Where authoritarianism and democracy meet

Resistance and submission of members of the Hong Kong diaspora in the Netherlands to
Chinese authoritarian repression and securitization

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Cover picture: taken by the author of this thesis at an overseas rally for Hong Kong at the Dam Square in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, June 12, 2021.

Abstract

This thesis seeks to explore the reactions of members of a diaspora in a democratic state to transnational repression and securitization by an authoritarian state, with members of the Hong Kong diaspora in the Netherlands responding to Chinese authoritarian repression and securitization as a case study. This thesis argues that, through securitization, the Chinese Government implemented the Hong Kong national security law to secure Chinese sovereignty and security. With the introduction of this law, the Chinese Government expands its authoritarian influence into the territories of other states to control the Hong Kong diaspora, which becomes subject to transnational repression. Through interviewing and participant observation, this thesis examines how members of the Hong Kong diaspora in the Netherlands have responded to home-country repression and securitization. This thesis concludes that members of the Hong Kong diaspora (1) self-deprive their (democratic) freedoms and (2) resist authoritarian home-country repression and securitization through an intertwined process of politicization and counter-securitization. The former shows the urgency of the matter for democratic states to protect their residents against authoritarian influence. The latter contributes to academic literature, emphasizing the perspective of 'diaspora resistance in a democratic host-country against home-country repression and securitization'. This thesis develops a framework in which resistance against home-country repression and securitization can be understood. This framework shows that Hong Kong diaspora members form a pressure group that, through counter-securitizing speech acts and politicization, makes the threat posed by the Chinese Government relevant for intermediary audiences to act upon.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

"Do you hear the people sing? Singing a song of angry men? It is the music of a people who will not be slaves again." The lyrics from the revolutionary song of the musical Les Misérables echo across Amsterdam Dam Square. A group of people, wearing black t-shirts, face masks, sunglasses, and hats, stand in a circle and sing together wholeheartedly. Some people raise black flags with the text 'liberate Hong Kong, revolution of our times'. Others raise Tibetan flags or hold a sign that says 'in solidarity Tibet stands with people of Hong Kong'. Near the group of people, posters are presented with information on Hong Kong's vanishing freedoms and China's threatening influence in the Netherlands through Confucius Institutes and Huawei.

A man comes up to me. He introduces himself as Shum. "Would you like to write a letter for a Hong Kong detainee? You can write to Gwyneth Ho. She studied at the University of Amsterdam. Now she is detained under the Hong Kong national security law. You should be careful when writing a letter because it might also put you in danger." I tell him I am interested in writing a letter and ask him whether he is part of the activist group 'Netherlands for Hong Kong' (NL4HK)[1] that organized this rally. After Shum confirms that he is part of the NL4HK, I recognize his voice. I ask whether we talked earlier about his role in the NL4HK. Shum nods and looks around him. "I prefer not to talk about this now. It might be dangerous", he says quietly.[2]

This thesis seeks to explore the reactions of members of a diaspora in a democratic state to transnational repression and securitization by an authoritarian state. The vignette illustrates the reactions of some members of the Hong Kong diaspora in the Netherlands to the actions of the Chinese Government. "China conducts the most sophisticated, global, and comprehensive campaign of transnational repression in the world." (Schenkkan and Linzer 2021, 15). With transnational repression, states reach across borders to silence dissent among diasporas. It encompasses a spectrum of tactics, such as threats, exile, assassinations, prosecution,

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[1] NL4HK is a group of Hong Kong, Dutch, and international citizens living in the Netherlands standing with Hong Kong (NL4HK n.d.).
[2] Participant observation at the 'Netherlands for Hong Kong' protest, an overseas rally for Hong Kong, at the Dam Square in Amsterdam, June 12, 2021.

surveillance, and family intimidation (Moss 2016). The Chinese Government represses Tibetans, Mongolians, Uyghurs, Taiwanese, Hongkongers, Falun Gong practitioners, journalists, human rights defenders, and others who criticize the Chinese Government. Hongkongers abroad are a relatively new target for transnational repression. This case will be explored further (Schenkkan and Linzer 2021).

1.1 The case of Hong Kong transnational repression

In 2019, citizens of Hong Kong went out onto the streets to protest against what they view as China violating the democratic freedoms granted to Hong Kong under the one country two systems agreement that came into effect upon Hong Kong's return to China from the United Kingdom in 1997. What started as protests against a proposed bill allowing extradition of Hong Kong citizens to mainland China, quickly escalated into demands for greater democratic freedoms and reforms of the Hong Kong assembly (Lee et al. 2019; Purbrick 2019). As the protests evolved into a larger pro-democracy and anti-China movement, the Chinese Government used various labels for the Hong Kong protests, with terrorism as its most common one (BBC News 2019; Irish Times 2020). Moreover, the Government commended police brutality and doubled the Chinese military personnel in Hong Kong as a response to threats to national security and sovereignty (Chor 2019; Feng 2019; Torode et al. 2019). At the start of 2020, the Chinese Government announced that Hong Kong needed a law to prevent, stop, and punish threats to Chinese sovereignty (Ho 2020). By portraying the protests as a threat to Chinese sovereignty and security, the Chinese Government was able to pass the Hong Kong National Security Law (NSL)[3] on the 30th of June 2020. This law was accepted as legitimate by supporters of the Chinese Government (Feng 2020; Hong Kong e-Legislation 2020).

The NSL is used to reshape the political system of Hong Kong as beneficial to Beijing and to prosecute and repress Hong Kong activists. The law punishes political speech (e.g., the slogan 'liberate Hong Kong, revolution of our times'), limits foreign contacts, and targets individuals who publicly criticize the Chinese Government or support the pro-democracy movement (Lo 2021; Wong and Kellogg 2021). The NSL applies to anyone on Earth, regardless of nationality or location (Amnesty international 2020). Article 38 of the law states that "This Law shall apply to offences under this Law committed against the Hong Kong Special

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[3] The Hong Kong national security law criminalizes any act of subversion (undermining the authority or power of the central Government), secession (breaking away from the country), terrorism (using intimidation or violence against people), and collusion with external or foreign forces (Hong Kong e-Legislation 2020). Critics argue that these offenses are too broadly defined and "[…] can easily become catch-all offences used in politically motivated prosecutions with potentially heavy penalties." (Amnesty International 2020)

Administrative Region from outside the Region by a person who is not a permanent resident of the Region." (Hong Kong e-Legislation 2020). This way the NSL enables the Chinese Government to target, repress and punish individuals abroad.

Hongkongers abroad who breach the NSL by publicly criticizing the Chinese Government or supporting the pro-democracy movement are at risk of being threatened, exiled, or prosecuted (Dyer 2020; Kwan 2020; VOA News 2020). Some Hongkongers abroad have received threatening messages supposedly from the Chinese Government warning them to stop activism against the NSL if they want to return to Hong Kong (Dyer 2020; Kwan 2020). Over 100 politicians, journalists, and protesters have been arrested under the NSL since the law was enacted, including Hongkongers abroad (BBC News 2021; VOA News 2020; Wong and Kellogg 2021). They have been prosecuted for simply exercising their basic civil rights, such as the freedom of expression, assembly, and association (VOA News 2020; Wong and Kellogg 2021). These tactics of transnational repression serve to repress dissident voices abroad (Moss 2016).

Focusing on the Netherlands, the actions of the Chinese Government raise various complications for the Hong Kong diaspora and the Dutch Government. A recent publication of the National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism (NCTV)[4] suggests that home-country governments (e.g., the Chinese Government) that recognize and repress dissident voices can form a threat to the Dutch state. It can harm the democratic values of the Netherlands, as diaspora members might feel limited in their basic civil rights (NCTV 2021). In accordance with this, Moss (2016, 493) argues that transnational repression tactics often instill mistrust and fear, render anti-regime activism risky, and de-politicize the social life and speech of diaspora members. Indeed, some members of the Hong Kong diaspora fear the law and, as a result, self-censor. Others still voice their opinion about the situation despite the risks of being threatened, exiled, or prosecuted (Barron 2020; Bristow 2020; Kwan 2020; VOA News 2020).

Some Hongkongers in the Netherlands continue speaking up and are active within activist groups, such as the NL4HK. Here, the complication is that the Chinese Government tries to repress voices that publicly criticize the Chinese Government or support the pro-democracy movement, but some diaspora members continue doing what the Chinese Government attempts to repress. The questions that arise are: How is it possible that diaspora members continue doing what the Chinese Government attempts to repress? What room do they have to resist the acts from the Chinese Government? What risks do Hongkongers in the

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[4] The NCTV is a department within the Dutch Ministry of Justice and Security.

Netherlands face engaging in activism? What are they trying to achieve and how successful can they be?

1.2 Research question and sub-questions

Portraying Hong Kong activists as a threat to Chinese sovereignty and security is a form of securitization. Securitization is the process where a securitizing actor portrays something as an existential threat (i.e., 'securitized subject'), which is collectively being accepted by relevant audiences. This makes it possible to use 'extraordinary measures' to secure the entity that is being threatened (i.e., 'referent object') (Balzacq et al. 2016). To relate this to the case study, the Chinese Government (i.e., securitizing actor) portrayed Hong Kong activists (i.e., securitized subject) as a threat, which was accepted by supporters of the Chinese Government (i.e., the audience). This made it possible to implement the NSL (i.e., extraordinary measures) to secure Chinese sovereignty and security (i.e., referent object). Security issues, such as securitization and repression, are often researched from the top-down, focusing almost entirely on the way securitizing actors can manage fear and construct threats. Consequently, the focus on the securitized subject with the agency to respond to or even resist the security practices is underdeveloped (Topgyal 2016, 166). This thesis looks at the Chinese security practices from the perspective of the securitized subject and focuses on members of the Hong Kong diaspora in the Netherlands. This results in the following research question:

How do members of the Hong Kong diaspora in the Netherlands respond to transnational repression and securitization acts from the Chinese Government in the wake of the implementation of the Hong Kong national security law imposed by China on the 30th of June 2020?

