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Abstract

Following the 2015 refugee crisis, the issue of migration became significantly more politically contentious across the European Union; however, the influx of Ukrainian refugees in 2022 posed a new challenge for Europe, specifically for states bordering Ukraine. Hungary has been in a spotlight of scholarly research around migration, with a number of researches highlighting the issues of refugees alienation, political othering and exclusionism. While there is a significant body of literature regarding the political and social context as well as implications of the 2015 migration crisis in Hungary, not much light has been shed on Hungary's political discourse and its possible change following the new refugee influx of 2022, and specifically the discourse produced by the Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban.

This thesis uses Critical Discourse Analysis to analyse the speeches of Viktor Orban that shaped the 2015–2018 and 2022–2023 migration discourses and employs a securitisation theoretical framework to assess how, if at all, the issue of migration has been securitised in the two cases and what securitisation narratives could dominate the discourses. The results of this research show that the 2015–2018 discourse contain significant securitisation which aligned with fundamentalist framing of Hungary and political goals of Viktor Orban, and suggest that the securitisation of migration was used as one of the tools to rally up the electorate for the 2018 parliamentary elections. However, the 2022–2023 discourse has shown evidence of multiple desecuritisation narratives, specifically concerning Ukrainian refugees, which could be attributed to the absence of need to legitimise new and possibly contentious policies, as Hungarian government followed the EU's approach towards Ukrainian refugees.

Keywords: migration, securitisation, Hungary, critical discourse analysis, Viktor Orban, refugees, political discourse

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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

The escalation of the Russian-Ukrainian war on 24 February forced millions of Ukrainians to flee to the EU, and countries bordering Ukraine were faced with the reception of a new wave of asylum seekers. In the midst of these events, *Hungary* found itself in the middle of a new crisis. An EU country that is today defined as competitive authoritarian regime (Lachapelle et al., 2020), hybrid regime (Bozóki & Hegedűs, 2018) and, by its own Prime Minister, illiberal democracy (Orban, 2014) has had a complicated history of political developments after the collapse of communism. After Fidesz, a right-wing political party, won with a landslide in 2010 and formed a new government headed by Viktor Orban, the Hungarian political climate has been slowly transforming. Hungary's transformation has been in the spotlight of many scholars interested in Central and Eastern European studies (Szalai & Göbl, 2015; Barlai et. al, 2017; Krekó & Enyedi, 2018; Fabry, 2019; Enyedi, 2020). In over 10 years of governance of Fidesz led by Viktor Orban, scholars identify significant democratic backsliding in the country (Bernhard, 2021). The range of restrictive and democratically questionable policies stretches from cracking down on independent media and civil society, messing with the checks and balances system, promoting anti-minorities legislation and, finally, passing a new constitution (Krekó & Enyedi, 2018; Bernhard, 2021) accompanied by a strong political rhetoric that “offered a sense of exceptionalism to Hungarians” (Szalai & Göbl, 2015: 13).

These political and institutional processes have been developing in a context of various global and EU-specific issues, one of which was the *2015 migration and refugee crisis*. In 2015, Europe faced an unprecedented challenge: due to instability and armed conflicts around the Middle East and Africa, tens and hundreds of thousands of asylum seekers started coming to Europe. The situation swiftly transformed into what is now known as 2015 migration/refugee crisis since many states struggled to cope with the refugee influx, and the Union itself was divided over the best strategy to tackle this challenge. Hungarian response to the crisis gained an increased amount of scholarly attention (Bajomi-Lázár, 2019; Barlai et al., 2017; Bíró-Nagy, 2022; Cantat & Rajaram, 2019; Furko, 2019; Rokicka, 2021). The country became one of the main transit states for asylum seekers travelling by the Balkan route, which put an extra pressure on the population and Hungarian government to find a solution to the crisis. Scholars indicated strong

anti-refugee sentiments (Juhász, 2017; Thorleifsson, 2017; Waterbury, 2020) combined with a number of anti-migration policy decisions, including a 175-km long fence at the Serbian-Hungarian border (Rokicka, 2021; Scott, 2020).

However, now the context of migration and refugees in Hungary is strikingly different due to the influx of Ukrainian refugees started in 2022. Even though the crisis is still recent and ongoing, and not much academic research has been generated on its progress and effects in Hungary, some preliminary work shows a strong degree of general European solidarity with Ukraine and Ukrainian refugees (Allin & Jones, 2022; Bosse, 2022; Pepinsky et al., 2022; Kyriazi, 2022). However, not much is known about the political discourse around migration and refugees after 2022, especially in the light of the highly exclusionist and anti-migration sentiment that persisted in Hungary after the 2015 crisis. Did the Hungarian government decide to frame the refugees from Ukraine differently compared to the refugees from the Middle East and Africa? How does this discourse reflect on ordinary Hungarians and their opinion? These inquiries guided the *research puzzle* of this thesis which aims to compare how similar events in one state (the inflows of a high number of refugees in 2015 and 2022 in Hungary) with the same securitising actor (Viktor Orban) were framed and if they were, in the end, securitised.

The **main theoretical framework** used in the thesis is securitisation theory, which explores when, why and how certain issues get securitised, and how the securitising actors achieve the securitisation (Wæver, 1993: 8; Buzan et al., 1998). The thesis employs a combination of the Copenhagen School's securitisation outlook, from where the concepts of securitising speech acts, referent objects and facilitating conditions are taken to explore the possible securitisation of migration and refugees in Hungary (Ibid), and Thierry Balzacq's securitisation theory, which brings greater focus to the social and political context accompanying the discourse (Balzacq, 2005, 2015). Additionally, the ontological security theory, which on a state-level, focuses on practices of identity preservation and the creation of sustainable political narratives by the elites, is utilised in the research (Giddens, 1991; Mitzen, 2006; Kazharski, 2019; Kinnvall & Mitzen, 2020). The concept of ontological security is inter-connected with the securitisation theory, as securitisation is seen as one of the three responses to a heightened sense of ontological insecurity, along with desecuritisation and asecuritisation (Alkopher, 2020; Browning & Joenniemi, 2013).

In this thesis, the researcher explores how, if present, the sense of ontological insecurity in Hungary could have been heightened through securitisation moves.

Accompanying the research puzzle, the **research questions** posed in this dissertation are:

1. To what extent, if at all, have the two instances of refugee crises – the 2015 inflow from the Middle East and the 2022 inflow from Ukraine – been securitised by the Hungarian government, and what narratives dominated the discourses?
2. What are the effects of these possible securitisations on Hungarian public opinion and are there indications of successful securitisation of migration in Hungary?

To answer the proposed research questions, the following **research objectives** should be reached:

- Analysing and conceptualising the main theoretical framework of the research – securitisation and ontological security;
- Using the critical discourse analysis method, investigating and comparing the scope, nature and narratives of the political discourses around two refugee influxes – 2015 and 2022;
- Identifying possible securitisation effects on the general public using secondary social polling data;
- Identifying and analysing the main differences between the two discourses and securitisation effects and evaluating them according to the established theoretical framework, thus drawing conclusions and solving the research puzzle.

In terms of **research design and methodology**, this thesis is structured as a 2-n paired comparison and interpretivist research to investigate how, if at all, the issues of migration and refugees were securitised in Hungary in 2015 and 2022, and how securitisation theory can be used in order to understand the possible similarities and differences in the political discourses. In order to solve the research puzzle, this thesis employs a Critical Discourse Analysis to analyse statements of the Hungarian Prime Minister in two time frames – 2015 – 2018 and 2022 – 2023, following the two refugee influxes. This thesis utilises Norman Fairclough's approach to critical discourse analysis with a focus on the second and third levels of the model, which analyse the

inter-textual and social context, that is the understandings and meanings of the specific linguistics choices, and how the discourse is framed in relation to its social and political contexts of power and ideology (Fairclough 1992, 2013). Additionally, to explore indications of possible success and effects of securitisation in Hungary, the researcher analysed secondary data from the social polling conducted during the established time frames.

This work contributes to the existing research on Hungary's politics and political climate, migration in Hungary and, more broadly, in Central and Eastern Europe, and a growing body of literature on security studies and securitisation. Moreover, this thesis offers a modest contribution to the area of comparativist studies as well as some insights of the application of the ontological security theory and critical discourse analysis research related to migration and political discourse. The research is also set to explore the fairly recent effects of the Russian–Ukrainian war on the domestic politics in Hungary.

Structurally, the thesis is divided into 5 chapters. Chapter I is dedicated to the introduction of the research, its main questions and design, and the theoretical framework guiding the research. It is followed by Chapter II which focuses on presenting the relevant theoretical and empirical literature on the key topics of this research – securitisation theory, ontological security, migration, refugees and securitisation in Hungary and more broadly – in Central and Eastern Europe. Chapter III provides the presentation and justification of the research design, methodology, data collection and limitations of the research. The context assessment for both discourses is presented in Chapter IV and takes into account key social and political events that shaped the migration discourse in Hungary in the analysed chronological periods. Finally, the thesis is concluded with the presentation of critical discourse analysis findings and secondary social polling data.

CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter focuses on presenting the relevant theoretical and empirical literature on the key topics of this research – securitisation theory and the main approaches to securitisation, ontological security, migration, refugees and securitisation in Hungary and more broadly – in Central and Eastern Europe. This research focuses on exploring and comparing the political discourses around migration in Hungary in two time periods – 2015 – 2018 and 2022 – 2023 through the lens of the securitisation and ontological security. Additionally, the research also analyses the social and political contexts of the respective discourses and brings in the discussion of securitisation outcomes through the analyses of Hungarian public opinion.

1. Securitisation theory

Copenhagen school

The origins of the securitisation theory come from the Copenhagen school – a school of academic thought in the field of security studies and international relations. The work by Barry Buzan – “People, States and Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relations”, – published in 1983, is considered to be one of the foundational texts of the school. The book outlines the idea of *a multi-layered or systemic approach to security*, where individual, national and international dimensions of the concept are taken into account. The securitisation theory itself was first introduced in the article “Securitisation and Desecuritisation”, written by Ole Wæver in 1993. In the article, Wæver emphasised that one of the main focuses of the field of security studies should be the processes of securitisation and de-securitisation, which are defined as “*when, why and how elites label issues and developments as “security” problems*”, whether they succeed or not in these practices, and finally whether the elites could “keep issues off the security agenda, or even to de-securitise issues that have become securitised” (Wæver, 1993: 8).

The later joint work by Buzan, Wilde and Wæver further explored these concepts. There, securitisation was defined as a process in which a securitising actor, using the rhetoric of an existential threat towards a referent object, mobilises support for implementing certain measures and acting on behalf of the people (Buzan et al., 1998). Said measures operate in the system

beyond normal politics and enter the area of emergency politics that go “beyond rules that would otherwise bind” (Buzan, 1997: 13).

Furthermore, Buzan et al. argue that any issue can be securitised in relation to a referent object by securitising actors using *a securitising speech act* (Buzan et al., 1998). This means that any topic or object, even those that do not necessarily receive attention in the political discourse or are painted as politically neutral, can be presented as “an existential threat, requiring emergency measures and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure” (Buzan et al., 1998: 24). *A referent object* is defined as a thing or person (people) that have a legitimate claim to survive and are being threatened at the moment of a securitising speech act (Buzan et al., 1998: 36). Securitising speech acts, according to Wæver (1995), are a basis of securitisation and are defined by an attempt to put a topic in relation to security. A securitising speech act, therefore, legitimises political actions taken against the perceived security threat to protect the referent object. In the case of this research, for example, the act of migration or asylum-seeking can be securitised as something threatening the social, political and cultural nature of a certain state, or de-securitised as an act of seeking refuge and the natural desire of people to remain safe.

However, *full securitisation only happens on the condition of public legitimacy and agreement* (to a certain extent) with the securitising claims since those are essential for any policy changes. Buzan et al. (1998: 25) note that just arguments or comments made by politicians or highlighting a certain topic, such as migration, in the media are *securitising moves* but cannot be called securitisation on their own. For a securitising move to become securitisation of an issue, certain degree of public agreement is required. Additionally, the theory defines *facilitating conditions* that make it more likely for certain issues to be securitised. These conditions are determined based on the ways identities were constructed in different societies, and what makes these identities vulnerable and threatened (Buzan et al., 1998: 124). For example, major historical events such as war, occupation, colonisation, etc. and the circumstances they happened in frame the facilitating conditions for a certain society. In the research focused on Hungary, one can single out such historical conditions as the legacy of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and its later demise in the form of the Treaty of Trianon, the communist past of Hungary, and the post-communism transition period.

The theory places the securitisation process in the realm of political discourse, and, thus, focuses on how the discourses around certain issues are constructed in relation to security. Therefore, the approach of the Copenhagen School reflects the constructivist paradigm of understanding international relations since, according to the authors, securitisation and, more broadly, security are social constructs implemented by speech acts of securitising actors (Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2014). This approach focuses on subjective perceptions of the actors rather than physical objective threats and thus is more appropriate for analysing political discourse compared to other security studies approaches that favour “realistic” and “objective” threats.

Thierry Balzacq

The “classic” securitisation theory was later expanded on by Thierry Balzacq (2005, 2011) and included processes and practices beyond speech acts and securitising moves. According to Balzacq, securitization is an “assemblage of practices whereby heuristic artefacts (metaphors, policy tools, image repertoires, analogies, stereotypes, emotions, etc.) are contextually mobilised by a securitizing actor, who works to prompt an audience to build a coherent network of implications (feelings, sensations, thoughts and institutions) about the critical vulnerability of a referent object” (originally quoted in Balzacq, 2015: 2 by Szalai, 2017: 4). In this definition, Balzacq’s securitisation embodies three main characteristics: “effective securitisation is audience-centered; it is context-dependent; and it is power-laden” (Szalai, 2017: 2).

Balzacq’s theory allows to emphasise the role of the context of securitisation and alternative actors that can engage in the process. The context in this framework is used to account for differences in securitisation outcomes. Political regime, institutional structures, change of audience and/or referent object constitute context of the securitisation. In this sense, securitisation is a process that “occurs within, and as part of, a configuration of circumstances, including the context, the psycho-cultural disposition of the audience, and the power that both speaker and listener bring to the interaction” (Balzacq, 2005: 172). In terms of alternative actors engaged in securitisation, Balzacq et al. (2015:13) argue that those who have veto powers within the regime can also be securitising actors. Therefore, depending on the regime, actors and agencies beyond the government should be taken into account. Such actors can include the

political opposition, the media, and judiciary, since they have traditional or non-traditional (in the case of the media) veto powers and influence the securitising practices of the regime and the policies it adopts.

Therefore, by introducing Balzacq's theory of securitisation, it becomes possible to apply greater focus to identifying and comparing the contexts of the securitisation of migration in Hungary in 2015 and 2022. By tracing the change of the context and identifying the national myths, narratives and symbols used to shape the two discourses, one can highlight and explain the difference (or lack thereof) in practices of securitisation.

In the framework of this thesis, the securitisation theory firstly has been applied to the discourse about migration produced by the main securitising actor – the Prime Minister of Hungary, Viktor Orban. At the first stage, it became possible to identify and compare possible securitising moves and speech acts used in two discourses – in 2015 and in 2022. Subsequently, to determine if the securitising speech acts have transformed into the full process of migration securitisation, data from public opinion polls have been analysed. Consequently, it was possible to identify if and how securitisation was produced in the political discourse of refugees in Hungary in 2015 and 2022. Taking into account the vast application of this theory throughout migration studies in recent years, the research will *contribute to the understanding of how securitising practices can change depending on the political conditions and “existential threats” faced by one state, and how events with similar social contexts can produce different securitisation frames.*

2. Ontological security

Ontological security as a concept was first used in the work of the psychiatrist R. D. Laing in 1960 to refer to a “*firm sense of his own and other people's reality and identity*” under the studies of anxiety and mental health (1960: 40). The concept was later applied and expanded on in social sciences by sociologist Anthony Giddens (1991), according to whom ontological security is “*a sense of continuity and order in events, including those not directly within the perceptual environment of the individual*” (1991: 243). In this sense, ontological security emphasises the dependence on the preservation of the stability and integrity of the self (Kazharski, 2019). This stability should be maintained despite changes in established routines

since, according to the theory, actors maintain selves through the creation of “spatial and temporal emotional structures, for example, habits, routines and predictable inter-subjective relations” (Johansson-Nogués, 2018: 530). To sum up, the concept of ontological security helps to understand the need for stability and security of an individual’s identity in a changing world (Bozhko, 2022).

The strive for biographical continuity, which is defined as “a security of ‘being’” (Kinnvall & Mitzen, 2020: 240) and stability of self’s existence can be applied to all actors and within international relations studies has been applied to organisations and states (Mitzen, 2006; Zarakol, 2010; Cupać, 2012; Johansson-Nogués, 2018). On a state level, seeking ontological security means practices of identity preservation and stability, as well as the creation of sustainable political narratives to achieve that (Mitzen & Larson, 2017; Subotić, 2016). The sense of ontological security and physical security – territorial integrity of a state – are not the same, even though the protection of one can be equal to the protection of the other in different political discourses. Critical events such as crises, wars, revolutions etc., rupture the established routines of states and thus may make states ontologically insecure.

The creation and maintenance of identity narratives are the main tools to achieve ontological security for collective actors (Giddens, 1991; Kinnvall, 2017). Narrative building is executed through arranging select events related to a nation in a coherent and logical order (Della Sala, 1994; Johansson-Nogués, 2018). This order tells a compelling story of national identity and how a nation came to be. The narrative can also include common goals and characteristics that differentiate members of a community – “us” – from outsiders – “them” (Johansson-Nogués, 2018). Since the mid-20th century, the feeling of ontological security has been repeatedly disrupted, resulting in widespread insecurity and anxiety, which led some authors to label the era ‘the age of anxiety’, defined by Kinnvall & Mitzen (2020: 243) as “a period of generalized social ‘edginess’ or unease, brought about by environmental factors and existing on a collective scale”. Anxiety in the political sense, in turn, triggers the politics of fear – “the manipulation and exploitation of publics by leaders to secure political goals” (Ibid). In turn, the politics of fear provide legitimacy and rationality to political responses taken by the government since they appeal to the need to preserve safety and security and, thus, the narrative building (Ibid).

