

Securitization Outside the Liberal Political Context: Did Cuba Matter in the Cuban Missile Crisis?

Abstract: *This article argues that the Copenhagen's securitization theory, as the analytical tool for grasping the dynamic of security processes, has the same applicability in any socio-political context. In order to support this claim the question why one does security will be addressed. The question deals with the motivation behind the securitization speech act. By dealing with these issues this article engages in the conceptualization of security as an act of utterance, which is at the centre of the securitization theoretical framework. For determining if the securitization process can take place in non-democratic settings, the above-presented theoretical assertions are tested on the empirical case of the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. The article concludes with the argument that by putting an emphasis on the survival that motivates security (speech) act, the Copenhagen's theory of securitization cannot be seen as context dependent.*

Key words: *Copenhagen School, securitization, non-democratic context, Cuban Missile Crisis*

After 1990s the international relations scholarship, once dominated by the traditional notion of power politics, became open to and influenced by the emerging constructivist line of thought. The critiques of traditionalist theories emphasize that the changes that came forth with the end of the Cold War politics had an unprecedented effect on the nature of international relations. The state and military perspective of international relations was no longer dominant, and such a change had to be followed by the re-conceptualization of old concepts and the development of new ones that would reflect the new state of affairs.

The same constructivist line of thought also made an impact on the security studies scholarship. The new security theories, which make an essential part of what is now known as the critical branch of security studies, challenge the very meaning of the concept of security. According to the challengers, the traditional meaning of the concept of security as the defence of the state

from external military threats had to be re-conceptualized in order to embrace security dynamics in the new post-Cold War environment.¹ The concept of security had to be diverged from what Berry Buzan and Richard Little had marked as the “Westphalian straitjacket”. The “Westphalian straitjacket” refers to the core concept of traditional security studies that views the state as the only referent object of security.² Drawn by such incentives, while defining the concept of security, critically orientated scholars emphasize above all the non-state and non-military aspects of the potential threat.

The most significant contribution to the constructivist and critical side of the security studies has been made through the work of scholars within the Copenhagen Conflict and Peace Research Institute (COPRI), later known as the Copenhagen School. Drawing from the European security agenda from the mid-1980s and onwards, the Copenhagen scholars introduced the concept of security sectors with the purpose of redefining not only the nature of potential threats but also the nature of the threatened objects. The concept of security sectors outlines that security deals with threats coming not just from military but also from sectors such as economy, environment, politics and society. In addition, the legitimate threatened object for security is not just state, but also society, collective identity, culture, economic integration, popular migration, survival of the species and the survival of the human civilization.³ Therefore, Jef Huysmans is right in pointing out that the Copenhagen’s concept of security sectors can be “universally applied to classify a possible diversity of security problems”.⁴

Apart from the concept of security sectors, the Copenhagen scholars have also contributed to the scholarship with the development of the securitization theory. The main purpose of the securitization theory is to offer an analytical tool for analysing the emergence of security processes in security sectors. In the centre of the theory is the re-conceptualized concept of security, which defines security as a self-referential, intersubjective and socially constructed practice. In other words, securitization theory moves security from being a fact of perception to the fact of utterance. By calling something a security issue, it necessarily becomes one.⁵ Defined in such a way

¹ Mohammed Ayoob, *The Third World Security Predicament: State Making, Regional Conflict and the International System* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995), 5.

² Berry Buzan and Richard Little, “Why International Relations has Failed as an Intellectual Project and What to do About It,” *Millennium* 30-1 (2001): 25.

³ Michael C. Williams, “Words, Images, Enemies: Securitization and International Politics,” *International Studies Quarterly* 47-4 (2003): 513.

⁴ Jef Huysmans, “Revisiting Copenhagen: Or, On the Creative Development of a Security Studies Agenda in Europe,” *European Journal of International Relations* 4-4 (1998): 490.

⁵ Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, and Jap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1998), 26.

and placed within the Copenhagen's theory of securitization, the concept of security is presented as an act of utterance that takes an issue beyond the realm of normal politics, by presenting it as an existential threat to the referent object, and upholds the support of audience for the extraordinary measures that are to eliminate this existential threat.⁶ Consequently, an analysis of security with the Copenhagen's securitization framework becomes an examination of the process through which an issue moves from the realm of normal politics, where it could be dealt with communal governance, to the realm of securitization where it is presented as an existential threat that requires the implementation of emergency measures.

