Title: Modes of institutionalized securitization: bottom-up and horizontal forces in ethnic conflict environments

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Abstract: This paper examines the possibility that in ethnic conflicts the securitization process could develop into a more institutionalized form, which in turn opens up the possibility for the process to be expanded, as securitization is no longer limited to the typical unidirectional top-down (i.e. elite-driven) path, but rather it becomes subject to bottom-up and horizontal forces, creating what is termed in this paper ‘horizontal and ‘bottom-up securitization’. Thus, the ‘creation’ of threats is no longer ‘left’ solely to elite, as the public has a more active role in the creation and perpetuation of security narratives and threats.

The paper also examines two of the most important driving forces behind the institutionalization of securitization, namely the domestic competition for political power (and thus the elite’s motives to maintain specific security narratives) and specific conflict perpetuating routines found in ethnic conflicts, (presumed by each side as necessary to maintain their ontological security). At the center of both these forces is the issue of national security, both physical and ontological, as well as the perpetuation of each group’s distinct identity.

The Cyprus conflict, as one of the most intractable ethnic conflicts, is used to test the abovementioned arguments (i.e. institutionalized, bottom-up and horizontal securitization and underlying forces) and the role they play in the intractability of the specific conflict and ethnic conflicts in general. As the case study indicates, the more institutionalized securitization is, the more rigid the ethnic groups’ relations are, which reduces the chances for resolution or settlement of the conflict.

Key Words: Securitization, security, ethnic conflict, conflict resolution

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1 This is a draft concept paper. Do not cite without the author’s consent.
Introduction

This paper explores an under-examined area in the literature of securitization and attempts to fill the existing theoretical gap by drawing empirical evidence from the Cyprus conflict. What is argued specifically is that ethnic conflict environments create a fertile environment for the process of securitization to become institutionalized. This, in turn, opens up the possibility for new modes of securitization, or an expanded view of the process, as it is no longer limited to the typical unidirectional top-down (i.e. elite-driven) path, but rather it becomes subject to bottom-up and horizontal forces; hence the introduction of two new terms, namely ‘horizontal and ‘bottom-up securitization’. As the argument goes the institutionalization of the process is both the outcome of, and a factor for, specific conflict-perpetuating routines, which in their turn play a central role in the people identities. This creates a vicious circle as these identities contribute to, or rather form the base for, the perpetuation of the securitization process as well as the conflict. In addition, the routines, which are inevitably based on the conflict-identities, also generate an environment with specific ‘rules’ for how elite should and do set up their strategies for access to power, as well as ‘rules’ for how the public should be and are part of these strategies. Thus the first part of the paper deals with the theoretical aspects of the theory. The second part on the other hand is more empirical and uses the Cyprus conflict, and specifically just the Greek Cypriot side, to provide evidence for the theoretical claims. It must be noted that the aim is not so much to criticize the main premises of the Copenhagen School and the securitization theory, but rather to complement it and offer grounds for more empirical applicability, especially in ethnic conflicts.

Securitization: a brief overview

In order to understand the theoretical claims of the paper it is important first to clarify the main premises of securitization. What must be emphasized in advance is that securitization, as a theory, is essentially a mechanism to help us analyze political practice, and more specifically, as Buzan et al. state, ‘[w]ho can “do” or “speak” security successfully, on what issues, under what conditions, and with what effects’ (1998: 27).
Said otherwise, securitization is an analysis tool more than anything else. The essence of securitization lies in the idea that security is a speech act, thus, by labeling something as a security issue, something is done. In other words, ‘the utterance itself is the act’; ‘the word “security” is the act’ (Wæver 1995: 55, emphasis in original). The actual utterance of the word security, however, is not a necessary prerequisite for a security speech act, as security and the need for emergency measures (i.e. appeal for urgency) could be connoted or inferred with the use of other words or terms (Buzan et al. 1998).

The mainstream process of securitization involves the actor and the audience and an intersubjective process between the two. Specifically, the securitizing actor performs the act by claiming that a particular referent object (e.g. identity, economy, environment, etc.) faces an existential threat. The actor is a specific someone, or a group, who performs the security speech acts, with some of the most obvious actors being political elite, bureaucrats, lobbyists and pressure groups (ibid). If these (alleged) threats are not dealt with immediately, then everything else will become irrelevant (Wæver 1996). Thus the need arises for ‘special handling’ and emergency measures to tackle the threats. In extreme cases, such as the September 11 attacks in the United States, the requested extraordinary measures asked for the complete breaking free of normal politics and the use of emergency and extreme actions, which included, inter alia, military interventions in foreign states. In the less ‘relaxed’ approach to the theory and subsequently in less extreme cases, the requested measures could be, for instance, change of leadership or change of laws to handle better any potential threats (e.g. to tackle immigration threats).

