Securitising chant vs contesting chant*: the 2016 U.S. presidential election*

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Biography

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Abstract

Ido Oren and Ty Solomon (2015) reconceptualised the securitisation process, claiming that issues become securitised through repetitive, ambiguous phrases. In this process, however, they limit the possibility of contestation. I build on their work and introduce the concept of the "contesting chant". The contesting chant draws on the same illocutionary force that the securitising chant does. Thus, it holds the potential to widen the space for contestation within Oren and Solomon's framework. Using discourse analysis, I argue that Hillary Clinton employed a contesting chant to counter Donald J. Trump's securitising chant during the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

Keywords: Securitisation theory; Contestation; Contesting chant; Donald J. Trump; Hillary Clinton; 2016 U.S. presidential election

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Introduction

This article seeks to build on the scaffolding provided by Ido Oren and Ty Solomon (2015) and introduce the "contesting chant". Oren and Solomon argue that a ritualised, securitising chant can be created from the continuous spouting of ambiguous phrases (2015, p. 315). Seeking to build on the work of the Copenhagen School (CS) (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde, 1998), Oren and Solomon (2015) argue that the repetition of these phrases grants the securitising chant the power of the illocutionary speech act due to its condensed historicity (p. 322). Their work highlights how catchy slogans and chants can have long-lasting effects on society. Problems arise with this framework, however, as the possibility of contestation is severely limited (Oren and Solomon, 2015, p. 336). Oren and Solomon do not leave adequate space for an informed, empowered audience and I consider this to be a gap in the literature. This observation led me to the question: how can empowered audience members contest a securitising chant? It is my argument that authoritative speakers can contest the message behind a securitising chant if this is done without invoking the words of the latter. Therefore, I seek to build on Oren and

Solomon's (2015) work and introduce the concept of the "contesting chant". The contesting chant draws on the same illocutionary force that the securitising chant does. Moreover, a contesting chant circumvents the danger of repeating the securitising chant; thus, it holds the potential to widen the space for contestation within Oren and Solomon's framework. I argue that Hillary Clinton used a contesting chant to counter Donald J. Trump's securitising move during the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

Election cycles create space for contestation, division of audiences and oppositional competition. Thus, elections often help to highlight the many issues a country is facing, and encourage frequent debates among the candidates, the media and audiences. Towards the end of the 2016 U.S. presidential election cycle, the American people had to choose between two candidates, Donald J. Trump (Republican Party) and Hillary Clinton (Democratic Party). When Trump announced his campaign, he stated that there was a crisis at the southern border, due to illegal migrants and drugs coming into the country. In order to solve these problems, Trump promised that he would build a wall to keep these dangerous elements out (Neate, 2015). This was a clear securitising move, which was repeated throughout Trump's campaign. Therefore, the securitising chant that I have chosen is "build that wall", and Trump is assigned the role of securitising agent. Trump's opponent in the election was Hillary Clinton, who has vast experience in foreign policy and is considered an authoritative speaker. I also view and assign Clinton the role of an empowered audience member, however, capable of contesting Trump's securitising moves. It might seem odd to characterise Clinton as an audience member, but as Rita Floyd argues, the audience 'is simply the addressee of the speech act' (Floyd, 2016, p. 688). Furthermore, I view Clinton as an empowered audience member because as Juha Antero Vuori argues, contestation is reserved for political actors with authority on security dealings (Vuori, 2014, p. 30). I argue that Clinton's campaign slogan "stronger together" (Clinton and Kaine, 2016) contests the securitising chant "build that wall". "Stronger together" symbolises unity as opposed to the divisive rhetoric that laid the foundation for "build that wall". Clinton continuously repeated how well America would do if it stuck "together". Moreover, it became noticeable as the election progressed that "stronger together" was simplified down to "together" in Clinton's speeches and, thus, should be taken verbatim. In my analysis, I found that while Clinton announced her slogan prior to Trump, she ultimately used this message to contest Trump's securitising language. I argue that this is because Trump's message, whether inadvertently or not, shifted the meaning of Clinton's slogan. It is against this background that the two chants in this article, "build that wall" and "together", were chosen.

Case selection and methodology

In order to illustrate the contesting chant, I conducted a discourse analysis of nine events. I examined three Trump rallies, three Clinton rallies, and the three televised presidential debates. The use of discourse analysis allowed me to highlight how a "chant" can gain the contextual and affective meaning needed for it to circulate. Jennifer Milliken (1999) argues

that discourse constructs social realities (p. 229). Moreover, discourse produces social roles and hierarchies in society, which define who is '*authorized to speak and to act*' (p. 229, italics in original). Therefore, discourse also creates the audience (Milliken, 1999, p. 229). Iver B. Neumann argues that 'discourse analysts examine utterances […] because it conveys meaning in a particular context' (2009, p. 63). For example, I found that Trump often spoke of the wall as a solution to issues regarding illegal immigration, drug smuggling and job theft. Discourse analysis allows me to see how many times the chants were uttered and in what context. A successful chant is dependent on its accumulating affective value. Therefore, the speaker must ensure that they draw clear connections between perceived issues and their chant. Considering this, I had to analyse the context in which the two chants were spoken. I searched for any utterance of the word "together" made by Clinton and any utterance of the word "wall" made by Trump. I found that Clinton made thirty-five references to the word "together" across her six events, while Trump made twenty-seven references to the word "wall".

