



KADIR HAS UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

**SECURITIZATION OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC:
COMPARATIVE CASES OF HUNGARY AND THE EU**

HASAN BASRİ BARIT

MASTER OF ARTS THESIS

ISTANBUL, JUNE, 2022



Hasan Basri Bant

Master of Arts Thesis

2022

**SECURITIZATON OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC:
COMPARATIVE CASES OF HUNGARY AND THE EU**



HASAN BASRI BARIT

A thesis submitted to
the School of Graduate Studies of Kadir Has University
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in International Relations

Istanbul, June, 2022

APPROVAL

This thesis, titled “SECURITIZATION OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: COMPARATIVE CASES OF HUNGARY AND THE EU”, submitted by HASAN BASRİ BARIT, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in International Relations, is approved by

Prof. Dr. Sinem Akgül-Açıkmeşe (Advisor)
Kadir Has University

Asst. Prof. Dr. Hüseyin Emrah Karaoğuz
Kadir Has University

Asst. Prof. Dr. Cihan Dizdaroğlu
Başkent University

I confirm that the signatures above belong to the aforementioned faculty members.

Prof. Dr. Mehmet Timur Aydemir
Director of the School of Graduate Studies
Approval Date: 22/06/22

DECLARATION ON RESEARCH ETHICS AND PUBLISHING METHODS

I, HASAN BASRI BARIT; hereby declare

- that this Master of Arts Thesis that I have submitted is entirely my own work and I have cited and referenced all material and results that are not my own in accordance with the rules
- that this Master of Arts Thesis does not contain any material from any research submitted or accepted to obtain a degree or diploma at another educational institution;
- and that I commit and undertake the “Kadir Has University Academic Codes of Conduct” prepared in accordance with the “Higher Education Council Codes of Conduct”,

In addition, I acknowledge that any claim of irregularity that may arise in relation to this work will result in a disciplinary action in accordance with the university legislation.

Hasan Basri Barit

22/06/22



To my family...

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This thesis was written despite everything, and many people helped me during this process. Firstly, I submit my gratitude to my supervisor Sinem Akgül-Açıkmeşe for her guidance and patience during the writing process, especially for her help in finding the subject of this study and reformulating the cases. Also, I would like to thank Hüseyin Emrah Karaoğuz and Cihan Dizdazoğlu for their insightful comments on my thesis defense committee, which made this thesis more consistent.

I want to thank my friends who listened to my problems and excitement about this study. I am also delighted to work with my excellent colleagues at FMV Işık University, and I would like to thank them for their patience, support, and energy. Among my friends and colleagues, I want to express my gratitude to İlgi Doğa Albasar for his guidance, academic support, and challenging questions that helped me improve my thesis.

Writing a thesis can sometimes be stressful and tedious, and I am so grateful to my family for their tolerance of my complaints and never-ending problems about this study. Also, I would like to thank my cat, Nohut, for his energy which gave me strength and happiness.

SECURITIZATION OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: COMPARATIVE CASES OF HUNGARY AND THE EU

ABSTRACT

World history witnessed several diseases and pandemics which heavily impacted the socio-economic conditions and economic and political structure. The last pandemic was the Covid-19 pandemic which broke out in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. The rapid spread of the pandemic across the continents caused state leaders, ministers, and international organizations to describe the pandemic as a security threat and to adopt measures to slow the pace of this pandemic down. This study focuses on the pandemic management in Hungary and the European Union. It aims to answer whether Hungary, the least democratic state in the EU, differentiated from the EU in the face of the Covid-19 policy in the first phase of the pandemic (March-June 2020). For this analysis, the securitization theory developed by Copenhagen School was employed. The primary components of this theory were investigated in the statements delivered by the securitizing actors. The analysis revealed that the pandemic was securitized in both cases and framed as a threat to human health and the economy, and similar emergency measures were adopted. However, Hungary moved in the direction of authoritarianism, and the securitizing statements were repleted with military terms, while the EU securitized the pandemic more liberally and democratically.

Keywords: Hungary, the European Union, Covid-19 pandemic, Securitization, Copenhagen School

COVID-19 PANDEMİSİNİN GÜVENLİKLEŞTİRİLMESİ: MACARİSTAN VE AVRUPA BİRLİĞİ VAKALARININ KARŞILAŞTIRMASI

ÖZET

Dünya tarihi, sosyo-ekonomik koşulları, ekonomik ve politik yapıyı büyük ölçüde etkileyen birçok hastalık ve salgına tanıklık etmiştir. Son pandemi, Aralık 2019'da Çin'in Wuhan kentinde ortaya çıkan Covid-19 pandemisidir. Pandeminin kıtalar arasında hızla yayılması, devlet liderlerinin, bakanların ve uluslararası kuruluşların pandemiye bir güvenlik sorunu veya tehdidi olarak tanımlamasına neden olmuştur ve ülkeleri salgının hızını azaltmak için önlemler almaya itmiştir. Bu çalışma, Macaristan ve Avrupa Birliği'ndeki pandemi yönetiminin ilk safhasına (Mart-Haziran 2020) odaklanmakta olup AB'nin en az demokratik üyesi olan Macaristan'ın bu dönemde Covid-19 pandemisi ile mücadelesinin AB'den farklılaşıp farklılaşmadığını yanıtlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu analizin yürütülmesi için, Kopenhag Okulu tarafından geliştirilen güvenlikleştirme teorisi kullanılmış ve bu teorinin temel bileşenleri, güvenlikleştirici aktörler tarafından verilen açıklamalarda incelenmiştir. Yapılan analiz pandeminin her iki vakada da güvenlikleştirildiğini ortaya koymuş olup, pandeminin insan sağlığı ve ekonomi için bir tehdit olarak çerçevelendiğini ve pandemiye karşı benzer önlemlerinin alındığını ortaya koymuştur. Ancak Macaristan'da otoriterlik derinleşirken ve askeri terimlerle dolu güvenlikleştirici açıklamalar yapılırken, AB pandemiye karşı daha liberal ve demokratik bir şekilde güvenlikleştirmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Macaristan, Avrupa Birliği, Covid-19 pandemisi, Güvenlikleştirme, Kopenhag Okulu

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENT	v
ABSTRACT	vi
ÖZET.....	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	x
LIST OF TABLES	xi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xii
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. SECURITIZATION THEORY	6
2.1 The Emergence of The Securitization Theory	6
2.2 Speech Act: The Core of The Securitization.....	9
2.3 Securitization Theory: Actors, Objects, Audience.....	12
2.3.1. The actors and the conditions in securitization theory	14
2.3.2 Securitizing actor, referent object, and functional actors	14
2.3.3 Audience: intersubjective nature of the securitization	16
2.3.4 Existential threats	17
2.3.5 Facilitating conditions.....	18
2.3.6 Methodology of the securitization theory	19
2.4 Securitization and Covid-19: The Literature Review.....	20
2.5 Case Selection, Methodology, and Limitations	25
3. SECURITIZATION OF COVID-19 PANDEMICS IN HUNGARY	30
3.1 Hungary: The Political Outlook	30
3.2 Covid-19 in Hungary: The Timeline	37
3.3 Covid-19 and Security Speech-Acts by Orbán	38
3.3.1 Securitizing utterances, referent objects, and facilitating conditions	
39	
3.3.2 Emergency measures	45
3.3.3 Audience: a successful securitization?	49
3.4 Conclusion.....	54
4. THE EUROPEAN UNION: COVID-19 AND SECURITIZATION.....	58
4.1 The Political Context.....	58
4.2 Covid-19 Pandemic in the EU: The Chronology	62

4.3	The Statements of The EUCO.....	65
4.3.1	Securitizing statements, referent objects, and facilitating conditions 65	
4.3.2	Emergency measures	71
4.3.3	Audience: a successful securitization?	75
4.4.	Hungary and the EU: The Comparison.....	80
4.5.	Conclusion.....	82
5.	CONCLUSION.....	85
6.	REFERENCES	89
	CIRRICULUM VITAE	108



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3.1: Civil Liberties Score and Liberal Democracy Score of Hungary (1989-2020)	36
Figure 3.2: Democracy Score of Hungary (2014-2021)	36
Figure 3.3: The Cumulative Number of Cases and the Death Toll in Hungary (March-May)	38
Figure 3.4: The Social Mobility in Hungary (February-June 2020)	52
Figure 3.5: Mask Use in Hungary (February-May 2020)	53
Figure 4.1: The Percentage of the Trust in the EU (2004-2019)	61
Figure 4.2: The Cumulative Number of Cases and Death Tolls in the European Union	63
Figure 4.3: Awareness about the EU actions and measures-April 2020	77
Figure 4.4: Satisfaction with the EU Measures-April 2020	78
Figure 4.5: Awareness about the EU actions and Measures-June 2020	79
Figure 4.6: Satisfaction with the EU Measures-June 2020	79

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1: The Prime Ministers of Hungary after gaining independence in 1990	32
Table 3.2: Discourse Analysis of Viktor Orbán	55
Table 4.1: Discourse Analysis of the EU Officials	84



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
CPM	The Civil Protection Mechanism
CRII	Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative
CRII+	Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative Plus
CS	Copenhagen School
EC	European Commission
ECDC	European Center for Disease Control and Prevention
EP	European Parliament
EU	European Union
EUCO	European Council
Fidesz	<i>Magyar Polgári Szövetség</i> (Hungarian Civic Alliance)
FKGP	<i>Független Kisgazda-, Földmunkás- és Polgári Párt</i> (Independent Smallholders, Agrarian Workers and Civic Party)
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IHM	Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluations
IPCR	the Integrated Political Crisis Response
KDN	<i>Kereszténydemokrata Néppárt</i> (Christian People's Democratic Party)
MDF	<i>Magyar Demokrata Fórum</i> (Hungarian Democratic Forum)
MSZP	<i>Magyar Szocialista Párt</i> (Hungarian Socialist Party)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
SZDS	<i>Szabad Demokraták Szövetsége – a Magyar Liberális Párt</i> (Alliance of Free Democrats)
TEU	The Treaty of the European Union
The USA	The United States of America
WHO	World Health Organization

1. INTRODUCTION

Various epidemics, diseases, and pandemics have struck the world throughout humanity's history, such as the bubonic plague in the 14th century, smallpox and the Spanish Flu in the 1920s, and HIV/AIDS, which started in the mid-1900s (BBC Future 2020). In the 21st century, various diseases, such as the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2002-3, Swine Flu in 2009-10, the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome 2015, and Covid-19 since 2020 have severely impacted the international society (Piret and Boivin 2021, 2).

The Covid-19 pandemic, which erupted in December 2019 in Wuhan (China), has been the latest pandemic that hit the world. Initially, the World Health Organization (WHO) did not decide on the severity of this new disease in the first meeting on January 22. However, as the virus spread worldwide, the number of cases and death toll skyrocketed. For this reason, the WHO declared this virus as a global pandemic on 11 March 2020 (World Health Organization 2020). Even though the disease originated in China, within a very short time, it spread elsewhere in the world, and the European continent became the center of this pandemic (Feuer et al. 2020).

All these unprecedented developments necessitated emergency responses of governments, and these responses were reflected in the leaders' discourses. The outbreak and the spread of the disease were framed as "a war, a fight against an invisible enemy or an attack which has to be eliminated rapidly." (Vankovska 2020, 73). There are several examples of these securitizing utterances. For example, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated that "We are at war. Our enemy is the virus, and the virus is invisible." (TV7 Israel News 2020); US President Donald Trump labeled the disease and ongoing situation as an "enemy" and a "war" (REV 2020). The UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres remarked that "Covid-19 will require a response like none before- a "war-time" plan in times of human crisis." (Guterres 2020). In this vein, French President Emmanuel Macron also described the virus as an "invisible and elusive enemy" (Rose and Lough 2020), while German Chancellor Angela Merkel maintained that the virus is the biggest challenge that Germany has faced since the World War II (Merkel 2020). In addition to

these examples, Boris Johnson (Johnson 2020), Italian Foreign Secretary Luigi Di Maio (Orlandi and Armstrong 2020), and several other leaders made similar remarks. The description of the pandemic as such clearly demonstrated that the pandemic was securitized by leaders and the governing elites throughout the world. The adaptation of measures to control and slow down the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic have been implemented according to these discourses. Those measures are but not limited to the declaration of bans on social activities, transition to online education, or the suspension of educational activities in some parts of the world, closure of borders, and the introduction of economic packages. In some countries, governments went further by deploying their armies on streets to inspect whether their citizens comply with the enacted measures or not, like in France (Akgül-Açıkmeşe 2020, 10; France 24 2020). In other words, the famous saying “extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures” became the reality of the world as the virus spread.

The use of a language loaded with military terms and the urgency of the pandemic ended up with authoritarianism in some countries. The governing elites around the world took advantage of this crisis to subvert the democratic norms and values, bypass the parliaments or silence the opposition figures (Lawless 2021; Hapal 2021; Grančayová 2021). All these abovementioned characteristics could be explained with the assumptions and the methodology of the securitization theory. The description of this virus as a threat and danger and the justification of precautions and measures which are difficult to adopt under normal settings could be explained as the securitization process. Additionally, this theory is critical of the notion of “the more security is better” since it can bring authorities onto the stage, as occurred in the case of Covid-19 (Buzan et al. 1998, 29; Wæver 2003, 12). Hence, securitization theory can shed light on the different dimensions of pandemic management worldwide.

Among all other countries, Hungary has also been a country that utilized Covid-19 in order to implement some extraordinary measures; in other words, the pandemic was securitized. In line with the authoritarian tendencies that characterized the last decade of the country, Hungary securitized the issue and benefited from the pandemic to suppress the opposition figures, enact laws and regulations which challenged the democratic norms and civil liberties, or favor Fidesz-loyalist. As will be mentioned in the following pages,

Hungary was a country that was criticized by international agencies, international organizations, and the European Union from 2010 onwards. All these criticisms led to a decrease in the democracy score prepared by the agencies. For instance, Freedom House labeled Hungary as a “hybrid regime,” and Hungary became the first country that is not “fully democratic” in the EU (Gehrke 2020b). The erosion of democracy as a result of the changes in the media structure, judiciary, and checks and balances has attracted criticism from the European Union several times (European Parliament 2013; 2015; 2022). This deviation of Hungary from the EU in terms of democratic norms and values in the 2010s had an impact on the pandemic policies and securitization.

The second case, the EU, is related to Hungary’s exclusive position in the EU as a state which poses several challenges and problems to the EU norms, values, and structures in the last decade. The EU, which advocates liberal values, became one of the primary critics of the consolidation of power in the hands of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and the democratic backsliding. In this vein, this thesis aims to answer the question, “Does Hungary deviate from the EU in terms of management of the Covid-19 pandemic?”. This thesis will point out whether the Covid-19 pandemic is securitized in these cases, if securitization occurred, how this was framed, and whether it was successful. However, there is another aspect of this study. This comparison of securitization of Covid-19 in Hungary and the European Union allows to answer to what extent these securitizations were similar or different.

In terms of time scope, this thesis concentrates on the securitization of Covid-19 in the first months of the pandemic, in other words, from March 2020 to June 2020. The reasons for selecting this timespan are twofold: (I) the difficulty of analyzing the pandemic, which lasted more than two years and which still continues with severe repercussions, and (II) the decreasing number of cases and death tolls which led to easing and abrogation of various enacted measures. The second reason implies that the Covid-19 pandemic, starting from July 2020 to September 2020, lost its power, and the number of cases was low compared to the period between March and June 2020. However, these numbers began to increase in September 2020 (European Commission 2020b, 1). It means that the pandemic was prioritized between March and June; however, it partially occupied the

agenda with other issues in the summer months, and then it became at the top of the agenda, starting from autumn onwards.

This study benefits from the securitization theory developed by the Copenhagen School, as the above-mentioned examples indicated that the framing of the pandemic in an extraordinary manner and the prioritization of this issue over several others demonstrates how securitization theory can be helpful in analyzing this pandemic process. Also, this theory is helpful to study different aspects of security, ranging from the environment to global health issues, since it bases its core on the speech act and aims to widen and broaden security. In the framework of this theory, this thesis aims to understand whether and how the Covid-19 pandemic was framed as a security threat in Hungary and in the EU, and these two cases differentiated from each other.

Accordingly, the following chapter is devoted to the securitization theory's development, intellectual core, and main characteristics. Besides the theory, the current literature on the securitization of the Covid-19 pandemic will be reviewed to understand to what extent this theory can explain this process and how this theory could be utilized to explain the security aspects of the pandemic. The last section of this chapter elaborates on the case selection, limitations, and methodology.

The second chapter is about the first case study at hand, Hungary, and intends to understand whether the Covid-19 pandemic was securitized in Hungary. The political picture when the Covid-19 pandemic arrived in Hungary will be analyzed, and the chronology of the pandemic will be provided to understand the political context better since the country was rebuked due to its non-democratic policies, as mentioned above. Following that, the statements made by Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán will be investigated through the lens of the securitization theory to identify the referent objects, facilitating conditions, and emergency measures. After that, public surveys, opinion polls, and projections will be analyzed to determine whether the securitization has been successful.

The third chapter intends to focus on the Covid-19 pandemic in the European Union context. Similar to the Hungarian case, the political context and the chronology of the

European response will be explained to understand the situation better and to pinpoint and justify the securitizing actor amongst the EU's institutional bodies. In this chapter, the European Council (EUCO) was acknowledged as the securitizing actor, and the reason for the selection of this governing body will be justified in detail in the relevant chapter. The texts published on the Council's website are the main sources of this chapter, and this chapter will analyze whether the primary criteria of the securitization theory were met or not.

In brief, this thesis will analyze how the Covid-19 pandemic was described in these two cases by employing the securitization theory. In light of this analysis, whether the Hungarian case differed from the EU's position in pandemic management will be enlightened, and the securitization theory will be tested in two cases.

2. SECURITIZATION THEORY

This thesis compares the securitization of the Covid-19 pandemic in Hungary and the European Union. For this reason, this chapter explains the theoretical framework of securitization developed by the Copenhagen School. In this chapter, firstly, the origins and the development of the Copenhagen School, then the speech act theory, on which the securitization is based, will be covered. In the third section, the main pillars of this theory will be analyzed, and the last part will focus on the case selection, as well as the methodology of the study and the limitations of this thesis.

2.1 The Emergence of The Securitization Theory

The last few decades of Security Studies turned into a contested and debatable arena. The main reason is the challenge posed by critical study studies to the established security thinking. During the Cold War period, with the influence of the bipolar world order and the realist theory, security was analyzed through state-centric lenses (Bilgin 2005, 18). However, the period following the 1970s witnessed a debate over units and levels of analysis, and this state-centric analysis was brought under heavy criticism on the ground that it could not suffice to solve emerging problems (Collective 2006; Buzan and Hansen 2009; Wæver 2003).

In the last years of the Cold War, the debate emerged between two camps regarding the nature of security: the traditionalists and the wideners. The former group maintained the state-centric and military-dominated understanding of security, while the “wideners” argued that security should include other subjects apart from the military and the state (Wæver 2003, 8). According to proponents of wideners, these traditional security understanding had a myopic understanding and were not able to analyze nascent security issues such as the outbreak of ethnic conflicts, environmental problems, and immigration (Buzan and Hansen 2009, 187). Hence, the wideners supported the idea that security should both “widen” and “deepen.” The widening means the addition of new threats to the agenda, such as environmental, political, economic, and societal. The deepening, on the other hand, implies that security should include different units threatened by varied

factors other than the state, such as individuals, society, and the environment (Huysmans 1998b, 227). Additionally, this debate was not only between the traditionalists and the wideners but also among the wideners. The question of “to what extent security should widen and deepen” was addressed by the wideners differently, and this debate led to emergence of new schools and theories, and Copenhagen school was one of these outputs favoring widening in the Security Studies (Buzan and Hansen 2009, 188).

Copenhagen School emerged while the debate between wideners and the traditionalist continued. The members of the school were supportive of widening and aimed to expand security beyond the military-dominated understanding. However, the CS understood the traditionalists’ concern about the fact that “everything becomes security” within the fully-fledged widening-deepening conceptualization of security (Wæver 2012, 53). Traditionalists feared that the widening and deepening of security could cause Security Studies to lose their coherence and make it harder to solve these problems (Walt 1991, 213). As an answer to this concern, the Copenhagen School asserted itself as the third way, or in other words, the CS stands as a middle way. This means that a clear line should be drawn between what is security and non-security and political (Buzan et al. 1998, 4–5). To distinguish security from non-security, the school developed the “securitization theory.”

The Copenhagen School became one of the most debated and studied theories in Security Studies (Peoples and Vaughan-Williams 2020, 114). There are two examples of the popularity of the CS: the application of the school to Western and non-Western cases (Buzan and Hansen 2009, 212) and the use of the framework provided by the school to analyze several issues, including the environmental concerns, epidemics like HIV/AIDS, cyber security, minorities and religion, economy, energy and terrorism (Salter 2010, 1–2; Balzacq et al. 2016, 14). This wide range of issues indicates how helpful this theory is in analyzing the security problems emerging in the world.

The foundations of the Copenhagen School were laid with the establishment of the Copenhagen Peace Research Institute (COPRI) at Copenhagen University in 1985 and with the publication of “European Security-Problems of Research on Non-Military Aspects” in 1987. The members, initially, were referred to as the “European Security”

research group (Wæver 2003, 7), and the “Copenhagen School” was adopted by the members after McSweeney, a critic of the ideas produced by these members, named them as such (Mcsweeney 1996). The school has two primary characteristics: the Europeanness of the CS and the limited number of people as members. The Europeanness of the school comes from its roots in the European security agenda (Huysmans 1998a, 483). The school’s name before adopting the Copenhagen School exemplifies the European nature of the school. The second nature is related to the members of the school. After its emergence, two scholars emerged as prominent figures in this school: Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver (Akgül-Açıkmeşe 2011, 57). According to Huysmans (1998a, 479), the low number of members in the Copenhagen school is one of the reasons for coherence and continuity. Also, this theory has been applied by several scholars on different referent objects and also criticized for its basic tenets, which makes and keeps this theory popular (Buzan and Hansen 2009, 215).¹

The school consisted of three fundamental frameworks: securitization, security sectors, and the regional security complex theory. These three theories were not a product of a collective effort; on the contrary, they were developed individually. Securitization was initially devised by Ole Wæver (Wæver 1995), while the other two were developed by Barry Buzan, who introduced sectors and regional security complex theory firstly in his book *People, States, and Fear* (1983) and then revised in his article (Buzan 1991). However, the primary reference for all these theories is the book written collectively: *Security: A New Framework* (1998) (Wæver 2003, 8). Despite the fact that the school has developed the abovementioned three frameworks, securitization has become the most eminent one, and Wæver (2003, 7) asserted that securitization is the meta-theory defining the Copenhagen School most distinctly and determining its future paths. Nevertheless, the school developed other two in their subsequent works. The sectoral analysis was introduced by Buzan (1991) exemplified the pro-widening nature of the school. There are five sectors: military, political, economic, societal, and environmental. Buzan et al. (1998,

¹ For some studies that are critical of the securitization theory: Hansen, Lene, “Little Marmaid’s Silent Security Dilemma and the Absence of Gender in the Copenhagen School”, *Millennium: Journal of International Relations*, 29(2), 2000, p. 285-306., Williams, Michael C., “Words, Images, Enemies: Securitization and International Politics”, *International Studies Quarterly*, 47, 2003, p. 511-531., Balzacq, Thierry, “The Three Faces of Securitization: Political Agency, Audience and Context”, *European Journal of International Politics*, 11(2), 2005: 171-201.

7–8) asserted that the fundamental aim of the sectoral analysis is to abate complexity. Regional security complex theory, on the other hand, posits that regional analysis matters for security studies and provides a guideline to study security problems related to each other at a regional level (Wæver 2003, 8). This theory, afterward, was elucidated by Buzan and Wæver (2003). However, securitization became the most eminent among these three.

The securitization theory claims that “security is about survival” (Buzan et al. 1998, 21), and security is a speech act or a social construction (Taureck 2006, 2). In this context, securitization is an issue framed as an existential threat to the survival of a referent object and requires emergency measures exceeding the normal boundaries of the political ways (Buzan et al. 1998, 23–24). Hence, securitization is equivalent to extreme politicization or, in other words, the securitized issue is placed above politics and requires a special and extraordinary procedure of handling. The securitized issue requires breaking the ordinary setting and calls for emergency actions. (Buzan et al. 1998, 23). However, the utterance of the word “security” does not suffice for securitization to occur. The school maintains that securitization is intersubjective, which means that the audience should accept the securitizing move, the framing of something as an existential threat to the survival of the referent object. The audience determines whether securitization is successful or not, not the securitizing actor (Buzan et al. 1998, 31). Thanks to this intersubjectivity, securitization theory extends security beyond the state-centered traditionalist understanding and prevents everything from becoming a matter of security. Hansen (2000, 288) argued that the success of the Copenhagen School is related to this solution, which is based on intersubjectivity.

2.2 Speech Act: The Core of The Securitization

The security understanding of the CS is based on a constructive ontology whose origins are directly linked to J. L. Austin, to whom the members of the school refer in their writings. J. L. Austin’s famous book “*How to Do Things with Words*” (1962), which reflects the author’s ideas on the speech act, is frequently cited by the members of the school as an inspirational study for securitization. For example, Buzan *et al.* (1998, 26)

directly made reference to this book, and Wæver (2004a, 12) cited Austin as a source of inspiration for the development of this theory.

J. L. Austin, in his book, criticized the prior linguistic studies on the ground that they just paid attention to “constative utterances” and neglected “performatives.” Constative utterances are either true or false and are inevitably descriptive, while performative utterances “perform an action” or create a novel reality (Stritzel 2007, 361). The sentence “*I name this ship Queen Elizabeth*” exemplifies a performative sentence since it creates a new reality and remains outside the true-false dichotomy (Akgül-Açıkmeşe 2011, 60).

Austin, in addition to his distinction between constative and performatives, classified speech acts under three categories: (I) locutionary, (II) illocutionary, and (III) perlocutionary (Balzacq 2005, 175). The locutionary act is the simplest one among these three, and it means a statement with a given meaning and reference. The illocutionary act adds performative action to the meaningful statement. “To urge, advise or order someone to do something” can be given as an example of this act (Taureck 2006, 4–5). The perlocutionary act is a meaningful statement with force engendering an impact or evoking feelings, actions, and beliefs in the target audience. The best example of this type of speech act is “to convince/persuade someone to do something” (Balzacq 2011, 5). In Austin’s speech act theory, the “felicity conditions” constitute another central pillar. According to Austin, if these conditions are fulfilled, even if the act is not true, the act takes place properly (Stritzel 2007, 361). Austin enumerated six felicity conditions: (I) the act should match with the accepted procedure, (II) the person and the conditions should be appropriate for the given procedure, (III) the procedure should be executed by all members correctly, and (IV) completely, (V) sincerity in the utterance, and (VI) the action of the person performing the speech act should be in line with the utterance (Austin 1962, 14–15).

Austin's speech act theory inspired the “security as a speech act” understanding of the Copenhagen school to a great extent; however, it was not only Austin’s theory that shaped the securitization theory. The critics of Austin’s speech act theory significantly impacted the school. Jacques Derrida was one of these critics who influenced the intellectual development of the theory, and Wæver (2004a, 12) mentioned him, like Austin, as an

influential figure in the securitization theory. Derrida shared the same opinion with Austin that utterances have the ability to generate a new reality and praised performatives for their novel essence. However, he criticized Austin for placing “speeches” above the “texts” (Akgül-Açıkmeşe 2011, 60). In that vein, Derrida maintained that the context was regarded as a fixed given in Austin's theory. However, the context is in flux and can change in every transmission. Thus, according to Derrida, the experience cannot be the main point in judging speech acts (Taureck 2006, 6), and he claimed that “there is nothing outside the text.” (Derrida 1972; 1977). In other words, the meaning is not contextual and should be looked at within the text, not beyond. The meaning and its performative power are irrelevant to the context (Stritzel 2007, 361). “There is nothing outside the text” approach was embraced by the Copenhagen School. Wæver (2004b, 17) posits that context is a suspicious concept since the classical notion of sender and receiver model of communication was meant by this term, and the proper context is necessitated to reach the real meaning.

