

Securitization of International Migration in the Context of Economic and Societal Security: An Example of the Hungarian Fidesz and Jobbik Parties

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Abstract

The phenomenon of international migration has become one of the most complex issues within the expanding and deepening security field since the conclusion of the Cold War. By the end of the 1990s, far-right parties had securitized international migration, which had previously been encouraged by many European countries to meet their workforce needs, posing a threat to the security of both the international system and developed and developing countries. Particularly after the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001, immigration and anti-immigrant sentiments and actions were concentrated in the Western world in general, and Europe in particular, reaching a pinnacle during the Arab Spring. Far-right parties have risen in response to migration and anti-immigration discourses, securitizing international migration by claiming that immigrants disrupt European society's homogeneity and increase integration problems, unemployment, and crime rates. This study examines the securitization of international migration on a socioeconomic and political level within the framework of far-right parties in Europe using the example of Hungary's ruling Fidesz and opposition Jobbik parties. The conclusions reached show that international migration will be securitized in both Eastern and Western European countries where the far-right is on the rise.

Keywords: International migration, Securitization Theory, Far-right, Fidesz party, Jobbik party, Viktor Orbán

Introduction¹

The end of the Cold War led to the expansion and deepening of the concept of security with the contribution of the Copenhagen School's "Securitization Theory," as well as critical and alternative security approaches. By removing the security phenomenon from its narrow and limited understanding of military security, the Copenhagen School ensured that the issues in the field of "low politics," which were not considered to be important, would be addressed (Buzan, 1991; Buzan, et al., 1998; Buzan & Wæver, 2003). The phenomenon of international migration is especially significant as one of the most remarkable illustrations of this ongoing change and development in the area of security. International migration, which had previously been outside the political sphere, was first politicized and later securitized through its inclusion in the political field in post-Cold War decision-making processes. As a result, the phenomenon of international migration following the Cold War has become increasingly seen as a critical security issue by developed and developing countries and has created a danger to both the security of the international system and the security of these countries.

International migratory movements have evolved in the post-Cold War era from economic migrants looking for greater possibilities to coerced illegal immigrants, asylum seekers, or refugees to Europe. Since the end of the 1990s, there have been significant irregular migration flows to Europe. International migration, which was first supported by many European countries to satisfy labor demands, has gradually come to be viewed as a possible danger to the countries' national, societal, and economic security (Ghosh, 2000; Martin, 1999; Massey et al., 2005; Zolberg & Benda, 2001). International migration has become more politicized as it began to present asylum as an alternative to economic migration and became an essential issue in post-Cold War intergovernmental forums in Europe. Finally, at the turn of the twenty-first century, European Union (EU) policies began to include a series of priorities concerning international migration (Huysmans, 2006: pp. 65–67). In response to these changes, European nations' policies have begun to take shape in a manner designed to curb the aforementioned international migrant flows over both land and sea routes.

International migration, which has been securitized by Europe's far-right parties, has steadily become one of the most pressing challenges of societal and economic security. Far-right parties have developed economic, social, political, and cultural grounds on which to defend their unfavorable attitudes toward international migration. The most common of these arguments is that immigrants put downward pressure on wages (Ottaviano & Peri, 2012; Zorlu & Hartog, 2005), increasing unemployment among the native population (Keita & Valette, 2019; Longhi et al.,

2010), and that immigrants' high birthrates disturb the demographic structure (Camarota & Zeigler, 2020; Jenkins, 2007; Parrado, 2011) and constitute a possible danger to national identity (Pehrson & Green, 2010; Triandafyllidou, 2003). The problem of international migration, which was widely securitized by far-right parties in Europe following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, was specifically portrayed to the audience by these parties as the major reason for insecurity in European countries, with the message that "we are under threat" (Ali, 2021: p. 129; Sterkenburg, 2019: p. 10). Following the Islamophobia wave unleashed by the September 11 attacks, Muslims were viewed as the immigrant group posing the greatest threat to Western civilization, and they were portrayed to the masses as the most alien and difficult to integrate. In some ways, this situation exemplifies Samuel P. Huntington's (1993: pp. 22–49) "Clash of Civilizations" theory in the Western world. In this context, far-right parties in Europe have gained voter support through anti-immigrant policies and widespread speculation that immigrants disrupt the homogeneous structure of European society and increase unemployment and crime. They securitize international migration, while they also draw the support of those who are concerned about these issues. While the globalization process continues apace, the enormous growth in the number of immigrants in many European countries prompts far-right groups to portray immigrants as a major danger to precarious employment and lives in the countries they moved to. At the same time, far-right parties claim that immigration endangers national culture and identity. Such discourses feed the feelings of hostility toward foreigners in European societies. The securitization of international migration by far-right parties reached its peak after the 2010 refugee crisis that was triggered by the Arab Spring. The countries where immigrants applied for asylum the most in 2015 were, in order of total immigrants, Germany, Hungary, Sweden, Austria, Italy, and France (Hoel, 2015: pp. 39–44; Kriesi et al., 2021: pp. 340–43; Veebel & Markus, 2015: pp. 256–58). In response to this development, the Alternative Party in Germany, the Swiss People's Party in Switzerland, the Fidesz and Jobbik parties in Hungary, the Northern League in Italy, and the France National Rally (formerly the National Front from 1972–2018) constructed and maintained an anti-immigrant discourse (Ratković, 2017: pp. 52–56). In this context, the most prominent subject on the agenda of far-right parties, particularly during election campaigns, was international migration and immigration in general, as well as critical views on asylum seekers and refugees in particular.

