward and honest political debate. Rendering them susceptible to manipulation of external forces, such as the transnational empire of George Soros. With the help of Brussel, Soros wishes to gain control over the continent to pursue his political goal and increase his riches. In this speech Orbán directly addresses Hungarian and call for action, as the nation is in dire need of protection. (Orbán, 2017, Feb. 14th) As Orbán is the Hungarian PM, he has the chance to back up is call for action with the government resources and effectively kickstart the securitization process.

Moreover, this speech presents other characteristic typical of the Speech Act. First of all, it claims a special right to address security issue with whatever means necessary and creates a rupture with the norm which redraws the boundaries that define the line of acceptable behavior. (Huyusman, 2011: 373) This speech represents a deviation from the norm, as it attacks liberalism. Orbán states that liberal democracies have been corrupted by a new political system known as 'open society' which uses liberal values to deprive the nation of its decision-making power, focusing it in the hands of a global network of unelected international organizations and media gurus. The anti-liberal rhetoric constitutes a double rupture as it rejects the liberal values upon which the EU is founded, as well as the political path that the country had been following since the fall of communism in 1989. (Vachudová, 2005: 83-90; Cottey, 2009: 11; Dangerfield, 2014: 636-646) In addition, the Speech Act focuses on the existence of an existential threat. As I previously argued, the attacks against Soros and Brussel are the reflection of the securitization of migration as a political threat. A political threat is defined as such as it questions the legitimacy of the state political order and affects the state territorial integrity and autonomy. (Buzan et al., 1998: 150) In this speech, Orbán identifies an existential threat to the state that is embodied by illegal migrants and orchestrated by Soros and Brussel. Mass migration becomes a tool to weaken and eradicate an opposition comprised by those who are unwilling to abandon their Christian roots and patriotic feelings, to replace it with masses of people with different culture, morals, traditions and religious backgrounds and that have no idea of what Europe means. Ultimately, erasing national borders and emptying European culture of its deeper meaning to commodify it. (Orbán, 2017, Feb. 14th) Therefore, the 'open society' is depicted as a threat to territorial integrity – as it erases borders - and

autonomy as the arrival of a multitude of people that do not share the same roots would influence the electoral results. Finally, while the Speech Act represents a deviation from the norm it is also connected to a normative and political order that determines whether or not the rupture is deemed socially acceptable. (Huyusman, 2011: 374) In the Hungarian case the nationalist rhetoric that Orbán uses in the speech fits within the nationalist and populist rhetoric that characterizes Fidesz-KDNP government narrative and that had always been part of the country political debates since the fall of communism as an alternative source of legitimization to that offered by liberal system. (Tartakoff, 2012; Batory, 2010)

In conclusion, through this speech the government is claiming the right to refute the EU intervention in state matters, as its authority has been corrupted and does not reflect the interests of Europeans anymore. At the same time though, as Soros is identified as the source of EU corruption, the government is able to attack the EU while claiming to have its best interest at heart. Ultimately, justifying the violation of liberal rights and freedom that the that represents the ideological base upon which the EU is built by given government policies.

So far, I discussed why the State of Nation Address qualifies as a Speech Act. Yet, as the Speech Act is uttered, action needs to follow. Then, the content analysis of the speech is not sufficient in and of itself to argue that this speech kickstarted a further securitization of the issue of migration, unless it was followed by the practice. Therefore, I chose three laws that violates EU values and have been approved by the parliament after this speech: the Lex CEU (Spike, 2017, Aug.16th), the NGOs Law (Serhan, 2017, Jun. 13th) and the STOP Soros Law (Reuters in Budapest, 2018, Jun 20th). The violations perpetrated by these three laws reflect the government attack against George Soros and Brussel and therefore are justified through the narrative constructed by the government around them. As these laws impact freedom and rights of both citizens and migrants, even in a situation in which the two groups are not in contact with each other, they reflect the implications of the illiberal turn the country has undertaken, clarifying the link between the government political vision and the securitization of the issue of migration created by its narrative. Before analyzing the role played by these three laws in connection to the government narrative, I shortly discuss the details of the Soros plan as described by Orbán to render this connection more explicit.

The Soros plan is a conspiracy theory centered around the person of George Soros. While, is based on a set of suggestions proposed by Soros to manage the European migration crises, its words and purpose have been intentionally misinterpreted. (Divininsky, 2017) According to the Hungarian government, Soros profits from migration as he is at the head of a human trafficking network.

Therefore, he has a strong political interest in supporting open border policies. Unfortunately, he managed to persuade Brussels' elites to support this policy and favor the resettlement of migrants from Africa and the Middle East. In order for his plan to succeed it is necessary to dismantle existing border control mechanisms, including the fence built by the Hungarian government. Another crucial point of the plan is to redistribute migrants across member states, as Western European countries are already saturated and new arrivals might result too unsettling. Soros and the Brussels' elites would benefit from the increase of illegal migrations in Europe as they will most likely support their vision of a multicultural and pluralistic society that will ultimately replace European civilization. To maintain their support the EU will set up a European migrant tax (€ 9 million) to provide an adequate welfare state for them. Moreover, migrants will serve milder sentences than standard for their crimes. This will favor the rise of violence and terrorism, and it will threaten European identity and culture. While this system clearly penalizes Europeans, disagreement will not be tolerated and punished accordingly. (Balogh, Oct.2017). Therefore, the Soros plan leads two attacks against the Hungarian society: a bottom up attack led by migrants and a top-down attack from the elites that favors migration and aims to spread its ideological stands.

This plan is described in details by the introduction of the National Consultation on the Soros plan, (The Orange Files, Sept. 2017) though it is a recurrent topic in the government narrative. (Kormany.hu, 2017, Jul. 22th; Sep. 18th & 2018, Feb. 18th; ATV Magyarország, 2018, Jun. 11th; Rankin, 2019, Feb. 19th) Nonetheless, I chose this specific source as it describes the Soros plan in details. Moreover, it supports the argument that the government policies that followed the State of Nation Address created a further rupture with the EU, as the National Consultation on the Soros plan can be interpreted as the government reaction against EU criticisms of the country migration policy.

In April, 2017, the government passed the so called 'Lex CEU' that specifically targeted the Central European University (CEU) which was founded by Soros. (BBC, 2017, Apr. 4th) This law sparked outrage in the country and abroad. (Thorpe, 2017, Apr.3rd) The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe requested an opinion from the Venice Commission on the matter which deliberated against the law as it affected academic freedom, freedom of expression, and education. (CDL-AD (2017)022) The same month the parliament passed the NGO Law, forcing foreign funded NGOs to register within 15 days as 'organizations supported from abroad', if the annual donation they received amounted to 23,225 euros or above. Failure to comply could result into the NGOs dissolution. Orbán justified this law as a tool to fight organizations connected to Soros that supported illegal migration. (The Orange Files,

2017, Nov.11th) The Venice Commission deliberated that the Law violates freedom of expression, association, privacy protection and prohibition of non-discrimination, protected by the ECHR. (CDL-AD(207)015-e) In the summer of 2017 the EU deemed the NGOs Law and the Lex CEU incompatible to EU principles and started an infringement procedure against the country (EC, 2017, Jul. 13th; EC, 2017, Apr. 26th) due to the refusal of the Hungarian government to change them as they were designed to interfere with Soros plans. (Magyar Nemzet, 2017, Aug. 14th) At the same time, the European Court of Justice dismissed the country complaints regarding the relocation quotas. (Rankin, 2017, Sep. 6th) Therefore, the government found itself in an uncomfortable position as it was unable to legitimize in any way its migration policies through already established procedures and started to look for an alternative.

