

To be secured or securitized? The dynamical process of political securitization against the Islamic community in France and its contestants in the aftermath of ‘terrorist attacks’ between 2015 and 2021.



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The title page image represents a street demonstration near Gare Du Nord, Paris, against Islamophobia in 2019. Photo by Mustafa Yalcin, Anadolu Agency via Getty Images. Retrieved from <https://www.gettyimages.nl/detail/nieuwsfoto%27s/thousands-of-demonstrators-gather-at-gare-du-nord-after-nieuwsfotos/1181355357?adppopup=true>.

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La République c'est à la fois un ordre et une promesse.

The Republic is both an order and a promise.

Emmanuel Macron

French president Emmanuel Macron in his speech on October 2nd 2020, shortly before new terrorist attacks on French soil startled the country. Retrieved from <https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2020/10/02/la-republique-en-actes-discours-du-president-de-la-republique-sur-le-theme-de-la-lutte-contre-les-separatismes>.

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Abstract

Since 2015 the French Republic has experienced multiple violent ‘terrorist’ attacks on French soil, which has caused a rise in the intense political debate on the position of Muslims in the French society. Using the theoretical lens of securitization, this research analyses in what matter the French government is using a speech-act to justify extraordinary policy measures against the Islamic community in France, and how two sorts of non-state actors (Islamic organizations and human rights organizations) are contesting these developments. While there has been considerable attention in the academic world for the usage of securitization theory in investigating religious minorities in European democracies, the dynamics within and between processes of (de)securitization involving different actors have been mostly neglected. By using Benford & Snow’s analytical framework of framing processes of social movements the pillars of securitization theory are operationalized and it is investigated via document analysis how the core framing tasks of diagnostic and prognostic framing are executed by actors in the dynamic playing field of emergency politics. This research shows that the French government is increasingly using a speech-act to persuade the French population to accept new laws that grant the government more possibilities to control the population and to limit the public expression of religion. While these laws are not explicitly aimed at the Muslim minority in France, the two investigated non-state actors believe that the French Muslim community are unjustly and disproportionately targeted by these new laws and as a result contest these law-making processes. However, the field of actors criticizing the politics of the French government proves to be too ideologically and logistically scattered to form a relevant and powerful voice against the French government. Concluding, this research shows that actors involved in processes of (de)securitization are active agents in an ever-evolving dynamic field of security, where processes of securitization and desecuritization are intermingled. Further research should focus on how the referent subject in a process of securitization can be part of the audience and has its own agency, how the institutionalization of securitization becomes increasingly relevant, how (social) media plays a role as provider of core framing tasks and how actors who oppose a securitizing act can start one themselves.

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Chapter I – Introduction

1.1 Empirical complication & research question

From January 2015 onwards, after years without experiencing any major ‘terrorist’ attack, France was startled by several violent assaults on French soil following in quick succession (Brouard et al., 2018, p. 1073). The attacks on the satirical French magazine *Charlie Hebdo* in January 2015, the multiple shootings including the *Bataclan* music hall in November 2015 and the vehicle ramming in Nice in July 2016 marked a new era of terrorism and radicalism in France, which resulted in the return of the already heated political debate aimed at the position of Muslims in the French society that occurred for the first time in the 90s of the 20th century (Brouard et al., 2018; Onishi et al., 2020). The early start of this debate ultimately resulted in several religious reforms in France, such as the prohibition of wearing a head scarf in Public schools in 2004 and a full ban on veils in public places in 2010 which made the relationship between the French government and the Muslim minority in France increasingly complex (Idriss, 2005; Wing & Smith, 2005; Friedman & Merle, 2013). In 2015, the new attacks triggered a further splitting process where the French government, led by former president François Hollande, created a situation where the Islamic religion was increasingly the center of a heated political and public controversy (Dück & Lucke, 2019). From 2015 onwards, words such as “Islamic separatism”, “Islamic extremism”, “terrorism”, and “radicalization” increasingly influenced the French political spectrum and made the position of the Muslim minority in French society increasingly difficult, convoluted, and unstable. This resulted in several new French laws that prohibited to openly exercise religion, officially aimed at the complete French population but mostly felt by the Muslim minority. During these developments after the 2015 attacks several scholars increasingly used securitization theory to analyze the relationship between the French government and the Islamic minority in France (Ajala, 2014; Dück & Lucke, 2019).

In 2020, new ‘terrorist’ attacks were committed which caused a serious revival of this debate, as new laws passed the French parliament to further prohibit the public expression of (Islamic) religion in the French society. The killing of a teacher in Paris, three church visitors in Nice and the wounding of a priest in Lyon in October 2020 indicate that France, more than five years after the attack on the *Charlie Hebdo* magazine, is still confronted with intense episodes of violence and heated debates on the political, religious and/or ethnic character of such assaults. The French government, from 2017 onwards led by President Emmanuel Macron, increasingly transferred the common political Muslim debate towards a debate about citizenship, identity and belonging where Muslims living in France are increasingly portrayed as an issue of great importance on the political agenda (Brouard et al., 2018). In his speech on October 2nd, 2020, Macron claimed that “Islam is in a world crisis” and that the secular French Republic must be protected against Islamic separatism. While this speech caused a rise of criticism on the French government from Muslims all over the world, these ‘emergency politics’ continue to play a role in the French political spectrum. This form of politics initiated by the French government, which thus some scholars consider to be part of the politics of securitization, has implications for relationship between the government and the French Muslim minority. At the same time, an increasing amount of non-state actors try to establish a counter-voice against the governmental speech-act and law-making activities, most prominently led by Islamic organizations and human rights organizations (Bruce, 2013). This thesis investigates the dynamic field of security politics incorporating the French government as securitizing actor and two sorts of non-state organizations (Islamic organizations and human rights organizations) as contesting actors in this process by answering the following research question:

How is the process of political securitization executed by the French government and contested by Islamic and human rights organizations in the aftermath of ‘terrorist attacks’ between 2015-2021?

This research investigates the dynamics of the political developments and decisions of the French government regarding the Islamic minority in France between 2015 and 2021 using securitization theory and shows how these processes are disputed by two non-state actors. These “dynamics” form the central pillar in this research. Thus, this research is not only just about the connection between the different actors involved, but also how processes of securitization and desecuritization are merged, intertwined, and how they interact. A researcher should enter inquiry with an open mind and focusing on interaction means that securitization maybe is not a one-sided activity, but that it can also be witnessed as a more circular process. According to Mason’s table of intellectual puzzles, this research can be labelled as a processual puzzle, as it is the *process* of political securitization that is analyzed (Mason, 2018, p. 12). To be able to answer this research question it will be divided into two separate yet integrated sub questions. These questions unravel the research puzzle and will eventually answer the main research question. In this way the research puzzle is broken into constituent parts, and those parts will form a qualitative synthesis after the sub questions are answered. It makes this social research both feasible as applicable. The sub questions formulated are interrelated and written as follows:

Sub question I

How is the French government using a speech act to justify extraordinary measures against the Muslim minority in France between 2015 and 2021?

The core of the politics of securitization concerns the “image” created by the securitizing actor that depicts an entity as an existential threat. Therefore, it is logical to start with analyzing the speech-act of the French government, thus how the French government is trying to persuade the audience that new laws and policies are needed to eliminate the existential threat. This sub question thus mainly exists to explain how the French government is using linguistic representations to persuade the French population that extraordinary measures that go beyond the common democratic formula are necessary and inevitable. It is important to realize that the audience in this research does not consists out of a homogenous group, but that it incorporates multiple actors, all with different goals and ambitions.

Sub question II

How do Islamic organizations and human rights organizations contest the speech act and the new (planned) laws aimed at the Muslim minority initiated by the French government?

This sub question investigates the reactions of non-state actors on the politics of securitization initiated by the French government. An important element of securitization theory is that the audience needs to be persuaded by the speech act of the securitizing actor and that the extraordinary measures thus can be implemented. However, in France these processes are increasingly contested by several non-state actors, most prominently by Islamic organizations and human rights organizations. These organizations are both part of the audience (human rights organizations) as of the threat itself (Islamic organizations). This sub-question examines the dynamic element in securitization theory by investigating the voices and strategies of the parties countering the extraordinary policy measures. This subquestion also sheds light on the strategies used by the opposing parties to prevent the successful speech act of the French government and explains the dynamics of security politics in France.

1.2 Significance

Above standing sub questions combined will make me able to answer the main research question. Paragraph 1.1 explains the social relevance of this research, as in 2015 and 2020 new attacks caused new developments in the existing debate on the place of Muslims in the French society and shows that these developments form an urgent topic in the present-day security politics of France. Investigating the dynamics and interplay between the French government and non-state actors

using securitization theory brings answer to the societal table of understanding the current place of Muslims in France. However, this research also has its academic relevance. The research puzzle of this research adds to the existing theoretical debate mainly for three reasons. First, this research puzzle focuses partly on the agency of the referent subject. In securitization theory, the referent subject can be seen as the perceived existential threat as formulated by the securitization actor, thus the entity that needs to be 'eliminated'. In this research that is the Islamic minority, as the Islamic minority is seen as a threat by the French government. Research that focuses on the consequences of securitization processes for the referent subject and the subsequent agency of this actor is nearly non-existent. In current securitization theory, the referent subject is considered as a passive entity that is depicted as an existential threat that needs to be eliminated, and thus has no agency on itself. In the last years there has been increased attention for the agency of the audience and its role in securitization processes, as the audience has the power to accept or reject extraordinary measures initiated by the securitizing actor (Léonard & Kaunert, 2010; Côte, 2016). However, research on the agency of the referent subject has not enjoyed the same attention by scholars. There are studies which reflect on the resilience and active attitude of the Islamic minority in France regarding its position in the French society (Fellag, 2014). However, these studies do not connect their findings with securitization theory. Also, newspapers only describe, but not analyze, what the implications of political decisions are for the French Muslim minority (Louis, 2020). As an increasing amount of existing literature claims that audiences are inevitable agents in the process of securitization, new research should also include the referent subject as active agent in securitization theory.

Second, and relating to the first point of academic relevance, this research investigates the dynamic spectrum of securitization theory by examining the way in which actors proposing and opposing securitizing politics interact with each other. Most studies on securitization theory focus on a certain aspect within the theoretical framework or on a certain phenomenon or case study where the politics of securitization are occurring. For example, there is an abundance of securitization studies that investigate the relationship between securitization and migration and integration, as for many governments they play an important role on the political agenda. The same is true for securitization studies on the 'war on terror', as after the event of 9/11 governments increasingly started to develop new security policies that went beyond the normal democratic political spectrum (McDonald, 2008, p. 565). Also, some studies focus on the securitizing actor, such as the way in which governments succeed in producing the speech act while others focus on the audience, the entity where the speech act is aimed at (Fox et al., 2019; Roe, 2008). This research adds to the theoretical debate on security literature by investigating the moveable and dynamical spectrum of securitization theory: proponents and contesters are in a constantly evolving conversation of persuading the audience, while the audience itself also consists out of a dynamic range of entities with agency and ambitions. The dynamics in the field of securitization has not been extensively researched yet, which makes this research significant by looking beyond the original, more static, definition of security used in securitization theory.

The third reason of academic relevance includes the usage of securitization as theoretical framework. The criticism on this theory is extensive. For example, Guzzini (2011, p. 330) claims that the core base of the concept of securitization is unclear: "however, what this improved understanding [of security] exactly meant turned out to be ambivalent in its theoretical scope, since it alternatively implied a conceptual move, a framework of analysis, and an empirical and political theory of security." McDonald (2008, p. 563) elaborates further claiming that many aspects of securitization theory remain 'underspecified' which makes securitization as analytic framework not eligible to use for academic findings or as explanation for shifts in policy. However, Balzacq et al. (2016, p. 497) do see the analytical value of securitization. They witness an important relationality between securitization and governmentality, a theory developed by Foucault, which gives securitization the "analytics of government" needed to provide sufficient practical elements to unravel state security issues. This is also important in this research puzzle. This means that securitization can be used as a theory, but that one must consider looking beyond the initially

limited formula of the Copenhagen School and consider broader interpretations of the concept which renewed the concept in the last decades (Van der Borgh & Savenije, 2019; Dück & Lucke, 2019, p. 23). This research thus uses an elaborated and more modern form of the originally formulated theory by the Copenhagen School and applies this theory to a current and relevant context. A further and wider explanation of the used forms of securitization theory can be found in chapter II.

1.3. The Muslim minority in France

France has the largest Muslim minority population of Western-Europe (Takieddine, 2019). In 2019, around 5.7 million Muslims lived in the West-European country, which means nearly 9 percent of the French population has a Muslim background. In the European Union, only Cyprus (25.4%) and Bulgaria (11.1%) inhabit more Muslims than France, but historically these two countries already had a relatively large Muslim population due to their closer bonds with the Arabic world (Pew Research Center, 2016). Due to historical developments the immigration of Muslims into France has risen since the second half of the twentieth century and it is expected that in 2050 nearly 13% of the French population will identify as Muslim (Pew Research Center, 2016). The growth of the Muslim minority in France is mainly the result of large immigration flows from Maghreb countries in the 20th century. Most of the Muslim immigrants in France originate from Tunisia, Algeria and in lesser extent Morocco, which is largely due to the colonial history of France in North Africa. In the 20th century Muslims inhabitants of the Maghreb left their home countries for France for several reasons (Seljuq, 1997, pp. 67-70): labor opportunities, colonial bands, military service, cultural exchange, family reunions, the immigration streams towards France kept at high numbers and the total amount of Muslim immigrants in France is still increasing in the 21st century. The Muslim immigrants mainly moved into large metropolitan areas, such as Paris, Marseille, Nice and Lyon. It was in these places that the first difficulties between Muslims and the French natives started:

The growing religious awareness, the quest to retain their identity, socioeconomic disparities, French government policy regarding the Muslim world, waves of subversive activities, and last but not least, the Gulf War and its aftermath - all these diverse and multi variant factors, joined by the rise of neo-Nazism in Germany, have posed serious challenges to the peace and stability in the Mediterranean region. (Seljuk, 1997, p. 68)

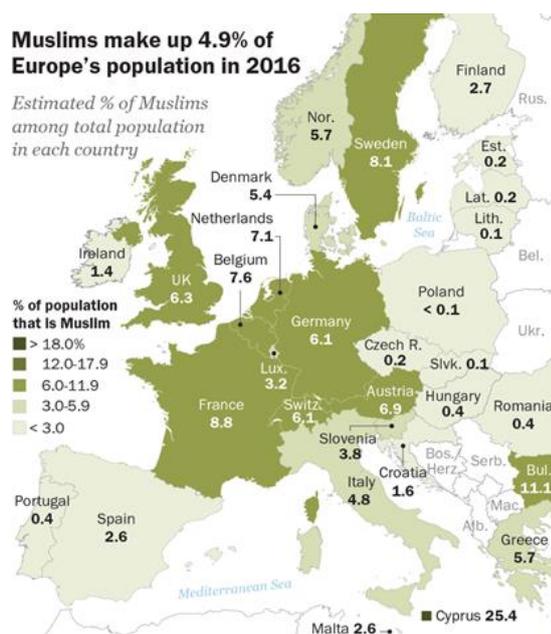


Image 1.1. With 8.8% of the French population identifying as Muslim, France has the biggest Muslim minority population in Western Europe.