The research question will be explored through a set of sub-questions, which show the social and academic relevance of the question. First, on the societal level, the sub-questions explore how transnational repression is experienced and how transnational repression affects the freedom to resist repression. Reflection on this is important as it shows the urgency of the matter for democratic states, such as the Netherlands, to protect their residents against authoritarian influence. This is particularly relevant as Freedom House reports that authoritarian regimes (e.g., Iran, Turkey, Russia, China) are expanding their reach into the territories of democratic states by employing repression tactics to control their citizens, and sometimes

foreign nationals, abroad (Schenkkan and Linzer 2021). For this, the following questions will be explored:

A. How do members of the Hong Kong diaspora in the Netherlands experience transnational repression tactics from the Chinese Government?
    a. Why do diaspora members engage in resistance despite facing the risks associated with transnational repression?
    b. How does transnational repression shape resistance?

Second, academically, the sub-questions will focus on 'diaspora resistance in a democratic state to repression and securitization from an authoritarian state'. This focus contains several under-researched elements for the transnational repression and securitization literature and thus contributes to existing academic knowledge. The academic relevance of the thesis will be further substantiated in the next chapter. Various analytical tools connected to securitization theory are used to explain the resistance of members of the Hong Kong diaspora; counter-securitization, desecuritization, and politicization. In short, counter-securitization is a linguistically[5] regulated process of resistance against crucial elements of the securitization process in relation to relevant audiences to delay, stop, or reverse the securitization process (Stritzel and Chang 2015, 552-53). Desecuritization can be understood as a process of resistance where the securitized subject performs a non-threatening identity to bring an issue back to normal (democratic) politics or to non-politicize an issue (Hansen 2012). Politicization is a process where an issue is claimed as significant to the society in question to make it subject of contestation and debate (Cavelty and Leese 2018; Hagmann et al. 2018). This results in the following sub-questions:

B. How do members of the Hong Kong diaspora in the Netherlands resist the activities of the Chinese Government?
    a. *Counter-securitization:* What claims, warnings, and demands are being communicated by diaspora members?
    b. *Desecuritization:* How do diaspora members perform the non-threatening identity of Hong Kong activists?

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[5] A counter-securitizing speech act is used consisting of a claim, warning, and demand.

c. *Politicization:* How do diaspora members claim an issue as significant to a society?

C. What do members of the Hong Kong diaspora in the Netherlands expect to achieve by engaging in resistance?

a. What do diaspora members expect from the Netherlands, as a host-country government, and/or other relevant audiences?

The research question focuses on how members of a diaspora respond to transnational repression and securitization acts from the authoritarian home-country government, where there is an emphasis on resistance. This thesis gives the securitized subject agency to respond to or even resist security practices. Using the epistemological approaches touched upon by Mason (2018, 8-9), I argue that the research question implies participatory/action research. It is believed that "[…] the world is constructed through action, interaction and collective agency and the researcher works with participants to co-generate knowledge and to create change collectively." (Mason 2018, 8) This epistemological approach is consistent with the ontological nature of the research question: action – people, their perspectives, reactions, and interactions. In the epistemology and ontology, the actions of the research population, their perspectives, and interactions stand out. The following sub-chapter delves deeper into the research strategy employed to answer the research question posed above.

1.3 Method

The research population is 'members of the Hong Kong diaspora in the Netherlands'. Included in this group are Hongkongers who actively voice their opinion about the activities of the Chinese Government and Hongkongers who decided not to speak up. In this thesis, the research population is referred to as part of a diaspora. This makes it important to reflect on the meaning of the term 'diaspora'. As Adamson (2019) points out, the use of the term diaspora, or related terms, and its interpretation are both academically and politically fluid and therefore sensitive. There is thus no general understanding of the term diaspora. This research refers to a diaspora as "[…] a person or group of people belonging to the same cultural background and origin but residing [...] outside of the country for differing reasons." (Srinivas 2019, 76) The Hong Kong diaspora in the Netherlands encompasses a diverse group of people with diverse viewpoints. For example, members of the Hong Kong diaspora in the Netherlands can support or oppose the activities of the Chinese Government. When speaking of 'members of the Hong Kong diaspora' this thesis refers to members that oppose the activities of the Chinese Government

and are securitized. The Chinese Government is also called the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The CCP is the founding and sole governing political party of China. In this thesis, the CCP equals the Chinese Government.

The research strategy employed is qualitative. In qualitative research, data collected is used to understand and explain certain aspects of the social world and are required to give evidence or justify everything that is presented as findings (Boeije 2010, 58). Qualitative research consists of the idea that "[…] individuals have an active role in the construction of social reality […]" (Boeije 2010, 6). To provide Hongkongers in the Netherlands with the agency to construct their social reality and explain how they respond to the acts of the Chinese Government, interviewing is the main research method employed. Besides interviewing, participant observation is employed to comprehend the participants' perspective of the social world.

DeWalt and DeWalt (2011, 138-42) distinguish different types of interviews. In this research, I made use of informal conversations and semi-structured interviewing. I interviewed twenty-one Hongkongers in the Netherlands; twelve Hongkongers who spoke up against the activities of the Chinese Government and nine Hongkongers who decided not to speak up. I also held informal conversations with three Dutch Hong Kong activists (see Appendix 1). Due to Covid-19, these interviews were conducted online through end-to-end encryption[6] communication networks (e.g., Threema, Signal, Telegram), where participants felt most comfortable and safe. This was due to the sensitivity of the topics discussed in the interviews. In the interviews, topics were discussed of the NSL, Hong Kong activism, social media activity, and the role of the international community. The semi-structured interviews covered all research topics, which gave an all-encompassing image to answer the research question (see Appendix 2). Although participants could bring forward other topics during the semi-structured interview, the informal conversations covered 'new' topics and provided new insights.

Participant observation is employed to observe and experience firsthand how diaspora members respond to the acts of the Chinese Government. I observed the resistance discourses shared on the social media platforms (i.e., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) of Hongkongers I spoke to. I also attended a protest of the NL4HK. During this protest, I observed and experienced the discourses, behavior, and interactions of Hongkongers in the Netherlands in the context of the NSL and transnational repression. Besides this, participant observation helped to connect with the research population and the NL4HK as an initial gatekeeper.

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[6] End-to-end encryption is a method of secure communication where only the communicating users can read the messages and third parties are prevented from accessing the data.

The data collected throughout the research process is arranged and analyzed through segmenting the data and reassembling it in NVivo with three phases; open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Boeije 2010). I also engaged in a constant dialogue between theory and data (Ragin 1994). This resulted in a reformulation of my research question. Instead of solely focusing on counter-securitization, I focused on various resistance tactics to grasp the data gathered. I also decided to focus on both activists and nonactivists, instead of Hong Kong activists alone. This was to better understand how transnational repression in the Netherlands works and to increase the amount of data gathered. There are, however, some limitations and ethical issues regarding this research.

1.4 Limitations and ethical responsibility

In qualitative research, the researcher is an important instrument for data collection (DeWalt and DeWalt 2011, 29-36). As qualitative researchers often play a crucial role in collecting and analyzing data, the research will hold a certain amount of subjectivity. To reduce subjectivity and improve reliability, I reflected on my role in the research. Also, this research cannot be generalized, as it is only small-scale qualitative research. Another limitation is related to security concerns.

Hongkongers abroad are at risk of breaching the NSL or experiencing transnational repression. As this research is conducted mainly online (partly due to Covid-19), it should be considered that Hongkongers in the Netherlands feel repressed through online surveillance. Hongkongers I spoke to sometimes carefully chose their words when communicating about the research topics or they did not want to talk about the topics. This affects the findings of the research and is therefore important to mention. This also leaves a certain level of ethical responsibility.

In this research, I took 'do no harm' as my starting point, as the American Anthropological Association (2012) views this as the primary ethical obligation. By participating in the (online) research, diaspora members might be more at risk of facing transnational repression by the Chinese Government. This would go against the 'do no harm' obligation. I tried to avoid this risk by following the other ethical guidelines of the American Anthropological Association (2012). First, I have been open and honest regarding the purpose of the research, explained the risks and benefits of participating, obtained informed consent, and made results accessible (see Appendix 2). Second, I collected data carefully and protected and preserved the records due to privacy and anonymity. When speaking to participants, I made sure they could decide how we communicated (e.g., type of communication network). I used

pseudonyms throughout the research process to guarantee the anonymity of participants (American Anthropological Association 2012; Boeije 2009, 45-52).

In the following chapters, there is a focus on the theoretical and empirical aspects of this research. At first, there is a theoretical exploration on the topics of transnational repression, securitization, and the resistance tactics of counter-securitization, desecuritization, and politicization. Here, gaps in the literature are identified and the academic relevance of this research comes forward. Secondly, in a descriptive chapter, empirical evidence on the experience of transnational repression is explored. After this, the empirical evidence on resistance tactics by members of the Hong Kong diaspora is analyzed. The results of both empirical chapters and the theoretical exploration are taken together in the discussion and conclusion. Here, the research question is answered, limitations and opportunities are discussed, and suggestions for future research are given.

Chapter 2: Theoretical context

Transnational repression, securitization, and resistance

With the introduction of the NSL, the Chinese Government expands its authoritarian influence into the territories of other states to control the Hong Kong diaspora, which becomes subject to transnational repression. The NSL is implemented through a process of securitization. This theoretical chapter focuses first on the current state of knowledge on transnational repression; how does it work and with what effect? Second, this chapter explores securitization and resistance tactics. Finally, the chapter explores how this research can contribute to the fields of transnational repression and securitization.