Judith Butler reinforced the post-structural criticism directed by Derrida towards Austin's theory. Butler, like Derrida, thought that speech acts own their power to produce a reality, or in his word, speech acts own a “productive power.” (Butler 1996; 1997). The importance in Butler's understanding is that the speech act generates authority and engenders change that is not derived from the antecedent context (Stritzel 2007, 361–62). In other words, the speech act itself creates the context authorizing the actors, not the initial conditions. Similar to the espousal of the “there is nothing outside the text” approach, the Copenhagen School embraced Butler's ideas. Buzan *et al.* (Buzan et al. 1998, 46–47) acknowledged that speech acts have the potential to break the mundane conditions by generating a new context that had not existed. This view, afterward, was re-emphasized by Wæver (2000, 286).

In a nutshell, the Copenhagen school was intellectually influenced by Austin's speech act theory; however, the criticism directed towards Austin impacted the Copenhagen School's development. By applying this constructivist ontology based on linguistic studies, the school went beyond the military-dominant security understanding. As Balzacq *et al.* (Balzacq, Léonard, and Ruzicka 2016, 496) stated, securitization theory intellectually

benefited from constructivism, sociology, and other fields to form its novel security understanding.

2.3 Securitization Theory: Actors, Objects, Audience

As mentioned above, securitization theory aims to widen and deepen the security understanding by going beyond the traditional understanding of security. However, the school did not want security to embrace everything ranging from global matters to individual subjects.

In this vein, the members of the school avoid making an ideal definition regarding the use of the “security” concept and focus on the “powers of the concept” (Wæver 2003, 9). The members claimed that “security is about survival,” which is derived from traditional security understanding (Buzan et al. 1998, 21). However, contrary to the traditional stance, the school claims that security is not an objective condition but an outcome of the social process (Williams 2003, 513). This process is known as “securitization,” which is when an issue is framed as an existential threat to a specified referent object. In the securitization process, there are no universal criteria to determine the nature of existential threat since it changes according to referent objects and the sectors (1998, 21–22). The referent object is the object whose survival is threatened and has “a legitimate claim to survival” (Buzan et al. 1998, 36). However, this process did not end with this framing.

According to the securitization theory, the process is intersubjective (Buzan et al. 1998, 25). It means that there is a need for acceptance by the audience. If the audience does not accept the statement which frames something as an existential threat, it is named a “securitizing move.” However, if the audience approves this “move,” securitization occurs (Buzan et al. 1998, 25). The audience’s approval makes securitization successful, not the actor who performed the speech act.

Securitization is extreme politicization, and it means that this issue has to be treated differently. Theoretically, issues can fall on the spectrum consisting of three realms: nonpoliticized, politicized, and securitized. In the nonpoliticized sphere, the issue is not a part of the public debate, and the state does not concentrate on it. The issue is considered

a public policy and necessitates policies and resources in the politicized realm. However, if an issue is securitized, it means that there is a need for urgent measures which are beyond normal politics (Buzan et al. 1998, 23–24). The securitized issue has more importance than the other issues; in other words, this issue is prioritized. Buzan *et al.* (1998, 24) posit that the actor, who initiated the securitization process, implies that “if we do not tackle this problem, everything else will be irrelevant.” For this reason, the Copenhagen school’s security understanding is security as a “self-referential practice” (Buzan et al. 1998, 24) because it does not matter whether the threat exists or not; what matters is the framing of an issue as a threat. As Wæver (1995, 55) stated:

With the help of language theory, we can regard "security" as a *speech act*. In this usage, security is not of interest as a sign that refers to something more real; the utterance *itself* is the act. By saying it, something is done (as in betting, giving a promise, naming a ship). By uttering "security," a state-representative moves a particular development into a specific area, and thereby claims a special right to use whatever means are necessary to block it. (Emphasis in original)

The securitized issue, as indicated, was carried above the political functioning, and it requires an urgent solution. Hence, the actors can break the rules, which are not easy to override. For this reason, the Copenhagen School challenges the assumptions of traditional security studies. Firstly, according to traditional security studies, security and insecurity are the two polars. However, the school thinks differently about “security” and “insecurity.” As Wæver (1995, 52) stated, both concepts suffer from “security problematique,” meaning that if there is no security problem, concern for security becomes meaningless. Additionally, security and insecurity are not binary. Security is the existence of defense in the face of threat, while insecurity means the nonexistence of defense against the threat (Wæver 2003, 12–13). Secondly, the school opposed the traditionalist notion that “the more security is better” (Wæver 2003, 12). From the viewpoint of securitization, this statement is not true. The school sees security as a negative and a failure to manage the threat within the boundaries of normal politics. Hence, Buzan *et al.* (1998, 29) argue that the issue should be resolved according to political procedures without being prioritized because securitization of an issue enables power holders to suppress the opposition and to gain more power by handling the issue with less democratic means and more restriction.

2.3.1. The actors and the conditions in securitization theory

Securitization bases its security understanding on the speech act; however, there are three main components that determine whether securitization is successful or not: (I) the articulation of the existential threat(s), (II) emergency action, and (III) the acceptance by the audience (Buzan et al. 1998, 26). In addition to these three components, the securitization theory distinguishes three types of actors: referent object(s), securitizing actor(s), and functional actors. Buzan *et al.* (1998, 32) claimed that securitization studies have an objective to grasp “who securitizes (securitizing actor), on what issues (existential threats), for whom (referent objects), why, with what results, and not least, under what conditions (Buzan et al. 1998, 32). This section aims to elaborate on these concepts and understand their role in securitization.

2.3.2 Securitizing actor, referent object, and functional actors

The Copenhagen School claims that there are three actors involved in the securitization process: (I) Securitizing Actors, (II) Referent objects, and (III) Functional Actors. Among these three, the school emphasized the first two extensively.

Referent objects, as mentioned, are the things under existential threat and which have a demand for survival. In other words, it is the object which needs to survive by emergency measures (Buzan et al. 1998, 36). In the framework of the securitization theory, securitizing actors can turn anything into a referent object; however, the facilitating conditions put a limit on this by making some attempts unsuccessful. Hence, the size of the referent object matters in the securitization process.

Buzan *et al.* (1998, 36–37) maintain that objects on the spectrum range from individual matters to global issues such as environmental problems and the fears of nuclear war. However, the middle-scale objects (states and nations as examples) are the most successful ones as referent objects. The high rate of success for the middle-scale objects derives from the self-reinforcing competition with other collectivities, which strengthens the feeling of “we” (usness) on which the middle-scale objects base themselves.

The success of these objects makes securitization open to criticism from the traditionalists regarding the central position of the state in Security Studies. The school acknowledges that the state is the primary security actor in the field of Security Studies, which is state-dominated due to the particular position of states entrusted with security duties. Nevertheless, the framework provided by securitization enables security studies to move beyond the state-centric approach by including other sectors like environment and economic-related problems (Buzan et al. 1998, 37).

The primacy of the middle-scaled referent objects does not mean that the others were eliminated entirely from the process. In the environmental sector and the economic sector, there are macro-scaled referent objects. For example, the environment, the future of humankind in the former, and free trade and the liberal world economy in the economic sectors are an example of major referent objects (Buzan et al. 1998, 38–39). Due to the change in the objects, the school posits that referent objects should find legitimacy with regards to claim to survival, and the way to understand what the referent objects are is through the analysis of the security discourses. Furthermore, societies have a different understanding regarding what should survive, and some societies are likely to label a specific animal species as a referent object while others claim survival for their film industry (Wæver 2003, 11). It makes the analysis of security discourses important for specifying the object existentially threatened.

Securitizing actors are the ones who perform the speech act. In this group, the political leaders, governments, pressure groups, and governments are the common actors due to their special position, and these actors do not become referent objects in the process. They occasionally claim survival for themselves (Buzan et al. 1998, 40). The “actor” label is contentious since a group of people can be reduced to a subgroup or a specific individual. However, the Copenhagen school claims that a reduction to a subgroup or a person is not practical because a collectivity seen as a social reality is more helpful to comprehend social life.

The identification of the securitizing actor is not as easy as specifying the referent objects because of the level of analysis problem. The speech acts rarely defines securitizing actors, and it makes the selection of securitizing actors arbitrary. The same securitization

process can be ascribed to different units, for instance, a state or a specific bureaucrat. Hence, the school suggests paying attention to the organizational logic behind the act (Buzan et al. 1998, 40–41). The securitizing actor has another role in the securitization: to convince the audience to approve the beyond-politics procedures. For this reason, the securitizing process is imbalanced towards the enunciator.

The last actor specified in the securitization theory is the functional actor, which is not the actor calling for action in the face of an existential threat or the object which is threatened. However, functional actors impact the decisions taken in the realm of security. A company that contaminates the water can be a functional actor in the environmental sector (Buzan et al. 1998, 36).

2.3.3 Audience: intersubjective nature of the securitization

Securitization is an intersubjective process, and its intersubjectivity comes from another central pillar of the process: the acceptance of the existential threat and the procedures beyond the normal functioning of the politics by the audience. As stated, if there is no or not enough audience consent, the act remains as a “securitizing move,” which means that successful securitization is decided by the audience. (Buzan et al. 1998, 31).

Leonard and Kaunert (2011, 59) remarked that there are not any criteria to specify the audience in the securitization process. Hansen (2000, 289) claimed that the relevant audience does not have to be the entire population, and the population can alter according to the political regime. The same idea was re-stated by Wæver (2003, 11–12), who maintained that the audience should not be confused with the whole population because the audience changes in each system and in each issue (2003, 11–12).

In democratic systems, the securitizing actors should present the issue to the public to receive their consent. However, Buzan *et al.* (1998, 25) argue that approval by the audience is not always obtained through free and fair discussions since coercion can play a role under some circumstances. Additionally, in some cases, the actor does not present the issue with security rhetoric or does not present it at all. (Buzan et al. 1998, 28).

The consent to the existential threat provides legitimacy to the securitizing actor to break the rules which are taken into consideration normally. The threat should be discussed and acquire sufficient resonance to legitimize the emergency measures, which are typically impossible to take (Buzan et al. 1998, 25).

The “audience” attracted several criticisms from various scholars on the securitization theory, and it is claimed that it is the most under-theorized part of the theory (Balzacq et al. 2016, 6). For example, Balzacq (2005, 184–85) asserted that there are two types of audience approval: formal and moral. The former refers to the approval from the relevant institutions such as Parliament, Cabinet, or a Council, and moral approval means the approval from the public. Roe (2008, 633) examined the British decision to invade Iraq in the framework of this two-layered audience structure and concluded that formal approval matters more than the moral one since the former is necessary to proceed with the emergency measures. Another critic directed to the securitization theory is the passive nature of the audience. As Baysal (2022, 115) argues, there is always a resistance to power, which means opposing voices can emerge as a result of the securitization in two ways, either peaceful or violent. If the rival voices turn out to be in violent way, it is called counter-securitization (Baysal 2020, 11).

2.3.4 Existential threats

The existential threat is the threat that was directed towards the survival of a referent object hence the nature of the existential threat can be grasped according to the referent objects at hand and the sectors. In other words, there are no criteria to determine the existential threat (Buzan et al. 1998, 21). Another issue regarding the existential threat is that it is not crucial whether these threats really exist or not; what matters is the presentation of an issue as a threat (Buzan et al. 1998, 24).

The Copenhagen School enumerated five different sectors which are compatible with its stance on the “widening of the security studies,” and the differentiation of the referent objects in each sector changed the existential threat. In the military sector, the referent object is generally the state, while the other entities can become. Hence, the menace to national security is an existential threat. In the political sector, sovereignty or ideology is

the main referent object, and the threats directed towards the recognition and the authority of the state can be considered existential threats. In the economic sectors, the market and firms emerge as referent objects. However, the nature of the economic system is the primary determinant; hence the liberal system is based on the emergence and death of firms. The societal sector has collective identities as a referent object, and the influx of refugees or the nascent rival identities can be perceived as a threat. In the last sector presented by the Copenhagen School, the environmental sector, global warming, or the depletion of nonrenewable energy sources can be seen as existential threats to the future of the climate or endangered species (Buzan et al. 1998, 22–23). Additionally, Lausten and Wæver (2000, 719) added another new sector: the religion sector, whose referent object is “faith,” which determines the existential threat. These examples from different sectors indicate the divergences among the referent objects and the changing nature of the threat in line with them.

2.3.5 Facilitating conditions

Securitization is a process that starts with the presentation of an issue as a menace to the survival of the specified object. However, the school posits that there are some factors increasing the possibility of successful securitization. These factors were derived from the felicity conditions by Austin and named “facilitating conditions.” These conditions indicate that Austin’s influence over the school is not limited to the only speech act but can be found in the other elements (Peoples and Vaughan-Williams 2020, 118). However, as Wæver (2003, 14) maintained, these conditions cannot supplant the intersubjective process because their introduction of them can move theory close to objectivism.

The school posits that these conditions can be classified under two distinct categories: (I) internal conditions, linguistic-grammatical factors, and (II) external conditions, contextual and social factors. The internal conditions are related to “the procedures of the speech act,” as Austin mentioned in his felicity conditions. The external conditions, on the other hand, are associated with the position in which the act is performed (Buzan et al. 1998, 32).

In this context, the most notable condition for the internal conditions is to pursue the grammar of security by determining “the existential threat, point of no return, and a possible way out” (Buzan et al. 1998, 33). In addition to these elements, the framing of the necessary objects in the related sectors can increase the likelihood of successful securitization. In the external factors, there are two different conditions. The first one is related to the position of securitizer, which should have authority for the securitizing move to get acceptance. The second factor is linked to the nature of existential threats. The threat perception of some objects or situations is more threatening than others, such as tanks crossing the border or contaminated water (Buzan et al. 1998, 33). This factor should be seen as a convention which means that the threat perception of the tanks crossing the border is not the same as the leaflets due to the different historical records, which can be associated with psychological harm (Wæver 2003, 15).

In a nutshell, the Copenhagen School enumerated two conditions that are likely to increase the success rate of securitization. Even though these conditions do not suffice alone to make securitization happen, their presence eases the occurrence of securitization and the acceptance by the audience.

2.3.6 Methodology of the securitization theory

The securitization, methodologically, bases itself on textual analysis, which is intellectually rooted in the studies by Austin, Derrida, and Butler, as mentioned above. Buzan *et al.* (1998, 24) argue that the meaning of “security” is not related to people’s thoughts and ideas but to the way of the actors’ implicit use. For this reason, the textual analysis provides the methodological tools to understand the meaning.

The Copenhagen School embraced the “there is nothing outside the text” approach developed by Derrida. Wæver (2002, 26–27) states that the securitization approach uses public texts and does not aim to understand intentions, ideas, or beliefs. What matters for the securitization theory is the codes used by the actors. It means that there is nothing beyond the text and the context in which the act performed or the intentions of the actors are not studied by the school. In this sense, the Copenhagen School’s methodology bears similarity to Derrida. However, there is another aspect that differentiates the school’s

methodology from Derrida's approach. According to Copenhagen School, text can be either written or utterance, and this is not compatible with Derrida's approach (Akgül-Açıkmeşe 2011, 65).

It should be noted that different methods and techniques have been used in securitization theory. Even though discourse analysis is the most used, there is a growing interest in other methodologies such as process-tracing, ethnographic research, or context analysis (Balzacq 2010, 39–50). As Balzacq (2016, 26) stated, discourse analysis, the most preferred method, pay attention to how securitization occurs. The process-tracing, which has the most advocates, understands why some securitization attempts become successful while others fail. For instance, Sjöstedt (2010) analyzed the securitization of HIV/AIDS in the USA by investigating a long timespan through process tracing. This study indicates how and why HIV was identified as a security issue by the Clinton administration despite the low number of cases in the USA (Sjöstedt 2010, 150–51).

2.4 Securitization and Covid-19: The Literature Review

Global health issues have always attracted the attention of securitization scholars, and different health problems were framed as security problems. For example, HIV/AIDS and Avian Flu were securitized by leaders in other countries (Balzacq et al. 2016, 512–14), and literature on the securitization-global health nexus grew as new diseases emerged.

The question of “whether health issues should be securitized” became a central issue for the nexus of the securitization-health issue. Elbe (2006), in his study, attempted to answer this question in the framework of HIV/AIDS, and he enumerated the risks and benefits of securitizing HIV/AIDS. For instance, the securitization of HIV can raise awareness and funds by attracting attention to the issue at hand (2006, 131), while it can also reduce the role played by non-state actors, and the activation of “threat-defense logic,” which prioritizes the state organs, not the civilians (2006, 129–30). The same question was tried to get answered by Youde (2008) by analyzing another health issue, the Avian Flu. In his study, he states that “the world is right to be vigilant against avian flu, but its vigilance is completely out of line with the realities of the disease.” (2008, 164). As this quotation implies, he does not favor the securitization of a global health issue for three reasons:

inappropriate responses, which bring the army and branches of the military to the stage, and prioritizing short-term gains over long-term ones (2008, 159–61), diverting attention from other issues and diseases to only one specific health problem which is accompanied by enormous funding and time at the expense of other diseases and issue (2008, 162), and the widening of the gap between developed countries and the others, since developing/less-developed countries are marginalized and blamed for spreading the disease since they did not take necessary measures due to the economic or social problems (2008, 163).

Besides this question, the domestic context was analyzed to understand the success of securitization. Curley and Herrington (2011) investigated the securitization of avian flu in Indonesia and Vietnam and concluded that the socio-economic, political, and administrative structure impacts this process. For instance, the centralized one-party system in Vietnam eased the securitization and the audience approval (2011, 154), while the de-centralized institutional structure in Indonesia aggravated the securitization process (2011, 159). On the other hand, this impacts the audience's approval since the local people in Indonesia value provincial elites, who are also a primary channel for communication, and their acceptance of the rhetoric uttered by the ruling elites. However, the centralized structure of Vietnam helped the governing elites easily access their message to the local people (2011, 163). Additionally, the analysis of these two cases also reveals a deficiency in the theory, which is “Westphalian-minded” (2011, 164). Like these mentioned studies, the securitization of global health produced a significant number of studies, and the Covid-19 pandemic became another global health issue analyzed through this theoretical framework.

As stated, the use of war rhetoric and the adaptation of emergency and extraordinary measures opened a way for analyzing the Covid-19 pandemic through the securitization theory. For instance, French Prime Minister Emmanuel Macron stated, "We are at war, certainly in healthcare, we are not fighting an army, nor we are fighting another nation. The enemy here is invisible, elusive; it progresses. It thus requires a call to arms. We are at war." (Momtaz 2020). Other leaders and ministers uttered similar discourses, and extraordinary measures followed them (Akgül-Açıkmeşe 2020, 11). For example, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu labeled the pandemic conditions as a war, and the

Israeli government benefited from its intelligence service, *Shabak*, to monitor their citizens (Amit et al. 2020, 1167), or Hungary under Orbán, a case that will be analyzed in this thesis, enacted a bill which allows himself to bypass parliament, which will be examined in detail in the following chapter (Hegedus 2020, 1).

This use of war metaphors and carriage of the pandemic above politics attracted scholarly attention and produced a growing literature on the securitization of the Covid-19 pandemic. Different studies and analyses have been conducted on different Covid-19 pandemic management measures to curb the spread of the pandemic in the framework of securitization theory. The studies in the existing literature on the securitization of Covid-19 fall mainly into three interlinked areas: (I) geographical and country-wise analyses, and (II) theoretical analyses which criticize or praise the theory with examples from different cases, and (III) authoritarianism followed by the securitization in some countries. In terms of geographical analysis, countries in two continents were heavily investigated: European countries and Asian countries. With the assistance of these countries, the literature assessed the securitization process and its impact on the political settings in the related countries. In this vein, comparative analyses have been conducted to grasp the differences and similarities among countries during their “fight against Covid-19”.

As mentioned above, different state policies regarding the Covid-19 pandemic have been investigated. Russia, the US and Slovakia (Lukacovic 2020), Sweden (Larsson 2021), the Philippines (Hapal 2021), the UK, Australia and New Zealand (Kirk and McDonald 2021), Hungary (Molnár et al. 2020), Turkey and Egypt (Grančayová 2021), and Balkans (Vankovska 2020) are the prominent ones among these cases studies. In these studies, the authors either directly pay attention to securitization processes in the country they study or rebuke the securitization theory by indicating its deficiencies. For example, Kirk and McDonald (2021) analyzed three different countries, the UK, Australia, and New Zealand, and concluded that the securitization theory suffers from two deficiencies. Firstly, the securitization process in the UK was driven by the audience, not the elites or the actors in a powerful position, and secondly, under some circumstances, there can be an adaptation of emergency measures without uttering a securitizing discourse as happened in New Zealand during the pandemic. Prime Minister did not securitize the

pandemic as envisaged by the Copenhagen School, but emergency measures were adopted like the closure of the country and lockdowns. Hence, the authors stated that there is a need for more “nuanced and contextual analysis” to understand securitization (2021, 9). On the other hand, another study was conducted by Lukacovic (2020) in three different countries: Slovakia, Russia, and the US. She aimed to understand the way the leaders framed the pandemic and how other groups reacted to this framing. The author claimed that the Covid-19 pandemic was securitized in three countries; however, the author posits that the expansion of the means of communication and the rising dominance of social media has opened room for different actors to challenge securitization by the leaders in the privileged positions (2020, 5). For example, in Slovakia, other political actors and elites challenged the securitization of the Covid-19 pandemic, while the grassroots organizations challenged this in the US. Hence, The difference among the responses to the securitization of the pandemic varies according to the countries' pre-existing contexts and political circumstances (2020, 11), as Kirk and McDonald stated. Another context-based analysis was studied on the role of the audience in Indonesia. Chairil (2020) aimed to understand why the Indonesian public accepted the securitization of the Covid-19 pandemic partially, and he concluded that the dominance of military and national security organs in the face of the pandemic, the lack of transparency, and the negligence of human security aspect of the pandemic led the Indonesians to accept the securitizing move partially (2020, 143–44). The article indicates the role of public trust, the importance of non-state security in the securitization of the Covid-19, and the audience's acceptance of the securitizing moves.

Together with these comparative analyses, there were studies on a specific country that opposed the premises of the theory. Larsson (2021), in his research on Sweden, claimed that Sweden did not fail in the securitization of Covid-19 but demonstrated how securitization ought to be in a democratic context. The political elites followed the rules which have been determined democratically, and it was “rule-following,” not the “rule-breaking” (as stated by the Copenhagen School) pursued by the Swedish authorities. Hence, the author asserts that Sweden is an example of how to respond to security issues in democratic political settings (2021, 21). Thus, Larsson criticizes the Copenhagen

school by looking from a more democratic angle and challenging its “emergency measures,” which carry an issue above the political realm.

In addition to the abovementioned studies with critical lenses, there is another group of studies focusing on the nexus between securitization and authoritarian tendencies. In this group of studies, there are both comparative analyses and single-case analyses. For instance, Grančayová (2021) concentrated on the question of “how autocratic regimes utilized the Covid-19 pandemic for their own good” and compared Turkey and Egypt during the pandemic in the framework of selective securitization and securitization dilemma. Grančayová (2021, 79–84) claimed that the leaders in these two states prioritized their fragile economies and tourism sectors, which are an enormous revenue resource for their economies. Additionally, the leaders in both countries pursued two same strategies to sustain their own survival: the use of a discursive hegemony regarding “who securitizes what and to what extent” and the consolidation of anti-Covid measures on the one hand (2021, 84). The author claims that these leaders utilized Covid-19 to extend their own ruling. Besides this study which concentrates on the extension of the authoritarian regimes, there have been other studies emphasizing populist governments. Hapal (2021) analyzed the securitization-populism nexus in the framework of securitization of Covid-19 in the Philippines. Hapal (2021, 225) securitized the pandemic on the ground that the nation was at war against an unseen enemy; however, this securitization brought another issue: the disciplining of “non-obedient people” (or *pasaway* in Filipino). The president of the Philippines, Duterte, used the Covid-19 pandemic and the emergency to discipline and punish the *pasaways* who did not obey the rules. With the help of this securitization, Duterte reinforced the policing capacity of the regime and turned it into a more authoritarian regime (2021, 229). In other words, the Philippines government under Duterte utilized Covid-19 to “protect angels from demons” who challenge the rules or are perceived as “others” (2021, 239). As indicated by these studies, these abovementioned securitizations entrusted leaders with the power to take advantage of the threat, which is Covid-19 in these cases, and to silence the opposing parts (Buzan et al. 1998, 29).

In sum, there is growing literature on the securitization of the Covid-19 pandemic, as it happened in previous global health issues like avian flu or HIV/AIDS. The literature

generally falls into two distinct areas: the studies critical of the securitization theory and the securitization-authoritarian nexus. This study aims to contribute to the literature empirically by analyzing the securitization of the Covid-19 pandemic in Hungary and the EU. Additionally, the authoritarian tendencies of the democratic backsliding in Hungary under Viktor Orbán will contribute to this group of literature. In the literature, the Covid-19 pandemic was studied in the context of Hungary; however, it was either the analysis of the metaphors in the framework of securitization (Molnár et al. 2020) or the populism and the illiberal nature of the pandemic management (Norbert et al. 2021; Bene and Boda 2021). However, the former study on Hungary utilized content analysis as a methodological tool and aimed to calculate how many times Orbán used concepts such as “fear, war, threat, etc.”. On the other hand, the other studies describe the events that occurred during the pandemic by referring to Hungary's political climate. In this study, through a methodology of speech act, the statements of Viktor Orbán, who became the main powerholder in Hungarian politics, will be investigated whether the Covid-19 pandemic has been securitized or not. Additionally, the Hungarian approach to the Covid-19 pandemic will be compared to the European Union’s approach, of which Hungary is a member. The comparison of the EU and Hungary aims to understand whether Hungary differed from the EU in terms of pandemic management or not.

2.5 Case Selection, Methodology, and Limitations

This thesis focuses on the securitization of the Covid-19 pandemic in Hungary and the European Union during the first months of the pandemic (March-June 2020), and it shows that there are two cases in this study: (I) Hungary and (II) the EU.

There is a primary reason for selecting Hungary as a case: its distinct position in the EU due to the rising authoritarianism in the 2010s. As stated in the first chapter and as will be analyzed in detail in the following chapter, Hungary, after Fidesz under Viktor Orbán came in power in 2010, started to get away from democratic norms and ideals and turned into an example of an illiberal democracy (Kornai 2015; Plattner 2019; Krekó and Enyedi 2018). This transition to semi-democracy makes Hungary the most problematic country, which challenges the EU norms and values. The change in the political outlook of Hungary placed Prime Minister Viktor Orbán at the top of Hungarian politics and the

country in a distinct position within the European Union which advocates democratic and liberal values. The international agencies and organizations directed harsh criticisms toward Hungary. Freedom House identified as a “semi-democracy,” and the country became the first “not-fully-democracy” in the EU (Gehrke 2020a). However, it was not only limited to the Freedom House. Other international organizations, like OSCE, or agencies, like Varieties of Democracy, rebuked Hungary due to the erosion of the democratic institutions, media structure, and judiciary system. As will be mentioned, the two elections following the 2010 elections, 2014 and 2018, were criticized due to their “free but not fair” natures since the media coverage of the opposition parties was low compared to the Fidesz officials and Viktor Orbán (Buzogány 2017; Walker and Boffey 2018). However, the criticisms were not only limited to these organizations and institutions.

These anti-democratic policies and the democratic backsliding which dominated the last decade attracted the attention of the EU, of which Hungary has been a member since 2004. The EP, for instance, criticized the subversion of democracy in favor of Fidesz and the erosion of the checks and balances such as the Constitutional Court, the media, and the electoral process (European Parliament 2013). The refugee crisis that erupted in 2015 is another example of this aberration from the EU. Viktor Orbán, a critic of the immigration policies pursued by the EU, made statements about “bringing back the death penalty” (Traynor 2015). These remarks, which contradict the EU values, attracted the attention of the EP, which asked the EC to evaluate the situation in Hungary. Additionally, it was stated that Article 7 of the TEU can be initiated if these statements continue, which occurred in 2018 (European Parliament 2015).

However, the best example of Hungary’s aberration from the European Union occurred in 2018 with the initiation of Article 7 of the Treaty of the European Union against Hungary by the European Parliament due to concerns about the judiciary independence, free media, and civil society (Baume and Bayer 2021). Article 7 of the Treaty of the European Union was introduced in 2000 to prevent breaches of the EU values and law with an aim to hold the accused countries accountable (Hervey and Livingstone 2016). Article 7.1 enables the European Council to warn the country. However, if the violations continue, Article 7.2 permits the EUCO to impose sanctions and suspend the voting right.

This process can be initiated with a proposal by a third of the EU members, the EP, or the EC. The EUCO can posit that there is a risk of a “breach of EU values” after getting consent from the EP (EUR-Lex 2012).