As I previously discussed the Speech Act creates a rupture with the norm. This implies that there was no previous consensus on whether or not the existence of a threat justified the violation of pre-established norms which can only be justified ex-post. Therefore, the established system opposes resistance, favoring an atmosphere in which the political critiques can flourish. (Huysmans, 2011: 374) While, traditional securitization theory limits the analysis of the process to the linguistic dimension of the Speech Act, it has been argued that such framework does not consider the impact that other means can have on the process. (Dauber, 2001: 209) In this logic, the National Consultation can be interpreted as the result of the rupture created by the Speech Act and as the manifestation of the government attempt to find an alternative source of legitimization. As people are called to directly express their opinion on a given matter, national consultations are an expression of direct democracy. Therefore, the Hungarian government attempted to justify its actions in front of the EU by framing them as the reflection of people's will. This further supports the theory that in 2017 the securitization of the issue of migration shifted from the social and economic sector of security to the political one. While the result of the consultation seems to support the government actions in reality its structure is inherently biased and only a minority of the population took part in it. (The Orange Files, 2017, Sep.) The manipulative intent of the National Consultation is further exposed by the advertisement campaign against Soros (Novak, 2017, Sept. 27th) and Brussel. (The Orange Files, 2017, May)

Finally, the last law that I take into account is the STOP Soros Law which was passed in June 2018. This law criminalizes the provision of assistance to migrants labeling it as promotion of illegal migration. (The Orange Files, 2018, Jun.) It violates the principle of Human Dignity as well as affecting the enforcement of international laws that Hungary has the duty to abide by, which grants basic human rights protection. Moreover, according to the Venice Commission it restricts freedom of association and

expression. (CDL-AD (2018)013) This law was approved by the Hungarian parliament after the initiation of the infringement procedure for the NGOs Law and the Lex CEU by the EU. Therefore, this law further reflects the government intention to prove its independence from Brussel.

The violations enforced by these three laws find justification in the Soros plan. The Lex CEU, directly attacks a university founded by Soros. The Soros plan describes Soros intention to manipulate people to impose his political vision. Therefore, by attacking a university, the government is explicitly targeting an institution that has the power to influence Hungarian understanding of reality. This law connects the state illiberal turn – as it affects freedom of information and education as well as academic freedom – to the issue of migration, as it frames this restriction as necessary to prevent Soros from gaining support for his pro-immigration stands, setting a precedent. The NGOs Law and the STOP Soros law on the other hand affects migrants as well as European citizens that wish to assist them. As the Soros Plan equates migration to an invasion it stigmatizes and criminalizes humanitarian help, while strengthening the government political stand.

In conclusion, the government narrative surrounding the Soros plan has been used to move the securitization of migration from the social and economic sector of security to the political one. This shift, allowed the Hungarian government to enforce questionable policies that violates liberal freedoms and rights, regardless EU criticisms and sanctions. This narrative labels the EU as corrupted. Therefore, it does not only justify the violation that followed the 2017 State of the Nation Address, but can be used to justify past violations as well, as this charge automatically questions the interests behind any given EU intervention. Finally, while this narrative supposedly protects Hungarians and Europeans from an external threat it curbs their freedom and right as well as those of migrants.

Felicity Conditions

Felicity conditions are conditions that favor the success of the securitizing move. The first felicity condition concerns the internal logic of threat construction. To legitimize the use of extraordinary measures the Speech Act must efficiently promote the existence of an existential threat - whether real or constructed. To be considered existential, a threat needs to threaten a group survival, affecting their sense of ontological security. Only then it can be used to legitimize the use of emergency mechanism. The second felicity condition, states that the securitizing actor must be in a position of authority and have enough social capital and political resources to result convincing to the audience and to support

the utterance of the word security with concrete action. Finally, the third condition sets the preconditions that determine the audience reaction to the Speech Act. As the Speech Act causes a rupture with the norm, the rupture needs to be justified to the audience through a logic it can understand. Therefore, historically rooted relationships of enmity, as well as specific socio-economic circumstances play a key role in rendering the threat intelligible. (Peoples, Vaughn-Williams, 2010: 79) As this chapter only discusses the process of threat construction and only aims at verifying the internal logic of the securitizing discourse, I limit the discussion of the felicity conditions in relations to the first one, while I discuss the second and the third felicity condition in the next chapter where I analyze the government narrative.

As securitization theory is built around the construction of an existential threat it promotes the creation of different social boundaries that are determined by the reorganization of state priorities. Therefore, this narrative and the context in which it developed determines not only which group are going to be more affected by this process, but as well to what extent. In the West the securitization discourse has been fuel by the fear of the 'other', dividing society alongside relationships of enmity. (Kinnvall, Lindén, 2010: 596) The narrative surrounding the Soros plan does not only highlights the rupture with the system, but it justifies the government attempt to reshape social boundaries according to relationships of enmity, affecting the distribution of rights and freedom of both citizens and non-citizens alike. Therefore, to meet the requirements set by the first felicity factor the narrative that surrounds the Soros plan need to foster a climate of insecurity.

First felicity condition

According to the quote above, the first felicity condition is related to the capability of the Speech Act to construct a convincing threat. Therefore, in order to achieve a successful securitization, the speaker needs to convincingly evoke a threat to group survival. (Peoples, Vaughn-Williams, 2010: 79) In this section I argue that identity can be used to foster a sense of insecurity that can be used to legitimize the securitization process.