While debates can be filled with both securitising moves and contestations, as highlighted by Faye Donnelly and William Vlcek (2021), I have opted to give the debates less space in this article. Instead, the focus of my analysis centres on the candidates' rallies because this is where they had a chance to create their chants, mostly uninterrupted. As Eduardo Gonzalez argues, 'campaign rallies provide political elites with access to platforms that allow them to make assumptions, attack opponents, and make promises to voters in ways that are less restrained than in televised presidential debates' (2019, pp. 46–47). This means, for example, that, during his rallies, Trump could repeatedly state the need for a border wall to his audience, without having an opponent interrupt and dispute the need for such a wall. I used C-SPAN to find the rallies, as I wanted an unbiased representation of the messages contained in the speeches (C-SPAN, 2019). I chose the rallies based on three criteria. First, the reviewed rallies took place in the time period between late July and early November 2016. I chose this timeframe because I wanted to analyse Clinton's contestation of Trump's chant after both candidates had become the official presidential nominees for their respective parties. Second, I wanted the respective three rallies to have taken place, as far as that was possible, on the same date. This was important because it allowed both candidates to speak on new developments in the election cycle if they felt it was important. Third, I wanted the rallies to take place in close geographical proximity. This criterion was chosen so that I could analyse how the candidates addressed crowds living in the same state, and how they might potentially have prioritised certain issues over others. This third criterion, however, was deprioritised slightly when there were no rallies in close proximity around the same dates. I watched the rallies in full and transcribed them myself. Therefore, the time stamp of the citations is in reference to the approximate time in the video from which the quote is obtained. In my analysis of the debates, I made a controlled search for the terms "together" and "wall" in the debate transcripts that I downloaded from *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*.[1] I found that the two chants were not as prevalent in the debates as they had

been during the rallies, but the context in which they appeared remained the same. Thus, I decided to grant the debates some limited space towards the end of each empirical section. After reviewing these sources, I reached the conclusion that Clinton had used a chant to contest Trump's securitising chant.

For the remainder of this article, I will first introduce the literature on securitisation from the CS and second-generation scholars. This section will also highlight the gap in the literature. This gap will be explored further in section two, where I present Oren and Solomon's work on the securitising chant and question the limitations of contestation. In section three, I focus on Trump's securitising chant "build that wall". Thus, I set the stage for section four, where I introduce Clinton's contestation and the concept of the "contesting chant". In the conclusion, I will summarise the article and explain why it matters, as well as propose some lines for further research.

Securitisation theory: context, audience and contestation

Securitisation was introduced by the CS (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde, 1998) with the intention of widening the conceptualisation of security from the traditional view of security studies. The CS aimed to explain how certain issues are lifted out of the realm of regular politics and become securitised. The securitising actor initiates the securitisation process through a securitising move, with the aim of convincing the audience that an issue is an existential threat to a referent object (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde, 1998, p. 33). If the audience accepts the issue as such, the securitising actor can deal with the issue via extraordinary measures. Thus, audience acceptance is key for successful securitisation (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde, 1998, p. 25). The CS conceptualise a securitising move as a speech act, where 'the utterance *itself* is the act' (Wæver, 1995, p. 55, italics in original; Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde, 1998, p. 26). So 'by saying the words, something is done' (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde, 1998, p. 26). The CS's framework has pushed the conceptualisation of security and has sparked numerous debates. In these debates, second-generation scholars have tried to reconcile some of the perceived gaps in the original framework dealing with the role of the audience (Balzacq, 2005; Côté, 2016) and contestation within the securitisation process (Vuori, 2014, 2018; Stritzel and Chang, 2015).

Context and audience

Balzacq claims that any successful securitising is context-dependent, audience-centred and power-laden (2005, p. 179). He also states that, in order to convince an audience, the securitising actor must 'tune his/her language to the audience's experience' (Balzacq, 2005, p. 184). This can be tricky, as Côté states that 'audiences are not the same across different instances of securitization, nor are they necessarily defined by a universal task or trait (2016, p. 547). Moreover, Côté notes that audiences in the securitisation literature have included, among others, the public, other branches of government, donors and technical experts (Côté, 2016, p. 546). Others have highlighted that there can be multiple audiences available at the

same time within any given securitisation process (Balzacq, 2005; Stritzel, 2007; Roe, 2008; Sperling and Webber, 2016). For example, Roe argues that the securitisation process can be split into two stages: identification and mobilisation. He states that the public can help identify security threats, but that the government is left to decide if extraordinary measures are needed (Roe, 2008, p. 620). The audience, thus, may influence a securitisation process and determine its success. Moreover, the literature highlights that an audience can also contest these processes.

Securitisation and contestation

The literature on audience contestations of securitisation processes has touched on such things as collective contestation (Blanc, 2014; Marchand, 2017), contestation through self-immolation (Topgyal, 2016), contestation through humour (Piazza, 2014), and how contestation can even originate in security personnel (Marx, 2014). Vuori argues that contestation is 'reserved for political actors which potentially have the capacity to affect securitisation processes as "top dogs" or actors with sufficient social capital or a position of power in matters of security' (2014, p. 30). He differentiates between contestation and resistance, stating that resistance is done by the '"underdogs" or positions which are usually subjected to security rather than wield it' (2014, p. 30). By these definitions, Vuori makes it clear that the audience and political elites can resist and contest securitising moves.

Stritzel and Chang conclude that the failure of the U.S. to include the Afghan people in their target audience – along with their audience in the U.S. – gave the Taliban the room they needed to counter-securitise the U.S. as a foreign invader (2015, p. 549). This led them to argue that counter-securitisation is oftentimes connected to resistance, stating that they see 'counter-securitization as the linguistically regulated process of resistance against crucial elements of the securitization process' (Stritzel and Chang, 2015, pp. 551–552). Vuori agrees that 'counter-securitization moves can be a form of resistance too, which questions the power of the securitization on the other side of the political struggle' (2014, p. 30). Topgyal, however, argues that more attention needs to be given to "the other" as part of the audience (2016, p. 167) and, specifically, how "the other" reacts when they become perceived as a threat. Further, Topgyal argues the importance of 'recogniz[ing] that securitizing moves (even if unsuccessful) have unpredictable inter-unit consequences inasmuch as human collectives can react to their representation as threats' (2016, p. 182). These points are important because they help explain how some securitising moves can cause division in society at large. Additionally, from these inputs, we can deduce the breadth of the ongoing debate about what contestation entails.[2]

While debates regarding contestation have flourished in the securitisation literature there is still a gap that needs to be filled. Few have written on contestation and securitising chants. Considering this, I will draw on the work of Oren and Solomon (2015) to illustrate and introduce *contesting chants* in order to explain how contestation can take place in a

securitisation process consisting of chanting. In attempting this, I must first outline the theory on securitising chants.