However, not all scholars agree that the Copenhagen's theoretical framework is equally applicable in any political settings. According to Claire Wilkinson, the theoretical framework provided by securitization theory "does not currently possess the theoretical vocabulary"⁷ to describe the security dynamic outside the Western liberal environment. Considering that it has been developed on the assumptions that the European understanding of state, identity and security are universal, the Copenhagen School has limited its research agenda only to liberal political context.⁸

Contra Wilkinson's point, this article aims to provide support for the argument that, although the Copenhagen School emerged from European experience, there is no reason to characterize its theoretical contributions as particularly European.⁹ Furthermore, by addressing the question *why one does security* this article will attempt to move the Copenhagen School's securitization theory away from the dependence on the nature of political context. As a case study, this article analyses the role of Cuban government in 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis and concludes that the applicability of the securitization theory, as the analytical tool for grasping the dynamic of security processes, is the same regardless of political context.

Security as a Speech Act?

With the new developments in the European security agenda in the post-Cold War period, the Copenhagen School has engaged in the conceptualization of analytical tools that would provide accurate explanation for the emerging changes. In their efforts, the Copenhagen's scholars became a part of the

⁶ Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde, *Security*, 23-26.

⁷ Claire Wilkinson, "The Copenhagen School in Tour in Kyrgyzstan: Is Securitization Theory Useable Outside Europe," *Security Dialog* 38-5 (2007): 22.

⁸ Wilkinson, "The Copenhagen School in Tour in Kyrgyzstan," 5.

⁹ Huysmans, "Revisiting Copenhagen," 483.

1990s debate about “conceptual reflections on the concept of security”.¹⁰ As a result of these incentives the scholars have developed the concept of sectoral security and the theory of securitization. The concept of security sectors introduced non-military and non-state perspective of potential threats into the national security agenda, and the aim of the securitization theory was to analyse the “attribution of the security problems to specific sources”¹¹ through the questions: “who can ‘do’ or ‘speak’ security successfully, on what issues, under what conditions, and with what effect?”¹²

In fact, the most valuable Copenhagen’s contribution to the critical security scholarship and security scholarship in general has been made with the conceptualization of the theory of securitization. The grassroots for the theory, the concept of securitization, has been developed and formally introduced in security studies by Ole Waever in the chapter “Securitization and Desecuritization”, which makes an important part of Ronnie Lipchutz’s book *On Security*. The chapter, through the reflection upon the concept of security, poses the argument that “with the help of language theory, we can regard security as a speech act”.¹³ Drawing on the assumptions that had been developed in John L. Austin’s speech act theory and on his concept of performative utterance, Waever moves security from being an act of perception, an interpretation of security according to Jahn et al., to security as a speech act.¹⁴ The performative utterance implies that “by saying something, something is being done”,¹⁵ or, applied through the concept of security, by calling something security that something becomes security. In this way for Waever, security does not speak of threats that are more real than others; the utterance of security itself is the primary reality.¹⁶

Defined as a speech act, an issue of practice, the concept of security is placed in the centre of the process of securitization. According to Weaver, securitization process starts with utterance. The securitizing actor, actor in the position of authority, delivers the security speech act to the significant audience. The subject of the speech act is a security nature of the development that emerges as an existential threat for the survival of the referent object. By

¹⁰ Ole Waever, “Securitization and Desecuritization,” in: *On Security*, ed. Ronnie D. Lipschutz, 46. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).

¹¹ Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde, *Security*, 44.

¹² *Ibid.*, 27.

¹³ Waever, “Securitization and Desecuritization,” 55.

¹⁴ Huysmans, “Revisiting Copenhagen,” 491-492.

¹⁵ Rita Taureck, “Securitization Theory – The Story So Far: Theoretical Inheritance and What it Means to a Post-Structural Realist,” Paper presented at the 4th annual CEEISA convention University of Tartu, 25-27 June 2006: 6.

¹⁶ Waever, “Securitization and Desecuritization,” 55.

saying security to the audience, securitizing actor “moves a particular development into a special area, and thereby claims a special right to use whatever means are necessary to block it”.¹⁷ In this case, the delivered speech act represents means for constructing an issue as an existential threat by which securitizing actor upholds the needed legitimacy for the break of rules of normal politics and for the execution of emergency measures.¹⁸ Yet, by approving the security nature of the presented development, the audience is the instance that decides about successful securitization. By doing so, the audience is the one that legitimizes the breaking of the rules of normal politics and the enforcement of the extraordinary measures.¹⁹ To sum up, the Copenhagen’s theory of securitization implies that by uttering security, an issue becomes a threat and also a part of the process that ends with the legitimate use of extraordinary measures for the purpose of securing survival of the threatened object.