Ontological security creates a sense of safety and trust of the other as well as among the group and therefore alleviates existential anxiety through the construction of a set of recognizable patterns, such as culture, traditions and national identity. Even though identity is a social construct that changes continually, identities are often perceived as stable and therefore are able to produce a feeling of safety

(Shotter, 1985, Gergen, 2000). This sense of stability is further reinforced by the presence of a physical place that the group associates with identity. While collective identity is in and of itself immaterial, it can lead a group to identify with a specific territory. This territory then becomes a safe place in which human interactions are predictable, as well as the material environment that represents a place of continuity and permanence on which identities are constructed. The nation is a perfect example of a physical space associated to a specific identity. The fear of change and unpredictability brought about by outside forces can then be mitigated by the protection offered by the territory as it represents a place to go back to and find repair in. Ultimately, this allows the group to maintain a feeling of control even when faced with sudden and uncontrollable changes. Nonetheless, phenomena such as globalization and immigration can shake this sense of security as they pose the group in front of a sudden change of high magnitude. (Kinnvall, 2004: 746 - 748)

In this optic, a threat that menaces the integrity of the territory is attacking the very core of collective identity as it simultaneously attacks the ideational plane on which the sense of community is located, as well as the physical place that grants it protection and predictability, creating a diffuse sense of ontological insecurity. In this scenario a threat to home equates a threat to territorial integrity. Moreover, as the home protects and fosters group identity, the loss of territorial integrity deprives the group of protection, affecting its ability to organize the space in accordance to its traditions and priorities. In sum, this could lead a group to start organizing society on an ethnical base, to protect their territory and its autonomy (Kinnvall, Lindén, 2010: 597)

On the one hand, the reaction of the autochome population to fear outsiders seems to be justified as what they hold dear the most is under attack. On the other hand, not all threats are real, while the resulting actions undertaken in the name of security, and its consequences are. Hamelink (2011) argues that through the manipulation of information an actor can foster people's anxiety to fuel fears and hatred against a specific group. This allows the actor to promote its political agenda and escape responsibility for his wrongdoings (2011: 22-29) Therefore, group identity can be manipulated in accordance to a specific political agenda. In this context a threat can be defined existential if it questions the group physical safety – a material threat such as violence or economic instability; if it menaces to destroy the mechanism of interaction devised by the group used to understand and interpret reality – ideational threat such as a threat to society values; or if it threatens the group's control over the territory – fear of invasion and desire for self-determination.

The Soros plan associates the phenomenon of migration and globalization to the destruction of national identity through the erosion of territorial integrity. Therefore, it clearly aims to affect Hungarians sense of security and promote a climate of insecurity, through the construction of a threat the menaces Hungarians material and immaterial safety. The migrants embody a physical threat, as they are described as violent criminal. Moreover, they represent an immaterial threat as well as coexistence between culture is deemed impossible and would eventually lead to the destruction of national identity, culture and traditions. Finally, Soros and Brussel threaten the system of ideas upon which (according to the government) the Hungarian state is built: they threaten the nation. As the fulfillment of this plan would ultimately lead to the erasure of borders and the annihilation of Hungarian culture, it directly threatens the group sense of security, legitimizing the implementation of the necessary security measures to tackle the issue. (Glieb, Pap, 2016, Orbán, 2017, Feb. 14th) In conclusion, migration can be used to trigger a sense of insecurity, as can be framed as threatening to group identity. Therefore, the securitization of migration when associated to a nationalist narrative can be used to reorganize state priorities and redefine social boundaries along ethnic lines. Therefore, the phenomenon of migration already contains the necessary ingredients for threat construction, and the type of fear it triggers in makes it a perfect tool for the government to reach its aim. As a matter of fact, migration is already in an of itself connected to the fear of invasion, which is the same fear that the government is trying to trigger to justify freedom and right restriction in the country in the name of security to legitimize its political stands despite EU criticisms.

CHAPTER 2: Narrative

In the first chapter, I discussed the process of threat construction and verified the internal logic of the securitization process. In this chapter I analyze the government political narrative and the justification that it offers to the audience. As the government narrative presents both nationalist and populist elements, I apply the second felicity condition to discuss the role they play in legitimizing government policies. Especially, I use on nationalist and populist theory to gain a better understanding of the dynamics of enmity they create to identify their impact on the creation of social boundaries and determine who is included and who is excluded by them. This sheds light on which groups are most affected by freedom and rights restrictions and on what basis, as well as favor the creation of a climate that promotes silence, coercion and repression. (Emerson, 2017: 7)

Finally, according to the third felicity condition I look for the existence of historical relationships of enmity that render the threat intelligible to the audience. As the Speech Act represents a rupture with the norm, it can only be legitimized ex-post. Therefore, it is necessary that the narrative that justifies the enactment of emergency mechanism is understood and accepted by the audience as legitimate. Historical precedents contextualize and add meaning to the narrative, rendering it understandable. This is necessary to the success of the securitizing discourse as without it the securitization move would be rejected and the securitizing actor would be forced to face the consequences of its actions instead of being able to reshape state priorities in accordance to its political vision. (Balzacq, 2005: 182) It is important to notice though that for this process to work not all history needs to be remembered. (Benazzo, 2017)

In conclusion, the felicity factors are useful tools not only to define whether there are the premises for a successful securitization, but to describe the impact that the securitization process has on the population, and on the role it plays in the legitimization of questionable government policies. It needs to be noted that this reasoning only works because of the political nature of the securitization process. In this process the political narrative is used to justify a government action that was enacted without consent. The narrative does not exist alone and cannot really be separated from the political action. (Huysmans, 2011: 373) Therefore, while in the Hungarian case it alters the perception of reality, it can still offer an indication of the government intention if contextualized correctly.

Second felicity condition

The second felicity condition argues that the amount of social and political capital that the securitizing actor can mobilize is crucial to the success of the securitizing move. While the audience appears to be a passive actor that suffers the consequences of the securitization process, it plays a key role in the legitimization of the Speech Act, which can't find legitimization through official channels. (Peoples, Vaughn-Williams, 2010: 79)

As a successful securitization is based on the ability of the securitizing actor to gather support for his actions, the ability to sense and use social grievances is crucial to his success. Emerson argues that the securitizing move restricts the audience agency as it focuses the power in the hands of the securitizer. As the audience support is vital to the success of the securitizing move, it is in securitizer interest to pose the audience in front of a question that corners the audience into submission. (2017:7) In this circumstance, it is common for political critiques to arise and denounce the violation of basic rights and freedoms and the weakening of liberal institutions inherent to the securitization process, as well as to combat the climate of coercion enforced by the speaker. (Huysmans, 2011: 373-374) Therefore, it is fundamental for the securitizer to convince the audience of the existence of a threat, or at least successfully manage to repress the audience agency as they would not otherwise be willing to give up their freedom in the name of security he is going to be held responsible for his actions. (Emerson, 2017: 8)

As I argued in the previous chapter the creation of an existential threat automatically triggers people fears. If the logic behind the securitization move is well constructed, disagreement will not be tolerated as any other alternative besides the one proposed by the securitizing actors is bound to fail and result in the destruction of the nation. Therefore, it promotes an atmosphere that stigmatizes disagreement and favor of one of silence, coercion and repression. (2107:7) As survival is at stake dissent becomes a subversive action and won't tolerated. In practice, it becomes crucial to understand whether the securitizer has sufficient resources and support to enact the securitizing move, and to construct a convincing narrative to bridge the lack of consensus that characterizes the initial phases of the securitization process. (Huysmans, 2011: 374)

In the previous chapter I identified Viktor Orbán as the securitizing actor as he uttered the Speech Act. Nonetheless, Orbán would not have been able to start the securitization process without

the government support. Therefore, I argue that Orbán, though a very influential voice within the government, spoke in the name of the government led by Fidesz.