Bridging the gap: contestation and chants

Oren and Solomon aim to reconceptualise the securitising act. The authors conceptualise the speech of securitising actors as consisting not in 'an *argument* about the priority and urgency of an existential threat' so much as in the repetitive spouting of ambiguous phrases, such as 'weapons of mass destruction [WMD]' (2015, p. 315, italics in original). This achieves two key outcomes. First, it removes the audience from their passive position. Second, it allows for the power of speech to be front and centre through its illocutionary force. Oren and Solomon, while focusing on the illocutionary force of the speech act, have still conceptualised securitisation as a process. They do so by relying on the repetition of the chant, or in their own words 'the audience echoing the phrase, joining in a chorus-like fashion with the securitizing actor to produce a repetitive, ritualized chant' (Oren and Solomon, 2015, p. 315). Moreover, Oren and Solomon argue that securitisation is built on a ritual process 'involving the simultaneous interweaving of linguistic repetitions with speakers' and audiences' material performance' (2015, p. 316). It is this ritualised collective chanting, between speaker and audience, that ultimately securitises issues. This makes the audience active and essential for any issue to be securitised, through their action.

The process of ritualised, securitising chanting brings forth the question of how much facts and details matter within the securitisation process. This is not a new question in the securitisation literature. For example, Balzacq (2005) argues that context must be considered in the securitisation process. Moreover, he states that securitising moves can be made through manipulation (Balzacq, 2005, p. 172). I believe that this latter point relies on two interlinking assumptions regarding the audience: first, that the audience(s) is not aware of the facts regarding the overall context concerning the perceived threat; second, that the audience(s) blindly accepts whatever the authoritative speaker states. I believe that these assumptions are further highlighted in a securitisation process consisting of chanting. Oren and Solomon (2015) see 'the speech of securitizing actors as consisting not in "an *argument*"' (p. 315, italics in original), but in audience participation in the repetition of phrases. This means that issues can be securitised without the audience knowing what effects the securitisation may yield. As Andrew A.G. Ross writes, 'catchy slogans, casual body language, and ambiguous forms of religious discourse enabled the Bush Administration to capture popular energies without directly appealing to people's capacities for political judgement' (2006, p. 213). Therefore, the repetition of the chant is important.

Tanja Aalberts and colleagues argue that 'repetitious invocations of words or rhythmic uses of the body in ritual […] operate performatively. Rituals and images generate pathways to knowing that exceed familiar modes of action by bringing together seeing, acting, and being affected' (2020, p. 243). Moreover, they argue that rituals 'are practices energising

participants and attaching them to each other' (Aalberts et al., 2020, p. 241). Similarly, Catherine Charrett argues that rituals can maintain 'social order and cohesion through their repetition' (2018, p. 158). Moreover, rituals connect and conform the individual to the community and 'impose a *compulsion to repeat*' (Charrett, 2018, p. 158, italics in original). This, Charrett argues, limits considerations of other forms of political options (2018, p. 158). Thus, through repetitive ritualised chanting, an audience's knowledge of contextual factors matters little. What matters for a successful securitisation is what the audience believes. Oren and Solomon contend that audience acceptance needs to be conceptualised 'in terms of *belief*: "an acceptance that something exists or is true, *especially one without proof*" or "trust, *faith*, or confidence in someone or something"' (2015, p. 321, italics in original). This belief stems from the daily repetition of these phrases through ritualised chanting, or as Oren and Solomon (2015) explain, 'I practice, thus I believe' (2015, p. 322). This means that a successful securitisation process is contingent upon catchy slogans or phrases that trap the attention of the audience. It is the daily repetition of these phrases, by both securitising actors and the audience, that leads to the point where 'the phrase becomes itself the threat' (Oren and Solomon, 2015, p. 324). This allows securitising actors to create the potential for securitisation, *regardless* of actual external or internal contextual factors. As a result, securitising actors can, through manipulation, create *their own* facts and threats through ambiguous phrases or catchy slogans.

This is something that other scholars have noted as well. Lin Alexandra Mortensgaard writes, concerning the European refugee crisis, that the term "flow" 'has become a culturally resonant term, needing no further explanation or justification' (2018, p. 20). Fred Vultee (2010) argues that the term "war on terror" speaks to the ambiguity of what that war entails and where it is fought. He writes that 'the more diffuse and less specific the war is, the more it becomes a "global" war, and [that] the more likely it is to reach the United States, the more thoroughly it is securitized' (Vultee, 2010, p. 38). Ultimately, what Oren and Solomon argue is that 'the more frequently a securitizing phrase (with ultimately contestable meaning) is repeated – the more condensed its "historicity" becomes – the more likely is the phrase to acquire a processual illocutionary force and cohere into a securitized threat' (2015, p. 322). This, I believe, leaves room for contestation.

A successful securitisation process, through chanting, is dependent on audience belief. Chanting allows for threats to be constructed regardless of actual contextual factors. This is because, as Claudia Aradau writes, 'the collective imagination of crowds works through emotional contagion and suggestibility, thus rendering the crowd almost blind to truth' (2015, p. 160). Eric van Rythoven argues that we are taught to fear (2015, p. 467) and, in line with the CS, that the top authority for threat construction is the political elite, for example, a president or prime minister (p. 461). This is consistent with securitising chants. Rather than debating the existence of a threat, however, the securitising actor must generate participation in the chant. In particular, they must generate a belief in the threat represented by the chant.

This is achieved by inspiring emotions in the audience, such as hate or fear. For example, Oren and Solomon state that 'the ritualistic choral chanting of this phrase [WMD] by the administration, the media, and the public constructed, we argue, a heightened generalized sense of danger' (2015, p. 316). This can be understood through collective affect and Sara Ahmed's (2014) concept of economies of affect.