The politics of fear are similar to the emergency policies used in the securitisation theory since they both appeal to the need for security and safety and can legitimise quite radical and reactionary political decisions. The disruption of narrative building and ontological security, and the following introduction of the politics of fear, have been attributed by a number of scholars to political radicalisation and authoritarian regime change (Hunt, 1999).

In Europe, according to Kinnvall et. al (2018), the ontological security approach helps to explore how anxiety and fear can influence states' behaviours and shape policies at the state and EU levels. The growing feeling of anxiety and ontological insecurity in Europe has been repeatedly attributed to the migration crisis of 2015 (Della Sala, 2017; Della Sala, 2018) and the start of the Russian-Ukrainian war in 2014 with the annexation of Crimea (Browning, 2018; Youngs, 2017; Della Sala, 2023), both of which are the case studies of this thesis.

The concept of ontological security is inter-connected with the securitisation theory as the scholars of ontological security suggest that securitisation is “*a society's psychological response to ontological insecurity and existential anxiety due to globalisation*” (Alkopher, 2020: 126). In that sense, when resorting to securitisation, social groups tend to essentialise their collective identities and construct non-flexible and contained biographical narratives (Ibid; Kinnvall & Nesbitt-Larking, 2009). These narratives deligitimise “others” and exclude them from biographical narratives in attempt to restore ontological security (Alkopher, 2020).

In addition to securitisation, Browning and Joenniemi propose two additional ways in which societal actors can respond to a threatened sense of ontological security – *desecuritisation* and *asecuritisation* (Browning & Joenniemi, 2013: 11-12). Desecuritisation covers attempts to restore ontological security by directly engaging with securitised identities and overcoming the securitisation by resolving past conflicts, leading to a “normalised” political debate (Ibid, 12). Asecuritisation implies normalised political debate where identity is ambiguous and complicated and thus does not require exceptionalism or construction of the “other” (Ibid). Therefore, when existential threat is not constructed, identity is not threatened, and the sense of ontological insecurity is not triggered.

In this thesis, the ontological security theory is used to deepen the analysis of the possible securitisation of discourse around migration in Hungary following the 2015 and 2022 refugee influxes. While analysing the statements, possible instances of a heightened sense of ontological insecurity are identified. Following the statements analysis, utilising the three-way response approach to ontological insecurity argued by Browning and Joenniemi, the researcher identifies whether or not the response of the public and the Hungarian government corresponds to any of the established approaches, offering greater insights into the securitisation effects.

3. Migration and securitisation in Central and Eastern Europe

A considerable amount of literature has been published on the role of migration in political discourses in various European countries, including Central and Eastern Europe. According to Stepper (2016), the governments of the Visegrad Four countries (Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary) succeeded in securitising the 2015 migration influx and immigration in general by emphasising the criminal events involving migrants – the New Year’s assaults on women in Cologne and the 2015 Paris terrorist attacks. In this securitisation, the connection between migration and terrorism was implied, which led to a change of views on safety risks among the population (Cvrtila et al., 2019).

Apart from the terrorism frame, the securitisation of migration can include framing it as a phenomenon that develops from ‘social collapse’ and wars, and thus, can bring instability and ethnic tensions to the host states (Ibrahim, 2005). That, in turn, can allow the governments to introduce radical and interventionist policies and lead to a change in the foreign agendas of states (Ibid). This has also been the case for the Visegrad Four states, where Braun (2020) argued that the V4 governments triggered securitised migration among the population by installing the fear of the open-door migration policy that, according to the governments, threatened individual, state and EU-level security. This kind of securitisation framing has allowed governments to pass restrictive migration-related legislation following the 2015 crisis, as a result of which migration has been viewed as a security issue rather than a humanitarian crisis in Central and Eastern Europe (Bauerová, 2018; Stepper, 2016).

Many scholars emphasise a greater tendency of right-wing populist leaders to securitise migration (Beck, 2017; Jaskulowski, 2019; Krzyżanowski, 2020; Lazaridis & Tsagkroni, 2015). Right-wing politicians focus their agendas on the prejudicial aspects of the population's beliefs and reinforce the framing of migrants and refugees as 'others', significantly contributing to migration securitisation (Bello, 2022). Some scholars also argue that right-wing populists are not the only ones that further xenophobic views and securitise migration, mainstream parties have also been found to engage in that (Frelak, 2017; Stefancik et al., 2021; Stojarová, 2018). According to Stojarová (2018: 32), until the 2015 refugee crisis, far-right populist parties in Central and Eastern Europe mainly focused on "anti-Roma, anti-Semitism, anti-communism, anti-establishment, and anti-NATO" matters. However, following the migration crisis, far-right parties started incorporating more and more anti-Muslim and anti-immigration rhetoric to appeal to their voters. The anti-Muslim and anti-immigration rhetoric was also adopted by the mainstream parties, which has significantly marginalised far-right parties and mainstreamed these populist views around the Visegrad Four region (Ibid). This change in rhetoric among the mainstream parties was explained by Frelak (2017), who argued that domestic electoral competition motivated the mainstream parties in Visegrad states to radicalise their rhetoric in order to catch more far-right voters and not let far-right parties win over the mainstream electorate.

Nevertheless, it is important not to overemphasise the ideological aspect of migration treatment in the Visegrad states. As according to some scholarly research (Nyíri, 2003; Card et al., 2005), views on migration in Central and Eastern are not solely ideologically motivated, and there is a significant difference in the levels of xenophobia in the region, just as among Western European states. Additionally, there is also a positive trend in social values related to xenophobia and intolerance in the V4 region, as public opinion has improved since the 90s, which could be attributed to the end of communism and greater European integration of the states (Szalai et al., 2017). According to Szalai et al. (2017: 26), higher hostility rates of the Visegrad Four countries can stem from "the lack of historical experience with migration and the socialist past", which reflects in both domestic and foreign policies.

Exploring the securitisation in more detail state by state, the framing of migration as moral panic and a securitised view of refugees started dominating the Slovakian political discourse after 2015 (Androvičová, 2016). Surprisingly, Stefancik et al. (2021: 1) found that there were “no significant differences among the relevant Slovak political parties” on the issue of migration, with all of them resorting to the populist practices of othering and drawing a dichotomy between “us” and “them”. In Poland, discriminatory practices of othering and exclusion rose to a new level after the 2015 migration crisis (Narkowicz, 2018). This has been most notably attributed to the othering of Muslims in Poland, where the ruling party presented all asylum seekers as Muslims and framed them as threats to national, cultural and social security by capitalising “on the already less welcoming Polish attitude towards Arab refugees” (Kabata & Jacobs, 2022: 12). The Czech Republic also followed the example of other Central and Eastern European states in ensuring the deterrence of asylum seekers from its borders by legitimising anti-refugee policies and depicting refugees as a security threat (Jelínková, 2019). This rhetoric, however, was evident in the discourse of various Czech political parties even before the 2015 migration wave and was framed as the issue of ‘illegality’ and the protection of the external borders of the EU (Krotký, 2019). A comparative study between the Czech Republic and Poland has concluded that following the 2015 migration crisis, a reversed (bottom-up) securitisation occurred in both states, where the population projected their anxieties regarding migration-related changes into the future, which intensified their fears (Bartoszewicz et al., 2022).

The case study of this research, Hungary, is often considered to be one of the most prominent examples of refugee othering and securitisation. Through government-funded media campaigns, Hungarian political elites constructed the discourse to frame “migrants as a threat to national security, irrespective of personal motivations” (Szalai & Göbl, 2015: 2). Bocskor (2018) analysed the framing used during the Hungarian government’s National Consultation campaign on immigration and terrorism in 2015 and concluded that immigration was framed as a security and economic threat in Hungary, merging together the image of regular and irregular migrants, refugees and terrorists.

Hungarian Prime Minister, *Viktor Orbán*, was one of the key framers of the anti-refugee discourse following the 2015 migration crisis in Europe (Egres, 2018). Among other securitising

actors, the far-right party Jobbik was sympathetic towards Islam at first but adopted more and more anti-Muslim narratives as it structured party cleavages according to morals rather than socioeconomics (Mareš & Havlík, 2016: 323). Moreover, the population's perceptions should also be taken into account, as even prior to the 2015 migration crisis, the Hungarian population was less open to the immigration of other religious and ethnic groups, which made them more prone to securitise migration after the crisis happened (Cichocki & Jabkowski, 2019: 33).

Additionally, it is important to note the *non-ideological factors* influencing Hungary's stance on migration. According to Stepper (2016), Hungary was not prepared for such a large number of refugees coming through the Western Balkans and faced challenges as one of the major entry points at the EU's external borders. The funding available under the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) could be used by the Member States to provide asylum seekers they receive with necessities; however, the long debates about its allocation and inability to reach a consensus on the relocation scheme have limited Hungary's options in terms of migration reception approach (Ibid). As a result, Hungary has become very cautious of migration and critical of the EU's inability to facilitate the proper distribution of funds and relocation of refugees, which led to further migration securitisation and intensification of anti-EU narratives.

All in all, the states of Central and Eastern Europe share *similar trends and frames of their political discourses around the 2015 migration crisis*. The key actors of discourse reproduction were right-wing media outlets and politicians, and in some instances – Poland and Hungary – the securitising media campaigns were funded and run by the acting governments (Goździak & Márton, 2018). These discourses led to a noticeable increase in islamophobia and xenophobia, and the asylum seekers were described as invaders rather than humans escaping conflict and seeking safety (Szalai & Göbl, 2015; Thorleifsson, 2017). In terms of party politics, certain populist and anti-Islamic tendencies already existed among the far-right parties in Central and Eastern Europe, and those have only increased significantly following the migration crisis, with the mainstream parties adopting similar rhetorics after 2015 (Frelak, 2017; Stojarová, 2018).

CHAPTER III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter is aimed at describing and justifying the chosen research design for the thesis – a qualitative interpretive study, which focuses on the analysis and comparison of political discourse around the two migration crises in Hungary. For the research methods, the justification of the chosen method, critical discourse analysis, is presented, followed by a discussion of the alternative research method, detailed description of data sources and data collection process. In the data collection section, the researcher explains what the sources of empirical data are and based on what criteria the analysed statements were narrowed down and chosen. Finally, the chapter is closed with a presentation of research limitations, where the author notes positionality and reflexivity as tools to deal with potential research biases, discusses language limitations and ways to tackle them, and provides insights on the possible issues related to different time frames of the materials analysed.

1. Research Design

This thesis is designed as a 2-n paired comparison study of the political discourses concerning the 2015 and 2022 migration crises in Hungary. The author aims to investigate to what extent, if at all, both discourses reproduce the notions of migration securitisation and how the theory of securitisation can explain the differences in the discourses. To achieve that, the discourses about migration and refugees framed by the main securitising actor in Hungary – Prime Minister Viktor Orbán – are analysed and compared using critical discourse analysis (further expanded on later in the chapter). Additionally, the data from public opinion polls is analysed to explore if there have been signs of “successful” or “full” securitisation of migration, which would, according to the theoretical framework, imply a degree of public legitimacy and agreement with securitising claims, and what the effects of such securitisation can be.

The 2015 case of the migration crisis has been extensively studied across the disciplines, with various theories applied to explain the Hungarian discourse and approach to the migration issue (see more in Chapter 1). However, the escalation of the Russian-Ukrainian war in 2022 provides a new context to the discourse and makes it possible to draw a comparison between the two migration influxes. This work contributes to the existing research on Hungary’s politics and

political climate, migration in Hungary and, more broadly, in Central and Eastern Europe, and a growing body of literature on security studies and securitisation.

Research Puzzle

The research puzzle of this paper aims to compare how similar events in one state (the inflows of a high number of refugees in 2015 and 2022 in Hungary) with the same securitising actor (Viktor Orban) were framed and securitised. Addressing the justification for the research design, only two cases were chosen for the analysis due to a number of reasons. First of all, as discussed earlier, the conditions (both cases are large migration influxes), location (both happen in Hungary) and actors (Viktor Orban is the Prime Minister in both cases) are the same; however, the outcomes of the two are hypothesised to be different. Therefore, in order to explore and explain this difference, the two cases have been chosen. Secondly, if we decide to expand on the research and move beyond Hungary to add more states into the comparison of migration securitisation, significant constraints arise. The main constraint is the time constraint since by adding more states, the data to analyse would grow significantly, and in the framework of the Master's thesis, there are not enough resources for such deep analysis. Additionally, critical discourse analysis requires a deep understanding of the social and political context in which the discourse takes place, as well as the roles and power relations between different actors (Wodak, 2002; Fairclough, 2003). In critical discourse analysis, it is essential to trace not only how the discourse is affected by the social structures but also how it frames and shapes the social and political context. Thus, adding an entirely different context to the comparison would make it considerably more difficult to properly utilise the research method and fully analyse the discourse.

Comparative study

Comparative studies cover a broad area of social science research and employ a multitude of methods to effectively study the similarities and differences between the cases. Comparative methods can involve case studies, small-N and large-N studies, where small-N studies are usually used to test a specific theory (or a part of it) and execute an in-depth investigation of a phenomenon (Halperin & Heath, 2020: 167). The author finds a 2-n paired comparison study suitable to the aim and the research questions identified since the comparison allows to examine

and explain if and why the securitisation occurred differently in two similar instances of migration in the same state and under the same government. By using the comparative method, it becomes possible to draw conclusions on if and why the political discourse around migration in Hungary has changed and how the social and political contexts of 2015 and 2022 have influenced the discourses, respectively.

Interpretive research design

To address the research questions posed in this paper, the author utilises the interpretive research design paradigm. According to Halperin and Heath (2020: 5), interpretivism argues that scientific knowledge can be gained through interpreting the meanings behind people's actions and ideas. It relies on people's own interpretations of the motivations that shape their behaviours and the external world (Porta & Keating, 2008: 26). Therefore, human actions and behaviours cannot be predicted or explained following law-like generalisations or strong causal relationships (Halperin & Heath, 2020: 5). The interpretive paradigm was chosen for this research since it allows to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomena without relying on causative links or broad generalisations. The object of the analysis – the speeches and statements of Viktor Orban – is inherently an interpretative piece of data for which the quantitative techniques and variable dependency used in positivism cannot be applied in order to answer the research questions. Therefore, interpretivism is a more suitable paradigm for this research as it seeks to analyse and compare if and how the discourses around migration were securitised in 2015 and 2022 in Hungary and what can explain the differences in the securitisation of the two cases.

Constructivism as the main theoretical approach

As mentioned in the previous chapter, social constructivism is used as the main theoretical approach in this thesis. Social constructivism implies that human behaviour and, therefore, politics and state relations are shaped mainly by ideational factors, contrary to the assumptions of realism and rational choice theory (Finnemore & Sikkink, 2001: 391). The ideational factors are based on collectively created and held ideas such as language, knowledge, rules and are intersubjective (Barnet, 2018: 88). While some objects exist independently from the human interpretation and usually have a single meaning (such as natural objects and phenomena), others rely on subjective ideas and can have different meanings based on the ways they are constructed

(Ibid, 89). In that sense, constructivism relies on the assumption that social phenomena and actors, such as migration and refugees, are determined by the social context in which they exist (Finnemore & Sikkink, 2001: 394). In this thesis, constructivism helps to explore and understand how the 2015 and 2022 refugee crises were framed as security issues and how the social context where the securitising actors exist shaped the securitisation.

2. Research Methods

The **research questions** posed in this dissertation are:

1. To what extent, if at all, have the two instances of refugee crises – the 2015 inflow from the Middle East and the 2022 inflow from Ukraine – been securitised by the Hungarian government, and what narratives dominated the discourses?
2. What are the effects of these possible securitisations on Hungarian public opinion and are there indications of successful securitisation of migration in Hungary?

To answer these questions, the research combines two sources of secondary data – official statements of Viktor Orban and the social polling conducted in Hungary – concerning the 2015 and 2022 migration crises. To analyse the statements of the Hungarian Prime Minister, critical discourse analysis (hereinafter – CDA) is used.

Many researchers have utilised CDA to assess social and political discourses, including the discourse around migration in European states (Griebel & Vollmann, 2019; Bączkowska, 2019; Khosravini, 2010). For example, Bocskor (2018) used CDA to explore the Hungarian government's National Consultation campaign on immigration and terrorism in 2015 and concluded that immigration was framed as a security and economic threat in Hungary, merging together the image of regular and irregular migrants, refugees and terrorists. Krotofil and Motak (2018) utilised CDA to examine the perception and discourse of migration in the Polish Catholic Church, whose representatives are found to be polarised on the issue, with some following the stance of the ruling party.

As a method, CDA employs various instruments to explore discourse. The central point of critical discourse analysis is how the text is affected by the context it exists in and vice versa, implying that language is a social practice (Wodak, 2002; Fairclough, 2018). CDA relies on the

idea that language and discourse are never neutrally produced and are always affected by the social and political reality surrounding them (Boréus & Bergström, 2017). Additionally, the acts of discourse, such as statements and text, are not only influenced by the context – the social world – but also actively frame and construct it (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002: 57). The part “critical” in CDA focuses on the impact that power dynamics and inequality have on the discourse (Ibid, 58).

There are several aspects worth noting to explain why critical discourse analysis is suitable for researching the proposed topic. Firstly, CDA is an interdisciplinary approach that allows the integration of multiple fields of science to analyse social phenomena and establish the connection between text analysis and social practices (Wodak, 2002; Wodak & Meyer, 2015). Secondly, CDA takes into account power relations and socio-historical context, which is an essential part of analysing statements of governmental officials (Wodak, 2007). Finally, one of CDA’s practical advantages is its accessible applicability for a junior researcher, which makes it a suitable research method for the Master’s level dissertation.

Fairclough’s CDA approach

This thesis utilises Norman Fairclough’s approach to critical discourse analysis. According to Fairclough and Chouliaraki (2010), discourse is conceptualised as not merely something that is affected by social structures but also as something that forms and reproduces those structures. Fairclough conceptualises discourse as social action and emphasises that power relations are discursive in his CDA approach (Fairclough, 2003). In terms of methodology, the text-driven analysis is the main focus of his approach since it unites “detailed linguistic analysis” and “macro-level analysis of social structures and relations” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002: 59). Just linguistic analysis is insufficient to show the interconnection between the discourse and the context, so the macro-level analysis is required to understand the power dynamics and connections between social structures and discourses (Ibid).