2.1 Diaspora politics and transnational repression

Adamson (2020) shows that previous studies have celebrated diaspora politics as a form of transnationalism that can potentially challenge authoritarian regimes (see Adamson 2002; Escribà-Folch et al. 2015; Shain and Barth 2003; Wayland 2004). These studies argue that diasporas living in liberal democracies can bypass the constraints found in authoritarian states to participate in political activism and mobilize themselves against the home-country government (Adamson 2020, 150-52). Moss (2016) challenges these studies by introducing transnational repression. She explains that authoritarian rulers view diaspora activism in democracies as most threatening to their power. Authoritarian states cannot depend on democratic states to regulate diaspora members who do not abide by their laws or restrictions. With transnational repression, authoritarian states extend their repressive power beyond their sovereign boundaries into the space of other states to control their diasporas. For example, Libya and Syria use transnational repression tactics against political activists in the United Kingdom and the United States (Moss 2016). As a result, Moss (2016) claims that diasporas cannot fully 'exit' from authoritarianism and that transnational repression tactics constrain opportunities to protest and exercise (democratic) freedoms.

2.1.1 Transnational repression tactics and effects

Moss (2016) focuses in her analysis on a spectrum of transnational repression tactics, such as threats, exile (direct and indirect banishment from the home-country), assassinations, surveillance, and coercion-by-proxy (intimidation of family members who have stayed behind). With a shift towards digital communication technologies by diasporas to challenge the position

of their home-country regimes, Michaelsen (2018) shows that authoritarian regimes adjust their repression tactics with, for example, cyberattacks or online surveillance, to punish and undermine these voices.

Glasius (2018) lifts the analysis of transnational repression tactics to a higher level by dividing the tactics into inclusive and exclusive repression. With exclusive repression, diaspora members are considered outlaws of the state. For example, diaspora members can face exile. This can happen to those who resist being included as part of the authoritarian state. With inclusive repression, diaspora members are considered subjects of the authoritarian state. These diaspora members experience inclusive repression tactics, such as surveillance and threats, to minimize the freedom experienced in the host-country. Through inclusive and exclusive repression, authoritarian states wish to manage population mobility and sustain and stabilize authoritarianism (Glasius 2018).

The above-mentioned raises a few questions. How does a diaspora in a democratic country react to transnational repression? What is the effect of transnational repression on the (democratic) freedoms experienced in the host-country? Also, what does this mean for the host-country as a sovereign state with certain prerogatives in relation to its citizens? Glasius (2018, 195) argues that democratic host-countries often tolerate and sometimes facilitate the reach of authoritarian home-countries into their territories. This way, the host-country possibly contributes to the diaspora politics of authoritarian home states and thus to authoritarian stability. This raises another question: what room is there for a diaspora to resist home-county repression?

Moss (2016, 482) states that resistance is considered risky regardless of the freedom granted by the host-country for any diaspora member who has family members residing in their home-country and who aspires to maintain access to their authoritarian home-country. Moss (2016, 493) also claims that transnational repression tactics often propagate mistrust and fear, limit anti-regime activism and de-politicize the social life and speech of diaspora members. However, Glasius (2018, 187) explains that authoritarian home-countries do not always successfully minimize the freedom experienced in the host-country. Adding to this, Moss (2016, 493) explains that political uprising in the home-country can change the perspective of activists on their relatives' circumstances, obligations and the capability of regimes to make good on their threats and activists might continue their activism. To relate this to the proposed research, this explains why Hongkongers in the Netherlands might continue their activism. Nevertheless, Moss (2016) and Glasius (2018) fail to explain how a diaspora tries to pursue political objectives despite facing the risks associated with transnational repression. Also, they

do not touch upon resistance tactics used by a diaspora against home-country repression. This makes researching these topics important.

A more recent study by Tsourapas (2020) claims that China deploys transnational authoritarianism tactics to prevent political dissent against the Chinese state by targeting one or more members of diaspora communities. Transnational authoritarianism tactics entail repression, legitimation, co-optation, and cooperation with non-state actors. These tactics consist of strategies of patriotism, patronage, and blacklisting. Tsourapas (2020) confirms that China deploys these tactics to 'silence' diaspora members. He also shows that China legitimizes these tactics with patriotic diaspora members. These diaspora members publicly show sentiment and support for the decisions of the Chinese Government. When diaspora members are included as patriots, they are also encouraged to monitor each other to report 'bad behavior' to the home-country government (Del Sordi 2018). A question remaining with Tsourapas's (2020) analysis is 'if transnational authoritarianism tactics can be legitimized among diaspora members, can these tactics also be delegitimized and resisted?' Therefore, the following sub-chapter focuses on securitization. Securitization is an all-encompassing framework that brings the elements of legitimization, delegitimization, and resistance together.

2.2 Securitization and resistance[7]

Through a process of securitization, the Chinese Government implemented the NSL to secure Chinese sovereignty and security. With securitization, a securitizing actor portrays something as an existential threat (i.e., 'securitized subject'), which is collectively being accepted by relevant audiences. This makes it possible to use 'extraordinary measures' to secure the entity that is being threatened (i.e., 'referent object') (Balzacq et al. 2016). In this process, issues are lifted out of normal (democratic) politics into the realm of emergency politics, where common law is overruled (Cavelty and Leese 2018; Floyd 2016). A securitizing actor can be public (e.g., governments or intergovernmental organizations) or private (e.g., NGOs or social movements). Public securitizing actors often hold positions of authority. They have the capacity to gain control over an issue and execute extraordinary measures to secure the entity that is claimed to be threatened. Private securitizing actors usually try to raise awareness of an issue that is claimed to be threatening and urgent. This issue can end up on the agenda of decision makers to be acted upon with extraordinary measures (De Wilde 2008). This way, a private securitizing

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[7] Securitization theory is a theory formed by many authors. It is important to acknowledge that securitization or elements thereof are approached differently by authors in the field. This thesis focuses on a few of these authors and will approach securitization from an angle that might differ from others in the field of securitization theory.

actor can also be considered a pressure group. A pressure group tries to raise an issue to the top of a government's agenda to be acted upon (Floyd 2016, 692).

Securitization theory knows two main schools of thought. The Copenhagen school focuses on the process of socially constructing a security threat with a speech act (Balzacq et al. 2016). With a speech act, a securitizing actor gives an object or people a status of 'security', with a generic structure of claim, warning, and demand[8] (Stritzel and Chang 2015, 550; based on Vuori 2008). Vuori (2008) shows that the Chinese Government legitimizes repression activities through a speech act by analyzing the securitization of the student democracy movement of 1989 in Beijing. Balzacq et al. (2016) show how the Paris School of thought moves beyond the original formulation of securitization theory from the Copenhagen School. The Paris School focuses on the role of audiences, power relations, and context. It also assesses 'what security does' after a threat has been identified through looking at practices and instruments (Balzacq et al. 2016).

A point of criticism towards securitization theory is that security is often researched from the top-down, focusing almost entirely on the way securitizing actors can manage fear and construct threats in relation to relevant audiences. In doing so, researchers exclude the securitized subject from the audience. Consequently, the focus on the securitized subject with the agency to respond to or even resist the security practices is underdeveloped (Topgyal 2016, 166). Stritzel and Chang (2015) include the securitized subject in the audience and give it agency by researching counter-securitization.

2.2.1 Counter-securitization

Stritzel and Chang (2015, 551) point out that authors often briefly mention counter-securitization but never fully explicated, defined, or applied the concept. Stritzel and Chang (2015) are the main contributors to counter-securitization. They describe counter-securitization as a linguistically regulated process of resistance against crucial elements of the securitization process (i.e., securitizing actor, referent object, securitizing speech act, or extraordinary measures). Counter-securitization typically involves processes of legitimization and delegitimization in relation to relevant audiences. In this process, a counter-securitizing speech act is performed, following the grammar of the securitizing speech act of a claim, warning, and demand. The securitized subject can, if successful, delay, stop, or reverse the securitization

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[8] Claim: contextualized description of something as dangerous (potentially an existential threat); Warning: contextualized description of the consequences of inaction; Demand: contextualized description of an action plan (Stritzel and Chang 2015, 551; based on Vuori 2008)

process (Stritzel and Chang 2015, 552-53). Stritzel and Chang (2015) refer to communication strategies as a counter-securitization tactic. They analyze that the Taliban constructed the West and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA) as existential threats to the Afghan people. The Taliban communicated this narrative through, among others, newspapers, television, and radio. The goal was to legitimize Taliban authority and delegitimize the authority of the West and the GIRoA (Stritzel and Chang 2015).

Topgyal (2016) is another author focusing on counter-securitization. Topgyal (2016) shows that with counter-securitization, political objectives can be pursued and brings new points of analysis to the field of counter-securitization. He focuses on Tibetan self-immolations as a form of counter-securitization to China's securitization of the 2008 Tibetan uprising. In his analysis, Topgyal (2016) shows that counter-securitization has been successful in strengthening Tibetan identity and unity but seemed politically less effective. Topgyal (2016) shows the importance of contextual factors (i.e., sectoral, social, political, historical) to relate to the audience and shows that identity insecurity (i.e., fear for the survival and reproduction of an identity) is a driving factor to resist the securitization process. He argues that securitization of issues in Chinese regions, like Hong Kong and Tibet, is met with identity-minded[9] local counter-securitizations (Topgyal 2016, 182). Although this observation is important, Topgyal (2016) focuses on 'local' counter-securitization, while some Hongkongers in the Netherlands resist acts from the Chinese Government despite not living in Hong Kong. In other words, securitization literature lacks a focus on how counter-securitization operates when diaspora members in a democratic state resist securitization by an authoritarian state. This makes it relevant to include counter-securitization as a resistance tactic in the research question. Focusing on other potential resistance tactics, I turn to desecuritization.