Ross argues that 'circulations of affect, prefigure, for example public enthusiasm for nationalist mobilization or military intervention' (2006, p. 199). This means that military intervention and nationalist mobilisation are generally rooted in an emotional sentiment. Solomon further argues that 'mobilizations of affect are key to understanding the constitution and spread of the Arab uprisings' (2018, p. 935). This builds on Ahmed's work wherein the author argues that 'emotions work as a form of capital: affect does not reside positively in the sign or commodity but is produced as an effect of its circulation' (2014, p. 45), or, as Ben Anderson contends, these 'atmospheres [of, for example, fear and danger] radiate from an individual to another' (2009, p. 80). Further, while generated by bodies, these atmospheres are never 'reducible to them' (Anderson, 2009, p. 80). In other words, the more a "sign" circulates, the more affect it will carry and create. For example, as more ambiguous phrases such as "flow" (Mortensgaard, 2018), "WMD" (Oren and Solomon, 2015) or "war on terror" (Vultee, 2010) circulate more widely, the more affective they become. Thus, they accumulate emotion and meaning, until the point where the chant embodies the threat itself (Oren and Solomon, 2015, p. 324). This, Solomon argues, is key because 'it is out of affective backgrounds that subjects often coalesce and identifiable emotions become distilled and crystallized' (2018, p. 940). Since feelings are subjective (Ross, 2006, p. 199), they must also be intersubjective (Solomon, 2018, p. 947). Thus, through the circulation of chants, groupings can be formed as 'the impossibility of reducing hate to a particular body allows the hate to circulate in an economic sense, working to differentiate some others from other others' (Ahmed, 2014, p. 47). While these emotions 'are impersonal in that they belong to collective situations [they can] yet feel intensely personal' (Anderson, 2009, p. 80). This, Ahmed argues, creates "us" vs "them" paradigms that never cease to end (2014, p. 47). Ultimately, a securitising actor spouts ambiguous phrases referencing a security threat, which sticks and attaches itself to subjects and objects. The more these securitised chants spread – through daily repetition by the audience and the securitising actor – the more they attract emotions such as fear or hate, and 'the more affective they become' (Ahmed, 2014, p. 45). Therefore, through audience participation, the chant gains emotional meanings and ultimately becomes the security threat it references, justifying action to deal with the threat in the process.

Oren and Solomon (2015) argue that it is hard to contest a securitising chant once it has gained traction. They state that 'by joining the chorus chanting "WMD", the opponents of the war helped consolidate a generalized atmosphere of danger, thus contributing to the securitisation of Iraq, even as on the intellectual level, they were not persuaded by the Bush administration's case for war' (Oren and Solomon, 2015, p. 334). Consequently, whether a

person was in favour of or opposed intervention in Iraq, by repeating the chant they increase its affective value and the likelihood for war. This erodes the space for contestation within securitised chanting, as opponents increase its affective value by repeating it, effectively rendering a securitising chant impossible to contest. Oren and Solomon, however, state that ways to push back against a securitising chant exist in the arts (2015, p. 336). They argue that this would force the 'reader to reflect on the phrase's arbitrariness', which could allow the audience to see how the phrase has been used to manipulate the facts surrounding an issue (Oren and Solomon, 2015, p. 336). While this provides a good scaffolding for contestation, the authors overlook other ways that an empowered audience can contest a chant. I want to expand the room for contestation within Oren and Solomon's framework for empowered audience members to contest these securitising chants. Lee Jarvis and Tim Legrand argue that an empowered audience can question a securitising move and demand justification for why it was initiated (2017, p. 160). I argue that by creating a chant of their own, an empowered audience member can contest a securitising chant, thereby limiting the risk of furthering the securitisation process. This would allow them to contest without participating in the securitising chant. During election campaigns, candidates use ambiguous phrases and catchy slogans in their battle to secure votes to win. In the remainder of this article, I will demonstrate that, during the 2016 U.S. presidential election, competing and contesting chants were at play. The two candidates continuously repeated their own chants, staking the nation's survival on their own victory. They did so through "catchy slogans", which gained traction across society, but which carried different emotional connotations among different audience members. In order to demonstrate this, I must first provide context for the case.

The 2016 U.S. presidential election

The 2016 U.S. presidential election has drawn the attention of academics both during and after its completion (see Bessi and Ferrara, 2016; Major, Blodorn and Blascovich, 2016; Enli, 2017; Faris et al., 2017; Allcott and Gentzkow, 2017; Bobo, 2017). I, however, will use the election to illustrate the concept of contesting chants. When Trump announced his campaign in 2015, he labelled Mexicans as 'criminals and rapists' and stressed the need for a border wall (Neate, 2015). As will be demonstrated, this was the start of a repetitive message grounded in a need for a border wall to protect the U.S. from criminals, drugs and job loss. It was out of this perceived threat that the chant "build that wall", was born. Trump's securitising moves, while accepted by his supporters, were not met with silence from his opponents. For example, Hillary Clinton stated that 'everybody should stand up and say that's not acceptable' (Kreutz and Klein, 2015). I argue that Clinton created her own contesting chant, "together". This provided a way to contest Trump's securitising move, circumventing the trap of repeating the securitising chant itself. There are, however, some particulars of the case that need to be elaborated before moving on to the empirical section: first, an explanation of how "stronger together" became the contesting chant "together" and, second, a brief overview of what role party partisanship played in this case.