[Source: Pew Research Center, 2016]

The large influx of Muslims into an overarching Catholic and secular country thus also brings up serious, difficult, and complex challenges. While Seljuq (1997, pp. 67-70) initially saw benefits concerning the arrival of Muslims in France and witnessed a peaceful relationship between the native French population and the mainly North-African Muslims at the beginning of the migration influx, serious religious tensions started to rise from the 90s of the twentieth century. Cinalli & Van Hauwaert (2021, p. 2), who are supported by Seljuq in his later argument, claim that presence of the Muslim population in France led to a “specific translation of issues related to Muslims across the public and policy spheres, namely, into public opinion, political agendas and policies.” The integration of Muslims into the French society emerged as a crucial point on the French political agenda, and it retains that position until today (Cinalli & Howart, 2021, p. 12). One central catalysator in the difficult position of Muslims in the French society is the existence of “laïcité” or “secularism” in France (Arslan, 2015, pp. 187-190). According to this concept, religion and politics are two strictly separated entities which should never be intertwined. Laïcité is considered as one of the core values of the French republic and is inevitable connected to the French state, society, and culture. By embracing laïcité as core principle, the French society moved away from the public expression of religion by placing it into the private spheres of small organizations at the edge of the French society (Willaime, 2008). Laïcité is a concept that can clash with the Muslim religion and identity, as in countries with a Muslim majority the state and the Islamic religion are more intertwined than in secular France. In Muslim majority countries, the Islamic religion is more openly exercised which makes Muslims get used to the wearing of a head scarf in public spaces, to pray multiple times a day in public buildings and to adapt their way of living to the co-existence of state and religion. The arrival of Muslims in France can be a relevant cause of a possible clash between Islam and France, as parts of the Islamic religion such as the head scarf are meant to be practiced publicly, which is something that does not cooperate with the concept of laïcité.

In this research it is important to constantly keep in mind that laïcité is a concept that is inevitable bounded to the French society and the French government thus also justifies political decisions referring to this concept (Arslan, 2015; Fox & Akbaba, 2015). A concrete effect of laïcité which had consequences for the Muslim minority in France prior 2015 are the laws prohibiting to wear a head scarf in public schools, established in 2004 (Idriss, 2005; Wing & Smith, 2005; Fox & Akbaba, 2015, p. 179; Abdelgadir & Fouka, 2020). While this new policy was not explicitly aimed at Muslims, the law resulted in extensive discussions on the differences between the clashing characteristics of Islamic religion and the characteristics of the secular French rule of law. The head-scarf law was expanded in 2010, which resulted in a complete ban on face covering in public spaces which only increased the debate about the position of (Islamic) religion in France. The French government justified this by claiming that France is a secular nation that respects religious freedom but controls its religious expression in public spaces (Friedman & Merle, 2013). The existence of laïcité thus causes difficult situations in the French society where on the one side law-making processes are justified by claiming the importance of secularism in France, while on the other side different actors claim that laïcité causes discrimination, racism, and limits the freedom of religious minorities (Baehr & Gordon, 2013, p. 250; Murdoch 2013, p. 1060). It is thus clear that laïcité complicates the political and religious context of this research, and it is important to be aware of this.

Ahmed (2019, p. 1) elaborates on another cause of an increasing division between Muslims and non-Muslims in France. Next to the more general form of laïcité in politics and law-making processes, the rise of populist right-wing parties in France is also important to mention. This development is foremost led by Marine Le Pen’s *Rassemblement National*, an extreme right-wing political party which identifies itself as the most steadfast defender of laïcité, which the party calls “exclusionary secularism” (Almeida, 2017, p. 250). While *Rassemblement National* always has been a protagonist of secularism, its position to defend the values of the republic has grown increasingly steadfast since the 2012 elections. With this development, which different scholars have named *dédiabolisation* (deradicalization), *Rassemblement National* succeeded to make the concept of laïcité the

centre of political debate on the position of Muslims in French society (Almeida, 2017, p. 251). The concept of laïcité and the emergence of right-wing political parties in France are relevant elements in understanding the current French context concerning the position of the Islamic minority and should not be neglected during this research.

1.4. Outline of this research

The rest of this research is set up as follows. In chapter II, the debate on the theoretical framework of political securitization will be explained, and my research will be positioned within this debate. During her existence in the academic world since the 90s of the 20th century, securitization theory has been extensively criticized (Balzacq et al., 2016). This research examines the resilience and flexibility of securitization as a theoretical frame in a recent case to see if it has been criticized justly, and how the theory renewed itself in the last decades to stay academically relevant. Certain aspects of this debate will be highlighted, as they form an important element in this contextual case study. Chapter III explains the methodology of this research, looking into the data-generating processes and explaining how analytical methods used can answer the research question. The results of the document analysis using the code program NVivo, and the supporting expert interview proves to stimulate the validity and correctness of the outcomes and conclusions of this research (Chenail, 2011, p. 255). Chapter IV presents the results of the NVivo analysis of the speech act of the French government and elaborates on the discussion derived from these results. Chapter V investigates the counter-voices of the securitizing act, by examining the perspective of Islamic and human rights organizations on the current political debate between the Islamic minority and the French government. Lastly, chapter VI contains the main conclusions from the analysis conducted and illustrates limitations and recommendations for further research.

Chapter II – Securitization as analytic framework

2.1 Chapter introduction

This chapter will outline the extensive theoretical debate securitization theory has been going through since its emergence in the 90s of the 20th century (Balzacq et al., 2016). The original theory of securitization, formulated by the Copenhagen School, has been accepted, rejected, and transformed by numerous academics. In this chapter, after reflecting on the emergence of securitization as theoretical framework, four points within this voluminous debate regarding this theory will be highlighted because of their close relationship with my own research. First the general suitability of securitization as theoretical framework will be discussed. Secondly, the dominance of the speech act within securitization theory will be analyzed, as in the 21st century several groups of scholars criticized this form of linguistic analysis as operationalization (Nyman, 2013). Next to this, the role of the audience and referent subject will be examined, as in this research it is important to understand how and in which manner they holds power to contest processes of securitization (Côté, 2016). Lastly, the debate on the concept of desecuritization will be examined, as the politics of securitization can also be rejected which leads to the return of the subject to normal politics (Roe, 2008). However, new studies show that processes of (de)securitization are more complex than originally formulated by the Copenhagen School (Van der Borgh & Savenije, 2019).

2.2 Security in our way of living

To put the theoretical framework of securitization in greater perspective it is relevant to shortly reflect upon its underlying theoretical core, security. “Security” is a concept that seems unavoidably intertwined with human life. In the 17th century, English philosopher Thomas Hobbes already witnessed security as something indispensable, claiming that without security ‘there is no place for industry... no arts, no letters, no society; and which is worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short’ (Oakeshott, 1946). Security is thus a concept of great value, but also an idea that is emotionally loaded and theoretically contested. However, because of the scholarly importance and the dominance of security in our way of living, the concept of security has undergone countless intellectual transformations throughout human history. In his book “*Security and international relations*”, published in 2005, Edward Kolodziej reflects on the many complex elements security studies entail. He compares this school of thought with the tower of Babel, claiming that “what to believe or expect is highlighted by the fundamental discord and debate among practiced and accomplished scholars, analysts, commentators, and political leaders about what the future holds for us as members of an emerging global society” (Kolodziej, 2005, p. 11). The theoretical debate on security is fuelled by such an abundance of actors, perspectives, and dimensions that it is difficult to formulate and establish a general security framework which can be used by different influential theoretical strands. Brooks (2009, p. 2) even claims that a universal definition of security is impossible to formulate, as every individual entity can define security as something else that depends on individual feelings and preferences. Nevertheless, Fischer and Green (2004, p. 21) come up with a general definition of security that is usable in the broader context of all security studies: ‘security implies a stable, relatively predictable environment in which an individual or group may pursue its ends without disruption or harm and without fear of such disturbance or injury’ (Fischer & Green, 2004, p. 21). This basic definition of security is an underlying concept of securitization theory, as securitization occurs when this stable environment is threatened. While the speech act forms the central element in the politics of securitization, it is important to understand the elemental vision of security where securitization finds its roots.

In international relations specifically, the concept of security was mostly concerned with the interactions between states after the emergence of the Westphalian sovereignty in 1648. After this peace treaty, the (nation-)state became the most important entity in the international system and

therefore the focus of security studies in international relations (Jackson-Preece, 2011, p. 17). Theoretically, this state-centric security focus is supported by realists and liberalists, as they witness power relationships between entities in the international system as the most important elements in security relations (Mingst et al., 2018, p. 124). They witness the state as an entity that has an established and peaceful internal system, and that most of the threats states face can be derived from other states, thus externally. However, due to globalization states has lost its lonely dominance as international actor in the 21st century. Multinational companies, internet and social media, and even key individuals have obtained such a reach over the world that these neo-classical theories of state dominance in international relations have lost its hegemonic power. This brings new dimensions to security theory, as new actors and elements are invited into the game of international relations that adapts the meaning of security.

However, some basic elements and definitions, despite all new developments, have stayed the same. Jackson (2000, p. 190-192) identifies four basic dimensions of security in international relations theory that, until now, have remained relevant in the ongoing scientific security debate. In their basics, these underlying elements also apply to the securitization theory and are therefore relevant to reflect on (Kilroy, 2018, p. 5). First, it is important to investigate 'what' needs to be secured. Security threats in international relations have mostly been about interactions between other human beings (individuals or organizations). However, there is increasing attention for environmental security, as in the 21st century climate change and climate refugees have been a growing concern for the governments and the international community (Biswas, 2011). Secondly, the 'threat' needs to be identified. Just like the first dimension this threat is often another human being, both an individual or/and united in an organizational entity such as a state or a labour organization. Third, Jackson elaborates on the means needed to achieve security. In general, two options are possible here: the entity being threatened needs to put off the threat, or the threat itself ceases to be threatening. While that may sound simple in abstract theoretical terms, many global trends tend to make the distinction between security and insecurity increasingly blurry (Kay, 2004, p. 13). For example, the emergence of a fast-paced globalization in the 20th century complicated the simple terms of feeling secure and feeling not. The last dimension Jackson (2000, p. 190-192) identifies is a more philosophical one, asking why security in general is important in a human life. He considers security as a core value in our way of living, attached to the idea that people want to be in relationships with each other, and therefore vulnerably expose themselves to some degree of insecurity. Therefore, their utter goal is to minimize the risks of expose themselves to insecurity, while maintaining social relationalities. These four dimensions form the basic underlying elements of security, and security is the underlying element of securitization.

2.3 The emergence of securitization as analytic frame

Liberalism and realism have been the dominant perspectives on international relations well into the twentieth century. However, from the 1990s onwards a new theoretical perspective gained foothold: constructivism (Mingst et al., 2018, p. 124). While constructivists have a fundamental different view on security in international relations, Adler (2013) warns for a too simplistic dichotomy between constructivism on the one side and realism and liberalism on the other, as they also share certain aspects: "the most ambitious bridgebuilding projects actually aim at synthesis, whereas other projects, for example, on 'international practices', aim at establishing a dialogue or conversation between the different 'isms'." (Adler, 2013, p. 122). For example, all three perspectives still consider the state as the most dominant entity in security issues. Their view differs on the way the idea of the 'state' as primal entity is constructed. Realists focus on material power, liberalists on both material and immaterial power, and constructivists on the power of ideas and culture. While their content thus differs, their way of thinking lays not as far apart as is thought (Adler, 2013). However, there are certain elements which constructivism prioritizes. These are mainly the national and subnational characteristics of the state: constructivists belief that every state has its own social identity that explains its behavior in both domestic and world politics (Hopf,

1998, pp. 174-175). Culture is indispensable in understanding security. The viewpoint of Brooks (2009), where he claimed that a universal definition of security cannot be formulated due to cultural differences, can thus be explained as a constructivist perspective on security. This cultural importance in security issues also supported by Hopf (1998, p. 192): "one will need to know about the culture, norms, institutions, procedures, rules, and social practices that constitute the actors and the structures alike". Key words that incorporate the theory of constructivism are power relationships, cultural interaction, and linguistic discourse (Mingst et al., 2018, p. 88). The establishment of constructivism as respected theoretical tradition added to the emergence the concept of securitization, initiated by the so-called Copenhagen School (Kilroy, 2018, p. 5). Next to these theoretical developments, new global challenges also paved the way for securitization to flourish. New, intra-state conflicts emerged during and after the Cold War, creating a "new world disorder" which could not be easily explained by the established theoretical frameworks. Internal conflicts such as in Yugoslavia (1991) and Somalia (1991), which were complex and caused by internal factors, opened the door for new approaches to understand security and conflict. Thus, both the emergence of constructivism and new global challenges formed by new intra-state conflicts can be witnessed as the just principles for the concept of securitization to emerge. Following the constructivist approach, The Copenhagen School emerged as a new intellectual tradition explaining violence and security by investigating this internal state behavior. This school of thought, that derived her name from her geographical location in the capital of Denmark, investigated new dynamic forms of security that looked beyond the limited scope of the traditional explanations in international relations (Kilroy, 2018, p.5). The term 'securitization' was first acknowledged by Ole Waever in 1993 and further expanded by Buzan, Waever & De Wilde with their book *Security: a new framework of analysis* (Kilroy, 2018, p. 5; Šulović, 2010). They define the original understanding of securitization as follows:

It is a discursive process by means of which an actor (1) claims that a referent object is existentially threatened, (2) demands the right to take extraordinary countermeasures to deal with that the threat, and (3) convinces an audience that rule-breaking behavior to counter the threat is justified. In short, by labeling something as [a] "security" [threat], an issue is dramatized as an issue of supreme priority. One can therefore think of securitization as the process through which nonpoliticized (issues are not talked about) or politicized (issues are publicly debated) issues are elevated to security issues that need to be dealt with urgency, and that legitimate the bypassing of public debate and democratic procedures (Kilroy, 2018, p. 5).

While the basic roots of securitization may lie in the theory of constructivism, Williams (2003, p. 515) claims that elements of securitization theory can be also be traced back to the realist ideas of German philosopher Carl Schmitt (1888-1985), mostly in the way an audience needs to be secured from existential threats. Schmitt's ideas about the 'politics of emergency', which were published during the years before the Second World War, show similarities with the politics of securitization published by the Copenhagen School. This means that Adler's ideas (2013) about the synthesis between the different theoretical perspectives on security in international relations is supported by other scholars and that there should be a shift from the pure constructivist perspective on securitization. While on the surface securitization seems inseparable with constructivism, above standing claims cause a more cautious consideration of included theories. Above standing discussions is just a starting point of the extensive debate securitization has witnessed since its emergence in the 90s of the 20th century. Next to the debate on the theoretical base of securitization, there also considerable discussion on the content, usability, and practicability of the theory (Balzacq et al., 2016). The most holistic forms of criticism witness securitization theory as Eurocentric, racist, theoretically limited, and static (McDonald, 2008; Balzacq et al., 2016; Howell

& Richter-Montpetit, 2020). Balzacq (2005) also claims that the ideas of the Copenhagen School miss a context bounded formula, which causes methodological problems:

Securitization is better understood as a strategic (pragmatic) practice that occurs within, and as part of, a configuration of circumstances, including the context, the psychocultural disposition of the audience, and the power that both speaker and listener bring to the interaction (Balzacq, 2005, p. 172)

Balzacq does not see securitization as a complete theory, but more as a way of understanding interaction between a securitization actor and an audience. However, several other academics do see the theoretical value of securitization, as it does not only form a reliable theoretical bridge between realism and constructivism, but also is a reliable way to explain current state security issues. Or as Williams (2003, p. 528-529) claims:

At a time when “security” is intensifying its hold as a dominant theme in contemporary politics, and increasing the range of its references (from home-lands” to “migrants” to a “war” against a terrorist adversary defined in part by its lack of visibility, and thus its relative insusceptibility to traditional terms of strategic and political debate and evaluation), and when appeals to the politics of “emergency” are ever more prominent, such investigations are even more imperative.