Fairclough outlines his perspective on CDA in the form of a three-dimensional model based on the idea that every discourse is a text (description), a discursive practice (interpretation), and a social practice (explanation) at the same time (Fairclough, 1989, 1992, 2013). In the description

dimension, linguistics levels of texts such as grammar, vocabulary, and textual structures are analysed. Under interpretation, the inter-textual and social context, that is the understandings and meanings of the specific linguistics choices, are taken into account. And under the last dimension, explanation, the linguistics choices of the text are considered in the relationship to power, ideology and social structures – the core of CDA (Fairclough, 1989). Following this model, any discourse can be divided into the three dimensions and analysed together or separately. The aim of the three-dimensional model is to provide methodological and analytical framework for CDA (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). In the framework of this thesis, the analysis of the second and third levels of Fairclough's model is executed. The first dimension cannot be fully analysed as the materials used in the thesis are translations of original speeches in Hungarian; therefore, it does not make sense to go into a deep analysis of textual structures of the translated pieces. And, additionally, the research is executed in the realm of social and political sciences, not linguistics, so a separate focus on that is deemed unnecessary.

Alternative methods for securitisation research

Another method that is used for assessing qualitative data, such as statements and interviews, is Qualitative Content Analysis (here and after – QCA). The central focus of QCA is on the words and the topics discussed, with an overarching focus on the general structure of the communication (Mayring, 2004), while CDA examines the relationships between the participants, the context, the power dynamics, and the social and cultural norms that shape the discourse.

The reason this thesis chose not to utilise qualitative content analysis is due to the limitations of the method and its focus primarily on the factual nature of the statements without taking into account the socio-political context (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Furthermore, QCA is a positivist approach that relies on the systematisation of the content and the construction of links and patterns, which does not correspond to the interpretivist nature of this research (Ibid). Content analysis limits the researcher's scope to verbal acts and entirely omits their discursive power to influence the social world. Therefore, in order to fully explore the discourse, execute a comprehensive analysis and take into account the social and political context of the phenomena being studied, critical discourse analysis was chosen.

By utilising the outlined research method, this thesis applies securitisation theory to identify, explore and compare possible securitisation (or its lack) of political discourse around migration and asylum seekers in Hungary. By using CDA, the researcher focuses on the words used to describe migration and refugees and how these words can appeal to the sense of security and safety of the referent objects. Furthermore, CDA allows the researcher to not only focus on verbal statements but also take into account the context in which they were made, which facilitates a deeper understanding of the phenomena and allows for greater explanatory power. The context assessment for both discourses is presented in Chapter IV and takes into account key social and political events that shaped the migration discourse in Hungary in the analysed chronological periods.

3. Data collection

For this research, in the first part, the official statements of Viktor Orban, Prime Minister of Hungary since 2010, have been analysed using the critical discourse analysis method discussed earlier. The main source of statements from the Hungarian officials is the governmental website <https://kormany.hu/>. From 2014 until 2020, it had its own English version on the domain, which has now been archived but still accessible for viewing at <https://2015-2019.kormany.hu/en>. In the section [Government](#), it is possible to access the Prime Minister's speeches between 2014 and 2020 in English, so this was the main data source for statements for the period of 2015-2018. In total, there are 101 pages of statements, with most of them in English and some in other languages. In 2020, the government website moved the English-language version to a separate domain at <https://abouthungary.hu/>, which also has official translations of statements of Viktor Orban from 2018 onwards, 24 pages in total. Therefore, the statements concerning the 2022 crisis have been taken from the second website.

For the analysis of the 2015 migration crisis, the statements starting from the spring of 2015, when the first considerably larger waves of refugees started to arrive, until the 2018 parliamentary elections in Hungary in April 2018, were analysed. This large time span is justified by the need to fully understand the context, which is an essential part of critical discourse analysis. The political discourse around migration in Hungary culminated in the 2018

parliamentary elections, where Viktor Orban and Fidesz got re-elected with a significant voter increase. The discourse and policies concerning the 2015 migration crisis are considered to have influenced the victory significantly by many scholars (Bajomi-Lázár, 2019; Bíró-Nagy, 2022; Waterbury, 2020); therefore, to meaningfully explore the issue and fully interpret the discourse, the analysis of the 2015 migration crisis has been conducted in the April 2015 – April 2018 time frame.

For the 2022 case, all statements starting from 24 February 2022, which marked the escalation of the Russian-Ukrainian war and the full-scale invasion triggering large refugee influxes, were analysed. Since the war is ongoing, Ukrainian people keep coming to Hungary and other EU states, so all statements can be deemed eligible for analysis. This part of the research was being conducted during April – May 2023, so the timeframe for the 2022 crisis is February 2022 – May 2023.

In order to identify the appropriate statements on the website, the keywords of “migration”, “migrant”, “migrants”, “refugee” and “refugees” have been chosen. These words represent the main recurring actors of the discourse, so they efficiently narrow down the number of statements. For the first period of analysis, April 2015 – April 2018, 102 statements featuring the keywords have been identified. For the second period of analysis, 24 February 2022 – 31 May 2023, 30 statements featuring the keywords have been identified. After this, all statements have been manually checked to include “sufficient information for critical discourse analysis”, which, in this research, is understood as having enough information to perform an analysis on the second and third levels by Fairclough’s CDA model – text as a discursive practice (interpretation) and a social practice (explanation) (Fairclough 1992, 2013). In practical terms the analysis on the second and third levels requires enough textual information to create a context, so not only one-two sentences featuring one of the keywords without elaborating, but ideally multiple sentences or a paragraph discussing the issues of migration and refugees. The researcher is aware that manually pre-selecting statements comes with a risk of researcher’s bias; however, it was a necessary step to identify materials fully eligible for the analysis.

Out of the 102 for 2015 – 2018 and 30 statements for 2022 – 2023 analysed, 90 and 18 respectively contained sufficient information for critical discourse analysis. This is a very contrasting number, but this difference was to be expected as the chronological areas that the two time periods cover are significantly different. Since more statements for the second period cannot be sourced, the researcher decided to narrow down the data sample for the first period to 18 to maintain the feasibility of the research and have a more comparable set of data. To do so, a random selection using an online randomiser was performed to avoid the selection and researcher's bias. Therefore, 36 (18 and 18 respectively) statements made by Viktor Orban were analysed in the research. A full list of analysed statements is available as Annex 1.

The researcher finds it appropriate to limit the data sources to the two official government websites mentioned earlier since they contain verified and official translations of statements and are there to communicate the position of the Hungarian government to the local and international public. The websites have an appropriate number of statements covering various communication channels and occasions (translations of social media posts, speeches, meetings, comments, etc.), thus able to fully illustrate the discourse.

For the second part of the research, to explore indications of possible success of securitisation in Hungary, the researcher analysed the data from the social polling conducted during the established time frames. To select suitable data polls, three criteria were taken into account – the coverage of the issues of migration and refugees, polling methodology, and reliability of the agency. Following the outlined criteria, 15 suitable polls have been identified by the international agencies *Eurobarometer*, *Pew Research Center*, *Ipsos*, think-tank *GLOBSEC*, Mercator Forum for Migration and Democracy (*MIDEM*) as well as a local Hungarian agencies *Társadalomkutató* and *Századvég Gazdaságkutató*. Eurobarometer, Pew Research Center and Ipsos are independent agencies which have a long history of conducting independent and high-quality research. GLOBSEC is an independent and non-partisan think-tank based in Central Europe focused on conducting research activities on foreign and security policies, while MIDEM is an international research centre based in Germany which focuses specifically on migration research. Among the Hungarian agencies, Társadalomkutató mainly conducts electoral, marketing and social polling, and Századvég is known to be associated with Hungarian government and thus, formulate their

surveys with a pro-government bias (CMDS 2013; Pivarnyik, 2018; Sipos, 2018). In any case, when assessing data, possible biases were taken into account by the researcher. It is important to note that using a variety of sources with different possible biases and political leanings can be considered a research strength and offer a balanced perspective when keeping in those biases in check. A full list of social polls is Annex 2.

In this research, it is important to recognise that the findings obtained via the analysis of the social polling data provide results showcasing *correlation rather than causality* since it is not possible to establish a direct causative link between the two issues. However, by studying the effects of discourse securitisation via the social polls, it becomes possible to gain limited insights into the discourse influence on the public and use the securitisation theory fully.

4. Limitations

The main limitation of the study is the subjectivity and possible researcher bias in the content selection process for the critical discourse analysis. To counter it, a thorough literature review has been conducted to conceptualise the securitisation and ontological security phenomena, and the most suitable conceptualisations for this thesis have been outlined. Nevertheless, it is crucial to recognise that during the data selection, the researcher relied on her own judgement to select appropriate content and analyse it. This, in turn, can lead to possible researcher and selection biases. In an attempt to minimise this risk, the researcher utilised internal reflexivity and positionality at all stages of the analysis. Reflexivity stands for “researcher’s awareness of the influence they are having on what they are studying and, simultaneously, of how the research process is affecting them” (Mackieson et al., 2019: 967). The aim of reflexivity, however, is not to become fully neutral and objective, as it is often impossible when engaging with qualitative research methods, but to highlight the researcher’s contribution and attitude at all stages of the interpretive research process (Johnson & Waterfield, 2004; Fischer, 2009). Positionality refers to “an individual’s world view and the position they adopt about a research task and its social and political context” (Holmes, 2020: 1) and can influence the design, process and results of the research (Bourke, 2014). In this study, positionality revolves mainly around the researcher’s identity as it is closely tied to the topic of the thesis, making the researcher reflect on different aspects of it and the ways it can influence the research findings.

The researcher is Ukrainian and has been living abroad since 2021, before the start of Russia's full-scale invasion. However, her family, relatives and friends are in Ukraine, which combined with her own lived experience, can project a certain framing on the research. Additionally, the researcher lived in Hungary during her studies, which can also impact the way the research is approached and form some underlying opinions. Thus, to tackle that, the researcher used reflexivity and positionality throughout the research process by constantly considering how her own identity affects the research and analysing how it might influence the analysis and the data selection.

Another possible shortcoming of the thesis is a varying time period for the discourse analysis of the two cases. The time frame covered in the analysis of the 2015 migration crisis in Hungary is 3 years (2015-2018) since it is essential to trace the discourse development until its ultimate culmination in the 2018 parliamentary elections, where the topic of migration was highly scrutinised. However, for the second case, the data has been available for shortly over 1 year, which is explained by the ongoing nature of the Russian-Ukrainian war and the following migration crisis. This asymmetry can spark a discussion of whether or not it is methodologically right to compare the cases with such different time frames. In this sense, the researcher appeals to the novelty of the study and the importance of analysing significant political events during their development. Even though it is unclear at this point when the war will end and what its implications will be, the comparison of migration securitisation between 2015 and 2022 can provide valuable insights into the change of migration-related discourses and policies in the EU.

Finally, the last limitation of this study is the researcher's language abilities. The researcher is fluent in Ukrainian, Russian and English; however, her Hungarian skills are limited and do not allow her to engage in critical discourse analysis as it requires full comprehension and deep understanding of the language of the materials. Therefore, only official government-issued translations of the statements are analysed. On the one hand, it reduces the scope of available materials and introduces a certain selection bias on the side of the publishing source. On the other hand, government websites are there to communicate and create political discourse in essence; thus, the statements published there are fully eligible for critical discourse analysis.

CHAPTER IV. SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT OF THE HUNGARIAN DISCOURSES AROUND MIGRATION

In this chapter, the social and political context for each discourse, featuring the key political events in Hungary and the EU, is analysed. This is an essential part of following the method of the research – critical discourse analysis – since it analyses textual information beyond its literal meaning and takes into account the socio-political context of the statements.

4.1. Social and political context of the 2015 – 2018 migration discourse

The social and political context of the discourse around migration and refugees in Hungary from April 2015 till April 2018 is defined by the three main events – the 2015 migration crisis in Europe, the Hungarian migrant quota referendum held on 2 October 2016, and the Hungarian parliamentary elections held on 8 April 2018.

4.1.1. The 2015 migration crisis in Europe

The 2015 migration crisis in Europe has been briefly mentioned in the Introduction of the research, but requires further discussion to fully reflect on its contribution to the local political discourse. Following a series of armed conflicts and economic collapses across the Middle East and Africa during the 2000-2010's, an unprecedented number of refugees started arriving on the EU borders in 2015 (Barlai et al., 2017: 13). According to the Eurostart (2016), over 1.3 million asylum seekers entered Europe (through EU and non-EU entry points), the number double to the rates of 2014.

Since a lot of migration routes involved crossing the Mediterranean Sea, countries located in that area experienced an especially intense refugee influx. Countries such as Greece, Italy and Croatia became the main points of entry to the EU after crossing the sea, while the geographical locations of Macedonia and Serbia made them “a corridor” for refugees to reach the Schengen zone entry points after Greece, which was the border between Serbia and Hungary (See Figure 1, European Parliamentary Research Service, 2016). Therefore, Hungary became one of the main transit countries for asylum seekers looking to enter the European Union through the Balkan

route, and by the end of summer 2015, more than 390,000 asylum seekers crossed the Serbian-Hungarian border (Rokicka, 2021: 202).

Combined with a series of tragic crossings resulting in many casualties among the refugees trying to get to Europe, the EU bodies started working on the procedure to allocate refugees among EU Member States and ease the burden on the entry countries (Cantat & Rajaram, 2019: 182). In the meantime, following the increased migration flow from the European external borders to the European Union borders, discussion regarding the re-installment of internal border checkpoints across the Schengen Area to control the refugees allocation was started (Stepper, 2016; Nugent, 2017). A number of countries, including Hungary, temporarily imposed border controls and started discussions on the introduction of other “safety measures”, such as building a border-long fence and deploying additional border control troops (Cantat & Rajaram, 2019: 185).

Figure 1 – Migration arrivals in the EU in 2015

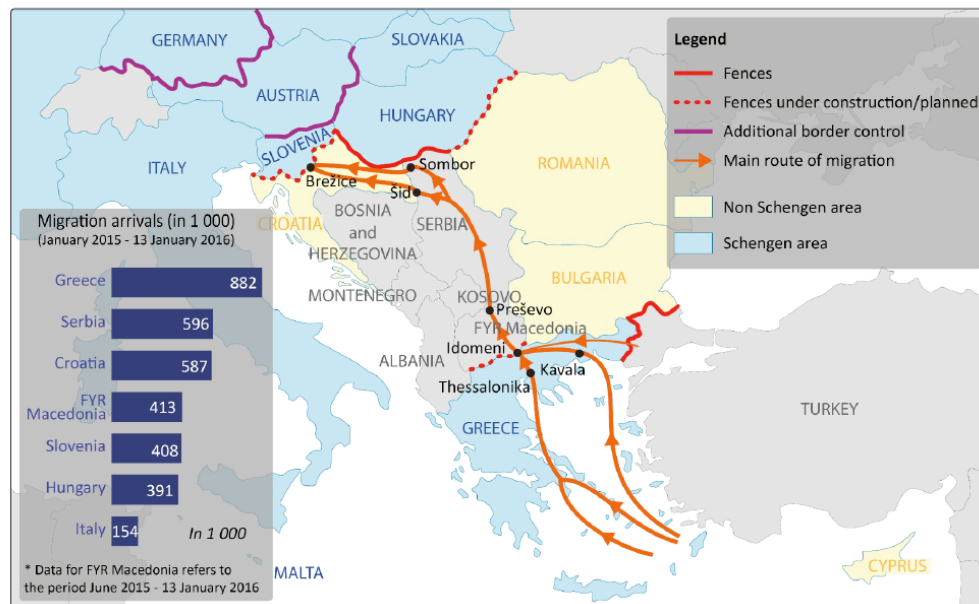


Figure 1. [Migration arrivals in the EU in 2015](#) (European Parliamentary Research Service, 2016)

Following the proposal of the European Commission’s Agenda on Migration, the talks on the EU-wide relocation and resettlement scheme began (Bauerová, 2018). Resettlement concerned “the safe and legal transfer of people in difficult situations from third countries to the European Union” (Pachocka, 2016: 115) and under relocation a mechanism of relocating asylum seekers

from the most affected Member States to other countries across the European Union was proposed (Ibid). A two-year resettlement plan was passed in late July 2015, according to which, 22 000 asylum seekers would be transferred from the external EU borders to the European Union (Ibid).

The European Agenda on Migration and the resettlement scheme were met with a strong opposition by the Eastern European Member States, Hungary being no exception (Bauerová, 2018; Niemann & Zaun, 2018). In mid-June 2015, the Hungarian government announced that they were planning to build a 4 meter high fence at the border with Serbia to halt illegal migration (Kingsley, 2015, The Guardian). By mid-September 2015, the border fence had been finished, stretching for over 175 km along the Serbian-Hungarian border (Samuels & Birnbaum, Washington Post, 2015).

Among other measures, the Hungarian government started an anti-migration billboard and media campaign in June 2015, the aim of which was to discourage asylum seekers from entering Hungary (Bauerová, 2018: 106). Despite framing it as targeting refugees, the main target audience of the campaign was the local Hungarian population since the posters were made in Hungarian with slogans such as “If you come to Hungary, you need to abide our laws/respect our culture” and “you cannot take away the jobs of Hungarians” (Szalai & Göbl, 2015: 24; Bajomi-Lázár, 2019). Moreover, the Hungarian government announced that they would attempt to change Hungarian legislation to defy European law and not accept the mandatory refugee quota system (Bauerová, 2018: 107). In order to legalise these changes, the government announced that a national referendum would be held, which brings us to the second notable event influencing the context of the political discourse around migration.



Figure 2. “Government information. IF YOU COME TO HUNGARY, YOU MUST RESPECT OUR LAWS! National consultation on migration and terrorism” (Bajomi-Lázár, 2019).