For a securitizing act to be successful the securitizing actor must convince a significant audience – e.g. public, international community, etc. – in order to gain access to the required measures and break free of the realm of ‘normal politics’ (Buzan et al. 1998). This ‘convincing’ is essentially an intersubjective process, or a negotiation between the securitizing actor and the audience.

Overall, if one follows the mainstream reading of the process of securitization, the focus will be on (a) speech acts, (b) securitizing actors and (c) the audience. This approach,

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2 For more on speech acts see J.L. Austin (1967)
therefore, connotes two things: that the process is essentially *ad hoc*, in the sense that the process occurs only when an actor initiates it (through a speech act), and for an issue to become a threat it must first be securitized by the actor, meaning that it is a top-down process as it is the elite, (including governments, organizations, etc.) that attempt to influence the public and not the other way around.

**Prospect for institutionalization and different modes of securitization**

The main argument is that the process of securitization, under certain conditions, could be significantly different; it is these conditions and the different modes of securitization that the paper explores. With this in mind, the paper’s main arguments/hypotheses could be summarized as follows:

I. It is possible, under some conditions, for the process of securitization to become institutionalized

II. Securitization need not be always a top-down process, but could also be bottom-up and/or horizontal

III. The institutionalization of securitization ‘forces’ actors and audience alike to engage in involuntary actions

IV. It is the different identities within and across the communities that determine to a great extent the process of securitization, the level of institutionalization and subsequently the degree of ‘involuntarism’.

**Institutionalizing securitization**

Buzan et al. mention briefly that ‘securitization can be either ad hoc or institutionalized. If a given type of threat is persistent or recurrent, it is no surprise to find that the response and sense of urgency become institutionalized (1998: 27)’. They also acknowledge that issues that are already defined as security issues may not be dramatized or prioritized (ibid: 28). This is as far as Buzan et al. have developed the notion of institutionalized securitization. There is neither empirical proof nor any theoretical ‘depth’ that supports
this view. Similarly, there is no examination of the underlying factors the play a role in the development of this institutionalization, or why certain issues are persistently defined as security issues, or even what the role of speech acts is in such environments (since dramatization may not be necessary). Thus, there is no real examination on how the process of securitization changes in the event that securitization becomes institutionalized.

With this in mind it becomes obvious that neither the term nor the notion of institutionalized securitization is clearly defined. In this paper, institutionalized securitization goes beyond the persistence of threats and also refers to cases where the entire process of securitization (including the referent objects, the source of threats, the securitizing actors and the audience, and even speech acts) has evolved into something diachronic (almost permanent) and has become part of the society’s political and social routines. To use a business term, the process could become a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), where actors and audiences know exactly what to do and how they should react, which means that the ad hoc part of the process almost does not exist; it is as if there are specific, albeit unwritten, rules that actors and audience alike follow. As discussed further later, in these environments – usually found in conflict and/or post-conflict areas - the entire process of securitization differs from the mainstream process, not least because the audience on one hand many times actually expects issues to be (or remain) securitized and on the other because the securitizing actors are many times left without the option of desecuritization or no-securitization.\(^3\) This understanding of institutionalized securitization is significantly different from Buzan et al.’s (under-developed) argument that issues may not need to be dramatized.

Institutionalization is not something that could ‘simply take place’ or, in other words, be the outcome of a speech act and a brief intersubjective process, as is the case with