On the one hand, Orbán holds a key position in the Hungarian government, as he is the leader of Fidesz which is by far the party with the majority of seats in parliament. He was elected PM from 1998 until 2002 and has been governing since 2010. Moreover, Orbán has been in politics for 31 years, as he founded Fidesz when he was still in university in 1988 and has been in politics ever since. (The Orange Files, 2018 Apr. 19th) The overwhelming victory in the 2010 election as well as in the 2014 and 2018 elections show that the government enjoys wide political support. (Britannica.com, 2019) Moreover, Fidesz was also part of the PPE until it was suspended in March 2019, one of the biggest groups in the European Parliament. (Rankin, 2019, Mar.20th) Therefore, Orbán as well as Fidesz are part of the establishment and their position was recognized both by national and EU institutions. Batory argues that Fidesz was able to reach the position it has now exactly because it has always been part of the establishment and therefore had access to virtually unlimited resource and no real obstacle to face (2015: 291-292).

His past political experiences, together with his current position and wide network are at the base of his vast social and political capital (in the country and abroad). (Batory, 2016: 298-300) In his book *Post-Communist Mafia state: The case of Hungary* (2016), Magyar argues that Fidesz - under Orbán guidance - managed to occupy the current position through an aggressive elite change. He describes how the party actions aimed at accumulating power and wealth in the hands of its members. This goal was achieved through the use of legal prosecution, parliamentary legislation, tax authority, police forces and secret services. Therefore, Fidesz not only has extensive resources but it has been accumulating them aggressively over time and have been slowly turning Hungary into a mafia state. Whether one agrees with Magyar definition of Hungary as a mafia state, various scholars argue that Fidesz took advantage of the system of the state to accumulate power in his hands, with disastrous effects on the state of Hungarian democracy. (Bánkuti et al., 2012; Kornai, 2015) The government unwillingness to accept EU criticisms connected to the way in which the Fidesz as being accumulating power, as it would limit its ability to exploit the system in his favor. Therefore, while the Soros plan creates a scenario of doom that culminates with the death of the nation, it is more probable that the government is more concerned with protecting himself and his benefits rather than those of the state.

As a matter of fact, the government has been strongly criticized at home, by the EU and by the international community. Moreover, as criticisms turned into actual sanctions, the system that helped Fidesz to establish itself is now rejecting it. While on a national level the government supermajority allowed Fidesz to re-write the constitution according to its political view, as well as to systematically bypass national checks and balances, such as the Hungarian Constitutional Court, (Bánkuti et al., 2012: 138) the same cannot be said about the EU. While the countermeasures taken by the EU have not been very effective, it still affected the Hungarian government legitimacy. Fidesz power is legitimized through democratic elections and thanks to democratic institutions – e.g. parliament and the judiciary. (Batory, 2016: 285) Therefore, any sanction or criticism that questions the state of democracy in the country questions the legitimacy of the government policies, too. The EU concerns in relation to the weakening of check and balances in Hungary do exactly that. Therefore, the more advanced the deterioration of liberal institutions in the country is, the more the government needs to find an alternative source of legitimization. Then, it is crucial for the Hungarian government to build a narrative that justifies its actions in front of the Hungarians, especially as its political vision negatively impacts citizens' rights and freedom. This means that to maintain their power producing mechanisms and to remain in power the party needs people support (Batory, 2016: 291, 292) or at least needs to maintain an appearance of legitimacy. (Chronowski and Varju, 2016)

The Soros plan serves exactly this purpose as it questions the EU interventions in the country and justifies the rupture through the further securitization of the issue of migration. Yet, to fully understand the impact of the Soros plan it needs to be contextualized within the government nationalist (Batory, 2010; Fekete, 2016; Tartakoff, 2012) and populist' narrative (Batory, 2016; Halmai, 2018). This narrative characterized the government rhetoric since 2010 and actively contributed to the repression of a political debate as well as reshaped societal boundaries.

On one other hand, populism divides people into two antagonized groups: the "pure" people versus the corrupted elites. It finds fertile ground in difficult socio-economic situations in which people lost trust in the establishment and are looking for an alternative solution, opting for voices that seem to share their rage and frustration at political elites. While populists advocate to be the ultimate defender of democracies because of the popular support they enjoy, they actually delegitimize the structure of the liberal state because direct democracy bypasses the system of check and balances that sets in place to limit state power. It focuses the power in the hands of the leader, giving him the power of interpreting peoples will and turning it into laws, whether they are constitutional or not. Therefore,

populist rhetoric can lead to the weakening of state power restrictions, while nationalist rhetoric has an impact over the content of such overrides. (Kaltwasser, 2012: 194-195) People dissatisfaction finds voice in a charismatic leader that poses himself as the embodiment of people's will, while in reality he is simply pushing forward his political agenda. It's mobilizing power does not lay in a specific political program but in the lack of it. It creates a clear division between those who belong to the group – 'us' - and those who are excluded and represents a threat - 'them'. While it fosters dynamics of enmity it is not inherently xenophobic nor racist. (Bonikowsky et al., 2019: 63) Due to this quality, populism is often described as a thin ideology, as such it is often combined with different ideologies that defines the criteria of belonging. (2019: 73)

On the other hand, ethnic nationalism creates a distinction among people on an ethnic base. It is inherently isolationist and intolerant as it links belonging and identity to kinship, turning it into a value to defended and preserve at all costs. Integration and assimilation become unfathomable as they threaten group homogeneity, and consequently its culture and traditions. (O'Kelly, 2003: 56) In this optic, the "other" represents can be both a material and ideological threat to group survival as it threatens territorial integrity and the group identity. Often, religion plays a key role into shaping the cultural parameter that constitutes the national heritage. (Brubaker, 2012: 15-17)

Fidesz's nationalist and populist narratives

Both nationalism and populism are built around the creation of relationships of enmity, and as such they can reshape social boundaries. The implementation of those boundaries ultimately determines the social hierarchy and the distribution of privilege, and freedom and rights attached to it. Together they contribute to the creation of collective identity and enable a politic of nostalgia and resentment, which is as much the reassertion of the dominance of a specific ethnic group over cultural and ethnic minorities, as it is a battle against the elites. (Bonikowsky et al., 2019: 73)

Buzan argues that national identity can be used as an ideological base on which a state structure is built. Conversely, a threat to national identity can be classified as a political threat and can be used to construct an existential threat. (Buzan et al., 1998: 142) Therefore, when combined, nationalism and populism can be used to construct an existential threat. In this optic, the populist narrative's attacks against the establishment will contribute to the creation of an atmosphere of silence and coercion even – if not especially – in front of abuse. Nationalist narrative on the other hand, will define the criterion of belonging and determine the degree of intolerance and discrimination against groups and individuals

perceived as outsider. Ultimately, leading to the justification of violation of democratic norms in the name of nation survival. (Levitsky & Ziblatt 2018).