4.1.2. Hungarian migrant quota referendum

The second key event in shaping the socio-political context of the discourse is the Hungarian migrant quota referendum held on 2 October 2016. The nationwide referendum was put on the agenda by Viktor Orban as “*a Hungarian solution to the migration crisis*” and an opportunity for the Hungarian population to express their opinion on whether to accept a resettling quota system proposed by the EU (Furko, 2019: 344). As mentioned above, prior to the referendum, an *extensive media campaign* securitising migration took place across Hungary (Szalai & Göbl, 2015). The referendum featured the following question: “Do you agree that the European Union should have the power to impose the compulsory settlement of non-Hungarian citizens in Hungary without the consent of the National Assembly of Hungary?” (Furko, 2019: 344).

The voter turnout of the referendum was equal to slightly over 44%, and out of those who voted, 98% voted against accepting the quota scheme (Komaromi, 2017: 77). However, due to the low voter turnout of less than 50% of the eligible population, the referendum was deemed void (Ibid). Nevertheless, both the opposition and the government considered the referendum a success, with Viktor Orban commenting that even though it was not valid in legal terms, it was “*valid in political terms*” since it received a 98% response rejecting the migration quota (Furko, 2019: 358). As a result of the referendum, the Hungarian government used its “political success” to legitimise further migration securitisation and became even more emboldened to pursue a hard-lining migration policy (Juhász, 2017; Rokicka, 2021). Additionally, the campaigning

around the referendum strengthened the position of Viktor Orban and Fidesz since the popularity of the party reached 49% following the event (Furko, 2019: 358).

4.1.3. The 2018 parliamentary elections in Hungary

The third main event that influenced the political discourse for the chosen time frame is the Hungarian parliamentary elections held on 8 April 2018. This event is particularly important to explore since the analysis is focused on Viktor Orban, the Prime Minister of Hungary since 2010, who, therefore, had been actively campaigning for re-election during the analysis period in 2017 – 2018. The election campaign of Fidesz was heavily focused on migration issues, with the frames of “protecting Hungary”, “protecting Christianity/our culture/our values” and “the fight against Brussels” dominating the political rhetoric (Bajomi-Lázár, 2019; Bíró-Nagy, 2022: 406). The pre-campaign rhetoric was heightened by two National Consultations conducted in 2017. The first campaign – “Let’s Stop Brussels!” – was focused on attacking the supposedly pro-migration EU politicians and institutions, accusing them of ruining the European ways of life and exposing Europe to the “migrant invasion” (Bíró-Nagy, 2022: 411). The second campaign concerned more the domestic Hungarian affairs with a focus on George Soros – a Hungarian-American businessman and philanthropist. Soros was accused of making a plan to resettle migrants from the Middle East and Africa to Hungary, thus turning the country into an ‘immigrant nation’ (Ibid). As the result of the campaign, many civil society actors, such as pro-migration NGOs, have been accused of being “foreign agents” and “serving foreign agendas” in Hungary. In the National Consultations, the questions were written in a suggestive manner, hinting to the ‘right’ answer, which was always framed according to the government’s position (Előd, 2017 quoted in Bajomi-Lázár, 2019: 622). The results of the Consultations, even though having no binding power or direct influence on legislation, were used in government communications to legitimise further securitisation and refer to “the will of the people” in decision-making (Ibid).

All in all, the current scholarly research suggests that the election campaign for the 2018 elections framed migration and refugees as a securitised and highly sensitive issue for domestic and foreign affairs (Cantat & Rajaram 2019; Bajomi-Lázár, 2019; Bíró-Nagy, 2022). The campaign, therefore, cemented the idea of the differences between “Hungarian land” and

“Hungarian path/solution” – a homogeneous nation-state with dominating religion and country, the goal of the current Hungarian government, and an “immigrant country” – a Brussels/Western elites idea of having a mixed, “resettled” European society with prominent Muslim communities and “declining” Christianity and local cultures. All the campaigning “efforts” yielded great results for Viktor Orban: out of 199 seats in the Hungarian Parliament, Fidesz-KDNP coalition won 117 and 16 seats (66.8%), 133 seats in total, securing a constitutional supermajority, followed by far-right Jobbik with 26 seats (19.06%) (BBC News, 2022). The general turnout was high – 70.14% – indicating a high public interest in the election (Ibid).

4.2. Social and political context of the 2022 – 2023 migration discourse

In the same manner as in the analysis of the 2015 – 2018 political discourse, it is essential to outline the main events influencing the 2022 – 2023 discourse around migration and refugees in Hungary – the Russian-Ukrainian war and the subsequent refugee influx and the 2022 parliamentary elections.

4.2.1. The Russian-Ukrainian war

The beginning of the second discourse around migration and refugees in Hungary is coined by the escalation of the Russian-Ukrainian war, the history of which was briefly outlined in the Introduction. In this section, the focus is placed on the influence of the war on the political discourse in Hungary. In terms of numbers, the Ukrainian refugee influx is much higher compared to the 2015 one, since as of May 2023, over 3 million Ukrainians had entered Hungary (UNHCR 2023). However, for the overwhelming majority of them, Hungary is not the final destination, but a transit country, similar to the situation in 2015. Out of the 3 million asylum seekers that crossed into Hungary, only a little over 36 thousand are registered for temporary protection which allows them to access refugee housing, social benefits, employment, etc. (UNHCR 2023; Kyriazi, 2022). Among other Central and Eastern European states, Hungary is the lowest country host of registered refugees relative to its population and in absolute terms (Kyriazi, 2022: 3).



Figure 3. [Ukraine Refugee Situation: Hungary](#) (UNHCR, 2023)

Bearing in mind these circumstances and technical similarities with the 2015 refugee crisis (in terms of numbers of asylum seekers and Hungary being a transit state), Orbán’s government was posed with two challenges – in domestic and international politics. On the domestic side, Viktor Orbán needed to elaborate a position towards refugees and migration in the highly exclusionist discourse that was created after the 2015 crisis while campaigning for the parliamentary elections planned for April 2022 (Kopper et al., 2022: 101). Additionally, the Prime Minister had to balance the narrative spawning in Hungary around the analogy of the 1956 revolution and the war against Ukraine in order to maintain relationships with Russia (Ibid). In terms of foreign politics, the Hungarian government also aimed to continue balancing between “the East” and “the West” (Ibid).

In order to not compromise the relationships with Russia and maintain the anti-Brussels narratives promoted over the years, Viktor Orbán’s government blamed the EU elites on pushing the block into economic crisis by deciding to impose sanctions on Russia and considering terminating oil and gas contracts (Fazekas & Korkut, 2023). These measures were justified by the protection of Hungary, claiming that implementing them would put an “atomic bomb” on the Hungarian economy, making one question if it is, in fact, due to Hungary’s high reliance on Russia’s gas, or an attempt to keep balancing between the ‘two sides’ (Kopper et al., 2022: 105).

4.2.2. The 2022 parliamentary elections in Hungary

Similarly to the 2018 parliamentary elections, the securitisation and fear mongering among the population played a considerable role in securing Fidesz's victory in 2022. According to the current state of research, this time around, the Hungarian government focused on capitalising on the general anxiety around the war and the fear of Hungary being dragged into the conflict. For example, research by Kopper, Szalai and Góra (2023) suggests that the state media campaign portrayed the opposition as “war mongers” who would make Hungary join the war the next day after winning the elections. Additionally, the Hungarian government put efforts in building an image for themselves as “protectors of the Hungarian nation and families” by claiming to stay out of the Russian-Ukrainian war (Fazekas & Korkut, 2023: 4). By choosing to be ‘neutral’ and maintain business relationships with Russia despite its aggression against Ukraine and EU’s general unity on sanctions and military aid for Ukraine, the Hungarian government claimed to not only protect the Hungarian families, but also “conservative values and the energy price caps” (Ibid).

During the election, Orban’s opponents, Hungarian left-leaning opposition, were linked to other ‘enemies’ and issues dominating the Hungarian political discourse – corruption and incompetence of Brussels elites, domestic actors being foreign agents and serving their interests, and the general decline/downfall of the collective West (Kopper et al., 2022: 104). Following the pre-existing anti-EU narratives, a part of the government-leaning media condemned the war as being provoked by the US and Ukraine, questioning Zelensky’s political figure and the legitimacy of the Ukrainian government (Fazekas & Korkut, 2023: 4; BBC News, 2022). The attempts of the opposition to reject these accusations and change the general narrative were not effective (Fazekas & Korkut, 2023: 4).

Just as in 2018, Fidesz-KDNP coalition won the elections with an overwhelming majority, a constitutional supermajority, managing to secure 2 extra seats in the parliament (Pawlak & Than, 2022). In his campaign, Viktor Orban “combined populism and crisis talk” (Kopper et al., 2022: 104) by invoking the fears of being dragged into the Russian-Ukrainian war among the electorate, choosing a (once again) Hungarian path and trying to balance between Hungary’s

commitments as a member of the EU and NATO and reliance on Russia's resources. However, very little is known regarding the role of the 2022 and, possibly, 2015 migration crises in the latest elections and the political rhetoric of Viktor Orban around refugees, thus making it a keen area to explore in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V. EMPIRICAL RESEARCH AND FINDINGS

This section of the thesis is the core chapter of the research which focuses on the synthesis of the empirical material studied, the theoretical framework of the research and the research methods.

This chapter is aimed at answering the **research questions** of the thesis:

1. To what extent, if at all, have the two instances of refugee crises – the 2015 inflow from the Middle East and the 2022 inflow from Ukraine – been securitised by the Hungarian government, and what narratives dominated the discourses?
2. What are the effects of these possible securitisations on Hungarian public opinion, and how do these securitisations influence the state of Hungarian ontological security?

To achieve this, firstly, the main discourse patterns from the gathered empirical material using critical discourse analysis are identified. In this section, the researcher provides an in-depth analysis of the political rhetoric of Viktor Orban around migration and refugees from the two time periods respectively, in which she relies on the theoretical frameworks of securitisation and ontological security presented in Chapter II.

Secondly, answering the first research question of the thesis, the comparison of the discourses around migration in Hungary from 2015 – 2018 and 2022 – 2023 is presented. In the comparison, the similarities and differences in the discourses are highlighted, and the researcher turns to the securitisation theory to explain the main findings from critical discourse analysis. Finally, following that, the securitisation effects on public opinion are analysed by presenting the relevant social polling, thus, answering the second research question of the thesis.

In this chapter, the securitisation theory, combining the aspects of the Copenhagen School and Balzacq's theory, is utilised as a theoretical framework for the critical discourse analysis. In the analysis, firstly, the main discourse patterns are identified. Furthermore, the *ontological security* theory is used to explore how bibliographical continuity and identity narratives of Hungary play into the securitisation of migration and refugees.

5.1. 2015 – 2018 main discourse patterns

5.1.1. Securitisation of identity

The first pattern identified in the political discourse around migration in Hungary is securitisation of refugee's identity. From the 19 statements (2015 – 2018 discourse) of Viktor Orban analysed in the research, 10 of them contained securitisation speech acts based on different traits of refugees' identity, mainly religion, culture, and values. In order to threaten the referent objects – Hungary, Hungarian people, Hungarian and, by extension, European culture – Viktor Orban used the concepts of “clash of civilizations” and “parallel societies”. For example, Viktor Orban provides his own definition of *multiculturalism* which is “the mixing of different civilizations” (2015) and warns against allowing the co-existence of “Islam, the Asian religions and Christianity side by side” (Ibid) in Hungary:

*“Multiculturalism means the mixing of different civilizations [...] Multiculturalism means the co-existence of people with different background civilizations – for example Islam, the Asian religions and Christianity side by side. We shall make every effort to save Hungary from this. We welcome investors, artists and scientists arriving from non-Christian countries, but we do not want to co-exist with those cultures in terms of large masses of their people.”*¹

However, a similar co-existence of European cultures and values is welcomed; moreover, it is something that needs to be defended, while the threat that the defence is needed from is not directly mentioned. The “right” and normatively democratic values are mentioned to describe Europe. At the same time, there is a clear antithesis between the European/Christian space (Hellas, Rome, Christianity) and the Eastern/Muslim space (Persia, Carthage, caliphate), implying that all the values mentioned before are only attributed to Europe, and not to the Middle East and Africa. (Viktor Orban, 2016):

*“we really do have something to defend: the co-existence of Europe's free, Christian and independent nations; shared roots, shared values, shared history, geographical and geopolitical interdependence; equality between the sexes; freedom and responsibility; fair competition and solidarity; pride and humility; justice and mercy. We are these things: this is Europe. Europe is Hellas, not Persia; it is Rome, not Carthage; it is Christianity, not a caliphate. When we say this we are not claiming that we are better, but that we are different.”*²

¹ Viktor Orban. 03.06.2015d, Interview with Prime Minister Viktor Orbán in “Napi Gazdaság”

² Viktor Orban. 28.02.2016d, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's State of the Nation Address

Similar securitising speech acts aimed at the protection of European identity, culture and sovereignty have been observed in more statements throughout the entire chronological time period of the analysis (Viktor Orban, 2017d; 2018c). Migrants/immigrants from “distant cultures”, meaning Islam, are presented as occupiers not respecting “our” (European) values and laws:

“Migrants arriving en masse from distant, distinct cultures are unable to integrate. The truth is that they don’t respect our culture, they don’t respect our laws, and they don’t respect our way of life; instead they make room for their own way of life, then suppress ours, and finally supplant ours with theirs. The issue of migrants is therefore an issue of identity as well as sovereignty.”³

“Furthermore, the majority of immigrants will arrive from the Islamic world. If everything continues in this way, then the cities of Europe will clearly have majority Muslim populations – and London will not be an outlier, but a pioneer. If things continue like this, our culture, our identity and our nations as we know them will cease to exist. Our worst nightmares will have become reality. The West will fall, as Europe is occupied without realising it. Will this be a vindication of the views of those who think that civilisations are not killed, but commit suicide?”⁴

In case when the cultures, ways of life and civilizations of refugees are not replacing the respective European issues, then Viktor Orban underlines the impossibility of integration and peaceful habitation together. For that, the Hungarian Prime Minister uses the term “parallel societies” – non-integrated communities of Muslim refugees and Christian host populations. In this narrative, the securitisation mechanism is also triggered by underlining: a) the increasing number of Muslims compared to Christians; b) the import of threatening and “non-European” values – inequality, hatred, lack of freedoms, anti-Semitism – with the arrivals of refugees. These distinct value sets create a moral dichotomy of sorts, and encourage the audience to associate refugees with hatred and inequality, while Hungary represents morally right values:

“If we mix with people coming from distant cultures who hold views on fundamental matters that are very different from ours, it will not result in the good life, but in parallel societies. We will be importing hatred, and we will be bringing anti-Semitism into Europe. Our views on the equality of men and women will come to an end, because we will not live in a world in which those principles are respected. Freedom of religion will also come to an end. So I believe that the mixing of certain cultures will not bring a superior, higher level of life, but will instead push us

³ Viktor Orban. 27.06.2017d, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s speech at the closing event for the National Consultation

⁴ Viktor Orban. 18.02.2018c, Viktor Orbán’s “State of the Nation” address

towards a society of much worse quality. Therefore it must be prevented – and that is something we can still do.”⁵

“The civilisation that stems from Christianity and the civilisation that stems from Islam are not compatible. They cannot mingle, but can only exist side by side. This is the situation in the Middle-East, and also in Europe. Our perceptions of the world are so different that they lead to parallel worlds. This is not a political issue, but the reality of life.”⁶

Additionally, a clear narrative of *us* – “the European Christian cultural community”, implying countries that were not ready to accept refugees, versus *them* – the “immigrant countries” – Western European states that accepted refugees, is present:

“The great old European nations in Western Europe have become immigrant countries. Day by day their cultural foundations are being transformed, the population raised in a Christian culture is declining, and the major cities are undergoing Islamisation [...] Whatever the reason, Western Europe has become an immigrant zone and a world of mixed populations; and, unlike central Europe, it is heading in the direction of a completely new development future.”⁷

“In the European Union today there are immigrant countries and non-immigrant countries. There are countries which accept, approve of, and at times even organise the resettlement into Europe of migrants, immigrants, new settlers, invading population groups.”⁸

The quote above is also a great example of securitising framing of refugees since Viktor Orban builds a synonymical word order starting with “migrants” and ending with “invading population groups”, essentially equalising these phrases.

“They are also within their rights to embrace large Muslim communities and to conclude that they are not worried by the experience that we – the European Christian cultural community – have so far been unable to integrate them, and that therefore parallel societies are coming into being in a number of European countries, with declining Christian and increasing Muslim ratios.”⁹

An array of the securitising speech acts capturing the securitisation of Islam, values of refugees and the implication of “us vs them” narrative can be found in the Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s State of the Nation Address from 28.02.2016, the first annual State of the Nation Address from the data poll. There Viktor Orban warns of the steady development of parallel societies, inability

⁵ Viktor Orban. 07.12.2017a, Interview with Prime Minister Viktor Orbán on Echo TV’s “Daily News” [“Napi aktuális”] Programme

⁶ Viktor Orban. 20.10.2016a, Interview with Prime Minister Viktor Orbán in the newspaper Passauer Neuer Presse

⁷ Viktor Orban. 18.02.2018c, Viktor Orbán’s “State of the Nation” address

⁸ Viktor Orban. 18.09.2017c, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s address in Parliament before the start of daily business

⁹ Viktor Orban. 21.09.2015c, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s reply in Parliament

of refugees to integrate in host countries and future tensions between the European and Muslim world:

“parallel societies has been evolving with steady persistence[...] The reality is that those coming here have no intention whatsoever of adopting our way of life, because they see their own as more valuable, stronger and more viable than ours. [...] The reality is that we are unable to use the Muslim world to solve the demographic problems of an undeniably shrinking and ageing Europe, without losing our way of life, our security and ourselves. The reality is that unless we put our foot down very soon, we will see an unmanageable level of tension between an ageing Europe and a young Muslim world, between a secular and faithless Europe and an increasingly fervent Islamic world, between a Europe which is unable to employ its own trained young people and an underqualified Muslim world.”¹⁰

Throughout the entire analysed time period, Viktor Orban remains consistent with his securitising speech acts and moves concerning identity. The identity of refugees is framed as foreign, invasive, threatening and potentially replacing the identity of Hungarians, while the Hungarian identity building is provided via linking it to the culture, Christianity, and “democratic” political values.