2.2.2 Desecuritization

Desecuritization can be understood as a process through which an issue is no longer treated as an emergency and returns to normal (democratic) politics (from security politics) (Hansen 2012). Focusing on the resistance of Falun Gong practitioners against Chinese repression, Vuori (2011) analyzes desecuritization as a resistance tactic. He argues that Falun Gong practitioners attempted to desecuritize their movement by performing a non-threatening identity and by referring to the non-political goals and high morals of the Falun Gong. An important insight Vuori (2011) gives is that desecuritization is sometimes employed before counter-

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[9] Identity-minded counter-securitization refers to counter-securitization where identity insecurity determines whether a given securitization will set off counter-securitization.

securitization. Therefore, desecuritization as a potential resistance tactic should be considered. Still, Vuori (2011) fails to provide a framework to analyze desecuritization. This is why I focus on Hansen (2012).

Analytically speaking, Hansen (2012, 530) argues that the process of desecuritization does not consist of a clear desecuritizing speech act, such as 'I hereby declare this issue to no longer be a threat'. Desecuritization is performative and should represent the non-threatening identity of the securitized subject (Hansen 2012). There are four forms of desecuritization. First, with 'change through stabilization' an issue is framed in other terms than security. The original conflict remains in the background. Second, with 'replacement' an issue is eliminated from the securitization sphere and is replaced by another issue. Third, with 'rearticulation' an issue moves into the sphere of 'normal politics' after a settlement of the threats that established the securitization. Fourth, with 'silencing' an issue is non-politicized or disappears (Hansen 2012). Based on Hansen's (2012) analysis, this thesis understands desecuritization as a process where the securitized subject represents a non-threatening identity with 'change through stabilization', 'replacement', 'rearticulation' or 'silencing'. The actor can, if successful, bring an issue back to normal (democratic) politics (from security politics) or it can non-politicize an issue.

Elements of desecuritization overlap with counter-securitization and contrariwise. Counter-securitization can result in desecuritization. Also, 'replacement', as part of desecuritization, has similarities with counter-securitization (Paterson and Karyotis 2020, 5). As with counter-securitization, the role of diaspora members resisting the securitization process is not considered by the above-mentioned desecuritization authors. There lacks a focus on whether diaspora members can desecuritize from their position in the host-country, while securitization was done by the home-country government. Also, do diaspora members communicate with their home-country government to bring an issue back to normal (democratic) politics or do they communicate with the host-country government in their resistance? For the latter to be possible, a focus on politicization is important.

2.2.3 Politicization

Politicization is developed in a distinct field and for distinct theoretical and empirical puzzles, outside the theoretical field of securitization (Cavelty and Leese 2018). Politicization, however, connects political studies to security studies with de-politicization as parallel to securitization (Cavelty and Leese 2018, 51; Hagmann et al. 2018, 5). "To politicise something is […] to do two things: to claim that this is of significance for the society in question and to make it the subject of debate and contestation." (Hansen 2012, 528 in Cavelty and Leese 2018, 51).

Politicization entails public awareness and engagement, controversy, and a shift to public arenas (Cavelty and Leese 2018; Hagmann et al. 2018).

Desecuritization and politicization are occasionally compared with each other. They both revolve around 'the political', where the outcome of public debate to solve an issue remains open (Cavelty and Leese 2018; Hagmann et al. 2018). There is an important conceptual difference between desecuritization and politicization. To be able to desecuritize an issue, the issue needs to be securitized. Through politicization, an issue is introduced to the society in question. This issue has not previously been securitized. Desecuritization can be considered as a post-securitization process and politicization can be considered as pre-securitization (Hagmann et al. 2018). Politicization is relevant to consider as a potential resistance tactic when diaspora members choose to communicate with the host-country in their resistance.

2.3 Academic relevance

This thesis merges the insights from securitization and transnational repression to grasp the empirical complication. Also, asking the question of 'how do members of a diaspora in a democratic host-country respond to home-country repression and securitization?' is relevant as it fills various literature gaps. Although there has been a focus in transnational repression literature on how diasporas respond to home-country repression, this perspective did not gain as much attention as the functioning of repression tactics from home-countries. The focus on diaspora members trying to resist home-country repression through specific resistance tactics while pursuing their political objectives is lacking. Emphasizing this perspective of resistance as a response to home-country repression in the research question is thus crucial.

Securitization brings resistance tactics forward and shows how these resistance tactics can also have a political purpose. It is theoretically relevant to focus on the resistance of Hongkongers in the Netherlands as part of the research question as this topic is underexplored and it brings new elements into securitization theory. Focusing on the resistance tactics employed by securitized diaspora members of an authoritarian state in a democratic state does not only show how securitization can travel across borders but also how resistance works when transnational securitization takes place.

It is also relevant to take the transnational repression perspective into account. The transnational repression perspective gives insight into the political processes at play and shows the constraints transnational repression brings for resistance. Besides this, this research will also reflect upon the role of the Netherlands, as a host-country. Concerning the acts of the Chinese Government and members of the Hong Kong diaspora in the Netherlands, the Netherlands is

included as an audience and a sovereign state with certain prerogatives in relation to its citizens as well as to its international interests. To understand how diaspora members resist home-country repression, a perspective on how transnational repression works in the host-country is required. To provide a complete picture of the case, those who speak up and those who do not are included in this perspective. The following chapter will reflect on how transnational repression is experienced in the Netherlands and what the effect is on freedom and resistance.

Chapter 3: To surrender or to resist

The battle between authoritarian repression and democratic freedoms

> "It [China] is threatening the world. It is threatening our freedom here. It threatens my freedom now, even if I live here [in the Netherlands]."[10]

Suki explains that the repressive activities of the Chinese Government are threatening the freedom of Hongkongers in the Netherlands. Emily also refers to the freedom she experiences in the Netherlands. She argues: "[…] I have this sense that I am not completely free to express myself."[11] Although both diaspora members refer to the restriction on their freedom, there is an important distinction between Suki and Emily. Where Suki completely restricts herself, Emily still tries to resist the repressive activities of the Chinese Government. To understand this interplay between repression, freedom, and resistance, this chapter describes how Hong Kong diaspora members in the Netherlands experience transnational repression, why some engage in resistance despite the risks associated with repression, and how repression shapes the resistance of diaspora members.

3.1 The repressive role of fear and inclusiveness

> "Fear is the most inexpensive and convenient way of ruling people and controlling people. […] They [the Chinese Government] know it and they are very good at it." (Lai 2021, 0:37-1:01)

This statement by Jimmy Lai[12] was made in a BBC video. The video was shared by Liam in an informal conversation.[13] The statement reflects how Hongkongers in the Netherlands experience transnational repression. Hongkongers I spoke to often describe possible transnational repression tactics of the Chinese Government, without experiencing these forms of repression themselves. Rather, they refer to the experiences of others, such as Uyghurs or well-known Hong Kong activists abroad. For example, Sophia points out:

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[10] Semi-structured interview with Suki [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, May 7, 2021.

[11] Semi-structured interview with Emily [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, March 26, 2021.

[12] Jimmy Lai is the founder of the newspaper Apple Daily. This newspaper favors democracy in Hong Kong and is critical of the Chinese Government.

[13] Informal conversation with Liam [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, April 2021.

"I think the Dutch Government should do more to protect Chinese dissidents in the Netherlands. I have been reading that a lot of them are getting threats and phone calls. […] I read about it in the news. […] Sometimes I get really anxious and stressed about these threats and sometimes I get paranoid that someone is coming to my house, but nothing happened yet."[14]

Similar to Sophia, other Hongkongers refer to stories they read in news articles about the repression of dissidents abroad by the Chinese Government. As a result, they fear they might experience this themselves. This way, fear epitomizes the experience of transnational repression by Hong Kong diaspora members.

The NSL is contributing to this fear. The NSL does not only generate fear to repress but also enables the fear for other repression methods. Hongkongers I spoke to describe the NSL as repressive due to its vagueness and extraterritoriality. Diaspora members believe that the Chinese Government leaves the description of the NSL broad and vague so that they do not know when their actions "[…] cross the red line of the NSL."[15] As a result, "People are just afraid and people self-sensor."[16] Besides this, Andrew shows how the NSL connects to other repression methods, such as coercion-by-proxy, harassment, or prosecution upon return:

"The way the NSL is written is applicable to supposably anybody in the world, regardless of nationality. […] If they know who you are, they may arrest you when you are visiting Hong Kong, or they might put your family or anything in danger. Even if you are here in the Netherlands, there is also a presence of the Chinese Government […]. So, you might get harassed or things like that."[17]

Similar to Andrew, participants describe the fear of experiencing coercion-by-proxy and prosecution upon return. Andrew also believes there is a presence of the Chinese Government in the Netherlands, which makes harassment possible. Alan makes a similar claim. Alan believes that he might face physical assault by Chinese patriots and that these patriots are connected to the Chinese embassy in the Netherlands. Alan supports his argument by sharing a

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[14] Semi-structured interview with Sophia [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, May 18, 2021.
[15] Semi-structured interview with Alan [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, May 12, 2021.
[16] Semi-structured interview with Sophia [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, May 18, 2021.
[17] Semi-structured interview with Andrew [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, March 19, 2021.

news article about the physical assault of a Hong Kong activist in the United Kingdom (Dimsumdaily Hong Kong 2021).[18] Others also refer to the presence of the Chinese Government in the Netherlands through patriotism. They do this in relation to another leading transnational repression tactic diaspora members fear to experience, which is online and offline surveillance.