\(^3\) It is usually assumed that the securitizing acts (and thus the process of securitization) are conscious political choices (see for example, Williams 2007), which means that there is the choice to either engage in a securitizing act or not. As I explain later, in some cases, where securitization is institutionalized this choice no longer exists and the option of ‘no-securitization’, (i.e. option not to securitize an issue) is not available to the actors. Similarly, the option of not accepting a securitizing act becomes unavailable.
‘mainstream’ securitization. On the contrary, some conditions must be present and a specific process is required. This process is similar to that of the 3-stage life cycle of norms: the birth (i.e. creation) of norms, the growing (i.e. spreading or expanding) stage, and lastly the internalization of norms (Kowert and Legro 1996; Finnemore and Sikkink 1998). In the case of securitization to reach the third stage (i.e. institutionalization), there must also be the birth stage, which takes place (primarily) after pivotal events. But unlike the case of norms where the ‘birth’ takes place mainly because of the role of ‘norm entrepreneurs’ (agents with strong beliefs of what is appropriate or desirable within a community (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998)), the pivotal events could be so dramatizing that no specific actors (entrepreneurs) are required to argue what is appropriate or desirable, or what is a threat for that matter. The second stage in securitization would be the unchallenged period. This is the period during which any perceptions regarding threats that derive directly from the pivotal event remain unchallenged. During this period the prospects for internalization of certain perceptions is particularly high, not only because certain perceptions remain unchallenged by elite and public alike, but also because after pivotal events these perceptions are usually holistic (i.e. they affect the entire population and not just parts it), while at the same time they also shape the community’s identity, especially when it comes to perceptions about the enemy. But for institutionalization to really take place (i.e. 3rd stage) there needs to be an ‘active’ and repetitive discourse on security issues on an elite and public level. The key to institutionalization is the repetition of securitizing acts, or in other words, routinized securitization. Said otherwise, securitizing acts become part of the elite’s political routines, and the process of accepting or rejecting them becomes part of the audience’s social routines. These routines do not start after the ‘unchallenged period’; they emerge during that period and are usually perpetuated. Thus the institutionalization face is not very distinct from the unchallenged face; on the contrary it is a concurrent period.

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4 It is worth noting that this is different from what Buzan et al. say about ‘recurrent threats’, which is, for instance, the case of Israelis, who experience recurrent threats from Hamas and Hezbollah. In the latter case, indeed no dramatization is necessary because the threats are ‘real’ (e.g. fatal explosions); the audience can accept that Hams and Hezbollah is a threat without dramatization. In cases, however, where the threats are not as ‘tangible’ or ‘real’, (e.g. Turkish settlers which pose a threat to the Greek Cypriot identity), a repetitive securitization discourse is required to reach the internalization stage. It is these kinds of political and social routines that I refer to.
However, at some point, even if the routinized acts stop, the threats still remain ‘valid’ and could easily re-emerge as they have been deeply internalized by the public. All of these ingredients are usually found in conflict and post-conflict cases, and more specifically in ethno-national conflicts, since in such conflicts the struggles revolve around the competing identities, which could make the issues of threats to one’s identity much more personal problem (compared to, for example, terrorism or environmental degradation).

Post-institutionalization impact

When the securitization is institutionalized, it means that it becomes part of the routines and more importantly part of the society’s norms. Before examining what this means for the process of securitization it is worth noting how norms influence a society. As Kowert and Legro (1996) point out, norms are legitimate social variables that are both accepted and created by the community. Moreover, because norms create collective expectations, they also set the proper behavior of actors within a given identity (Katzenstein 1996; Finnemore 1996; Legro 1997); they create, in other words, certain expectations of behavior. Thus, with the same token, if securitization becomes part of the norms, it means that securitization is both accepted (i.e. it is legitimate to present certain issues as threats) and/or is created by the community, and more specifically by the people’s identity. This ‘acceptance’ leads to an environment where threats are easily perpetuated, especially within a given identity. What is more, if the securitization process is viewed in the same way as norms, then the public (i.e. ‘bottom’ part of the process) has a bigger role to play than currently assumed in the securitization literature.

Specifically, once securitization is institutionalized the process per se changes significantly. The first change is in regards to the role of speech acts, whose importance diminishes. This is because the public already internalized and subsequently accepted some issues as threats. Thus, the role of speech acts shifts from convincing an audience that a specific issue is a threat, to reminding them. Reminding them, essentially, that the expected behavior, the norm, is to accept certain issues as threats unquestionably; it
almost becomes a national duty for people to accept certain issues as threats. Another important difference is that the ‘reminders’ need not come from individuals with significant political capital, but also from ‘ordinary’ non-elite individuals. Moreover, the ‘reminding’ could very easily be done without influential speech acts, but also with the use of visual images (e.g. ads on billboards), as is many times the case in specific periods such as elections or referenda.