What is essential to mention in these statements from the standpoint of the securitisation theory is the sense of urgency and implied anxiety about the future that they have. These feelings are placed there in order to heighten the securitisation and highlight how close the threat is to the referent object. “*unless we put our foot down very soon*” is a direct implication of the need to resolve the security threat immediately. It also legitimises political actions taken to protect the referent object, which brings us back to the concepts of the politics of fear and emergency policies. Moreover, the discourse created around the identity, culture and religion of refugees aims to exploit Hungarian ontological insecurity by implying that if refugees are accepted into the Hungarian society, the biographical continuity and identity narratives of Hungary will be questioned: refugees will disrupt the regular ways of life, bring unacceptable values, and, over time, simply replace the declining host population, thus rewriting the essence of Hungary and Europe.

¹⁰ Viktor Orban. 28.02.2016d, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s State of the Nation Address

5.1.2. Securitisation of border protection and state security

The second overarching narrative of the first time period analysed is the “migrant invasion” and the need for protection of a) the Hungarian borders, b) Hungary, c) the EU, d) Europe. It was decided to separate this narrative from the protection of identity and culture. Even though some quotes can refer to the protection of identity and civilization, the physical protection of the state is the main theme. In that sense, the securitisation emphasis is shifted from the cultural and religious “threat” to the number of refugees and the illegal entry into the country and the EU:

*“I propose that we should first protect our borders, and then the time will come when we can no longer avoid the great debate on deportation back to the country of registration.”*¹¹

*“We have succeeded in rallying the majority behind the effort to attain important goals; and on the most important issues – such as independence, defence of the borders and migration – we have even managed to forge an enormous unity which crosses party political lines.”*¹²

In order to securitise refugees even further, Viktor Orban brings new actors into the narrative – “the people smugglers, the human rights activists and Europe’s top leaders” (Viktor Orban, 2016d). They are the actors facilitating the “migration invasion”, and thus must be ostracised and outlawed. The securitisation of civil society actors that deal with migration also influenced the adoption of “Soros laws” and foreign-funded NGOs laws in Hungary (Witte, 2018; Plenta, 2020):

*“This is how, for the planned transport to Europe of many millions of migrants, there came into existence the most bizarre coalition in world history: the people smugglers, the human rights activists and Europe’s top leaders.”*¹³

*“There is full agreement that the activities which seek to help illegal immigration – such as the popularisation of people smuggling and illegal immigration – must be punished. The Hungarian people cannot be deceived: they understand perfectly well that many foreign-funded organisations are organising, supporting and financing illegal immigration and, whether intentionally or not, are thus functioning as Trojan horses for illegal immigration and ensuing terrorism.”*¹⁴

¹¹ Viktor Orban. 21.09.2015c, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s reply in Parliament

¹² Viktor Orban. 18.02.2018c, Viktor Orbán’s “State of the Nation” address

¹³ Viktor Orban. 28.02.2016d, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s State of the Nation Address

¹⁴ Viktor Orban. 27.06.2017d, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s speech at the closing event for the National Consultation

In this discourse, Viktor Orban often underlines that Hungary is fighting on two fronts – against migration and against Brussels, the narrative which is further expanded on in a separate subsection. He underlines the illegality of migration, uses criminalisation rhetoric and appeals to the more formal anti-migration notions compared to the identity-based securitisation:

“We shall teach Brussels, the people smugglers and the migrants that Hungary is a sovereign country, and its territory can only be entered by those who will obey our laws and accept the authority of our law enforcement and military personnel.”¹⁵

By implementing anti-migration policies, Hungary is not only aiming to protect itself, but the entire EU. The next statement is particularly interesting from Balzacq’s understanding of securitisation, as it makes the comparison between the fall of communism in Hungary and a broader context of the collapse of communist regimes across CEE and the fall of the Berlin wall. It frames the events of 2015 as being as historically important as the events of 1989, and by using the “positive” socially accepted events it aims to justify the securitisation and the consequential emergency policies:

“In 1989 we dismantled a fence which divided the peoples of Europe. In the early autumn of 2015 we erected a fence on the external green border of the Schengen Area, to protect the European Union’s greatest achievement: free movement within the common area of the internal market. As a result, we have been protecting the European people’s way of life and economic model – at least on the section of Europe’s external border for which we are responsible. And, no less crucially, we have been protecting their security.”¹⁶

The securitisation of migration and refugees is performed by framing it as an invasion, something threatening the physical security of the state. It reaches its peak in the speech of Viktor Orban at the ceremonial swearing-in of new border hunters in 2017. Words such as “siege”, “attack”, “storm” are used to describe the arrival of refugees to the Hungarian borders. Even the name of the specialists – “border *hunters*” – rather than guards securitises refugees framing them as someone automatically illegal and necessary to be caught:

“No one should be under any illusions: even now, as we speak, at this very moment, we are under siege. The migrant flow has not come to an end, but only slowed down. All that has happened is that, between two major attacks, we have gained time to reinforce our lines of defence, to recruit,

¹⁵ Viktor Orban. 28.02.2016d, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s State of the Nation Address

¹⁶ Viktor Orban. 13.07.2016c, “Are You Opposed to Peace?”

train and deploy border guards. The storm has not yet passed, but has only subsided temporarily [...] The truth is that we can only rely on ourselves: we have to protect our borders ourselves.”¹⁷

At times, the statements of Viktor Orban can be compared with proclamations of conspiracy theories, as they invoke strong existential anxiety and ontological insecurity about the state and the future. In those statements, “they” (the Western elites working against Europe) captured the sovereignty of Brussels and are implementing plans for the new world order – Europe of mixed populations that is achieved by the “mass population movement” (Viktor Orban, 2017b, 2017c):

“This summer Hungary and the Hungarian government continued their battle against Brussels’ mandatory relocation plans [...] The old world trade order – the world economic and political order that we’re used to – is being replaced by another: by a new world order [...] Whether we like it or not, one consequence of this realignment is mass migration in the form of a new mass population movement, that has reached our European continent and has placed it under pressure. In addition, this mass population movement also coincides with an offensive by a major world religion: Islam’s latest global offensive.”¹⁸

“It is this empire of financial speculation that has captured Brussels and several Member States [...] It is this empire that saddled us with modern-day mass population movement, with millions of migrants, and with a new migrant invasion. They developed a plan with which they now seek to turn Europe into a continent with a mixed population. We alone resist them now. We have reached the point at which Central Europe is the last migrant-free region in Europe.”¹⁹

The rhetoric here is strikingly similar to the Great Replacement and Eurabia – far-right conspiracy theories popularised by French author Renaud Camus and the British-Swiss historian Bat Ye’or respectively (Bergmann, 2018). Both theories talk about a secret project between European “replacist” politicians and elites and the Arab states for the ‘Islamisation’ of Europe (Bergmann, 2021; Carr, 2006). Both of them draw on a deep-rooted ontological insecurity of nations since they highlight the possibility of the entire states and cultures being replaced, which is exactly what Viktor Orban implies in a number of his speeches.

5.1.3. Securitisation of the EU – a battle against Brussels

A narrative pattern securitising not migration and refugees but politicians in Brussels as threats to the referent objects has been identified in the 2015 – 2018 migration discourse. In line with the

¹⁷ Viktor Orban. 07.03.2017e, Viktor Orbán’s speech at the ceremonial swearing-in of new border hunters

¹⁸ Viktor Orban. 18.09.2017c, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s address in Parliament before the start of daily business

¹⁹ Viktor Orban. 23.10.2017b, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s speech on the 61st anniversary of the 1956 Revolution and Freedom Fight

general anti-EU rhetoric of Viktor Orban, the Hungarian Prime Minister underlined the threat of the EU-led policies for Hungary and the future of the Hungarian nation in a number of statements. Such phrases as “battle” against Brussels, Brussels’s “advance” and the “danger” of the Western politicians are securitising speech acts towards the EU itself or EU politicians in relation to Hungary:

*“The referendum is about the future: we call the citizens of Hungary to battle, in opposition to the new European immigration system’s compulsory resettlement quotas, which will be on the agenda for March.”*²⁰

*“We shall not surrender our right to decide who we want to live with, and who we do not want to live with. This is why we must resist those who seek to popularise the idea of the quotas in Europe, and we shall resist them. We must halt the advance of Brussels.”*²¹

*“What will be decided in the referendum is how strong a sword we can forge for our battles with the Brussels bureaucrats. The referendum will decide whether we can stop Brussels from making a decision which forces us Hungarians to admit refugees and distribute them among our cities and villages.”*²²

*“However absurd it seems, the situation is that now the danger is threatening us from the West. This danger to us comes from politicians in Brussels, Berlin and Paris. They want us to adopt their policies: the policies that made them immigrant countries and that opened the way for the decline of Christian culture and the expansion of Islam. They want us to also accept migrants and to also become countries with mixed populations.”*²³

The Western countries are blamed for forcing Hungary to accept refugees, drawing a divisive narrative between the EU and Hungarian governments. The audience of the statements is reminded that the issue of migration and refugees relocation is within Hungary’s national sovereignty, and thus cannot be decided for Hungarians:

*“In the storm of migration, or the storm of the global refugee crisis, this gives us the right to insist that we shall not accept a European policy from those seeking to force us – explicitly or implicitly – to change, and to become like them. We want to decide what we are like and whom we want to resemble. This is our own sovereign, national decision [...] This is a Hungarian national duty, a constitutional duty.”*²⁴

²⁰ Viktor Orban. 28.02.2016d, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s State of the Nation Address

²¹ Ibid.

²² Viktor Orban. 22.09.2016b, “I love this country, and I do not want to see anyone change it under orders from outside” Viktor Orban’s interview to Hungarian online news portal Origo

²³ Viktor Orban. 18.02.2018c, Viktor Orbán’s “State of the Nation” address

²⁴ Viktor Orban. 21.09.2015c, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s reply in Parliament

“We alone may make that decision: the jurisdiction on this belongs to the Hungarian parliament, the Hungarian government and Hungarian municipalities [...] We must not be given orders from Brussels on whom we should live together with, and Brussels must not have the power to forcibly resettle here people whom we do not want to live together with. Whether we make the right decision, whether it is morally acceptable, whether it is a technically sound or a wise decision, is a matter for the Hungarian people.”²⁵

The reasoning behind this securitisation from the political standpoint is quite simple: if the EU institutions are to blame for the refugee crisis in the first place, then it becomes possible to make them scapegoats for various domestic shortcomings by linking the narratives. The strategy of reinforcing national sovereignty and ‘not bending’ to the orders from Brussels fits in the general anti-establishment and populist rhetoric of Viktor Orban; furthermore, by engaging in additional ‘othering’ of the EU politicians, it becomes possible to later legitimise political decisions that come in conflict with Brussels. The narrative of ‘us’ – the ‘morally right’ Christian Central Europe not ready to accept refugees – and ‘them’ – “immigrant countries that opened the way for the decline of Christian culture and the expansion of Islam”, “countries with mixed populations” (Viktor Orban, 2018c) is also clearly exploited to securitise the EU policies and threaten Hungary as a referent object.

5.1.4. Securitisation of physical safety – the threat of terrorism

Viktor Orban has used securitisation speech acts to capitalise on the public’s fear of terrorist attack in order to reinforce Hungary’s anti-migration stance. In a number of statements throughout the analysed time period, the Hungarian Prime Minister linked migration and refugees to terrorism. These claims have been especially prominent following a sharp increase of deaths from terrorism in 2015 – by 650 per cent compared to 2014 in OECD member states (Global Terrorism Index, 2016), and the following spawn of public fear around an increasing number of attacks across the EU in 2015 and 2016 (Ibid; Global Terrorism Index, 2017).

“We believe that, like us, they really think that mass migration is a bad thing, which must be stopped, because it brings the threat of terrorism, is a threat to security and will transform our culture.”²⁶

²⁵ Viktor Orban. 04.12.2015b, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán on Kossuth Rádió’s “180 minutes”

²⁶ Ibid.

“And the most important thing for them is migration: it is accompanied by the danger of terrorism and by crime; women are endangered by it; and their economies are shaken by it.”²⁷

“The migration crisis, Ladies and Gentlemen, will continue until we eliminate its root causes. It will remain on the agenda until people everywhere realise that migration is the Trojan horse of terrorism. The people who seek to come here do not want to live according to our culture and customs, but according to their own – with European standards of living.”²⁸

Migrants and refugees are often put in the same synonymical word order as terrorists and criminals, basically equating these concepts and thus securitising all asylum seekers as threats to physical security of the population:

“There was no chance of us screening out those who posed a danger to us. Today, also, we have no idea who are terrorists, who are criminals, who are economic migrants, and who are really running for their lives. It is hard to call this anything but madness.”²⁹

The securitisation of refugees as terrorists is frequently accompanied by securitisation of their identities. Even though Viktor Orbán does not directly link terrorism and Islam, he attempts to create a link between other issues he ascribed to refugees earlier and terrorism. Interestingly, in the next statement, Viktor Orbán characterises homophobia as one of the issues that should not be imported to Hungary, meanwhile several scholars argue that the Hungarian government itself has been showing a significant degree of homophobia and LGBTQI+ exclusion (Takács et al., 2022; Nuñez-Mietz, 2019):

“We do not want to – and we shall not – import crime, terrorism, homophobia and anti-Semitism to Hungary. In Hungary there shall be no lawless urban neighbourhoods, there shall be no street violence or immigrant riots, there shall be no arson attacks on refugee camps, and gangs shall not hunt our wives and daughters.”³⁰

The Hungarian Prime Minister also implies that the cause of terrorism is “flawed Brussels policy” concerning migration as he later mentions that apart from terrorism, it changes the cultural and religious composition of Europe, and that something Hungary and Central Europe need to protect themselves from:

²⁷ Viktor Orbán. 25.03.2018b, Interview with Viktor Orbán on the Hungarian radio programme “Sunday News”

²⁸ Viktor Orbán. 07.03.2017e, Viktor Orbán’s speech at the ceremonial swearing-in of new border hunters

²⁹ Viktor Orbán. 28.02.2016d, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s State of the Nation Address

³⁰ Ibid.

“Consequences of this flawed Brussels policy are acts of terrorism which are becoming weekly occurrences, a dramatic deterioration in public security, and a transformation of Europe’s demographic, religious and cultural composition which can be seen in everyday life – without the need for research studies. Well, it is from this that we seek to protect ourselves, and it is from this that we seek to protect Hungary, Central Europe and – if still possible – the whole of the European Union.”³¹

It is important to recognise, however, that implying the threat of terrorism with incoming refugees is not exclusive to Viktor Orban, but persisted in the rhetoric of many political figures from both Western (Özer & Kaçar Aşçı, 2021; Witteveen, 2017) and Central Eastern Europe (Goździak & Márton, 2018; Pickel & Öztürk, 2018) after 2015. In the case of Viktor Orban and this discourse narrative, it clearly fits among other securitising frames, and intersects with securitisation of refugee’s identity and anti-EU narratives.

5.1.5. Who are refugees?

In order to fully assess Viktor Orban’s discourse around migration, it is especially important to explore how refugees are defined and referred to linguistically. During the analysis of the selected statements, the most common linguistic tropes describing refugees featured the following frames: “migrants”, “immigrants”, “people from distant, distinct cultures”, “flood of migrants”, “migrant invasion”, “new settlers”, “invading population groups” (Viktor Orban, 2016, 2017, 2018). These frames are clearly securitising frames as they create the narrative of ‘invading’ people, those from different cultures coming not seeking shelter, but to occupy. The words migrants and immigrants imply that the people are coming out of their own free will, seeking employment or other benefits.

The word “refugees” was barely used in the discourse, which can be attributed to the fact that it is associated with those seeking shelter and running for their lives rather than with danger to culture and security, which was the key framing of Viktor Orban. The Hungarian Prime Minister even deliberately outlined the difference between “genuine refugees” and migrants in his discourse:

“I would like to make it clear that the rules relating to refugees do not come into play at all if we are talking about economic migrants; no one, no country in the world is obliged to accept them, unless they want to. There is no international law which compels anyone to receive economic

³¹ Viktor Orban. 18.09.2017c, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s address in Parliament before the start of daily business

*migrants. As regards genuine refugees who are indeed fleeing degradation or a threat to their lives, the world does provide safe shelter for them. But a refugee cannot say that they want to be a refugee in Germany, or in Macedonia – or in Hungary, for that matter. They have no choice!*³²

Apart from that, Viktor Orban also jokingly calls people from the states he defines as “immigrant” who would want to move to Hungary “genuine refugees”. He implies that they would have to leave their homes as ‘terrified Christians’ seeking life without Muslim migrants:

*“And with the migrant referendum we barred others from deciding whom we should and shouldn’t allow into the country. [Applause] We will of course be letting in genuine refugees: Germans, Dutch, French and Italians, terrified politicians and journalists, Christians who have been forced to leave their homes and who here in Hungary want to find the Europe they have lost in their homelands. [Laughter, applause]”*³³

Viktor Orban is also clear on the fact that foreigners who come to Hungary “in a legally regulated lawful manner” such as international students are allowed to stay. Moreover, later in the statement he went to lengths to explain how Islam is respected and Muslims live safely in Hungary, most likely addressing concerns of the Muslim students studying there:

*I would like to make it perfectly clear to you that the current uncontrolled, unregulated and illegal flow of immigration – the flood of migrants pouring into Europe – shall not change the Hungarian government’s education policy [...] You all arrived in Hungary in a legally regulated, lawful manner; you have always observed the laws of Hungary – both when you first arrived and during your stay here – and you have always shown respect towards the Hungarian people*³⁴

In one case, Viktor Orban used a strategy of *desecuritisation* towards refugees, where he emphasised that the circumstances around them such as conflicts in the country of their origin and poor international decision-making are the one to blame, not the refugees themselves:

*“Although emergencies do not favour nuanced thinking – and refined feelings even less – it is hardly the migrants whom we should be so angry with. The majority of them are also victims: victims of their countries’ collapsing governments, victims of bad international decisions, victims of people smugglers.”*³⁵

This specific quote showcases how a different, desecuritisng narrative could have been shaped in Hungary if the political agenda of the Prime Minister allowed that. All in all, we can conclude

³² Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s reply in Parliament, September 23, 2015

³³ Viktor Orban. 10.02.2017f, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s State of the Nation Address

³⁴ Viktor Orban. 10.12.2015a, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s speech at the welcome ceremony for Stipendium Hungaricum scholarship holders

³⁵ Viktor Orban. 28.02.2016d, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s State of the Nation Address

that the strategy of refugee securitisation dominated the narrative, with an exception of one desecuritising attempt.