Hongkongers I spoke to believe that Chinese patriots in the Netherlands work for the Chinese Government and collect information for the Government. For example, Alison points out: "Are you aware that many Chinese businesses, Chinese organizations, and Dutch-Chinese in the Netherlands support the [Hong Kong national security] law? They expressed this view in a local Chinese newspaper. Now we have to be very careful here in the Netherlands. We may get reported."[19] This suggests that patriotic diaspora members can be sensitive to supposed threats to the motherland, monitor other dissidents of the home-country and report 'bad behavior' to the home-country government (Del Sordi 2018; Tsourapas 2020). Besides surveillance through patriotism, Hongkongers in the Netherlands believe that the Chinese Government is capable of surveilling its 'citizens' abroad through, for example, Huawei or social media. Sophia explains: "There was a big leak a year ago of a Chinese database and they [the Chinese Government] have stuff on so many people. [...] It was all this stuff that they coned up from social media."[20]

It is important to note that the repression tactics mentioned thus far (e.g., surveillance, harassment, coercion-by-proxy) are inclusive repression tactics, where diaspora members are included as subjects of an authoritarian state to be controlled and repressed (Glasius 2018). Hongkongers I spoke to fear that they will experience repression as if they were still on the territory of the state. The following sub-chapter discusses how this fear leads to the self-deprivation of freedoms.

3.2 To surrender: the self-deprivation of freedoms

Nine out of twenty-one Hongkongers I spoke to resort to a full self-deprivation of their freedoms as a result of the fear of experiencing transnational repression. This sometimes goes together with a feeling of powerlessness and the belief that it is a waste of time to speak up, as the international community will not act and "[…] your voice and opinion will never be heard."[21]

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[18] Semi-structured interview with Alan [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, May 12, 2021.
[19] Semi-structured interview by email with Alison [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, May 12, 2021.
[20] Semi-structured interview with Sophia [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, May 18, 2021.
[21] Informal conversation with Carmen [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, May 2021.

Still, the fear of experiencing transnational repression takes the upper hand in the self-deprivation of freedoms. The fear of the NSL plays an important. This fear is often related to other tactics such as surveillance, coercion-by-proxy, or prosecution upon return.

Hongkongers I spoke to fear that their activities in the Netherlands can be exposed through surveillance and this can make coercion-by-proxy or prosecution upon return a logical consequence. This is one of the main reasons for some diaspora members to fully restrict themselves. This is illustrated by Katy:

> "I would consider there is some risk of exposing your face to certain [Hong Kong activist] groups without knowing the organizers of the group. CCP agents can infiltrate the groups. […] You can say that the NSL is quite effective. Because of my family in Hong Kong, I would not want to be associated with these groups. I want to protect myself. I think that is what China wants to do. People to become individualized and who do not dare to speak up."[22]

Katy explains that she does not participate in activism, because she is afraid of surveillance by Chinese patriotists and bringing her family and herself in danger. Similarly, Suki explains that she is afraid to speak up as a result of the fear of the NSL:

> "I am careful to show myself and to speak up about anything about China. You might get spotted by other CCP supporters from China. I am afraid if I speak up in public, even on social media, in the future if I re-enter Hong Kong that would be a problem."[23]

Both Katy and Suki show that there is mistrust and fear between co-nationals, as exposing yourself to CCP supporters is thought to be dangerous. Besides this, Katy shows that she limits her Hong Kong activism and Suki illustrates that she is constrained to talk about home-country politics. As Suki points out, diaspora members also restrict themselves online. This was confirmed during interviews with participants. Throughout the research, participants were careful with providing detailed (personal) information and answering questions about, for

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[22] Semi-structured interview with Katy [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, May 11, 2021.
[23] Semi-structured interview with Suki [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, May 7, 2021.

example, the Chinese Government or the international community. Celia explains this is due to the "[…] the fear of the law."[24]

The fear of experiencing transnational repression tactics, such as surveillance or coercion-by-proxy, thus restricts Hongkongers in the Netherlands in their freedoms. In line with Moss's (2016) argument, transnational repression tactics can propagate mistrust and fear, limit anti-regime activism and de-politicize the social life and speech of diaspora members. This group of diaspora members seems to give in to the authoritarian rule of the Chinese Government rather than resorting to their freedoms granted in their democratic host-country, the Netherlands. Others, however, continue to speak up while partly restricting themselves. For Hongkongers who continue voicing their opinion against the Chinese Government, their reasons to resist outbalance their reasons to surrender to authoritarian repression.

3.3 To resist: the embracement of freedoms

Despite the feelings of threat and fear, the fear of experiencing transnational repression does not silence all Hongkongers in the Netherlands. For example, Amber describes that she speaks up despite the repression:

> "[…] if everyone is afraid of speaking up, then we are self-censoring ourselves and that is exactly what the Chinese Government wants. Therefore, even with the risks and potential threats, I will never want to be muted, instead, be as active as I can and do much more than what I could do back in Hong Kong."[25]

This shows that the repression by authoritarian states to restrict the freedom of their diasporas is not always successful (Glasius 2018; Moss 2016). Instead, twelve out of twenty-one Hongkongers I spoke to embrace the freedoms granted to them in the Netherlands and resist transnational repression.

Hongkongers I spoke to provided various reasons to resist repression. These are often connected to (1) the continuity of repression and resistance between the Chinese Government and Hongkongers; (2) the connectedness with the Hong Kong identity; and (3) the freedom they experience here in the Netherlands. First, the continuity of repression and resistance is a reason for Hongkongers to resist the Chinese Government. Various participants who currently voice

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[24] Informal conversation with Celia [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, May 2021.
[25] Informal conversation with Amber [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, May 2021.

their opinion have been active in other resistance movements against the Chinese repression. For example, Amber has been active in the Moral and National Education controversy in 2012 and Andrew has been active in the Umbrella Movement in 2014.[26][27] Second, Hong Kong diaspora members refer to their connectedness with the Hong Kong identity to resist the Chinese Government. Emily explains: "I still regard myself as a Hongkonger although I live in the Netherlands. I wish I could do something for my 'home'."[28] For Emily, identity is thus a reason to resist. This confirms Topgyal's (2016) argument that identity is an important driving force in resistance, particularly regarding issues in Chinese regions like Hong Kong. Third, Hongkongers I spoke to refer to the experience of freedom in the Netherlands to resist the Chinese Government, something they do not have in Hong Kong. Wendy argues: "To me, the Netherlands is still a country with freedom […]. So, for me, it is still safe to organize it here."[29] Here, Hongkongers embrace the (democratic) freedoms granted in the Netherlands. Nevertheless, the resistance of Hongkongers in the Netherlands is also shaped by the fear of experiencing authoritarian repression.

3.3.1 Facing restrictions in resistance

Although diaspora members have specific resistance tactics (see chapter four), these tactics are shaped by the fear of experiencing authoritarian repression. The fear of the NSL plays an important role. This fear is, again, related to tactics such as surveillance, coercion-by-proxy, or prosecution upon return. Hongkongers I spoke to refer to restrictions in their offline and online resistance. Regarding offline resistance, participants explain that they anonymize themselves with plain clothes, face masks, and pseudonyms. The motivation to do this is often related to protecting their family members in Hong Kong; thus preventing coercion-by-proxy. Some participants worry about attending protests. Alan explains that he does not attend protests because he fears being photographed.[30]

Regarding online resistance, diaspora members explain that they anonymize themselves and avoid using certain words that may lead to a breach of the NSL. Dylan explains that he deleted 'forbidden' words on his social media to protect himself.[31] Emily explains that she shares news articles on her social media as resistance, but she cannot fully exercise this tactic:

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[26] Informal conversation with Amber [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, May 2021.
[27] Semi-structured interview with Andrew [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, March 19, 2021.
[28] Informal conversation with Emily [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, February 2021.
[29] Semi-structured interview with Wendy [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, May 10, 2021.
[30] Semi-structured interview with Alan [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, May 12, 2021.
[31] Informal conversation with Dylan [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, March 2021.

"If I share news I try not to put too much commentary on the news. Sharing news is self-made and neutral. When I add commentary, it reveals my viewpoints. That is also a risk for me. So sharing on social media I have some constraints within myself."[32] Diaspora members who decide to resist cannot fully exercise their freedom to do this, as they continue to fear experiencing transnational repression. There is, however, one member who seems to fully exercise their freedoms in the Netherlands.

Sophia considers herself an exile because the company she decided to join after the implementation of the NSL got sanctioned by the Chinese Government. She explains that this gives her the freedom to speak up: "The freeing part is that I am not afraid of the NSL and I am not afraid of the Chinese Government's opinions, because I am here [in the Netherlands]. I have accepted that I am not going back so I am not afraid of saying things now."[33] This shows that Sophia resists being included as a citizen of the Chinese Government and considers herself an exile. This contradicts Glasius's (2018) observation that authoritarian states alone decide to banish citizens from the home-country. It shows that diaspora members themselves can also decide to 'exit' authoritarianism. Still, this step is often difficult to take due to ties with the home-country (e.g., through family members and citizenship). Many Hong Kong diaspora members simply "[...] would not dare to go back to Hong Kong [...]"[34] out of fear of what might happen by arrival. The decision not to return is thus not always made out of 'free will'. This suggests that considering oneself an exile can make the difference between choosing to surrender or to resist. Those who choose to cut ties with the authoritarian home-country can fully enjoy the freedom to resist, while those who continue to be connected to the authoritarian home-country (e.g., through family members and citizenship) can choose to surrender.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter sought to explore how Hongkongers in the Netherlands experience transnational repression, why some engage in resistance despite the risks associated with repression, and how repression shapes the resistance of diaspora members. Fear epitomizes the experience of transnational repression by Hong Kong diaspora members in the Netherlands. Fear for what 'might' happen is the driving force for some Hong Kong diaspora members to completely self-deprive their freedoms. The fear of experiencing transnational repression tactics propagates mistrust, limits anti-regime activism, and de-politicizes the social life and speech of diaspora

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[32] Semi-structured interview with Emily [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, March 26, 2021.
[33] Semi-structured interview with Sophia [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, May 18, 2021.
[34] Informal conversation with Dylan [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, April 2021.

members. Like Moss (2016) argues, this shows that some diaspora members cannot fully 'exit' from authoritarianism.