The second change in regards to securitization processes in an institutionalized environment has to do with the prospects of horizontal forces. In cases where threats have been internalized there are instances where the audience (i.e. the public) engages directly in the securitization process, taking the role of securitizing actors. In such cases each individual’s aim is to influence his/her immediate periphery (e.g. co-workers, family, friends, etc.) and not the entire population spectrum, as is the case with ‘regular’ securitizing actors. This is what I term ‘horizontal securitization’. Especially in ethnic conflicts, such as the one in Cyprus, where the people’s (ethnic) ideologies and identities are many times quite strong, the horizontal securitization plays a very important role in influencing opinions and actions. This is particularly the case in small societies (e.g. Cyprus) where each vote/person counts. ‘Micro-securitization’ on a horizontal level (i.e. peer-to-peer securitization with the aim of influencing a small number of individuals) in such environments could provide significant support to the ‘mainstream’ top-down securitizing acts, and more specifically by increasing the chances of a specific act being accepted, rendering it thus a successful act. This was the case during the Annan Plan referenda in Cyprus, where there has been significant top-down securitization and even more significant horizontal support.

The second scenario has to do with bottom-up or upward forces, and not just horizontal. In these cases, the bottom (i.e. public) does not change the process of securitization, meaning it does not become an actor itself, but rather influences the mainstream process, namely the top-down process. This is done when the public applies pressure on elite to present certain issues as threats, because they (public) want certain issues to be maintained as threats. These expectations are maintained because the existence of threats
and the subsequent expected behavior on how to handle them, are part of the society’s norms. This process is could be termed as ‘expected securitization’: cases where the audience expects (and desires) the securitization – by their elite - of certain issues or referent objects. This demand for securitization derives from the need for ontological security, or one’s identity that, in ethnic conflicts, is inevitably linked to the ‘enemy other’. Said otherwise, the perpetuation of the conflict becomes important for the perpetuation of one’s identity, making thus the conflict a desirable option (Mitzen 2006). With this in mind, to perpetuate a conflict, especially a comfortable one such as the one in Cyprus (Adamides and Constantinou, 2011) there is a need to maintain specific threats and an enemy other; hence the expectation for securitization, which contributes towards the perpetuation of the threats and thus the conflict.

This brings us to the last issue, namely that in cases where there is expected securitization, the securitizing actors’ options as well as those of the audience may be very limited. Specifically, the actors may have no choice but to securitize certain issues – in order to satisfy the public feelings and safeguard their political power – while members of the audience may not have a choice but to accept certain securitizing acts because of the horizontal pressures they face. There is in other words, a process of involuntary securitization. The degree of this involuntary process depends on how rigid and how connected the identities are to the conflict and the existing perceived threats. This link is not surprising, if we take into consideration that in ethnic conflict environments the identities are frequently developed with the conflict at their core as the conflict and more specifically the ‘enemy other’ becomes essential to define who ‘we’ are. Thus any post-conflict identities cannot be maintained without the existence of the conflict (Mitzen 2006). As a result, there are times when conflict-based identities are particularly rigid (i.e. cannot easily change). The rigidness and their connection to the conflict is inevitably linked to the perceptions of particular threats. Without those threats the conflict cannot exist (and neither could their current identity), which subsequently means that the perpetuation of specific threat related perceptions is necessary. This necessity is a major force that fuels the institutionalization of the securitization process.
Evidence from Cyprus

It is beyond the scope of this paper to provide the historical background of the Cyprus conflict. One characteristic that should be noted for the purposes of this paper is that it is an intractable conflict that revolves around two distinct ethnic identities (see e.g. Papadakis et. al. 2006). Cyprus is also a securitized environment, in the sense that many issues are deeply internalized as threats, making it thus a prime case study to test the aforementioned theoretical hypotheses.

Testing the institutionalization process

As mentioned above the first stage of institutionalization is the ‘birth’, which takes place after pivotal events and without the intervention of any particular securitizing actor. In the Cypriot contemporary history there have been several pivotal events on both sides of the Buffer Zone, but because the empirical research focuses only on the Greek Cypriot side, this paper only focuses on the most important one for Greek Cypriots, namely the Turkish invasion in 1974.5 The latter has been by far the most dramatizing event for Greek Cypriots, creating almost automatically an unchallenged and unquestionable perception of what constitutes the biggest threat for them. This threat was none-other than Turkey and more specifically the Turkish military.6 After the invasion there was no need for any securitizing actor or political entrepreneur to securitize any issues, or to argue what the source of the threat was, or what the referent objects under the threat were (e.g. Greek Cypriot identity, sovereignty, physical security, etc.). The public had a very clear and concrete perception of the source of threats as well as the endangered referent objects. These perceptions became clear without any specific speech acts from any

5 It is worth noting that similar evidence exists for both sides and it would be easy to identify some pivotal events for the Turkish Cypriot community as well, especially during the period 1963-1967. However, this is subject to further empirical research and it is beyond the scope of this paper.