5.1.6. Ontological security

Separate attention should be devoted to how Viktor Orban capitalised on the sense of ontological insecurity among Hungarians to securitise migration, specifically on how he attempted to frame the issue of refugees as disruption to the biographical continuity and identity narratives of Hungary. To achieve that, he referred to a number of historical events from Hungarian past and core identity blocks and showed how they can be disrupted by the arrival of refugees.

For instance, in the 2016's State of the Nation Address, Viktor Orban underlined the exceptionality of Central Europeans in sensing the danger of mass migration, since they are ones who "put our ear to the rails every now and then for any suspicious noises which could signal a source of danger". This ability is caused by the number of historical events that shaped the region, which shows how Viktor Orban is arranging selected events related to Hungary in a coherent and logical order, while implying that the said order will be disrupted by migration:

*"perhaps the storms and seismic waves of history; perhaps the sweaty struggles in the years after the fall of communism; perhaps the experience that we must be on our guard, because something may happen at any time"*³⁶

In the next quote we can observe how a time-bound narrative fuelling ontological insecurity is crafted by Viktor Orban. First, with the referral to key crisis events, a bibliographical timeline is outlined, in which the EU authorities continuously fail to ensure economic and physical security of their population:

*"By the time changes were made, with the Treaty of Lisbon's entry into force, a global crisis was upon us. In 2008 the European elite, which had drawn its legitimacy from economic achievements, suffered a defeat. The aftermath of the economic and financial crisis spelled the end of the illusion that the EU could guarantee continuing prosperity – let alone increasing prosperity – for all of its citizens. In certain Member States the crisis of the elite has escalated into a crisis of democracy. This came to a head in the geopolitical crisis in Ukraine in 2014 and the migration crisis barely a year later. Fears and concerns have multiplied, while the number of solutions and effective answers has reduced."*³⁷

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Viktor Orban, 13.07.2016c, "Are You Opposed to Peace?"

In contrast to the failing EU measures, Viktor Orban introduces the Hungarian way where “security is the foremost concern”, thus legitimising his anti-EU stance and other emergency policies decisions and building on the sense of ontological insecurity. A coherent bibliographical narrative is built by engaging core identity blocks, according to Viktor Orban – religion, culture and the way of live of Hungarians. By emphasising the role of Christianity and Hungary’s own sovereignty in this historical path, Viktor Orban fuels the sense of ontological insecurity of the population:

“We Hungarians want a Europe in which we can live our own Hungarian lives. In the Hungary that we want, security is the foremost concern [...] You are now the defenders of both freedom for Hungary’s present and hope for Hungary’s future.”³⁸

The securitisation and capitalisation on ontological insecurity reaches its peak in the last speech of Orban analysed in the time period – speech at the final Fidesz election campaign event on 6 April 2018. There a clear sense of urgency and attempt to threaten bibliographical continuity is visible: the Hungary that everyone wants is threatened “by the millions of immigrants coming from the South”, and the only way to protect it is to re-elect Fidesz, who has successfully “defended the southern border”:

“But the greatest threat of all is posed by the millions of immigrants coming from the South, and Europe’s leaders – in partnership with a billionaire speculator – have no intention of defending the borders, but want to let in the immigrants [...] We have built the border fence. We have defended the southern border. In Brussels we have rejected migrant resettlement of any kind. But the danger has not yet passed. They can hardly wait to start again. We have 48 hours within which to tell everyone about this – one more time, with renewed strength.”³⁹

5.1.7. Bridging the narratives – all-round securitisation

In the final subsection of this time period, the essence of the discourse is outlined. On top of all the separate discourse narratives using securitising speech acts to securitise refugees’ identities, the threat of terrorism, Brussels policies and border protection, in a number of statements, Viktor Orban appeals to a combination of these securitisations, providing a speech act that the researcher can call an “all-round” securitisation. This type of securitisation does not exploit only one threat of refugees; in turn, it is focused on painting a comprehensive securitising picture

³⁸ Viktor Orban. 07.03.2017e, Viktor Orbán’s speech at the ceremonial swearing-in of new border hunters

³⁹ Viktor Orban. 06.04.2018a, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s speech at the final Fidesz election campaign event

where many referent objects, all concerning different aspects of Hungary as a state or the life of Hungarian people, are threatened by migration:

“The financial stability we have worked so hard for is in danger. The only recently evident closing of the gap between us and other economies is in danger. Our nationally-oriented foreign policy – which has been built with such painstaking attention to detail – is in danger. Restored public order and public security free of terrorist threats are in danger. And our national culture – which is slowly finding its feet once again – is also in danger. What is more, not only does this danger threaten the things which we have, but also the things which we may have in the future: our prospects; the possibility of a promising future; and our children’s expanding European potential, which is only beginning to unfold. The name of this danger is mass migration.”⁴⁰

This striking quote is from the State of the Nation Address of 2016. This speech is exceptionally important since State of the Nation Address is an annual speech of Hungarian Prime Minister where he delivers the key achievements and challenges to the public. In this sense, having such a strong securitising speech act to be included there, shows how much the securitisation of migration dominated the Hungarian political discourse of that time.

In 2017’s State of the Nation Address, a similar all-round securitisation was observed, with more focus on the other actors being securitised – not only refugees themselves, but also “human rights activists and leading European politicians”. They are portrayed as those having them aim to bring refugees to Europe to ruin “the subsoil of European life”:

“ “If these fuddy-duddies in Europe, who are unwilling or unable to shake free of their Christian roots and patriotic feelings, won’t take heed, then let’s dig deeper and replace the subsoil of European life. Let masses of people from different religious backgrounds – who have been raised with different morals and different traditions, and who have no idea about Europe – come and teach us a lesson”. This is how the world’s most bizarre coalition of people smugglers, human rights activists and leading European politicians was created, with the aim of systematically bringing millions of migrants into Europe.”⁴¹

And a similar pattern of all-round securitisation can be found in 2018, when in March interview leading up to the parliamentary elections in April, Viktor Orban outlined “the essence of the battle” against migration:

“Therefore the first and most important issue at stake in this battle is the transformation of Hungary into an immigrant country. The second issue is security: one must clearly state that

⁴⁰ Viktor Orban. 28.02.2016d, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s State of the Nation Address

⁴¹ Viktor Orban. 10.02.2017f, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s State of the Nation Address

there is a link between migration and the threat of terrorism. The third issue is public safety: it is obvious that crime rates rise in areas with high migrant populations. The fourth issue is European culture, which we express as Christian culture, but in reality this refers to our way of life: the way in which European people have lived up to the present day, the rules which until now everyone has accepted, are now being called into question [...] And finally – and from a certain point of view this is perhaps the most important issue – there is the matter of respect for women. [...] This is the cornerstone of European culture. This will be called into question, however, if Europe is transformed into an immigrant continent by masses of people arriving here from outside cultures. This, therefore, is the essence of the battle.”⁴²

The statement above neatly captures the essence of the political discourse around migration of Viktor Orban in 2015 – 2018 – the securitisation of refugee’s identity, physical security of citizens and the state, as well as the securitisation of external actors such as human rights NGOs and EU politicians. Essentially, it shows that in order to legitimise anti-migration policies in Hungary, Viktor Orban employed a multi-securitisation strategy focusing on various actors, but mainly exploiting the identity and safety related discursive frames, with one exception of a recorded desecuritising attempt related to the status and framing of refugees.

In terms of each discourse pattern, from the statements analysed in the research, the need for border protection and anti-EU narrative dominated the discourse, with identity and terrorism-related securitisation moves falling not far behind (Fig. 4). These numbers do not show a pronounced overall trend since the focus of the thesis was on qualitative critical discourse analysis of the empirical material rather than on quantitative content analysis; however, it might be insightful to take a look what themes were securitised more or less, and later on in the chapter, to explore how these securitisation attempts with various focuses could shape public opinion. It is important to note here that the research does not imply a direct link between the focuses of securitisation and changes of public opinion but rather looks at the accumulation of data to interpret the political discourse and gain valuable insights into its construction and contents.

⁴² Viktor Orban. 26.01.2018d, Viktor Orbán’s speech at the Visegrád Group conference “The Future of Europe”

5.2. 2022 – 2023 main discourse patterns

5.2.1. Securitisation of identity

Similarly to 2015, the pattern of *securitisation of refugee's identity* through the securitisation of their religion, values and culture is present in 2022. However, it is not applied to the Ukrainian refugees, but still to Muslim refugees coming from non-European countries:

*“The example of Western Europe shows that on this front one only needs to make a single mistake: once illegal migrants from other cultures have settled, the wheel of time can never be turned back, and life will never be the same again [...] What we want – and it is our right, our birthright – is for Hungary to remain a Hungarian country.”*⁴³

*“I do not want Hungary to become an immigrant country, and I do not want migration to strengthen in Hungary. This is the position I have always taken and will continue to take. For us the basis of this is not biological, and it is not a racial issue: it is a cultural issue, and we simply want to maintain our civilization as it is today.”*⁴⁴

The key basis for his securitisation of non-European refugees in 2022 has not changed – it is the supposed inability of communities who have different cultures and religions to integrate and peacefully live together, to form a state. Viktor Orban, just as in the previous time period analysed, insists on the danger of “mixing” of different national, religious and cultural groups since it leads to “the destruction of the national community” (2023a). Additionally, following the same narrative as in 2015 – 2018, the demographic threat is outlined as another argument in the securitisation attempt:

*“It is the dismantling of the cultural foundation necessary for the functioning of the nation state, and the creation in its place of marginalized, atomized, coexisting—but mutually hostile—groups who will never form a community, and who ultimately will never form a state.”*⁴⁵

*“One half is a world where European and non-European peoples live together. These countries are no longer nations: they are nothing more than a conglomeration of peoples. I could also say that it is no longer the Western world, but the post-Western world. And around 2050, the laws of mathematics will lead to the final demographic shift: cities in this part of the continent – or that part – will see the proportion of residents of non-European origin rising to over 50 per cent of the total.”*⁴⁶

⁴³ Viktor Orban. 09.09.2022g, Speech by Viktor Orbán at a swearing-in ceremony for border hunters

⁴⁴ Viktor Orban. 28.07.2022h, Statement by Viktor Orbán following his meeting with Chancellor of Austria Karl Nehammer

⁴⁵ Viktor Orban. 04.05.2023a, Speech by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán at the opening of the CPAC Hungary conference

⁴⁶ Viktor Orban. 23.07.2022i, Speech by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán at the 31st Bálványos Summer Free University and Student Camp

The identity of Ukrainian refugees, on the other hand, is *desecuritisised*. This strategy is based on equating Ukrainians to Hungarians, with a specific focus on people from Transcarpathia, whom Orban calls “our own”:

“Most of them are coming from the interior of Ukraine. Of course there are also Transcarpathian Hungarians and Transcarpathian Ukrainians. We know them well, because they are our own, they’re in an area neighbouring us.”⁴⁷

Additionally, when commenting on the arrangements set up for Ukrainians, Viktor Orban emphasises that Hungary is “treating [refugees] just as we treat ourselves”, which is a drastically different narrative from the one applied to the non-European and Muslim refugees:

“those who are forced to stay with us for a shorter or longer period of time, depending on what the situation is at the end of the war, can find work while they’re here with us. We can offer those coming here the same benefits that we offer Hungarians: we can cover their expenses for three months. We give unemployed Hungarians benefits for three months, but after that period they either have to enter the labour market or sign on to a public works scheme. The same will be offered to foreigners coming here. So we’re taking everyone in, and treating them just as we treat ourselves.”⁴⁸

All in all, it becomes possible to establish that the securitisation of refugees in 2022 – 2023 focused on non-European and muslim asylum-seekers, the same actors as in the previous discourse. The new refugee group – Ukrainians – was desecuritisised based on similarities to the Hungarian people; however, those similarities were not specifically spelled out, which could be related to the lack of discourse materials or different securitising strategy applied to Ukrainians based on Viktor Orban’s political agenda.

5.2.2. Securitisation of border protection and state security

The securitisation of border protection, the need of border defence and provision of physical security of the state was one of the dominating narrative in the 2022 – 2023 discourse. The need for protection, as in 2015 – 2018 discourse, related to Hungary’s southern borders, which indicates that the protection was required from asylum seekers trying to enter through southern border points, namely the Balkan route:

⁴⁷ Viktor Orban. 16.05.2022k, Speech given by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán after swearing his prime ministerial oath

⁴⁸ Ibid.

“But we’ve been defending our southern border for years, and they haven’t given us a penny for the fence: they haven’t given Hungary a penny to deal with the migration pressure it’s facing.”⁴⁹

“We decided to stop migration and build the wall on our southern border because Hungarians said that they did not want illegal immigrants. They said: “Viktor, build that wall!” Three months later the border barrier was up.”⁵⁰

In the statements, the asylum seekers arriving to the southern Hungarian borders are described as “migrants”, “immigrants” and, most notably, “illegal (im)migrants”. This shapes the securitisation as a protection for illegality, thus, criminal activities, and legitimises relevant policies since the focus of the securitisation is on the legal aspect. Additionally, the securitisation attempt is further fuelled by proclaiming the intensity of the crisis in the number of people supposedly coming and framing it with the terms such as “invasion”, “wave”, “battle”:

“But we shall continue to defend our borders, we shall not dismantle the fence and we shall not let in migrants. [...] We stand for peace and security in Hungary and we shall not accept economic measures that would ruin Hungarian families.”⁵¹

“If we do not defend our borders there, you will see hundreds of thousands of migrants and immigrants arriving illegally on your border. The only way you can avoid this is for Hungary to defend its own southern borders.”⁵²

“The figures are reminiscent of the great invasion, the migratory invasion wave of 2015. We can build up the fence, and we are increasing its height, and we can increase the numbers of our border guards and police officers – and we are increasing them.”⁵³

In the time period, statements on the conferences and meetings with the state officials of Austria and Serbia were randomly selected for analysis. In these statements, to make securitising speech acts more convincing, Viktor Orban extends the referent object from just Hungary and Hungarian people to Serbia and Austria, and then – to “the whole of Europe” (Viktor Orban, 2022f). With this securitising strategy, the Hungarian Prime Minister legitimises the necessity of emergency

⁴⁹ Viktor Orban. 04.03.2022m, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán on the Kossuth Radio programme “Good Morning Hungary”

⁵⁰ Viktor Orban. 19.05.2022j, Speech by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán at the opening of CPAC Hungary

⁵¹ Viktor Orban. 16.05.2022k, Speech given by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán after swearing his prime ministerial oath

⁵² Viktor Orban. 28.07.2022h, Statement by Viktor Orbán following his meeting with Chancellor of Austria Karl Nehammer

⁵³ Viktor Orban. 14.10.2022e, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán on the Kossuth Radio programme “Good Morning Hungary”

politics around migration in Hungary, and capitalises on the narrative established during 2015 – 2018 discourse:

“We have concluded that the border guards of the Serbs, the border guards of the Hungarians and the police and soldiers protecting the Austrian border are fighting a heroic battle to curb illegal migration and to combat people smugglers.”⁵⁴

“Our three countries are not simply defending our own borders – here, of course, I speak primarily on behalf of Hungary – but we are defending the whole of Europe.”⁵⁵

“Since 2015 a migration crisis has swept Europe. Millions of people from Africa and the Middle East have arrived illegally in Europe, in defiance of borders and laws [...] This is why, after the crisis erupted, we Hungarians decided that – no matter what anyone said – we would not compromise our security: we defended our borders and we built a fence [...] It can withstand the most powerful waves of illegal migration.”⁵⁶

The narrative of “population replacement” that is similar to the one from the previous analysed period is also present in this discourse. The focus is, once again, on the danger of replacement of European – Christian – population with migrant from non-Christian civilisations. As mentioned before, the notions are in sync with a number of popular right-wing theories such as the Great Replacement and Eurabia:

“One such suicide attempt that I see is the great European population replacement programme, which seeks to replace the missing European Christian children with migrants, with adults arriving from other civilisations.”⁵⁷

“The second challenge is migration, which you could call population replacement or inundation.”⁵⁸

Only in one statement Viktor Orban mentioned asylum seekers coming from Ukraine. They were framed as an extra pressure in addition to the “illegal” border crossing attempts on the southern border. In the next quote, it is clear that asylum seekers arriving to the southern border are

⁵⁴ Viktor Orban. 03.10.2022f, Statement by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán following a migration summit with the President of Serbia and the Chancellor of Austria

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Viktor Orban. 09.09.2022g, Speech by Viktor Orbán at a swearing-in ceremony for border hunters

⁵⁷ Viktor Orban. 16.05.2022k, Speech given by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán after swearing his prime ministerial oath

⁵⁸ Viktor Orban. 23.07.2022i, Speech by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán at the 31st Bálványos Summer Free University and Student Camp

securitised as migrants who are trying to cross the border illegally, while no similar statements are made about Ukrainians:

“Hungary’s third outstanding achievement in 2022 was that we continued to stand our ground against migration. This is a difficult task every year, but this year was special because the refugee situation means that we are the only European country under pressure from two directions at the same time. The southern migration route has been added to by a flood of millions of refugees from Ukraine [...] Under these circumstances it was difficult to maintain the defence of the southern border. Hungarian police, border hunters and soldiers thwarted more than 250,000 illegal border crossing attempts, which is a fantastic achievement.”⁵⁹

5.2.3. Securitisation of the EU – a battle against Brussels

A similar pattern of the securitisation of Brussels and EU politicians in regards to migration and refugees has been observed in the second time period. Here, the same as before, Hungary is fighting a battle against Brussels authorities who are trying to force them to accept migration.