The emergence of far-right political parties in local and national elections in several European countries, particularly in the last two decades, has made these parties a key topic for academic research. In this environment, studies on far-right parties in Europe within the framework of their oppositional and populist policies on

international migration have started to increase. Nonetheless, these studies (Brown et al., 2023; Brox & Krieger, 2021; Davis & Deole, 2017; Steinmayr, 2021) primarily concentrate on voter preferences within the framework of broad political science concepts and methodologies, their implications for voting potential, ideologies, and their reflections on national and supranational policies. Although studies conducted specifically for Hungary are also on this axis (Bozóki & Cueva, 2021; Gessler et. al, 2021; Kondor & Paksa, 2023; Lönnqvist et al., 2019), few studies address the issue within the framework of Securitization Theory (Ahmed, 2020; Campbell, 2021; Miholjic, 2017; Rizova, 2019; Sükösd, 2022; Szalai, 2017; Thorleifsson, 2017). In these studies, the securitization of international migration is analyzed in a general sense. The securitization process in sectoral security areas (economic security and societal security) is examined in fewer studies (Ader, 2017; Butler, 2017; Stein, 2017), which focus on its theoretical and practical dimensions.

In this study, far-right parties in the case of Hungary are viewed as actors in the international migration process, and the focus is on how these actors can create this process and which tools they employ. In this context, Hungary's situation in Eastern Europe in the securitization of international migration is worth examining because it represents a successful example of securitization. In this study, the securitization of international migration has been problematized within the context of far-right parties in Europe, using the example of Hungary's Fidesz and Jobbik parties. This study aims to draw conclusions regarding the common security themes utilized by these far-right parties whose international anti-immigration discourse is focused on Hungary. The connection between this discourse and security will be shown, and an attempt will be made to explain the process using the securitization approach. In other words, this study seeks to investigate the securitization process as a top-down, actor-driven process based on the idea that far-right parties in Europe portray international migration as a threat in the public view and contribute to the securitization of migration at the national level.

The first argument of the study is that there is a spectacular and multi-actor international securitization process on international migration at the national and supranational level in European countries where the far right is on the rise, including Hungary. The second argument of the study is that the securitization process issue serves as the basis for international anti-immigration strategies and that far-right parties play a significant role in the political and social spheres of migration. The study's central hypothesis is that radical right parties in Europe form their anti-immigration rhetoric and roles within the scope of a construction process by using some common security themes. Moreover, these themes can be classified as follows:

economic security, societal security, national security. The countries' historical, social, and cultural differences heavily influence the usage weights and references of these themes. Other hypotheses of the study concerning Hungary are as follows:

- 1) In Hungary, far-right parties create their international anti-immigration rhetoric, roles, and policies within the framework of a construction process by drawing on recurring security themes.
- 2) In the securitization process of international migration, the security themes that far-right parties concentrate on are societal security, economic security, and national security.
- 3) In the securitization process of international migration, the country's historical, social, and cultural differences significantly impact the usage weights and references of the security themes.

Within this methodological framework, the cases of the Hungarian Fidesz and Jobbik parties are discussed in the study using case analysis and the descriptive method and are based on the discourses of both parties, especially in the period spanning 2015 to 2018. In this context, the study attempts to explain (1) the securitization of international migration through their migration and anti-immigrant discourse in which they speak on "societal security" and "economic security" topics and (2) how this securitization affects the political and social environment on theoretical and empirical grounds. Primary sources for the study include speeches by Viktor Orbán (Fidesz) and Gábor Vona (Jobbik), official statements, newspaper articles, and written and visual media. Secondary sources used were articles, books, reports, and theses on the far right, securitization, Fidesz, and Jobbik.

1. The Theory of Securitization

Securitization Theory was first put forward by Ole Wæver (1995: pp. 46–86) in his work "Securitization and Desecuritization" and became a popular theory developed by the representatives of the Copenhagen School in the historical process. This theory of securitization conceptualizes security as an intersubjective phenomenon from the point of view of a constructivist approach. In other words, a problem becomes a security problem not because of certain features it has, but because it is seen, discussed, and interpreted as a security problem. According to the Copenhagen School, allegedly life-threatening matters are inherently subjective. Threat perception is based on both a common understanding and common acceptance of

what constitutes a threat to security (Buzan, et al., 1998: p. 23). Therefore, security issues are constructed by the speaking acts of certain players who are merely identified as securitizing actors. The securitizing actor typically presents a specific issue as a security concern, or a danger, and takes it into the political arena. Once the matter is in the realm of security, the actor can claim a particular authority to utilize exceptional techniques to confront and neutralize the threat at hand. What matters here is that the securitizing actor recognizes an existential threat that necessitates a rapid response and is able to convince a willing audience of this need (Buzan, et al., 1998: p. 27).

Securitization Theory explains how a specific problem becomes a security problem. When a problem exists outside of the political sphere, it is not in the interest of the state. The inclusion of an issue from outside the political sphere in the political sphere is only conceivable when the problem becomes politicized and becomes part of public policy. This occurs when the government makes specific judgments about the problem, and after government actors allocate appropriate resources, it acquires a societal dimension. As a result, a problem that enters the political sector may be addressed on a large scale by incorporating it into the security domain, that is, through securitization. The problem enters the realm of security, or is securitized, by portraying the situation to a receptive audience as an existential threat requiring a quick and drastic response (Buzan, et al., 1998: p. 23).

It is necessary to investigate the meaning of “securitizing actor,” “reference object,” “recipient audience,” “speech act,” and “facilitating conditions” to better understand the idea of securitization:

- *Securitizing actor*: The Copenhagen School defines the securitizing actor as an important political subject with the capacity to securitize an issue (Buzan, et al., 1998: p. 36). This subject gives the discourse of an existential threat to the reference object and securitizes the problem. The securitizing actor carrying an issue to the security field and can demand from the audience the right to use extraordinary practices that cannot usually be applied in the daily political processes (Buzan, et al., 1998: pp. 36–40).
- *Reference object*: Objects of reference are “things that are perceived as existentially endangered and have a valid claim to survival” (Buzan, et al., 1998: p. 36). The subject areas that can legally claim to exist and whose existence appears to be threatened, Individuals, organizations can serve as reference objects (Emmers, 2017: p. 134).