6 The Turkish military was (and still is) considered to be the primary threat for Greek Cypriots. However, over the past few years the issue of the increasing number of Turkish settlers also constitutes an additional primary threat for Greek Cypriots, not least because it changes the demographic balance of the island and subsequently jeopardizes the Greek Cypriot identity.
The event, dramatic and life changing as it was, changed the Cypriot environment physically (i.e. geographically with the movement of populations and loss of sovereignty), politically (i.e. what constituted political challenges and how they should be handled) and socially (i.e. the Greek Cypriot identity underwent changes). These changes led to the second face, namely the unchallenged period.

Since 1974, and even though several Greek Cypriot political parties or individual politicians have lately softened their position vis-à-vis Turkey, nobody ever ‘dared’ to argue the conflict is not the outcome of the Turkish invasion and occupation. Indeed, the perceptions regarding the source of threats (i.e. Turkey), especially the first few decades, were completely unchallenged. Similarly there has been a consensus by all political parties and public alike in regards to what constitutes a threat (e.g. Turkish army, settlers, governance, etc.). It must be noted that the lack of challenge is not limited to an elite level. On the contrary, it is the public, with some very minor exceptions of a handful bi-communal activists, that perpetuates the unchallenged period, as it is unwilling to consider that certain issues might not be as major threat as they used to be. Similarly, and despite the many significant global developments, such as the current financial crisis that has an impact on the country, the public still maintains the conflict at the core of its identity and still considers it to be the most important issue in their daily lives, even though the conflict is particularly comfortable and does not really interfere with the people’s daily routines.

With this in mind it is not a coincidence that the unchallenged period allowed for some issues to became part of the daily political routines of elite, parties and even the society (e.g. in education). This has led to the internalization of specific threats. It is not surprising that in every single opinion poll the first concern of Greek Cypriots is the Cyprus problem, and their first fear regarding the potential settlement of the problem is not the economy or the governance aspect of the settlement, but rather that of security. Similarly, the main deciding factor for the Greek Cypriot voting preference, even in parliamentary elections, is how a political party or an individual would handle the Cyprus problem.

7 See for examples opinion polls by Lordos et al. 2004, 2005, 2006; Cyprus2015 2009
conflict. Also unsurprising is the fact that the withdrawal of the Turkish army and the elimination of Turkish intervention guarantees remains by far the most deciding factor for accepting or rejecting a settlement plan, and the most adamant red line of all Greek Cypriot political parties and public; indicatively 97.1% of Greek Cypriots would be unwilling to accept the Turkish guarantees even if that would be lead to a settlement of the problem (Ant1 2010).

Perhaps the most important outcome of the unchallenged period is the creation of an environment with specific (unwritten) rules on how politics in Cyprus should be played out, forcing elite and public alike to be limited within the boundaries of these rules. Being unable to ‘escape’ from these boundaries, the elite are constantly pre-occupied with the perceived threats that have remained unchallenged, and specifically the issue of guarantees, army, settlers and lately that of governance. Political elite when asked about potential threats, either in private settings (i.e. interviews) or in public (e.g. television shows, newspaper interviews), their answer always revolves around the Cyprus problem and Turkey. It is not a coincidence that each and every political party during election periods focuses primarily on the Cyprus problem and then on everything else. Some parties (e.g. Evroko) actually focus almost exclusively on the Cyprus problem during their campaigns, ignoring many times other important issues such as the economy. In simple words, the path to political power passes through the Cyprus problem; it is impossible for any political elite to rise or stay in power without having at the core of its agenda the Cyprus conflict. The conflict, therefore, is not part of the people’s identities only in terms of ‘who they are’ vis-à-vis the enemy other, but also in terms of their social and professional developments – i.e. every day life, for elite and public (but especially for the former), revolves around conflict related routines.