Some diaspora members exercise the freedoms granted in a democratic country and resist Chinese authoritarian repression. Other reasons to engage in activism are the continuity of repression and resistance between the Chinese Government and Hongkongers and the connectedness with the Hong Kong identity. Still, diaspora members feel restricted to fully exercise their (democratic) freedoms in the Netherlands due to the fear of experiencing transnational repression. This in turn shapes their resistance. Similar to the case of Moss (2016), resistance is considered risky regardless of the freedom granted by the host-country for Hongkongers who have family members residing in their home-country and who aspire to maintain access to their authoritarian home-country. Only by cutting the ties with the home-country, diaspora members seem to fully enjoy the freedom to resist home-country repression.

This chapter shows that diaspora members can simultaneously experience authoritarianism and democracy in their response to home-country repression, particularly those who resist repressive activities by the home-country. The next chapter will discuss the resistance tactics of those who choose to resist, where again democracy and authoritarianism intersect.

Chapter 4: Resisting home-country repression and securitization
Politicization and counter-securitization intertwined

"同共產黨鬥長命 [This means] roughly to raise for longevity against the CCP. It is a mentality to prepare people for a long-term effort, instead of something that is short-term."[35]

This statement introduced by Andrew characterizes the resistance of Hong Kong diaspora members in the Netherlands; long-term and against the CCP. This chapter examines the resistance of Hongkongers in the Netherlands through the analytical lenses: counter-securitization, desecuritization, and politicization. The focus is on how diaspora members resist the activities of the Chinese Government and what they expect to achieve by engaging in resistance. This chapter will make the following arguments: (1) diaspora members interact with foreign citizens, through counter-securitizing speech acts, to politicize the issue of the threat posed by the Chinese Government; (2) diaspora members interact with politicians and political entities to reverse or stop the securitization process; and (3) diaspora members are considered a pressure group and attempt to affect change (i.e., reverse or stop the securitization process) through intermediary channels. The following sub-chapter substantiates the first argument.

4.1 The CCP as a threat: changing public opinion to change political debates

Emily, as part of the NL4HK, uses the democratic system of the Netherlands in her resistance. She raises awareness among Dutch citizens about the Chinese Government to influence political debates and for people to "[…] have more consideration when they pick the candidate [during elections]."[36] Emily explains:

"[…] the Netherlands is a real democratic country with a democratic system. I feel like if more people are concerned about this then the politicians will also be concerned about this. […] Then maybe some impacts can be brought."[37]

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[35] Semi-structured interview with Andrew [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, March 19, 2021.
[36] Semi-structured interview with Emily [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, March 26, 2021.
[37] Semi-structured interview with Emily [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, March 26, 2021.

Others also argue that it is important to inform people of the threat posed by the Chinese Government. This issue is made relevant for citizens of foreign countries, particularly the Netherlands, to influence political debates. This connects closely to the process of politicization, where an issue is claimed as significant for the society in question and to make it a subject of debate (Cavelty and Leese 2018; Hagmann et al. 2018). Foreign citizens serve as an intermediary audience and are expected to influence political debates about the threat posed by the Chinese Government. As Emily points out, this is to raise concern among politicians and to eventually create change.

Hong Kong diaspora members perform counter-securitizing speech acts for citizens of foreign countries to show the significance of the issue and to influence political debates. This is illustrated by Dylan:

"Of course, the Netherlands and the rest of the world should […] fight against authoritarianism and dictatorship […]. Look at the situation getting worse and worse every day in places like Hong Kong, Myanmar, and Belarus. However, for the Netherlands, I would say 'resist the CCP' is the priority. I am telling you, CCP and pro-CCP people are everywhere in the Netherlands. They are building up foreign forces of China every day in the Netherlands. […] if you continue to let anti-democratic forces and autocrats advance abroad, then it means that you continue to give away your own democratic values as well. […] I really hope people, especially in the European Union (EU), know more about the 'true color' or 'evil side' of the CCP so that they protect the country or people against the dangerous traps by the CCP."[38]

This statement by Dylan can be analyzed through the generic structure of the counter-securitizing speech act, consisting of a claim, warning, and demand. Dylan gave a contextualized description of the danger of the CCP. He described that the CCP expands its authoritarian reach into the territories of other states (claim). Dylan provided the consequences of inaction by pointing out that democratic values will erode (warning). He also provided an action plan to inform people worldwide about the danger of the CCP and protect them against the CCP (demand). Other diaspora members similarly provide claims, warnings, and demands against the Chinese Government. Hongkongers I spoke to argue, among others, that the Chinese

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[38] Informal conversation with Dylan [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, March 2021.

Government violates human rights, infiltrates other countries (e.g., through Dutch education or political parties), represses the voices of countries where they hold economic power, censors information (e.g., holding back information about the Uyghurs and Covid-19), and represses Taiwanese, Uyghurs, Hongkongers, and Tibetans. The following section will explain how Hong Kong diaspora members perform counter-securitizing speech acts for citizens of foreign countries to influence political debates.

4.1.1 Exposing the 'truth': the role of news articles, social media platforms, and research

"I believe someone like you, local Dutch and European, never know most of the news […]. Of course, the news stories were all hand-picked by me. Most of them are from mainstream media […] and are not propaganda or 'fake-news'. I also believe the more people would read the news I read, the more people would see the 'true color' of the CCP."[39]

Similar to Dylan, Liam explains that it is important to share the correct news with citizens of foreign countries. Liam claims that "[…] Western media could only understand the Hong Kong problem via China's foreign affairs or Hong Kong local media which are controlled by the Chinese capital."[40] For diaspora members, this lack of 'truth' in the Western media results in the obligation to inform people about the CCP and Hong Kong.

Hong Kong diaspora members inform people on social media platforms and construct an anti-CCP social reality with news articles. Shum explains that for the NL4HK he mainly shares news articles related to the Netherlands and Europe to show the significance of the issue to Dutch or European citizens, which relates again to the process of politicization. Shum explains: "If it [the news] relates Europe or the Netherlands to China or Hong Kong, they [Dutch or European citizens] can relate to it."[41] Besides this, he prioritizes Dutch news articles over English articles and includes a Dutch summary when the news is only available in English to increase accessibility for Dutch citizens. It is important to note that diaspora members often share news articles without commentary. They deliberately choose news articles to get their anti-CCP message across and reach foreign citizens. Examples of news articles diaspora members share are: "Westerners are increasingly scared of traveling to China as threat of

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[39] Informal conversation with Dylan [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, March 2021.
[40] Informal conversation with Liam [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, March 2021.
[41] Semi-structured interview with Shum [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, March 26, 2021.

detention rises" (Marsh 2021)[42], "How a teacher ended up in a Chinese torture camp (and escaped to here)" (Botje 2021)[43], and "Huawei was able to eavesdrop on KPN customers' conversations" (NOS Nieuws 2021)[44]. These examples show that diaspora members use the narrative of the media to construct an anti-CCP social reality. This contradicts Stritzel and Chang's (2015) finding that securitized subjects, in their resistance, use newspapers to communicate their own narrative. Using the media's narrative to construct a social reality in favor of the securitized subject provides new insights for the literature.

As a Dutch citizen and researcher, I am included in the audience of participants. In the starting statement of this section, Dylan talks to me as a Dutch or European citizen. Others also point this out. For example, Liam states that he expresses his views through news articles by sharing them on his social media and he argues: "I also share something with you."[45] Also, through participating in the research, participants hope to spread their anti-CCP social reality. Emily asks during her interview: "Do you have a chance to connect with a NOS journalist or Sjoerd Sjoerdsma?" Sjoerd Sjoerdsma is a Dutch politician and serves as a member of the House of Representatives. Sjoerdsma regularly critiques China's human rights violations in Xinjiang. Sometimes, non-activists point out that they hope to spread the CCP threat narrative through this research. Suki explains: "I hope that in your thesis you can bring a message to people who live in the West, people who are not Asian, or people who do not speak Chinese, that China is a threat and it has already come here [in the Netherlands]." This aspect of the researcher being an audience member for counter-securitizing speech acts is an analytical aspect not considered by the counter-securitization authors discussed in the theoretical context (Stritzel and Chang 2015; Topgyal 2016).

Besides using news articles and myself as a Dutch citizen and researcher, diaspora members construct an anti-CCP social reality in various ways. During protests, participants share information on China's influence in the Netherlands through speeches and leaflets to show the significance of the threat posed by the Chinese Government to citizens of the Netherlands.[46] Other diaspora members use their thesis research to construct a narrative. Alan argues that he hopes to raise awareness for the future: "If I change some of their [my fellow students'] opinions, these small changes might accumulate and become a real policy change in the future

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[42] Participant observation on the Instagram account of Dylan [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], March 10, 2021.
[43] Participant observation on the Facebook page of the NL4HK, May 2, 2021.
[44] Participant observation on the Facebook page of the NL4HK, April 17, 2021.
[45] Semi-structured interview with Liam [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, April 2, 2021.
[46] Participant observation at the 'Netherlands for Hong Kong' protest, an overseas rally for Hong Kong, at the Dam Square in Amsterdam, June 12, 2021.

when they enter the field of international affairs."[47]. Participants also share narratives on social media. Jade regularly shares posts of the Instagram account 'International Fuck CCP'[48][49] Anson comments on Facebook posts or shares posts himself, where he criticizes and warns his audience about the CCP.[50]

The above-mentioned shows how Hong Kong diaspora members perform counter-securitizing discourses relevant to foreign citizens to influence public opinion. They predominantly do this using news articles, social media platforms, and research. It comes forward that the content shared in the media often facilitates counter-securitization discourses. This closely relates to the socio-political context where counter-securitization discourses can be used (Topgyal 2016). Another context that facilitates the counter-securitizing speech acts of diaspora members is repeated repression by the authoritarian state of China.