- *Recipient Audience*: The receiving audience is the community that the securitizing actor tries to convince of the security problem as an existential threat. The audience differs according to the management systems of the countries. If the act of securitization takes place in countries belonging to nondemocratic systems, the audience is limited to the political elites. On the other hand, in democratic countries, the receiving audience is the parliament that decides on behalf of the people (Thorsten & Thorsten, 2007: p. 7).
- *Speech act*: “Speech Act Theory” forms the basis of Securitization Theory (Buzan, et al., 1998: p. 25). John L. Austin’s “Speech Act Theory” was instrumental in developing the Copenhagen School’s speech act approach. Austin argues that language as a performativity structure and argues that saying something means doing it (Rumelili & Karadağ, 2017: p. 73). A speech act has a very important place in the securitization process, which consists of two stages. The act of speaking is defined as the discursive representation of the vital threat to security posed by a particular issue. According to the Copenhagen School, the starting point of the securitization process is the act of speaking. Through the act of speaking, an issue can be turned into a security issue regardless of whether it poses a real threat to life (Emmers, 2017: p. 137).
- *Facilitating conditions*: Facilitating conditions are divided into internal and external conditions. The internal conditions are called the security grammar. Security grammar is the dramatic language that supports the fact that which is the issue poses an existential threat and that there is no other approach than to take extraordinary measures. External conditions, on the other hand, consist of the securitizing actor’s social status and the historical conditions associated with the threat (Buzan, et al., 1998: pp. 32–33).

The Copenhagen School describes a two-stage securitization process that informs how and when a problem is identified as a critical security concern and action is taken. The securitizing entity presents specific issues, people, or entities as a critical danger to reference objects in the initial phase of the securitization process (Emmers, 2017: pp. 133–34). In the second stage of the securitizing process, the securitizing actor attempts to use discourse to convince the audience of a security threat against their reference object and uses the facilitating conditions in its attempts. If the audience views the situation as a security issue and takes immediate action to address the threat, securitization was effective (Emmers, 2017: p. 134).

1.2. Securitization in the Societal Security Sector

The phenomenon of sociétality is related to collective identities and belonging discussions that form the dynamic structures of societies and individuals' adoption of the elements of belonging in question. All collective identities (religious beliefs, nationalisms, political ideologies, gender, etc.) are structures that build individuals' practices of understanding and giving meaning to themselves and their environment. Since the end of the Cold War, the effects of the securitization of collective identities on social reflexes have become evident in parallel with the increase in international migration. In this context, one of the most important parts of the securitization agenda of far-right parties against international migration is societal security, and this study has tried to analyze the relationship between societal security and the discourses used by the Fidesz and Jobbik parties while securitizing international migration. In the analysis, discourse mediators (party leader's speeches, posters, surveys, slogans, etc.) and subreference objects (national identity, religion, culture, and lifestyle) were used.

The societal security sector emerged with the application of Securitization Theory to the field of identity. In this respect, societal security is closely related to the security of identity. Social distrust occurs when a community defines a development or a situation as a threat to its existence—in other words, to its identity. The concept of societal security can be defined as large identity groups that can reproduce and maintain themselves independently of the state. The subject of what is included in the scope of these groups varies according to time and place. In these respects, the concept of societal security means collective identity security (Wæver, 2008: p. 155). According to the Copenhagen School, societal security is both one of the five security sectors (national, political, societal, economic, and environmental) and the reference object whose existence is threatened within the context of the Securitization Theory. For example, in the speech act in which immigrants are shown as a threat to societal peace, the reference object is presented as a society. Considering the relationship between migration and security, society rather than the state is accepted as the reference object in the securitization step. In this way, societal security is constructed as a security issue (Rumelili & Karadağ, 2017: p. 76).

The societal security agenda is determined by different actors in different periods and regions. According to Wæver (2008: pp. 158–59), the most common issues seen as a threat to societal security are grouped under four headings: (1) Immigration: In the act of securitization built on identity, the threat is generally shown to be the immigration received by the nation in question. It is claimed that the receiving people were invaded by the immigrating people or the receiving people lost their

homogeneous social values because of immigrants. At the same time, the fact that a part of the population of the receiving community is formed by the others (immigrants), who are described as “other,” is shown as a reason for the changes in the “we” identity of the receiving community. Securitizing agents try to complete the securitization process by presenting this situation as one that will create differences and therefore the receiving community will no longer be able to maintain its former existence. In summary, the concept of societal security emerges with the perception of a threat to the survival of a society (Buzan, et al., 1998: pp. 119–20).

(2) Horizontal competition: Although the receiving community continues to live in the country, the lifestyles of those people will change due to the prominent cultural and linguistic influences of the neighboring culture, potential immigrants. (3) Vertical competition: People will stop seeing themselves as part of the receiving community after a certain period. This is due to the existence of either an integration project or a separatist regionalist project. These projects are pulling people toward broader or narrower identities. (4) Decrease in population: Due to natural disasters, war, plague, famine, or genocide policies, a decrease in population is also considered as a possible threat.

1.3. Securitization in the Economic Security Sector

From the beginning of the twentieth century until the end of the Cold War, international migration was encouraged because of the need for labor and economic motives, while the phenomenon of international migration began to be seen as a security problem in terms of economic security after the Cold War. In this context, as developed and developing societies increase their welfare levels, they have adopted a negative attitude toward international migration, which disrupts the functioning economic and social balance. In this respect, economic security is one of the most important parts of the securitization agenda of far-right parties against international migration, and this study tries to analyze the relationship between economic security and the discourses used by the Fidesz and Jobbik parties while securitizing international migration. In the analysis, discourse mediators (party leader’s speeches, posters, surveys, slogans, etc.) and subreference objects (employment market, social security, welfare state) were used.