However, the above presented argument – that the Copenhagen scholars moved from the traditional understanding of security with the development of the securitization theory, which defined security as a speech act, and by introducing the concepts of sectoral security that led to the broadening and deepening of the security agenda – has been challenged by the critics. As Felix Ciuta in his critical evaluation of the securitization theory in the article “Security and the problem of context: hermeneutical critique of securitization theory” points out, the theoretical framework of the securitization theory has not yet departed the concept of security from the (traditional) notion of survival. The Copenhagen scholars were still relying on the logic of survival while making an effort to define security as an intersubjective and socially constructed practice. As noted by Ciuta, in the 1998 Copenhagen book security is described as a “survival in the face of existential threat, but what constitutes an existential threat is not the same across different sectors”.²⁰ Therefore, Ciuta rightfully claims that for the Copenhagen School the intersubjective construction of security is divided in the area where it can and cannot happen. Within the securitization framework this division is presented in a way that the construction of security has been reduced to the “successful production of the ‘label security’”,²¹ but the label itself (the meaning of security) is excluded from the construction.²² In addition, Jef Huysmans in the article “Security! What Do You Mean?: From Concept to Thick Signifier” argues that the broadening and deepening of the security agenda has led to adding adjec-

¹⁷ Ibid., 55.

¹⁸ Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde, *Security*, 24-25.

¹⁹ Ibid., 25.

²⁰ Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde, *Security*, 27.

²¹ Felix Ciuta, “Security and the problem of context,” 309.

²² Ibid., 306-309.

tives to the noun 'security', but has failed to deal with the meaning of the noun itself.²³ With that being said, it is possible to support Ciuta's argument that the Copenhagen efforts to move security from the traditional interpretations of the concept have led to the reinforcement of the claim that "security always means survival in the face of existential threat".²⁴

Although Ciuta, while critically evaluating the securitization theory, makes an argument that the concept of security should be conceptualized without making a reference to the notion of survival, it is hard to think of a way in which one would define security outside the implication that it has for the survival. Furthermore, the very link between security and survival, made within the securitization framework, could be seen as a contribution to the applicability of the framework to a wide range of cases. With that being said, this article argues that, by retaining the notion of survival within their theoretical framework, the Copenhagen scholars have addressed the underlining question: why one does security in the first place? The answer to this question, in a more or less open manner, is pointed out in the 1998 Copenhagen book: "the fear that other party will not let us survive as a subject is the fundamental motivation"²⁵ for the security (speech) act. Security may be an act of practice but the reason behind doing (speaking) security is perseverance of the threatened object. In fact, by emphasising survival as the motivating force behind the security speech act, through which an issue is discursively constructed as an existential threat, the analytical applicability of the securitization theory is strengthened even further. Considering that the motivation behind doing (speaking) security can be directly linked to the survival of the threatened (referent) object, it could be argued that this motivation stays the same regardless of socio-political context within which securitization takes place. Although the nature of the referent object may vary depending on the political settings or security sectors, the concern about its survival that motivates the security speech act, and thus the securitization process itself, can be seen as a constant.

Drawing on the arguments presented in the paragraph above, this article claims that the securitization framework is not dependent on the context within which the securitization process may take place. Yet, the same cannot be stated for the nature of the referent (threatened) object. As pointed out by the Copenhagen scholars the "securitizing actor can attempt to construct anything as a referent object";²⁶ although, depending on the context, some referent objects are more likely to be successfully securitized than others. Therefore,

²³ Jef Huysmans, "Security! What Do You Mean? : From Concept to Thick Signifier," *European Journal of International Relations* 4-2 (1998): 227.

²⁴ Felix Ciuta, "Security and the problem of context," 397.

²⁵ Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde, *Security*, 26.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 36.

when applying the securitization theoretical framework for the analysis of a specific empirical case, and in order to be able to present valuable answers to the questions: “who can ‘do’ or ‘speak’ security successfully, on what issues, under what conditions, and with what effect?”,²⁷ security analysts should look more thoroughly into the socio-political context within which securitization takes place. Juha Vuori’s article “Illocutionary Logic and Strands of Securitization: Applying the Theory of Securitization to the Study of Non-Democratic Political Orders” is a good reference point on this issue.