4.1.2 Reappropriating authoritarian home-country repression

Repeated repression by the Chinese Government can create an environment for discourse suitable to counter-securitization and repression can be reappropriated. Throughout interviews, participants relate the situation in Hong Kong to the current situation of Uyghurs, Tibetans, and Falun Gong practitioners and include themselves in the Milk Tea Alliance[51]. These are other groups repressed by and resisting the Chinese Government. There is the belief that it is important "[…] to support anyone willing to fight against the CCP [and] it is important to support anyone 'suppressed' by the CCP [...]."[52] As Emily points out, "[…] this raises public understanding of China."[53] This connection is made in online threat constructions and during protests of the NL4HK. During protests, Tibetans and Uyghurs stand with Hongkongers and contrariwise.[54] Another way diaspora members relate to repressed groups is by actively supporting these groups. Sophia joined an NGO researching the Uyghur cause after the NSL got passed and explains: "I think it fits into the broader philosophy of resisting the CCP and holding them accountable and speaking the truth about what they do."[55] This relationship

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[47] Semi-structured interview with Alan [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, May 12, 2021.
[48] 'International Fuck CCP' is an Instagram account for Hongkongers fighting against the CCP.
[49] Participant observation on the Instagram account of Jade [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], May 2021.
[50] Informal conversation with Anson [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, March 2021.
[51] The Milk Tea Alliance is a democratic solidarity movement made up of citizens from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Myanmar, and Thailand. The movement resists the authoritarian power of the Chinese Government.
[52] Informal conversation with Dylan [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, April 2021.
[53] Informal conversation with Emily [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, May 2021.
[54] Participant observation at the 'Netherlands for Hong Kong' protest, an overseas rally for Hong Kong, at the Dam Square in Amsterdam, June 12, 2021.
[55] Semi-structured interview with Sophia [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, May 18, 2021.

between repressed groups is something that is not new. It has been visible in other conflicts, such as the use of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to strengthen claims in Northern Ireland (Arar 2017).

The above-mentioned shows that diaspora members can turn the government's repressive actions around and use them to criticize the government. Some diaspora members also reappropriate the transnational repression activities of the Chinese Government towards Hong Kong activists. Andrew points out: "The fact that the law relates to everybody regardless of nationality, is again another way of putting it in front of people, to say this is related to you as well."[56] This way, the repressive side of the NSL is used by diaspora members to show the significance of the NSL to foreign citizens. This was shown throughout the interviews, where I, as a Dutch citizen, received warnings for the NSL. Anson points out: "[…] the security law applies to all nationalities, you too can just disappear, or your family is threatened."[57] This shows that repression can be reappropriated and claimed as significant to societies in question. This also shows that repetitive repression can facilitate the counter-securitization discourse where the Chinese Government is constructed as a threat.

Hongkongers in the Netherlands resist repression by utilizing both politicization and counter-securitization. Diaspora members interact with foreign citizens, through counter-securitizing speech acts, to politicize the issue of the threat posed by the Chinese Government. Diaspora members mainly use the media's threat constructions and their own threat constructions to communicate their anti-CCP social reality. Another way diaspora members construct a threat is to reappropriate the repression by the Chinese Government. These threat constructions serve to show the significance of the issue to foreign citizens. Diaspora members hope this could lead to changing public opinion. Foreign citizens are expected to influence political debates about the threat posed by the Chinese Government. This way, foreign citizens serve as an intermediary audience, as they are expected to do something subsequent to the actions of diaspora members. Sometimes, Hong Kong diaspora members try to influence political debates directly. They do this by interacting with politicians and political entities.

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[56] Semi-structured interview with Andrew [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, March 19, 2021.
[57] Informal conversation with Anson [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, May 2021.

4.2 Direct interaction with politicians and political entities

To influence political debates, Hong Kong diaspora members interact with different politicians or political entities; (1) Dutch politicians or the Dutch Government and (2) politicians and political entities within the EU. Particularly members of the NL4HK point out that they interact with politicians and political entities. Their main political audience is (1) Dutch politicians or the Dutch Government. A Dutch member of the NL4HK points out: "For politicians fighting for taking measures against China and providing aid for Hong Kong or other groups within China, we share suggestions to help […] and we also share arguments that they can use in meetings."[58] This member also points out that the NL4HK shares information with Dutch politicians to shape their perspectives and substantiate their arguments against the Chinese Government.

Besides this, members of the NL4HK provide options to react. They do this through petitions and by informing the Dutch Government on the measures other countries already took. Andrew refers to a petition for Amsterdam to end their sister relationship with Beijing and Shenzhen as the values of the cities do not align. Here, claims are made on freedom and human rights. Andrew argues: "The focus is on how the Dutch Government can voice their concern and this is an action that can send a message [to the Chinese Government]. [...] to say what you are doing is not acceptable."[59] This petition builds on the actions of Czechia to end their relationship with Russia and Beijing. Andrew points out that examples of other countries' measures against the Chinese Government serve to show how the Dutch Government can react: "If Dutch politicians and the Dutch Government see that Canada [for example] did this [they can think] we can also do something like this. And do something about Xinjiang and Hong Kong."[60] Diaspora members "[...] want to pressure the [Dutch] Government to take action [against the Chinese Government]."[61] They suggest that the Dutch Government can, for example, impose sanctions against the Chinese Government. Diaspora members hope that the Dutch Government treats the Chinese Government as a security concern, takes (extraordinary) measures against the Chinese Government, and eventually, from the perspective of diaspora members, reverse the securitization process.

Diaspora members also interact with (2) politicians and political entities within the EU. The NL4HK reaches out to some members of the European Parliament. Another diaspora

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[58] Informal conversation with a Dutch member of the NL4HK, online, April 2021.
[59] Semi-structured interview with Andrew [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, March 19, 2021.
[60] Semi-structured interview with Andrew [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, March 19, 2021.
[61] Semi-structured interview with Shum [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, March 26, 2021.

member who reached out to the European Parliament is Alan. He explains: "There is a parliamentarian group specifically for Hong Kong. We asked them to push forward a motion concerning the case of the NSL in Hong Kong two or three times. There was a motion that asked them to consider suing China in the International Court of Justice. [...] This motion was passed by the European Parliament."[62] Instead of focusing on the broader anti-CCP discourse, Alan focuses on resisting the extraordinary measures, the NSL, taken by the Chinese Government. If successful, the securitization process can be stopped (e.g., by taking back the NSL).

Diaspora members interact with politicians or political entities to reverse or stop the securitization process. Diaspora members try to politicize the issue of the threat posed by the Chinese Government. They do this by influencing political debates about the Chinese Government by, for example, presenting information to substantiate arguments, providing options to react, and pushing motions. Also, claims and demands are made, which relates to the performance of counter-securitizing speech acts. Claims are made on, for example, the freedom or human rights of the Netherlands. Diaspora members demand that politicians or political entities will act against the securitizing actor, the Chinese Government, or the extraordinary measures, the NSL. These demands relate to the goals of counter-securitization, where the impact is to delay, stop, or reverse the securitization process (Stritzel and Chang 2015). Similar to foreign citizens, politicians or political entities serve as an intermediary audience as they are expected to do something subsequent to the actions of diaspora members. The question that arises here is: 'How successful can they be when we focus on the goals they want to achieve?'

4.3 Goals and success in resistance

Throughout this chapter, various goals for the above-mentioned resistance tactics have been discussed. Hong Kong diaspora members refer to (1) resisting CCP influence nationally and internationally and (2) pressuring the Chinese Government (e.g., with sanctions). Regarding the former, resisting CCP influence nationally and internationally can be done by foreign citizens, politicians, or political entities. For example, Jade suggests: "When the government is doing something pro-China, maybe you can be the one to write a letter to say I do not want more Chinese influence in our country."[63] Other participants suggest boycotting Chinese cotton,

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[62] Semi-structured interview with Alan [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, May 12, 2021.
[63] Semi-structured interview with Jade [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, May 10, 2021.

investigating the influence of the Chinese embassies in other countries, or for democratic states to do more to protect their citizens.

The second goal, pressuring the Chinese Government, is seen as what political entities can do to stimulate the Chinese Government to change their policy. Wendy refers to policy in general: "We want certain countries to pressure them to change their policy. Not only Hong Kong, but also the problem of Xinjiang or other human rights problems."[64] Others, like Andrew, are more specific and focus on policy in Hong Kong: "I hope that the pressure on China is enough and that they decide to take a step back and the NSL would be the logical thing to take back."[65] Some participants, like Wendy, hope that measures can be taken against the Chinese Government, and thus reverse the securitization process, to pressure the Government to change their policy in general. Others, like Andrew, wish that measures against the Chinese Government can result in taking back the NSL, and thus stopping the securitization process. This goal of pressuring the Chinese Government can be related to the goals of counter-securitization, where the impact is to delay, stop, or reverse the securitization process (Stritzel and Chang 2015).

The goals of diaspora members also relate to the goals of desecuritization. This makes it important to reflect on desecuritization as a resistance tactic. With desecuritization, a securitized subject performs a non-threatening identity to bring an issue back to normal (democratic) politics or to non-politicize an issue (Hansen 2012). Although this relates to the goal of diaspora members to take back the NSL and stop the securitization process, the way diaspora members try to achieve this is not in line with desecuritization. Participants do not perform a non-threatening identity for their home-country (government) to bring the issue back to normal politics or non-politicize the issue. Rather, as this chapter shows, they interact with foreign citizens, politicians, and political entities to stop the securitization process. Therefore, desecuritization is disclaimed as a resistance tactic for the Hongkongers I spoke to.

When focusing on how Hongkongers I spoke to estimate the success of reaching their goals mentioned above, diaspora members point out that it is hard to say. Andrew argues that "It could take years if not decades for something to happen."[66] Diaspora members, like Emily, feel they do not always have enough manpower and resources to reach their goals[67]. Still, Hong Kong diaspora members celebrate small successes. For example, Shum points out: We [the

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[64] Semi-structured interview with Wendy [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, May 10, 2021.
[65] Semi-structured interview with Andrew [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, March 19, 2021.
[66] Semi-structured interview with Andrew [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, March 19, 2021.
[67] Informal conversation with Emily [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, February 2021.