Orbán's nationalist narrative and political actions emphasize the centrality of ethnicity and cultural unity, which distinguish Hungary and give the country prestige, setting it apart from the rest. According to Orbán's, Hungarians are a specific ethnic group that needs to preserve its homogeneity¹. (Kormany.hu, 2017, Mar.1st) A recurrent topic in his narrative relate to the fact that Hungary favors a multi-national rather than a multicultural system. (Kormany.hu, 2017, Mar 1st; Szabolcs, 2015, Jun. 2nd; Eurologus, 2015, May 19th) This distinction is crucial because it implies that in order to be recognized as Hungarians. Ethnicity becomes a basic requirement of belonging and those who do not share neither culture nor kinship are not welcomed – it is not multicultural – though they are allowed to live their lives according to their own believes in their own country. This creates a strong link between the notion of ethnicity and territory, as in a way the territory becomes a safe haven the group has the ultimate control over. (Batory, 2010: 40) This relationship is reflected by the legal dimension of the state, as the legislations passed by the government seem to indicated a shift towards a state centered around the notion of ethnicity. (Körtvélyesi, 2012: 111-140)

An example, of this shift is the extension of Hungarian citizenship to Hungarian minorities living abroad. (Peter, 2011, Jan. 4th) This law sparked debate for numerous reasons. First, the opposition claimed that it was an attempt of the government to broaden its voting base. Secondly, a debate developed around the fact that basic linguistic knowledge was not required to apply for citizenship. Thirdly, it created tension with the Slovakian government as the law reopened an old debate surrounding a border controversy between the two country. Finally, it was opposed by EU countries who did not look favorably upon bestowing European citizenship to Hungarian minorities. (Kovaks, 2006: 431-451). In short, this law favored kin (Hungarian minorities) over the interest of other groups (EU, EU member states, Slovakia) and strengthened the government political position. As Orbán put it:

“The unification of the nation across borders was not only a gesture on our behalf — a past due reparation — it was more of an everyday act to allow us to shape our destiny together, to determine our own future.”

¹ “First of all, I consider it to be very important to preserve ethnic homogeneity. Now it is possible to say things like this. A few years ago, such statements entailed a death warrant, but today it is possible to say things like this because life has proven that too big a mixture brings about problems.”

(Kormany.hu, 2017, Mar.1st)

(Bayer, 2017, Aug.

24th)

Batory argues that the limitus test of ethnic nationalism though, “should not be how a kin-state behaves toward co-ethnics but how they behave with ethnic minorities internally”. (2010: 42) In this regard, the Venice Commission has redacted numerous reports on the protection of minorities in the country. The report criticizes the lacks of constitutional guarantees to protect ethnic (AD (2012)011) and religious minorities (CDL-AD(2012)004) as well as other groups such as the LGBT+ community (CDL-AD(2013)012). Moreover, numerous concerns have been expressed in regards to the structural racism against Roma in the country. (Ljubic et al., 2012)

Therefore, nationalist narrative is used to strengthen the link between identity and territory and justifies a structural change – as long as it used to justify issues related to the securitization process- of the system that aims to defend state ethnic homogeneity. At the same time, the nationalist narrative creates an intolerant environment as its ultimate goal is to destigmatize criticisms against discriminatory policies to legitimize the government stand. At the 2019 ceremony of the 1948-1949 Revolution and Freedom fight Orbán explained the importance to protect homogeneity:

“He said that ‘To be truly free one cannot be the subject of an empire: one must be the child of a free nation,’ adding that ‘A European can only be happy if they are allowed to freely decide their own fate and the fate of their nation.’ He observed that we know that the Hungarians of the first millennium chose to adopt Christianity from their own free will, and later Hungarians fought tooth and nail for the right to freely choose – against the will of the Ottomans, the Habsburgs and the Soviets. The notion of freedom, he said, is rooted in Christianity, because before God everyone is equal.”

(Kormany.hu, 2019, Mar 15th)

Basically, Europeans share Christian origins and as a result they believe in the notion of equality and freedom and live their lives abiding by it. At the same time, it emerges that this Christian notion of equality is more related to the freedom of self-determination - Europeans should be able to freely chose the fate of their nation- than to its liberal counterpart. When it comes to Hungary, this freedom was gained through centuries of struggles. According to this principle, Christianity is at the base of peaceful coexistence and cooperation, a cooperation though that should never go as far as infringing upon national sovereignty. The rest of the world is excluded as the lack of common Christian origins

automatically turn them into a potential threat because they do not come from a culture that puts freedom and equality between communities at the center. Therefore dialogue is not possible and coexistence unthinkable as it menaces the very existence of European culture and traditions. (Fekete,2016; Glied and Pap, 2016) Therefore, the religious element is added to the mix and homogeneity becomes a mean to protect the country's Christian cultural roots and allow European countries to peacefully coexist. On the other hand, it discriminates migrants and especially Muslim on religious and cultural basis. (Hafez, 2018, 438). Therefore, this narrative allows the Hungarian government to claim that the securitization of the issue of migration is the result of its concerns for Hungarian safety, as it is its duty to protect its citizens. This narrative greatly damages freedom and rights of individuals that belong to a different group, as nationalist narrative systematically poses their interests behind that of the Hungarian, and the Christian narrative automatically disqualify their right to be in the country in the first place. Ultimately, both of this narrative pose the protection of rights and freedoms always behind the will of the chosen group, who's will the government pretend to represent. Ultimately, this narrative legitimizes freedom restriction and rights violations in the name of the security of the chosen group. (Hamelink, 2011: 15) The government narrative on the Soros plan reproduces these two dynamics as well, as it moves an attack against an external threat – migrants – to protect the nation and its culture from extinction. Putting the protection of human rights and freedom on the back sit.

Not only is the government official narrative Christian and nationalist, but it is populist as well. The populist element instead of attacking a specific minority it attacks the elites – Soros and Brussel - and the power structure they represent – liberal values. It identifies two groups: the 'pure' people and the corrupted elites. Orbán has exploited this narrative to win the 2010 elections and to redirect Hungarians frustrations and anxiety against the EU.

After 1989 the Hungarian political debate developed towards a bipolar system that was mostly dominated by the conservative, center right – Fidesz - and the socialists - MSZP. While Fidesz political stands started out as liberal and centrist in time they evolved towards a more conservative platform. On the other hand, the MSZP political views did not fluctuate over time and maintained its liberal stands – in defense of liberal rights and freedoms – and its socialist platform. Rather than favor dialogue both sides preferred to raise consensus promoting their vision through the demonization of their political adversaries stands rather than through dialogue. This created a strong polarization and prevented the establishment of a more pluralistic and fragmented system ultimately leading to the personalization of

politics and the (ab)use of the media as a mean to build or destroy political consensus (Palonen, 2009: 320). Therefore, Orbán landslide victory in 2010 is the consequence is related to the way democratic discourse developed in the country, as well as the socio-economic conditions that shook Hungary and the EU - the start of the war on terror and the 2009 economic crises. In 2006 a scandal involving the country PM Ferenc Gyurcsány, head of the MSZP, broke out. A tape of the Hungarian Prime Minister admitting to have lied during the election campaign signed the beginning of a series of scandals that involved the socialist government, angering people and signing the end of the MSZP reign. (BBC, 2006; Balogh, 2006) Fidesz was left as the only viable alternative. The populist rhetoric implemented by the party paid off. Their aggressive and divisive rhetoric clearly set them apart from the MSZP. The long history of populist narrative not only left Fidesz unscathed by the uncovering of deep political corruption in the country, it offered the newly elected government an excuse to marginalize the defeated liberal left and its supporters and to label them as enemies. Once in government though, they had to face a new challenge: they were elected but they also lost their enemy and needed a new one. The EU and successively György Soros were the perfect solution to their problems (Batory, 2016: 289; Palonen, 2018: 318)

As Hungarian political debate was characterized by a long-standing populist tradition, the polarization of the political discourse is the produce of numerous decades, (Palonen, 2009) it inevitably affected the openness of the political debate favoring its polarization. The narrative that surrounds the Soros plan therefore needs to be interpreted in accordance to this pattern. It favored the polarization of the political discourse on the issue of migration. As the Soros plan shifts the securitization from the social and economic sector of security to the political one, it questions the legitimization of the EU intervention. This dynamic of enmity takes place within an already polarized political debate, hindering even further the political debate.