In order to provide support for the argument that the process of discursively constructing an issue as security threat has the same dynamics in democratic and non-democratic settings, this article analyses the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis as an empirical case study. In the next section, the article will examine how the measures taken by the United States, the Bay of Pigs invasion and the embargo posed against Cuba, were interpreted by Cuban political establishment as existential security threats for their survival. Consequently, the delivered security discourse served as a means of justification to the Cuban public for the implementation of the emergency measures through the acquirement of the Soviet nuclear missiles.

The Cuban Missile Crisis: Was it Just a Superpowers Play?

The Cuban Missile Crisis, or the Caribbean Crisis, or the October Crisis, depending on the interpretation of involved actors,²⁸ was one of the most dangerous confrontations in the Cold War era. According to historian Arthur Schlesinger, the crisis was not only the most dangerous confrontation of the Cold War, it was also “the most dangerous moment in human history”.²⁹ The two Cold War superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, were deciding about the possibility of the Third (nuclear) World War. The crisis began on the ‘Black Saturday’, October 16, 1962, when the United States’ government was presented with photographic evidence, discovered by U-2 spy plane, of the medium-range ballistic missiles site in Cuba.³⁰ This discovery was followed by the United States’ navy “blockade against all ships that were carrying ‘offensive military’ cargoes to Cuba”,³¹ transportation of the Soviet

²⁷ Ibid., 27.

²⁸ In the United States the crisis is known as the Cuban missile crisis, in the Soviet Union as The Caribbean crises, and in Cuba as the October crises.

²⁹ Michael Dobbs, *One Minute to Midnight: Kennedy, Khrushchev, and Castro on the Brink of Nuclear War* (New York: Random House, Inc., 2008), xiii.

³⁰ Aleksandr Fursenko, and Timothy Naftali, *Khrushchev’s Cold War* (New York, W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2006), 465.

³¹ Ibid., 475.

nuclear warheads closer to the missile sites, shooting down of the United States U-2 spy plane and firing at the United States aircrafts that were flying-low over Cuba, the submarine incident, and the finalization of the plan for all-out invasion of Cuba. Considering the gravity of the situation Michael Dobbs is right to claim that any of these incidents could have resulted in a nuclear confrontation.³² Yet, after the thirteen days of ‘standing on the brink of nuclear war’ the United States and Soviet Union’s governments reached a settlement. The Soviet nuclear missiles were removed from Cuba and, in return, the United States agreed to withdraw its nuclear missiles from Turkey and to pledge that the sovereignty of Cuba would not be threatened by a possible invasion.³³

This unprecedented Cold War confrontation soon became the subject of a wide range of scholarly work. The scholars, especially those interested in international relations, analysed the Cuban missile case as an ideal case of the Cold War politics. As Jutta Weldes and Mark Laffey in their article “Decolonizing the Cuban Missile Crisis” point out, the Cuban missile crisis was viewed in academia as a perfect case for studying decision-making process, nuclear proliferation, politics of deterrence and crisis management. In addition to this, Laffey and Weldes rightfully note that – although a wide range of scholarly work has been done on this topic – the crisis has been presented only from the perspective of the two Cold War superpowers. The role of the third party, the Cuban government, has been mostly neglected: “[s]imply put, Cuba didn’t matter in the Cuban missile crisis.”³⁴

Considering that there would be no Cuban missile crisis without the involvement of the Cuban government, this article will try to offer a third perspective on the 1962 confrontation. The role of the Cuban government will be analysed through the theoretical framework of Copenhagen’s securitization theory. The purpose of this analysis is to examine whether the theory of securitization can be applied to studying discursively constructed security processes in a non-liberal socio-political context. For that purpose special attention will be given to the motivation behind Cuban government’s actions that led to the extraordinary security measures such as the acquirement of the nuclear weapons. In addition, with the reference to Vuori’s classification of securitization processes in a non-democratic political context, this article will try to determine what kind of securitization may have happened in Cuba during the October crisis. Although, due to the lack of empirical data available, the case of Cuba may not be ideal for theory testing, this very obstacle is a

³² Dobbs, *One Minute to Midnight*, xiv.