This does not mean that the extensive forms of criticism can be completely neglected when using securitization theory as framework. Paragraph 2.4, 2.5, and 2.6. further elaborate on some specific elements within securitization theory that are criticized which are relevant to reflect on concerning this research.

2.4 The speech act: a usable linguistic framework or a limited form of analysis?

The core of the securitization framework, as originally defined by the Copenhagen School, is its so-called “speech act analysis”. A speech act is a linguistic representation that positions a particular issue as an existential threat (McDonald, 2008, p. 566). Securitization theory has relevant relationalities with framing and discourse analysis, as it investigates the words a securitizing actor is using to persuade an audience to accept the securitization act. These words have the purpose to unravel the justification of certain actions by the securitizing actor by posing these actions as necessary to protect (national) security. This is supported by Stritzel (2007, p. 360): “the defining textual feature of securitization is therefore a specific security rhetoric which is marked by survival, priority of action and urgency, a claim to a modus of exceptionality that is contained in the meaning of (national) security”. Formulating a speech act to convince the audience to accept extraordinary measures is therefore the “modus operandi” of securitization. However, from different theoretical perspectives there is criticism on this linguistic framework.

A broad form of criticism on the speech act has been formulated by the so-called “Paris school” (Collective C.A.S.E., 2006). This school of thought emerged as a reaction on the Copenhagen School and suggested certain important alterations concerning securitization theory. Proponents of this school claim that there is not one single securitizing actor, but that there is a “growing significance of new actors in the social scientific knowledge market, such as think tanks, consultancies, NGOs, social movements and the media” (Collective C.A.S.E., 2006, p. 474). These different actors are a serious addition to the process of securitization and should not be ignored, as they form an increasing important player in audience acceptance, but also in forming a speech-act. Especially mass media are important players in spreading or rejecting the process of securitization, as they hold the power to reach a major part of the population. For example, according to Dolinec, media has the capabilities to influence imaginaries and to impose certain priorities (Dolinec, 210, p. 830). This means that there is no single speech act from an individual

entity, but that the complete speech-act process is influenced by an abundance of smaller actors with their own ambitions, and that a speech-act can also be contested by different sorts of actors. The Copenhagen School thus oversimplifies the speech-act, as it is not about one actor using a single speech to persuade a homogenous audience. The Paris School also claims that many sorts of ideas can be considered as a speech act, including physical activities such as camera surveillance or border control (Bigo, 2002).

Next to the Paris School, McDonald (2008, p. 569) argues that the focus of the Copenhagen School on the speech act is limited. He claims that a securitization act goes beyond the use of language. Following Möller (2007, p. 180) it is important to look beyond simplistic forms of linguistic persuasion, considering broader forms of analysis. Especially in the 21st century, with the emergence of social media as communication platform, Möller argues that representations of non-traditional media must be included as the audience is highly influenced by images, clips, symbols, and visual narratives. For example, despite the material absence of the Twin Towers after 9/11, the two iconic buildings are still used by the US government and other actors to legitimize securitization practices and to persuade the US population to accept extraordinary security measures, such as the war in Iraq or the authorization and power of the FBI. It are these symbolic representations that must not be neglected in the securitization process, as they help to visualize the existential threat for the audience. However, Vuori (2010, p. 274) reminds us not to draw too easy conclusions from visual representations. In his research, where he investigates the symbol of the *Doomsday Clock* which is imaged on the cover page of the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* for nearly 75 years, it is difficult to say if visual representations solely add to the process of securitization. It is unproven if visual symbols are often anchored in textual representations, and academic proof that an image only results in a successful securitization act does not exist. He therefore claims that securitization is a complex process, that must be used as “an avenue for understanding the relationships of actors, objects and meanings – in the end, to comprehend the functioning of power” (Vuori, 2010, p. 274). While visual representations thus help the securitizing actor with his objectives, their individual competences are not yet proved.

2.5 The audience as active entity

As is stated above, most of the research on securitization is focused on the basic *process* of securitization and on the securitizing *actor*, mostly “elite” entities such as governments or the military which hold power to carry out the securitization act (Balzacq 2016). The audience often has been neglected in securitization theory, or as Côte (2016, p. 542) claims: “The treatment of the audience within securitization theory has been inconsistent and at times non-existent, creating confusion surrounding both its identity and its purpose.” This seems strange, as the audience forms one of the central actors in the securitizing act, as “securitizing moves do not exist in isolation” (Wilkinson, 2007, p. 20); the audience must be persuaded by the securitizing actor for the securitizing act to be successful. While the Copenhagen School claims that securitization is an “intersubjective process”, and that there needs to be legitimate consensus among the audience to accept the politics of securitization, the original definition of the audience is seen as limited and controversial (Léonard & Kaunert, 2010, p. 60). On the one side, Buzan, Waever and De Wilde view the audience as a key actor, while on the other their explanation of the audience is under-specified and contradictory. However, recently there has been increasing attention for this other side of the securitization process, mainly formulated by the main critics on securitization theory (Côte, 2016). The audience knows many different dimensions, but in most securitization studies the audience forms the general population of a state and increasingly the audience has been examined as important entity in securitization studies. Roe (2008) makes an important dichotomy between the “formal” audience and the “moral” audience. The formal audience, often inhabited by governmental actors with policy power, are crucial to persuade as they have the power to cause policy change. Secondly, the general population is witnessed as the “moral” audience. They do not

have the power to influence the actual state apparatus, but their voice is measured as equal important. Securitizing acts influence the society in such a profound way that their consensus cannot be neglected (Roe, 2008, p. 619). In liberal democracies both the formal and moral support are vital for the securitizing act to succeed. Some scholars present further divisions in the sorts of audiences involved during a securitization process, such as Salter (2008, p. 328). He divides the audience in four different varieties: popular, elite, technocratic and scientific. Every entity here has its own dynamics concerning the acceptance or rejection of the securitization process which makes the audience acceptance debate an increasingly difficult process. Thus, the ‘audience’ is not a homogenous group but is exists out of a variety of smaller bodies that have agency and form a more complex network than that it was initially explained by the Copenhagen School.

It is important to realize that audiences are not always persuaded easily (Côté, 2016). For example, after the implication of new anti-Muslim laws in France in 2020 and 2021 several Muslim organizations and individuals opposed the implementation of these laws and started protests (News Wire, 17 February 2021). They claim that the new laws implemented in the winter of 2020/2021 are not targeted against Muslim extremists, but against all Muslims in France, which limits their religious freedom and makes all Muslims potential suspects. The Muslim population thus tries to reject the politics of securitization by holding back their moral support. (Roe, 2008) This development shows that audiences are not homogenous but form a complex range of different groups, all with their own ideas and opinions (Roe, 2008). In this research the audience plays a crucial role, as the existing debate concerning the Muslim minority in France and the closely linked policy reforms initiated by the French government are rejected by certain organizations. Islamic organizations can be seen as direct representatives of the Muslim communities, while human rights organizations are indirectly involved in the protection of religious freedom in France. They both try to contest the securitizing move. In chapter III the actors that contest the politics of the French government will be explained more thoroughly.

2.6 Desecuritization: rejecting the securitizing move

Since the emergence of securitization as analytic frame the word ‘desecuritization’ has formally been its counterpart (Balzacq, 2005). In classical securitization theory, existential threats that are securitized and therefore leave the normal political spectrum also have the chance to stay in or return to the normal political debate if the securitizing act fails. This means that the audience is not persuaded, that (inter)national pressure prevents the establishment of extraordinary measures, or that the securitizing actors stops securitizing. Instead of being securitized, subjects are ‘politicized’ and thus issues of open and democratic debate in (inter)national politics (Kilroy, 2018, p. 5). Figure 2.1 schemes these two actions as it was originally formulated by the Copenhagen School.

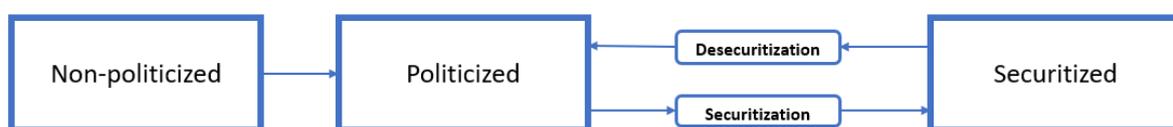


Figure 2.1. Schematic display of the classical process of de(securitization), based on Kilroy (2018).

Desecuritization is identified as a preferred development over securitization, as subjects can be treated in a less secretive and more democratic ways than they are in emergency politics (Roe, 2004, p. 282). In her analysis of the securitization process of the Muslim minority in Great-Britain, Brown (2016 p. 178) identifies movements that reject the securitizing move of the UK government: “however, this process [of securitization] is not uncontested and alternative cultural models of belonging emanate from Muslim communities that ‘normalize’ and challenge the Othering in security discourses.” It is important to realize that in the UK context the securitizing move is not only challenged by the Muslim organizations themselves, but also by an abundance of (non-Muslim) cultural organizations and news media (Brown, 2016, p. 181). They try to find an

alternative British-Muslim culture where Muslims are positioned as “normal individuals” instead as “terrorist and violent ones”. These processes seem to occur in several more diverse and multicultural democracies such as France (Ajala, 2014). Van der Borgh & Savenije (2019) show that processes of (de)securitization are more intertwined than the Copenhagen School originally stated. In their analysis of the truce process between street gangs and the official government in El Salvador by a combination of informal and formal processes of securitization and desecuritization, it is showed that securitization and desecuritization are processes that are influenced by each other and not strictly separated processes. Using the framework of strategic action fields of security governance, they show that the analysis of the politics of securitization is complex, as actors who oppose securitization of another actor also have the possibility to start securitizing acts themselves. In this way, Van der Borgh & Savenije support the ideas of Côte (2016) that audiences, but also referent subjects, are more complex and dynamic entities than the Copenhagen School has identified at the end of the 20th century, as there agency originally has been highly understated. Roe (2008, p. 282) argues that desecuritization seems inevitable after a longer period of securitization, as securitization is ultimately self-destructive. Securitization can be counterproductive, as the securitizing actor can cause only instability, fear, and violence after conducting a securitizing act instead of achieving peace and rest after ‘eliminating’ the existential threat. The concept of securitization should therefore, after some time, be replaced by a dynamic, creative, and social form of desecuritization, where a securitized subject returns to normal politics. According to the Copenhagen School there are different ways to desecuritize (Waeber, 2000, p. 253). First, there is the lack of a successful securitizing act in the first place, secondly is to keep the political debate common and democratic despite the existence of a securitizing act, and third is to move subjects that are securitized back to normal politics. However, the existence of dynamic security fields makes the process of desecuritization increasingly complex, as actors who oppose a securitizing act also can start a securitizing act themselves. Processes of securitization and desecuritization are therefore not naturally, as they are increasingly intertwined due to the existence of these dynamic fields of security governance (Van der Borgh & Savenije, 2019, p. 907). Referent subjects can thus float between being politicized and securitized, constantly influenced by processes of securitization and desecuritization. Figure 2.2 presents this view of circular (de)securitization, incorporating the entities involved in this research (see also chapter III).

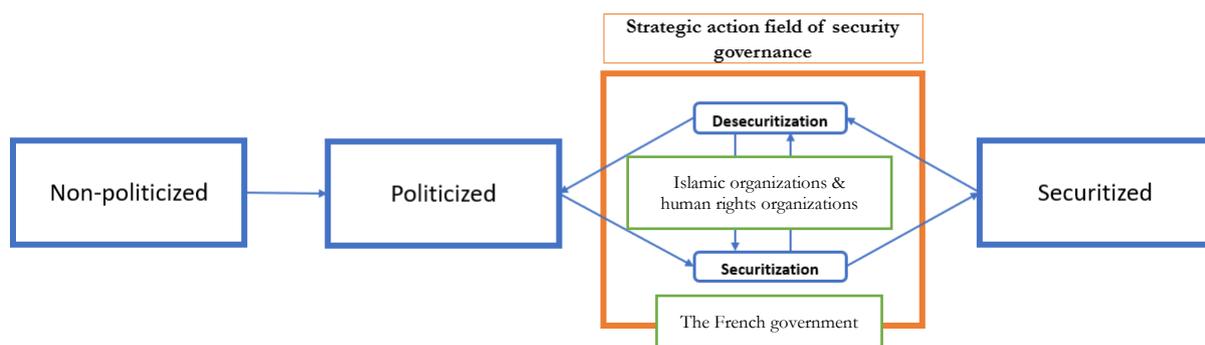


Figure 2.2. Schematic display of the dynamic processes of (de)securitization within the existence of strategic action fields of security governance including the actors incorporated into this research, based on Kilroy (2018) and Van der Borgh & Savenije (2019).

Above standing debate on securitization shows that the original claims and findings of the Copenhagen School in the last decade of the twentieth century have been subject of considerable debate in the school of international relations. After the emergence and establishment of securitization theory the academic world criticized, transformed, extended, and redeveloped the original elements. This theoretical debate highlights the dynamics in the processes of securitization and desecuritization by investigating the fluid aspects of the speech-act, the heterogeneity and

moveability of the audience and the interconnectedness of securitization & desecuritization as simultaneous existing processes. Section 2.7 presents how this research copes with the criticism on securitization theory and explains how this theory, in an elaborated form, is used practically to answer the sub questions and eventually the research question.

2.7. Securitization theory as framework in this research

In the 21st century securitization theory has been reconceptualized by an abundance of scholars which provides this research with new dynamics needed to use this theory in my research. A particular helpful reconceptualization is presented by Van Der Borgh & Savenije (2019, p. 907) who claim that the process of securitization is influenced by an “strategic action field of security governance” (FSG). This means that there are actors in favor of the securitization process, while in a later stadium there are also actors who oppose or reject the securitizing act, which makes securitization a dynamic playing field of moveable actors which changes continuously. Van Der Borgh & Savenije elaborate on these dynamics, as “the positions of actors can be blurred or fluid, with incumbents implicitly challenging the rules of the game, and support for challengers rapidly growing or fading” (Van der Borg & Savenenije, 2019, p. 910). This means that securitization is not a one-sided process by a single securitization actor, but that there are both securitizing and desecuritizing actors active in the same strategic action fields at the same time. This research uses this concept to investigate the dynamics of the process of securitization, to see how the politics of securitization can change over time and how this process is stimulated and rejected by different actors in a dynamic playing field. The same counts for the process of desecuritization, as section 2.6 shows that desecuritization and securitization are intermingled processes. Investigating the dynamics within the process of (de)securitization therefore forms a pillar in this research.