With the introduction of the phenomenon of economic security into related fields such as international relations, security studies, and peace studies, the debates around this issue have moved from being only about state-centered economic security to the social and individual level. Thus, socioeconomic living conditions have come to the fore as a fundamental element of societal and individual security (Mesjasz, 2008: pp. 126–28). In this framework, economic security can be related to a wide range of

subjects (production, distribution, exchange, and consumption of goods and services), beginning with the existence of the state and extending to the negative living conditions of citizens. Economic security also becomes important for personal freedom, social welfare, and security. While addressing securitization issues in the economic sector, the process of securitization at the state level reveals reference objects that satisfy voters but are also threatened at the social, individual, and international system levels. In this respect, the securitization process of the economic sector is multifaceted (Turgutluoğlu, 2017: p. 132).

The portrayal of immigrants as the source of existing or prospective economic issues, both at the state and societal levels, is an essential aspect of the anti-immigrant rhetoric and one of the topics that finds the most traction among far-right groups' arguments (known as "welfare chauvinism") (Mandacı & Özerim, 2013: p. 115). When evaluated in general, securitization of economic security is mainly shaped around the following theses: Does the issue or actor (1) pose a threat to the employment market, the welfare state, and social security; (2) employ illegal immigrants; (3) cause indirect taxation and social dumping; (4) not contribute to social security; (5) create health expenses with their families; (6) create educational expenses for immigrants' children; and (7) lead to government spending on refugees? (Mandacı & Özerim, 2013: p. 116).

2. The Far Right in Hungary: Fidesz and Jobbik Parties

Fidesz was formed in 1988 as the Federation of Young Democrats, an anticommunist party that promoted market economic development and European integration. The name of the party was added to the abbreviated form of the Hungarian Civic Party in 1995, and the name was changed to the Hungarian Civic Alliance in 2003. Fidesz's first notable triumph came two years after its formation, in 1990, when Fidesz candidates linked to a coalition of which it was a member won mayorships in several cities around Hungary. Furthermore, in the 1990 National Assembly elections, Fidesz gained 22 of 386 seats in parliament (Kenes, 2020: p. 6). In 1997, members of a disbanded Christian Democrat group joined Fidesz in the National Assembly, making the party the largest bloc of the joint group. Fidesz, which won 148 seats in 1998, thus rose to the position of the largest single party in the National Assembly and formed a coalition government. Viktor Orbán became prime minister (Kenes, 2020: p. 7). As the leader of the party, Orbán implemented austerity policies and reduced social insurance wages. The coalition government also continued Hungary's EU membership process. However, following the 2002 elections, the party was no longer in power and a socialist government ruled Hungary for the next eight years. However, when Hungary's economy crashed in 2008, Fidesz saw an

opportunity and returned to power by capturing two-thirds of parliamentary seats in the April 2010 legislative elections. Fidesz and its coalition partner, the Christian Democratic People's Party (KDNP), replicated their 2010 triumph in elections conducted in 2014 and 2018 (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2018). Since the formation of the second Orbán government in 2010, Hungary's political scene has been dominated by Fidesz, a populist right-wing party, and Jobbik, a far-right-wing party. However, the political positions of both parties have altered over time. While Fidesz has moved to the far right, Jobbik is attempting to go to the center right. Since the beginning of the refugee crisis in 2015, Fidesz has shifted to a more authoritarian and illiberal right-wing posture.

Jobbik's roots go back to 2002 as a student association of Catholic and Protestant Christian conservative students under the name "Conservative Youth Community." In 2003, this group was founded by David Kovacs and Gábor Vona on the campus of Eotvos Lorand (ELTE) University in Budapest under the name Jobbik "Movement for a Better Hungary" (Stadelmann, 2013: p. 97). In 2006, Vona, a history student, was elected as the leader of Jobbik. The party was seen as insignificant politically at the first stage and it was able to get only 2.2% of the votes in the 2006 elections. Jobbik made its first breakthrough in its political life in the 2009 elections, when it garnered 15% of the votes and won three seats in the European Parliament. In the 2010 Hungarian national elections, Jobbik earned 16% of the vote, making it the third-largest party in the Hungarian National Assembly. Jobbik's political status in Hungary was secured in elections conducted in 2014 and 2018. As a result of these elections, it became Hungary's second-largest political power. Vona, the party leader, resigned as a result of the 2018 elections and Péter Jakab was elected as the party's head (www.jobbik.com, 2020).

Most of the initiatives and election campaigns first advocated by Jobbik were implemented in Hungary by Fidesz between 2010 and 2014. However, with Orbán's re-election in 2014, things began to shift. First, Orbán decided to initiate the struggle for personal freedom from the oligarchs. He eliminated the oligarchic structures that tried to prevent him and replaced them with structures that were loyal to him. In this context, Orbán's struggle with the oligarch Lajos Simicska, who he had previously preferred, began in 2015 (Mátyás, 2020: pp. 269–71). Fidesz felt threatened by Simicska's decision to support Jobbik, the strongest opposition party, and began a transformation toward the far right. Coincidentally, the refugee problem erupted shortly afterward. Orbán, who had begun to lose popularity among the Hungarian people, took on the role of "crusader" in the refugee crisis. By keeping Muslims out of Hungary and Europe, he was able to reclaim political authority and strengthen his popularity. As a result, even the most notable far-right researchers, such as Cas

Mudde (2002: pp. 1–24), see Fidesz as an extreme far-right party that places bigotry at the core of its policies (Kreko, 2017: p. 2). Fidesz won the election with 48.9% of the votes in the general elections held in Hungary on April 8, 2018. The Fidesz-KDNP alliance led by Orbán obtained a two-thirds majority in the parliament with 134 deputies (Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2021). In the 2022 general elections, Orbán repeated his success by increasing voter support by a little (Politico, 2022). As a result, since the April 2010 elections in Hungary, the Fidesz party and the Fidesz-KDNP coalition led by Orbán continue to hold power and produce discourse and policy along the far-right line.