In addition to democratic backsliding, there is a factor that facilitates the case study on Hungary: the data availability, which means that the statements and remarks delivered by the Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán is available in English on the website titled About Hungary (<https://abouthungary.hu/>). The official statements made during the Parliamentary sessions and the interviews on the radio programs can be accessed via this website. These statements are necessary to evaluate the pandemic in the framework of the securitization theory since the theory benefits from textual analysis. This website provides researchers with official sources to assess the securitization of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The second case, as mentioned above, is the European Union. The brief analysis of Hungary’s deviation from the EU norms and values necessitates the analysis of these norms. Article 2 of the Treaty of the European Union states that (Official Journal of the European Union 2012):

The Union is founded on **the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities**. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which **pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men** prevail. (Emphasis added)

Article 2 demonstrates that the EU espouses liberal norms and values. As stated above, Hungary challenged these norms and values from 2010 onwards. In this vein, this thesis aims to understand whether this deviation in Hungary continued during the pandemic and whether this aberration impacted the pandemic politics in Hungary. This thesis will focus on the statements and declarations made by the European Council to understand the securitization of the Covid-19 pandemic in the EU in order to answer this question.

The reason for analyzing the speeches, statements, and declarations by the EUCO is related to the EU’s institutional structures. The European Commission is the representative of the common EU interests and the body which initiates the law-making process, while the European Council consists of the heads of the states (or governments)

and determines the priorities and primary direction of the EU's policy. On the other hand, the Council of the European Union is the main representative of the EU states, in which the relevant ministers meet ("Types of Institutions and Bodies" n.d.) For this reason, the European Council is the main body that guides the EU policies. Hence, this analysis will primarily focus on the speeches and statements delivered by the President of the European Council, Charles Michel, and the official declarations by this institutional body. However, there was a factor that characterized the EU's pandemic policies. On March 10, 2020, the EUCO asked the EC to coordinate all measures (European Council 2020b). For this reason, the EC planned and coordinated Covid-19 policies in the EU. In this sense, the chapter on the EU will focus on the statements by Charles Michel, the declarations made by the Council of the EU, and the statement made by Ursula von der Leyen.

In terms of methodology, textual analysis is the central tool to grasp the process. As mentioned, this study benefits from the securitization theory developed by the Copenhagen School as a theoretical framework, which has textual analysis as a significant methodological instrument. In this study, as envisaged by the members of the Copenhagen School, the methodology of speech act analysis will be conducted. Additionally, as Wæver (2002, 26–27) remarked that public texts should be used. This study benefits from the texts of statements and remarks published on the relevant websites, About Hungary, and the official website of the related EU bodies.

In terms of limitations, this research suffers from two specific interrelated limitations. Firstly, this study concentrates on the statements that have been translated into English and published on the About Hungary website. However, besides the statements, social media posts, especially Facebook posts, were frequently used by Viktor Orbán during the pandemic (Norbert et al. 2021, 274). The statements and Facebook posts that have not been translated from Hungarian fall outside the scope of this study. The second shortcoming comes from the emphasis on the statements uttered by the Prime Minister and the negligence of the other actors like the Minister of Health or the actors performing at the societal level. However, as stated, Hungary in the post-2010s is characterized by a system with the charismatic Prime Minister at the top of the system, and Viktor Orbán is the main powerholder in Hungarian politics. Additionally, Viktor Orbán emerged as a key figure in this process, and he became the main determinant of the management

policies (Bene and Boda 2021, 97). That's why the emphasis on the statements made by Orbán can explain a greater extent of the securitization process in Hungary.



3. SECURITIZATION OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN HUNGARY

The Covid-19 pandemic, which spread from the People's Republic of China to other countries, was handled differently in various countries. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the pandemic was securitized by different countries under different contexts, and various measures were introduced by the political leaders in these states. This chapter is wholly devoted to the securitization of the Covid-19 pandemic in Hungary, and the whole process will be analyzed in the framework of securitization theory developed by the Copenhagen School. The chapter will process as follows: Firstly, the political outlook of Hungary will be mentioned to understand the atmosphere in which the securitization of Covid-19 occurred. Significantly, the emphasis will be placed on the last decade of Hungarian politics since the governing party, Fidesz, came into power in 2010. After the political outlook, the Covid-19 pandemic in Hungary will be mentioned, and the number of infected people and the death toll will be provided. Thirdly, the security statements of Viktor Orbán will be demonstrated through a methodology of speech act to understand the securitization of the Covid-19 pandemic through the theoretical framework provided by the Copenhagen School. In this vein, the securitizing acts, the emergency measures, and the role of the audience will be identified.

3.1 Hungary: The Political Outlook

It is crucial to understand the political outlook of Hungary to grasp the management of the Covid-19 pandemic, and its authoritarianism in the last decade. Hungary, following its independence from the Soviet bloc, replaced its communist system with a liberal democratic model and turned into a democratic country with a market economy and a representative government elected with free and fair elections for the first time in history. The Hungarian transition was characterized by two phenomena: non-violence and elite-driven process (Bozóki and Simon 2012, 208).

After its independence, Hungary became a county that enacted several reforms and made a transition to a liberal form of governance. The electoral and constitutional structure of

the country was determined in the National Round Table Talks, which had three pillars: the Hungarian Communist Party (*Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt*, MSZMP), the Opposition Round Table (named EKA, which includes nine organizations), and the relatively ineffective pillar Third Side consisted of seven different organizations. As a result of the table talks, which were held in the summer of 1989, the constitution based on socialism was adjusted to democracy, and the Republic was declared on 23 October 1989 (Bozóki and Simon 2012, 209). The country adopted a parliamentary system, which has the prime minister as the head of the executive, and there was a system of check and balance.

This desire to make a transition to democratic governance was accompanied by another idea: the return to Europe, which means to seek membership into the European-led organizations, namely the European Council, the European Community (the European Union today), and NATO. Hungary joined these three organizations in the following period. Hungary became a member of the European Council in 1991 (Bozóki and Simon 2012, 212). In 1999, the country joined NATO, and this membership was approved by the majority of the Hungarians. In 2004, Hungary officially joined the European Union, for which the country revised its economic, political, and legal structure for about twelve years (von Klimó 2017, 78).

Hungarian politics, after the 1990s onwards, were characterized by different political parties, including leftist MSZP, centrist MDF, and conservative Fidesz. These parties lost their seats in the elections, which can be seen as a sign of a functioning democracy or a consolidated democracy (Bozóki and Simon 2012, 226). As indicated in the table above, the Hungarian Prime Ministers changed regularly, and different prime ministers emerged from different parties, and Hungary was considered as a “success story” for this variety of cabinets and prime ministers (Rupnik 2012, 132) (Table 3.1). However, after the 2010 election, which brought Fidesz-KDNP in power, Hungarian democracy started to backslide under Prime Minister Viktor Orbán.

Year	Prime Minister	Parties
1990-1993	József Antall	MDF-FKGP-KDNP
1993-1994	Péter Boross	MDF-KDNP
1994-1998	Gyula Horn	MSZP-SZDSZ
1998-2002	Viktor Orbán	Fidesz-FKGP-MDF
2002-2004	Péter Medgyessy	MSZP-SZDSZ
2004-2009	Ferenc Gyurcsány	MSZP-SZDSZ,
2009-2010	Gordon Bajnai	MSZP
2010-2014	Viktor Orbán	Fidezs-KDNP
2014-2018	Viktor Orbán	Fidezs-KDNP
2018-...	Viktor Orbán	Fidezs-KDNP

Table 3.1: The Prime Ministers of Hungary after gaining independence in 1990

Source: (Meyer-Sahling and Toth 2021, 100)

The emergence and the transformation of Fidesz are important to understand the current political outlook of the country. Fidesz (the Alliance of Young Democrats or *Fiatal Demokraták Szövetsége* in Hungarian), when it was first established in 1988, embraced liberal ideas, and its audience was educated young Hungarians, and in the first half of the 1990s, received around 7 percent of the votes (von Klimó 2017, 46). However, there were different parties advocating liberal values like free market and democracy, and this plethora of parties in the same political camp led Fidesz to receive a low percentage of the votes. On the contrary, there were a few political parties on the right side of the spectrum. In the mid-1990, under the leadership of Viktor Orbán, the party altered its political outlook and the audience by espousing an ideology based on nationalism and conservatism or altering its side of the spectrum by moving towards the right (Batory 2016, 4). In the 1998 elections, Fidesz emerged as the party with the most voters. However, in the following two elections, Fidesz lost the elections to SZMP. In the 2002 elections, Fidesz lost by a small percentage, and in the 2006 elections, despite receiving more votes than the SZMP, Fidesz had fewer seats in the parliament, and these two defeats brought more radicalization (Rupnik 2012, 135).

The 2010 Parliamentary election was the turning point for Hungarian democracy. Fidesz, under the leadership of Viktor Orbán, formed an alliance with KDNP

(*Kereszténydemokrata Néppárt* in Hungarian or Christian Democratic People's Party) (Meyer-Sahling and Toth 2021, 99). This alliance won the elections by receiving 52.7 percent of the votes, and this share of votes enabled this coalition government to enjoy 68 percent of the seats in the Hungarian parliament, thanks to the electoral system, which favors large parties to ensure government stability (Öniş and Kutlay 2019, 236). However, KDNP does not have a prominent role other than being the ally of Fidesz (Bene and Boda 2021, 87). This victory provided Fidesz with another opportunity: to amend the constitution. According to the Hungarian constitution, two-thirds of the seats suffice to revise the constitution (Krekó and Enyedi 2018, 41–42).

Fidesz, by taking advantage of this opportunity, revised the Hungarian constitution, and it gave the party in power political leverage over other political and societal actors and caused damage to Hungarian democracy. There were significant changes in the Hungarian constitution, the whole check-and-balance system was damaged, and most of the institutions were transformed in a way that favored Fidesz. All of these political moves brought the country close to autocracy (Pappas 2019, 79). This constitution, which is named "Fundamental Law," was not a product of different groups and political parties; on the contrary, it was not open to public discussions and written by the party in power, Fidesz, and it came into effect in 2012 which transformed the Hungarian politics utterly (Rupnik 2012, 133). There is one characteristic of Fundamental Law that is worth noting due to its relationship with pandemic management: the inclusion of different special legal orders and "state of danger" was one of them. According to Fundamental Law, a state of danger can be declared in case of natural or man-made disasters to alleviate their impact. Accordingly, the Government can enact new measures or suspend some laws (Szente and Fruzsina 2020, 157). However, it has a time constraint, and the parliament has to approve all measures beyond 15 days (Hegedus 2020, 1).

Following the Constitutional amendments, the second target of the Government was the Constitutional Court. Fidesz, by taking advantage of its majority, changed the structure of the court. For instance, the number of judges appointed by the party in power was increased to seven, or the court's authority over budgetary and fiscal matters was either weakened or entirely abrogated. All these actions and policies moved the Constitutional Court out of the political life in Hungary and abated its crucial role in check and balances,

which is necessary for democracy (Bánkuti et al. 2012, 139–40). Besides the constitutional court, the mass media was brought under control with the restructured Media Authority, which has a Fidesz-royalist in charge and established Media Council, whose five members were appointed by Fidesz for nine years in 2010 (Polyák 2019, 284). In addition, the Fidesz found its own media structure, which rewards the Fidesz-loyal newspaper while punishing the others. For instance, the person in charge of the newspaper, *Figyelő*, works as a government consultant and benefits from the state funds more than other newspapers. Besides the privileges provided to loyal media organs, the Government expends on campaigns to attack “the enemies of Hungary” like George Soros, the EU, or the influx of refugees (Krekó and Enyedi 2018, 47). This political change impacted the economic outlook. Companies that are closely allied to Fidesz started to prevail in the economy, which led to an increase in corruption in Hungary (Krekó and Enyedi 2018, 44; Kornai 2015, 38). These examples, which are few among many, indicate how the democratic system and institutions were subverted.

The migration issue and the way the Orbán government handles it exemplify the main characteristics of the Orbán government. Furthermore, Viktor Orbán used migration to demonstrate the seriousness of the pandemic through analogies during the pandemic. Hence, this issue is worth noting. The refugees coming from the Middle East to the European borders occupied the agenda after the influx of refugees started in 2015, and the issue was framed as a security issue. The Government presented itself as a “protector” or a “guardian” of Hungarian society and values (von Klimó 2017, 202). The embracement of xenophobic and hostile stance toward the refugees by Orbán became the main characteristic of Hungary in that period. The Government propagandized the economic loss and the harm to Hungarian law and order due to the influx of refugees (Ágh 2016, 7). The Hungarian public embraced this hostile and anti-immigrant stance. For instance, as of 2017, 6 out of 10 Hungarians perceived migration as a threat (Simonovits 2020, 171).

The democratic backsliding process placed Orbán at the top of the Hungarian political system (Kornai 2015, 35). The offices were full of servants loyal to Fidesz and Orbán, ranging from presidency to minor offices. The economy started to get dominated by the companies owned by the friends of Orbán, like the media outlets. In other words, Hungary

turned into a “post-Communist Mafia State,” in the words of the previous Minister of Education (von Klimó 2017, 201). It should be noted that not only the policies are the reason for democratic backsliding. Even though they form the major parts of this process, Viktor Orbán explicitly declared his support for illiberal democracy by giving examples from Turkey, Russia, and Singapore, and he claimed that the system they formulate is an “illiberal state, or non-liberal state” (Plattner 2019, 9).

Fidesz under Orbán won the next two elections (2014 and 2018). In 2014, Fidesz, allied with KDNP, won 44.9 percent of the votes. In the 2018 election, with the assistance of the refugee crises mentioned above, this vote share rose to 49.3 percent (Politico Research 2020). However, these elections were not “free and fair.” The 2014 election was criticized by Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe for its “free but not fair” nature (Buzogány 2017, 1312–13). The OSCE report (2014, 2–3) states that most of the media had an association with Fidesz, which created an imbalance in the campaigning process. The 2018 election was also rebuked by OSCE for the same reason and maintained that the media coverage was biased in favor of the ruling coalition and the use of state funds in a way that provided an advantage for the Fidesz-KDNP coalition (Walker and Boffey 2018).

Together with the elections, other non-democratic policies were criticized by different organizations and the EU. For example, the European Parliament criticized Hungarian constitutional changes on the ground of encroachment on fundamental rights (Buzogány 2017, 1316), and in 2020 the EU rebuked the “democratic standards” of Hungary due to its judiciary system, civil society, and media under the control of the government (European Commission 2020a). As mentioned in the previous chapter, the best example of Hungary’s aberration from the European Union is the initiation of Article 7 of the Treaty of the European Union against Hungary by the European Parliament in 2018 due to previously mentioned policies, amendments, and regulations (Baume and Bayer 2021).

The annual reports published by the research teams touched upon the democratic erosion in Hungary, such as Varieties of Democracy (Figure 3.1) and NGOs like Freedom House (Figure 3.2), in parallel with these criticisms by the international organizations. For example, according to the dataset which pays attention to Civil Liberties and the Liberal

democracy score of the Countries, Hungary started to backslide democratically after 2009; however, the process began to accelerate following Fidesz’s landslide victory.

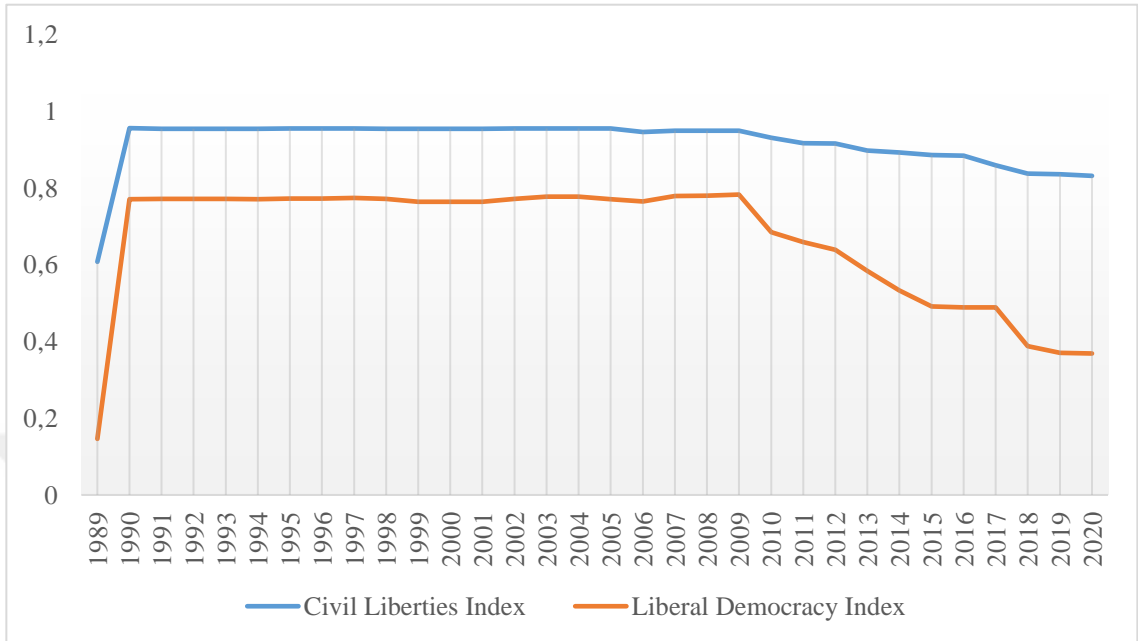


Figure 3.1: Civil Liberties Score and Liberal Democracy Score of Hungary (1989-2020)

Source: (“Varieties of Democracy: Variable Graph” 2021)

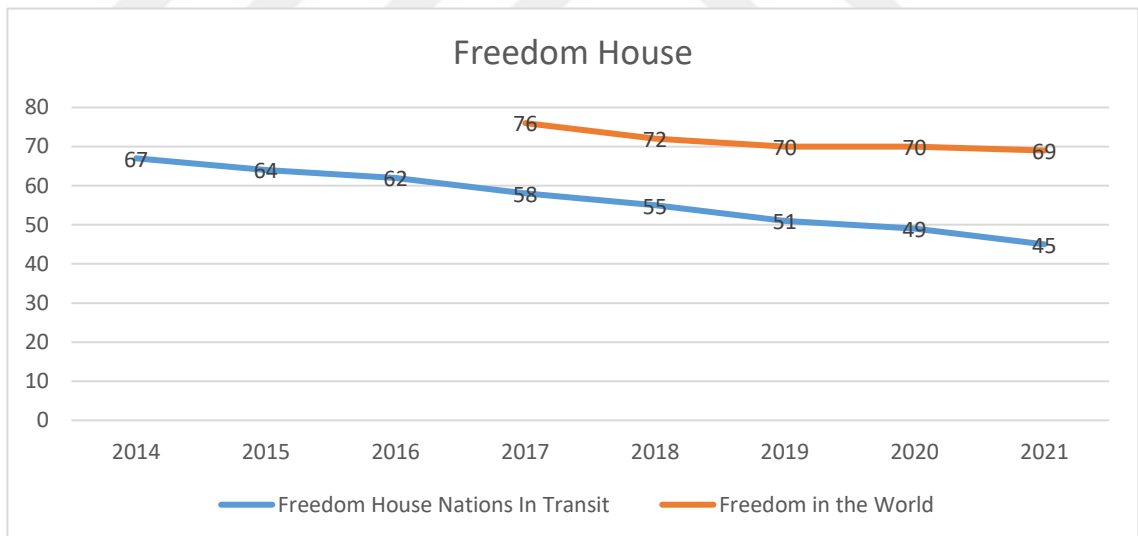


Figure 3.2: Democracy Score of Hungary (2014-2021)

Source: (Végh 2021; “Hungary: Freedom in the World 2021 Country Report | Freedom House” 2021)

The index prepared by Freedom House also clearly demonstrates this trend. Even though this chart does not provide any information on the democracy in Hungary before Fidesz came into power, the downward trend in the second period of the 2010s is blatant.

However, what is striking is that Freedom House identified Hungary as “partly free” (Gehrke 2020b), and Hungary became the only EU member that is not a democracy.²

In short, Hungary, after Fidesz came in power in 2010, started to experience democratic erosion by subverting democratic institutions and the check-and-balance structure. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán was placed at the top of the system, and the appointments of the top officials, the economic structure, and the media are directly linked to the desires of the Prime Minister, which makes Orbán the central figure in the political landscape.

3.2 Covid-19 in Hungary: The Timeline

After the eruption of the Covid-19 pandemic in China, Hungary reacted by forming a group named “Operational Group” on January 31 to monitor the virus's situation, coordinate the precautions, and public information. Hence, the Operational Group informed the Hungarian public via televised meetings after its formation (Bene and Boda 2021, 90–91). On February 3, the 28-point action plan was introduced to manage the necessary precautions against the pandemic (About Hungary 2020a). It should be added that in the first two months of 2020, Prime Minister Orbán emphasized migration, not the coronavirus. For example, in his statement on February 28, Orbán stated that migration from Africa and the Middle East is the real menace while the Covid-19 pandemic receives most of the global attention (About Hungary 2020b).

However, the detection of the first cases occurred in March 2020, a month later than the introduction of the action plan. Two Iranian students studying in Hungary were tested positive for coronavirus on March 4. After detecting the first two cases, Viktor Orbán became the leading actor in the pandemic management by leaving negligent behavior that he previously had (Norbert et al. 2021, 274–75). He stated, “Hungary has all the personnel, facilities, and regulations in place to handle the situation” (Kovacs 2020a).

² For this report: Hungary, Freedom in the World 2019: <https://freedomhouse.org/country/hungary/freedom-world/2019>.

Following the appearance of the virus in Hungary, the number of cases began to increase, as indicated in the graph below (Figure 3.3). The first death from coronavirus occurred on March 15 (Norbert et al. 2021, 273), and the transmission accelerated after April 2020 (Bene and Boda 2021, 93).

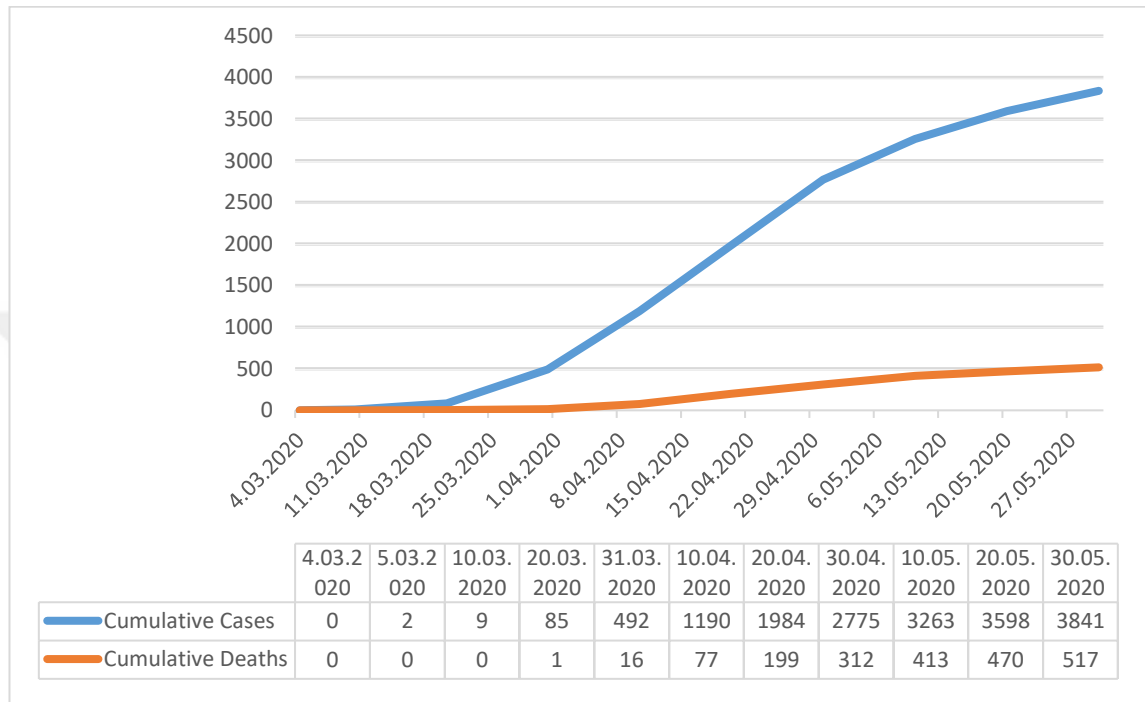


Figure 3.3: The Cumulative Number of Cases and the Death Toll in Hungary (March-May)

Source: (“Hungary: WHO Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Dashboard With Vaccination Data” 2021)

To slow down the transmission and curb the impacts of the pandemic, after the detection of the coronavirus cases, the Government introduced several measures in the fields of economy, politics, and civil rights. For example, on March 11, the Government declared a “state of emergency” with reference to Fundamental Law (Hegedus 2020, 1), and on March 21, all schools and kindergartens were closed to slow down the spread of the virus (Norbert et al. 2021, 274). All these measures will be analyzed in detail in the section which pays attention to “emergency measures.”

3.3 Covid-19 and Security Speech-Acts by Orbán

This chapter aims to understand the securitization of the Covid-19 pandemic in Hungary in the framework of the securitization theory developed by the Copenhagen School. In

this sense, these statements (March-June) delivered by Viktor Orbán will be investigated to find the major components of the securitization process. The securitizing remarks, the emergency measures, and the acceptance by the audience will be determined as envisaged by the Copenhagen School. The questions like whether the Covid-19 pandemic was framed as an existential threat, whether extraordinary measures were taken in the face of the pandemic and whether the target audience accepted the securitizing framing would be answered. In addition to these major components of the securitization theory, the referent objects, the facilitating conditions, and the idea of the “point of no return” will be searched in the statements by Viktor Orbán.

3.3.1 Securitizing utterances, referent objects, and facilitating conditions

The first statement on the coronavirus outbreak was delivered by Orbán on March 5, 2020, after detecting the first cases in the country. This statement was made after the Prime Minister met with the Operational Group, which was formed in January 2020 to take necessary precautions against the Covid-19 pandemic. This statement directly framed the coronavirus as a danger and determined the primary guidelines about the themes which appeared in the following addresses by Orbán. In this statement, Orbán (2020d) stated that:

Today the Group again confirmed that **two dangers** are inherent in the coronavirus: **one to public health and the other economic in nature. This is a virus that can clearly cause harm to both human life and the economy at the same time.** This Group, the members of which – or the key members of which – I will introduce to you in a moment, is dedicated to the protection of human lives; so it does not deal with economic issues. This is the correct order of priorities: first of all we need to deal with issues centring on human life; that is the first thing, and then the financial professionals will concern themselves with measuring the economic impact, which is work for a later phase. **Effective prevention requires effort on the part of everyone. So I would like to ask everyone observing us not to consider this preventive work solely as an authority or government task, because effective preventive demands effort from everyone.** (Emphasis added)

In this statement, as highlighted, Viktor Orbán identified two distinct referent objects: the Hungarian people and the economy. However, he put the priority on the former one and framed the Covid-19 pandemic as a “danger,” something from which people should protect themselves and something from which the economy should be protected. In the following quotations from Viktor Orbán, there will be direct references to these two objects. Additionally, these two referent objects shaped the emergency measures taken

against the virus. Also, his request to work collectively to slow down the transmission of the pandemic will be used frequently to show “how enormous the threat is.”

In the same statement, even though there were no measures were taken against the Covid-19 pandemic, Viktor Orbán (2020d) remarked that:

This situation requires the Government to provide the necessary resources for **preventive measures**. There will be **no shortcoming on that front**, and I can promise the professionals and the public that there will be no financial barrier or obstacle to the **battle against the virus** in Hungary. I would like to ask the political parties for restraint, as people’s protection is not a political issue, and certainly not a party-political issue. And most importantly, I would like to ask people for their cooperation. I ask the citizens of Hungary to be cooperative and understanding if they find that **combating the virus comes with inconveniences – that it involves inconvenience**. **Now the rules we need to put into effect are dictated by common sense**. Before the virus appeared in Hungary, during the prevention phase we had already taken a number of necessary measures; and **if necessary, we will be taking more and more decisions every day** as a result of the Operational Group’s discussions. (Emphasis added)

The focus on the “inconveniences” and Orbán’s implication that “the more to come in the future” indicates that the Government can adopt new measures in the face of this threat. As stated in the last sentences, the implication that there can be a change in the lifestyles that were otherwise not sensible matches the pillars of the securitization process. The introduction of measures and the likelihood of novel precautions to slow down the spread of the virus is the “emergency measures,” a component of securitization. Additionally, there is another prominent feature of Orbán’s style exemplified in this statement: the use of military terms and themes. As seen from the quotation above, “front,” “battle against,” and “combating” were used to emphasize that the situation could turn into a more severe form. This statement carries the seeds of securitization of the Covid-19 pandemic with its references such as “danger to Hungarian people” and “battle against the virus.”