Concerning the speech-act it is important to realize that this concept, as originally formulated by the Copenhagen School, is limited in its content and one should consider including broader aspects of the process. This means that there is no single securitizing actor with a single speech-act, but that the concept of the speech-act is dynamic and can change over time, influenced by an abundance of organizations. In this research, the speech-act of the French government is investigated looking at different years to see how the speech-act is executed and how the use of it changes throughout time. In this way, it is examined how the concept of the speech-act of the French government is influenced by new attacks, policy developments and changes of individuals in the French state apparatus. Next to this, the speech-act of the organizations contesting the politics by the French government (thus the Islamic organizations and the human rights organizations) is analysed to investigate how different actors perform different forms of speech-act at the same time. While the importance of visual and symbolic representations is not underestimated, the organizations involved use mainly official documents to present its speech-act. Chapter III elaborates further on how the speech-acts of the different organizations are gathered and analysed.

Due to the absence of extended research on the agency of the referent subject this research partly uses the existing academic literature on the audience. However, an adjustment is made here. Using Roe’s division of formal and moral audiences, this research uses the distinction between the ‘formal’ securitizing actor, which is the French government and the ‘moral’ organizations contesting the politics of the government, which are the Islamic organizations and human rights organizations. While the non-state entities do not have formal policy power to directly influence the law-making processes, their activities are relevant in contesting the politics of the government. Next to this, it is important to realize that the government and non-governmental organizations do not make up the audience, as the French population is not incorporated into this research. However, Roe’s distinction can be used to separate the ‘formal’ actor from the ‘moral’ entities included. In this way, the heterogeneity of the actors involved in processes of (de)securitization is made aware. Chapter III will further elaborate on the methods used to operationalize securitization theory in this research, by using the framework of framing processes by Benford & Snow (2000).

Chapter III – Methodology

3.1 Chapter introduction

In general, the analytical framework of securitization identifies a three-stage process where a political subject can be situated (Kilroy, 2018, p. 5): non-politicized, politicized and securitized. Following a post-structuralist approach, referent subjects are labelled as a follow-up of the speech act formulated by the securitizing actor (Hansen, 2011). This means that a certain discourse is persuasive, and thus words create the box where a certain subject is placed. This process is central in this research, as this dissertation investigates how the French government is using a speech act to shift the Muslim minority in France from a politicized subject into a securitized one, and how several opposing actors contest this. These dynamics are the focus of this research, and this chapter elaborates on the methodological decisions taken. This chapter is organized as follows. First, the research design is explained and investigates my ontological and epistemological stances. In this part, the general strategy to combine the different elements of my research is analysed, as my research design forms the “blueprint” to conduct this research in a logical and coherent way. Secondly, the methods of data collection are spelled out to elucidate on how the primary and secondary data is gathered. After this, the approach to data analysis is explained by elaborating on the exact strategies to come up with analytical results. In the last part of this chapter, general choices concerning the methodology and ethical issues common in this field of research are explained, consequently elaborating on how to overcome them.

3.2 Research design: ontology, epistemology, and the research puzzle

It is important to realize that a quick demarcation in purely ‘qualitative’ of ‘quantitative’ research methods is not always appropriate, as some research methods cannot be easily boxed into one of the two aspects (Mason, 2018, p. 24). The question you need to ask is, which research methods are most suitable to answer my research question? Which strategy will solve my research puzzle? Therefore, in this research the research design is not put immediately in one of the boxes, because this limits the research horizon and consequently creates premature box thinking. This is also what Mason in her book *qualitative researching* (2018) claims:

Our world is incredibly complex, nuanced, and multi-dimensional, and finding a method or combination of methods that are up to the challenge of investigating whichever aspect of it you have chosen to explore requires imagination, creative effort, and sound reflexive thinking. (Mason, 2018, p. 24)

Before assigning your research as qualitative, quantitative, or “mixed-methods”, a first step in designing your research is identifying your ontological and epistemological perspective. They form the solid background of the research, your tower of strength, your theoretical ideas that are woven into your entire research and your common thread of your analysis. Rawnsley explains the importance of the use and clarification of ontology and epistemology, claiming that “the power of language to influence our perceptual and conceptual patterns cannot be overstated” (1998, p. 2). It is therefore vital to identify your epistemological and ontological perspective. Concerning the ontological stance, this concept is the position you take as a researcher in viewing the social world (Mason, 2018, p. 5). Defining your ontological position also means that your view of the social world forms is led by a certain perspective and excludes other views from being the focus in your research. It makes the research systematic and valid, as the different parts in the research are viewed from a similar perspective on this social world. In this research, the theoretical framework of securitization forms the point of focus, examining how this theory has an influence on the Muslim minority in France and how other actors react on this process. The dynamics in this debate form the focus of my research, and my ontological perspective is finding the “relationalities”, “connectedness” and “interactions” between the different actors involved and the concept of

securitization (Mason, 2018, p. 5). These concepts describe the view on the social world and thus form the ontological stance in this research.

Ontology thus investigates how the world is viewed. Epistemology, on the other side of the spectrum, looks into how the world can be explored, and how knowledge of this world can be gathered (Marsh & Furlong, 2002, p. 19). It is about what researchers can observe, and how research can possibly objectively investigate relationships between social phenomena. The epistemological perspective of this research can be described as “actor-network”, as it looks at how an act of agency (securitization) affects the network of social reality and experience (Mason, 2018, p. 9). In other words, this research investigates how different actors have the power to put a securitizing act into operation and how other actors try to contest this process which has consequences for the reality they are all incorporated in. My ontological and epistemological stance thus form the indispensable foundation of this research.

Mason also identifies “intellectual puzzles” or “research puzzles”, which in general forms the essence of your inquiry, the part of the social world that the research tries to unravel, and Mason identifies several different puzzles. The puzzle forms the part of the social world that is being investigated and needs to be formulated in such a way that it cannot be answered without an in-depth analysis. This research can be identified as a “processual puzzle”, investigating how things change, influence, and interact with each other (Mason, 2018, p. 10). The data needs to be gathered and investigated thus needs to be aimed at explaining processes that are can be traced back to the research puzzle. This research strategy expresses a view on how and why processes are formed, where they aimed at and how they are interconnected. The data collected needs not only to be meaningful and relevant, but also in line with the ontological and epistemological stances. To help to solve the research puzzle of this analysis it is important to elaborate on the research strategy. Blaikie (2009, p. 101) identifies four important sorts of research strategies. Concerning this research puzzle and ontological and epistemological stances, this research touches upon two of them: a retroductive research strategy and an abductive research strategy. This research puzzle can be divided into those two research strategies. A retroductive strategy wants “to discover underlying mechanisms to explain observed regularities” (Blaikie, 2009, p. 101). Concerning the first sub-question this is my aim: to explain how the French government is using a speech-act and how this speech-act is dynamic within the years analysed. The aim is to find regularities between different speeches conducted and to discover connections between speeches and policies. On the other side, an abductive strategy wants “to describe and understand social life in terms of social actors’ motives and accounts” (Blaikie, 2009, p. 101). The second sub-question inspects not the ambitions of the French government but investigates the other side: organizations that contest this process of securitization. It investigates the motives of contesting the politics of the French government and the strategies used in this process. Again, finding regularities among the understandings forms the essence of my inquiry. However, this strategy does not investigate the top-down implemented policies but analyses the bottom-up initiative. Taken together, the two above standing strategies thus look into different scales and give unique insights in the connectedness between top-down implement governmental policies and non-state actors such as Islamic organizations and human rights organizations.

Concerning the ontological stance, epistemological perspective and after defining the research puzzle, it is now clear that qualitative research methods are most suitable for conducting this research. However, qualitative research is a broad phenomenon, and there is little academic consensus on what exactly entails the definition of “qualitative” and what is not. Aspers & Korte (2019) investigated this and came up with the goal of qualitative research: “an iterative process in which improved understanding to the scientific community is achieved by making new significant distinctions resulting from getting closer to the phenomenon studied” (Aspers & Korte, 2019, p. 155). Qualitative research methods are thus both about explaining and understanding qualitative phenomena. An essential element in doing research is gathering and analysing qualitative data to

solve the research puzzle. Concerning data generation, several methods are applicable, and the next section will further elaborate on this.

3.3 Data generation methods

To answer the research question of this dissertation several sets of data are needed. In short, document analysis forms the core of the generated data in this research. This data generation method is identified as a qualitative research method in the academic world which makes them suitable methods in this research (Mason 2018). Document analysis is a method where already existing data sources are used and analysed, thus available secondary sources. This analysis forms the core of my research, as travel restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic prevented me from collecting primary data in person. Despite the challenges, I also conducted an expert interview with a British scientist, which supported my findings.

Document analysis

To be able to answer the two sub-questions analysing existing data forms a central element in this research. For a major part in this research, documentary analysis will be the foremost research method to use and to answer these questions. As stated in the theoretical debate on the framework of securitization, the speech act of the securitizing actor forms a central point in the analysis (Kilroy, 2018, p. 5). This is reflected in sub-question one. The French government has used different sorts of speech acts to persuade the audience to accept new policies aimed at the Muslim minority. By analysing these documents and speeches and by investigating the new policies implied the politics of securitization can be assessed. It can be explained how certain speech acts are implied by the French government and how the speech-act of the government changes between the years analysed. While the securitizing act is supported by several far-right organizations and news media, the focus of this research is to analyse the speech act of the French government. This means that the value of other organizations in supporting the securitizing is not underestimated, but that for the feasibility of this research these voices are not considered in this analysis. Concerning the French government, 10 speeches will be analysed. They are presented in Table 3.1, including the source and the date of the speech. All speeches have been held between 2015 and 2021 and they are retrieved from the official website of the French government (www.gouvernement.fr). By analysing speeches from different years after the attacks on *Charlie Hebdo* in 2015 it can be analysed if the language and tone of the speeches has changed. Most of the speeches are held by the French government leaders: current president Emmanuel Macron, former president François Hollande and current French prime minister Jean Castex make up the largest share of the speeches analysed.

Table 3.1. *Analyzed speeches from the French Government in chronological order.*

Name Speaker	Date	Source
Prime-Minister Manuel Valls	January 13, 2015	https://www.gouvernement.fr/en/tribute-to-the-victims-of-the-attacks
President Francois Hollande	September 8, 2016	https://jean-jaures.org/sites/default/files/redac/commun/discoursfrancoishollande.pdf
President Emmanuel Macron	June 21, 2017	https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2017/06/21/discours-du-president-de-la-republique-au-diner-du-conseil-francais-du-culte-musulman
President Emmanuel Macron	August 30, 2017	https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/the-ministry-and-its-network/news/ambassadors-week/prior-editions/ambassadors-week-edition-2017/speech-by-president-emmanuel-macron-ambassadors-week-2017/

President Emmanuel Macron	February 7, 2018	https://www.alamy.com/french-president-emmanuel-macron-delivers-a-speech-at-the-alboru-cultural-centre-in-bastia-on-the-french-mediterranean-island-of-corsica-february-7-2018-reutersbenoit-tessier-image372804763.html
President Emmanuel Macron	February 11, 2018	https://www.lejdd.fr/Politique/islam-de-france-ce-que-veut-faire-macron-3571067
Senat.fr	December 10, 2018	https://www.gouvernement.fr/en/french-islam-adapting-the-law-of-1905-to-the-world-of-2018
Prime-Minister Edouard Philippe	September 29, 2019	https://www.lejdd.fr/Politique/edouard-philippe-condamne-les-discours-nauseabonds-tenus-a-la-convention-de-la-droite-3922451
President Emmanuel Macron	October 2, 2020	https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/coming-to-france/france-facts/secularism-and-religious-freedom-in-france-63815/article/fight-against-separatism-the-republic-in-action-speech-by-emmanuel-macron
Senat.fr.	2020	http://www.senat.fr/rap/r19-595-1/r19-595-12.html
Prime-Minister Jean Castex	December 4 th , 2020	https://www.gouvernement.fr/vigipirate-a-son-niveau-urgence-attentat
Prime-Minister Jean Castex	December 9, 2020	https://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2020/12/09/jean-castex-l-ennemi-de-la-republique-c-est-une-ideologie-politique-qui-s-appelle-l-islamisme-radical_6062698_823448.html

The second sub-question focuses on the counter voices of the securitizing act. While the French government as actor in the first sub-questions is clear, coherent, and obvious the actors that (try to) contest the politics of securitization are not. An abundance of voices tries to counter the securitizing act, which makes it hard to logically categorise them for analysis. To overcome this difficulty the several actors are classified into larger groups. Two groups are identified: Islamic organizations and human rights organizations. First it was considered to also take French & international media entities into account. However, this would have made the research blurry as it is unclear if the media really represent their own opinion in the debate or only reproduce the opinion of other actors, such as the views of the French government, Islamic organizations, or human rights organizations. To keep the research clear for analysis it is therefore decided only to use content of actors that can be directly traced back to its writers so that it is evident where the voices that counter the French governmental politics exactly originate from.

The current classification keeps the collected data synoptic and coherent, and all collected sources can be put in one of the boxes. Table 3.2 and table 3.3 give an overview of the organizations that are contacted and analysed. Every name in the table means that the one document is derived from this actor. It is also important to look beyond "standard" sources to find expression of discontent and disagreement concerning the securitizing act. Especially Islamic organizations tend to express themselves via social media (such as Facebook and Instagram) instead of posting verified documents on their websites. This makes the data search process different than for the French government in the first and second sub-question. After careful consideration, the organizations displayed in table 3.2 and table 3.3 are the most important voices in contesting the securitizing act of the French government. Three reasons are important in forming the argument that these organizations form the most relevant voices in contesting securitization. First, an expert interview with Joseph Downing, researcher at the London School of Economics, resulted in a clearer overarching distinction between the different actors in the securitization debate. Downing elaborated on the importance of the French government in exercising emergency politics and being

a dominant actor in this debate, but also on the different voices that try to oppose the practices of securitization. Second, media sources were investigated to find out which organizations were formed the most relevant counter-voices to analyse. Third, other secondary sources such as dissertations, scientific articles and policy reports which were read up on resulted in increased knowledge on the active organizations suitable for analysis. Above standing activities resulted in a systematic search for relevant entities and as a result table 3.2 and table 3.3 form the definitive list of organizations that are used in the analysis.