Elections offer great potential to review the process of securitisation, as 'nearly every well-organized presidential campaign outlines a specific set of heuristic principles that situate the candidate's platform among an array of issues' (Gonzalez, 2019, p. 47). What this means is that campaign strategists review the prevalent national issues and 'contextualize the current economic, cultural, and political affairs of the nation and international community' (Gonzalez, 2019, p. 47). Donnelly and Pham argue that 'the nomination of any individual as running candidate can serve to imbue their voice with a sense of authority, legitimacy and knowledge' (2017, p. 1). This makes studying securitisation processes easier in elections, as their authority 'increases the potential of their security claims to resonate with the beliefs, feelings and emotions of voters' (Donnelly and Pham, 2017 p. 1). Elections are considered the backbone to democracy and fall under the rubric of "normal politics." Elections, however, are also where candidates commonly argue that if the public choose poorly (i.e. the other candidate), the nation and state's survival might be at risk. This raises the question of whether one can deem election cycles as "normal politics" or if they fall under another rubric closer to the securitising agenda. This is brought up to explain how I have situated Clinton's slogan "stronger together" as a contesting chant and not as a "normal politics" campaign slogan. While Clinton announced her campaign prior to Trump and used "stronger together" as her slogan from the beginning, it only became a contesting chant later on in her campaign. Thus, when Clinton announced her campaign in the spring of 2015 (Calamur, 2015), her slogan "stronger together" was part of "normal" election politics. I argue, however, that Trump's announcement a few months later (Diamond, 2015) and the campaign Trump ran, transformed Clinton's "normal politics" campaign slogan to a contesting chant. A few days after Trump labelled Mexicans as criminals, Clinton stressed how dangerous such remarks could be (Kreutz and Klein, 2015). This is where I situate the beginning of the transformation of her slogan into a contesting chant.

Another important aspect of the case that needs to be discussed revolves around the audience and party partisanship. The securitisation literature is clear on the importance of the audience for the process of securitisation. Further, the literature spells out that the audience cannot be treated as a homogeneous block. Mike Medeiros and Alain Noël (2013) point out that party partisanship is a direct consequence of party politics. This is especially evident in an election cycle, where divisions in the audience caused by party partisanship become especially pronounced. In fact, during the election campaign in 2016, the division between voters for each party was so wide that the Pew Research Center reported unprecedented numbers. Their findings showed that '55% of Democrats and 58% of Republicans view[ed] the other party in deeply negative terms' (Pew Research Center, 2016), statistics they had not seen in almost two decades of polling. Therefore, any securitising move, from either candidate, would be met with resistance and contestation from the opposition. Usually, in a case like the 2016 presidential election, scholars of securitisation would have to take party partisanship into consideration in order to demonstrate and validate the success of securitisation. In this article, however, and in accordance with the theory outlined by Oren and Solomon (2015),

party partisanship is granted limited attention. This is because repeating a chant is something that people will do regardless of their political affiliation.

In the final two sections of this article, I will first illustrate how Trump's securitising chant "build that wall" was contextualised in relation to illegal immigration, drug smuggling and job theft in order to construct a security narrative at the southern border. Second, I will do the same to situate Clinton's contesting chant, "together".

Donald Trump's securitising chant: "build that wall"

During a rally on 29 September in New Hampshire, Trump stated that 'the biggest single problem they have up here is heroin' (C-SPAN, 2016, 29 September, 6:20). This statement was the leeway into asserting the necessity of the wall. Trump stated that:

> [I]t's the single biggest problem, and I said that if I win, I get the nomination and I win, we are gonna build that *wall* and we are gonna stop that heroin from pouring in. And we are gonna stop the poison of the youth [crowd chanting "build that wall"], we're gonna build the *wall*, believe me. We are gonna build the *wall*, but we're gonna stop the poison from pouring in and destroying our youth and plenty of other people and we're gonna work on those people that got addicted and are addicted (29 September, 6:35).

This statement is a clear demonstration of how Trump contextualised the need for a wall through the issue of drugs 'pouring' over the borders and 'poisoning' the youth. These two terms are invoked twice. The interesting aspect in this statement, however, is where Trump mentions the wall. Trump begins by stating that the biggest problem New Hampshire has is its people's addiction to heroin, and the way to deal with it is to build a wall. He goes on to reference the poisoning of the youth, and as the crowd starts chanting "build that wall", Trump restates that they are going to build a wall and that the crowd should believe him. This is an example of circulations of affect. Trump invoked feelings from his audience by addressing core issues of the area. Since this rally took place, more than a year after his campaign announcement, the chant "build that wall" was already loaded with affective value. It had been spread by Trump's supporters and opponents for over a year. As Ahmed argues, the more the chant circulates, the more affective it becomes (2014, p. 45). Thus, when Trump, a year into his campaign, made statements on the need to build a wall, his supporters instantly knew what the threat was and became charged with emotions they connected with said threat.

This, however, could not have been possible without the repetitive nature of how Trump speaks of the wall. During his rally in Denver on 29 July, Trump referenced the wall a total of 13 times in approximately five minutes (C-SPAN, 2016, 29 July, 26:00–31:30). Towards the end, he stated that:

> I was endorsed by the border patrol agents. First time in the history, 16,500 border patrol agents […] I said to the top people, when they called and said 'Mr. Trump we're endorsing you', and I said 'that's good. How many people?' And they said '16,500. Mr. Trump they [the politicians] are not doing their jobs, they are not letting us do our job'. I said 'how important is the *wall*?' They said 'Mr. Trump, the *wall* is vital.' It is a great tool. It will end up being our best tool for protection. We have to stop the drugs from coming in. We have to stop illegals from pouring across our border [crowd chanting "build that wall"] (29 July, 28:10).

This quote demonstrates how Trump attempts to position himself as a top authority on border security. Once again, he connects the wall with issues of drugs and immigration. In the process, he continues his securitising move to contextualise the necessity of the wall as protection against an existential threat that is poisoning the youth. Moreover, during this section of Trump's speech, the crowd collectively chanted "build that wall" twice. The first time, Trump himself invited the crowd to chant it by asking 'would anybody like to see the *wall* get built?' (29 July, 26:00–28:00). The second instance was after Trump spoke on the dangers of drugs and illegal immigration, thus provoking the crowd to chant the perceived solution, "build that wall". Trump finished these five minutes by referencing the wall another two times and stated:

> Here is what's gonna happen, we are going to build the *wall*, Mexico is going to pay for the *wall* 100%, 100%. We are gonna stop the drugs from pouring into our country and poisoning our youth. We are gonna stop people that aren't supposed to be here from coming into our country. That is going to happen (29 July, 29:30).