On March 11, the Hungarian Government declared a state of emergency to curb the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact, as mentioned above. On March 13, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán answered questions on a radio program named “Good Morning Hungary,” and in this interview, he remarked that (2020c):

In Hungary a **special legal order** has a different meaning from that in most European countries. Here it is a special situation regulated in the Constitution when normal constitutional principles and rules are effectively suspended or bypassed, and it is possible to implement **measures which the gravity of the emergency demands, and which depart from the procedures which are usual in a democracy**. It thus allows for the implementation of **swift and immediate measures**.

This is perhaps **unprecedented in our history. I don't remember anything of the kind here in Hungary**, and I've been a Member of Parliament for thirty years. But neither is it something which is often seen in other places around the world. I don't want to be a doom monger, but should the need arise, we could go as far as to place plants and factories under state control, and production facilities could be put at the service of the state. So this is **somewhere between peacetime democracy and a state of war**. (Emphasis added)

In this quotation, the emphasis on the “unprecedented” situation in Hungarian history exemplifies the securitization of the Covid-19 pandemic. The extraordinary nature of the pandemic and the necessity to adopt measures that have never been taken before pointing to the securitization of the Covid-19 pandemic. As stated by the members of the Copenhagen School, the mundane political process was subverted to deal with the securitized issue, which is the Covid-19 pandemic in this case. The depiction of the situation as “somewhere between peacetime democracy and a state of war” implies the urgent nature of this issue. In addition, the emphasis on the “swift and immediate measures” had an impact on the emergency measures.

In the same radio program, Orbán continued to use war and military-related metaphors. Orbán (2020c) remarked that:

The world's **biggest problem is that this is an unknown virus**, we have very little knowledge about it, and there's no vaccine, no cure, no antidote; this is why everyone is filled with worry and fear. **We are facing an unknown enemy**. (Emphasis added)

Besides using war-related themes, this quotation includes statements that increase the urgency of the situation. The emphasis on the absence of any kind of treatment against Covid-19 and the depiction of the disease as an “unknown enemy” gives the message that the situation the country and the world face is extraordinary and has to be handled immediately. The necessity of novel measures was underlined in this statement more than once (2020c):

But what can we do in a situation like this? **If we have no cure for it, we must try to prevent its spread. We are developing the rules for this. In addition to this fortitude, this demands strength from public administration – or law enforcement services, to put it another way**. (Emphasis added)

The recurring stress over the absence of cures and antidotes appeared again, and the “hindrance of the spread of the virus” requires the amendment and introduction of new

laws, regulations, and measures. This is the point at which the emergency measures were rationalized (Viktor Orbán 2020c):

This means that the number of infections will increase, and after that **it will take us quite a few months to return to where we started from**. So, there's no point in hoping or deluding ourselves into thinking that we can get over this thing within a week or two. It will last for many months, and so **we must expect our lives to change**. Over the next few months **life won't be the same, because measures must be enacted in order to contain the epidemic**. (Emphasis added)

As indicated above, “containing the epidemic” was the main objective, and the measures were introduced to realize this aim. There was a need for change in politics because there was something that should be dealt with urgently. The statements made by Orbán in this radio program are a great example of securitization. Especially the negative nature of the securitization process can be seen in the quotation above. Orbán's remarks about the extraordinary and unexpected circumstances dictated by the Covid-19 pandemic and the need for handling this issue in a different way are great examples of securitization. The sense of “this is the only way out” was established, and the regulations to reduce face-to-face interactions were rationalized. The understanding of “the only way out” falls into the scope of the internal facilitating conditions related to the securitizing action's linguistic aspect.

In addition to the above-mentioned discursive practices exemplifying securitization, Viktor Orbán (2020c) made direct references to the previous “challenges” (or previously securitized issues) to demonstrate how serious the Covid-19 pandemic is that:

There's no doubt that **we're engaged in a war on two fronts: on one front there is migration, and on the other the coronavirus epidemic**. (Emphasis added)

This sentence made an analogy between migration and coronavirus. As mentioned, the Orbán government used the migration crisis as a political tool to expand its political base and depict itself as a guardian of Hungarian values. The Hungarian public supported the stance of Fidesz, and migration was perceived as a threat. For this reason, the utterance of an issue that is framed and accepted as a security issue and a new challenge in the same context underlined the severe and urgent nature of the pandemic. Hence, this can be perceived as a “facilitating condition,” which increases the likelihood of a successful securitization.

Orbán, three days after this above-mentioned radio program, made a statement in the Hungarian parliament, which focused on the “unprecedented situation in Hungarian history,” the change in daily life, and the normal functioning of politics. Similarly, Orbán (2020a) made analogies to previous crises:

Not only is there no vaccine against the coronavirus epidemic; **we do not have a global solution either**. Therefore, **every country is developing its own defence strategy**. For us this situation is not an unfamiliar one. **This was the case in earlier crises – whether the economic crisis, flooding or the immigration crisis. On those occasions we also had to develop our own national crisis management action plans.** (Emphasis added)

Firstly, he emphasized that there were no solutions to this virus, and it necessitates the adoption of new measures. Secondly, he claimed that this crisis has similarities with the previous crisis. Besides the 2015 migration crisis, the Danube flooding and the post-2008 economic crisis were highlighted by Orbán. This statement, similar to previous cases, can be seen as a “facilitating condition” since former extraordinary and securitized issues necessitated different types of emergence measures. Through this resemblance, the coronavirus pandemic was easily upgraded above the ordinary functioning of politics, like the above-mentioned previous crises.

In the remainder of the same statement, he shifted the attention to the economic consequences of the coronavirus pandemic, another referent object stated by Orbán. There are two parts in this statement that clearly has all the major components of securitization (Viktor Orbán 2020a).

Now I would also like to say a few words about the economic consequences. **The coronavirus epidemic is primarily a threat to human life, but clearly the global epidemic already also has grave economic consequences. The entire economy – I’m talking about the Hungarian economy now – will be in distress, but not all at once, not all at the same time.** There are sectors in the economy – such as tourism, catering and services – where **trouble has already arrived.** (Emphasis Added)

Orbán securitized the Covid-19 pandemic by citing two distinct referent objects, as he did before: Hungarian people and the economy, emphasizing the specific sectors that were affected the most. In the following of the same statement, Orbán (2020a) mentioned that a change in the budget is required:

As the primary **danger is to Hungarians’ jobs**, in the coming weeks we will concentrate on protecting jobs. **Hungary is facing a very serious wave of unemployment, and I ask every**

employer and every worker to make personal efforts to preserve their jobs. The economic consequences of the coronavirus epidemic will also override fiscal and economic plans: the Government's fiscal and economic plans. Budgets at every level will have to be redesigned.
(Emphasis added)

In the quotation above, Orbán cited the economy as one of the referent objects, and in the second part, the focus was shifted to another aspect of the Hungarian economy. His statement that the impact of the coronavirus on the economy and the obligation to revise and restructure the budgets exemplifies the “emergency measures” of securitization. This sentence demonstrates the degree of coronavirus’s influence (Viktor Orbán 2020b).

The question was whether we should wait or take action; and we decided that instead of waiting, **we would commit ourselves to the fight. We immediately saw that we wouldn't be able to organise Hungary's collective self-defence – and that even acting together, we wouldn't be able to ward off this attack – if we followed the usual way of things, pursuing our normal lifestyle, maintaining our lives' customary organising principles, within the boundaries of the normal rules of law.** This is why we sought authorisation and declared a “state of danger”. A state of danger means that the Government has received both the authorisation and the means to organise Hungary’s self-defence, with the prospect of success. (Emphasis Added)

This sentence clearly shows the urgency and extraordinariness of the coronavirus pandemic. The notion that “it was impossible to handle this situation under the normal conditions” directly indicates the securitization of the Covid-19 pandemic. This statement evidently securitizes the pandemic and puts this issue at the top of the political agenda. Also, as Orbán did in his former statements, he used internal facilitating conditions, which is “the only possible way out” was established.

All of the statements cited above were made in March 2020, and the following addresses by Orbán in April and May had similar contexts: the Hungarian citizens and economy as referent objects, the necessity of the reduction in social interactions, the importance of the swift decision-making, and the change in the lifestyles. However, there were also some differences amongst these statements: In April, a significant amount of the addresses was allocated to the announcement and the elucidation of the emergency measures, while the statements delivered in May mainly focused on the “going-back-to-normal.” For this reason, it can be stated that Viktor Orbán, after the detection of the first cases in Hungary, directly securitized the coronavirus and called for emergency measures to handle the situation.

3.3.2 Emergency measures

The adaptation of emergency measures in the face of an issue is another major component of the securitization process. As indicated above, Viktor Orbán securitized the coronavirus and enumerated two referent objects: the health of Hungarian citizens and the economy. Hence, he highlighted that there was a need for altering lifestyles and decision-making. All these statements clearly exemplify the securitization process. In the face of Covid-19, Hungary introduced a variety of emergency measures. These emergency measures fall into two categories compatible with the identified referent objects: (I) the measures about the spread of the virus to protect the health of the Hungarian citizens, and (II) the measures about the economy to protect the above-mentioned sectors and jobs.

The Government began to adopt measures in the face of coronavirus prior to the arrival of Covid-19. On January 31, the Operational Group was established (Molnár et al. 2020, 1169), and on February 3, the “28 Point-Action Plan to Fight the Coronavirus” was published (About Hungary 2020a). However, after the identification of the first cases, more measures were begun to adopt.

Viktor Orbán, in his statements and interviews, referred to an essential rule to protect Hungarian citizens: slowing down the spread of the virus or reducing social interactions. For this reason, the measures aiming to save human life are highly related to this principle. In this vein, Government took precautions targeting different sectors and institutions. On March 11, the Government declared a “state of emergency,” which included other measures. For instance, the number of participants for the indoor activities was limited to 100 people, while the number was 500 for the outdoor activities. There was a travel ban on arrivals from South Korea, China, Iran, and Italy except for Hungarian citizens, and higher education was suspended (Kovacs 2020b). On March 16, the Government introduced new measures. All public activities except religious ceremonies, funerals, and civil marriages were banned, and primary and secondary education institutions were also closed and switched to online learning. From March 17 onwards, Hungary closed all its

borders (European Commission 2021).³ On 27 March, the Government declared a curfew for two weeks to prevent the further spread of the virus, which means that people can only leave their homes to meet their basic needs. (Bene and Boda 2021, 91). The declaration of curfew came along with other decisions that limited the open hours of the shops and pharmacies, and restaurants were only allowed for take-away (About Hungary 2020c). On April 9, the curfew was extended indefinitely, and Prime Minister Viktor Orbán announced that the mayors were granted the authority to impose new measures (Viktor Orbán 2020g). One of the measures taken to combat the virus was the decision “freeing up the 60 percent of the hospital beds,” which was taken in April (Bene and Boda 2021, 92).

At the end of April, the government gradually eased the restrictions, and Viktor Orbán stated that this process would be slow and compatible with the strict timetable. However, this process brought new measures (Viktor Orbán 2020h). For example, on April 27, wearing a mask in Budapest became mandatory (Kaszás 2020). On May 4, this rule was extended to the whole country while the restrictions for the region except Budapest and the nearby areas started to ease (“Coronavirus: New Phase of Protective Measures to Begin on Monday - Hungary Today” 2020), and the restrictions in Budapest and the Pest County eased on May 18 (Norbert et al. 2021, 272).

The above-mentioned measures were aimed to reduce social interactions and prevent the coronavirus from spreading fast. However, they were not the only measures. As mentioned, Orbán identified two referent objects and the Hungarian economy was the second one. To abate the economic challenges posed by the pandemic, the Fidesz government introduced several financial packages. On March 18, Viktor Orbán announced that the obligations for principal and interest payments were suspended, and loans for short-term businesses were extended. There were some measures targeting specific sectors like tourism, catering, and entertainment. The contribution of employers

³ At this point, it should be added that the Schengen Borders Code authorize states to introduce controls at the internal border temporarily in case of threats to domestic security or public policy. However, the introduction of the border control should be the last solution under exceptional circumstances (European Commission 2022a). Hungary notified the European Commission for border closure on March 17 (Maior and Camisão 2022, 32). For more: European Commission, “Temporary Reintroduction of Border Control”, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/policies/schengen-borders-and-visa/schengen-area/temporary-reintroduction-border-control_en.

was set to zero, while the contribution of employees was decreased to a minimum level (Viktor Orbán 2020e). On April 8, the Government announced another package for economic purposes, and approximately 20 percent of the Hungarian GDP was used for this package. The Government introduced compensation for employers who made a loss due to curfew and the short working hours and allocated 450 billion HUF for investment projects to create novel jobs. Besides these measures, the Government supported endangered sectors and businesses through subsidies and credits (Viktor Orbán 2020f).

Besides these emergency measures directed at the protection of human life and the economy, there are measures in the political realm. As the passages from the statements of Viktor Orbán demonstrate, there was recurring stress over the need for swift and urgent decision-making. The declaration of the state of emergency on March 11, as regulated by the Fundamental Law, allows Government to enact decrees and laws. According to this, parliamentary approval is required for the decrees beyond 15 days. However, on March 20, the Government introduced an act that permits the Government to govern by decrees for an unlimited time and without parliamentary control (Hegedus 2020, 1). On March 23, the opposition voted against the Coronavirus Act or the “Enabling Act” named by its critics. However, on March 30, the Act was approved by the parliament and the President (Norbert et al. 2021, 272).

The adaptation of this Act suffers from several deficiencies and problems. Firstly, the government had a chance to extend the state of emergency’s duration thanks to its two-thirds majority in the parliament, and the opposition was eager for this extension (Hegedus 2020, 1). Secondly, this act was unconstitutional. The Fundamental Law authorized parliamentary to determine the scope of the decrees, revise and extend its duration beyond 15 days. However, the Coronavirus Act gave authority to bypass the Parliament by excluding it from checking the scope, frameworks, and duration of the decrees, and the extension of all decrees promulgated after March 11 was against the Fundamental Law (Szente and Fruzsina 2020, 161–62).

The act brought undemocratic policies to Hungarian politics and worsened the democratic picture of the country. The already-damaged democracy was undermined with this Act and the decrees enacted following its enactment. The by-elections and referendums were

postponed until the state of emergency ended, which means the electoral process was subverted by the Act (Végh 2021). In addition to the subversion of the electoral process, corruption and nepotism intensified. The details of the China-financed railway between Belgrade and Budapest, which would be constructed by a close friend of Viktor Orbán, Lorinc Meszaros, were classified for ten years (Káncz 2020).

Viktor Orbán used this Act as a tool to enact decrees and laws which had nothing to do with the Covid-19 pandemic. For example, on March 31, a bill that prohibited change of gender was passed in the parliament, and the definition of “sex” was altered with reference to “sex at birth” (Holroyd 2020). Even though the definition of “sex” and “gender recognition” was not related to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Government pursued its own agenda by taking advantage of the situation. However, it was not the only case. Fidesz enacted laws and decrees, causing damage to the opposition parties. For instance, the Government cut the state funding for the political parties in halves to find a resource for the coronavirus fund. At first glance, this situation seemed to exert equal influence over the parties; however, Fidesz, due to the structure of the system, has several different revenues, while the opposition parties are mostly contingent on the state funds (Beauchamp 2020). Besides that, the Government made amendments other than this to harm the opposition parties. The Government promulgated a decree allowing them to label some areas or cities as a “special economic zone.” In this vein, the taxes paid by the companies in these zones will be collected by local county administrators, not by the municipalities, which causes economic loss for the municipalities (Szente and Fruzsina 2020, 164). For instance, Göd, a city near Budapest, was labeled as a special economic zone due to investment by Samsung in the city, and the taxes paid by Samsung will be transferred to the Fidesz-led county administration, not to the opposition-led municipality as a result of the decree (Kreko 2020).

There were some other decrees and changes in the laws which seemed to have a relationship with the Coronavirus; however, they were used to punish the opposition. The Government changed the Criminal Law to sentence the ones spreading “fake news” about the pandemic for up to five years (Szente and Fruzsina 2020, 161). However, this law was utilized to silence opposition figures. For instance, a member of the Momentum Party, which is critical of the policies of Fidesz and Viktor Orbán, was arrested for his criticism

of the government policy of “freeing up 60 percent of the hospital beds”. Besides that, a citizen who was critical of the lockdown policies was detained (Sandford 2020). All of these examples above indicate that the authority was used to expand its power and undermined liberal democratic values like freedom of statement and LGBTQ+ rights. The weakening of civil rights was reflected in the annual report published by the Freedom House. According to this report, Hungary’s position between democracies and authoritarian regimes was strengthened with a score falling from 3.96 to 3.71 (Végh 2021). Even though this Act was revoked on June 16, its impact on democracy remained (Norbert et al. 2021, 273).

In conclusion, Viktor Orbán securitized the Covid-19 pandemic and identified two referent objects: the Hungarian citizens and the Hungarian economy. In this vein, Government announced some emergency measures which roughly fall into three distinct categories: health-related, economy-related, and political. The former had an objective to reduce social interactions, and the economy-related measures aimed to prevent companies from going bankrupt or people from losing their jobs. The political measures are intended to make decisions swiftly. However, the political measures, especially the Coronavirus Act, deepened the democratic backsliding in Hungary. The authorization of the Government to enact decrees indefinitely and the absence of parliamentary checks moved Hungary close to authoritarian regimes. In addition, the Government under Viktor Orbán used this authority to silence opposition, undermine the liberal democratic values, and reward Fidesz loyalists.

3.3.3 Audience: a successful securitization?

The approval of the audience is the last pillar of the securitization process, as indicated in the first chapter. If the relevant audience does not accept the framing of an issue, the frame remains as a securitizing move, but if these moves are accepted, a successful securitization occurs (Buzan et al. 1998, 31). The analysis of the statements delivered by Viktor Orbán blatantly demonstrated that the Covid-19 pandemic was securitized, and extraordinary measures were taken to lessen its impact. However, whether the Hungarian public accepted these framing and the extraordinary measures is an important question. This study benefits from the public opinions, the rate of citizens complying with the

measures such as mask use and stay-at-home orders, and the rate of the leading figure during the pandemic, Viktor Orbán, to answer this question. It should be noted that the Fidesz-KDNP alliance won 49.3 percent of the votes in the 2018 elections and acquired 133 seats in the Hungarian parliament (Politico Research 2020). It implies that the ruling party and the cabinet get tacit approval through elections. For this reason, it can be stated that there was approval for the decisions taken by Orbán. In this vein, it can be claimed that the securitization was successful in light of the 2018 elections. However, the indicators which will be provided below will shed more light on the audience's approval.

In terms of public opinion polls, this study benefits from the results of different public opinions to ensure that public polls have overlapping and matching results. Hence, this study will pay attention to polls published by three different institutions: Nézőpont Research Institute, Századvég Foundation, and the Public Institute by Népszava. The reason for this choice of these three institutions is their ideological affiliations: the former one, Nézőpont Research Institute, is pro-government, and Publicus Institute is identified as leftist (Hungary Today 2022). Századvég Foundation is known as a conservative think tank founded in 1993 (About Hungary 2020d).⁴ In the public surveys published by these three, two primary criteria will be investigated to understand whether the Hungarian public approved the securitization of Covid-19: the approval rate of the Fidesz/KDNP and Viktor Orbán and the approval of the emergency measures taken to handle the Covid-19 pandemic.

Prior to the statements made by Viktor Orbán, the Hungarian public opinion did not place the Covid-19 pandemic at the top of the “concerned issues list.” According to a public poll published by Századvég Foundation on 6 March 2020, coronavirus was in third place, behind climate change and illegal migration, which get 87 percent and 63 percent, respectively. 56 percent of the respondents stated that they were concerned about Covid-

⁴ For some examples of the same identifications: “Hungary’s Government in reality control more than half of leading media”, András Bódis, Balkan Insight, <https://balkaninsight.com/2021/01/14/hungarys-government-in-reality-controls-more-than-half-of-leading-media/>, “Pro-government research institute publishes scientifically unfounded study to justify media concentration”, Attila Bátorfy, Atlatszo, <https://english.atlatszo.hu/2019/02/27/pro-government-research-institute-publishes-scientificallly-unfounded-study-to-justify-media-concentration/>, “Orban regime shuts down conservative Századvég journal”, Christopher Adam, Hungarian Free Press, <https://hungarianfreepress.com/2018/09/25/orban-egime-shuts-down-conservative-szazadveg-journal/>.

19 (Molnár et al. 2020, 1177). However, after Orbán framed the coronavirus as a threat following the detection of the first cases, public opinion changed, and the percentage of concerned respondents increased to 74 percent on 14 March 2020 (Századvég 2020c).

There were also public opinion data about the measures taken against Covid-19. The public opinion poll conducted by Nézőpont Research Institute on 18 March 2020 clearly demonstrated that the majority of the respondents approved the steps taken by the Government. Approximately 70 percent of the respondents found the government actions satisfactory. However, the percentage of the respondents agreeing with the measures was higher. For instance, 95 percent approved the travel ban on non-Hungarians from South Korea, Italy, China, and Iran, and 87 percent backed the prohibition of outdoor gatherings with more than 500 participants. When it comes to the state of emergency, which was declared on 11 March 2020, 85 percent of the respondents agreed with this measure (Nézőpont Intézet 2020a). All these results indicate that the measures adopted by the Orbán government were approved by the majority of the Hungarian population.

Similar results can be found for the Coronavirus Act, enabling the Government to bypass the parliament and rule by decrees. Most of the respondents agreed with the extension of the state-of-emergency, and 68 percent stated that the political parties should support the bill, according to the public opinion poll conducted by Századvég Foundation on 26 March 2020 (Századvég 2020b). The change in the penal code, which punishes the spread of fake news about Covid-19, was also approved by the Hungarian population. The public poll published by the Nézőpont Institute demonstrated that 72 percent approved the change in the Criminal Law (Nézőpont Intézet 2020b).

As mentioned above, the curfew, which was initially declared for two weeks, was extended indefinitely on 9 April. There was a consensus on this decision, and 91 percent of the respondents agreed with the extension of the curfew (Századvég 2020a). This approval can be observed in the Hungarians' actions and daily routines. As the Nézőpont Institute's poll result on 20 April, 37 percent of respondents remarked that they did not leave home a day before the questionnaire was conducted, and 61 percent stated that they did not have a meeting longer than 15 minutes with anyone (Nézőpont Intézet 2020c). Besides these results, the projections made by the Institution of Health Metrics and

Evaluation (IHME) show to what extent the Hungarian citizens complied with the bans on social gatherings, and it has similar results.⁵ Following the declaration of the state of emergency on 11 March 2020, there was a considerable decrease in the social mobility. The declaration of the curfew on 27 March and its extension had an impact on this decrease (Figure 3.4).

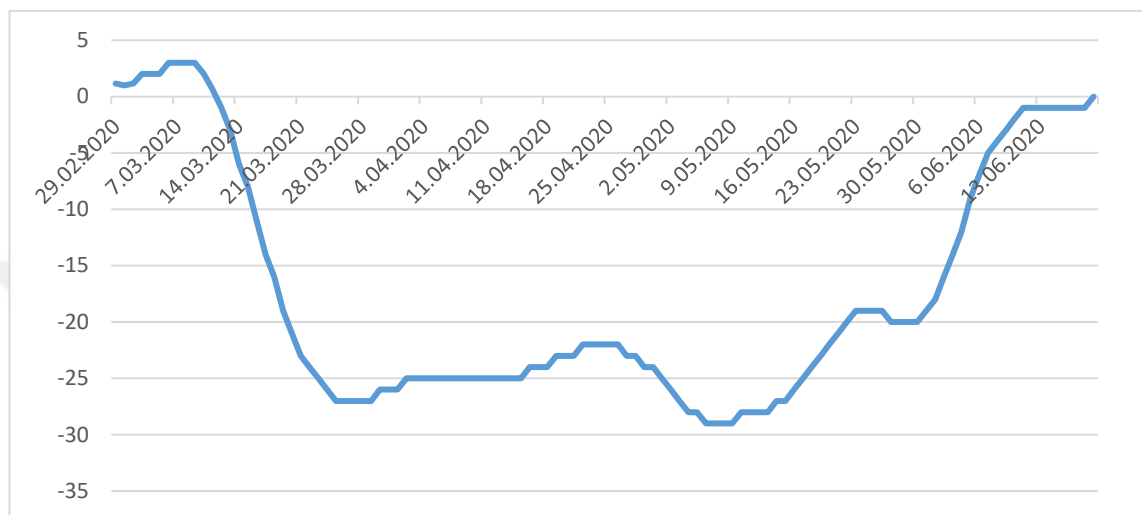


Figure 3.4: The Social Mobility in Hungary (February-June 2020)

Source: (Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation 2022)

As the chart above clearly demonstrates, the social mobility between March 2020 and June 2020 decreased due to the measures such as stay-at-home orders, ban on social gatherings, or curfew enacted by the Hungarian Government was both approved and abided by the Hungarian population.

Another preventive measure was the use of masks, and Hungary introduced the mask rule for Budapest on 27 April and for the whole country on 4 May. The same projection by IHME clearly shows that the Hungarian population abides by the mask rule between February and May (Figure 3.5).⁶ There was an increase in mask use among the

⁵ This projection was compiled by using the anonymous mobile phone data, and intents to indicate how human mobility changed following the measures on social gatherings. For more: <https://www.healthdata.org/covid/faqs#social%20distancing>.

⁶ This projection intends to indicate the percentage of population who states that “they always wear mask in public”. This projection was compiled by using different sources: The Delphi Group at Carnegie Mellon University and University of Maryland COVID-19 Trends and Impact Surveys, in partnership with Facebook; Kaiser Family Foundation; YouGov COVID-19 Behaviour Tracker survey. For more: <https://www.healthdata.org/covid/faqs#about%20the%20project>.

Hungarians, and after mask use became compulsory for the whole population, approximately 65 percent of the population stated that they wore a mask in public areas in May 2020.

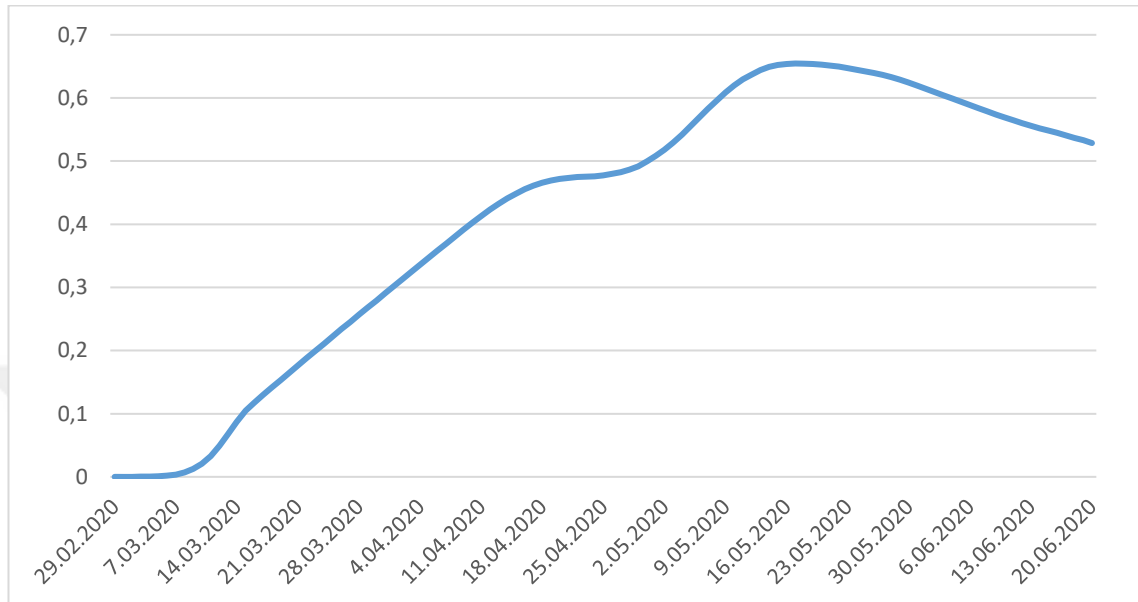


Figure 3.5: Mask Use in Hungary (February-May 2020)

Source: (Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation 2022)

The Hungarian public also approved the abrogation of the state of emergency. The public poll by Nézőpont Institute on 18 July 2020 shows that 82 percent of the respondents agreed on the termination of the state-of-emergency and coronavirus-associated measures (Nézőpont Intézet 2020d). These public opinions and projections about mobility and mask use reflect that the Hungarian public opinion was in favor of government actions. This trend can be seen in the popularity of the Orbán Government.