In Hungary, the union of populist and nationalist narrative contributed to the identification of the 'pure' people with a specific ethnic group: The Hungarians. The translation of this narrative into law prioritized them over other ethnic groups, resulting in the violation of human rights. Nonetheless, the polarization of the political discourse produced by a history of populist political narrative led to the creation of an environment that stifled the political debate. Moreover, since 2010 the government has increasingly stifled the independence of Hungarians media, up to a point in which some news outlets were forced to close as the they could not guarantee their impartiality. (Csink and Koltay, 2012; Sargentini Report, 2018: 10,11) Therefore, the current political climate in the country hinders open

political debate, systematically attacks criticisms and creates obstacle to a free and independent press. Therefore, it can be argued that the the government narrative promotes an atmosphere of silence and coercion, affecting the ability of audience to exercise its agency, ultimately affecting citizens freedoms and rights, such as freedom of expression and information. (Krekó, Enyedi: 2018: 40)

In conclusion, the Soros plan systematizes the dismissal of dissenting opinions as it automatically labels them as its produce and it disqualifies EU criticism or intervention in domestic policy. Stifling further the political debate and imposing its narrative as the dominant one, strengthening already existing dynamics of discrimination and intolerance. Therefore, rather than gaining consensus the government created its appearance through the creation of a climate that gives no space to diverging opinions. Ultimately, this negatively affects freedom and rights of both citizens and non-citizens and open the field to further abuse.

Third felicity condition

Emerson (2017) locates Speech Act within a performative and constative continuum. The Speech Act – performative utterance - provokes a rupture to tackle an existential threat through an emergency mechanism. (Huysmans, 2011: 373) As the securitizing move deviates from the norm, it is undertaken by the securitizing actor without universal consent and therefore lacks legitimacy. Therefore, there is a gap between the moment in which the Speech Act is performed -performative utterance- and the moment in which the audience gives its consent. This gap can only be filled retroactively, if and only if the given justification offers the audience a socially acceptable explanation. (Emerson, 2017: 7) this explanation can be accepted or rejected, and allows the audience to verify whether or not it reflects the truth – constative utterance. This implies that while the audience agency is apparently limited and restricted by the securitizing actor's political will, it is actually still present and it is an integral part of the securitization discourse. The intelligibility of the securitizing discourse is then crucial to the success of the securitizing move. (Ricoeur, 1984; Buzan et al.,1998). In his book *Politics of Friendship* (2005), Derrida criticizes Austin's explanation of the Speech Act as the result of the sole will of the securitizer and instead proposes a different interpretation. He argues that the securitization process is not reducible to sovereign will nor the intention of the securitizer. Instead, it is the product of intersubjective field of relations. It is informed by the securitizer and the audience whose believes, understanding and expectations are informed by the social environment and historical circumstances.

Therefore, the Speech Act is only a part of a process that is in fact, the produce of a dialogue between the present and the past. In sum, while, the Speech Act constitutes a rupture with the norm, the securitization move acceptance heavily relies on social cues.

Therefore, if the speaker narratives refer to preexisting relationship of enmity the probability of the securitizing move increases. (Peoples, Vaughn-Williams, 2010: 79) While historical precedents can offer legitimization on the other hand not all history is useful to that purpose. (Benazzo, 2017) Moreover, it needs to be kept in mind that while the securitizing actor might be using a specific narrative to justify his actions this does not necessarily equates to the fact that the general populations accepts and shares his views. It simply means that he has the chance of using his platform to promote and diffuse a specific narrative pared up to his own version of history. A history that washes Hungary of its responsibility during the Holocaust (2017: 203) and focuses on the struggle against foreign invaders to glorify the country's tribulation in the name of independence (2107: 204). The physical manifestation of an external threat reproduces a dynamic of invasion that is used to shift the attention for the state shortcomings on a different object. The Soros' plan is structured exactly around this trope as it reproduces a dynamic of invasion perpetrated by a supranational actor – Soros and the EU – and is framed as a threat to the country freedom of self- determination. This threat is one of the key dynamics that characterize the political sector of security. (Buzan et al., 1998: 150) Therefore, this threat does not only reflect the circumstances of the present but re-evokes pre-existing dynamics of enmity. This is one among the three different dynamics that evokes, though the anti-Semitic narrative in the country informed the Islamophobic narrative.

According to Orbán, the Soros' plan is dangerous on many levels. On the ideological level liberalism aims at substituting of Christian values with a multicultural society. As George Soros is Jewish, the attacks moved against him re-evokes the country Antisemitism. This attack is carried through two dynamics: a top-down - Soros and Brussel – and a bottom-up dynamic – illegal migrants and Muslims.

The bottom-up dynamic is characterized by diffuse Islamophobia. While anti-Arab sentiment and Islamophobia are not new sentiments in Western Europe, especially in ex colonial powers, (Betz, 2013: 72) the same cannot be said about Hungary. While antisemitism and xenophobia were amply present, in Hungary Islamophobic sentiments are rather recent and more connected to the global and European context rather than specific local circumstances. Currently, Hungary is rated between the most Islamophobic countries in EU, together with Italy and the Visegrad Four. This contrast with the pacific relationship between the two communities. As a matter of fact, the Hungarian Muslim

community, although small was really well integrated in society (Csiszár, 2016: 302). Another difference between Eastern and Western Europe is that in Eastern Europe this sentiment is highly represented in parliament by populist parties, rather than being part of daily life interactions. (Hafez, 2018: 438) The 2015 refugee crises, joined to the fear of terrorism created favorable conditions for the strengthening of such narrative. The government exploited the fear produced by the 2015 refugee crises and terroristic attacks, to foster the country Islamophobic sentiment. (2018: 447) The government - backed by the medias - put Islam at the center of the public debate, labeled migrants as a threat to the country's cultural, ethnic and religious identity and turned them the perfect scapegoat to diverge people attention from its wrongdoings. (Hafez, 2018: 443)