3. The Process of Securitization of International Migration in Hungary

Following the September 11, 2001 in the US and, later, in Europe, political rhetoric took the shape of a powerful anti-immigrant mechanism. This tendency was especially noticeable in Hungary. The refugee crisis in 2015 heightened anti-immigrant discourse, which can be explained by the fact that Hungary is one of the nations experiencing extensive immigration because of its location on the borders of Serbia and transit country Turkey. Due to their geographical location, Hungary, Italy, and Greece have been the three countries with the highest number of illegal border crossings in Europe in 2015 and subsequent years. When irregular transit migrants who wanted to reach prosperous European countries such as Austria and Germany crossed Turkey and Greece and, after settling in the continent from the south, headed toward Hungary via Serbia, high-level security concerns arose. In Hungary, the primary actor was the Orbán government, which started the securitization policy by defining the threat to make irregular migration a security issue and guiding the process with speech acts. In other words, Prime Minister Orbán and his cabinet members used their privileged positions to become the decisive actors in identifying the threats to the reference objects and determining how to eliminate them. During this time, Orbán became so adept at producing anti-immigration rhetoric that he has almost developed his own terminology. The following brief statement demonstrates Orbán's command of anti-immigration terminology: "If we do not want to experience what other European countries have gone through, we must protect ourselves from terrorism, crime, and non-assimilated immigrants from other cultures, destroying our social system and burdening our economy" (Hungarian Government, 2016b). Moreover, in his interview with the German daily Bild dated February 25, 2016, he said, "Anyone who 'takes masses of non-registered immigrants from the Middle East' into a country is also importing terrorism, criminality, anti-Semitism and homophobia" (Hungarian Government, 2016a). He portrays political refugees and all illegal border crossings in a negative light, clearly conflating the increasing

number of immigrants with the increasing terrorist threat and deterioration of public security.

Orbán stated in September 2015, when the unwelcome population movements, which he viewed as a crisis throughout the process, reached an acute level, that the immigrants desired to reach Germany and Austria. However, they would not permit mass migration toward them due to security concerns (TRT Haber, 2015). From the beginning of the migration crisis in 2015, the Hungarian government has tended to securitize migration. From 2010 to 2015, Fidesz existed at the center right. However, in 2015, the migration crisis was seen as a threat by the government, and as a result of their populist campaign, Fidesz leaned to the far right (Pereira, 2021: p. 14). The government, the ruling party Fidesz, and the far-right Jobbik have utilized the subject of immigration to capitalize on xenophobic, anti-immigrant attitudes. Statements made by notable government officials and politicians throughout the relevant time period pushed political discourse in a xenophobic, extreme direction. For example, Orbán said this in a statement: “Europe and European identity is rooted in Christianity...is it not worrying in itself that European Christianity is now barely able to keep Europe Christian? There is no alternative, and we have no option but to defend our borders” (Channel 4 News, 2015). With a speech made in January 2015 following the Charlie Hebdo terrorist murders in Paris, Orbán and his far-right party Fidesz began the process of securitizing international migration. Government officials and Fidesz politicians have consistently characterized asylum seekers arriving in Hungary using terms such as “subsistence migrants,” “economic migrants,” and “illegal immigrants.” They further alleged that these people fled their countries for economic reasons and simply appeared to be refugees.

Orbán’s administration has various political motivations for implementing this policy: First, the administration attempted to remove the subject of immigration from the hands of the far-right opposition party Jobbik. Second, the government turned the minds of the Hungarian people when it vowed to “protect the country” against a “shared adversary.” In this way, it hoped to solidify its electoral base and acquire traction in domestic politics. The administration has split the political spectrum into two extremes in order to dominate public discourse—“those who oppose immigration, that is, those who serve the national interest and therefore refuse to accept refugees in Hungary; and those who support immigration and thus betray Hungarian interests” (Hungarian Government, 2015b). Moreover, Fidesz aimed to completely monopolize its anti-immigration position by excluding other political actors (Juhász et al., 2015: p. 24). However, Jobbik’s impact on the government was the most visible in terms of the refugee crisis in that period. Both the anti-

immigration rhetoric and the refugee and immigration policy measures Fidesz proposed are based on the far-right party Jobbik's arguments and refugee and immigration policy solutions (e.g., referring to refugees as "economic migrants," associating refugees with terrorism and disease, closing refugee camps, etc.). László Toroczkai, a Jobbik member, came up with the concept of a "border barrier" (NBC News, 2018). As a result, the government has modeled its aggressive campaign against "economic immigrants" after Jobbik's plans. Fidesz attempted to avoid another far-right party from deciding its stance on the topic and seizing control of the conversation in this way (Juhász et al., 2015: p. 28).

3.1. Societal Security and Economic Security Themes in the Anti-Immigration Rhetoric of Fidesz and Jobbik

The concept of societal security is frequently mirrored in the anti-immigration discourse of both Fidesz and Jobbik, in which migration is viewed as a danger to the cultural homogeneity of European ideals. Thus, societal security is based on immigration as a paradoxical "other" that endangers Hungarian residents' regular way of life.