During the first phase of the Covid-19 pandemic, the trust in government was high, and it was evident in the public opinion polls. The public survey conducted by the Public Institute by Népszava in March 2020 demonstrated this phenomenon. According to the results, 76 percent of the respondents found the government policies in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic satisfactory. Furthermore, 58 percent maintained that they were confident that the government to take the necessary steps to curb the pandemic, while 23 percent asserted that the government would handle the crisis somewhat (Dorosz et al. 2020, 2). Even though this survey reflects the results at the beginning of the first phase in

March, the picture did not change in June, the end of the emergency period, and the measures. The survey revealed that 62 percent of the Hungarian population were satisfied with Viktor Orbán, which is 20 percent more than the satisfaction with Fidesz, Orbán's party (Nézőpont Intézet 2020e).

In sum, the Hungarian public opinion and the actions indicated that the public welcomed the framing of Covid-19 as a threat and the emergency measures. In March, public opinion did not place the coronavirus issue at the top of the "concerned issues"; however, after the issue was framed as a security problem by Viktor Orbán and the pandemic became the main agenda of world politics, the public opinion began to express their concerns. The measures adopted by the Hungarian government, such as curfews, bans on public gatherings, or the Coronavirus Act, were approved by a large portion of the Hungarian public. Besides these public opinion polls, the projections about mask-use and social mobility demonstrate that the public opinion matches their actions. For all these reasons, it can be stated that the audience accepted the securitization of Covid-19 in the first months of the pandemic.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter intended to understand how the coronavirus pandemic was handled in Hungary and used the securitization theory developed by the Copenhagen school. For this reason, this chapter analyzed the security speech-acts of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, who was the leading figure in the pandemic management in Hungary. The initial months of the Covid-19 pandemic (March, April, and May) were analyzed, and three main components of the securitization were investigated: the framing of an issue as a threat, the adaptation of the emergency, and extraordinary measures, and the approval of the audience.

The analysis showed that Viktor Orbán securitized the coronavirus pandemic by identifying two referent objects: the health of the Hungarian people and the economy. These two referent objects determined the emergency measures taken in the face of the coronavirus. The measures to protect Hungarian citizens had the objective of reducing face-to-face interactions and decelerating the spread of the virus. Hence, the government

enacted measures like curfew, mask mandates, or transition to online education. For the protection of the economy, the government announced economic packages and provided subsidies to the most damaged sectors, especially tourism. Hence, the first two significant tenets of securitization theory were met.

The approval by the audience, which reflects the intersubjective nature of the securitization process, is the last criterion for a successful securitization. The public opinion polls and the projections regarding mask use and social mobility clearly showed that the Hungarian public approved both the securitizing utterances and the emergency measures. After framing Covid-19 as a danger, the Hungarian public became more concerned about the situation and the following precautions. Hence, it can be stated that the securitization of Covid-19 in Hungary was successful since all significant components of the theory are met (Table 3.2). All these steps indicate that the Covid-19 pandemic was initially addressed in the political sphere, but after its detection of the first cases, it was upgraded to the security sphere.

Document	Threat	Referent Objects	Emergency and Extraordinary Actions	Audience Approval	Success of Securitization
The Statements delivered by Viktor Orbán in March, April, and May 2020	Coronavirus	The health of the Hungarian citizens Hungarian Economy	Closure of borders Bans on social gatherings Economic Packages The use of a mask Coronavirus Act Change in the definition of sex/gender Cut in the state fund for political parties in halves The arrest of opposition figures	Yes	Successful

Table 3.2: Discourse Analysis of Viktor Orbán

Besides the significant parts, the facilitating conditions were met in the statements made by Orbán. The internal conditions related to linguistic-grammatical factors were fulfilled since Orbán mentioned “the point of no return” and “the possible way out” in his statements. Several times, his stress over the “change in the lifestyles” and “the necessity

to reduce gatherings” were mentioned. For the external factors, the position of the enunciator has importance. Viktor Orbán is the leading figure in Hungarian politics, and he consolidated his power after his party Fidesz came in power in 2010. In addition, the reference for the necessity of protecting human health indicates that the referent object matches the securitized issue, and all these factors may have increased the success rate of securitization.

This successful securitization of the Covid-19 pandemic has two characteristics exclusive to Hungary: (I) military-related themes and (II) the anti-democratic nature of the emergency measures. The first one refers to the frequent use of the words, terms, and themes associated with military and wars by Orbán. As indicated above, Viktor Orbán used terms such as “enemy,” “fight,” “battle,” “front,” and “defense.” These words appeared in his statements recurrently and were associated with the virus and its spread. It can be added that their use enabled Viktor Orbán to visualize and materialize the danger caused by the virus.⁷ The second feature is related chiefly to the Coronavirus Act enacted on March 30 to handle the situation. The Hungarian democracy was damaged after 2010 when the Fidesz-KDNP coalition came into power. As mentioned in this chapter, the amendment of the Constitution, the change in the structure of the Constitutional Court, and the tightening grip on the media led to democratic backsliding in Hungary. Additionally, the concentration of the power in the hands of the Prime Minister Viktor Orbán caused a political system characterized and dominated by people loyal to Orbán and Fidesz. The impaired Hungarian democracy was damaged more on the pretext of slowing down the Covid-19 pandemic. The declaration of the state of emergency on March 11 and the Coronavirus Act on March 30 entrusted Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and Fidesz with more power by bypassing the parliament. Even though this act was promulgated to reduce the adverse effects of the pandemic, the government utilized it to harm opposition parties, undermine LGBTQ+ rights, and classify the details of the contracts signed by Orbán-loyalists. All of these changes shifted Hungary to a more

⁷ For the use of military terminology by Orbán: Anna Molnár, Lili Takács and Eva Jakusné Harnos, “Securitization of the Covid-19 pandemic by metaphoric discourse during the state of emergency in Hungary”, *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 40(9/10), 2020, p. 1167-1182.

authoritarian regime. Even though this Act was revoked on July 16, its impact on democracy became permanent.

In sum, the country accepted the securitization of the Covid-19 pandemic in Hungary, which is replete with the frequent use of military themes, as the public opinion polls and surveys indicate. Besides this acceptance, this securitization process moves the country closer to an authoritarian regime with the promulgation of the “Coronavirus Act.” As envisaged by Buzan *et al.* (1998, 29), the securitization of Covid-19 in Hungary provided power holder(s), notably Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, with a chance to deal with this issue in less democratic ways, punish and silence the opposition figures, and take advantage of the threat for advancing its own domestic agenda. Hence, it can be stated that the Covid-19 pandemic and the way Hungary handles this issue exemplifies the whole premises and concerns of the securitization theory developed by the Copenhagen School.

4. THE EUROPEAN UNION: COVID-19 AND SECURITIZATION

This chapter intends to understand whether the European Union securitized the pandemic and what types of emergency measures were enacted by the Union. The statements delivered by the President of the EUCO and the EC and the declarations published by the Council of the EU will be analyzed to find whether the EU securitized the virus or not. This chapter proceeds as follows: firstly, the political context in the European continent when the Covid-19 pandemic arrived in the continent will be provided. Secondly, the chronological order of the pandemic in Europe will be given to understand how severe the pandemic was. In the following two sections, the speeches, statements, and declarations of the EUCO will be investigated in the framework of the Copenhagen School.

4.1 The Political Context

When the Covid-19 cases appeared in the European continent, the EU was suffering from several crises, namely the Euro-crisis, migration crisis, and Brexit (Dinan et al. 2017, 1–2). The major incidents which the EU experienced in the 2010s can be summarized as follows: The Euro crisis started in 2008, the influx of refugees from the Syrian Civil War, and the decision of the UK to leave the Union in 2016. In addition to these incidents, there were other problems, such as the emergence of populist regimes and political parties, which are generally Euro-skeptic and far-right, in the EU member countries and the annexation of Crimea by resurgent Russia (Archick 2018).

The first crisis was the Euro-crisis which erupted because of the Great Recession that started in the USA in 2008. This crisis spread throughout the European continent and posed major damage to European economies, which started to shrink and suffered from the high unemployment rates and budget deficits. The use of the common currency, the Euro, in the member countries created another problem: the decrease in the value of the Euro (Berend 2019, 9). However, the crisis hit each country differently, and its impact was not even. In this sense, a cleavage between “the North and the South” appeared. The

Northern countries, led by Germany, wanted the Southern countries, such as Greece, to adhere to fiscal measures and pursue austerity measures (D. H. Olsen and Rosen 2021, 390–91). This cleavage, measures, and shrinking economies were one of the first challenges which dominated the first half of the decade.

The second challenge which impacted the European Union was the migration issue and the influx of refugees, which started in late 2015. More than 1 million refugees from the countries impacted by wars, environmental problems, or social cleavages from the countries like Syria, Afghanistan, and Sub-Saharan Africa, arrived in the European Union. This flow of refugees perpetuated in the following period.⁸ The high number of refugees arriving in the EU, more than 1 million in 2015, created several tensions for the Union (Apap et al. 2019, 3). As envisaged by the Dublin Regulation, the migrants should apply for asylum status in the first country they arrived in to share the burden and hinder multiple applications by the same asylum seekers (Davis 2020, 266–67). However, the burden of the refugees arriving at the EU borders was not equally distributed. Three countries emerged as the main arrival spots: Hungary, Italy, and Greece, due to their geographical proximity (Park 2015). To alleviate the overburdening over these states, the EU intended members to host a number of asylum seekers with the introduction of the quota system. However, some countries were reluctant to pursue this scheme (Kanat and Aytac 2018, 71). The high number of refugees and the uneven burden led states to adopt measures such as building walls along the border (Hungary) and introduction of strict border control (Portugal, France, Sweden, etc.) which caused harm to the Schengen system (Berend 2019, 14).

The influx of refugees led to the utterance of anti-migration discourses and the rise of the Euro-skeptic parties, which violate the rule of law and the liberal values the EU embraced. The erosion of democracy in Poland and Hungary perfectly exemplifies this trend, as explained in the previous chapter (Raube and Costa Reis 2021, 631). However, it does not mean that there are not any Euro-skeptic and far-right parties in other member states. These parties began to appear in other member states such as Germany, Denmark, Italy,

⁸ For the numbers who reached the Europe: UN High Commissioner for Refugees “Mediterranean Situation” <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean>.

and Spain. The League led by Matteo Salvini in Italy, the anti-immigrant and Islamophobic Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) in Germany, and the National Front (FN) under the leadership of Marine Le Pen in France are other examples (BBC News 2018). Two crises were the leading reasons behind this trend: the Euro-crisis and the refugee crisis. As mentioned, the Euro-crisis led some members to austerity measures dictated by the debtor countries, and the refugee crisis caused some states to close their borders for the protection of their “territory and identity” (Archick 2018, 7). Besides its impact on democracy, the populism wave has another influence over the EU: the BREXIT, or the UK, which left the EU. The conservative Cameron government held a referendum to see whether the UK public wanted to stay in the EU or not, and 52 percent voted in favor of leaving the Union first time in the history of the EU. The damage to the UK caused by the EU, national autonomy, and the refugee crisis were presented as the main causes (Berend 2019; Arnorsson and Zoega 2018, 303). The exit of the UK from the EU was completed on 30 January 2020, after delineating the details of the trade and other issues (European Commission 2020d).

In addition to these challenges, the EU witnessed the hybrid threats and the rise of Russia, which annexed the Crimean peninsula from Ukraine in 2014 (Dokos 2019, 2). The use of special forces named “little green men” in the annexation of Crimea and the terrorist attacks in the European cities pushed the EU to prepare plans against hybrid threats and unconventional warfare (European Commission 2020b, 2). In addition, the Russian actions posed a challenge to the peace and stability in Eastern Europe. The EU adopted several measures to counter the emerging hybrid threats directed at the EU by state or non-state actors. For instance, in 2016, the EU members agreed on the definition of hybrid warfare, and the European Commission formed a Security Union and stressed the necessity and importance of internal and external actions in the field of security (Bajarūnas 2020, 64; European Commission 2020b).

All of these problems, challenges, and threats created tension points and led to a decline in the trust in the EU. As the Eurobarometer conducted in Autumn 2019 indicates that only 43 percent of the Europeans have trust in the European Union, and in parallel with this finding, 42 percent found the image of the EU “positive” (European Commission 2019, 134–40). As demonstrated above, the share of “tend not to trust” started to outweigh

the share of “tend to trust” after the Euro crisis, which hit the continent in 2008 and zigzagged until 2019. It is clear that the crises impacted the EU citizens’ way of thinking about the EU (Figure 4.1).

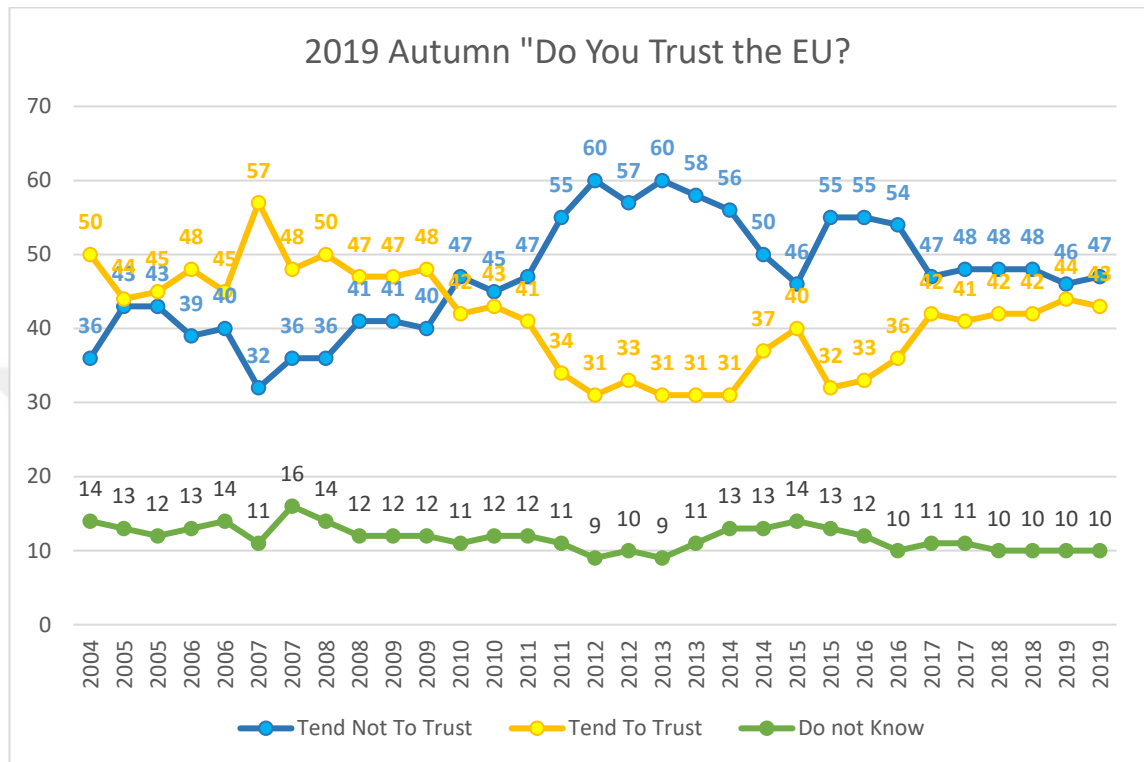


Figure 4.1: The Percentage of the Trust in the EU (2004-2019)

Source: (European Commission 2019, 134)

Together with the above-mentioned crisis, the leaders of the EU institutions were relatively new in their offices: Charles Michel was elected as the President of the European Council by the EU leaders on 2 July 2019 (European Council 2022a), and Ursula von der Leyen was elected as a Commission President on 16 July 2019 (European Parliament 2019b). Their tenures started on 1 December 2019, which means that the Covid-19 pandemic was an early challenge for both leaders (Lichtenstein 2021, 79).

In sum, when the Covid-19 pandemic arrived in the EU, the Union was “exhausted” by several crises ranging from economic ones to land seizure by Russia, from migratory movements to the first country leaving the Union. The economic, social, and political challenges led to a decline in the public trust among the EU members. In addition, two

governing bodies had new leaders whose tenures began in December 2019. All in all, the EU was fragile and suffering from several challenges at the same time.

4.2 Covid-19 Pandemic in the EU: The Chronology

The chronological order of the EU actions, the dates on which the first cases appeared in the members' states, and the measures are crucial for understanding the securitization process, as stated in the previous chapter on Hungary. In this section, the brief timeline of the actions taken by the member states and the EU bodies until March 2020 will be analyzed.

Prior to the detection of the first case in the member states, the European Center for Disease Protection and Control (ECDC) published a “Threat Assessment Brief” on 9 January 2020. According to this report, there was not any known human-to-human transmission, and for this reason, the risk associated with “novel coronavirus” for travelers was considered low. The detection of a possible case was also considered low, and the further spread in the European continent was considered low to very low. (European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control 2020d, 2). However, the risks were updated on 17 January 2020 with the Risk Assessment Brief by the ECDC. As stated in the report, the human-to-human transmission was still unknown. However, there was a likelihood of this type of transmission. In addition, the risk for the travelers who visited the “live animal market” was updated to “moderate,” while it remained low for the ones who did not visit these markets. The risk for the EU and its spread was considered low, with possible risks (European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control 2020a, 5).

On 22 January 2020, the ECDC presented a “Risk Assessment Brief” on the EU Health Security Community, and there were major updates about the novel coronavirus. The report stated that the risk assessment was uncertain due to the many unknowns about the novel coronavirus. In addition to that, the risk level for travelers was upgraded to moderate, and the spread within the EU was considered very low with the application of necessary infection prevention and control mechanisms (IPC), while the risk was high without effective IPC mechanisms (European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control 2020c, 5–6).

When all these briefs and reports were published by the relevant EU institutions, the first cases were detected in the EU member state: France, on 24 January 2020. The detection of cases continued within the member states from 24 January onwards. Germany, on 28 January 2020, and Finland, on 29 January 2020, announced their first Covid-19 cases (European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control 2020b, 1). As indicated above, the number of cases started to increase from March 2020 onwards (Figure 4.2).

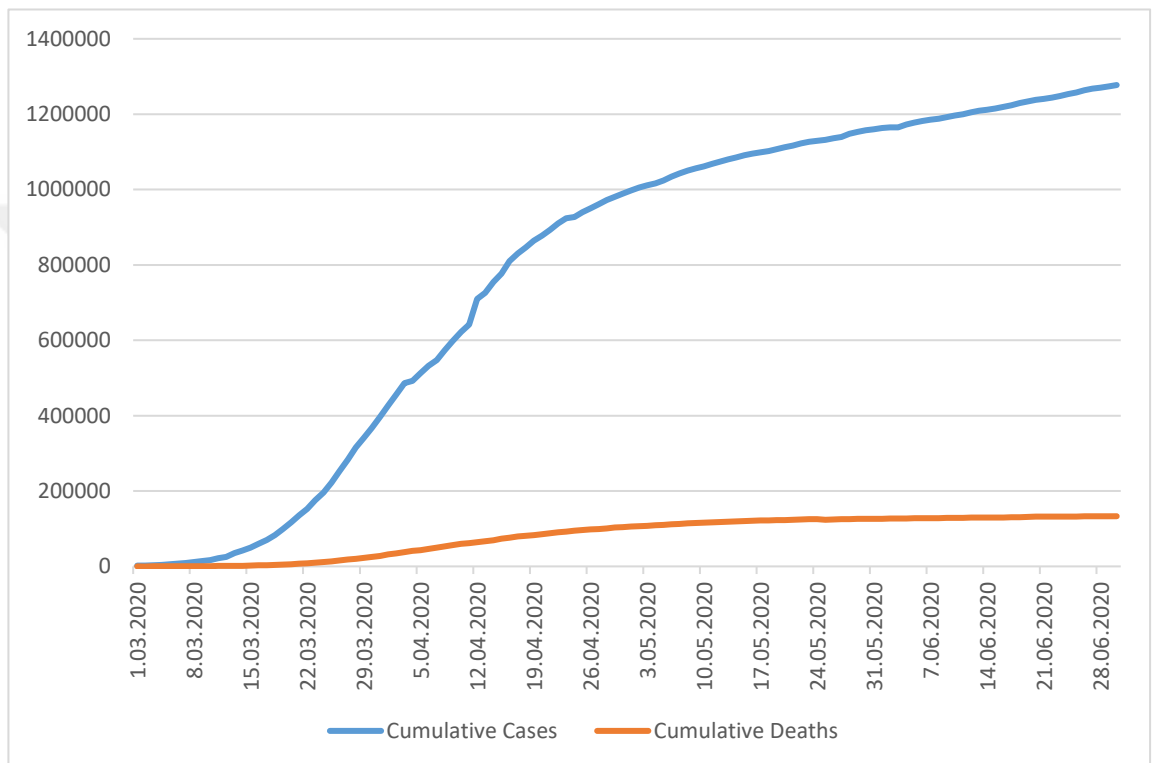


Figure 4.2: The Cumulative Number of Cases and Death Tolls in the European Union

Source: (European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control 2022).

As the virus was detected in the EU territory, different mechanisms were activated by the member states. On 28 January 2020, Croatia, the president of the Council of the European Union, activated the “information-sharing mode” as envisaged by the Integrated Political Crisis Response (IPCR)⁹ to improve a common sense of the situation among the members and the governing institutions (European Council 2022b). In addition to IPCR, France

⁹ To learn more about the Integrated Political Crisis Response (IPCR): <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/ipcr-response-to-crises/>

activated Civil Protection Mechanism (CPM)¹⁰ on 31 January 2022 to bring EU citizens home from other countries (Akin Ocak and Erhan 2021, 8). However, the crisis in the EU started after the number of cases began to skyrocket from the end of January onwards. As stated by Maior and Camisão (2022, 31), the initial stage was a “national cacophony,” in which each member state pursued its own interests.

In February, the Lombardy region in Italy became the most impacted region in Europe, and at the end of February, Italy requested to activate the CPM mechanism to receive additional protective equipment, notably masks. Even though the European Commission activated the mechanism, none of the member states responded to this call from Italy (De Pooter 2020), and the protective equipment was sent by Cuba, China, and Russia (Akin Ocak and Erhan 2021, 9). In addition, the EU members banned the trade of protective equipment. For example, some of the EU members either prohibited or limited the export of this type of equipment (Gostyńska-Jakubowska and Scazzieri 2020). France seizing the masks and other protective equipment sent from Sweden to Italy and Spain or Czechia imposing a ban on the export of the anti-virus gear perfectly exemplify this prohibition trend (Akin Ocak and Erhan 2021, 9; Nicolás 2020). In addition, some member countries started to close their border unilaterally to slow down the spread of the virus, such as the announcement by Slovakia, Malta, and Czechia for border closures (Schengen Visa Info 2020). All these policies and incidents indicate that the “national cacophony” was the reality of the initial steps of the Coronavirus pandemic in the EU.

It should be added that this “cacophonous” era did not mean that the EU institutions were doing nothing, but they were not the main actor in the face of the pandemic. However, there were some steps taken by the EU governing bodies, such as the allocation of 10 million Euros for research programs on Covid-19, the shipment of protective equipment to China, or the allocation of 232 million Euros to worldwide endeavors to contain the pandemic (European Commission 2022b). The backstage role of the EU institutions was altered after the European Council, and the European Commission began to take the leading role from March 2020 onwards. As stated previously, on 2 March, the European

¹⁰ CPM is the mechanism which enables a crisis-hit country to receive assistance from other members. To learn more about the Civil Protection Mechanism (CPM): https://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/civil-protection/eu-civil-protection-mechanism_en

Commission established a “Corona Response Team,” which consisted of five Commissioners under the leadership of Ursula von der Leyen (Lichtenstein 2021, 80), and this team became the coordinator of the measures in the face of the pandemic. On the same day, the Croatian Presidency in the European Council upgraded the IPCR mechanism to “full mode” (European Council 2022b). These two steps taken by two EU bodies demonstrate that the EU institutions were aware of the “national-interest-characterized” behaviors and began to act. Additionally, the European continent became the new epicenter of the Covid-19 pandemic on March 13, which demonstrates how severe the pandemic turned out to be (Feuer et al. 2020) and gives another stimulus for the EU bodies to act.

In brief, the Covid-19 virus arrived in the EU territory at the end of January, and the first months were characterized by the national interests pursued by the member countries. However, starting from March 2020 onwards, the EU bodies started to act, and the EUCO was the securitizing actor due to its place in the EU structure.

4.3 The Statements of the EUCO

The Copenhagen School pays attention to three main points for analyzing securitization: the securitizing statement(s), the emergency measures, and the approval by the relevant audience. In this section, the statements delivered by the President of the European Council, Charles Michel, and the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, will be analyzed to understand whether the pandemic was framed as a security issue. In addition to these statements, the declarations published by the Council of the EU will be analyzed. Hence, as conducted in the previous chapter, the securitizing utterances, the emergency measures adopted following the securitizing actions, and the existence of the audience approval will be investigated respectively in the light of the Copenhagen School.

4.3.1 Securitizing statements, referent objects, and facilitating conditions

The President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, and the President of the European Council delivered several speeches which paid attention to the Covid-19 pandemic and its repercussions. Additionally, the declaration published by the Council of

the EU will be examined. The speeches will be analyzed in the framework of the securitization theory.

As previously mentioned, the EU bodies were not active when Covid-19 hit the continent, and the relevant bodies became active from March 2020 onwards. In one of the first meetings of the European Council on March 10, 2020, the leading guideline was determined, and the necessity of emergency measures was stated by the President of the European Council, Charles Michel (European Council 2020b):

I think we should therefore **try to coordinate as much as possible and see how we can do more together, both as regards the disease and its wider economic consequences.** (Emphasis added)

This speech focus on the economic challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. In the same speech, Michel enumerated four different objectives in managing the pandemic: limiting the spread of the virus, medical equipment provision, promoting research for vaccines and novel treatments, and abating the socio-economic consequences (European Council 2020b). This speech clearly posits a need for emergency measures, and the economy of the EU was challenged by the pandemic. The stress over “coordination as much as possible” exemplifies the emergency measures.

On March 17, 2020, following the joint online meeting of the ECB President, the President of the European Council, the President of the Eurogroup, and the European Council, a joint declaration was published, and it was stated that (European Council 2020c):

We reaffirmed the need to **work together and to do everything necessary to tackle the crisis and its consequences.** The priority is the **health of our citizens.** (Emphasis added)

As this sentence implies, the necessity of working together and the importance of public health was stressed. It means that the “health of the EU citizens” was one of the referent objects threatened by the Covid-19 pandemic. Additionally, the necessity of emergency and extraordinary measures was underscored.

Together with the European Council, the Council of the EU held meetings at a ministerial level. On March 23, 2020, the Ministers of Finance convened to discuss economic aspects of the pandemic (Council of the EU 2020b):

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a major economic shock that is already having a significant negative impact in the European Union. The consequences for our economies will depend both on the duration of the pandemic and on the measures being taken by national authorities and at European level. **The severe economic downturn now expected this year requires a resolute, ambitious and coordinated policy response. We need to act decisively to ensure that the shock remains as short and as limited as possible and does not create permanent damage to our economies** and therefore to the sustainability of public finances in the medium term (Emphasis added).

In this speech, the Ministers of Finance associated the Covid-19 pandemic with the economic shock, which requires emergency measures, and the solution to the more economy-related severe problems: a persistent and coordinated policy response. Additionally, the stress over the desire to prevent these impacts from growing by acting decisively implies the “possible way out” to protect the European Economy.

On March 26, 2020, in the joint statement published by the members of the EUCO, there were several securitizing utterances (European Council 2020a, 1):

The COVID-19 pandemic constitutes **an unprecedented challenge for Europe and the whole world.** It **requires urgent, decisive, and comprehensive action at the EU, national, regional and local levels. We will do everything that is necessary to protect our citizens and overcome the crisis,** while preserving our **European values** and way of life (Emphasis added).