Table 3.2. *Analyzed sources concerning Islamic organizations in chronological order.*

Name	Date	Source
Collective against Islamophobia in France (CCIF)	November 27, 2020	https://www.islamophobie.net/tag/islamophobia/
Justice and Liberty for all committee (Yasser Louati)	October 12, 2020	https://www.pri.org/stories/2020-10-12/does-spirit-je-suis-charlie-endure-france-today
European Network against racism	November 2020	https://www.enar-eu.org/Protection-of-civil-society-organisations-and-human-rights-defenders-working-1825
CAGE	December 4, 2020	https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/uk-rights-groups-decry-frances-anti-muslim-drive/2066075
Human Rights Watch	December 4, 2020	https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/12/04/france-dissolving-anti-discrimination-group-threatens-rights
Statewatch	December 8, 2020	https://www.statewatch.org/news/2020/december/france-dissolution-of-the-collectif-contre-l-islamophobie-en-france-threatens-basic-human-rights-and-liberties/
CAGE	January 18, 2021	https://www.cage.ngo/global-coalition-demands-un-human-rights-council-take-legal-action-against-france-for-abuse-of-muslims
United Nations	January 18, 2021	https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/france-islamophobia-un-human-rights-council
Amnesty international	March 21, 2021	https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/EUR2139122021ENGLISH.pdf
CNCDH (Commission Nationale Consultative des droits l'homme)	April 12, 2021	https://www.la-croix.com/France/menace-contre-lieux-culte-musulmans-persiste-2021-04-12-1201150545

Table 3.3. *Analyzed sources concerning human rights organizations in chronological order.*

Name	Date	Source
l'Union des démocrates musulmans (UDMF).	October 19, 2019	https://www.liberation.fr/france/2019/10/21/l-udmf-le-parti-musulman-qui-derange-la-droite_1758967/
Muslim brotherhood	October 5, 2020	https://global-watch-analysis.com/la-traduction-integrale-du-communique-du-guide-supreme-des-freres-musulmans-menacant-la-france/?lang=en

La fondation d'Islam en France	November 5, 2020	https://www.jeuneafrique.com/1068198/societe/ghaleb-bencheikh-le-discours-islamiste-a-pris-en-charge-langoisse-liee-aux-fractures-identitaires/
Dissolution of the le Collectif contre l'islamophobie en France (CCIF)	November 27, 2020	https://www.liberation.fr/france/2020/11/27/le-collectif-contre-l-islamophobie-en-france-prefere-l-autodissolution-a-la-dissolution_1807024/
Religious union of all religions in France except Islam	January 8, 2021	https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2021/01/08/separatisme-les-critiques-des-representants-des-cultes-contre-le-projet-de-loi_6065618_3224.html
Muslim brotherhood	January 8, 2021	https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20201006-macrons-anti-islam-remark-against-principals-of-french-revolution-says-brotherhood-leader/
Conseil Francais du Culte Musulman (CFCM)	January 17, 2021	https://www.lefigaro.fr/flash-actu/la-charte-des-principes-de-l-islam-de-france-approuvee-par-l-ensemble-des-federations-du-cfcm-20210117
Christian organization	March 15, 2021	https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2021/03/15/projet-de-loi-separatisme-gerald-darmanin-rassure-les-responsables-chretiens_6073119_3224.html
Front contre l'islamophobie	Multiple dates	https://www.facebook.com/frontcontrelislamophobie/
#Stopseparatismbill – Coordination Contre la loi séparatisme	Multiple dates & sources put in a document	https://twitter.com/CoordinationCLS

Interviews

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021 it was impossible to travel to France to conduct in-depth physical interviews. This was the main reason I shifted towards document analysis as main tool of analysis. While document analysis might provide me with less ground-breaking conclusions, it is still a respected and valuable form of reasoning in qualitative researching and therefore suitable to use in this inquiry. Next to this, investigating the speech act of the French government and identifying the countering developments of the non-state actors can still be adequately investigated without conducting any interviews. The feasibility of this research therefore does not suffer without conducting them. However, in the 21st century “a growing literature about ‘computer-mediated’, ‘online’ and ‘Internet’ research methods” emerged (Jowett et al., 2011, p. 354). This includes online interviewing, and therefore I initially decided not to let go interviews entirely. Online interviewing was still possible, but it made the research far more dependent on the reactions from organizations that were contacted. As the concept of securitization, new laws aimed at the Muslim minority of France, Islamic separatism, and terrorist attacks are all sensitive concepts in the social world it was expected that organizations would be very reluctant in cooperating with online interviews, as there was possibility that information would be recorded, and information would be leaked. This was supported by Joseph Downing, a security researcher at the London School of Economics specialized in France, claiming that an abundance of scholars sees the results of online interviewing as problematic, especially when doing research on sensitive topics. Still, the organizations in table

3.1. are all contacted in French to request an online interview in the first two weeks of April 2021. Unfortunately, after sending multiple e-mails and telephone calls no organization contacted agreed on online interviewing. Next to this, it was decided to look beyond the initial primary data collection plans as the COVID-19 pandemic asked for more creative forms of data collection. Throughout the research multiple scientific experts with a focus on securitization, France and Muslims were contacted to interview them and obtain a more enhanced view on the subject. Again, while these interviews were not the focus of the data collection it both supported and debunked results from the document analysis. After contacting 7 experts only Joseph Downing was available for an interview, and thus forms the only interview incorporated in this research with supporting the data. Now that the data generation methods of this research are clear, it is relevant to elaborate on the way this data is analysed.

3.4 Data analysis

3.3 elaborates on the data collection methods, thus how the data for the interviews and document analysis is gathered. After the data is organized in a logical and systematic way, the data is analysed to come up with results. For the validity and reliability of this research it is important to explain in detail the way in which these results are achieved. Explaining the process how a piece of data is altered into empirical evidence that contributes to answering your research question and sub-questions is indispensable. This part of the chapter analyses the analysis. Why is the NVivo as qualitative program used for the document analysis? How can raw data put into the NVivo program in a coherent and systematic way? 3.4.1 elaborates on the data analysis of the speech act of the French government. Benford & Snow's practical framework of framing processes is used to operationalize the politics of securitization and to analyse the linguistic performances the speech-acts. In 3.4.2, it is explained why and how three important laws that are presented and installed between 2015 and 2021 are incorporated into this research. 3.5.2. looks into the analysis of the non-state entities that contest the politics of securitization.

Data analysis – Document analysis of the speech act

The document analysis consists out of two separate elements. First, the speeches by the French government are analyzed using the code program NVivo. NVivo is a widely used analysis program which provides the researcher with coding software:

The software provides a workspace for researchers to store, manage, query, and analyse unstructured data, including text, images, audio, video, and other data types. NVivo has been used in many library and information science studies, including to analyse interview data, student assignments, and survey data. (Phillips & Lu, 2018, p. 104)

As NVivo has been widely used by the academic world to inspect qualitative data this program is suitable to use in this research. The goal of the program is to configurate unstructured data and to give certain words and sentences codes. Codes are summarizing phrases for a piece of text which expresses the meaning of the fragment. Step by step, the coding process will provide the researcher with valuable information (Boeije, 2009, p. 94). The researcher will be able to see relationships between certain phenomena and compare visual and linguistic changes throughout time. According to Boeije (2009, p. 96) the coding process incorporates three steps: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. These steps will also be followed in this research. Open coding is the start of the coding process and generally labels all relevant information in superficial, loosely bounded topic groups. It provides the researcher with the first ideas, as it is still unclear what information is of great importance and what is not (Boeije, 2009, p. 96). It are mainly general words closely related to this research. As a second step, axial coding goes a layer deeper by finding connections between the different codes. Several codes resulting from open coding are merged and compared, which results in a smaller amount of codes used in the analysis. Also, a new scan of the data causes a new

additions and insights to the already existing data sets, which makes the code scheme better organised and refined (Boeije, 2009, p. 108). The last step in the coding analysis is selective coding. Its purpose is to integrate all loose parts of the earlier coding practices. No more new data is analysed, and the coding outcomes are integrated in theoretical frameworks. This means that the selective codes are compared to securitization theory, and codes such as "Islamic separatism" are put in perspective regarding the theoretical debate. In this way, theory and empirical analysis are integrated to formulate the answers on the different sub-questions. In the analysis only the results of these coding processes will be incorporated.

To systematize the coding process of the NVivo analysis the framework of "framing processes and social movements" by Benford & Snow (2000) is used. Benford and Snow explain in their article that the success of social movements depends on accomplishment of the framing activities carried out. Important within this framework is human agency, as "movement actors are viewed as signifying agents actively engaged in the production and maintenance of meaning for constituents, antagonists, and bystanders or observers" (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 614). This framework overlaps with the epistemological and ontological perspectives of this research, as the relationalities between actors and their agency are investigated (see 3.2.). Within the extensive framework of Benford and Snow certain elements specifically are used in this research which are part of the creation of collective action frames. These elements are part of the core framing tasks of the movement actor, which are diagnostic framing, prognostic framing, and motivational framing. Diagnostic framing is the identification of a problem and investigating its attributions. In this research, this means that both the French government as the organizations contesting the politics of securitization diagnose a certain problem that needs to be overcome. This can be compared to the existential threat in the framework of securitization, and therefore diagnostic framing is relevant to operationalize in this research. Secondly, prognostic framing elaborates on strategy of the movement actor to bring a solution for the problem. This is thus about a plan and the tactics involved to solve the threat and includes a range of procedures. Persuasion is also an important element of prognostic framing, and again this shows overlap with the politics of securitization. Motivational framing is the last step of the core framing tasks, but this element is only partly incorporated in this research. The main reason for this is that motivational framing is used as a last step in the framing process, and its goal is to motivate people to undertake (violent) action. In the French context, (violent) action is not the goal of the French government at all, and therefore motivational framing will only be used in the context of the non-state entities as it is expected that some non-government organizations will use motivational framing processes.

Benford & Snow's framework of framing is relevant to use in this research for two general reasons. First, the core framing tasks of social movement are suitable concepts to operationalize the politics of securitization and to analyse both the speech act of the French government as the speech-act concerning the contestation of securitization by human rights organizations and Islamic organizations. Especially the concepts of diagnostic and prognostic framing provide this research with researchable indicators. Secondly, as Benford & Snow investigate how a certain issue is problematized and solutions and strategies for this problem are presented, the framework of framing processes shows important relationalities with securitization theory. Both frameworks value and witness mobilization and conflicts as discursive practices, where images of the other are created and sustained via framing activities (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 615; Kilroy, 2018; p. 1-5). While securitization focuses on the speech act as framing factor, the framework of Benford & Snow both concentrates on the problematization as the presentation of solution strategies. The concept of securitization highlights the importance of the speech act, but it does not automatically provide the researcher with operationalized indicators to perform analysis. These two elements are both present in the speech act, which makes this framework suitable to use in this research. The results of this analysis are presented in chapter IV.

Data analysis – Document analysis of voices that contest the securitizing act

The second element in the document analysis concerns sub-question II and investigates the non-state actors that counter the politics of securitization. The non-state actors consist out of Islamic organizations and human rights organizations, as both the contextual documents in chapter I as the academic literature in chapter II claim that these two entities form the most important actors that counter the securitization act. Next to this, British terrorism-expert Joseph Downing marked these two sorts of entities as most relevant counter-securitization entities. The different individual organizations are presented in table 3.2 and 3.3. To map the different positions of the two categorized non-state actors NVivo will be used to code the different forms or linguistic representations. Again, the framework of Benford & Snow (2000) will be used to analyse how the different organizations try to counter the politics of securitization. This provides this research with a systematic analysis, as both the speech-act of the French government as the counter-voices are analysed by using the same concepts of diagnostic and prognostic framing. This makes the comparison between the different actors and their agency valid and reliable and in line with my epistemological and ontological perspectives. The results of this analysis are presented in chapter V.

3.5 Methodological and ethical decisions

This chapter investigated the research strategy, data collection methods and the methods of analyzing of this research. By choosing a certain strategy, other strategies are dismissed, and it is important to shortly reflect on certain methodological choices and ethical complexities. As Mason (2018) claims, methodological and ethical choices in qualitative research can be difficult:

It is precisely because qualitative data are not entirely reducible to numbers and statistical associations but are often based on holistic/ecological analyses and presentations of what may be personal, identifiable and idiosyncratic material – especially in light of the different ways of being creative with data – that questions of confidentiality and anonymity are raised in particularly sharp form. (Mason, 2018, p. 103)

Concerning this research, the document analysis does not inhabit special forms of ethical decisions, as the documents scrutinized can be accessed openly through official websites or (social) media. As these documents are thus open to the global community, they do not require special treatments. However, it is important to realize that open sources are not ethically neutral. Publicly available documents still represent the world through colored glasses, as these documents are published by a certain actor. This research is aware of this coloration, and therefore tries to represent the debate using document from different organizations. For example, by investigating the perspective of the Islamic organizations documents of several different organizations are inspected to make claims more generalizable. Next to the document analysis one expert interview was conducted. The last years there has been increasing attention for the ethical implications of online interviewing (O'Connor & Madge, 2017). Important is to get the consent of the interviewees, and that they agree with their statements being used in qualitative usage. Also, with subjects that can be quite sensitive, such as in this research, it is important that the individuals interviewed feel comfortable, trusted, and safe. During the process of collecting primary data and analyzing secondary data, it is also important to realize that no research can be entirely neutral. Every researcher has it biases, ideas and perspectives. While doing research does not skip these dimensions, it is tried to assess and manage this subjectivity by being aware of the positionality of the researcher.

Chapter IV – Analyzing the speech-act of the French government

4.1 Chapter introduction

In chapter IV & V the methodological choices (chapter III) are intertwined with the theoretical debate (chapter II) and empirical complication (chapter I) to perform analysis to answer the research question. This chapter elaborates on the results of the analysis executed on the speech act of the French government. It is divided into two parts, where in general the speech act of the French government is investigated according to the concept of framing processes (Benford & Snow, 2000). Section 4.2 investigates diagnostic framing, as the French government is increasingly 'diagnosing' the French society with existential threats such terrorism and Islamic separatism. Section 4.3, as a follow-up, uses the concept of prognostic framing to witness how the French government is presenting tactics, ideas, and a general strategy to bring a solution to the suggested problems the French society is facing.

4.2. Diagnostic framing: who or what is the problem?

Following Benford & Snow's study an important element within framing processes is the concept of 'boundary framing' (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 617). Boundary framing inhabits framing processes where a certain actor is portraying another entity (this can be an individual, organization, or something else) as threatening and therefore creates a situation where differences, or the boundaries, between the two entities are stressed. These framing processes thus create "us-them" thinking, which could lead to negative and hostile images of the other. However, Benford and Snow (2000, p. 616) also claim that it is often not completely clear who or what exactly is to blame. They call it "attributional processes", where agreement on the nature of the problem is not constantly in line with the source the problem. In other words, this means that in France there is consensus about the threat terrorism or Islamic separatism form for the French society, but that it is not always evident who exactly needs to be blamed for it. Terrorists? Migrants? Imams? Islamic organizations in the Arabic world? The complete Islamic minority living in France? It makes the diagnosis of the problem by the securitizing actor complex, and this is reflected in the speeches performed by the different French governmental actors. Every speech analyzed is permeated with an abundance of claims, statements, and opinions, but there are remarkable shifts within these speeches about the targets of these claims. In general, two relevant shifts can be identified.