The former leader of Jobbik, Gábor Vona, states in his anti-immigration discourse that ethnic and cultural homogeneity is a value that must be protected. According to this viewpoint, immigration will both destroy and demolish cultural homogeneity. In other words, immigrants are depicted as people who would irreparably alter Hungary's and Europe's inherent cultural and demographic structures. This perspective does not suggest that immigrants seek only economic gains or harm public safety; instead, he highlights that they will undermine the European lifestyle to which Hungarians are accustomed. The points mentioned in the speech of Vona at the anti-immigration rally in Budapest in 2015 were highlighted as follows:

"But it must be said that every culture and religion has the right to live on its land, not on someone else's land! And now most of the immigrant masses who come to our country are Muslims and I protest this! And at the same time, I protest their incursion into Europe....Because Europe and Hungary should not passively accept millions of people from such cultures whose habits, we cannot harmonize with them....Just look at Western Europe! Look at the negative examples and let us not make the mistakes they made for our own country." (<https://www.youtube.com>, 2015)

Jobbik's 2018 election manifesto, which is in conflict with the EU on almost every issue related to international migration, shows that the party associates immigrants with terrorism and that European culture and identity encodes them as a threat:

“Europe was built on a triple pedestal: Greek thought, Roman law and Christian morality. We right-wingers believe that not only Europe's past, but also its future can be based on these values, which we must protect especially strongly today. We consider the ever-deepening integration that began on the basis of the Lisbon Treaty to be a misstep, as it was actually aimed at creating a super-state above nations. By the way, with this contract, all provisions of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union became binding. At the same time, for example, in relation to the right of asylum, the inclusion of the relevant contracts in the legal system as mandatory regulations is contrary to the interests of the European population. Starting in 2015, it is not about accepting refugees, but about eliminating the consequences of a migration of several million people, as well as curbing further migration processes. The influx of migrants has dramatically increased the threat of terrorism and led to actions requiring massive human sacrifices, in addition to placing a heavy economic burden on the host states, as well as endangering European identity and culture. The leaders of the Union, and especially its parliament, have not even gotten to the point of establishing the correct diagnosis, their main goal is to ‘manage’ migration, to force member countries to accept them based on mandatory quotas. Jobbik was the first to stand up for the physical, technical and legal strengthening of our southern border, and provided the government with the necessary parliamentary support to enact the relevant laws. Contrary to the will of the cabinet, we still expect the establishment of an independent border guard. Neither poor nor rich migrants are accepted. Contrary to previous promises, EU membership alone did not solve the problems of Hungarian national communities abroad. Even after nearly a decade and a half of membership, we are saddened to see that the Union acts more in the interests of various minorities living in remote parts of the world than for Hungarians abroad” (Szívvel et al., 2018: p. 58).

Fidesz leader Viktor Orbán also emphasizes the cultural differences between Europeans and immigrants in his discourses: “[Migrants] are unwilling to accept European culture, or [even] come here with the intent of destroying European culture. [They are] people from different cultures, with different customs, who are unable to integrate” (Jánosi, 2019: p. 42). The message Orbán conveys is that cultural

differences will inevitably lead to conflicts in European society. In other words, as long as people come from outside Europe, they pose a threat to European culture. As a result, the discourse depicts immigrants as a cultural danger. It also spatializes European culture by firmly confining it to EU member states or the continent itself. In certain ways, all other civilizations outside of Europe are regarded as hostile. It also promotes the notion that immigrants endanger their societal security. This viewpoint is a clear illustration of Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" theory, which is a securitization discourse.

Far-right parties (e.g., Austrian Freedom Party, Alternative for Germany, League, Party for Freedom, Progress Party, Sweden Democrats, United Kingdom Independence Party) claim that immigrants do not have the right to benefit from the economic and social opportunities offered by the welfare state due to the increase in economic problems and unemployment rates in their countries (Enggist & Pinggera, 2022). Immigrants are presented as rivals to the indigenous people in accessing job opportunities in the country and receiving unemployment benefits, housing, health, and other social services. In this way, international migration is securitized based on economic security (Huysmans, 2000: p. 767). The Fidesz and Jobbik parties deliberately refer to the incoming people not as asylum seekers or refugees but as "welfare seekers" or "economic immigrants." They do this because the term "refugee" evokes humanitarian feelings such as solidarity and compassion, while the term "welfare seeking" has negative connotations for the audience (Jánosi, 2019: p. 33).

Orbán stated the following in 2015:

"I am sure you will remember that at the beginning of the year Europe was shaken by an unprecedented act of terror. In Paris the lives of innocent people were extinguished, in cold blood and with terrifying brutality. We were all shocked by what happened. At the same time, this incomprehensible act of horror also demonstrated that Brussels and the European Union are unable to adequately deal with the issue of immigration. Economic migrants cross our borders illegally, and while they present themselves as asylum-seekers, in fact they are coming to enjoy our welfare systems and the employment opportunities our countries have to offer. In the last few months alone, in Hungary the number of economic migrants has increased approximately twentyfold. This represents a new type of threat—a threat which we must stop in its tracks. As Brussels has failed to address immigration appropriately, Hungary must follow its own path. We shall not

allow economic migrants to jeopardise the jobs and livelihoods of Hungarians. We must make a decision on how Hungary should defend itself against illegal immigrants. We must make a decision on how to limit rapidly rising economic immigration” (Boeskor, 2018: p. 560).

This indicates that the group of economically motivated immigrants is more prominently featured in the government’s discourse. Welfare-seeking immigrants are portrayed as people who want to abuse Hungary’s social welfare system. In this way, the Hungarian people have the perception that immigrants threaten their welfare system (Jánosi, 2019: p. 34).