These references to the wall illustrate how the 'repetitive spouting of ambiguous phrases' (Oren and Solomon, 2015, p. 315) can be used to securitise an issue. During his rallies, Trump continuously constructs the threat on the southern border by inviting his crowds to chant the words with him, to the point where "build that wall" is repeated enough times to become the representation of the threat itself. As Oren and Solomon write: 'the threat comes into existence *in* one's chanting of the phrase that ostensibly describes this threat. The phrase becomes itself the threat' (2015, p. 325, italics in original).

During his 6 November rally in Pittsburgh, two days before the election, Trump continued his repetition of the chant. He stated that the country has 'drugs pouring through our borders, our jobs taken away [crowd chanting "build that wall"]. Oh we'll build a *wall*, don't worry, we will build […] I promise we're building the *wall*, and Mexico will pay for the *wall*, I promise' (C-SPAN, 2016, 6 November, 12:14). As Trump mentioned drugs and job theft, the audience was incentivised to chant "build that wall" collectively. At this point in the campaign, the chant was directly associated with the perceived threat of drugs and illegal immigration, and Trump's supporters almost automatically would start chanting "build that wall" as soon as

these issues were mentioned. This rally is interesting because the two separate times that Trump mentions the wall, it is the crowd that brings it to his attention. The second time, Trump was speaking on refugee programmes from dangerous regions, stating that:

> […] and we will pause admissions from terror prone regions until a full security assessment has been performed and until a proven vetting mechanism has been established. We only want to admit those into this nation who will support our country and love our people. A Trump administration will also secure and defend the borders of the United States and for that young gentleman who keeps saying *wall*. Yes, we will build a great, great *wall* and Mexico will pay for that *wall* [crowd chanting "build that wall"] (6 November, 21:00).

Prior to this quote, Trump had extensively outlined how he, and not Clinton, had the correct plan of action to deal with immigration from Syria (6 November, 19:15). Thereby, Trump referenced yet another issue/threat connected to the chant "build that wall", namely that of terrorism. It is important how Trump situates the chant within his own speeches. In the material I have reviewed, Trump hits at least one out of three key points before, and after, the wall is brought up. These points are immigration, drug smuggling and job theft. Thus, it is noteworthy that during one of his last rallies, it was the crowd that brought up the wall first upon hearing Trump speak on immigration. This fact highlights how the collective chant has come full circle. Through circulations of affect, the words "build that wall" created and assumed affective meaning to the point where a ritualised, securitising chant was created. The result was that "build that wall" became interconnected with the issues that Trump claimed threatened the U.S. existentially.

Rallies are a way for Trump to communicate directly with his supporters. Moreover, his messages in those rallies are also spread through media coverage. During any presidential campaign, however, there will also be debates where the candidates face each other. Maria Cheng argues that these debates 'provide a channel for the candidates to reinforce their images which may change voters' attitudes, alter their perceptions of the candidates' personality and leadership qualities that may change their voting intentions and elicit their favorable support for president' (2016, p. 173). In other words, televised presidential debates are another way to win votes. I found that, during these debates, Trump rarely mentioned the wall at all. In fact, he only mentioned it during the last debate after being explicitly asked about it. Trump stressed the need for the wall, stating that 'I want to build the *wall*. We need the *wall*. And the Border Patrol, ICE, they all want the *wall*. We stop the drugs. We shore up the border' (Blake, 2016b). These messages are not new to his supporters, as they have taken part in the collective chant throughout his campaign. These, however, were national debates, with a larger and more politically diverse audience than his regular crowd. Oren and Solomon contend that people who oppose the wall, still contribute to the securitisation of the issue if they repeat the chant (2015, p. 334). Thus, the question becomes, how can the need for the border wall be contested? In order to answer this question, I will now introduce the "contesting chant".

Hillary Clinton's contesting chant: "together"

In this section, I examine what happens when an empowered audience member does not accept a securitising chant, but instead contests it. Even if an opponent to a securitisation move utters a securitising chant in contestation, they strengthen the securitisation process by repeating said chant. Oren and Solomon see one way to contest a securitising chant successfully: through the arts (2015, p. 336). I argue, however, that an audience can circumvent the original chant and create a chant of their own, which opens up more room for contestation. I call this the "contesting chant". Below is a timetable indicating the dates when the chosen rallies for each candidate took place. I include this to remind the reader that Clinton's contestations were made around the same time as Trump's securitising moves.

	1st rally	2nd rally	3rd rally
Trump	29 July 2016	29 September 2016	6 November 2016
Clinton	31 July 2016	30 September 2016	6 November 2016

In line with Vuori's work on contestation, Clinton was a political actor with the capacity to 'affect securitization processes […] with sufficient social capital or a position of power in matters of security' (2014, p. 30). Clinton saw herself as the everyday American's champion (Calamur, 2015). As previously mentioned, her campaign slogan was "stronger together" (Clinton and Kaine, 2016), from which I draw the contesting chant "together". Clinton uttered "together" thirty-five times in the three rallies and the three debates that I reviewed. My analysis of these six events demonstrates that the word is uttered with a message of unity. During the rallies, Clinton used the chant before or after contesting Trump, or in the context of uniting the country and working together for a better future.

During her campaign rally in Columbus, Ohio on 31 July, Clinton spoke of her feelings after the Democratic Convention, and stated that: 'I was so proud to see Democrats standing up and speaking about what we can do *together* to make sure the economy works for everyone, not just those at the top' (C-SPAN, 2016, 31 July, 19:30). These remarks came soon after she was officially nominated as the presidential candidate for the Democratic Party. The key part of this statement is, 'not just those at the top' (31 July, 19:30), which is important for two reasons. First, it helps to contextualise the chant "together", with the idea that the U.S. is for all and not just the few. The second reason is encapsulated in what Clinton states a few minutes later:

> I am personally sickened when I hear the stories about Donald Trump refusing to pay plumbers and painters and marble installers and glass installers, and small businesses who have done the work (31 July, 23:30).