This quotation also demonstrates that the health of the EU citizens was referred to as an object which should be protected. The European values, which were mentioned before, indicate how the EU approaches pandemic policies and decisions. The remainder of the same declaration clearly indicates that there is a need for measures that cannot be taken under normal circumstances, which had been altered by the Covid-19 pandemic. (European Council 2020a, 6):

The urgency is presently on fighting the Coronavirus pandemic and its immediate consequences. We should however start to **prepare the measures necessary to get back to a normal functioning** of our societies and economies and to sustainable growth, integrating inter alia the green transition and the digital transformation, and drawing all lessons from the crisis (Emphasis added).

On April 2, the Council of the EU published an official document. This document also demonstrates that the unprecedented nature of the crisis requires exceptional measures in line with the securitization theory (Council of the EU 2020a):

The direct and indirect effects of the COVID-19 outbreak continue to increase in all Member States. **The current situation is unprecedented and requires exceptional measures adapted to the situation to be applied in these circumstances.** (Emphasis added)

On April 15, President Charles Michel made another speech, and this speech had similar connotations. The speech blatantly indicates that the pandemic was a problem for the EU and EU citizens. (European Council 2020d).

These exceptional restrictions are impacting life all over the world, but especially life in the European Union, and we are well aware that they are directly affecting every one of us on a personal level. It is our most basic individual freedoms which are directly affected by the decisions that have been taken. And of course **we are facing a potentially extraordinary and extremely serious economic and social impact,** which will continue to be felt over the next few months, and **perhaps even for several years to come** (Emphasis added).

In this speech, Michel emphasized the internal market, which is a part of the European economy. As demonstrated by the previous quotations, the EU institutional body mainly highlighted the necessity of protecting the European economy (European Council 2020d).

The internal market is a common good for the European Union. **The internal market** is the beating heart of economic development and therefore of the European Union's capacity for social cohesion. **The internal market has been damaged. It has been affected by the decisions that have been taken for legitimate reasons, for health reasons.** The **first priority is to repair the internal market** and make sure that it can function properly (Emphasis added).

In another meeting convened on April 16, 2020, the Ministers of Finance highlighted the importance of the emergency measures to keep the economy functioning, which was challenged by Covid-19 (Council of the EU 2020c):

We will continue to closely monitor the evolution of the situation and to coordinate between European and national measures. **Where necessary, we stand ready to take further actions, including legislative measures if appropriate, to mitigate the impact of COVID-19** (Emphasis added).

In another online meeting between President Michel and the members of the EUCO on April 23, the emergency measures and the change in the lifestyles were stated by Charles Michel again (European Council 2020e):

This pandemic is **putting our societies under serious strain**. The well-being of each EU member state depends on the well-being of the whole of the EU. We are all in this together. **Fighting Corona and its consequences will take time but we have already made a lot of progress and taken bold action.**

On May 8, 2020, the President of the EUCO delivered a speech on the Covid-19 pandemic, and this speech clearly shows how the pandemic was framed as a security issue. The notion of “the biggest crisis affecting the world the World War II” and the idea of “fighting” indicates securitization (European Council 2020f):

Today many people are comparing the coronavirus crisis to a war. Others reject that metaphor. Never mind this debate: **what matters is that we can all engage in fighting this adversity**. And we all agree on one thing: **this pandemic, the first for a century, is the biggest crisis to affect the whole planet since the Second World War**

In the remainder of the speech, the association of the ongoing crisis with the pandemic was underscored. Additionally, Michel focused on the sources which were allocated to the pandemic. Another feature of this speech is that the metaphors such as “battle” and “fight” were used (European Council 2020f).

For the challenge we face is not just to get through the crisis. Pandemics, like economic crises, have a beginning, a middle and an end: **we have started to fight this one and thrown considerable resources at it, and we will win the battle**. There is no doubt about that (European Council 2020f).

Five days later than the previous remarks (March 13, 2020), the President of the European Council made remarks, and the earlier emphasis on the unprecedented nature of the pandemic and the measures that were taken in the face of this crisis continued (European Council 2020g).

This crisis is unprecedented, and it means that we need to take unprecedented decisions. And that is why I am convinced that a **very strong cooperation between the democratic and legitimate European institutions** will be vital in the next weeks and in the next months.

The emphasis on the “cooperation between the democratic and legitimate European institutions” is another example of how the EU wanted to tackle this crisis. This speech clearly revealed two criteria of the securitization theory: emergency measures which were implied by the attention to the “adaptation of the plans and strategies,” and the referent object, the European economy, with an emphasis on specific sectors like aviation and tourism (European Council 2020g):

More than ever, we need to take decisions, we also need to adapt our strategy in order to take into consideration the huge consequences of this crisis. But this is not enough. Beyond the next European budget, **we have also taken this very strong commitment to work together to launch a recovery fund, to mobilise more means, more money to identify our priorities in the near future.**

Lastly, I should like to say that there is one other point which is extremely important. **We are seeing initial, very severe, impacts on the economy, for instance in the tourism sector, in the air transport sector and in many other sectors. It is clear that in the days and weeks ahead we will need to work actively on the basis of the Commission's proposals and recommendations.**

Another pillar of the Covid-19 policy in the EU was the European Commission, which represents the EU's interests and worked in tandem with the European Council during this process. The last quotation exemplifies this cooperation between the EU bodies. The President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, made several remarks which are primarily parallel with the speeches, declarations, and statements delivered by the figures mentioned above and institutional bodies.

For instance, on March 10, 2020, von der Leyen delivered a speech that framed the European economy as an object challenged by the pandemic (2020a).

On the whole of Europe, I asked the Coronavirus Response Team this morning to look into **further tools that the Commission can mobilise** in order to address the **overall impact the Coronavirus outbreak has on the economy, throughout Europe. Many sectors are already suffering.** And we will need to look for ways to support them. For instance, and this is just one example, **aviation.** The Coronavirus outbreak **has a major impact on the European and international aviation industry.** We see that the **situation is deteriorating** on a daily basis. (Emphasis added)

Three days later (March 13, 2020), she made a similar remark which concentrates on healthcare, the health of European individuals, and the economy. Her emphasis on making bold and extraordinary decisions matches the declarations made by the EUCO and Charles Michel (2020b):

We all know that **the virus is not only dangerous for our health,** but it is also **hitting our economies.** It is a **major shock for the global and for the European economy. We have to take decisive and bold action now, and this is on all different levels.** This shock is temporary, but we must work together to ensure that it is as short and as limited as possible. And that it does not **create permanent damage to our economies.** (Emphasis added)

This section aimed to understand the main referent objects of the EU bodies in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic. Even though the actors place emphasis on the human health and healthcare system, the primary referent object is the European economy. The

speeches and declarations clearly indicate that the pandemic was framed as a security problem that has to be handled in a way that is different from the normal settings. The emphasis on the adaptation of the measures shows the second pillar of the securitization theory: the emergency measures.

4.3.2 Emergency measures

In the previous section, the referent objects were found, and it was discovered that the European Council enumerated two referent objects: human life or health and the European economy. The EU bodies took various measures and enacted decisions to protect these two objects. However, as mentioned, the European bodies took some precautions against Covid-19; however, there was minor. The formation of the Corona Response Team on 2 March 2020 and the identification of the objectives by Charles Michel on 10 March 2020 accelerated the process of measures and decisions to tackle the ongoing crisis. Also, different bodies and figures emphasized the unprecedented and immediate nature of the situation. Hence, the ordinary functioning was subverted, and the issue was carried above normal politics. In terms of emergency measures, the European Commission played a crucial role due to its duties and the authority entrusted by the EUCO.

The measures enacted by the European Commission can be categorized under two distinct categories: the ones associated with health and the ones associated with the economy. In terms of health measures, the EC began to work in January; however, there was an intensification after establishing the Corona Response Team. One of the mechanisms the EC employed was allocating financial aid to medical companies and projects. As mentioned, in January, the EU allocated 10 million euros from Horizon 2020 budget for researching Covid-19. On 6 March, the Commission allocated extra 37.5 million euros for 17 projects aiming to develop vaccines, diagnosis devices and tests, and novel treatments, and the number of projects increased to 18 on March 31 (European Commission 2020e). Another measure was taken on March 16 by donating 80 million euros to German medical company CureVac for vaccine development (European Commission 2020f).

The EC aimed to maintain enough personal protective equipment. The EC enacted an act in which the export of this type of equipment necessitates the approval by the member countries to provide doctors and field workers with enough equipment. The “RescEU Stock of Equipment” (notably ventilators, masks, and related supplies) was formed to assist the member states that needed them to counter the Covid-19 pandemic on March 19. The Commission suspended the value-added tax and customs duties charged on this equipment on April 3 (European Commission 2022b). Together with the donations and equipment management, the Commission published guidelines regarding border management and mobility to slow down the spread of the virus. The decision to close all external borders for 30 days, which von der Leyen announced on March 17, was one of the most significant steps to reduce mobility. The Commission proposed the border closure on March 16 with the EU members’ leaders meeting, and all states implemented it except Ireland (BBC News 2020). On the other hand, the Commission published guidelines and roadmaps to maintain the movement of capital, goods, services, and the people (March 16) and about passenger rights for the protection from delayed and canceled flights (March 18). On March 23, the Commission announced the “green lanes” in which the goods and services were carried (Lichtenstein 2021, 81).

In April, May, and June 2020, the EC continued to enact new decisions and measures to protect the EU citizens and the flow of the necessary equipment. The publication of a guideline for “cross-border treatment” to lessen the burden on the hospitals in member states (April 3) and the allocation of 2.7 billion Euros for improving the EU healthcare facilities and equipment (April 14) can be given as examples. The decision to extend the EU border closure until May 15 was taken on April 8 and until 15 June on May 8 (European Commission 2022b). In addition, the Commission continued to distribute masks to health workers on March 8 and decided to finance eight new projects for vaccine and treatment development (May 12) (Lichtenstein 2021, 81).

In brief, slowing down the spread of the virus and the protect human life were the main objectives to protect human life and keep the healthcare system intact. Hence, the EC enacted several measures and decisions. The closure of the EU external borders, the announcements of guidelines to maintain the movement of goods, people, services, and capital, the donation of financial aid to support vaccine and treatment projects, and the

distribution of masks and other necessary equipment were the main policy tools in this framework.

The second leg of the measures was related to the second referent object: the European economy. As shown above, different commissioners paid attention to the damage caused by the pandemic to the EU economy. Hence, the EC announced several aid packages and measures to protect the EU economy and the damaged sectors. The temporary change in the airport slots was made to lessen the impact on the aviation industry (March 10).¹¹ On the same day, the member states entrusted the Commission with authority to use 60 billion euros of unused cohesion funds to mitigate the pandemic's impact (European Commission 2022b). On March 13, the EC announced its plan Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative (CRII), worth of 37 billion Euro which aims to alleviate the financial burden on the member states, and the EUCO approved it on March 18 and approved by the European Parliament on March 26 (Council of the European Union 2020a). On March 19, the EC introduced the Temporary Framework for State Aid. This framework enabled member states to provide companies with grants, advantages in taxation, guarantees for loans, and subsidized loans for the companies. The Commission extended this framework several times: on April 3, May 8, June 29, and October 13, respectively (Enache 2020). On March 20, the EC proposed to put the general escape clause embedded in the Stability and Growth Pact in effect so that the member states can have higher public deficits and more control over their fiscal policies. This proposal was approved by the European Council on March 23 and entered into force on the same day (Lichtenstein 2021, 81).

The European Union paid attention to the economic burden caused by the pandemic. Hence, the EC took a measure to mitigate the effects of unemployment. The Temporary Support Mitigating Unemployment Risks in Emergency (SURE), which aimed to allocate 100 billion Euro for workers and companies, was introduced on April 2. After the approval by the European Council on May 19, this proposal came into force on May 24 (Akin Ocak and Erhan 2021, 13). On April 2, an additional package was proposed, named Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative Plus (CRII+), and the EP approved it on

¹¹ For the background of the airport slot use: European Commission, "Commission proposes measures to ease impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the aviation industry and the environment", https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_20_431.

April 17 (EU Funding Overview n.d.). Additionally, the EC had an objective to keep small and medium-scale companies alive and provided 1 billion Euros for their protections on April 6 (European Commission 2022b). However, the economic measures were not limited to these measures. The Commission facilitated bank loans for EU citizens and companies on April 28 (Lichtenstein 2021, 81).

The restoration of the EU economy and recovery from the pandemic-related economic crisis led to the preparation of the recovery packages. The joint initiative by Germany and France on March 18 to restore the EU economy became a catalyst for the EU institutions, and the European Council requested the European Commission to prepare a plan which mitigates the economic impact of the crisis and eases the recovery process (Maior and Camisão 2022, 69). The Commission prepared and proposed the “Next Generation EU” plan on May 27. The project aimed to enable the EC to borrow 75 billion euros from the financial markets and finance the programs. The payment of this borrowed money would happen between 2028 and 2058. The plan put forward three different mechanisms for recovery: (I) financial aid for the EU countries, (II) incentives for the private companies, and (III) investment in the health sector, necessary equipment, and foreign aid. To find the necessary resources immediately, the Commission made another proposal for amendment of the multiannual financial framework (MFF), which covered 2014-2020 (European Commission 2020h). In addition, the MFF 2021-2027, which was prepared in 2018, was subjected to revision to face the challenges posed by the pandemic (European Commission 2020i). The EU heads approved this plan of states on July 21, and the European Council and the European Parliament agreed on the package on November 10. The EUCO finalized the process of package adaptation on December 10 and accepted the MFF 2021-2027 on December 17. The key part of the Next Generation EU, the Recovery and Resilience Facility worth 560 billion Euro, was approved by both the EUCO and the European Parliament (European Commission n.d.).

Another measure adopted by the EC was the donation of financial packages to neighboring states. For instance, on April 22, the Commission announced a financial package of 3 billion euros in total to ten neighboring states like Albania, Ukraine, Jordan, and Montenegro (European Commission 2020c). Another package was announced on 29 April for the Western Balkans (European Commission 2020g). Similar measures were

reported in the following period: 50 million euros for Palestine, Chad, Yemen, Venezuela, and other countries (May 20) and the Central African Republic (June 18). These efforts and financing indicate the EU's global perspective on the pandemic.

In brief, the EU's emergency measures were shaped by the identified referent objects: human health and the European Economy. The formation of stocks, allocation of money for developing novel treatments and vaccines, the relief plan for the overburden created by the increasing Covid-19 cases, and the closure of the EU external borders were related to human health measures. The Next Generation EU program for recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, the introduction of the SURE program to lessen the rising unemployment rate, and various financial aid packages aimed at different sectors were economy-related measures. The EU addressed different aspects of economics, ranging from aviation to unemployment, and as listed, the European Commission prepared several blueprints and proposals under the authority entrusted by the European Council. The EUCO and the EP approved these measures to tackle this crisis, showing the audience's third pillar of the securitization theory.

4.3.3 Audience: a successful securitization?

As the Copenhagen school posits, the audience is the intersubjective tenet of the securitization theory, and audience approval for the security framing and emergency measures is necessary for securitization to succeed. The audience approval for the EU's security framing and emergency measures is the key to understanding whether the securitization of Covid-19 by the European institutional bodies, notably the EUCO and the EC, which were investigated above, was accepted by the EU organizations and the citizens. The public opinion pools can be used for this purpose, as in the Hungarian case.

According to the EU institutional structure, the EC prepares and proposes the laws and regulations. The EUCO and EP should agree on the proposal in order to become an EU law (European Commission n.d.). Since the EU citizens directly elect the European Parliament members, and the EUCO consists of the heads of state (or government) who are elected through elections in their countries, it shows the tacit approval by the European

citizens. The last EP election was held in 2019¹² before the pandemic erupted in the world, and the turnout rate was 50.66 percent (European Parliament 2019c). As mentioned in the emergency measures, most of the measures adopted by the European Commission were approved by both institutions. For example, the CRII and CRII+ were adopted by the EP on March 26 and April 17, or the Next Generation EU was approved by the EUCO and EP on November 10. Together with these significant economic packages, other measures were also approved. The suspension of airport slots to help the aviation sector, for instance, was approved by the EUCO and EP on March 20 and 26, respectively (Council of the European Union 2020b; European Parliament 2020a). It shows the tacit approval by the European citizens for the enacted measures since the elected bodies agreed on them. Additionally, the President of the EC and the other Commissioners are approved by the EP, and the President is proposed by the European Council, which consists of democratically elected leaders. It implies that there is a tacit approval for the European Commission (European Union n.d.). Hence, as in the Hungarian case, it can be stated there is an audience approval which makes the securitization successful.

When it comes to the approval of the EU citizens, public surveys can be utilized to assess the success of securitization. For this reason, the public surveys conducted in the member state can shed light on this information. However, there is one problem regarding the national-level public opinion polls: the exclusion of questions and surveys regarding the European Union, its role in the pandemic, and the measures adopted by the EU bodies. It can be easily seen in the Eurobarometer, which has been used since 1974 to monitor the EU citizens' ideas and opinions about politics, economics, and the EU (European Parliament n.d.). The Eurobarometer conglomerated all survey results from the EU countries during the pandemic (European Parliament n.d.), and it openly indicates that most of the countries did not conduct surveys on the EU, or there is no consistently revised data regarding the EU measures and actions. For example, while there is a survey result that 32 percent of the Austrian citizens had trust in the European Parliament in the framework of the pandemic management, there is no similar data on this matter from

¹² According to results of 2019 EP elections, the allocations of the seats are: the Christian Democrats (182 seats-24.23%), Socialists and Democrats (154 seats-20.51%), Renew Europe Group (108 seats-14.38%), Greens/EFA owned 74 seats 9.85%), Identity and Democracy gained (73-9.72%), European Conservatives and Reformist Group (62 seats-8.26%), European United Left-Nordic Green Left (41 seats-5.46%), and non-attached members (57 seats-7.59%) (European Parliament 2019a).

other member states (European Parliament 2020b). Another example, about Italy, showed that 69 percent of the Italian population expressed their support for their Next Generation EU program; however, there is no data about other members (European Parliament 2020c). This missing data is an obstacle to understanding whether the European citizens accepted the EU’s securitizing act and emergency act. For this reason, the public surveys conducted in the member states cannot be beneficial for finding the answer.

Together with this list of public opinion polls, the European Parliament conducted two public opinions, in April and June 2020, in order to monitor the EU citizens’ position on the role of the EU and their national government in the Covid-19 pandemic and their freedoms. According to this survey indicating the public opinion in April 2020, which was published in June, 74 percent of the EU citizens were more or less aware of the measures enacted by the EU in the face of the pandemic (Figure 4.3) (European Parliament 2020d, 24). This figure shows that most of the respondents were aware of the EU’s endeavor to tackle the ongoing crisis.

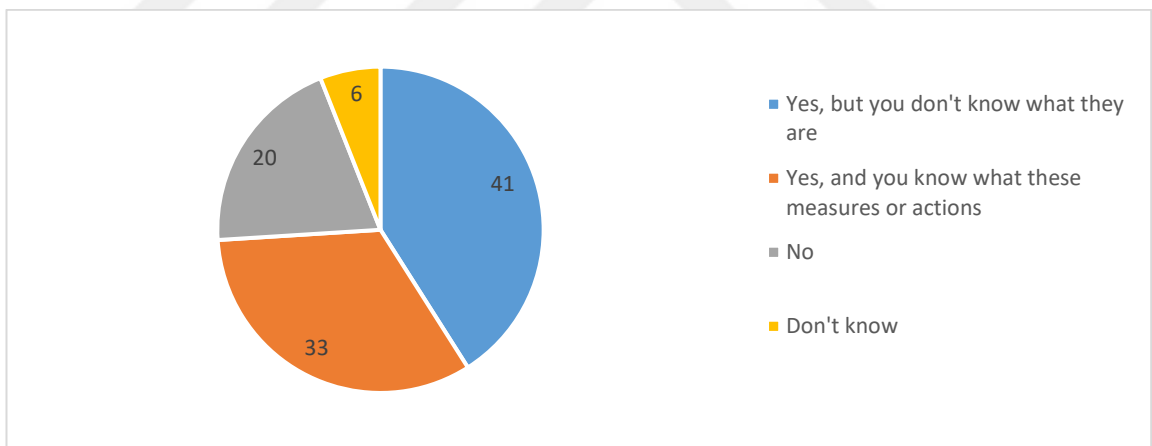


Figure 4.3: Awareness about the EU actions and measures-April 2020

Source: (European Parliament 2020d, 24)

Another data published in the same survey was about the “satisfaction with the EU measures,” which indicates that more than half of the respondents expressed their dissatisfaction with the measures, and 42 percent were satisfied with the adopted measures to some degree (Figure 4.4).

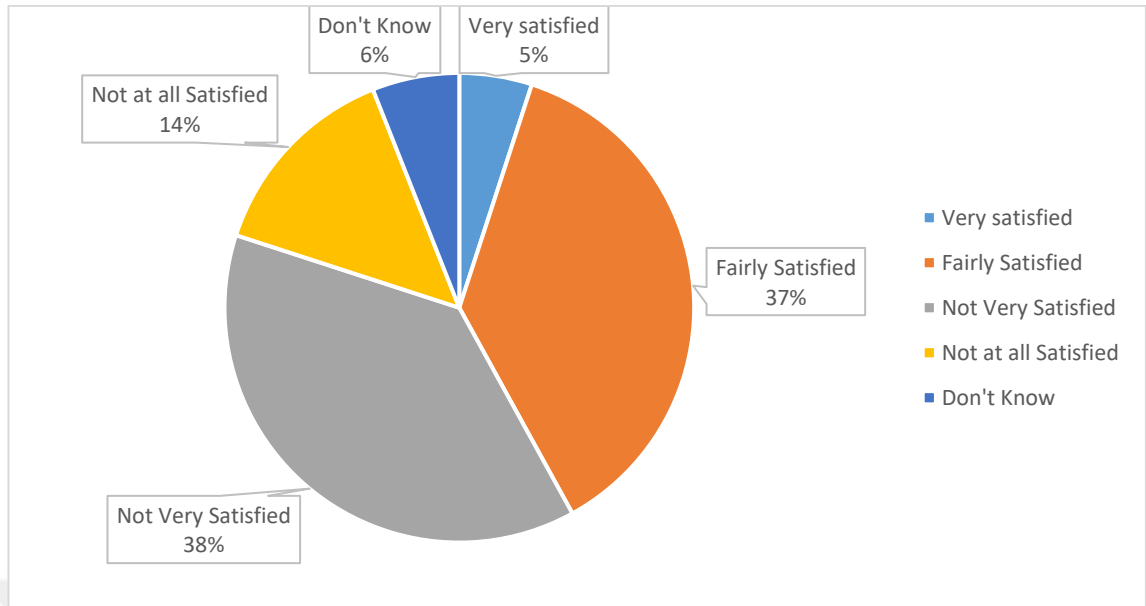


Figure 4.4: Satisfaction with the EU Measures-April 2020

Source: (European Parliament 2020d, 27)

Another data published in the same survey was about the “satisfaction with the EU measures,” which indicates that more than half of the respondents expressed their dissatisfaction with the measures, and 42 percent were satisfied with the adopted measures to some degree (Figure 4.4). It can be stated that the EU citizens’ perception of the EU actions was characterized by the “national cacophony” in that period. In the second public opinion survey, the picture changed. As indicated in the figures below (Figure 4.5 and Figure 4.6). In this public survey, 49 percent of the EU citizens expressed their satisfaction with the EU measures and policies.

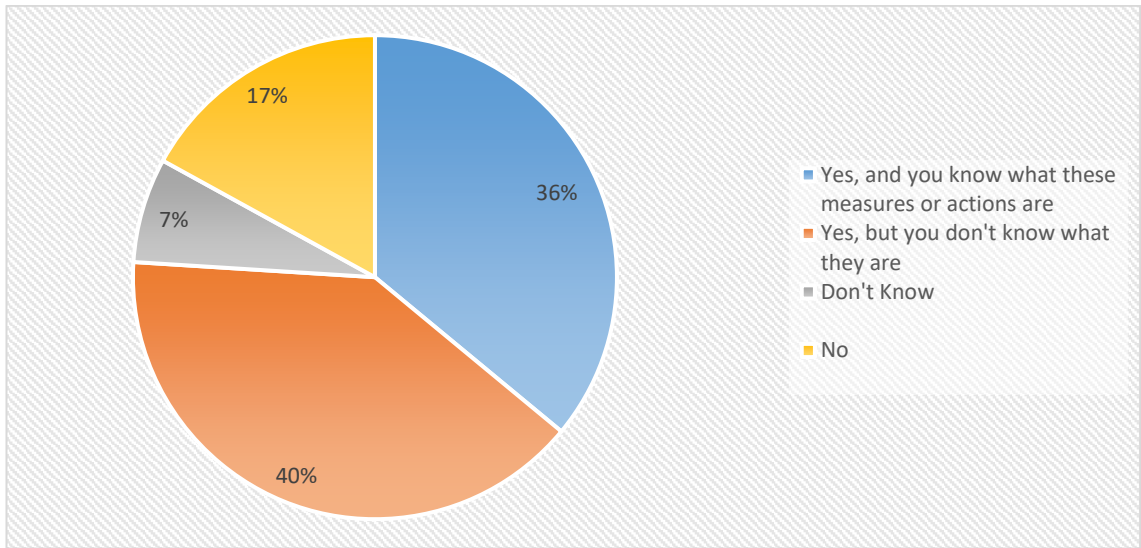


Figure 4.5: Awareness about the EU actions and Measures-June 2020

Source: (European Parliament 2020e, 10)

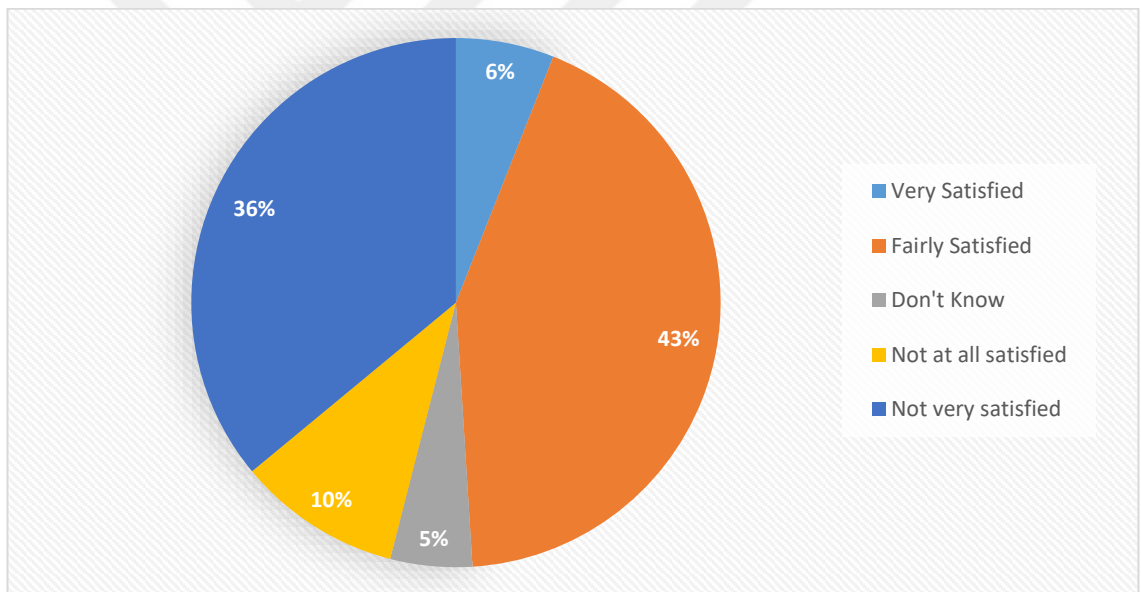


Figure 4.6: Satisfaction with the EU Measures-June 2020

Source: (European Parliament 2020e, 13)

There were differences between these two public opinion polls. The first one did not include six members of the EU: Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Cyprus, Malta, and Luxembourg (European Parliament 2020d, 82). Hence, the findings of the first survey did not represent the whole EU citizens. However, the second pool includes all of the member states. As the June 2020 survey demonstrates, the EU citizens' perception of the EU measures changed positively, and satisfaction with the enacted measures indicates. This

difference in the included countries can be traced to the sample size. The first survey's sample size is 21,804 for the first and 24,798 for the second (European Parliament 2020e, 77).

In the light of information, it can be stated that the securitization of Covid-19 at the EU level was successful, and the audience (the relevant bodies and the public opinion) accepted the securitizing statements and the enacted measures. The EP and EUCO approved the EC-initiated policies, and public opinion changed as the EC get more active in the face of the pandemic.