From external to internal

First, a systematic comparison between the main Islam-oriented speeches of Prime-Minister Valls, (January 2015), President Hollande (September 2016) and President Macron (February 2018, February 2020, and October 2020) exposes differences in the scale used. While on the surface the speeches seem quite similar, as they are aimed at the protection and defense of the French population and the secular values of the republican state against the threat of Islamic terrorism, there are slight differences in the linguistic representations of their pronounced goals and ambitions that present a shift in the governmental perspective on the Islamic minority in France. Throughout his speech, President Hollande (2016) maintains his diagnostic framing statements and annotations quite general. For example, the form13 68 m qer president of the Republic considers the danger of Islamic terrorism as a planetary, as a struggle in which all European countries should unite to protect democracy:

Democracy will always be stronger than the barbarism which declared war on it. This belief in me does not erase my lucidity in the face of the seriousness of the threat. Islamist terrorism bleeds all continents with blood, occupies territories, destabilizes countries, massacres populations, organizes attacks that it sponsors or inspires. (Hollande, September 2016)

It is not a case of France against Islam, but a case of the world community against Islamic terrorism. Hollande sees this diagnosis as universal, and Islamic terrorism as the attack on the complete global democratic community. He speaks of togetherness, solidarity, and resilience to protect the values of the Western democracies. Hollande has less attention for internal struggles within France, as he speaks of “external threats” that need to be eliminated. He does not entirely skip the threatening of the French identity, but Hollande stresses less the internal struggles of the Republic which dominate in President’s Macron speeches in 2020. Macron (2020), in contrast to Hollande, does quote the threat of Islamic terrorism towards the French republic as unique entity:

But we have to realize that a radical Islamism is leading to a repudiation of the Republic’s laws, to the trivialization of violence and to some of our citizens, our children, choosing the worst or believing the worst has become natural, and so to the creation of conditions for political abuses but also violent abuses, those of Islamist terrorism. (Macron, October 2020)

The speeches that are performed in 2018, 2019 and 2020 are dominated by terms and claims aimed at internal developments within the Republic instead of the external threat Hollande was speaking about. This marks a shift in diagnostic framing, as the enemy is no longer outside, but also inside the Republic. This is also witnessed if the locations of the speeches are analyzed. Looking at the geographical locations where important government speeches on the Islamic minority in France are held, there is also a visible shift throughout the years investigated. Again, it can be deduced that the process of diagnostic framing is expanded. Former French president François Hollande, in 2015 and 2016, held his speeches mostly in French official government buildings in Paris, where he claimed his war against “Islamic terror” and ISIS. He saw Islamic radicalism mostly as an external threat, attacking the French republic from the outside and the attacks on the satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* and the *Bataclan* music hall were mostly the result of external terrorist organizations who infiltrated the French society and formed an existential threat to the French society. The “enemy” was far away and should be destroyed via international cooperation. The diagnostic frames that thus were created were aimed at the outside and formulated as “us” against “them”. However, current French president Emmanuel Macron chose other locations for his speeches. His speech about Islamic separatism on the 2nd of October 2020, for example, was not carried out in the stately government buildings within the *Boulevard Périphérique*, but in *Les Mureaux*, a suburb in the west of Paris often described as *banlieue*. While this change of location may seem innocent and of little importance, this geographical shift also has a symbolic meaning: the dangers of Islamic terrorism are no longer external but can be found in within the French republic. The speeches are no longer conducted in buildings which represent the power and inviolability of the Republic, but in places where the French government tries to persuade the French audience that the threat is also present within France. This means that there is also a shift in the diagnostic framing process: a transformation of the problematization of the enemy from external to internal.

From individuals towards a political movement

Investigating the speeches of the French government another development also stands out. Between 2015 and 2021 the content of the diagnostic framing processes by the French government has changed. This is most visible comparing Macron’s speeches in 2020 and earlier speeches of Hollande in 2015 and 2016. Macron uses a slightly different word to portray the existential threat: he does not speak about “Islamic terrorism” as Hollande did in 2016, but about “Islamic separatism” and “radical Islamism”. While this not seems of great importance at first sight, this linguistic shift has consequences for the Islamic minority in France. The word terrorism is aimed at a small group of individuals who form an active threat to the French society committing attacks on French soil. In Hollande’s speech, they form the focus area. However, in Macron’s speech in 2020 it is no longer just about these “terrorists”, but it is the complete political concept of “Islamic

separatism' and "political Islam" that needs to be eliminated. This means that there is a shift from a very identifiable small group of radicalized enemies towards a more general resentment against political Islam, which makes the general Muslim minority increasingly the target of the speeches conducted by Macron. For example, Macron, in his speech on October 2nd, 2020, mentions "Islamic separatism" nine times, while he speaks of "terrorism" only six times, which means that he broadens the negative perspective on Islam. It seems easier to see the difference between a Muslim and a terrorist than to see the difference between Muslim who is in favor of "Islamic separatism" or "radical Islamism" and a Muslim who is not. The boundaries between different sorts of groups of Muslims are becoming blurry and unjust generalization of the Muslim minority is lurking. Following Benford's & Snow's framework this means that processes of diagnostic framing created by the French government are expanded by introducing a broader set of threats to the French society. Macron's 2018 speech can in some ways be seen as a part of a transitional period between the 2015 attacks and 2020 attacks, where Macron elaborates on the limitation of external influences such as the arrival of radical Imams and the existence of cash flows between mosques in France and Arabic countries, but Macron also talks for the first time about the problematic existence of "political Islam", which "has no place in France". This means that in 2018 the process of diagnostic framing was already expanded from a very identifiable group of Islamic radicals towards a more holistic form of boundary framing against political Islam. By systematically investigating and comparing the linguistic formulations of the speeches it becomes clear that the French government is increasingly portraying the Islamic minority in France as a problem to the core values of the French Republic.

Another analytical result is that the framing targets in the speeches analyzed are different shortly after terrorist attacks. This is witnessed in all speeches analyzed in 2015, 2016 and 2020, speeches given shortly after attacks on French soil took place. The attacks on the satirical French magazine *Charlie Hebdo* in January 2015, the multiple shootings including the *Bataclan* music hall in November 2015, the vehicle ramming in Nice in July 2016 and the recent smaller attacks in the fall of 2020 caused a rise in the use of different topics and diagnostic framing practices, pointing the guilty finger more directly towards the Muslim community as a direct response of the attacks. Words as "barbarism", "terrorism" or "the destruction of the spirit of France" are frequently used in these speeches to stress the differences between the terrorists and the Republic (Valls, 2015; Hollande, 2016). By stressing the differences between "us & them", the process of boundary framing is used, and negative perceptions of the other are maintained and exacerbated. This is also supported by several academics. Fellag (2014), for example, also observes the strengthening of us-them boundaries in her study on the Muslim labelling in France, claiming that diagnostic framing also has implications for the Muslim minority which results in increasing socio-economic tensions: "part of this struggle for social and economic integration, I argue, relates to the historical tendency of the French state to label French North Africans as "Muslims", and not as "true" French citizens. (Fellag, 2014, p. 4). Next to this, the speeches of the French government also function as paying tribute to the French victims of the attacks. By claiming in speeches that "we" are under attack it is also assumed that the attackers are neither citizens of the Republic nor part of the French culture. "We" incorporates everything that the attackers are not: French, republican, civilized. The speeches in 2015 and 2016 that followed the attacks are mainly aimed at the external threat against individuals who infiltrated and attacked France, while the speech of Macron in October 2020 also incorporated internal threats. However, they all share the same characteristic: the attacks are performed by individuals who are the fundamental opposite of everything the French culture and state entail.

4.3. Prognostic framing: taking extraordinary measures as a solution?

According to the framework of Benford & Snow the next step in using framing processes is prognostic framing, thus presenting strategies and tactics to come up with a solution. In terms of politics of securitization this means that the securitizing actor is coming up with extraordinary

measures to defeat the existential threat. What are the strategies and tactics of the French government?

The NVivo analysis shows that the prognostic framing activities by the French government are not constantly on the same level. Throughout the years analyzed there is a shift from the tactics and strategies presented. Different governmental actors show different sorts of framing activities, and despite an broadening negative perspective on the existence of Islamic separatism in France, several speeches also include the confirmation of an unavoidable co-existence between the Muslim and non-Muslims in France. This is most prominently exerted by Edouard Philippe, former prime minister of France, who even opposed anti-Muslim narratives formulated by right-wing political parties which he called "*discours nauséabonds*" (false speeches) in his speech conducted on February 28, 2018. He claimed that extremism in all its forms must be rejected, but that Muslims & Christians must live next to each other in the Republic. This means that in years where no big attacks took place the violent imaginary of "us & them" is sometimes replaced by "we" and the violent perspective created by the certain government officials not always dominates. This is also reflected in the speech of prime-minister Manuel Valls in January 2015, but one thing stands out. Valls' speech is the only speech analyzed that also talks about the protection of the Muslim population in France:

The other urgent need is to protect our Muslim compatriots. They too are worried. Unacceptable, intolerable anti-Muslim acts have again occurred in recent days. Attacking a mosque, a church, a place of worship, desecrating a cemetery – these too are insults to our values. (Valls, January 2015)

Speeches conducted by Emmanuel Macron from 2018 onwards are less positive about the Muslim community. A neutral perspective can still be identified in some parts of the speeches analyzed, but the concept of co-existence is replaced by ideas of adaptation. For example, in an interview with *Le Journal de Dimanche* on 11 February 2018, Macron elaborates on the ideas of the French government to completely reorganize the foundation of Islam in France and to prevent "parallel societies". This interview is less a result of direct events but more about policy, laws and how the Muslim minority and the non-Muslim population can be united in the Republic. The French triangular values of "liberty, equality and fraternity" shine through in all speeches in these years to promote unanimity under the French population:

It is this desire that we all have to be French and French together, to live under the regime of laws that we have given ourselves and that democratically elected representatives vote and to live there freely". (Macron, 18 February 2020).

This means that the Muslim minority should adapt and assimilate into the French republic and ultimately becoming French instead of Muslim. These claims are also made in Macron's speeches in 2020 and shows a shift from the strategies used: the Muslim minority must assimilate into the French culture. This means that Macron's speeches also try to convince the Islamic population of France to accept the new reforms and upcoming activities by the French government to prevent parallel societies and stimulate Muslim and non-Muslims to live peacefully together in France, but all according to the French Republican values. In other words, Macron also tries to convince the referent subject (the existential threat) that the measures needed are also in their advantage, by stressing the national cohesion and the unification of all individuals under the French secular flag:

Every day people want to put forward good reasons for dividing us. We aren't a society of individuals. We're a nation of citizens. That changes everything. We learn to be citizens; we become them. These are rights and duties. But I won't yield an inch to those who want to

divide us one way or another, because I believe our greatest treasure is this grouping we form. (Macron, October 2020).

In Benford and Snow's framework this means that developments within the prognostic framing process are dynamic, and that the securitizing actor only uses certain prognostic framing activities in certain moments of time, predominantly after terrorist attacks on French soil. Moments of hatred, fear and despair are interchanged by moments of fraternity, cooperation, and resilience and the process of diagnostic framing is thus not always in line with the process of prognostic framing. Tactics of preventing the arrival of Imams in France are interchanged by feelings and strategies of co-existence. The analysis shows that more aggressive forms of prognostic framing are "peaking" at times when attacks take place, but that these are replaced by more thoughtful forms or linguistic representations and content in times when France is not experiencing major casualties from terrorist attacks. Framing processes are therefore also not constantly on the same level and the topics and content greatly vary according to the speaker, the time, and the place. However, this section shows that, in general, the prognostic framing activities of the French government have expanded throughout the years analyzed. While in 2015 peaceful co-existence was part of the prognostic framing activities, later speeches were more coercive in imposing processes of assimilation. Another claim reflects on an important element in the theoretical debate on securitization: the existential threat and the audience are two entities who are not always strictly separated. While Macron identifies Islamic separatism as the enemy of French society, it is also known that more than 8% of the French population identifies itself as Muslim. Therefore, the Muslim population forms both the threat and the audience which makes the concept of securitization as it is formulated by the Copenhagen School limited in its scope (Côte, 2016, p. 542). The interweaving of the audience and the existential threat makes this debate complex and shows that in the politics of securitization different sorts of actors interact with each other.

Another point stands out. In all speeches analyzed the different French government representatives come up with general solutions for the terrorist threat and ideas of preventing the spread of Islamic separatism. However, most of these tactics remain quite general. For example, by claiming that France is "refusing extremism" or that "democracy will win", such as in the speeches conducted by Valls and Hollande in 2015 and 2016, general values of the French Republic are respected but it is not really a presentation of tactics. The only speech that does elaborate on a more specified strategy is Macron's speech on October 2nd, 2020. In this speech, Macron refers nine times to the 1905 law, the first official law on establishing secularism in France. This law officially marked an end to the era of officially recognized religions and created a strictly institutionalized division between the French church and state. In his October 2020 speech Macron's claims that this law now is limited and overtaken by the growth of the Islamic minority in the last decennia of the 20th century, which requires a reformulation of this law. The law represents the importance of the republican values of the French state and is considered as a universal characteristic of France. No other speech analyzed mentions this law so often which creates the assumption that the French government is increasingly making institutionalized decisions to interfere further in the religious practices of its citizens. Next to the mentioning of the law, Macron presents five pillars to overcome the threat of Islamic separatism in his October 2020: these pillars are mainly aimed at internal struggles within France, from schools and education to the establishment of an "Islam of enlightenment", a form Islam that is intertwined with the secular values of the French republic. The *cinq piliers* are also used by Macron to justify the anti-separatism bill, a new law initiated by the French government which has been heavily criticized by several religious and human rights organizations (see chapter V for more information about this law). These five pillars are a focus of Macron's strategy to defeat Islamic separatism and protect the French values of the Republic. The French president tries to persuade the audience by claiming that these pillars represent the values

of the Republic and thus must stay upright, as they symbolically represent the strength of the Republic against the threat of Islamic separatism.

Most speeches performed by the French government are quite thus general, touching upon an abundance of different subjects, while some others focus more on one or two subjects. This also has implications for the process of prognostic framing, as specific speeches present more detailed tactics. For example, in his speech on the February 18, 2020, Macron extensively elaborates on the arrival of Imams from the Arabic peninsula in France, which he sees as a contributing factor to radicalization of the French Muslim youth. He therefore advocates for a complete stop on the arrival of Imams in France to prevent further external influence of Islamic separatism. However, in the exact same speech but a few sentences later, Macron talks about the importance of Imams in France to 'train' them to educate the core norms and values of the French republic and to keep Islamic youth of the French streets. This means that while on the one side the arrival and presence of Imams is framed as a problem to the French society, on the other side they are indispensable in educating the Islamic youth. This makes the process of prognostic framing complex, there is no 'general' framing rule followed, but several forms of prognostic framing processes are interchanged.

4.4 Politicization or securitization?

This analysis also exposes one of the shortcomings discussed in theoretical debate (chapter II). In the different government speeches, it becomes clear that Macron wants to defeat Islamic separatism and Islamic extremism to protect the French republic values. However, it remains underspecified if these ideas, ambitions and claims in the different speeches analyzed can be placed under the label of politicization or should be placed under the label of securitization. The dividing line is thin, and securitization theory provides too little differences between those subjects imaged as politicized and those portrayed as "an existential threat to society", thus securitized. Due to the dynamic developments of prognostic framing it is difficult to put the activities of the French government in one box or the other. The framework of Benford & Snow is valuable in this research, as in some speeches the enemy is imagined and created using certain narratives, may it be radical terrorists or political Islam in general. However, in other speeches these claims are partly softened and rollbacked and the French government is not quite steadfast: the content and claims different according to the speaker, the date and time of the speech (directly after attacks or not), the geographical location and the topics addressed. An important characteristic of the framing activities of the French government is the (re)formulation of laws, such as the 1905 law mentioned above. Throughout the years analyzed several new laws have been presented and installed, which has been a focus of critique of the non-state organizations. Chapter V shows that the French government is not the only actor using framing processes to achieve its goals. The non-state organizations analyzed in this research (Islamic organizations and human rights organizations) prove to also incorporate framing processes their activities, predominantly focused on these laws.

Chapter V - Contesting the politics of securitization?

5.1 Chapter introduction

As is witnessed in chapter IV, the relationship between the Muslim minority and the French government is complex. The speech-act analysis of the government shows that the relationship between the French government and the Muslim population, from certain perspectives, is worsening. However, it seems that this speech-act is not easily accepted by certain non-state actors. There is an increasing group of Islamic and human-rights organizations that contest the speech-act and try to recall certain aspects of newly initiated laws. The first part of chapter presents the results of the NVivo-analysis concerning these organizations, again using the framing framework of Benford & Snow (2000), as this framework focuses on social movements and is therefore suitable to use. Non-state organizations also use a speech-act including diagnostic and prognostic framing processes, which differs fundamentally from the content of the French government. The second section investigates the dynamics in the field of non-state entities opposing the securitizing act of the French government.