In this context, Clinton is contesting the notion that Trump is the right man to be president. In the first quote, she speaks of how she is excited about what Democrats can do "together",

and in the second, she claims that Trump is not an everyday, hard-working American. Rather, he exploits small businesses for his own gain, thereby questioning his character. In order to emphasise her point, Clinton later states:

> And I've watched what's happened over the last two weeks, a lot of the rhetoric that came from Trump and his convention was so dark, so pessimistic, so negative. You know, I know we've got problems and challenges, I'm not taking a position that we don't have work to do. In fact, I'm telling you what work we can do *together*. But at the end of the day, we Americans are better when we roll up our sleeves, we set some goals, and we work *together*, because yes, we are stronger *together*. And I'm very excited about what we can do (31 July, 30:15).

At this rally, Clinton spent a lot of time questioning Trump's character and the negativity of his campaign. Rather than ridiculing the border wall, however, which would only reinforce Trump's securitisation move (Oren and Solomon, 2015, p. 334), she instead repeatedly used the word "together". This highlights that she is contesting the initial securitising move with her own chant. Clinton disagrees with Trump and does not accept the perception of the threat on the border. Rather, she argues that if the country unites and works towards a solution together, no drastic measures need to be implemented. In the material I have reviewed for this article, this is the point that Clinton has repeatedly made.

For example, on 30 September, in Fort Pierce, Florida, she had a similar message. The overall theme for this rally seemed to be the importance of community service. Clinton, however, started her speech with a few notes on Trump and stated that:

> [H]e [Trump] stood on that stage, at his convention, and described a hopeless, broken nation. I'm sorry. I'm looking at you. I don't see that. That in no way resembles the strong, vibrant America I know. And here's what he said. He said, 'I alone can fix it. I alone' (30 September, 5:40).

In this quote, it is again apparent that Clinton paints Trump as unfit for office. Here, however, she is also trying to place him as the extreme opposite of her own chant, "together". This becomes clearer as she states:

> But that is not how change happens in America. It is never just one person. Not even someone as powerful as the president. Every good thing our country has ever achieved has always happened because people have worked *together*, to make it a reality. Not just the wealthy or the powerful. All of us (30 September, 5:40–7:47).

Clinton first frames Trump as a man who likes to act alone and believes has all the solutions. She then communicates her own message by stating that everything good in the U.S.

has happened because people work "together". At this rally, Clinton referenced the chant "together" on eight separate occasions, two of which stood in stark contrast to the chant "build that wall". The first one reads:

> Too often we Americans can become separated from each other. And I think a lot of people are feeling this way during this election. It's easy to surround ourselves with only those who think like us, talk like us, look like us, read the same news as us. That's understandable to an extent. But it comes with a cost, because it magnifies our differences, which then makes it harder to put those differences aside when our community or country needs us. There aren't many places where people of all ages, all races, all backgrounds, all beliefs come *together* in common cause. But service is one of them (30 September, 14:12).

The second is the following:

> In a country founded on liberty and equality, I can't think of a more important notion than every one of us is valuable. We all deserve respect. We all should listen to each other. We all can make our mark on the world. And when we come *together* in common purpose, we can do so much more than we could ever do on our own. That's why stronger *together* is more than a slogan. It's a course of action. […] And I want you to help me bring our nation *together* to solve our problems, strengthen our communities, to join with people across America (30 September, 29:18).

There is a lot to unpack in these two quotations, but the core element is the idea of unity. As we saw in section three, Trump often made statements that were pessimistic regarding drugs, immigration and job theft. Oftentimes, he cited illegal immigrants performing acts of violence. In contrast, Clinton focused on unity through her chant "together". This is seen in the first quote's penultimate sentence. Rather than fearmongering, she opted for unity and understanding among all Americans, emphasising that only together could they achieve great things. Another important note to make about these two quotations is how often she inserts her chant "together". Four out of the eight references to the chant came in these two quotations and three in the last one alone. Remembering Oren and Solomon's argument (2015, p. 322), repetition of the chant is crucial if the chant is to gain affective value. Therefore, through the repetition evidenced in the quotes above, Clinton can construct her contesting chant and garner enough affective value to contest Trump's securitising move. This repetition was seen again at Clinton's rally in Manchester, New Hampshire, two days before the election.

During this rally, Clinton uttered the chant "together" nine times. This makes sense, as this rally was one of the final opportunities she had to convey her message of unity. She also focused less on Trump, opting instead to communicate messages of hope:

> [I]t is unusual for somebody running for president, to say that what we need more of in our country is love and kindness, but we really do. Toward one another, toward people different from ourselves. We all have a role in building a better, stronger, fairer America (6 November, 33:56).

While she did not reference Trump by name, however, she did again contrast herself to him, stating that: 'my opponent has a very dark and divisive view of our country' (6 November, 20:15). She used these words as a stepping stone to her own message:

> I think it's also important that we believe, in a hopeful, inclusive, big-hearted united America, right! Where everyone has a place, where everyone is included, where people who are willing to work hard can get ahead and stay ahead. Where we recognize the importance of the American dream and we believe and we will ensure it is big enough for everyone. Not just a few (6 November, 21:30).

This is a clear contestation of Trump's message. Rather than division and a wall, Clinton seeks love, understanding and unity among the American people. Her role as Trump's opponent in the election allows her publicly and officially to contest any securitising move made by him. Later, she states:

> We've got to get everyone to believe that this election is about you, it is about you, your dreams, your aspirations, your hopes, your family, your community. I have never felt more strongly about what we can do *together*. I am confident and I am optimistic about the future we can make *together* (6 November, 34:54).

While in the previous quote she speaks of the values she sees as important for the country, here, she makes the election about the voter, while also again uttering the chant a final two times. Clinton consistently pushes her slogan of "stronger together" by continuously using the word "together" within a context of unity. She is trying to reach the audience of "the other", which Topgyal argues is forgotten within the CS's framework (2016, p. 167). Her approach was especially noticeable during the debates.