³³ Johan Swift, “The Cuban Missile Crises,” *History Review* (2007): 10-11.

³⁴ Mark Laffey and Jutta Weldes, “Decolonizing the Cuban Missile Crisis,” *International Study Quarterly* 52 (2008): 555.

valuable challenge for applying the securitization theory in political settings that are known for not being very transparent.

The key for understanding the Cuban perspective on the October crisis is the position and the role of the revolutionary regime established in Cuba after overthrowing the dictator Fulgencio Batista in 1959. The new political establishment that emerged from the 26th of July revolutionary movement led by Fidel Castro enjoyed the support of the United States. In return, only four months after the revolution, Fidel Castro visited the United States as a guest of the American Society of Newspaper Editors. During the visit Castro emphasized that the Cuban revolution was not a communist revolution, and that the new government did not pose a communist threat to the United States.³⁵

However, the relations between Cuba and the United States moved in different direction during the 1960s. The Cuban revolutionary government was facing severe internal economic challenges combined with a high rate of poverty. Thus, in order to maintain its power position, the government enforced the nationalization of all foreign-owned private assets.³⁶ As a response to this measure the United States⁷ imposed economic, commercial and financial embargo towards Cuba. The quotas on the sugar imported from Cuba to the United States were put in place. By doing so the United States deprived the Cuban government from the main source of external income,³⁷ which aggravated the power position of the political establishment even more. As Fursenko and Naftali in their analysis note, Cuba has not been able to meet its domestic needs even before the US embargo was placed, and this measure contributed even more to the deterioration of its economic situation.³⁸ Furthermore, the United States⁷ involvement in Cuba did not end with economic measures. The economic measures for the overthrow of Cuban government were also supported by military means. The 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion, which was planned during Eisenhower's and carried out during Kennedy's administration, is a good example of this strategy.³⁹

Yet the Cuban revolutionary regime managed to survive these external challenges, and, furthermore, it managed to gain stronger domestic support and a powerful ally. The public support for the Castro's regime was there, but the public discontent with the economic situation in the country did

³⁵ Aleksandr Fursenko, and Timothy Naftali, *One Hell of a Gamble: Khrushchev, Castro, Kennedy and the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1958-1964* (London: Pimlico, 1999), 5-6.

³⁶ Swift, "The Cuban Missile Crises," 6.

³⁷ Fursenko, and Naftali, *One Hell of a Gamble*, 162.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Swift, "The Cuban Missile Crises," 7.

not vanish. Dissatisfying economic situation and unpopular social measures, which were result of bad economic policy, reduced the public support for the ruling political elite. The situation aggravated even more in December 1961 when Castro publicly declared himself to be a communist “who intended to lead Cuba through a socialist revolution”.⁴⁰ This statement caused division within the Cuban political establishment and society. Not all supporters of the revolutionary government were in favour of the new path of communism. As Khrushchev pointed out Castro’s statement had “the immediate effect of widening the gap between himself and the people who were against Socialism, and it narrowed the circle of those he could count on for support”.⁴¹ Consequently, legitimacy of Castro’s government, which was founded on the 1956 post-imperial national revolutionary heritage, was facing serious challenges. This time, legitimacy and the power position of the regime were called into question by internal challenges. As a reply, the Cuban government resorted to the discourse about its days of revolution and the potential security threat coming from the imperialist United States. In one of his 1961 radio interviews about the reforms in Cuba, the Prime Minister Castro, while discussing the security of the country, clearly described the United States as a potential source of sabotages and funds for counterrevolutionary, terrorist organizations.⁴² With the reference to these interviews, it could be argued that Cuban political establishment used the potential threat from the United States as a political tool for giving legitimacy to the regime and the changes that it was enforcing.

The existence of the potential imperial threat from the United States was not just used as an instrument for the consolidation of the revolutionary, now communist, regime in Cuba. Cuban political establishment used the possibility of the new United States invasion in order to enhance its newly formed alliance with the Soviet Union. Under the pretext of an existential threat, the Cuban government managed to facilitate the sales of arms from the Warsaw Pact countries and to receive a ten-year credit arrangement.⁴³ As Fursenko and Naftali point out, “a KGB report on Cuban perception of the American threat arrived on April 20, and a day later the Kremlin decreed the necessity ‘to render urgent assistance to the Cuban government’”.⁴⁴ However, the Soviet assistance did not end just with military and economic arrangements. In order to protect the Cuban revolution and prevent possible invasion, in May