5.2 Focus of non-state entities

A first important element in the analysis is that the criticism of all speeches and representations of the non-state organizations are aimed at laws implemented by the French government. The critique of the non-state entities is not directly aimed at the speeches conducted by Hollande, Macron, Valls or Darmanin, but at the concrete laws that were installed before and/or after the speeches. The same applies to the human rights organizations analyzed. For example, Amnesty International's contributions mostly occur when new laws are presented, such as the law on mass surveillance (2015) or the anti-separatism law (2021) in which they blame the French government for unjustifiably targeting the Islamic minority. Thus, the speech-act of the contesting organizations is mostly a reaction on concrete and practical developments of the government rather than directly debunking speeches performed by (former) presidents or prime ministers. The analysis claims that their critique is predominantly aimed at three laws, which will be shortly discussed below. After an elaboration on the content of the law, the critiques of the non-state organizations will be put next to it.

Law on mass surveillance (2015)

In March 2015, two months after the attacks on the satirical magazine of *Charlie Hebdo*, the government of François Hollande rapidly presented a new law as a reaction on the terrorist assaults which could prevent new attacks in the future. The *Loi relative au renseignement*, or 'Intelligence act' was accepted by the French parliament as a response to the Islamic terrorist assaults on the Paris-based magazine. The law empowers the government to monitor all sorts of media activities, such as phone calls, emails or text messages from every French citizen suspected of having connections with terrorist or terrorist activities and pass this information forward towards intelligence services without the approval of an official judge. This new law directly caused a storm of criticism from an abundance of entities. The law on mass surveillance, originating from 2015 already received criticism from human rights organizations, as they claim that the French government is "turning a deaf ear to strong opposition from rights groups, judges, tech companies, trade unions, lawyers and parliamentarians, as well as criticism from international human rights bodies" (Amnesty International, 2015). In their eyes, the law unjustly follows innocent civilians and infringes their privacy and personal freedom. The question that arises is if this law really is a result of the politics of securitization. If the definition of securitization, which is used in this dissertation (see also chapter II), is followed closely, an important element stands out: the taking of extraordinary countermeasures (such as laws) must be justified (Kilroy, 2018, p. 5). This means that the audience is persuaded and convinced that the normal democratic formula must be bypassed to eliminate the existential threat. After investigating the law on mass surveillance, two important claims can be

made considering the institutionalization of the politics of securitization. First, it can be concluded that the 2015 law on mass surveillance, despite its broad criticism from mainly human rights organizations, can only partly be seen as a follow-up of the politics of securitization. The law was broadly accepted by both the National Assembly and the Senate and the law was published as a “*law ordinaire*” (ordinary law). The law-making process broadly followed the legal path as every law, and from this perspective the technical and logistical elements of the law do not look like a form of emergency politics. Secondly, after the attacks on *Charlie Hebdo* a state of emergency was proclaimed which was still in place during the instalment of the law. It is important to realize that this state of emergency provides the government mainly with more executive tasks, and that new laws still need to be installed via the common political way. This means that while the state of emergency was proclaimed, this had no grand consequences to produce the law on mass surveillance. Next to this, the attacks on *Charlie Hebdo* provided a solid justification to take these extraordinary measures which persuaded the French audience partly.

Anti-terrorism law (2017)

In 2017 French president Emmanuel Macron announced a new law to combat terrorist activities within the Republic. The anti-terrorism law, or *loi renforçant la sécurité intérieure et la lutte contre le terrorisme*, grants special police forces far-reaching powers which are normally only permitted during a state of emergency. While France was in a state of emergency since the attacks on *Charlie Hebdo* in 2015 this *état d'urgence* was supposed to be withdrawn in 2016 but ultimately was suspended in the fall of 2017. Because President Macron saw the internal dangers of the terrorist threat as more important than his predecessor Hollande, Macron desired to transfer these powers for special police forces from the state of emergency into permanent law. However, while the assemblage of the law on mass surveillance by the French government seems like an ordinary way of policymaking, the law was not accepted by the French audience without fierce criticism. In April 2015, more than 100.000 French citizens had signed a petition to hold back the law as it would infringe the privacy and personal freedoms of all French citizens. Nationally, the media paid a lot of attention to the establishment of the law and internationally there was also criticism from media which feared the concentration of extraordinary powers in the hands of French political leaders. It can be concluded that while the official formation of the law was established in the correct legal way, the public debate was certainly not silent but still bypassed as the law was still put into practice on July 24, 2015. While the attacks on *Charlie Hebdo* caused a shockwave throughout France and the French government presented a quick response in the form of this emergency law which passed the National assembly and the Senate via the normal way, the audience was not persuaded, but the law was still installed. While it is too early to claim that this law is a result of the politics of securitization, it can be said that there are cracks in the degree of democracy in the instalment of the Intelligence act. Concerning the anti-terrorism law, there are three relevant differences between this law and the law on mass surveillance. First, while the law on mass surveillance was easily accepted by the National assembly and the Senate, the anti-terrorism law was subject of far more debate in French governmental entities, mainly concerning its content. This ultimately resulted in several modifications of the anti-terrorism law. Secondly, there is a difference in the timing of the law. While the law on mass surveillance in 2015 was mainly a direct result of the attacks on *Charlie Hebdo* and therefore was partly justified, the law on anti-terrorism was installed directly after the end of the state of emergency in France, which again raised criticism from human rights organizations who claimed that the anti-terrorism law is a disguised way to maintain the powerful executive possibilities for the government. There was, despite a terrorist threat, no direct occasion for the law to be installed. Thirdly, the presentation of the anti-terrorist law also attracted the attention of the UN, which condemned the damage done to human rights and democratic values of the republic. Michel Forst, a UN rapporteur claimed that the anti-terrorism law “risked creating a “permanent emergency situation”, handing the state special policing powers without the proper control of judges and the legal system.” (Chrisafis, 28 September 2017). This means that the

criticism was supported more broadly and extensively than it was for the law on mass surveillance. Another reason the UN criticised this law was the ‘vague wording’, where at some points it was unclear in which way special police forces can infiltrate houses, arrest, and interrogate suspects, and in which way peaceful demonstrations could be put on halt. The UN had no direct remarks on the law on mass surveillance, which means that the anti-terrorist law is further damaging the democratic elements in the French society.

Anti-separatism law (2020)

The last law analysed, originating from 2020 but officially presented in 2021, goes even further than the laws mentioned in above. The *loi confortant le respect des principes de la République*, shortly the *loi contre le séparatisme* or anti-separatism law has been developed and presented by Macron’s government shortly after the different small terrorist attacks in the fall of 2020. These attacks included the beheading of the French teacher Samuel Patty in Paris, the stabbing of church visitors in Nice and the killing of a priest in Lyon. While the new law was already being prepared in the summer of 2020, the attacks in October accelerated the preparation and presentation of the law. The principles of the law are based on the 1905 law, the first important document that officially divided church and state in France. The basic principles of the 1905 law are redeveloped in the anti-separatism law which makes the fundamental base of this law different. The content of the new law is basically about “discouraging behavior seeking to impose religious viewpoints in the public sphere” (Griffin, 2021). The law on mass surveillance and the anti-terrorist law are examples of government documents that influence mainly the executive tasks of government entities such as judges, police, and special police forces. However, the anti-separatism law is based on a transformation of the fundamental principles of the French Republic, which makes this law not only more radical, but also constitutionally different. The criticism on the anti-separatism law was broad, and next to the already existing organizations who criticized the formation of this law such as (inter)national media, human rights organizations and the UN now a new actor joined this criticism: non-Islamic religious organizations. French Christian and Protestant organizations joined the Islamic organizations in claiming that the new law is against religious freedom for all French citizens, and Islamic organizations called the new law the “*loi anti-Musulman*”. On February 16, 2021, the law passed the French parliament after 144 amendments were made (RfI, 2021). However, it is important to realize that far-right political parties such as Marine Le Pen’s *Rassemblement National* asked for amendments as they claimed that anti-separatism law in its current form did not go far enough to combat terrorism and separatism. This resulted in two weeks of fierce debate where political left and right were evenly matched opponents, but the non-state entities did not succeed in preventing the establishment of this law. Table 5.1 shortly summarizes the different analytical components of the laws.

	Occasion	Main content	Accepted by parliament	Criticism
Law on mass surveillance (2015)	Terrorist attacks	Surveillance	Yes	(Inter)national media, HRO
Anti-terrorism law (2017)	Ending of the state of emergency	Special Police Forces	After modifications	(Inter)national media HRO, UN
Anti-separatism law (2020/2021)	Terrorist attacks	Principles of the Republic	After modifications	(Inter)national media, HRO, UN, non-Islamic religious organizations

Table 5.1. Analytical differences between new French laws installed in 2015, 2017 and 2020/2021 to combat terrorism.

The social movements analyzed in this research, in contrary to the French government, do touch upon the last core framing task of Benford & Snow's framework (2000). Motivational framing, defined as a "rationale for engaging in ameliorative collective action, including the construction of appropriate vocabularies of motive" is identified recurrently in the framing activities of Islamic organizations (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 617). This is mostly visible on the Instagram and Twitter-accounts analyzed. Image 5.1. shows an example of a tweet that was reposted by the #CoordinationLLS, which motivates French citizens to participate in a demonstration in Lyon against the anti-separatism law. This means that Islamic organizations go beyond the core framing tasks of diagnostic and prognostic framing, but also try to mobilize the population to actively engage in demonstrations and to take the debate to the streets.

L'ISLAMOPHOBIE

DIMANCHE 16 MAI À LYON, 14H PLACE JEAN MACÉ

(à faire tourner un maximum !)



Image 5.1. Motivational framing by an Islamic organization on Twitter. Retrieved from

https://twitter.com/Eco_Decoloniale/status/1392407358240874505

Another form of motivational framing by non-state entities is the establishment of petitions. For example, *le front contre l'Islamophobie* started a petition against the separatism law which was signed by thousands of French inhabitants. These forms of motivational framing are a relevant difference between the framing activities of the government and the non-state associations, as the governments' goal is not cause social mobilization of certain population groups but to de-escalate the social and religious unrest. Thus, above standing analysis shows that the combination of framing processes by the non-state organizations with increasing extensive criticism on practical laws formulated by the French government proves that Islamic organizations and human rights organizations are also active in contesting the speech-act and the relational institutionalization processes of the government. A next question that arises is how the non-state organizations construct a speech-act themselves.

5.3 Diagnostic & prognostic framing: a speech-act?

Between 2015 and 2021 both international and French media increasingly presented the views of human rights organizations and Islamic organizations on the French government. Chapter III presents the different organizations that are incorporated into the NVivo analysis, as after careful consideration it is decided that these organizations are among the most prominent voices to counter the politics of securitization by the French government. A first important remark is that the way non-state entities present themselves is fundamentally different from the government. While the French government tries to reach the audience by official speeches on French television and documents which can be found on official government websites, non-state entities do not have the possibilities to carry out framing tasks via these canals. Islamic organizations and human rights organizations present their ideas and opinions using (social) media, such as Twitter, Instagram,

Facebook, and news websites. They also have statements on their own websites, where they try to reach the audience for diagnostic and prognostic framing practices. The organizations use (social) media as important canals to share their statements, ideas, and opinions. Using these kinds of channels can help organizations to reach the greater international community to ask attention for what is happening in France. In this way, international pressure is a way for the non-state entities in France to help achieve their goals in the sense that criticism from more international respected organizations will increase the support on the debate in the French Republic. For example, many Islamic organizations in France are organized on Twitter in the account #CoordinationLLS, in full *la coordination contre la loi séparatisme*, which is specialized in criticizing the anti-separatism law presented by the French government in 2020. Next to this, this account is also, more broadly, an international online assembly point for several Islamic organizations to unite and share their critic opinions. After the NVivo-analysis, it becomes clear that the non-state entities also have a speech-act in which they problematize the activities of the government, and this speech-act consists out of mainly three elements. Throughout the different sources analyzed, three general topics keep returning in the speech-act of the non-state entities. These three topics are central in the diagnostic and prognostic framing process and explain the focus of the entities contesting the politics of the government. These topics are, in random order, human rights, religious freedom, and identity. The analysis shows that processes of diagnostic and prognostic framing are intermingled. First, human rights are a term mainly covered by the human rights organizations analyzed. They witness a decrease of general tolerance which goes beyond the concept of religious freedom. CAGE, a human rights group based in London, argues that the news laws initiated by the government between 2015 and 2021 also caused a general decline in an abundance of human rights, such as freedom of speech, privacy, and the right to organize demonstrations:

The French government has enacted policies that deliberately and systematically undermine and violate fundamental civil liberties and human rights of Muslims, including young children. As such, France has violated the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child. (CAGE, January 18, 2021)

In addition, Islamic organizations try to reach international human rights organizations to help the Islamic organizations in their struggle against Islamophobia. Well-known organizations such as Amnesty International devoted several documents on the different new laws which claim that the news laws increasingly unjustly targeted the Muslim community in France, violating the rights of freedom of association and expression, and discriminating Muslims. For example, Amnesty uploaded a document that criticizes the bill ‘to strengthen respect for the principles of the republic’, as it would discriminate the Muslim community:

The conflation of Islam with terrorism in government policy and in the implementation of administrative measures unduly singles out this community, alienates the community from the State, and creates a form of political and social disenfranchisement that is inconsistent with the State’s obligations under international human rights law. (Amnesty International, March 29, 2021)

Next to this, Amnesty International argues that while the laws are not specifically aimed at the Muslim minority, the practical consequences are mainly felt by this group. They problematize the actions of the government thus mainly by labelling the new presented laws as a threat to general human rights. This means that the non-state entities are also carrying out a speech act directly aimed at the French government in which they try to persuade the French population and the international community that the developments in France are undesired. The diagnostic framing process thus includes the problematization of the new presented laws, and the tactics presented

(prognostic framing) to prevent the violation of human rights is the abolishment of these laws. Within the concept of human rights, the element of religious freedom is the main point of the Islamic organizations analyzed. The new laws are mostly aimed at the public expression of religions, and these laws collide with the core values of the Islam, where religion is exercised on the streets and in public buildings. Especially the verb “threaten” is an often-cited annotation in the documents analyzed. For example, the French commission for human rights claims that xenophobia has risen in the 21st century: “Islam is a threat to the identity of France. For twenty years, xenophobic and racist discourse has shifted into anti-Muslim discourse, with the idea that Islam is a security threat” (CNCDDH, April 12, 2021). The protection of religious freedom inhabits the same sort of diagnostic and prognostic framing processes: the problem are the new laws, and the solution is to prevent these laws from being successfully installed. Motivational framing is also incorporated, as petition, demonstrations and international attention tend to help the non-state organizations with their ambitions.

Lastly, identity is a recurring concept in the organizations contesting the politics of securitization. This is mostly explained by the Islamic organizations, as they witness the establishment of different laws as a threat to their public Muslim identity. The NVivo analysis shows that Islamic organizations devote considerable attention the new laws initiated, and most sources also claim that these laws are problematic concerning the formulation of a French identity. This has been the case for a longer time, as the analysis shows that the complex relationship between the government and the French Islamic minority has implications for the establishment of a united French-Muslim identity. This idea is supported by Kaya et al (2017, p. 361) who claim that loss of French identity is the result of “nostalgic deprivation”, which means that political exclusion, discrimination, and stigmatization against Muslims in the French society challenges the co-existence of a French identity and an Islamic identity. A combination of several factors has contributed to complications in the formation of French-Muslim citizenship and the establishment of *Islam français*. While there is a distinction between conservative and more liberal Muslims in France, they both experience issues with a dual identity and some scholars claim that it is legally impossible to combine aspects of “Frenchness” with “Muslimness”. The news laws initiated by the French government will only increase the complexity of this identity formation process and according to Downing “this process will increase the religious tensions in France, which could cause a constant return of terrorist attacks” (Downing, personal interview, April 7, 2021).