The top-down dynamic is dangerously evocative of anti-Semitic sentiment. Orbán has never openly attacked Soros Jewish origins and he has clearly rejected accusations of antisemitism multiple times. (Heller, 2018, Ju. 19th; MTI, 2019, Feb. 19th; AboutHungary.hu, 2017, Jul.13th) Nonetheless, numerous accusations have been moved against him. In 2017 Soros openly protested against a billboard campaign that negatively linked his image -his face- to the debate on migration in Hungary, emphasizing the antisemitic sentiment they carried. While Orbán claimed that the billboards addressed only an issue of national security, Soros face was covered in anti-Jewish and anti-Israel graffiti. (Agence France-Presse, 2017, Jul. 12th) Another example is the re-evaluation of the Regent of Hungary in the interwar period, Miklos Horthy. He was known for his right-wing stands and as Nazi sympathizers that condemned half a million Jewish to the concentration camps. (Balogh, 2017, Jun,21st) Moreover, Orbán statement during the State of Nation address on the EU and Soros is extremely similar to the structure of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion:

“There Jews and Freemasons were said to have made plans to disrupt Christian civilization and erect a world state under their joint rule. Liberalism and socialism were to be the means of subverting Christendom”

(Britannica.com)

The alliance between Soros (Jewish) and Brussel (freemason) described by the Soros plan aims to establish an open society in which the Christian root of European culture will be replaced by a multi-ethnic society. Moreover, while describing the danger posed by Brussel Orbán reveals their plan, the so-called Socialist pillar. (Kormany.hu, 2017, Feb. 14th) While the re-evoking of socialism during the Interwar period and after the fall of the Soviet Union has completely different connotations, in this case it serves a double purpose. First, it completes the anti-Semitic logic and reminds the country of its year

of subjugation to a foreign power, further potentiating fear of invasion. Moreover, liberalism is part of the Hungarian heritage, therefore the rejection of a part of its own society and its description as alien and corrupting dangerously retraces the Hungarian Post War antisemitic narratives, described by Murer in *Pursuing the Familiar Foreigner*, (1999: 61-102) that attacked part of its own society to justify the weakness of the nation. That being said while building this parallel is extremely scary the historical happening that led to the Holocaust and the current Hungarian political situation are radically different. What emerges from this confrontation is that Orbán's narrative is not original and it is the product of the country and the continent history. The fact that Orbán's narrative is influenced by the old nationalist sentiment is contained in the events he chooses to recall and idealize – the Trianon Treaty, contradictory stands on Hungarian responsibility during the Holocaust (McKenzie, 2013) – and is the product of lack of confrontation with his troubled past (Murer, 1999).

As a result, in the early 1990s together with the end of communism and the implementation of the new democratic system the 'Jewish question' re-emerged. Antisemitism was not anymore just the manifestation of social frustration but became a political identity as the newly created political parties were looking for different ways to legitimize their voice. The 'Jewish question' permanence within Hungarian society offered newly formed parties a form of legitimization rooted in the country past (Kovács, 2011: 254-56). It is not surprising that the same type of rhetoric is now being adopted by the Orbán to legitimize his attack to the EU and his attempt to put the nation and national sovereignty at the center of the state decision making process.

A very clear distinction between the past and the present is that antisemitism is not considered acceptable when it comes to the mainstream political debate. Moreover, the Hungarian government officially opposes anti-Jewish sentiment and even Jobbik, extreme right party, has formally changed its position, though in practice the transition has proven to require longer amount of time that initially planned. (Thorpe, 2016, Nov. 15th) The argument that the party's political stands change though does not cancel the fact that before 2016, in 2010 and in 2014 Jobbik won numerous seats in parliament with respectively 16.7% and 20.3% of votes. (The Orange Files, 2018, Oct. 29th) Which seems to support the hypothesis that while antisemitic stands are considered unpopular the narrative that is built around it still has traction. Yet, the abandonment of antisemitism from the country far right is indicative of an apparent detachment from the racial characterization of the antisemitic discourse. But while the racial

connotation became more and more implicit the overall logic², the structure, connected to it survived possibly creating an implicit bias, an unconscious preference that nonetheless influences choices. (Cousins, 2014: 694) This means that Orbán's narrative is automatically more appealing as it uses a specific language that overtime has become a part of the Hungarian's political identity. Nonetheless, this discourse validates xenophobic stands and keeps the past alive though it officially disapproves of them.

While Islamophobia is a fairly recent phenomenon, Hungarian history of antisemitism is a different story. On the one hand, the anti-Jewish element over time became less and less acceptable and socially condemned. On the other hand, the lack of social introspection made it possible for the illiberal and ethnocentric element of the narrative to survive creating a favorable environment for xenophobia to resurface and thrive, offering fertile ground for the development of Islamophobia, as the new existential threat to the continent Christian roots is now mostly embodied by Muslims, though still planned by a Jew. (Hafez, 2017, Aug. 9th; Zizek, 2017, Oct. 27th)

In conclusion, the government nationalist narrative is characterized by a theme of invasion, that reflects the country Antisemitic past and has Islamophobic presents. Therefore, the existence of historical relationships of enmities rendered the threat described through the Soros plan intelligible to the public, and testify to its effectiveness. Moreover, the centrality of the dynamics of invasion to the Soros plan created the perfect shield behind which the government can hide from his responsibilities, as it connects the government struggle to reclaim sovereignty from the EU with the country century old struggle for independence against the same but yet different old enemy.

² I am referring to the plot from a globalist force to spread liberalism bring chaos and establish its dominance and that therefore needs to be stopped by the sovereign state before it destroys common Christian heritage of Europe.

CONCLUSION

Securitization implies the construction of an existential threat which poses society in front of the consequences of an uncontrollable phenomenon or abrupt change. Since the 2015 migration, the Hungarian government securitized the political discourse on the issue of migration. (Bocksor, 2015) At the same time the country political landscape changed with the 2010 elections. The newly elected Fidesz-KNDP coalition won the election in a landslide and was re-elected in 2014 and in 2018. During the past nine years, the government has drafted a new constitution and passed a series of extremely questionable amendments that reflected the government illiberal vision. (The Orange Files, 2018 Apr. 19th) This created a conflict between Hungary and the EU, as Hungary is bound to respect the basic principles upon which the EU is built. This contrast reached a peaked in 2018 when the European Parliament voted in favor of the activation of the Art. 7 of the TEU. This procedure could ultimately deprive Hungary ability to vote for resolutions at an EU level, though this eventuality is highly unlikely. (Sargentini report, 2018)

In this essay I argue that in 2017 the Hungarian government changed the political narrative on migration and further securitized the issue, reframing the issue as an issue of legitimacy and therefore related to the political sector of security. In the new narrative the government managed to bridge the gap between the narrative that surrounded the country illiberal turn and the issue of migration. To do so it devised the Soros plan. The Soros plan is a conspiracy theory that claims that the Jewish-American entrepreneur and philanthropy George Soros created an alliance with Brussel to profit from the migration crises to the detriment of EU member state. Moreover, they also planned to replace the continent European Christian root with a new multicultural and pluralistic society. (Fekete, 2106) I argue that the in February 2017 Orbán addressed the parliament and expressed his intention to block Soros at all costs as the Hungarian national identity was at stake. He framed the Soros plan as a security issued that menaced the country territorial identity as well as the ideas upon which the nation is build. Therefore, it represented a threat to the very existence of the Hungarian state and culture. (Kormany.hu, 2017, Feb. 14th)