⁴⁰ Fursenko, and Naftali, *One Hell of a Gamble*, 161.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Fidel Castro, “On Currency Reform,” Havana, Revolution, August 9, 1961, <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1961/19610809.html> (Accessed: 24. 05. 2011)

⁴³ Fursenko, and Naftali, *One Hell of a Gamble*, 46.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

1962 the delegation of the Soviet Union arrived to Cuba with an unprecedented offer. The Cuban government was presented with the new plan of defence that relied on the placement of the Soviet medium-range ballistic missiles on Cuban soil. Unexpectedly, the Cubans accepted this extraordinary offer within two days.⁴⁵

Drawing on the above-presented chain of events, it is possible to argue that the securitization process in Cuba did in fact take place. Starting from 1961, with the economic crisis and the Bay of Pigs invasion, the presence of the imperial threat from the United States has become a part of Cuban everyday politics. According to the speeches delivered by the Cuban political establishment, the danger coming from the United States' sabotages was not affecting just the security of the country, the referent object of securitization, but also the country's economy, agriculture, currency reform and social policies.⁴⁶ The securitizing actor, in this case the Cuban political regime, used its position of authority to create the discourse of the existential threat as a political tool for the consolidation (legitimization) of the regime itself. Even more, this "fear that other party will not let us survive"⁴⁷ led the Cuban government to go as far as accepting Soviet medium-range ballistic missiles, even though the consequences of that extraordinary measure could have been devastating not just for the regime but also for the Cuban population.

In order to provide additional evidence for the argument that securitization process could have culminated with the 1962 October crisis, the article will rely on Vuori's classification of securitization processes in the non-democratic political context. Drawing on the role of audience as the final legitimator, even in non-democratic political context, Vuori develops a distinction between four types of securitization: securitization for raising an issue on the security agenda, securitization for deterrence, securitization for legitimating past acts, and securitization for the control.⁴⁸ Based on this classification, and considering the chain of the 1962 events in Cuba and the role of the audience (viewed as general public), the security dynamics that led to the placement of the Soviet medium-range ballistic missiles on the Cuban soil could be described as the securitization for legitimating past event.

As Fursenko and Naftali note, the Cuban government kept the new type of the Soviet assistance in secret from the Cuban public. Only after accepting the Soviet medium-range ballistic missiles the Cuban political leadership planned to launch a campaign in order to gain public support for this measure.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Fursenko, and Naftali, *One Hell of a Gamble*, 178-183.

⁴⁶ Castro, "On Currency Reform".

⁴⁷ Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde, *Security*, 26.

⁴⁸ Vuori, "Illocutionary Logic and Strands of Securitization," 75-75.

⁴⁹ Fursenko, and Naftali, *One Hell of a Gamble*, 220.

Yet, with the publication of the photographs from missile sites and the United States navy blockade that followed, the existence of the Soviet missiles had to be justified to the Cuban public without hesitations. Thus, on the October 24, 1962 Castro's official interview on the October crisis was broadcasted on all television and radio stations in Cuba. In the interview Castro made a claim that the established navy blockade of the Cuban island was just another step in the United States' imperialistic politics towards the revolutionary Cuba. As he emphasized, "all these measures do not surprise us. Measures of this type and others which we have had to endure are thing which were logically to be expected from a type of government which is as reactionary and as lacking in respect of other peoples and other nations as is the U.S. Government."⁵⁰ In addition to this Castro warned that the United States government would turn to even more radical measures in order to deal with the Cuban revolution. While describing the United States actions against Cuba, he concluded that "it has been the story of an uninterrupted chain of failure leading the imperialists, who have not resigned themselves, who will not resign themselves, despite the fact that they have no choice but to resign themselves – a series of more adventurous, more aggressive, and more dangerous steps for the sole purpose of destroying the Cuban revolution."⁵¹ Therefore, in order to deal with this kind of threat and protect the revolutionary heritage, the Cuban government had no other way but to relay on the support of the Soviet Union. In other words, Castro legitimized the acquirement of the ballistic missiles through the hostile intentions of the United States. He argued, "if the U.S. Government did not harbour any aggressive intentions toward our country it would not be interested in the quantity, quality, or type of our weapons."⁵²