All actors involved in the securitization of migration, especially Orbán, frequently benefited from the theme of societal security while turning the issue of irregular migration into a state issue and gave priority to discourses emphasizing that the survival of the state and the nation is in jeopardy. Based on the view that irregular migration threatens the societal security of Hungary, the message has been spread that immigrants are an asymmetric security threat to the existence of the state and nation throughout the securitization process. In speeches that are sometimes constructed as a claim, sometimes as a warning, and sometimes as a demand or expectation, irregular migration and immigrants are frequently positioned as a threat to national security by employing metaphors from the war literature, such as “occupation” and “invasion.” In a statement during the escalation of the crisis, Prime Minister Orbán stated that his country’s borders are under an order due to irregular migrants (BBC News, 2015), spreading the myth that they are facing a national security threat. In a separate statement, Orbán claimed that immigrants had invaded Hungary and immediate action was required (T24, 2015). In this way, it was intended to make the extraordinary measures taken and planned by security professionals against immigration meaningful. In addition to the discourses about the danger of irregular migration to Hungary, there are repeated assertions that other European countries are also facing a severe existential threat due to irregular migration. Thus, Orbán attempted to propagate the myth that the “European fortress” was intended to be destroyed by eliminating the distinction between internal security and external security and he wanted other European countries to adopt the measures taken by his government to stop immigration. In this regard, Orbán’s discourses reflect the pattern—“receiving people were invaded by the immigrating people or lost their homogeneous social values because of immigrants”—used by Wæver (2008: pp. 158–159) to describe the securitization of migration.

3.2. Campaigns Implemented by Fidesz in Order to Take Extraordinary Measures

On April 24, 2015, Fidesz began a campaign against immigration with a survey titled “National Consultation on Migration and Terrorism.” This 12-item questionnaire was mailed to every resident over the age of 18. Using this approach, the government attempted to impose harsher immigration laws. A letter written by Prime Minister Orbán accompanied the survey. Asylum seekers were labeled as “economic migrants.” It was also said that “economic migrants cross the border illegally, posing as refugees while seeking social assistance and jobs” (Juhász et al., 2015: p. 25). Orbán believes that the growing number of economic migrants constitutes a new challenge to Hungary that must be addressed. According to Orbán, “Since Brussels cannot cope with immigration, Hungary has to follow its path.” “We will not allow economic migrants to endanger the jobs and livelihoods of the Hungarian people,” the letter said (Juhász et al., 2015: p. 25). Following this biased entry, citizens were asked to answer the questions and return the questionnaire to the government. Although this campaign seems to be a survey, the government’s anti-immigrant rhetoric was positioned before the majority of the questions. Simultaneously, words matching Orbán’s remarks in the letter were added. For example, Question 3 asked, “For some, immigration policy badly handled by Brussels is linked to expanding terrorism. Do you agree with this idea?” and in Question 12, “Do you agree with the Hungarian Government that social assistance should be spent on Hungarian babies and their families, not immigrants?” the statement is included (Hungarian Government, 2015a: pp. 1–3). This initiative was not intended to learn about Hungarians’ attitudes on immigration. On the contrary, it was designed to influence the Hungarian people’s pre-existing beliefs. The survey’s questions were answered by approximately 10% of the Hungarian population. Orbán, on the other hand, said that an overwhelming majority of respondents agreed with the survey’s findings. The government’s anti-immigrant campaign was then carried on by a billboard campaign initiated by Orbán in June 2015, with an estimated \$1.2 million spent on the billboard campaign and paid for by public money (The Budapest Beacon, 2015). Billboards were posted in nearly a thousand places around the country, and their content consisted of three types of messages: “(1) If you come to Hungary, don’t take the job of Hungarians; (2) If you come to Hungary, you should respect our laws!; (3) If you come to Hungary, you should respect our culture!” (Martínez, 2016: p. 63).

Officials from the government said that the advertising campaign was directed at migrants and human traffickers. The most startling aspect of the billboards, however, was that they were exclusively in Hungarian and were only published in Hungary.

What was actually desired was to manipulate the Hungarian nation by instilling anti-immigrant sentiments in the population. In this approach, Fidesz, the securitizing actor, attempted to persuade the Hungarian people, the receptive audience, to adopt unprecedented steps against immigration, which was framed as an existential threat (Martínez, 2016: p. 63). Against this backdrop, the Hungarian government decided to seal the Serbian border with a 4-meter high, 170-kilometer-long barbed wire mesh wall. Furthermore, border police have boosted their presence. Hungarian police were permitted to use tear gas, water cannons, and rubber bullets on people crossing the Serbian border. A comparable wire barrier was constructed along the Croatian borders. Despite the international public's outrage, Hungarian residents welcomed these extreme actions (Sputnik Türkiye, 2015). Hungary also built fences on the Croatian border (Deutsche Welle, 2015), and transition zones were created on the Serbian-Hungarian border. Also, in 2017, Hungary built a second 155-kilometer-long wire fence on the Serbian border (Asylum Information Database, 2022; Euronews, 2017).

Despite Viktor Orbán's harsh anti-immigrant campaign and extraordinary measures, the Fidesz-KDNP alliance performed exceptionally well in the 2018 elections. In elections where the homeland, the defense of cultural values, the elites, and international migration were the most critical issues, Fidesz and Jobbik came to the forefront as the two parties that most instrumentalized and securitized the refugees and migration issue with a populist logic. Fidesz focused on the central issues during the election campaign: "Soros," "Migration / Refugees / Asylum Seekers," and EU policies. These three issues were used to instill a climate of fear in society. On the other hand, demonized Soros is described as the cause of the refugee crisis, the origin of Euroscepticism, and the cause of the situation in Hungary. This is supported by excerpts from the Fidesz-KDNP alliance's 2018 election platform:

"Migration is not the goal of the Soros Plan, but merely its means. Millions of people in desperate situations in Africa and the Middle East are being encouraged to come to Europe; indeed they are even being transported here, in order to debilitate nations and deliver the coup de grâce to Christian culture. Let's also talk candidly about the fact that the Soros Plan also seriously endangers the security of our everyday lives. In Europe's immigrant countries, acts of terrorism have become regular occurrences, crime rates are increasing, violence against women has escalated, and anti-Semitism is emerging again. This is what we must prevent, and this is the threat against which we must defend the country. So when we say that we must defend Hungary, we declare that we must defend work, our families,

security, the authority of our laws, our achievements and Hungarian culture. And we must also defend our future. What we did not tolerate from the Soviet Empire we shall not tolerate from the Soros Empire. We shall defend our borders, we shall prevent implementation of the Soros Plan, and eventually we shall win this battle” (Hungarian Government, 2017).