However, not every Islamic organization in France is active in the problematization of the actions of the French government. In particular, *La fondation d’Islam en France*, an Islamic organization that is aimed at the integration of Muslim in the French Republic, calls for a harmonious relationship between the French government and the Islamic minority, “to help the emergence of an Islam in France that is a republican Islam, autonomous both in its funding and in its approach”. This organization does not reject the current political steps of the French government but tries to find a middle ground between the government on the one side and more radical Islamic organizations on the other. Next to this, as only organization analyzed, *la fondation d’Islam en France* supports certain controversial claims which are heavily rejected by other non-state entities. In their sources, Ghaleb Bencheikh, the head of the organization, extensively uses words and sentences which criticize the current position of Islam, such as that “fanatic ideas must be dismantled”, that there is a “fight against radical Islam” and the confirmation that “theological Islam is in a crisis”. This organization is thus more in favor of the ideas of the French government than of the Islamic organizations, which again presents the complexities in the framing processes: there is no single voice against the securitizing act, but an abundance of entities involved in the process all with their own goals and ambitions.

Above standing claims show that non-state organizations use an identifiable speech-act too, and that this speech-act is both part of securitization and desecuritization processes. One the one side,

Islamic organizations and human rights organizations tend to desecuritize by claiming that the Muslim minority is not forming a threat for the French society. This is done by stressing that religious freedom, an own identity, and the observance of human rights are equally important and fundamental rights to all French people. Next to this, these two actors are also involved in processes of securitization, as they try to picture the French government and the newly initiated laws as an existential threat to freedom of religion, human rights and identity.

5.4 The dynamics in the field of non-state entities

After analyzing the field of non-state actors which oppose the securitizing act of the French government several claims can be made. The analysis shows that the field of contestants is fluid, and that the non-state entities are not simply following the process of desecuritization as formulated by the Copenhagen School. In fact, by investigating the framing activities they also carry out securitizing acts by themselves. The activities of the non-state entities are unpredictable, ever-changing, and fluctuating but several aspects in this dynamic field can be highlighted.

First, the analysis shows that the field of contestants is ideologically and logistically scattered. For example, *la foundation d'Islam en France* follows the discourse of the French state and thus not openly criticizes the new laws. Rather, this organization direct towards a society where the Islamic population and the core values of the Republic are merged. On the other side, the *Muslim Brotherhood* denies any form of cooperation with the French state: "The Brotherhood resists the excesses of regimes that deliberately seek to force them to abandon their faith and distort their image through illegal and inhuman acts" (Mounir, October 6, 2020). The field of counter-voices is divided into an abundance of smaller organizations which all pursue their own ambitions and aspirations. This prevents the representers of the Islamic minority to organize and mobilize themselves in an entity which can adequately counter the politics of the French government. The government thus has practical and powerful advantages over the scattered non-state entities, as despite the broad waves criticism the three laws are still installed.

Next to the division of the non-state entities the government also interferes in the activities of the organizations. The presentation of tactics and strategies by non-state actors is not always successful. The CCIF, the *collectif contre l'Islamophobie en France* (Collective against Islamophobia in France) was disbanded in October 2020 after new terrorist attacks in France. The French government suspected the organization to have linkages with political Islam and Islamic separatism and was labelled as a separatist organization. The CCIF was not the only Islamic organization that disappeared as a counter-voice, as 51 other entities that were suspected of linkages with Islamic separatism also disappeared from the scene. The activities and expression of the Islamic organizations on (social) media is thus not without dangers, as the French government has the power to disband counter-voices of their own politics. In a way to overcome this development, some Islamic organizations try to collaborate with international human rights organizations to strengthen their powers of opposing the politics of the French government and to increase their credibility. However, the analysis shows that this is happening in little amount. This is supported by Downing (personal interview, April 7, 2021), as he claims that the different small organizations, despite their actions and their showed resilience, fail in causing concrete changes in the government's tone and activities. Their individual power is too small, and their actions and ideas too diverse to form a significance voice against the government. The analysis supports this, as there are many different organizations, social media accounts, and key individuals active who all try to counter the speech-act of the French government. However, for a more effective and efficient form of contesting several of these entities need to join forces to become a united entity of importance in the dynamic framing field. Currently, their ideas are too divided, as some organizations use social media to gain (inter)national attention, while others focus more on recalling concrete laws, while there are also organizations which try to motivate the Islamic minority to come in action. The contesting of the politics of the government and its Islamophobic elements is thus a broad affair which includes an abundance of non-state

actors but proves to be limited in its decision-making and management skills as their misses an integrated approach. For example, this can also be seen in the number of accounts and hashtags on twitter and Instagram against the new laws. Instead of two or three popular accounts, hundreds of smaller entities are active which prevents the establishment of an actor that gains attention from the government.

A last claim is that throughout the different years analysed the number of organizations joining the group of non-state entities criticizing the proposed laws increased. While the law on mass surveillance was only addressed by media and human rights organizations, the anti-terrorism law and the anti-separatism law have been criticised more extensively including the UN, religious organizations which have no Islamic background, and the parliament, who asked for modifications in the law. Concluding it can be said that there is an increasing negative spiral of new governmental laws that by an increasing amount of (inter)national parties is seen as an assault on the democratic principles of the French Republic, both in limiting religious freedom as in limiting popular influence on the establishment of the laws. However, this growing field of active entities in the dynamic field of security has only partly succeeded in preventing the instalment of new laws. The analysis makes clear that field of entities contesting the securitizing act is dynamic, growing and also conducting speech-acts and proposing extraordinary measures. This means that they are not only trying to desecuritize, but that they are putting up securitizing acts themselves in the field of security governance as is explained in figure 2.2 in the theoretical debate. This analysis shows that the process of political securitization is not a static and unilateral act, but a dynamic procedure where processes of securitization and desecuritization are intermingled, including a broad range of actors all pursuing their own goals and ambitions.

Chapter VI – Conclusions & recommendations

6.1 Conclusions

Since the second half of the 20th century the percentage of inhabitants with an Islamic background in France has been steadily growing due to an abundance of reasons, and it is expected that in 2050 more than 13% of the French population will identify themselves as Muslim (Pew Research Centre, 2016). However, the arrival and growth of the Islamic population in France has not been undisputed and has been increasingly the focus of a heated political and scientific debate, also due to the occurrence of Islamic terrorist attacks. The aim of this master thesis was to shed light on the dynamic and complex relationship between the French government and the Muslim minority in France using the analytical lens of securitization theory, incorporating counter-voices of non-state organizations. To be able to investigate this ever-changing and progressive relationality, the research question of this thesis was formulated as follows: *how is the process of securitization executed by the French government and contested by Islamic and human rights organizations in the aftermath of 'terrorist attacks' between 2015-2021?* This research is an addition to the scientific debate by focusing on the agency of the actors included and thus bypassing the passive definitions originally formulated by the Copenhagen School of security (Kilroy, 2018). Next to this, this dissertation investigated the dynamic playing field of securitization and its main contesters to show how processes of securitization and desecuritization are intermingled, which has been proven to be of increasing importance yet is currently still scarcely researched.

It can be stated that, between 2015 and 2021, the French government used an identifiable speech-act, conducted by French Presidents, Prime-Ministers, and other government officials, to persuade the French audience that there is an existential threat that needs to be eliminated. Gradually, there was a shift in the discourse of the speech-act concerning two important elements. First, the French government, as securitizing actor, claimed that the existential threat of Islamic separatism moved from the 'outside' to the 'inside', and that this is the primary reason why extraordinary measures in the form of new laws controlling the population were necessary in the French Republic. The enemy is no longer found in countries far away from France but is inevitable connected to the Republic and can be found within its borders. This shift was supported by changes of location of the speeches. Where Hollande still conducted them in parliament buildings in Paris, Macron chose to appear in Parisian *banlieue* to stress that the 'danger' is far closer than thought. Secondly, there was an expansion of the speech-act concerning the threat. The image of the existential threat expanded from a small group of identifiable individual Islamic terrorists towards the political movement of Islamic separatism. This means that the enemy was not easily identifiable anymore, but that in fact every French Muslim that may be connected to the political movement of Islamic separatism can be witnessed as a threat to the French society. This shift and expansion of the existential threat is supported and institutionalized by the installment of the three laws that were discussed in this research, as they were existentially (but not exclusively) aimed at the Muslim minority. This research also shows that, from a governmental perspective, the speech acts conducted are not a constant broadcast of the same message but prove to be dynamic and ever-changing.

Concerning the Islamic organizations and human rights organizations trying to contest the speech-act an important claim is that these organizations focus on laws specifically in their diagnostic and prognostic framing activities. For them it is not about the speech-act, but about the practical consequences in the form of tangible laws. The three laws discussed in this thesis form the 'diagnosis' for the non-state organizations as they see these laws as the threats to their religious freedom and Islamic identity. It is important to realize that the number of involved organizations is ever-changing, as Islamic organizations have proved to be unpredictable in their support and human rights organizations only tend to be engaged during the installment of laws and not during the speech-act itself. Next to this, this research shows that because of the capriciousness and disunity of the contesters they have not (yet) succeeded in preventing the installment of new laws.

The entities involved in the process of securitization prove to be dynamic in their ambitions, opinions, and actions and a unification of the contesting entities is needed to form a voice that is constantly heard. Next to this, the strategic action fields of security governance show that the entities contesting the securitizing act of the French government are also involved in securitizing acts themselves, as motivational framing and extraordinary measures are also part of their prognostic and motivational framing activities and processes of securitization and desecuritization are intertwined.

Regarding the theoretical debate on securitization theory this dissertation supports the criticism by McDonald and Guzzini that the original concept of securitization as formulated by the Copenhagen School is too static and increasingly limited to explain state-security issues in the 21st century. This research claims that the referent subject and the audience are no strictly separated passive entities but are intertwined actors with agency which could switch sides over time, and that the process of securitization forms a dynamic field of constantly active securitizing and desecuritizing entities. A Muslim can both be part of the audience as part of the existential threat, which makes the analysis of these groups complex. However, this research also shows that the core base of securitization theory is still usable, as the basic definitions such as the “speech-act” or the “securitizing actor” are still applicable to current affairs. As will be formulated in 6.2, it is about smaller adjustments and context-bounded reformulations that are needed when using theoretical framework of securitization.

6.2. Limitations & recommendations for further research

While this research contributed to the existing debate on securitization theory and the dynamic interactions of the agents involved, it surely does not bring all the definitive answers to the academic table. This research also has its limitations, and further and more extensive research needs to be conducted to understand how the dynamic positions of actors in the process of political securitization shape the playing field of political debates such as researched in this dissertation. The most important fallacy of this thesis, which has to do with the existence of COVID-19, is the absence of in-depth interviews. With interviewing governmental officials and members of Islamic and human rights organizations the ideas, ambitions and emotions of the actors involved could provide this research with an abundance of new and interesting information. In this way, it can be understood why actors behave the way they do, and this stays under the radar when investigating secondary sources only. Another limitation in this research is the narrow possibility for generalization. This research focused on a particular geographical context in a particular time which means that comparison with other contexts is difficult due to the uniqueness of the French situation and the presence of for example *laïcité*. Last, this research only investigated the speech-act of the French government and two sorts of non-state organizations thus looking at the linguistic representations of these actors. Including other ways of communication and framing, such as images, symbols or physical forms of communication could have been included to broaden the scope and results of the diagnostic and prognostic framing activities. As the theoretical debate already proves, the inclusion of new forms of framing is fruitful and relevant.

Next to the limitations of this research there are also further points of interest to focus on for researchers engaging in this field of enquiry. First, further research needs to be conducted on the referent subject as part of the audience. This research shows that the Muslim population also holds its own power and ambitions, formulated in the existence of Islamic organizations and human rights organizations. The Islamic minority is increasingly using its own agency to contest the securitizing process by the French government. The referent subject is not a passive entity in this process, but an actor with goals and ambitions. While the academic debate already mentioned that there is increasing attention for the audience as actor that also has its ambitions and objectives, there is still little academic research that investigates the fluid relationship between the audience and the referent subject, as they can intermingle. Next to this, while this research sheds light on

this agency, further research should investigate how a referent subject can also securitize instead of desecuritize and how these two processes can be intertwined.

Second, this research has focused mainly on the French government as securitizing actor on the one side and Islamic organizations and human rights organizations as contesters of this process on the other. While these three entities belong to the most relevant voices in this debate, there are also actors that are not incorporated into this analysis. This is mostly due to practical and feasible constraints. Future research should invest more in the role of (inter)national media organizations in forming a new dimension in the securitization process. While in some cases the media functions as so-called objective provider of information, they can also play important roles in the acceptance and denial of the securitizing act. This is certainly true for the French context, where leftist media organizations frame against the ‘discriminatory laws’ and are thus opposing right-wing entities who claim that the new installed laws by the French government do not go far enough. The dynamic role of the media forms a completely new dimension to this debate and new research should focus on this group of entities.

Last, further research needs to be conducted on the institutionalization of securitization processes. According to the Copenhagen School, the speech-act is the core of the securitization act and therefore forms a focus of analysis in this dissertation. Being a central point of enquiry, breaking down the speech-act of (former) French government officials into constituent parts brought insightful information to this research, as the result of the analysis claimed that the French government’s perspective on Islamic separatism was increasingly negative, unfavorable, and adverse between 2015 and 2021. However, a speech-act analysis does not look beyond the linguistic formulations of the speeches conducted. It is interesting for the both the scientific world as for policy advisors to investigate how speech-acts are officially institutionalized in politics, how the extraordinary measures taken relate to them, and how they are contested by other entities. This research shows that the speech-act is inseparable bounded to the extraordinary measures taken after it. The current framework of securitization proves to have too little tools to connect the speech-act with actual and practical decisions and developments, while this is of great academic interest. Further research needs to dive into the connection between the speech-act and the concrete activities that are derived from this, such as the role of the speech-act of the French government in the formulation and presentation of news laws such as the anti-terrorism law (2017) or anti-separatism law (2020/2021) in the French context.

6.3. What next?

Next to more academic conclusions and recommendations it is also relevant to reflect briefly on the concrete political situation in France. The data analysis in this research shows that the relationship between the French government and the Islamic minority in France is becoming increasingly complex. Since the occurrence of new ‘terrorist’ attacks in October 2020 and the presentation of the anti-separatism law, the debate on the position of the Islamic minority in France rapidly intensified. This same can be applied for 2021, where in May right-wing army officials wrote a letter to President Macron in which they expect a civil war and leftist activists in French education are sparking the religious tensions. At the same time, thousands of Muslims take part in demonstrations on the streets in major French cities such as Paris and Lyon to complain about the new French laws that limits the religious freedom of the French population. While no researcher can predict the future of this debate, it is important to stress the urgency of the position of the French minority in the current French politics and the dangers of us-them thinking, box-placing, and increasing religious tensions. The political gap between the French government and the Islamic population is growing, and all actors involved must act to prevent further bifurcation.

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