“We have spent more than one and a half billion euros on border protection, we have formulated numerous laws, and we have fought numerous battles with Brussels – which has been continuously attacking Hungary’s border defence operations.”⁶⁰

“A battle is in progress between the two halves of Europe. We made an offer to the post-Westerners which was based on tolerance or leaving one another in peace, allowing each to decide for themselves whom they want to live alongside; but they reject this and are continuing to fight against Central Europe, with the goal of making us like them [...] There is now less talk about migration, but, believe me, nothing has changed: Brussels, reinforced with Soros-affiliated troops, simply wants to force migrants on us.”⁶¹

The language of the statements is filled with war/battle-related phrasing: “battle”, “attack”, “defence”, “troops”, “capitulate”, “halt”, “command”. This creates a stronger sense of securitisation as it frames the conflict of the Hungarian and EU governments as a sacred battle for Hungary, the battle for its sovereignty and national identity, which is being threatened by the EU migration policies. A similar us vs them narrative was also present in this time period, where Viktor Orban divided Europe into immigrant and non-immigrant Europe:

⁵⁹ Viktor Orban. 21.12.2022a, Press Statement By Prime Minister Viktor Orbán At The Government End-Of-Year International Press Conference

⁶⁰ Viktor Orban. 24.11.2022b, Press statement by Viktor Orbán following a meeting of the Visegrád Four

⁶¹ Viktor Orban. 23.07.2022i, Speech by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán at the 31st Bálványos Summer Free University and Student Camp

“For a long time Brussels has been demanding that Hungary should capitulate and become an immigrant country. That we should be like them, and struggle with the problems, the difficulties, the irreversible historical processes that the countries to the west of us are struggling with today, after having let in migrants and having transformed themselves into immigrant countries. But we don’t want that, because Hungary belongs to Hungarians, we want Hungary to remain a Hungarian country, we want our grandchildren to live in a country like ours is now, and we don’t want to change its composition.”⁶²

In this time period, the anti-Brussels narrative has been expanded from a battle against Muslim cultural expansion and a struggle to protect one’s border into “intellectual-ideological battlefield”:

“We gave the command to halt, we took up the gauntlet and we defended ourselves: we built a fence and we defended our country. After a while I realized that it is not enough to defend our borders, it is not enough to fight in physical self-defense, but we can only defend our country if we also engage in intellectual and ideological battles. We found ourselves in the middle of an intellectual-ideological battlefield, because migration is an important part of the liberal progressives’ philosophy.”⁶³

5.2.4. Securitisation of physical safety – the threat of terrorism

No statements securitising refugees through linking them with terrorism have been identified: neither the ones about Ukrainian, nor about refugees that came following the 2015 crisis. This can be possibly explained by a few of factors. First of all, the intensity and number of terrorist attacks around the EU has dropped significantly compared to 2015 – 2017 time period in the last two years (Global Terrorism Index, 2020; Global Terrorism Index, 2023). Secondly, the agenda of terrorism in the previous discourse has played a key role and intensified in the statements either directly following an attack or closer to the 2018 parliamentary elections. In the 2022 elections, however, the key topics did not relate to that, but were strongly connected to mobilising the electorate around non-interference of Hungary in the Russian-Ukrainian war, which was described in Chapter IV. Viktor Orbán did not attempt to link Ukrainian refugees to terrorism whatsoever, and neither did he try to securitise refugees from the Middle East and Africa in this discourse.

⁶² Viktor Orbán. 10.03.2023b, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán on the Kossuth Radio programme “Good Morning Hungary”

⁶³ Viktor Orbán. 04.05.2023a, Speech by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán at the opening of the CPAC Hungary conference

5.2.5. Who are refugees?

In the discourse of 2022 – 2023, different interpretations of refugees are essential to be explored since they were the key in Orbán's shaping of the discourse, specifically around differences between the two studied time periods. First of all, Viktor Orbán has been clear on the fact that refugees are the ones that came from Ukraine, meanwhile those coming from the Middle East and Africa are (illegal) migrants:

*"Hungary helps refugees, but continues to reject migration."*⁶⁴

*"We stand together for peace and for the refugees from Ukraine. But on illegal migration our thinking diverges."*⁶⁵

*"Hungary has initiated this meeting because we are in the most extraordinary situation, experiencing the problem of migration from two directions: as a result of the Russo-Ukrainian war, more than a million refugees have arrived from the east, from Ukraine; meanwhile our border is under continuous siege from the south. This year alone we have had to nullify around 180,000 attempts to cross our border illegally."*⁶⁶

In a number of statements, Viktor Orbán provides justification and explanation as to why Hungary should accept Ukrainian refugees. Firstly, Ukrainians deserve support and good treatment as a result of being victims in the Russian-Ukrainian war. Secondly, it is also the "imperative of basic humanity" and in Hungary's good heart to help people in need – Ukrainian refugees. Such desecuritising descriptions of refugees as "running for their lives" and "those in need" are used to characterise Ukrainians:

*"Russia has attacked Ukraine, so we must let Ukrainian refugees into our country, and we have done well in supporting them with the largest humanitarian aid operation in our country's history. This is the imperative of basic humanity, and we are complying with it."*⁶⁷

*"And it is also a land of good-hearted folk: full of great people, from Saint Elizabeth to the thousands of today's individuals helping refugees who are running for their lives."*⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Viktor Orbán. 19.05.2022j, Speech by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán at the opening of CPAC Hungary

⁶⁶ Viktor Orbán. 28.07.2022h, Statement by Viktor Orbán following his meeting with Chancellor of Austria Karl Nehammer

⁶⁷ Viktor Orbán. 18.02.2023c, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's "State of the Nation" address

⁶⁸ Viktor Orbán. 15.03.2022l, Speech by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán on the 174th anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution and War of Independence of 1848–49

*“In this war, Ukraine has been attacked and Russia is the aggressor. This is why we are supporting Ukraine, and why we have launched the largest humanitarian aid operation in Hungary’s history. Proportionally, we have admitted the largest number of refugees, and we are providing for those in need. We will help Ukrainian refugees.”*⁶⁹

Similarly to 2015 – 2018 period, Viktor Orban also talks about “Western refugees” – Germans and other Western Europeans who want to live in “a safe, Christian country”. They will be accepted in Hungary since they will “find the basis for a shared life” and the people from Western Europe can learn Hungarian over time:

*“In the next ten to twenty years more and more Western Europeans will move to us, because Hungary is a safe, Christian country, which is proud of its traditions [...] Western Europeans who want to live in freedom and in an atmosphere different from that at home should continue to feel free to move here. We welcome them with open arms.”*⁷⁰

*“Over time we will find the basis for a shared life. Newcomers will gradually learn our language. Their children certainly will [...] In short, citizens who treat us and our traditions with respect will continue to be welcome in Hungary.”*⁷¹

*“So can we say “Refugees Welcome”?
Yes, exactly. But from the West! Western Refugees Welcome!”*⁷²

However, such chance is not offered to other refugees, mainly to non-Europeans. However, in the statements referring to Ukrainian refugees, Viktor Orban also does not mention any indication of attempts to accept and integrate Ukrainian into Hungarian society. The idea of ‘Western’ depends heavily on the context and does not always refer to geographically Western countries, but in no statement did the Hungarian Prime Minister identify Ukrainians as Westerns; thus, it can be concluded that they are not.

5.2.6. Ontological security

A utilisation of Hungarian ontological insecurity has also been recorded in the 2022 – 2023 political discourse. Similarly to the previous time period, Viktor Orban constructed the Hungarian bibliographical continuity with references to previous historical events and attempted to provoke further ontological insecurity by framing migration as a threat to that:

⁶⁹ Viktor Orban. 16.05.2022k, Speech given by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán after swearing his prime ministerial oath

⁷⁰ Viktor Orban. 26.10.2022d, Interview with Prime Minister Viktor Orbán in the biweekly magazine Budapesti Zeitung

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Viktor Orban. 02.03.2022n, Interview with Prime Minister Viktor Orbán in the political weekly “Mandiner”

“I am convinced that Hungarians – not only the leaders, but also the broadest sections of the population – have a highly developed historical instinct, and a particularly highly developed sense of danger. This is no wonder. A thousand years is a long time, and the Hungarians have learned that – in times of danger – disunity, confrontation and internal conflict can lead to serious consequences: to decline, to fall, and even to the loss of one’s country. Internal conflict and discord are luxuries to be reserved for the happy years of peace. We are not living in such times. In troubled times, the order of the day is unity. It is the order for such times. Whoever evades it is a danger to the community, the nation and the country.”⁷³

The framing of the current times as ‘troubled’ and the idea of learning from the historical past ties neatly with the heightened sense of ontological insecurity. Evidently, the reason for this strategy is to encourage national unity which, in this case, translates into the supermajority of Fidesz in the parliament, as the above quote is from Viktor Orbán’s prime ministerial oath.

5.2.7. Bridging the narratives

Unlike in 2015, Viktor Orbán did not engage in ‘all-round’ securitisation of migration and refugees. In his statements, he mostly addressed and securitised specific issues related to migration and actors engaged in it. This could be explained by the fact that in 2022 and 2023, Hungary has already successfully passed the anti-migration legislation it was fighting and rallying people for in 2015 – 2018 and Fidesz has won both elections since 2015 migration crisis, hence the political goals of the securitisation have been achieved. Additionally, it is important to mention that even though the Russian-Ukrainian war remains a contentious issue in Hungarian domestic (the difference in approaches of the government and the opposition) and foreign (Hungary’s disagreements with the EU on the war) policy, the issue of Ukrainian refugees is something that achieves more or less stable political unity both inside and outside of Hungary. Hungary did not protest the implementation of the Temporary Protection Directive for Ukrainians nor did it introduce any additional measures on the Hungarian-Ukrainian border related to refugee deterrence.

However, despite the fact that the largest influxes of asylum seekers from the Middle East and Africa have gone down at the time of the research, migration from the South still remains on Hungarian political agenda as a “civilisational threat”:

⁷³ Viktor Orbán. 16.05.2022k, Speech given by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán after swearing his prime ministerial oath

“Nor can we abandon our great goal of making Hungary the safest country in Europe. This is threatened by the most serious problem of our time: migration. The threat of migration and the risks it poses are so great that its avoidance and defence against it continue to be Hungary’s primary task. What our distant forebears called “népvándorlás” [“Völkerwanderung”, or “the wandering of peoples”] is now known as migration. Whatever one calls it, the meaning is the same: a civilisational threat.”⁷⁴

Overall, this discourse was dominated by the securitisation of border and state protection, with significant securitisation of identity of non-European refugees and anti-EU narratives. Additionally, a part of the discourse was devoted to differentiating between Ukrainian refugees and non-European migrants, with prominent desecuritisating narratives around the former.

5.3. Comparison and Main Findings

Having analysed the two discourses around migration in 2015 – 2018 and 2022 – 2023, it becomes possible to draw a comparison between them and answer the first research question of the thesis: to what extent, if at all, have the two instances of refugee crises – the 2015 inflow from the Middle East and the 2022 inflow from Ukraine – been securitised by the Hungarian government, and what narratives dominated the discourses?

In 2015 – 2018 discourse, significant securitisation of multiple aspects of refugees and migration crisis was present. Among those, the most significant securitisation attempts concerned the issues of border and state protection, refugees’ identity, namely the religion, culture and the way of life, and the threat of terrorism. Firstly, in terms of identity securitisation, Viktor Orbán focused on the securitisation of Islam as a distinct and dangerous religion for Christian Europe, the political and moral values of refugees, which he ascribed were non-democratic and threatening, and the implication of “us vs them” narrative between the asylum seekers and host population. Secondly, for border protection, the Hungarian Prime Minister emphasised on the illegality of the incoming refugees, often through securitising frames using war-like language – invasion, battle, attack, storm, and siege – to describe the threat of migration and defence and protection – to justify the Hungarian response.

⁷⁴ Viktor Orbán. 09.09.2022g, Speech by Viktor Orbán at a swearing-in ceremony for border hunters

The third most prominent securitising narrative concerned the threat of terrorism. In the securitising speech acts, migrants and refugees were often put in the same synonimical word order as terrorists and criminals, therefore, securitising all asylum seekers as threats to physical security of the population. Moreover, on numerous occasions, increasing migration was directly linked to terrorism and named its “Trojan horse”. The narrative coded under “battle against Brussels” is essentially an anti-EU narrative used to blame the European Union authorities for unfair and anti-Hungarian policies as well as justify democratically questionable domestic legislation (Kürti, 2020; Wodak, 2019).

All in all, in the first research period, prominent securitisation of multiple aspects of migration has resulted in the strong anti-migrant/anti-refugee rhetoric to protect multiple referent objects: firstly, Hungary as a state and Hungarian people, and then, by extension, the EU and the whole Europe. Dramatisation and fear mongering regarding terrorism and the numerous waves of arriving refugees capitalised on existing feelings of ontological insecurity and fear among the population. Multiple applications of ‘us’ – Hungary, Hungarians, Christian, “true” Europeans – was put against ‘them’ – most notably Muslim migrants, but also EU politicians/Brussels, Hungarian NGOs and human rights activists, and Western pro-migration elites, e.g. George Soros. All this was to build a number of external enemies that Hungary needs to be protected from, and justify further confrontations with the EU authorities. The role of identity-based and cultural securitisation should not be overlooked in the discourse, as Europe came under attack specifically because the refugees were Muslim, thus foreign and dangerous, reinforcing fundamentalist Christian rhetoric and the ideas of ethno-nationalist Christian Hungarian state.

In 2022 – 2023 discourse, some of the securitisation narratives have declined significantly, mainly the securitisation of refugees as a threat to physical security through terrorism; however, identity-based securitisation and the securitisation of border protection related to non-European refugees were still present. In terms of identity securitisation, even though the main asylum seekers in 2022-2023 were coming from Ukraine, Viktor Orban has been consistent in his securitisation of Muslim refugees coming from non-European countries, proclaiming that countries who have accepted refugees are no longer nations, thus once again showcasing his interpretation of Hungary as ethno-national state, and the arrival of Muslim refugees leads to

“the destruction of the national community” (2023a). The identity of Ukrainian refugees, on the other hand, was purposefully desecuritized based on similarities to the Hungarian people and emphasising on the reason and nature of the refugee influx – as a result of the Russian aggression against Ukraine.

In terms of border protection securitisation, greater emphasis was put on the defence of the “southern border”, clearly to create a distinction and show that Hungary needs to defend from the refugees coming through the Balkan route – Muslim refugees from the Middle East and African refugees. Additionally, the referent object in this securitisation during 2022 – 2023 was more often Europe and the EU compared to the dominating protection of just Hungary in 2015 – 2018. This can be an evidence of growing rhetoric to portray Hungary as the protector of Europe, a true bastion of Christian and conservative values, most probably to legitimise political decision-making and showcase the importance of the state on the EU arena, where Hungary is often criticised.

Significant desecuritisation speech acts have been observed in the 2022 – 2023 discourse, something novel compared to the previous analysed time period. The desecuritising narratives concerned Ukrainians and depicted them as ‘true refugees’ – “running for their lives” and “those in need”, unlike the “illegal migrants” from the Middle East and Africa. One can assume that this strategy was implemented in order to support policies related to Ukrainian asylum seekers in a highly securitised and contentious environment for refugees created as a result of the political discourse leading up to 2022. On Figure 4, a simple graph with the narratives is presented to visualise the changes between the two discourses described in the paragraphs above.

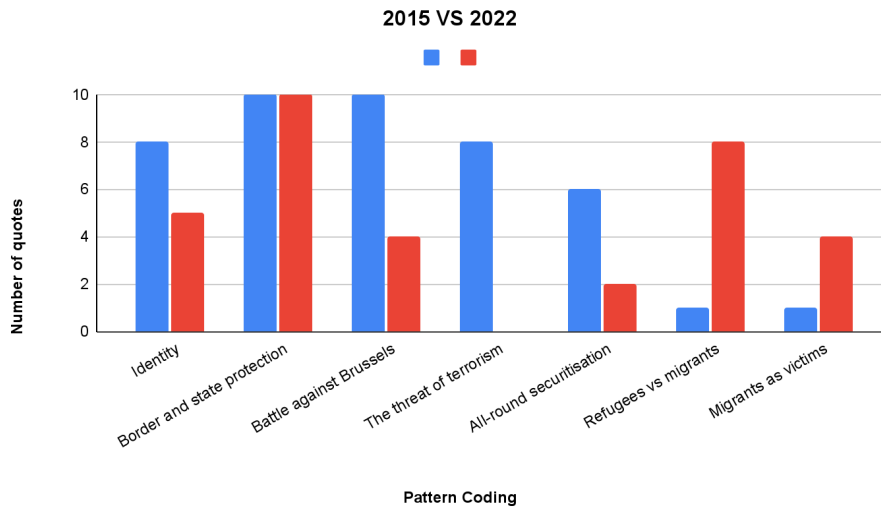


Figure 4. Discourse patters comparison (Author’s own contribution)

In conclusion, answering the first research question of the thesis, *the 2015 refugee inflow from the Middle East was heavily securitised in Hungary*, with the engagement of multiple securitisation patterns, targeting primarily the issues of refugees’ identity, the threat of terrorism, border security and securitisation of Brussels migration tactics. The 2022 inflow from Ukraine, on the other hand, *contained very few securitisation patterns* focusing mostly on the pressure of migration on the economy and the costs associated with refugees reception. The identity of Ukrainian refugees was *desecuritised* while the main securitisation patterns recorded in 2022 – 2023 targeted Muslim non-European refugees, the same securitised actors as in the previous discourse.

The explanation of such differences in the discourse can be offered by the main theoretical framework of the thesis – the securitisation theory. According to it, securitisation attempt legitimises political actions taken against the perceived security threat to protect the referent object. The 2015 migration influx was followed by a number of political decisions that can be classified as emergency politics in Hungary such as building of the border fence, multiple National Consultations and the 2016 referendum, and the total rejection of the EU refugee allocation quotas by Hungary. Additionally, it is important to note the general trends of democratic backsliding in the state associated with the reduction of the freedom of press and shrinking civil society space. Such measures, especially the latter, could also be justified as a

protection of the referent object in terms of securitisation of migration, since NGOs and human rights activists were also securitised in the 2015 – 2018 discourse. On the other hand, the 2022 influx from Ukraine did not require a potentially politically contentious response: on the issue of refugees, Hungary fully accepted the EU's approach, legalised the Temporary Protection Directive, and has been cooperative in terms of reception and further refugee transit. By engaging in desecuritisating narratives and actively accepting Ukrainian refugees, Orban could also improve his reputation abroad as well as demonstrate in practice how Hungary can help “real” refugees, which goes in line with his narrative since 2015. Thus, we can conclude that the all-round securitisation of refugees in 2015 – 2018 period could be motivated by the need to legitimise new and contentious political decisions regarding migration as well as to lay the ground for further policy changes in Hungary.