During the first debate, one of the earliest messages Clinton sent to the nationwide audience was that 'the central question in this election is really what kind of country we want to be and what kind of future we'll build *together*' (Blake, 2016a). Again, in the second debate, Clinton immediately stated:

> I have a very positive and optimistic view about what we can do *together*. That's why the slogan of my campaign is "*stronger together*", because I think if we work *together*, if we overcome the divisiveness that sometimes sets Americans against one another, and instead we make some big goals […] If we set those goals and we go *together* to try to

> achieve them, there's nothing in my opinion that America can't do. So that's why I hope that we will come *together* in this campaign […] I will work with every American. I want to be the president for all Americans, regardless of your political beliefs, where you come from, what you look like, your religion. I want us to heal our country and bring it *together* […] (*The New York Times*, 2016).

In this quote, Clinton continuously utters her chant and contextualises it repeatedly with her want for unity. Cheng argues that televised debates provide an opportunity to sway the support of voters (2016, p. 173). Therefore, the debates also provide opportunity for the candidates to spread their chant. It is the collective chanting between speaker and audience that can securitise an issue (Oren and Solomon, 2015, p. 316), and the same principle applies to the contesting chant. In order for the contesting chant to be successful, it must reach the level of a collective ritualised contesting chant. Thus, when Clinton repeatedly spouts her message of unity and tirelessly utters her chant "together", she raises the likelihood of her contestation being successful.

In the reviewed material, Clinton repeatedly uttered the chant "together". She continuously pushed back against Trump's discourse, which she believed was divisive and negative. Her heavy reliance on the term "together" to convey this message, I argue, represents a contesting chant outside the scope of what Oren and Solomon (2015) argued possible in their original work.

Conclusion

The goal of this article has been to introduce a new form of contestation to the theory on securitisation and chants. Building on the CS, Oren and Solomon (2015) introduced the ritualised securitising chant. In their reformulation, they argue that the repetition of ambiguous phrases and catchy slogans was used to justify U.S. involvement in Iraq back in 2003. They argue that the chant relies on the full force of the illocutionary speech act, which it gains through constant repetition between speaker and audience (Oren and Solomon, 2015, p. 322). More importantly though, they argue that a securitising chant is hard to contest, because when someone invokes the chant, they further the securitisation process (Oren and Solomon, 2015, p. 334). In fact, they argue that the way to contest the chant is through satire or news articles, where the arbitrary meaning behind the chant could potentially be revealed (Oren and Solomon, 2015, p. 336). This, however, severely limits the possibility for contestation. This realisation led me to the question which has guided this article: how can empowered audience members, who disagree with a securitising chant, contest it?

Since its publication, the work of Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde (1998) has sparked intense debate in the securitisation literature. It also raised questions regarding the audience's agency (Balzacq, 2005; Côté, 2016), as the audience was placed firmly in a role of either accepting or rejecting a securitising move. As a result, there seemed to be no space for audience

contestation in the original framework. This is yet another issue that has received extensive attention from second-generation scholars. The literature on contestation and securitisation is vast (Balzacq, 2014; Jarvis and Legrand, 2017; Stritzel and Chang, 2015; Vuori, 2014). There is a gap in the literature on contestation and securitisation, however, as few have written on contestation in relation to securitising chants. I aimed to fill this gap.

I conducted discourse analysis on six rallies and three televised debates during the 2016 U.S. presidential election. I chose the 2016 election because of Trump's securitising chant "build that wall". The focus of this article, however, was on illuminating contestation. Vuori argues that contestation is reserved for 'actors with sufficient social capital or a position of power in matters of security' (2014, p. 30). Clinton fulfils these criteria. I argue, for the purpose of this article, that Clinton is an empowered audience member. I explored how Clinton had made use of her slogan "stronger together". What I found was that "stronger together" was simplified down to the chant "together". It was not only continuously repeated by Clinton, but also contextualised to hold a meaning of direct opposition to Trump's chant "build that wall". While Trump uttered his chant twenty-seven times, Clinton referenced hers thirty-five. She continuously repeated her chant in the context of unity and made sure to invoke it in relation to both Trump's character and to his ideas and values. I found that Clinton attempted to contest Trump's securitising chant "build that wall" with the chant "together". While I did not establish whether Clinton's contestation was successful, I did demonstrate that Trump's chant can be contested through other means than what has previously been suggested (Oren and Solomon, 2015, p. 336). I argue that this holds importance because it opens up a new space to contest a securitising chant. Looking ahead, I would like to offer some future lines of enquiry.

Further research on contesting chants would need to analyse what impact they have on the securitisation process. Oren and Solomon reviewed news articles, counting how often the chant appeared, in order to demonstrate how the phrase "weapons of mass destruction" became part of everyday life leading up to the Iraq war (2015, p. 329). Similar work could be undertaken for the contesting chant but through the use of Twitter instead. Twitter could hold great potential to demonstrate circulations of affect regarding chants. For example, Brian L. Ott argues that 'tweets are often sparked by an affective charge', and tweets filled with emotional charge are more likely to be retweeted (2017, p. 61). Twitter also offers a good platform to measure exactly how often a particular chant has been retweeted, and scholars could examine how the audience engage with them. Therefore, a study looking at Twitter and contesting chants holds potential for determining the success of contestation. More importantly, it is imperative to set clear criteria for what a successful contestation, through chanting, entails, as the limited space in this article has been prohibitive in pursuing this. Future research should analyse whether contesting chants can be used to deconstruct securitising chants that have been in circulation for some time. Another interesting question would be whether the contesting chant must always originate from an empowered audience

member. A movement that suggests otherwise is "Black Lives Matter". These questions, I believe, offer exciting pathways for future research on the contesting chant.

Endnotes

[1] See Appendix A for the website addresses.

[2] I am aware that there is a larger debate here. For more input, see Balzacq (2014), Fussey (2015), Contessi (2010), Xenakis and Cheliotis (2013).

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Appendix A: Debate transcripts

First debate: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/09/26/the-first-trump-clinton-presidential-debate-transcript-annotated/?utm_term=.1b6fb036c226

Second debate: https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/10/us/politics/transcript-second-debate.html

Third debate: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/10/19/the-final-trump-clinton-debate-transcript-annotated/?utm_term=.0357dfa2a97f