4.4. Hungary and the EU: The Comparison

This thesis aims to understand whether Hungary, the least democratic state of the EU, differentiated from the European Union regarding pandemic management and the securitization of the Covid-19 pandemic. The first three months of the pandemic were studied, and it was concluded that the pandemic was securitized in two cases. However, the securitization of the pandemic was not identical.

The previous chapter analyzed the securitization of the pandemic in Hungary and the statements delivered by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. It was found out that the pandemic was framed as a security threat against two referent objects: the survival of the Hungarian citizens and the survival of the Hungarian economy. In terms of the emergency measures, the government enacted several measures ranging from border closure to bans on social life, from curfew to economic and financial aid to alleviate the burden on the pandemic-hit sectors. Lastly, the Hungarian public accepted the securitizing utterances and the emergency measures as indicated by the public opinion polls, projections, and election results.

In terms of the European Union, the initial response was slow. Until mid-March, the member states were alone, and the EU bodies were slow in taking necessary actions. However, the EU bodies started to act, and the EUCO authorized the EC to coordinate the measures. In line with this development, the speeches and statements delivered by the President of the EUCO, Charles Michel, and the President of the EC, Ursula von der

Leyen, and the declarations published by the Council of the EU were analyzed to determine the referent objects. Like the case of Hungary, there were two referent objects: the health of the European citizens and the European economy. However, the statements and declarations placed the emphasis mainly on the economy of the EU. In line with these referent objects, the EU bodies enacted measures such as the closure of the EU external borders, financial packages for developing novel treatments and vaccines, and the change in the budget or aid to non-member states. The audience accepted the securitizing statements and the emergency measures, which made the securitization successful.

Even though the securitization of the pandemic in Hungary and the EU looks similar at first glance, there were significant differences. The pre-pandemic political context of Hungary had an impact on the securitization process. The democratic backsliding which followed the changes in the judiciary and media structure led to international criticisms of these amendments and a decline in the democracy scores of the country. This authoritarianism led by the Prime Minister Viktor Orbán had repercussions for the pandemic period: the militant language and the deepening of authoritarianism.

The securitization of the pandemic in the EU, as demonstrated in this chapter, the use of the terms like “war,” “battle,” “front,” or “enemy” was low. However, in the case of Hungary, Viktor Orbán uttered these words in almost all of his speeches. The description of the pandemic as a war or battle, the virus as an invisible enemy, or the hospitals as the front where the war continues was a dominant discourse. On the other hand, the EU officials avoided these terms and described the situation as a “unprecedented challenge” or “crisis.”

The second difference, which was more significant than the previous one, is the deepening authoritarianism in Hungary. The pandemic opened a space for Orbán to advance his non-democratic agenda and suppress the voices critical of his government. In this vein, the Coronavirus Act was enacted on March 31, 2020, which allows the Prime Minister to bypass the parliament. This Act, which remained in effect for over two months, provided Viktor Orbán with a chance to punish the opposition parties and figures who were critical of the Orbán government and to make a change in several fields. For instance, the definition of “sex” was altered to “sex at birth,” the budget for the political parties was

cut in halves, and the status of Göd to direct the revenue created by the Samsung investment in this city to Fidesz-administered bodies. These and several other regulations enacted during this period had nothing to do with the pandemic. However, Orbán used this Act to advance his policies. All these undemocratic policies did not aim to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic but to tilt the political structure towards his party, Fidesz. As mentioned in the former chapter, Hungary experienced democratic backsliding in the last decade due to these policies, and the pandemic gives more room for changing the damaged structure.

On the other hand, the second case indicates that the securitization of Covid-19 in the EU was not similar to the Hungarian case. The statements and declarations of the relevant bodies and figures clearly showed that there was a securitization. However, the securitizing actors do not use a language loaded with military terminology. On contrary, statements and declarations demonstrate that the democratic nature of the EU was emphasized in the speeches several times. The EU acted in line with its values, and the remarks delivered by Michel and von der Leyen reflect this. The avoidance of the militant language and the emphasis on the democratic tackling of the pandemic exemplify this value-driven securitization.

This comparative analysis revealed that referent objects and emergency measures were identical, and the securitization was successful in both cases. However, the way the securitization occurred was different due to the embraced values and the political contexts when the pandemic erupted in these cases influenced the securitization processes. In other words, what the EU did was the reverse of what Hungary did regarding the securitization of the pandemic and managing the Covid-19 pandemic. Hungary deviated from the European Union regarding pandemic policies and securitization of the pandemic despite the overlapping referent objects and emergency measures. The non-democratic policies and the statements repleted with military terms are the best examples of this deviation.

4.5. Conclusion

This chapter intended to understand whether the EU securitized the Covid-19 pandemic. The security framing of the issue, the emergency measures, and the audience approval

was investigated with reference to the securitization theory. In this sense, the statements and declarations delivered by the European Council were examined. Additionally, the statement made by the President of the EC was analyzed due to the role played during the pandemic and the authority given by the EUCO. For this reason, the statements and declarations delivered by the EUCO, Charles Michel, and Ursula von der Leyen from March 2020 to July 2020 were studied.

When the virus arrived on the European continent, the EU faced political, economic, and socioeconomic challenges. Furthermore, two Presidents of the EU's governing bodies, the European Commission and the European Council, were new in their posts. Hence, the pandemic management started with a "national cacophony," and until March 2020, the governing bodies of the EU had a passive role. In March 2020, the EUCO led by Charles Michel, the Council of the EU, and the President of the EC, von der Leyen, appeared as primary actors. Hence, these bodies and leaders were analyzed in this chapter.

In the statements delivered by the members of the EUCO and two presidents of the EC and EUCO, there were two prominent main referent objects: human health and the European economy. These figures touched upon the necessity of the protection of these two objects and enacted different measures such as the closure of external borders, the introduction of several economical packages for other economy-related purposes, or the procurements of necessary health equipment as summarized below (Table 4.1).

Document	Threat	Referent Objects	Emergency Actions	Audience Approval	Success of Securitization
The statements delivered by Charles Michel & Ursula von der Leyen, The Declarations published by the Council of the EU	Coronavirus	Human Health The EU Economy	Closure of borders RescEU Stockpile Economic Packages Public Procurements for Health Equipment Recovery Fund Introduction of General Escape Clause	Yes	Successful

Table 4.1: Discourse Analysis of the EU Officials

The facilitating conditions, it can be noted, were met. The figures who delivered the statements at hand had enough power and capacity. In addition, as shown in the quotations, “the point of no return” and “the possible way out” were stressed in the statements. The reference to the necessity of protecting human health means that the referent object was compatible with the pandemic, which caused death tolls and damage to healthcare facilities.

In this vein, it can be stated that the referent objects match the referent objects framed by Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. The emergency measures were similar such as the closure of the borders and the introduction of various economical packages, which alleviated the burden exerted by the pandemic. In terms of audience approval, both the EU institutions and the EU public opinion was analyzed, and it was found that the policies and measures of the EU were welcomed and accepted by both. This indicates that the EC securitized the issue as a threat to human health and the EU economy, and the audience accepted this process. However, while the securitization initiated by the EU remains in the realm of democratic values, the Hungarian case moved in the direction of authoritarianism.

5. CONCLUSION

Various diseases and pandemics hit the world in different periods, and humans, states, and organizations developed different strategies, blueprints, and policies to eradicate these pandemics and ease the burden. The last pandemic that struck the world was the Covid-19 pandemic that erupted in Wuhan, China, at the end of 2019. After its first detection, the virus spread worldwide and was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 11 March 2020. The detection of Covid-19 cases in different continents and countries led to the adoption of different measures and policy tools.

This study benefited from the securitization theory developed by the Copenhagen School, which is explained in the first chapter. Securitization theory was formulated in the 1990s as a response to the state-centric understanding of the traditional security studies which dominated the Cold War period. The members of the Copenhagen School aimed to overcome this security understanding by deepening and widening the security. Hence, they asserted that security is a speech act, which means the framing of an issue as a threat or danger to the existence of a referent object (or objects). This framing upgraded the issue from the political sphere to the exceptional sphere, where emergency measures and decisions which are not easy to take under normal circumstances are adopted. However, the relevant audience needs acceptance and approval, which is the intersubjective part of the securitization process. If the securitizing act does not receive acceptance from the audience, it remains a “securitizing move.”

Together with these three primary components (existential threat, emergency measures, and audience approval), the school listed “facilitating conditions,” which ease the success of the securitization. They are classified under two categories: internal and external conditions. The former refers to the linguistic formulation (the use of military themes or the reference to “the only possible way out,” etc.) of the securitizing utterances and the framing of the necessary object, which can be associated easily with the relevant sector. On the other hand, the external conditions are twofold: the position of the securitizing actor and the historical and contextual conditions like the perception of tanks is much more hostile due to their historically loaded image.

The first case was analyzed in the third chapter of this study, and the securitization of the Covid-19 pandemic in Hungary was scrutinized. A brief history of Hungary after 1990, with a great emphasis on the last decade, was provided. This part showed that Hungarian elites aimed to establish a democratic country, and Hungary had a functioning democracy until 2010. However, after the Fidesz-KDNP coalition's landslide victory in the 2010 elections, Hungary began to suffer from democratic backsliding characterized by the erosion of free media, civil society, and institutions and the consolidation of power in the hands of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. For this reason, the statements delivered by Orbán between March and June 2020 were analyzed in the framework of the securitization theory. This analysis demonstrated that Viktor Orbán securitized the Covid-19 pandemic, and two referent objects were identified: human health and the Hungarian economy. The government introduced several measures for their protection ranging from financial packages to border closures. Both the framing of the pandemic as a security issue and the emergency measures were accepted by the Hungarian public as the public opinion polls conducted by different organizations and projections about mask use and mobility indicated. Hence, it can be stated the Covid-19 pandemic was securitized in Hungary since all major components of the securitization are met.

Additionally, this chapter posited that the securitization of the Covid-19 pandemic in Hungary has two specific tenets: the use of military terminology and the rising authoritarianism. As the first characteristic points, the statements by Orbán are replete with the words like “enemy, attack, front, war, fight,” which were used frequently. The second one refers mainly to the Coronavirus Act promulgated on March 30. Viktor Orbán was entrusted with the authority to enact new decrees in the face of the pandemic. However, he abused this power by passing decrees which had nothing to do with the Covid-19 pandemic ranging from LGBTQ+ rights to the classification of public procurements. Hence, the securitization process in Hungary matches Hungary's political context from 2010 onwards.

The last chapter focused on the European Union in terms of pandemic management. This chapter, like the previous one, started with the history of the EU's last decade to show how several economic and political crises impacted the European Union in the 2010s and how the image of the EU deteriorated. Following that, the chronology of the Covid-19

pandemic in the EU was listed. It demonstrated that the initial months of the pandemic in the EU were characterized by unilateral national interest pursued by the members. This short “national-interest-based” period came to an end in March 2020, when Charles Michel, the Council of the EU, and the EC started to speak about the pandemic. For this reason, the statements made by the EUCO, Charles Michel, and Ursula von der Leyen were analyzed, and it was found that the European Union identified two referent objects: human health and the European economy. In that sense, the EC enacted various measures to protect these two objects, such as economic packages directed towards unemployment, small businesses and health equipment, border closure, and recovery funds. This securitizing act was approved by both relevant audiences: the EU institutions (namely the EUCO and the EP) and the European citizens. In order to analyze the EU citizens’ approval, whose population is around 447.7 million (European Union n.d.), the surveys conducted by Eurobarometer were used. It was shown that the EU citizens found the EU actions satisfactory.

The thesis aimed to understand whether Hungary, the least democratic state in the EU, differentiated from the EU in terms of pandemic management and benefited from the securitization theory. It was found out that both cases presented the pandemic as a threat to both human health and their economies, and they enacted necessary measures to protect these two referent objects. The relevant audiences accepted the securitizing acts. However, the way securitization occurs in Hungary and the EU differs from each other. Hungary, which got away from the liberal and democratic values in the last decade, moved toward more authoritarianism (the Coronavirus Act), and the securitizing actor, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, used military-loaded terms. On the other hand, the securitization of the Covid-19 pandemic in the EU was much less replete with military terms, and authoritarianism was not present. In other words, the values defended by these cases impacted their securitization process in the face of Covid-19.

Lastly, some shortcomings can be studied in future studies. Firstly, this study only focused on the statements by Orbán, which were translated into English, and it is explained that Orbán used Facebook as a communication venue during the pandemic. These Facebook posts can be analyzed in the securitization framework and contribute to the literature on the securitization-social media nexus. Additionally, this study focused

on the first three months of the pandemic in Hungary and the EU due to the easing of the measures from July 2020 onwards. However, the second phase of the pandemic (from September 2020 onwards) can be investigated in two cases. Thirdly, Orbán directly placed the importance of the vaccines for reverting to the pre-pandemic way of living. Hence, the de-securitization and vaccination nexus can be analyzed in terms of Hungary.



6. REFERENCES

- About Hungary. 2020a. “About Hungary - Hungary’s 28-Point Action Plan to Fight the Coronavirus.” February 3, 2020. <https://abouthungary.hu/news-in-brief/hungarys-28-point-action-plan-to-fight-the-coronavirus>.
- . 2020b. “About Hungary - PM Orbán Warns of Migrant Wave amid Coronavirus Spread.” February 28, 2020. <https://abouthungary.hu/news-in-brief/pm-orban-warns-of-migrant-wave-amid-coronavirus-spread>.
- . 2020c. “About Hungary - Coronavirus Update: Restrictions on Movement Now in Force.” March 28, 2020. <https://abouthungary.hu/news-in-brief/coronavirus-update-restrictions-on-movement-now-in-force>.
- . 2020d. “About Hungary - Think Tank Századvég Pens Open Letter to European Parliament and Commission.” October 13, 2020. <https://abouthungary.hu/news-in-brief/think-tank-szazadveg-pens-open-letter-to-european-parliament-and-commission>.
- Ágh, Attila. 2016. “The Decline of Democracy in East-Central Europe: Hungary as the Worst-Case Scenario.” *Problems of Post-Communism* 63 (5–6): 277–87. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10758216.2015.1113383>.
- Akgül-Açıkmeşe, Sinem. 2011. “Algı Mı, Söylem Mi? Kopenhag Okulu ve Yeni-Klasik Gerçeklikte Güvenlik Tehditleri.” *Uluslararası İlişkiler* 8 (30): 43–73.
- . 2020. “Covid-19 ve Güvenikleştirme.” In *2020’de Kadınlar, Dünya Politikası ve Türkiye*, 10–11. İstanbul.
- Akin Ocak, Pırıl, and Çağrı Erhan. 2021. “A Litmus Test for the EU’s Longest Year: Solidarity Principle and Challenges by COVID-19 in 2020.” *Uluslararası İlişkiler* 18 (71): 21–43. <https://doi.org/10.33458/UIDERGISI.947511>.
- Amit, Moran, Heli Kimhi, Tarif Bader, Jacob Chen, Elon Glassberg, and Avi Benov. 2020. “Mass-Surveillance Technologies to Fight Coronavirus Spread: The Case of Israel.” *Nature Medicine* 26 (8): 1167–69. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41591-020-0984-3>.
- Apap, Joanna, Anja Radjenovic, and Alina Dobрева. 2019. “EU Policies – Delivering for Citizens: The Migration Issue.” *European Parliamentary Research Service*. [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS_BRI\(2019\)635542](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS_BRI(2019)635542).
- Archick, Kristin. 2018. “The European Union: Current Challenges and Future Prospects.”

The European Union: Challenges and Prospects. Washington DC.

- Arnorsson, Agust, and Gylfi Zoega. 2018. "On the Causes of Brexit." *European Journal of Political Economy* 55 (November 2016): 301–23. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejpoleco.2018.02.001>.
- Austin, J.L. 1962. "Austin J. L. -How to Do Things With Words." London: Oxford University Press.
- Bagge Laustsen, Carsten, and Ole Wæver. 2000. "In Defence of Religion: Sacred Referent Objects for Securitization." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 29 (3): 705–39. <https://doi.org/10.1177/03058298000290031601>.
- Bajarūnas, Eitvydas. 2020. "Addressing Hybrid Threats : Priorities for the EU in 2020 and Beyond." *European View* 19 (1): 62–70. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1781685820912041>.
- Balzacq, Thierry. 2005. "The Three Faces of Securitization: Political Agency, Audience and Context." *European Journal of International Relations* 11 (2): 171–201. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066105052960>.
- . 2010. "Enquiries into Methods: A New Framework for Securitization Analysis." In *Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve*, edited by Thierry Balzacq, 31–54. Oxon: Routledge.
- . 2011. "A Theory of Securitization: Origins, Core Assumptions and Variants." In *Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve*, edited by Thierry Balzacq, First Edit, 1–30. Oxon: Routledge.
- Balzacq, Thierry, Sarah Léonard, and Jan Ruzicka. 2016. "'Securitization' Revisited: Theory and Cases." *International Relations* 30 (4): 494–531. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117815596590>.
- Bánkuti, Miklós, Gábor Halmai, and Kim Lane Scheppele. 2012. "Disabling the Constitution." *Journal of Democracy* 23 (3): 138–46. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2012.0054>.
- Batory, Agnes. 2016. "Populists in Government? Hungary's 'System of National Cooperation.'" *Democratization* 23 (2): 283–303. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2015.1076214>.
- Baume, Maïa De La, and Lili Bayer. 2021. "EU's Top Court Rejects Hungary's Bid to Halt Punishment Proceedings – POLITICO." 2021. <https://www.politico.eu/article/ecj-ruling-hungary-rule-of-law-article-7/>.

- Baysal, Başar. 2020. "20 Years of Securitization: Strengths, Limitations and a New Dual Framework." *Uluslararası İlişkiler* 17 (67): 3–20. <https://doi.org/10.33458/uidergisi.777338>.
- . 2022. "Güvenikleştirme Teorisi." In *Uluslararası İlişkilerde Güvenlik*, edited by Başar Baysal, 107–16. İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları.
- BBC Future. 2020. "Covid-19: The History of Pandemics ." March 26, 2020. <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20200325-covid-19-the-history-of-pandemics>.
- BBC News. 2018. "Europe and Nationalism: A Country-by-Country Guide - BBC News." BBC. November 13, 2018. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36130006>.
- . 2020. "Coronavirus: Europe Plans Full Border Closure in Virus Battle - BBC News." March 17, 2020. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-51918596>.
- Beauchamp, Zack. 2020. "Hungary's 'Coronavirus Coup,' Explained - Vox." April 15, 2020. <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2020/4/15/21193960/coronavirus-covid-19-hungary-orban-trump-populism>.
- Bene, Márton, and Zsolt Boda. 2021. "Hungary: Crisis as Usual-Populist Governance and the Pandemic." In *Populism and the Politicization of the COVID-19 Crisis in Europe*, edited by Nicolas Hubé and Giuliano Bobba, 87–101. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-66011-6>.
- Berend, Ivan T. 2019. *Against European Integration: The European Union and Its Discontents*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Bilgin, Pınar. 2005. *Regional Security in the Middle East. Regional Security in the Middle East: A Critical Perspective*. Oxon: RoutledgeCurzon. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9780755622382.ch-009>.
- Bozóki, András, and Eszter Simon. 2012. "Hungary since 1989." In *Central and Southeast European Politics Since 1989*, edited by Sabrina P. Ramet, 204–32. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511803185.014>.
- Butler, Judith. 1996. "Performativity's Social Magic." In *The Social and Political Body*, 29–47. New York: Guilford Press.
- . 1997. *Excitable Speech: A Politics of Performative*. London: Routledge.
- Buzan, Barry. 1983. *People, States and Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relations*. Brighton: Wheatsheaf Books.

- Buzan, Barry. 1991. "New Patterns of Global Security in the Twenty-First Century." *International Affairs* 67 (3): 431–51. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2621945>.
- Buzan, Barry, and Lena Hansen. 2009. *The Evolution of International Security Studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Buzan, Barry, and Ole Wæver. 2003. *Regions and Power: The Structure of International Security*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Buzan, Barry, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde. 1998. *Security: A New Framework*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Buzogány, Aron. 2017. "Illiberal Democracy in Hungary: Authoritarian Diffusion or Domestic Causation?" *Democratization* 24 (7): 1307–25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2017.1328676>.
- Chairil, Tangguh. 2020. "Indonesian Government's COVID-19 Measures, January-May 2020: Late Response and Public Health Securitization." *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Ilmu Politik* 24 (2): 128–52. <https://doi.org/10.22146/JSP.55863>.
- Collective, C.A.S.E. 2006. "Critical Approaches to Security in Europe: A Networked Manifesto." *Security Dialogue* 37 (4): 443–87. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010606073085>.
- "Coronavirus: New Phase of Protective Measures to Begin on Monday - Hungary Today." 2020. May 3, 2020. <https://hungarytoday.hu/coronavirus-easing-monday-protective-measures/>.
- Council of the EU. 2020a. "Regulation of the European Parliament and of the European Council Amending Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 as Regards Specific Measures to Provide Exceptional Flexibility for the Use of the European Structural and Investments." Vol. 2020. Brussels.
- . 2020b. "Statement of EU Ministers of Finance on the Stability and Growth Pact in Light of the COVID-19 Crisis - Consilium." March 23, 2020. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/03/23/statement-of-eu-ministers-of-finance-on-the-stability-and-growth-pact-in-light-of-the-covid-19-crisis/>.
- . 2020c. "Statement of EU Ministers of Finance on Continuing Bank Lending and on Maintaining a Well-Functioning Insurance Sector amid the COVID-19 Pandemic - Consilium." April 16, 2020. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/04/16/statement-of-eu-ministers-of-finance-on-continuing-bank-lending-and-on-maintaining-a-well-functioning-insurance-sector-amid-the-covid-19-pandemic/>.

- Council of the European Union. 2020a. "COVID-19 - Council Gives Go-Ahead to Support from EU Budget - Consilium." March 18, 2020. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/03/18/covid-19-council-gives-go-ahead-to-support-from-eu-budget/>.
- . 2020b. "COVID-19: Council Agrees Its Position on Helping Airlines by Suspending Slot Requirements - Consilium." March 20, 2020. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/03/20/covid-19-council-agrees-its-position-on-helping-airlines-by-suspending-slot-requirements/>.
- Curley, Melissa G., and Jonathan Herington. 2011. "The Securitisation of Avian Influenza: International Discourses and Domestic Politics in Asia." *Review of International Studies* 37 (1): 141–66. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210510000537>.
- D. H. Olsen, Espen, and Guri Rosen. 2021. "The EU's Response to the Financial Crisis." In *The Palgrave Handbook of EU Crises*, edited by Marianne Riddervold, Jarle Trondal, and Akasemi Newsome, 381–400. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Davis, Klimara. 2020. "The European Union's Dublin Regulation and the Migrant Crisis." *Global Stud. L. Rev.* 19 (2): 261–90.
- Derrida, Jacques. 1972. "Signature Event Context." *Glyph*, no. 1: 172–97.
- . 1977. "Limited Inc a b C." *Glyph*, no. 2: 162–254.
- Dinan, Desmond, Neill Nugent, and William E. Paterson. 2017. "A Multi-Dimensional Crisis." In *The European Union in Crisis*, edited by Desmond Dinan, Neill Nugent, and William E. Paterson, 1–15. London: Palgrave.
- Dokos, Thanos. 2019. "Threats and Challenges to European Security and the Need for Well-Informed Parliamentarians." *German Marshall Fund of the United States*, 1–9. <https://www.mercatoreuropeandialogue.org/download-file/983/>.
- Dorosz, Dávid, Krisztina Hegedűs, Dániel Prinz, Dániel Róna, and László Sebián-Petrovszki. 2020. "COVID-19 in Hungary Challenges and Opportunities for Progressives." Washington DC. <https://cdn.americanprogress.org/content/uploads/2020/12/17120823/COVID19-in-Hungary.pdf>.
- Elbe, Stefan. 2006. "Should HIV/AIDS Be Securitized? The Ethical Dilemmas of Linking HIV/AIDS and Security." *International Studies Quarterly* 50 (1): 119–44.
- Enache, Raluca. 2020. "European Union- Measures in Response to COVID-19 - KPMG Global." November 18, 2020. <https://home.kpmg/xx/en/home/insights/2020/04/european-union-government-and->

institution-measures-in-response-to-covid.html.

EU Funding Overview. n.d. “Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative (CRII) | EU Funding Overview.” Accessed June 29, 2022. <https://eufundingoverview.be/funding/coronavirus-response-investment-initiative-crii>.

EUR-Lex. 2012. “Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union.” October 26, 2012. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A12012M007>.

European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control. 2020a. “Cluster of Pneumonia Cases Caused by a Novel Coronavirus, Wuhan, China.” *European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control*. Stockholm.

———. 2020b. “Outbreak of Acute Respiratory Syndrome Associated with a Novel Coronavirus, China: First Local Transmission in the EU/EEA – Third Update.” *European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control*. https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/novel-coronavirus-risk-assessment-china-31-january-2020_0.pdf.

———. 2020c. “Outbreak of Acute Respiratory Syndrome Associated with a Novel Coronavirus, Wuhan, China: First Update.” *European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control*. Stockholm. https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/novel-coronavirus-risk-assessment-china-31-january-2020_0.pdf.

———. 2020d. “Pneumonia Cases Possibly Associated with a Novel Coronavirus in Wuhan, China.” *European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control*. Stockholm. <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/Threat-assessment-Pneumonia-cases-possibly-associated-to-a-novel-coronavirus-in-Wuhan-China.pdf> [<https://perma.cc/8JWR-V5ES>].

———. 2022. “COVID-19 Situation Update for the EU/EEA, as of 4 March 2022.” European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control. March 4, 2022. <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/cases-2019-ncov-eueea>.

European Commission. n.d. “Recovery Plan for Europe | European Commission.” Accessed March 15, 2022a. https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/recovery-plan-europe_en.

———. n.d. “What the European Commission Does in Law | European Commission.” Accessed June 29, 2022b. https://ec.europa.eu/info/about-european-commission/what-european-commission-does/law_en.

———. 2019. “Standard Eurobarometer 92 – Autumn 2019. Public Opinion in the

European Union.” <https://doi.org/10.2775/033750>.

- . 2020a. “2020 Rule of Law Report on Hungary.” *European Commission*. Brussels.
- . 2020b. “Communication From the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: Staying Safe from Covid-19 During Winter.” Brussels. chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/viewer.html?pdfurl=https%3A%2F%2Fec.europa.eu%2Fhealth%2Fsystem%2Ffiles%2F2020-12%2Fcovid-19_stayingsafe_communication_en_0.pdf&clem=745165&chunk=true.
- . 2020c. “Coronavirus: Commission Proposes € 3 Billion Macro-Financial Assistance Package to Support Ten Neighbouring Countries,” no. April 2020. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_716.
- . 2020d. “History of the European Union 2010-19.” 2020. https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/history-eu/2010-19_en.
- . 2020e. “COVID-19: Commission Steps up Research Funding and Selects 17 Projects in Vaccine Development, Treatment and Diagnostics.” March 6, 2020. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_386.
- . 2020f. “Coronavirus: Commission Offers Financing to Innovative Vaccines Company CureVac.” March 16, 2020. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_474.
- . 2020g. “Western Balkans’ Leaders Meeting: EU Reinforces Support to Address COVID-19 Crisis and Outlines Proposal for Post-Pandemic Recovery.” April 29, 2020. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_777.
- . 2020h. “Europe’s Moment: Repair and Prepare for the next Generation.” May 27, 2020. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_940.
- . 2020i. “Questions and Answers on the MFF and Next Generation EU.” May 27, 2020. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_20_935.
- . 2021. “Measures List - Ecml Covid.” 2021. <https://covid-statistics.jrc.ec.europa.eu/RMeasures>.
- . 2022a. “Temporary Reintroduction of Border Control.” 2022. https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/policies/schengen-borders-and-visa/schengen-area/temporary-reintroduction-border-control_en.
- . 2022b. “Timeline of EU Action.” 2022. https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/coronavirus-response/timeline-eu-action_en.