As a result, the Fidesz-KDNP alliance came to power for the third time, with a two-thirds majority in the parliament and a great victory. In his post-election speech, Orbán stated that the government would soon implement stricter immigration rules (The Guardian, 2018b). In this context, the Hungarian parliament adopted in June 2018 the constitutional amendment known as “Stop Soros!” that forbids the resettlement of asylum seekers in the country as part of the fight against illegal immigration. The Jobbik party made the protection of Hungary’s Christian culture an obligation of the state with the constitutional amendment supported by the ruling Fidesz-KDNP alliance, and the placement of foreigners in the country was forbidden. Thus, while anti-immigrant measures were incorporated into the Hungarian constitution, the “Stop Soros!” law allowed more pro-government institutions, approved by the interior ministry, to deal with immigration and taxed research centers with foreign funding. By creating a new type of crime, this law also made it a crime to support immigration. The fact that the Fidesz-KDNP alliance won the 2018 and 2022 general elections for the third and fourth time proves that Orbán’s anti-immigrant rhetoric and strong anti-immigrant measures were well received by the Hungarian people.

Conclusions

International immigration can be securitized through the discourses of different securitization actors (political elite, government, state representative, political party, society, and army) at the national, regional, and international level. In this context, this study concluded that the securitizing actor in Hungary was the ruling far-right party Fidesz, the securitization was done at the government’s initiative, and it had similar arguments to that of opposition far-right party Jobbik. These findings are also significant because it supports the argument that governments (ruling parties) have a greater advantage than other securitizing actors (opposition parties) in terms of influencing target groups and implementing extraordinary measures in the implementation of securitization action.

Fidesz’s securitization of international migration is a relatively new phenomenon for Hungary’s right. The ruling party, Fidesz, has a great advantage in securitizing international migration, convincing the audience, and implementing the

extraordinary measures to be taken, due to its majority in the Hungarian parliament. This finding is significant because it supports the thesis that governments have a greater advantage than other securitizing actors in terms of influencing target groups and adopting exceptional steps in the execution of securitization actions. In the instance of Hungary, immigration was first framed as an economic danger. However, with the increase in immigration to Europe in 2015 as a result of the refugee crisis, the economic security narrative was abandoned in order to establish an identity-based danger paradigm. Based on societal security, immigrants were portrayed as an existential threat to both Hungarian culture and European civilization. In the anti-immigration discourse of Viktor Orbán, who is the representative of the far-right in Hungary, it has been determined that there is a focus on the threats that immigrants pose to Hungarian identity and national security rather than the economic problems that they create. Therefore, Orbán and his government have been at the forefront of this process, acting as securitization of irregular migration. Based on national, societal, and economic security dimensions, Orbán, as the securitizing actor, portrayed migration as an existential threat to the culture and identity of Hungarian society, which comprise the objects of reference, to the Hungarian people, who are the receiving mass. To convince the audience, Orbán utilized facilitators. It organized campaigns by spending large sums with the power provided by being the ruling party, especially in speech acts. Influencing the audience in this way, Orbán successfully securitized immigration in Hungary by putting extraordinary measures into practice. Thus, a government-supported anti-immigration strategy was followed in Hungary. The far-right-wing Jobbik and the government-controlled media supported this process and acted as functional actors. While guiding the securitization policy, these actors applied to the themes of national security, internal security, societal security, and economic security. The audience that these actors tried to persuade was limited to the Hungarian society.

The rapid increase in the number of irregular immigrants in a short time, the terrorist attacks in major European countries, the ostracizing culture of the society, and the traumas previously experienced by the immigrants have facilitated the securitization of immigration in Hungary. In addition to the anti-immigration speeches made throughout the process, the extraordinary regulations introduced were recorded as the most important developments demonstrating the success of securitization in practice. Ultimately, the Orbán government's anti-immigration strategy was largely successful and the entry of irregular migrants into the country was restricted. No serious problems were encountered in the adoption of the measures taken against immigrants by the society. Within this framework, both Hungary's ruling Fidesz and opposition Jobbik parties are securitizing international immigration on the basis of

societal security by presenting the narrative, through their discourses based on national identity, that the homogeneity of their culture and identity is under threat from Islam. As a result, the securitization of international migration through Muslim identity prepares the way for immigrants to be excluded and marginalized from Hungarian society. This condition makes immigrant assimilation even more challenging. This outcome also fosters violent impulses and racist movements against immigrants, as well as an upsurge in anti-Islamic acts, particularly in Europe. Despite both Fidesz and Jobbik's harsh attitudes toward immigrants, their acceptance by Hungarian society to a significant extent and their increase in votes day by day indicates that international immigration will continue to be a security problem and securitization will continue in the near future, both in Eastern European and Western European countries where the far-right is on the rise. The international community's expanding and varied security issues in the twenty-first century appear to hasten this trend even further.

Endnotes

¹ This article is derived from the master's thesis, "Avrupa'da Aşırı Sağ Partiler Çerçevesinde Uluslararası Göçün Güvenikleştirilmesi: Fransa ve Macaristan Örnekleri" [Securitization of International Migration in the Framework of Far-Right Parties in Europe: Examples from France and Hungary], which was defended by Şeyma Uzun, under the supervision of Assoc. Prof. Bülent Şener, at Karadeniz Technical University, Institute of Social Sciences, Department of International Relations in June 2021.

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