More importantly however, these rules also dictate what is acceptable and what is not. For instance, no political elite is in a position to accept the Turkish guarantees for the sake of a settlement without having a significant political cost. The same applies for the

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8 See for example an opinion poll conducted for Ant1 “Kypriako Varometro” (2011)
9 See for examples opinion polls by Lordos et al. 2004, 2005, 2006; Cyprus2015 2009
issue of settlers. Indicatively, President Christofias accepted \textit{a priori} that 50,000 settlers would stay in Cyprus and he is currently facing opposition from \textit{all} the other political parties and the vast majority of the press. Some parties are even demanding a referendum to register the public’s position on this issue, which almost certainly will reject the President’s proposals (for indicative opinion polls see Ant1 2010; 2011). This is a clear example of a case where an elite did not play the game with the pre-determined rules and he is now facing the consequences, which are particularly significant. Similarly, and as mentioned, the public also plays the game with the same rules. Public opinions have clearly indicated that the number one factor that influences people’s voting preference is the perception on how the specific elite or party would handle the Cyprus problem; or how well, in other words, he or she could play the game within the pre-determined rules.

This unchallenged period creates inevitably specific routines (i.e. rules) that elite and public must follow. It is these routines that lead to the institutionalization of the securitization process. Specific issues are constantly securitized to the degree that the process becomes part of the daily routines and so are the threats. This brings us to, or rather is part of, the next face, that of institutionalization. It must be noted again that this face runs to a degree concurrently with the previous one. There is little doubt that securitization in Cyprus is deeply institutionalized as a process. The securitization related routines (e.g. present specific issues as threats) are well established and more importantly well accepted, as seen from several opinion polls. This institutionalization created an environment where there is no need for any political elite to convince the public about the Turkish army or the guarantees or any other similar threats; indeed what elite do, every now and then – primarily in a framework of political power struggles – is \textit{remind} the people of these threats and emphasize how they (or their party) is more suitable to handle these threats. What should be noted is that the ‘reminding’ part of the process is many times tailored to the voter’s specific ‘sub-identities’. Specifically, while the conflict has shaped all Greek Cypriots’ identities, it did not do so in the same way for everyone. The leftists for instance have not just institutionalized the securitization process for Turkey related threats, but also for Greek and right-wing related threats. Thus, the multi-layered identities of ethnic conflict communities such the ones in Cyprus allow for multiple
institutionalizations of the process, which also influence one another. In general though, these institutionalizations perpetuate the ‘political rules’ mentioned above and more importantly for the theory allow for other modes of securitization to emerge.

Horizontal and bottom-up securitization

One way of examining the conflict perpetuating reasons and the prospects and problems of cooperation between people and organizations across the divide, a series of bi-communal roundtable discussions with individuals from different sectors of the society (e.g. artists, academics, NGOs, business people, students, etc.) were conducted, followed by a series of interviews with some of those participants as well as other individuals in key positions (e.g. Greek and Turkish Cypriot presidents of the Chambers of Commerce). The results were particularly interesting and pointed out towards very ‘heavy’ pressures that either led to horizontal securitization or to forces that supported the perpetuation of the securitized environment. Specifically, ‘ordinary’ individuals (i.e. not elite) who attempted to escape the ‘norm’ (i.e. disagree as to what constitutes a threat or collaborate with the ‘other’) faced significant pressure from peers and family, forcing them either to conform to the norms and/or to minimize any interaction with the ‘other’ side. The pressures had many forms and ranged from name-calling and ‘character assassinations’ to social exclusions at schools, workplace or even families. It is worth noting that this was the case for high school students as well, indicating that the securitized environment is indeed deeply institutionalized even among the younger generations of the Cypriot society. Even though these students were born decades after the division and the violent events, they still follow the existing security norms and even help perpetuate them. In the case of students, the pressure came either from other students who discriminated against their classmates, forcing them many times not to participate in national holiday celebrations (because they were considered to be traitors who did not share the same views regarding the enemy and the threats), or even by teachers, taking advantage of their asymmetric power. In non-student cases many of the participants indicated that they faced significant family pressures or peer pressure at their working environment. They
too were frequently excluded, from events while they were also at the receiving end of very negative and anti-patriotic characterizations.