- European Council. 2020a. “Joint Statement of the Members of the European Council” 2020 (March): 1–7.
- . 2020b. “Opening Remarks by President Charles Michel before the Videoconference of EU Leaders - Consilium.” March 10, 2020. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/03/10/opening-remarks-by-president-charles-michel-after-the-videoconference-of-eu-leaders/>.
- . 2020c. “Conclusions by the President of the European Council Following the Video Conference with Members of the European Council on COVID-19 - Consilium.” March 17, 2020. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/03/17/conclusions-by-the-president-of-the-european-council-following-the-video-conference-with-members-of-the-european-council-on-covid-19/>.
- . 2020d. “Remarks by President Charles Michel at the Press Conference on the EU Response to the Coronavirus Crisis - Consilium.” April 15, 2020. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/04/15/remarks-by-president-charles-michel-at-the-press-conference-on-the-eu-response-to-the-coronavirus-crisis/>.
- . 2020e. “Conclusions of the President of the European Council Following the Video Conference of the Members of the European Council, 23 April 2020 - Consilium.” April 23, 2020. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/04/23/conclusions-by-president-charles-michel-following-the-video-conference-with-members-of-the-european-council-on-23-april-2020/>.
- . 2020f. “A Caring Society Is the Blueprint for Ensuring Our Union Emerges from the Current Crisis Stronger, More United and with Greater Solidarity than Ever - Consilium.” May 8, 2020. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/05/08/a-caring-society-is-the-blueprint-for-ensuring-our-union-emerges-from-the-current-crisis-stronger-more-united-and-with-greater-solidarity-than-ever/>.
- . 2020g. “Intervention by President Charles Michel at the European Parliament on the Video Conference of the Members of the European Council of 23 April 2020 - Consilium.” May 13, 2020. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/05/13/intervention-at-the-european-parliament-on-the-video-conference-of-the-members-of-the-european-council-of-23-april-2020/>.
- . 2022a. “Biography of Charles Michel - Consilium.” February 23, 2022. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/european-council/president/biography/>.
- . 2022b. “Crisis Coordination in the Council (IPCR) - Consilium.” February 24, 2022. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/ipcr-response-to-crises/>.

- European Parliament. n.d. “Eurobarometer.” Accessed March 16, 2022a. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/en/be-heard/eurobarometer>.
- . n.d. “Public Opinion in the Time of COVID-19.” Accessed March 16, 2022b. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/en/be-heard/eurobarometer/public-opinion-in-the-time-of-covid-19>.
- . 2013. “REPORT on the Situation of Fundamental Rights: Standards and Practices in Hungary (Pursuant to the European Parliament Resolution of 16 February 2012) | A7-0229/2013 | European Parliament.” June 24, 2013. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-7-2013-0229_EN.html?redirect.
- . 2015. “Hungary: MEPs Condemn Orbán’s Death Penalty Statements and Migration Survey | News | European Parliament.” June 10, 2015. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20150605IPR63112/hungary-meps-condemn-orban-s-death-penalty-statements-and-migration-survey>.
- . 2019a. “2019 Election Results | 2019 European Election Results | European Parliament.” July 2, 2019. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/election-results-2019/en/european-results/2019-2024/>.
- . 2019b. “Parliament Elects Ursula von Der Leyen as First Female Commission President | News | European Parliament.” July 16, 2019. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20190711IPR56824/parliament-elects-ursula-von-der-leyen-as-first-female-commission-president>.
- . 2019c. “Turnout | 2019 European Election Results | European Parliament.” October 22, 2019. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/election-results-2019/en/turnout/>.
- . 2020a. “Procedure File: 2020/0042(COD) | Legislative Observatory | European Parliament.” 2020. [https://oeil.secure.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?lang=en&reference=2020%2F0042\(COD\)](https://oeil.secure.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?lang=en&reference=2020%2F0042(COD)).
- . 2020b. “Public Opinion Monitoring at a Glance in the Time of COVID-19 | 27 May 2020.” Brussels.
- . 2020c. “Public Opinion Monitoring at a Glance in the Time of Covid-19 | 3 June 2020.” Brussels.
- . 2020d. “Uncertainty/EU/Hope: Public Opinion in Times of COVID-19.” Brussels.

- . 2020e. “Uncertainty/EU/Hope: Public Opinion in Times of Covid-19 Second Round.” Brussels.
- . 2022. “Rule of Law in Hungary and Poland: Plenary Debate and Resolution | 02-05-2022 | News | European Parliament.” April 28, 2022. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/agenda/briefing/2022-05-02/6/rule-of-law-in-hungary-and-poland-plenary-debate-and-resolution>.
- European Union. n.d. “Elections and Appointments for the EU Institutions.” Accessed July 6, 2022a. https://european-union.europa.eu/institutions-law-budget/leadership/elections-and-appointments_en.
- . n.d. “Facts and Figures on Life in the European Union.” Accessed March 19, 2022b. https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/key-facts-and-figures/life-eu_en.
- Feuer, Will, Noah Higgins, and Berkeley Lovelace Jr. 2020. “Europe Is Now the ‘Epicenter’ of the Coronavirus Pandemic, WHO Says.” *CNBC News*, March 13, 2020. <https://www.cnn.com/2020/03/13/europe-is-now-the-epicenter-of-the-coronavirus-pandemic-who-says.html>.
- France 24. 2020. “Macron Launches Army Operation Resilience to Support Fight against Coronavirus.” March 25, 2020. <https://www.france24.com/en/20200325-macron-launches-army-operation-resilience-to-support-fight-against-coronavirus>.
- Gehrke, Laurenz. 2020a. “Hungary No Longer a Democracy, Freedom House Says- POLITICO.” June 5, 2020. <https://www.politico.com/news/2020/05/06/hungary-no-longer-a-democracy-report-239807>.
- . 2020b. “Hungary No Longer a Democracy, Freedom House Says - POLITICO.” Politico. June 5, 2020. <https://www.politico.com/news/2020/05/06/hungary-no-longer-a-democracy-report-239807>.
- Gostyńska-Jakubowska, Agata, and Luigi Scazzieri. 2020. “The EU Needs to Step up Its Response to the COVID-19 Outbreak | Centre for European Reform.” March 23, 2020. <https://www.cer.eu/insights/eu-needs-step-its-response-covid-19-outbreak>.
- Grančayová, Michaela. 2021. “Plagues of Egypt - The COVID-19 Crisis and the Role of Securitization Dilemmas in the Authoritarian Regime Survival Strategies in Egypt and Turkey.” *Czech Journal of International Relations* 56 (1): 69–97. <https://doi.org/10.32422/MV-CJIR.1766>.
- Guterres, Antonio. 2020. “Program 23 March 2020.” New York.
- Hansen, Lene. 2000. “The Little Mermaid’s Silent Security Dilemma and the Absence of

Gender in the Copenhagen School.” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 29 (2): 285–306. <https://doi.org/10.1177/03058298000290020501>.

Hapal, Karl. 2021. “The Philippines’ COVID-19 Response: Securitising the Pandemic and Disciplining the Pasaway.” *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 40 (2): 224–44. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1868103421994261>.

Hegedus, Daniel. 2020. “Orbán Uses Coronavirus to Put Hungary’s Democracy in a State of Danger.” Berlin.

Hervey, Ginger, and Emmet Livingstone. 2016. “What Is Article 7? – POLITICO.” January 13, 2016. <https://www.politico.eu/article/hungary-eu-news-article-7-vote-poland-rule-of-law/>.

Holroyd, Matthew. 2020. “Hungary Passes Bill Ending Legal Gender Recognition for Trans Citizens | Euronews.” May 20, 2020. <https://www.euronews.com/2020/05/20/hungary-passes-bill-ending-legal-gender-recognition-for-trans-citizens>.

“Hungary: Freedom in the World 2021 Country Report | Freedom House.” 2021. 2021. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/hungary/freedom-world/2021>.

“Hungary: WHO Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Dashboard With Vaccination Data.” 2021. 2021. <https://covid19.who.int/region/euro/country/hu>.

Hungary Today. 2022. “One Week until 2022 Election, Fidesz Retains Lead Ahead of Opposition Alliance.” March 25, 2022. <https://hungarytoday.hu/one-week-until-2022-election-fidesz-retains-lead-ahead-of-opposition-alliance/>.

Huysmans, Jef. 1998a. “Revisiting Copenhagen: Or, on the Creative Development of a Security Studies Agenda in Europe.” *European Journal of International Relations* 4 (4): 479–505. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066198004004004>.

———. 1998b. “Security! What Do You Mean? From Concept to Thick Signifier.” *European Journal of International Relations* 4 (2): 226–55.

Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation. 2022. “Covid-19 Projections: Hungary.” January 21, 2022. <https://covid19.healthdata.org/hungary?view=cumulative-deaths&tab=trend>.

Johnson, Boris. 2020. “Prime Minister’s Statement on Coronavirus (COVID-19): 17 March 2020 - GOV.UK.” March 17, 2020. <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-statement-on-coronavirus-17-march-2020>.

- Kanat, Selim, and Merve Aytaç. 2018. "Suriyeli Mülteciler Özelinde Avrupa Birliği Ortak Göç Politikası ve Birlik İle Üye Devletler Arasında Egemenlik Tartışmaları." *Sosyal Politika Çalışmaları Dergisi* 40 (2): 55–86.
- Káncz, Csaba. 2020. "The New Budapest-Belgrade Railway Line: A White Elephant on the New Silk Road - Chinaobservers." June 15, 2020. <https://chinaobservers.eu/the-new-budapest-belgrade-railway-line-a-white-elephant-on-the-new-silk-road/>.
- Kaszás, Fanni. 2020. "Coronavirus: Face Masks Mandatory to Enter Budapest Shops, Public Transport, Taxis - Hungary Today." April 27, 2020. <https://hungarytoday.hu/coronavirus-face-masks-mandatory-to-enter-budapest-shops-public-transport-taxis/>.
- Kirk, Jessica, and Matt McDonald. 2021. "The Politics of Exceptionalism: Securitization and COVID-19." *Global Studies Quarterly* 1 (3): 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1093/isagsq/ksab024>.
- Klimó, Árpád von. 2017. *Hungary since 1945. Hungary since 1945*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315397429>.
- Kornai, János. 2015. "Hungary's U-Turn: Retreating from Democracy." *Journal of Democracy* 26 (3): 34–48. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2015.0046>.
- Kovacs, Zoltan. 2020a. "About Hungary - PM Orbán: Two Cases of Coronavirus Encountered in Hungary." March 4, 2020. <https://abouthungary.hu/blog/pm-orban-two-cases-of-coronavirus-encountered-in-hungary>.
- . 2020b. "About Hungary - BREAKING: Hungarian Government Orders State of Emergency." March 11, 2020. <https://abouthungary.hu/blog/breaking-hungarian-government-orders-state-of-emergency>.
- Kreko, Peter. 2020. "Orbán's Pandemic Authoritarian Grab | Heinrich Böll Stiftung." Heinrich Böll Stiftung. September 18, 2020. <https://www.boell.de/en/2020/09/18/orbans-pandemic-authoritarian-grab>.
- Krekó, Péter, and Zsolt Enyedi. 2018. "Orbán's Laboratory of Illiberalism." *Journal of Democracy* 29 (3): 39–51.
- Larsson, Oscar Leonard. 2021. "The Swedish Covid-19 Strategy and Voluntary Compliance: Failed Securitisation or Constitutional Security Management?" *European Journal of International Security* 2: 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1017/eis.2021.26>.
- Lawless, Jill. 2021. "Authoritarianism Advances as World Battles the Pandemic | AP News." July 15, 2021. <https://apnews.com/article/joe-biden-business-health>

religion-government-and-politics-a127151d7208b79c02767b435355511d.

- Leonard, Sarah, and Christian Kaunert. 2011. "Reconceptualizing the Audience in Securitization Theory." In *Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve*, edited by Thierry Balzacq, 57–76. Oxon: Routledge.
- Leyen, Ursula von der. 2020a. "President von Der Leyen on the Coronavirus Response." March 10, 2020. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_20_435.
- . 2020b. "Remarks by President von Der Leyen at the Joint Press Conference with Executive Vice-Presidents Vestager and Dombrovskis to Present the Economic Response to the Coronavirus Crisis." European Commission. March 13, 2020. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_20_465.
- Lichtenstein, Dennis. 2021. "The EU: The Story of a Tragic Hero and the 27 Dwarfs." In *Political Communication and Covid-19: Governance and Rhetoric in Times of Crisis*, edited by Darren Lilleker, Ioana A. Coman, Miloš Gregor, and Edoardo Novelli, Lichtenstein, 269–79. Routledge.
- Lukacovic, Marta N. 2020. "'Wars' on COVID-19 in Slovakia, Russia, and the United States: Securitized Framing and Reframing of Political and Media Communication Around the Pandemic." *Frontiers in Communication* 5 (December): 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2020.583406>.
- Maier, Paulo Vila, and Isabel Camisã. 2022. *The Pandemic Crisis and the European Union. The Pandemic Crisis and the European Union*. Oxon: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003153900>.
- Mcsweeney, Bill. 1996. "Identity and Security: Buzan and the Copenhagen School." *Review of International Studies* 22 (1): 81–93. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210500118467>.
- Merkel, Angela. 2020. "An Address to the Nation by Federal Chancellor Merkel." March 2020. <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/themen/coronavirus/statement-chancellor-1732296>.
- Meyer-Sahling, Jan-Hinrik, and Fanni Toth. 2021. "Governing Illiberal Democracies: Democratic Backsliding and the Political Appointment of Top Officials in Hungary." *The NISPACEE Journal of Public Administration and Policy* 13 (2): 93–114.
- Molnár, Anna, Lili Takács, and Éva Jakusné Harnos. 2020. "Securitization of the COVID-19 Pandemic by Metaphoric Discourse during the State of Emergency in Hungary." *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 40 (9–10): 1167–

82. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSSP-07-2020-0349>.

Momtaz, Rym. 2020. “Emmanuel Macron on Coronavirus: ‘We’Re at War.’” Politico. 2020. <https://www.politico.eu/article/emmanuel-macron-on-coronavirus-were-at-war/>.

Nézőpont Intézet. 2020a. “Government Measures Find Support Among Opposition – Nézőpont Intézet.” March 18, 2020. <https://nezopont.hu/en/government-measures-find-support-among-opposition/>.

———. 2020b. “All Hungarians Support The Government Over Pandemic Control Measures– Nézőpont Intézet.” March 31, 2020. <https://nezopont.hu/en/all-hungarians-support-the-government-over-pandemic-control-measures/>.

———. 2020c. “Fidesz Keeps Getting Stronger – Nézőpont Intézet.” April 20, 2020. <https://nezopont.hu/en/fidesz-keeps-getting-stronger/>.

———. 2020d. “Ending The Emergency: Hungarians Are Satisfied With Government Action – Nézőpont Intézet.” June 18, 2020. <https://nezopont.hu/en/ending-the-emergency-hungarians-are-satisfied-with-government-action/>.

———. 2020e. “Pandemic Response a Winner for Viktor Orbán – Nézőpont Intézet.” July 1, 2020. <https://nezopont.hu/en/pandemic-response-a-winner-for-viktor-orban/>.

Nicolás, Elena Sánchez. 2020. “Coronavirus: EU Ministers Urge Members to Share Supplies.” March 9, 2020. <https://euobserver.com/coronavirus/147659>.

Norbert, Merkovity, Bene Márton, and Farkas Xénia. 2021. “Hungary: Illiberal Crisis Management.” In *Political Communication and Covid-19: Governance and Rhetoric in Times of Crisis*, edited by Darren Lilleker, Ioana A. Coman, Edoardo Novelli, and Edoardo Miloš, 269–79. Oxon: Routledge.

Official Journal of the European Union. 2012. “Official Journal C 326/2012.” October 26, 2012. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=OJ:C:2012:326:FULL&from=EN>.

Öniş, Ziya, and Mustafa Kutlay. 2019. “Global Shifts and the Limits of the EU’s Transformative Power in the European Periphery: Comparative Perspectives from Hungary and Turkey.” *Government and Opposition* 54 (2): 226–53. <https://doi.org/10.1017/gov.2017.16>.

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. 2014. “Hungary, Parliamentary Elections, 6 April 2014: Final Report.” Warsaw. <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/hungary/121098?download=true>.

- Orlandi, Giorgia, and Mark, Armstrong. 2020. "COVID-19 Crisis Is an 'enormous Responsibility' for the EU, Italy's Luigi Di Maio Tells Euronews." March 30, 2020. <https://www.euronews.com/2020/03/27/italy-is-at-war-with-a-virus-the-country-s-health-minister-tells-uronews>.
- Pappas, Takis S. 2019. "Populists in Power." *Journal of Democracy* 30 (2): 70–84. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2019.0026>.
- Park, Jeanne. 2015. "Europe's Migration Crisis | Council on Foreign Relations." August 23, 2015. <https://www.cfr.org/backgroundunder/europes-migration-crisis>.
- Peoples, Columba, and Nick Vaughan-Williams. 2020. *Critical Security Studies. Critical Security Studies: An Introduction*. Third Edit. Oxon: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203847473>.
- Piret, Jocelyne, and Guy Boivin. 2021. "Pandemics Throughout History." *Frontiers in Microbiology*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fmicb.2020.631736>.
- Plattner, Marc F. 2019. "Illiberal Democracy and the Struggle on the Right." *Journal of Democracy* 30 (1): 5–19. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2019.0000>.
- Politico Research. 2020. "Hungarian Polls, Trends and Election News for Hungary – POLITICO." 2020. <https://www.politico.eu/europe-poll-of-polls/hungary/>.
- Polyák, Gábor. 2019. *Media in Hungary: Three Pillars of an Illiberal Democracy*. Edited by Eva Połńska and Charlie Beckett. *Public Service Broadcasting and Media Systems in Troubled European Democracies*. Cham: Springer International Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-02710-0>.
- Pooter, Helene De. 2020. "The Civil Protection Mechanism of the European Union: A Solidarity Tool at Test by the COVID-19 Pandemic ." *American Society of International Law*. May 1, 2020. <https://www.asil.org/insights/volume/24/issue/7/civil-protection-mechanism-european-union-solidarity-tool-test-covid-19>.
- Raube, Kolja, and Francisca Costa Reis. 2021. "The EU's Crisis Response Regarding TheDemocratic and Rule of Law Crisis." In *The Palgrave Handbook of Crises*, edited by Marianne Riddervold, Jarle Trondal, and Akasemi Newsome, 627–46. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- REV. 2020. "Coronavirus Task Force Briefing Transcript March 17: Trump, Pence, Mnuchin Speak about COVID-19 | Rev." March 17, 2020. <https://www.rev.com/blog/transcripts/coronavirus-task-force-briefing-transcript-march-17-trump-pence-mnuchin-speak-about-covid-19>.

- Roe, Paul. 2008. "Actor, Audience(s) and Emergency Measures: Securitization and the UK's Decision to Invade Iraq." *Security Dialogue* 39 (6): 615–35. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010608098212>.
- Rose, Michel, and Richard Lough. 2020. "'We Are at War': France Imposes Lockdown to Combat Virus | Reuters." March 16, 2020. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-macron-restriction-idUSKBN2133G5>.
- Rupnik, Jacques. 2012. "How Things Went Wrong." *Journal of Democracy* 23 (3): 132–37. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2012.0051>.
- Salter, Mark B. 2010. "Securitization Theory: 20 Years in Security Dialogue." *Virtual Special Issue*, 1–6.
- Sandford, Alasdair. 2020. "Hungary: 'Critics Silenced' in Social Media Arrests as EU Debates Orban's Powers | Euronews." May 15, 2020. <https://www.euronews.com/2020/05/14/hungary-critics-silenced-in-social-media-arrests-as-eu-debates-orban-s-powers>.
- Schengen Visa Info. 2020. "Schengen Area Crisis: EU States Close Borders as Coronavirus Outbreak Grips Bloc ." March 13, 2020. <https://www.schengenvisainfo.com/news/schengen-area-crisis-eu-states-close-borders-as-coronavirus-outbreak-grips-bloc/>.
- Simonovits, Bori. 2020. "The Public Perception of the Migration Crisis from the Hungarian Point of View: Evidence from the Field." In *Geographies of Asylum in Europe and the Role of European Localities*, edited by Birgit Glorius and Jeroen Doornik, First Edit, 155–76. Cham: Springer Open.
- Sjöstedt, Roxanne. 2010. "Health Issues and Securitization: The Construction of HIV/AIDS as a US National Security Threat." In *Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve*, edited by Thierry Balzacq, 150–69. Oxon: Routledge.
- Stritzel, Holger. 2007. "Towards a Theory of Securitization: Copenhagen and Beyond." *European Journal of International Relations* 13 (3): 357–83. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066107080128>.
- Századvég. 2020a. "Századvég - Koronavírus-Járvány: Társadalmi Konszenzus Alakult Ki a Rendkívüli Intézkedések Mögött." March 14, 2020. <https://regi.szazadvég.hu/hu/kutatasok/az-alapitvany-kutatasai/piackutatas-kozvelemeny-kutatas/koronavirus-jarvany-tarsadalmi-konszenzus-alakult-ki-a-rendkivuli-intezkedesek-mogott>.
- . 2020b. "Századvég - A Magyarok Több Mint Kétharmada a Koronavírus-

Törvény Mellett Áll.” March 26, 2020. <https://regi.szazadvég.hu/hu/kutatasok/az-alapitvany-kutatasai/piackutatas-kozvelemeny-kutatas/a-magyarok-tobb-mint-ketharmada-a-koronavirus-torveny-mellett-all>.

———. 2020c. “Századvég - Koronavírus-Járvány: A Magyarok Többsége a Gazdaságvédelmi Intézkedések Mellett Áll.” April 11, 2020. <https://regi.szazadvég.hu/hu/kutatasok/az-alapitvany-kutatasai/piackutatas-kozvelemeny-kutatas/koronavirus-jarvany-a-magyarok-tobbsege-a-gazdasagvedelmi-intezkedesek-mellett-all>.

Szente, Zoltan, and Gardos-Orosz Fruzsina. 2020. “Using Emergency Powers in Hungary: Against the Pandemic and/or Democracy?” In *Pandemocracy in Europe: Power, Parliaments and People in Times of COVID-19*, edited by Matthias C. Ketteman and Konrad Lachmayer, 155–78. Oxford: Hart Publishing.

Taureck, Rita. 2006. “Securitisation Theory-The Story so Far: Theoretical Inheritance and What It Means to Be a Post-Structuralist Realist.” In *Securitisation Theory-The Story so Far: Theoretical Inheritance and What It Means to Be a Post-Structuralist Realist*, 1–19. Tartu.

Traynor, Ian. 2015. “Hungary PM: Bring Back Death Penalty and Build Work Camps for Immigrants | Hungary | The Guardian.” April 29, 2015. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/29/hungary-pm-death-penalty-work-camps-for-immigrants-viktor-orban>.

TV7 Israel News. 2020. “Netanyahu: ‘we Are at War’ against COVID-19 - TV7 Israel News.” March 16, 2020. <https://www.tv7israelnews.com/netanyahu-we-are-at-war-against-covid-19/>.

“Types of Institutions and Bodies.” n.d. Accessed February 21, 2022. https://european-union.europa.eu/institutions-law-budget/institutions-and-bodies/types-institutions-and-bodies_en.

Vankovska. 2020. “Dealing with COVID-19 in the European Periphery: Between Securitization and ‘Gaslighting.’” *Journal of Global Faultlines* 7 (1): 71. <https://doi.org/10.13169/jglobfaul.7.1.0071>.

“Varieties of Democracy: Variable Graph.” 2021. March 2021. https://www.v-dem.net/data_analysis/VariableGraph/.

Végh, Zsuzsanna. 2021. “Hungary: Nations in Transit 2021 Country Report | Freedom House.” 2021. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/hungary/nations-transit/2021>.

Viktor Orbán. 2020a. “About Hungary - Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s Address to the Hungarian Parliament before the Start of Daily Business.” About Hungary. 2020.

<https://abouthungary.hu/speeches-and-remarks/prime-minister-viktor-orbans-address-to-the-hungarian-parliament-before-the-start-of-daily-business-2020-03-16>.

———. 2020b. “Press Statement by Viktor Orbán Following a Meeting of the Operational Group.” About Hungary. 2020. <https://abouthungary.hu/speeches-and-remarks/press-statement-by-viktor-Orbán-following-a-meeting-of-the-operational-group>.

———. 2020c. “Prime Minister Viktor Orbán on the Kossuth Radio Programme ‘Good Morning Hungary.’” About Hungary. 2020. <https://abouthungary.hu/speeches-and-remarks/prime-minister-viktor-orban-on-the-kossuth-radio-programme-good-morning-hungary-2020-03-15>.

———. 2020d. “About Hungary - Press Statement by Prime Minister Orbán Viktor after a Meeting of the Operational Group Set up in Response to the International Outbreak of COVID-19.” About Hungary. March 5, 2020. <https://abouthungary.hu/speeches-and-remarks/press-statement-by-prime-minister-orban-viktor-after-a-meeting-of-the-operational-group-set-up-in-response-to-the-international-outbreak-of-covid-19>.

———. 2020e. “About Hungary - Extraordinary Announcement by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán.” About Hungary. March 18, 2020. <https://abouthungary.hu/speeches-and-remarks/extraordinary-announcement-by-prime-minister-viktor-orban-2020-03-19>.

———. 2020f. “About Hungary - Extraordinary Announcement by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán.” About Hungary. April 6, 2020. <https://abouthungary.hu/speeches-and-remarks/extraordinary-announcement-by-prime-minister-viktor-orban-2020-04-06>.

———. 2020g. “Announcement by Viktor Orbán.” About Hungary. April 9, 2020. <https://abouthungary.hu/speeches-and-remarks/announcement-by-viktor-orban>.

———. 2020h. “About Hungary - Announcement by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán.” About Hungary. April 29, 2020. <https://abouthungary.hu/speeches-and-remarks/announcement-by-prime-minister-viktor-orban>.

Wæver, Ole. 1995. “Securitization and Desecuritization.” In *On Security*, edited by Ronnie D. Lipschutz, 46–86. New York: Columbia University Press.

———. 2000. “The EU as a Security Actor: Reflections from a Pessimistic Constructivist on Post-Sovereign Security Orders.” In *International Relations Theory and the Politics of European Integration: Power, Security and Community*, edited by Morten Kelstrup and Michael C. Williams, 250–95. London: Routledge.

<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203187807>.

- . 2002. “Identity, Communities and Foreign Policy: Discourse Analysis as Foreign Policy Theory.” In *European Integration and National Identity: The Challenge of Nordic States*, 20–50. London: Routledge.
- . 2003. “Securitisation : Taking Stock of a Research Programme in Security Studies,” no. February: 1–36.
- . 2004a. “Aberystwyth, Paris, Copenhagen New ‘Schools’ in Security Theory and Their Origins between Core and Periphery.” In *International Studies Association*. Montreal. http://www.americanbanker.com/issues/179_124/which-city-is-the-next-big-fintech-hub-new-york-stakes-its-claim-1068345-1.html%5Cnhttp://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/15003161%5Cnhttp://cid.oxfordjournals.org/lookup/doi/10.1093/cid/cir991%5Cnhttp://www.scielo.
- . 2004b. “Ten Works.” *Tidsskriftet Politik* 4 (7).
- . 2012. “Aberystwyth, Paris, Copenhagen: The Europeanness of New ‘Schools’ of Security Theory in an American Field.” In *Thinking International Relations Differently*, edited by Arlene B. Tickner and David L. Blaney, 48–71. Oxon: Routledge.
- Walker, Shaun, and Daniel Boffey. 2018. “Hungary Election: OSCE Monitors Deliver Damning Verdict | Hungary | The Guardian.” April 9, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/apr/09/hungary-election-osce-monitors-deliver-damning-verdict>.
- Walt, Stephen M. 1991. “The Renaissance of Security Studies.” *International Studies Quarterly* 35 (2): 211–39.
- Williams, Michael C. 2003. “Words, Images, Enemies: Securitization and International Politics.” *International Studies Quarterly* 47 (4): 511–31. <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.0020-8833.2003.00277.x>.
- World Health Organization. 2020. “WHO Director-General’s Opening Remarks at the Media Briefing on COVID-19 - 11 March 2020.” March 11, 2020. <https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19---11-march-2020>.
- Youde, Jeremy. 2008. “Who’s Afraid of a Chicken? Securitization and Avian Flu.” *Democracy and Security* 4 (2): 148–69. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17419160802020264>.

CIRRICULUM VITAE

Personal Information

Name and Surname: Hasan Basri Barıt

Academic Background

Undergraduate Degree: Istanbul 29 Mayıs University-Department of Political Science and International Relations (2014-2019)

Graduate Degree: Kadir Has University-Department of International Relations (2020-2022)

Foreign Languages: English

Work Experience

Research Assistant: Işık University (January 2021-...)