Superficially, this new framework reflects the country willingness to protect itself from an external threat. The threat of migration though hides a far worse threat, as migration becomes only a tool in the hands of Soros and Brussel to impose their political vision on Europe. Therefore, there are two threats: a bottom- up threats that is embodied by the migrants and a top-down threat that is represented by Soros and Brussel. Therefore, this set up exploits the issue of migration to defend the

country from EU criticisms and infringement procedures. On the one hand, it labels Brussel as corrupted, as it is now subservient to Soros. This allows the government to arbitrarily label unwanted criticisms from the EU as the result of malignant intention. As the label of corruption does not have a begin nor an end date, it can be used to counteract EU criticism that precedes the creation of the Soros plan. This label is attached to the collaboration with Soros and its liberal stands. Therefore, it justifies government policies that have nothing to do with the issue of migration but that can be associated with liberal stands. On the other hand, the ultimate evil is represented by Soros. This allows the government to attack the EU while claiming to have its best interests at heart. In short, the government has devised the Soros plan to defend itself from external attacks, whether rightful or not. It automatically, disqualifies any EU intervention and questions its legitimacy.

Therefore, as the EU started to question the Hungarian government illiberal stands, they devised a plan that questioned the legitimacy of such claim in the first place. As this back and forth between the EU and Brussel concerns issues of legitimization and recognition it can be classified as a security issue that pertains the security of a nations against a supranational institution (EU), effectively creating a situation in which the parties involved questions each other legitimacy. (Buzan et al., 1998: 141-160) This place their interaction within the political sector of security and therefore reflects the Hungarian attempt to reclaim its sovereignty.

To support this argument, I used securitization theory to argue that the 2017 State of Nation Address fits within the criteria of the Speech Act and created a rupture with the status quo. I chose that speech as it is a type of Speech that the PM gives at the beginning of the year to discuss upcoming political challenges, and therefore it foreshadows a series of policies especially designed to tackle the issues discussed. The Speech identified an existential threat to the Hungarian state and was followed by a series of Amendments that clashed with the EU core values and that reflected the capability of the Soros plan to create a narrative able to legitimize migrations policies as well as the country further illiberal shifts. Th NGOs Law and the Stop Soros Law fits within the first category, though their inherently xenophobic nature made them clash with the liberal values system and therefore encountered EU criticisms as well. They impacted freedom of association and violated migrants' dignity and basic human rights as they implemented a regime that promoted discrimination and intolerance. (Venice Commission, CDL-AD (2017) 015 and CDL-AD (2108) 013) The Lex CEU on the other hand was redacted with the purpose of forcing the transfer of the Central European University, founded by Soros, outside of the country. This law directly affected Hungarian citizens freedom of scientific research, their right to

education which is related to academic freedom. (Venice Commission, CDL-AD (2017)022) In sum this law affected Hungarian citizens, volunteers from all around Europe. The infringement of liberal freedom and rights committed by the Hungarian government was justified through one unifying conspiracy theory: the Soros plan. Therefore, the purpose of these laws was framed as a way to shield Hungarians from an external threat that would lead to its annihilation. This narrative is in contrast with the previous securitization narrative as it does not just claim to be defending Hungarians, but it is literally reclaiming the government rights to choose to defend Hungarians, as it previously did. Another, crucial aspect is that this narrative was devised after the European Court of Justice dismissed the Hungarian government opposition to migration quotas. (Rankin, 2017, Sep. 6th) Therefore, the Soros plan can be seen as a device that the government use to legitimize its actions through an alternative channel, non-established channel.

After establishing that the government further securitized the issue of migration and with it the EU intervention in domestic policy, I used the felicity factors to determine the likelihood of success as well as conduct and analysis of the internal logic of the security process and of the surrounding political narrative.

According to the first felicity condition the State of Nation Address respects the internal logic of securitization as the threat represented by the Soros plan can be used to trigger a sense of ontological insecurity as it describes a threat not only to national identity but the place within which such identity developed. (Kinnvall, 2010) Therefore, by threatening the physical place that is supposed to represent the last defense of group identity, it creates a scenario of doom in which the national will be swallowed into oblivion. This scenario inevitably triggers existential anxiety.

I used the second and the third felicity condition to contextualize the Soros plan within previous government narrative and identify which past relationships of enmity it evoked. It emerged that the government nationalist's narrative redraws social boundaries alongside ethnic lines and lead to the prioritization of the wellbeing of the community over that of a group or individual that does not belong. This results in the violation of basic human rights and dignity as well as in the promotion of a climate of intolerance and discrimination in the name of the defense of the country Christian roots. (Fekete, 2106) The populist narrative, joined to the Hungarian government extensive control over media outlets, lead to the polarization of political ideas and to the subsequent creation of a climate that promotes silence and coercion. Therefore, it negatively impacts the agency of the audience as it does not feel free to express dissent. In this case the Soros plan reinforces the pre-existing climate and reclaims Hungary

rights as it justifies this atmosphere as a necessary barrier to prevent the spread of the liberal values that the Soros plan plans to spread, reclaiming the country rights to protect itself regardless what the EU says.

Finally, I discuss the third felicity factor and I contextualize within the current socio-economic and historical context. The Soros plan re-evokes old dynamics of enmity that concern the theme of invasion. The Soros plan is dangerously similar to the Protocol of the Elders of Zion. Both identify the danger represented to the European Christian culture by and alliance between two parties -the Jewish & the freemasons, and Soros and Brussel. Both parties aim at gaining control over the continent to spread their dangerous political ideas which would only lead to the annihilation of the European nations and their identity. The difference between the two plan is the partial removal of anti-Semitic undertones of the conspiracy mastermind – Soros- only to replace them with an openly Islamophobic element, which can be seen as the product of the Hungarian xenophobic discourse as well as the product of the current socio-economic circumstances. (Zizek, 2017, Oct. 27th)

In conclusion, the Soros plan moved the securitization of the issue of migration from the social and economic sector of security to the political one. As a consequence, the government political narrative reflected its need to reclaim its sovereignty from the EU. Yet, securitization provokes a rupture with norm it fostered the government to find an alternative source of legitimation. To do so, the government unearthed old relationships of enmity – characterized by a strong xenophobic sentiment – to construct an understandable existential threat. While the Soros plan carries out its function perfectly well, up to a point where it offers a security related justification to the past, as well as present violations of liberal freedom and right, it actively contributed to the creation of a toxic environment. It created a climate that destigmatizes intolerance and discrimination, while simultaneously stifling the critical social debate necessary to prevent the solidification of reorganization of the priorities of the Hungarian state in accordance to illiberal canons.

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