Evidence of bottom-up pressure was particularly clear during the period of the Annan Plan referenda, and especially in the leftist circles, when large numbers of people gathered together and warned the party authorities not to support the Plan (as the Plan-related threats were perceived to be too great), forcing thus specific elite and parties to reconsider their views.\textsuperscript{10} Other forms of bottom-up forces appeared only after elite expressed specific views that were outside the established norms (e.g. in regards to the number of settlers that could remain in Cyprus in case of a settlement, or on the governance structure of the settlement – e.g. rotating presidency). In those cases the public reaction was so ‘loud’ that forced elite to amend their positions so as to be much more in line with the norms.

\textit{Option not to securitize? Not really...}

The last argument has to do with the lack of options for securitizing actors and audience alike, and is directly linked to the two aforementioned points. The severe horizontal and bottom-up pressures, which are almost always directly linked to historical experiences, have created an environment where the elite are not in a position to desecuritize certain issues or even not securitize them, without at least severe political costs. Elite are, in other words, expected to re-affirm that some issues are indeed existential threats, regardless of what they really believe. As mentioned, in Cyprus this is particularly the case when it comes to a number of issues, the most important of which are the Turkish guarantees, the military presence in the island and the Turkish settlers. Similarly, individuals who might disagree with the securitization of certain issues are not in a position to easily express their disagreement as they face peer pressure, or even top-down pressure, while labeling (e.g. traitor) and character assassinations are quite frequent, as

\textsuperscript{10} For instance, there are anectodal stories, which the author has heard from several different sources, referring to stories when members of the political party AKEL (leftist), applied pressure to their party to reject the Annan Plan by telling them that they would never again vote for AKEL (and to emphasize their position they even took with them their electoral books which they threatened to leave at the premises, as evidence that they would indeed not vote again for them).
already mentioned above. In simple words, in environments where securitization is so deeply internalized and has become institutionalized, there seems to be involuntary securitization. There is therefore no real intersubjective process or negotiation between the actor and audience. Indeed, as the Cyprus conflict suggests, there is no negotiation. Both the act on behalf of the actors, and the ‘acceptance’ on behalf of the audience, have pre-determined outcomes: it is given that an act must take place just as it is given that the audience will accept it, making thus successful securitization inevitable. The most indicative example is that of the Turkish guarantees. It is ‘given’ that all political elite (i.e. potential securitizing actors) will securitize the issue just as it is ‘given’ that the audience (i.e. Greek Cypriots) will accept this issue as an existential threat for the community.

What is particularly interesting is not so much that the public has internalized the threats and the securitization process (and subsequently accept it unquestionably many times), but rather that the people actually want the securitizing actors to maintain the securitized environment. There is therefore ‘expected securitization’ and only the elite and parties that could prove their ability to handle threats successfully do well in the political games. Why the public wants the threats (and subsequently securitization) to be perpetuated is not very clear. One view is that the image of the ‘enemy other’ (i.e. Turkey in this case) must be maintained in order for ‘our’ identity (i.e. Greek Cypriots) to exist in its current form. Without the threats and the ‘other’ the Greek Cypriot identity, which includes among other that of the ‘victim’ must be altered. It is difficult to quantify this, but suffice to say that one in four people (in both communities) actually does not want the negotiations to reach a settlement (without the opinion poll specifying what kind of settlement) (Cyprus2015 2011).

**Conclusion**

Overall, when the presentation of certain issues as threats becomes part of the political and social routines of a society, the process of securitization becomes deeply institutionalized. Securitizing acts are thus no longer ad hoc. Elite simply need to re-
affirm the existing security-threat discourse, many times without the option not to do so, while there is no real intersubjective process between actors and audience, as the latter is already convinced. This is especially the case in ethnic conflict environments where the ‘enemy other’ is clearly defined, while its existence becomes necessary for the other side to perpetuate its identity. This leads to conflict-perpetuating routines, making thus desecuritization or no-securitization a difficult task; on the contrary it makes securitization necessary. It is perhaps this fear for the loss of identity that leads to the severe horizontal pressures in Cyprus. Similarly, because the perpetuation of threats is important for the public, elite are forced to engage in mild securitizing acts but not in an attempt to convince the audience that a specific issue is indeed a threat (as this is really irrelevant), but rather to remind them that this is indeed the case and convince them that they (i.e. specific elite or party) is the most suitable agent to handle the threat. This seems to be the case in regards to the numerous internalized threats in Cyprus; a constant political party power struggle through continuous securitizing acts, which seem to have become part of everyone’s routines. It is not surprising therefore that lately the Greek Cypriot elite have discovered the word «κινδυνολογία» (scaremongering) and accuse each other of using it for political purposes.

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