This study examines states' non-compliance with the rulings of the International Court of Justice. Submission to international arbitration is a special case of international law, implying sacrifice of state’s autonomy of action and acceptance of the risk of sanctions. This study examines two cases of non-compliance with the rulings of the Court, the Fisheries Jurisdiction and the Gabcíkovo-Nagymaros cases.

Security is the fundamental interest, function, and raison d’être of the state, the safeguarding of which supersedes all other issues. Securitization of an issue provides the state internal legitimacy for tackling the issue with all measures. The objective of the study is to examine whether the central issue of the dispute was perceived as a security threat and successfully securitized in both Iceland and Hungary, and whether non-compliance with the ruling was a consequence of securitization in the Fisheries and Gabcikovo cases. The study consists of two analytical phases: the analysis of the securitization processes of the cases, and the analysis through the sectoral approach, which consists of five security sectors. The study is primarily based on Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde’s framework for analysis.

The study is a two-case study. The cases were selected according to the requirements posed by the theoretical framework. The study is an ideographic analysis, in which methods of qualitative research are used. The research data consists of documentary material: previous studies, judgments, articles, and other existing literature and relevant legal analyses. The research techniques of textual analysis and source criticism are employed.

The hypotheses are verified by the analysis. Both securitization processes were successful, and non-compliance was demonstrated to be a consequence of the securitization. Further findings are related to the theoretical framework: the relative importance of the sectors, the cross-sectoral dynamics, and the developments of the security discourse. The implication of securitization processes to the role of the Court in the international system are also discussed. The results of the study are applicable only to the two examined cases, yet securitization provides a possible explanation of non-compliance with the rulings of the International Court of Justice also in a wider context.