5.4. Securitisation effects and further discussion

According to the securitisation theory, full securitisation only happens on the condition of public legitimacy and agreement (to a certain extent) with the securitising claims. Therefore, to assess the securitisation effects in Hungary and answer the second research question, a number of surveys reflecting the opinions of Hungarians on migration, refugees and security in the analysed time periods are reviewed.

Among the polling agencies, one of the key agencies delivering reliable and regular surveys in the EU is Eurobarometer. Starting from the beginning of the analysed time period, in the Eurobarometer's standard survey for autumn 2015, 67% of Hungarians answered that Hungary should not help refugees, the third highest number in the EU. However, only 9% of Hungarians ranked Immigration as one of the two most important issues they were facing. A little over half (54%) of the surveyed Hungarians said that more decisions should be taken at the EU level – 12th number in the EU, higher than the EU average. This is the starting point of the analysis: already a significantly high level of refugees' alienation is present, but, at the same time, the issue of immigration itself is not nearly the highest among the most important issues for Hungarians.

In the next survey in autumn 2016 not much has changed: 67% did not support helping refugees. In the “Future of Europe” survey in 2016 migration issues were the most mentioned challenge among 56% of respondents in Hungary, second highest in the EU. Additionally, Hungary had one of the lowest support for decision-making on migration at the EU level – 31%. In summer’s 2017 survey “Europeans’ attitudes towards security”, 60% of Hungarians agreed that the EU was a secure place to live in (average in the EU – 65%), while ranking the security of EU’s external borders at 93% among the other security issues, which marks an 8 percentage point increase compared to 2015.

In autumn 2017, in “Integration of immigrants in the European Union” survey, only 17% of Hungarian respondents said they would feel comfortable with immigrants, second lowest number in the EU. 63% responded that immigration is more of a problem than an opportunity, in contrast to the EU average of 38%. 64% of Hungarians also said that immigrants did not enrich the cultural life of the country, meanwhile only 54% of the respondents said that it was important that immigrants shared the cultural traditions of the host country (EU – 76%). In the last survey of spring 2018, 68% of Hungarians responded that Hungary should not help refugees.

Similar trends have been recorded by the American polling agency Pew Research Center. In the Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey, 61% of Hungarians were unhappy with Brussels’ handling of the refugee issue, meanwhile 71% approved of the anti-refugee policies of Viktor Orban. The same survey found that Hungarians were more likely to hold negative views of minority groups. 72% had an unfavorable view of Muslims, much higher than the EU average of 43%. This can be attributed to Hungary’s exclusionary views on national identity also found in the survey: they ranked the second highest in Europe when considering national language, customs and traditions, being born in Hungary, and being a Christian as essential traits to their identities. The majority of surveyed Hungarians also believed that refugees could increase the likelihood of terrorism and posed a major threat. In Pew’s survey of 2018, the securitised view of migration persisted: 54% opposed taking in refugees, the highest number in the EU, and 80% disagreed with how the EU handled the refugee issue.

What can we make of all that? Firstly, it is clear that the general opinion around helping refugees stayed about the same throughout the 3 years. This can indicate two possible outcomes regarding the securitisation: a) the available polls do not capture the pre-crisis levels of acceptance since it was not a relevant issue but migration has securitised fairly quickly in the beginning of 2015; b) there was already a securitised environment around refugees and migration in Hungary prior to the crisis and further discourse securitisation did not affect it. Secondly, the level of Hungarian scepticism around EU's decision-making on migration was high, while the protection of EU's external borders was a strong priority. This is line with the main securitising patterns of Orban identified in the research, which makes it possible to suspect some form of success of securitisation of EU's role in migration and securitisation of border protection. Thirdly, the majority of Hungarians said they would be uncomfortable having immigrants around, showcasing a highly exclusionist attitude towards them in the society. However, when asked about culture, something that Orban's securitisation heavily focused on, only slightly over half of the surveyed Hungarians said it was important to them. At the same time, the anti-Muslim sentiment in Hungary was rather high, which hints to the perspective that the culture of immigrants did not matter as long as it was not Muslim. This is just a suspicion and requires further scholarly research to be confirmed or denied.

Once again, the situation was different for the 2022 – 2023 time period. According to the Ipsos surveys in 2022-2023, 71% of Hungarians supported the admission of refugees. In 2023, it decreased by 8%, and stood at 63%. However, in 2019, before the start of the full-scale war, only 43% of Hungarians supported the reception of refugees. Such striking difference can be explained by the suggestion that in 2019, most likely, Hungarians perceived refugees as asylum seekers coming from the Middle East and Africa, while after 2022 that association shifted to Ukrainians. Among surveys relating specifically to Ukrainian refugees, the Tarsadalomkutato survey from March 2022 found that 79% of Hungarians believed that refugees from Ukraine should be accepted without restrictions. A similar survey from GLOBSEC from autumn 2022 found that 82% of Hungarians were in favour of hosting Ukrainian refugees.

In the meantime, some data regarding Hungarian's attitudes towards non-Ukrainian refugees is available from Szazadveg Foundation, a Fidesz-linked think-tank. According to a recent survey

from June 2023, 68% of Hungarians reject the EU migrant quota system. It is important to emphasise the language used in the survey. For example, the answer “against” migrant quotas is formulated with a very similar securitising language that Viktor Orbán used in his statements: “Hungary will have to resist the decision taken by Brussels and continue to fight against the mandatory resettlement quota”. In a 2022 survey by MIDEM, an investigation into the difference of attitudes towards Ukrainian and non-European refugees has been launched, with one of the questions formulated as “Refugees from Ukraine can be integrated into society much better than those from the Middle East or Africa” – between “0 – do not agree at all” and “10 – completely agree”. Among Hungarian respondents, 55% agreed with the statement, which is similar to the number across other surveyed EU states.

Recognising the fact that due to the recent nature of the 2022 Ukrainian refugee crisis in Hungary, not much social polling data has been generated yet, we can draw some very preliminary conclusions. Firstly, no significant securitisation of Ukrainian refugees has been observed; in contrast, some desecuritising strategies of Viktor Orbán have been identified. Therefore, a high acceptance rate around Ukrainians specifically correlates with the critical discourse analysis findings. Secondly, the securitisation of non-European migrants has continued in 2022 – 2023, which is reflected by a limited data from a pro-government agency. All in all, for this time period, it is challenging to recognise any significant effects of the securitisation due to the lack of data; however, a strong indication of a desecuritized political discourse around Ukrainian refugees has been found in both statements of Viktor Orbán and social polling results.

CONCLUSIONS

Drawing on the critical discourse analysis performed, it became possible to establish that significant securitisation of multiple aspects of refugees and migration crisis appeared in the statements of Viktor Orbán during the 2015 – 2018 discourse. The securitisation of refugees' identity, the need for border protection, linking the threat of terrorism to refugees and persistent anti-EU narratives shaped the discourse and resulted in the strong anti-migrant/anti-refugee rhetoric to protect multiple referent objects: Hungary, the Hungarian people, the EU and Europe. Such significant securitisation attempts also aligned with fundamentalist and ethno-nationalist framing of Hungary and political goals of Viktor Orbán, since he used the securitisation of migration to rally up the electorate for the 2018 parliamentary elections.

However, the 2022 – 2023 discourse was not that simple: around Ukrainian refugees, mostly desecuritisating frames were present, justifying the reception and praising the support of Hungarians towards asylum seekers from Ukraine. As discussed earlier, this strategy could have been chosen to ease the highly securitised and contentious environment around refugees created as a result of the previous discourse. Hungary did not oppose any EU policies related to Ukrainian asylum seekers, therefore, there was no need to legitimise questionable emergency policies. Nevertheless, securitisation was still present when it concerned non-European refugees, which is an indication of the continuation of *identity-based* securitisation. Additionally, the referent objects of the discourse expanded from Hungary to Europe, showing evidence of growing rhetoric to portray Hungary as the protector of Europe, perhaps to legitimise political decision-making and showcase the importance of the state on the EU arena, where Hungary is often criticised.

Reflecting on the contribution of the ontological security theory in the research, it is possible to conclude that Hungarian ontological insecurity might have been further triggered and instrumentalised as basis for securitisation. By engaging key identity narratives – religion, culture, the way of life of Hungarians and main historical events – Viktor Orbán built a coherent bibliographical narrative which he, later on, could endanger by applying securitisation. This exploitation of ontological insecurity can be explained by the need to introduce politics of fear/emergency politics, in which the fear and social anxiety provides legitimacy and rationality

to political responses taken by the government since they appeal to the need to preserve safety and security (Kinnvall & Mitzen (2020: 243). Therefore, the theory can suggest that the securitisation strategy chosen in 2015 – 2018 could have been chosen to secure political goals of Viktor Orban, and desecuritisation of Ukrainians in 2022 – 2023 can be explained by the absence of clear domestic political goals concerning refugees and in line with Orban’s foreign policy agenda.

In terms of *securitisation effects*, we can conclude that a part of the securitising rhetoric is in correlation with the social polling, which can show a certain degree of success of securitisation speech acts and indicate full securitisation. As discussed earlier, identity-based securitisation, the level of Hungarian euroscepticism and the need of protection of EU’s external correlated with the main securitising patterns of Orban. In the same time, desecuritisation of Ukrainian also correlates with a high support of their reception among Hungarian public, while Hungarians still remain opposed to the EU resettlement quotas, almost proving one of Viktor Orban’s statements: “Hungary helps refugees, but continues to reject migration” (Vikror Orban, 2022j).

Thus, summarising the above, this research answered the first research question by finding that: a) securitisation of migration and non-European refugees was present in both discourses, while Ukrainian refugees were desecuritisised; b) some differences are present in the securitising patterns of discourses – terrorism-related securitisation disappears entirely, while identity-based and anti-EU securitisation goes down in 2022 – 2023 compared to 2015 – 2018; c) according to the theoretical framework of the research, the change in discourse can be motivated by the changing political goals of the securitising actor, and the absence of the political need for securitisation of Ukrainians in the second time period. For the second question, a certain degree of correlation has been observed between CDA findings and social polling, hinting to an indication of securitisation success. However, to fully explore this issue, and build on the understanding of political discourse in Hungary, further research is needed.

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ANNEX 1

LIST OF VIKTOR ORBAN'S STATEMENTS USED IN THE RESEARCH

2015 – 2018 time period

1. Viktor Orban. 06.04.2018a, [Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's speech at the final Fidesz election campaign event](#) (accessed on 15 May 2023)
2. Viktor Orban. 25.03.2018b, [Interview with Viktor Orbán on the Hungarian radio programme "Sunday News"](#) (accessed on 15 May 2023)
3. Viktor Orban. 18.02.2018c, [Viktor Orbán's "State of the Nation" address](#) (accessed on 15 May 2023)
4. Viktor Orban. 26.01.2018d, [Viktor Orbán's speech at the Visegrád Group conference "The Future of Europe"](#) (accessed on 15 May 2023)
5. Viktor Orban. 07.12.2017a, [Interview with Prime Minister Viktor Orbán on Echo TV's "Daily News" \["Napi aktuális"\] Programme](#) (accessed on 15 May 2023)
6. Viktor Orban. 23.10.2017b, [Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's speech on the 61st anniversary of the 1956 Revolution and Freedom Fight](#) (accessed on 15 May 2023)
7. Viktor Orban. 18.09.2017c, [Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's address in Parliament before the start of daily business](#) (accessed on 15 May 2023)
8. Viktor Orban. 27.06.2017d, [Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's speech at the closing event for the National Consultation](#) (accessed on 15 May 2023)
9. Viktor Orban. 07.03.2017e, [Viktor Orbán's speech at the ceremonial swearing-in of new border hunters](#) (accessed on 15 May 2023)
10. Viktor Orban. 10.02.2017f, [Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's State of the Nation Address](#) (accessed on 15 May 2023)
11. Viktor Orban. 20.10.2016a, [Interview with Prime Minister Viktor Orbán in the newspaper Passauer Neuer Presse](#) (accessed on 15 May 2023)
12. Viktor Orban. 22.09.2016b, ["I love this country, and I do not want to see anyone change it under orders from outside" Viktor Orbán's interview to Hungarian online news portal Origo](#) (accessed on 15 May 2023)
13. Viktor Orban. 13.07.2016c, ["Are You Opposed to Peace?"](#) (accessed on 15 May 2023)

14. Viktor Orban. 28.02.2016d, [Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's State of the Nation Address](#) (accessed on 15 May 2023)
15. Viktor Orban. 10.12.2015a, [Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's speech at the welcome ceremony for Stipendium Hungaricum scholarship holders](#) (accessed on 15 May 2023)
16. Viktor Orban. 04.12.2015b, [Prime Minister Viktor Orbán on Kossuth Rádió's "180 minutes"](#) (accessed on 15 May 2023)
17. Viktor Orban. 21.09.2015c, [Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's reply in Parliament](#) (accessed on 15 May 2023)
18. Viktor Orban. 03.06.2015d, [Interview with Prime Minister Viktor Orbán in "Napi Gazdaság"](#) (accessed on 15 May 2023)

2022 – 2023 time period

1. Viktor Orban. 04.05.2023a, [Speech by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán at the opening of the CPAC Hungary conference](#) (accessed on 2 June 2023)
2. Viktor Orban. 10.03.2023b, [Prime Minister Viktor Orbán on the Kossuth Radio programme "Good Morning Hungary"](#) (accessed on 2 June 2023)
3. Viktor Orban. 18.02.2023c, [Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's "State of the Nation" address](#) (accessed on 2 June 2023)
4. Viktor Orban. 10.02.2023d, [Facebook Post By Prime Minister Viktor Orbán Following A Meeting Of The European Council](#) (accessed on 2 June 2023)
5. Viktor Orban. 21.12.2022a, [Press Statement By Prime Minister Viktor Orbán At The Government End-Of-Year International Press Conference](#) (accessed on 2 June 2023)
6. Viktor Orban. 24.11.2022b, [Press statement by Viktor Orbán following a meeting of the Visegrád Four](#) (accessed on 2 June 2023)
7. Viktor Orban. 18.11.2022c, [Speech by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán at the 20th session of the Hungarian Standing Conference \(MÁÉRT\)](#) (accessed on 2 June 2023)
8. Viktor Orban. 26.10.2022d, [Interview with Prime Minister Viktor Orbán in the biweekly magazine Budapesti Zeitung](#) (accessed on 2 June 2023)
9. Viktor Orban. 14.10.2022e, [Prime Minister Viktor Orbán on the Kossuth Radio programme "Good Morning Hungary"](#) (accessed on 2 June 2023)

10. Viktor Orban. 03.10.2022f, [Statement by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán following a migration summit with the President of Serbia and the Chancellor of Austria](#) (accessed on 2 June 2023)
11. Viktor Orban. 09.09.2022g, [Speech by Viktor Orbán at a swearing-in ceremony for border hunters](#) (accessed on 2 June 2023)
12. Viktor Orban. 28.07.2022h, [Statement by Viktor Orbán following his meeting with Chancellor of Austria Karl Nehammer](#) (accessed on 2 June 2023)
13. Viktor Orban. 23.07.2022i, [Speech by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán at the 31st Bálványos Summer Free University and Student Camp](#) (accessed on 2 June 2023)
14. Viktor Orban. 19.05.2022j, [Speech by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán at the opening of CPAC Hungary](#) (accessed on 2 June 2023)
15. Viktor Orban. 16.05.2022k, [Speech given by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán after swearing his prime ministerial oath](#) (accessed on 2 June 2023)
16. Viktor Orban. 15.03.2022l, [Speech by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán on the 174th anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution and War of Independence of 1848–49](#) (accessed on 2 June 2023)
17. Viktor Orban. 04.03.2022m, [Prime Minister Viktor Orbán on the Kossuth Radio programme “Good Morning Hungary”](#) (accessed on 2 June 2023)
18. Viktor Orban. 02.03.2022n, [Interview with Prime Minister Viktor Orbán in the political weekly “Mandiner”](#) (accessed on 2 June 2023)

ANNEX 2

LIST OF SOCIAL POLLS USED IN THE RESEARCH

2015 – 2018 time period

1. Eurobarometer. (December 2015). [Standard Eurobarometer 84 - Autumn 2015](#)
2. Eurobarometer. (December 2016). [Standard Eurobarometer 86 - Autumn 2016](#)
3. Eurobarometer. (December 2016). [Future of Europe 2016](#)
4. Eurobarometer. (December 2017). [Europeans' attitudes towards security](#)
5. Eurobarometer. (April 2018). [Integration of immigrants in the European Union](#)
6. Eurobarometer. (June 2018). [Standard Eurobarometer 89 - Spring 2018](#)
7. Pew Research Center. (July 2016). [Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project](#). (accessed on 1 July 2023)
8. Pew Research Center. (September 2016). [Hungary less tolerant of refugees, minorities than other EU nations](#). (accessed on 1 July 2023)
9. Pew Research Center. (September 2018). [Europeans support taking in refugees – but not EU's handling of issue](#) (accessed on 1 July 2023)

2022 – 2023 time period

1. GLOBSEC. (December 2022) [New report shows that the V4 population supports Ukrainian refugees with some reservations](#). Global Think Tank: Ideas Shaping the World (accessed on 1 July 2023)
2. Ipsos. (June 2022). [World Refugee Day 2022 - Global attitudes towards refugees](#) (accessed on 1 July 2023)
3. Ipsos. (June 2023). [World Refugee Day 2023: Support for the principle of refuge remains high despite a decline since 2022](#) (accessed on 1 July 2023)
4. MIDEM. (February 2023). [Europe and Refugee Migration from Ukraine. Annual Report 2022](#) (accessed on 1 July 2023)
5. Szazadveg. (June 2023). [Brussels migrant quota – public opinion says no to mandatory resettlement](#) (accessed on 1 July 2023)
6. Tarsadalomkutato. (March 2022). [Hungarians are in solidarity with Ukrainian refugees](#). [Szolidárisak az Ukrajnai Menekültekkel a Magyarok] (accessed on 1 July 2023)