Drawing on the intentions and actions of the Cuban political establishment, and with the reference to Vuori's classification of the securitization processes, it is possible to claim that the decision of the Cuban government to accept Soviet medium-range ballistic missiles had to be at some point backed up by the Cuban public. Yet, the decision when the public support is going to be asked for was forced by the events in October 1962. Faced with the charges from the United States government for possessing dangerous 'offensive weapon', the Cuban political establishment had to explain the acquirement of the Soviet missiles. The Cuban public had to be convinced that the regime's decision to place ballistic missiles on Cuban soil was a necessary measure against the threats that were coming from the United States. That being said, and considering that the Cuban revolutionary regime is still in

⁵⁰ Fidel Castro, "23 October Interview," Havana, October 24, 1962, <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1962/19621024.html> (Accessed: 24. 05. 2011)

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

power, it is possible to argue that the security speech act delivered by the Cuban government for the purpose of legitimizing past actions (acquisition of the ballistic missiles) led to a successful securitization.

Conclusion

In order to make a genuine contribution to the security studies scholarship the scholars within the Copenhagen Conflict and Peace Institute, later on known as the Copenhagen School, have developed the concept of sectoral security and the securitization theory. These new approaches to the concept of security were presented as universal tools for the analysis of the contemporary security processes. Yet, not all scholars agreed upon the universal value of the Copenhagen contributions. The critics have argued that the Copenhagen theoretical developments were internally inconsistent, conceptualized on the Western, European historical experience and thus applicable only within the European, liberal settings. As Clair Wilkinson claims, the Copenhagen theory of securitization could not be viewed as a general analytical tool considering the undermined role of the socio-political context in its theoretical framework.⁵³ The criticism did not pass without a reply. The scholars argued that the fact that Copenhagen's concepts have been developed from the European experience was not good enough of a reason to characterize them as particularly European.⁵⁴

Following this argument, this article aimed to support the scholars who argue that the applicability of the securitization theory is not context-dependent. As pointed throughout the article, by dealing with the issues of motivation behind the security (speech) act the assumption about the applicability of the securitization theory in any political context could be strengthened even more. Considering that the motivation behind doing (speaking) security can be related to the survival of the threatened (referent) object, it could be argued that this motivation is the same regardless of socio-political settings. Consequently, the need to survive in the face of existential threat is what moves an issue from normal to extraordinary politics and thus leads to the process of securitization.

In order to test these theoretical assertions, the case of the Cuban missile crisis was analysed. The purpose was to determine if securitization in Cuba during the events in October 1962 took place. During the analysis, the emphasis was put on the role of the Cuban political establishment, which in order to secure its survival from the imperial threats resorted to extraordinary means. The fear from the United States' invasion led the Cuban government to

⁵³ Wilkinson, "The Copenhagen School in Tour in Kyrgyzstan," 22.

⁵⁴ Huysmans, "Revisiting Copenhagen," 483.

accept the placement of Soviet ballistic missiles on Cuban soil. Later on, these measures were revealed to the Cuban public through the security discourse that aimed to uphold the support and legitimacy in the face of possible invasion. With that being said, and with the reference to Vuori's classification of the securitization processes in a non-democratic political context, this article concludes that the securitization process took place in Cuba during the October missile crisis. In other words, Cuba did matter in the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Copenhagen's securitization theory, as the analytical tool for grasping the dynamic of security processes, has the same applicability in any socio-political context.

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Резиме

Маја Ружић

Процес секуритизације у нелибералном политичком контексту: Да ли је Куба играла важну улогу у Кубанској ракетној кризи?**Кључне речи:** *Копенхагенска школа, секуритизација, недемократски политички контекст, Кубанска ракетна криза*

Чланак заступа становиште по коме је копенхагенска теорија секуритизације, као аналитичко средство за проучавање динамике безбедносних процеса, једнако примењива у било ком социо-политичком контексту. У циљу подршке наведеном становишту, чланак се бави питањем мотивације која условљава појаву безбедносних процеса, а самим тим и безбедности као језичког акта који се налази у центру теорије секуритизације. Као студију случаја за наведену теорију, чланак анализира улогу кубанске владе у догађајима из 1962. године, познатим као Кубанска ракетна криза. Резултати анализе показују да уколико пођемо од претпоставке да је опстанак основни мотив иза безбедности као језичког акта, на копенхагеншку теорију секуритизације не можемо гледати као на теорију чија је применљивост условљена контекстом.