NL4HK] managed to talk to parliament members and we managed to draw a lot of attention."[68] Andrew argues: "[...] you reaching out to the NL4HK [...] is already a small success."[69] Wendy explains that she successfully informed her followers on social media: "I discovered that one of my friends from Germany is now also following the [Instagram] account of Hong Kong Free Press.[70,71]

The resistance process by members of the Hong Kong diaspora seems an unfinished and complicated battle. Diaspora members hope to reach their goals and affect change (i.e., reverse or stop the securitization process) through intermediary channels. There are many actors involved and there is a dependency on these actors; the intermediary audiences are expected to act against the Chinese Government subsequent to the tactics of members of the Hong Kong diaspora. Diaspora members point out that the process to reach their goals can be long. Still, they celebrate small successes.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter explored how diaspora members resist the activities of the Chinese Government and what they expect to achieve by engaging in resistance. Hongkongers in the Netherlands walk different paths and communicate with a variety of intermediary audiences to resist the transnational repression and securitization acts from the Chinese Government. First, diaspora members interact with foreign citizens, through counter-securitizing speech acts, to politicize the issue of the threat posed by the Chinese Government. Second, diaspora members interact with politicians and political entities to reverse or stop the securitization process. This way, diaspora try to achieve change (i.e., reverse or stop the securitization process) through intermediary channels. I consider Hong Kong diaspora members to be a pressure group. In chapter two, this members concept is related to a securitizing actor. I argue that a securitized subject can also form a pressure group. Similar to a pressure group, diaspora members try to raise awareness of the issue of the Chinese Government that is claimed to be threatening and urgent. This issue can end up on the top of the agenda of political entities to be acted upon.

To relate this to counter-securitization, desecuritization, and politicization, some conclusions can be drawn. After analysis, desecuritization is disclaimed as a resistance tactic for the Hongkongers I spoke to. Diaspora members make use of the democratic systems of 'the

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[68] Semi-structured interview with Shum [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, March 26, 2021.
[69] Semi-structured interview with Andrew [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, March 19, 2021.
[70] Hong Kong Free Press is a non-profit Hong Kong newspaper.
[71] Semi-structured interview with Wendy [a Hongkonger in the Netherlands], online, May 10, 2021.

West' and try to bring the issue of the threat posed by the Chinese Government into the 'normal democratic politics' of the Netherlands, the EU, or the international community. This process can be connected to politicization. Diaspora members introduce the issue into the debates of other countries and make the issue significant for these countries. Participants perform counter-securitizing speech acts and expect their audience to eventually react to the Chinese Government as a security threat. This aligns with counter-securitization. Different from politicization, where the question of how to solve an issue remains open, Hong Kong diaspora members have clear goals in mind that relate to the goals of counter-securitization: reverse or stop the securitization process. Here, the tactics of politicization and counter-securitization intertwine and politicization can be considered a strategy to achieve counter-securitization.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and discussion

This thesis sought to explore the reactions of members of a diaspora in a democratic state to transnational repression and securitization by an authoritarian state. Socially, it aimed to show the urgency of the issue of authoritarian transnational repression and securitization. Academically, it aimed to contribute to the literature by emphasizing the perspective of diaspora members who choose to resist and the resistance tactics they employ. With the introduction of the NSL, the Chinese Government expands its authoritarian influence into the territories of other states to control the Hong Kong diaspora, which becomes subject to transnational repression. With qualitative research, this thesis focused on the following research question: 'How do members of the Hong Kong diaspora in the Netherlands respond to transnational repression and securitization acts from the Chinese Government in the wake of the implementation of the Hong Kong national security law imposed by China on the 30th of June 2020?' This chapter answers this question by reflecting on the main findings of this research, focuses on the limitations and opportunities of the research, and provides recommendations for future research.

5.1 Main findings

To reflect on the main findings, the intersection between democracy and authoritarianism comes forward. First, Hong Kong diaspora members in the Netherlands experience authoritarianism. This shapes, in turn, their response to transnational repression and securitization. Diaspora members fear coercion-by-proxy, surveillance, harassment, threats, and prosecution upon arrival. These repression tactics can be categorized as inclusive transnational repression (Glasius 2018). As if diaspora members are still in the territory of the authoritarian state, they believe to be included as subjects of their home-country. For both non-resisters and resisters, the fear of experiencing authoritarian home-country repression results in the self-deprivation of their democratic freedoms. They constrain themselves in their freedom of assembly and speech. This is consistent with claims made in the literature that some diaspora members cannot fully 'exit' from authoritarianism and that transnational repression constrains opportunities to exercise their (democratic) freedoms (Glasius 2018; Moss 2016). However, in line with Glasius (2018) and Moss (2016), some diaspora members are not fully constrained by authoritarian repression. In fact, some Hong Kong diaspora members use transnational repression to portray the oppressor as a threat. They reappropriate repression and include it in

their resistance. This perspective is absent in the work of transnational repression authors, such as Del Sordi (2018), Glasius (2018), Michaelsen (2018), Moss (2016), and Tsourapas (2020). Using transnational repression as a resistance tactic provides new insights for the literature.

Second, Hong Kong diaspora members in the Netherlands experience democracy. This shapes, in turn, their response to transnational repression. Hong Kong diaspora members who respond to authoritarian repression by speaking up often embrace the democratic freedoms experienced in the host-country. This is consistent with scholars arguing that diasporas living in liberal democracies can bypass some constraints found in authoritarian states to participate in political activism and thus mobilize themselves against the home-country government (Adamson 2002; Escribà-Folch et al. 2015; Shain and Barth 2003; Wayland 2004). Hong Kong diaspora members resist authoritarian repression by including a democratic element, the process of politicization, into the process of counter-securitization. In this process, part of the diaspora function as a pressure group and try to convince their intermediary audiences to react to the CCP threat. Instead of responding to transnational repression and securitization by 'negotiating' with their authoritarian home-country government, they choose to 'negotiate' with their democratic host-country government and other democratic entities.

The CCP threat reoccurs in the way Hong Kong diaspora members respond to transnational repression and securitization. Some Hong Kong diaspora members share news articles in their counter-securitizing speech acts. In these articles, the threat posed by the Chinese Government and particularly the repressive side of the Government comes forward. Also, Hong Kong diaspora members read about CCP repression towards other diaspora members (e.g., Uyghyurs) in news articles. This can instill fear and result in the self-deprivation of freedoms. One might wonder, does counter-securitization become its self-fulfilling prophecy? Do diaspora members, when sharing news articles, indirectly contribute to the self-deprivation of freedoms and Chinese authoritarian repression? It is important to realize how the CCP threat is possibly perceived. Regardless of whether the threat is legitimate, it leads to the self-deprivation of freedoms and should be taken seriously by democratic (host-country) governments.

To answer the research question, members of the Hong Kong diaspora in the Netherlands respond to home-country repression and securitization by (1) self-depriving their freedoms and (2) resisting the repression and securitization through an intertwined process of politicization and counter-securitization. The latter provides new insights into resistance tactics to securitization by a securitized subject.

5.1.1 A new framework: how diaspora members resist authoritarian home-country repression and securitization

The resistance tactics discussed in this thesis, counter-securitization, desecuritization, and politicization, cannot fully explain on their own how members of a diaspora in a democratic country resist home-country repression and securitization. Diaspora members do not perform a non-threatening identity for their home-country (government). Rather, diaspora members communicate with foreign citizens, politicians, and political entities in their resistance. Therefore, desecuritization has been disclaimed. Besides this, politicization or counter-securitization on their own is not enough to explain diaspora resistance, as these tactics are employed as intertwined tactics. Although diaspora members politicize the issue of the CCP, they do this through counter-securitizing speech acts and construct the Chinese Government as a threat to be acted upon. This thesis shows that politicization is a strategy employed to achieve counter-securitization. As a result of this, a framework is developed, based on this research, to explain 'diaspora resistance in a democratic host-country against home-country repression and securitization'.

The framework I develop is based on the framework of counter-securitization. Counter-securitization is a linguistically regulated process of resistance against crucial elements of the securitization process in relation to relevant audiences. The securitized subject can, if successful, delay, stop, or reverse the securitization process (Stritzel and Chang 2015, 552-53). As the counter-securitization framework cannot explain 'diaspora resistance against home-country repression and securitization' completely, new elements are included; the pressure group, intermediary audiences, and politicization. The securitized subject (i.e., Hong Kong diaspora members) forms in this research a pressure group that tries to raise an issue to the top of the agenda of political entities. The pressure group does this by performing counter-securitizing speech acts (i.e., constructing the CCP threat) for intermediary audiences. They often follow the generic structure of the counter-securitizing speech act presented in the counter-securitization framework, consisting of a claim, warning, and demand. Different from the counter-securitization framework, the issue is politicized and the audiences are intermediaries as they are expected to do something. There is an intermediary audience (i.e., foreign citizens) that is expected to influence political debates about the threat posed by the securitizing actor (i.e., the Chinese Government). The other intermediary audience (i.e., politicians or political entities) encompasses decision makers and is expected to use (extraordinary) measures against the securitizing actor to reverse securitization. If successful, the securitizing actor (i.e., the Chinese Government) or the extraordinary measures placed on

the securitized subject (i.e., the NSL) can be resisted. This relates to the goals of counter-securitization, where the impact is to delay, stop, or reverse the securitization process. This framework is illustrated in Map 1. There is a division made between the actions of the securitized subject, colored orange, and the actions of the intermediary audiences as desired by the securitized subject, colored green.

Map 1 - The Logic of Resisting Authoritarian Home-country Repression and Securitization
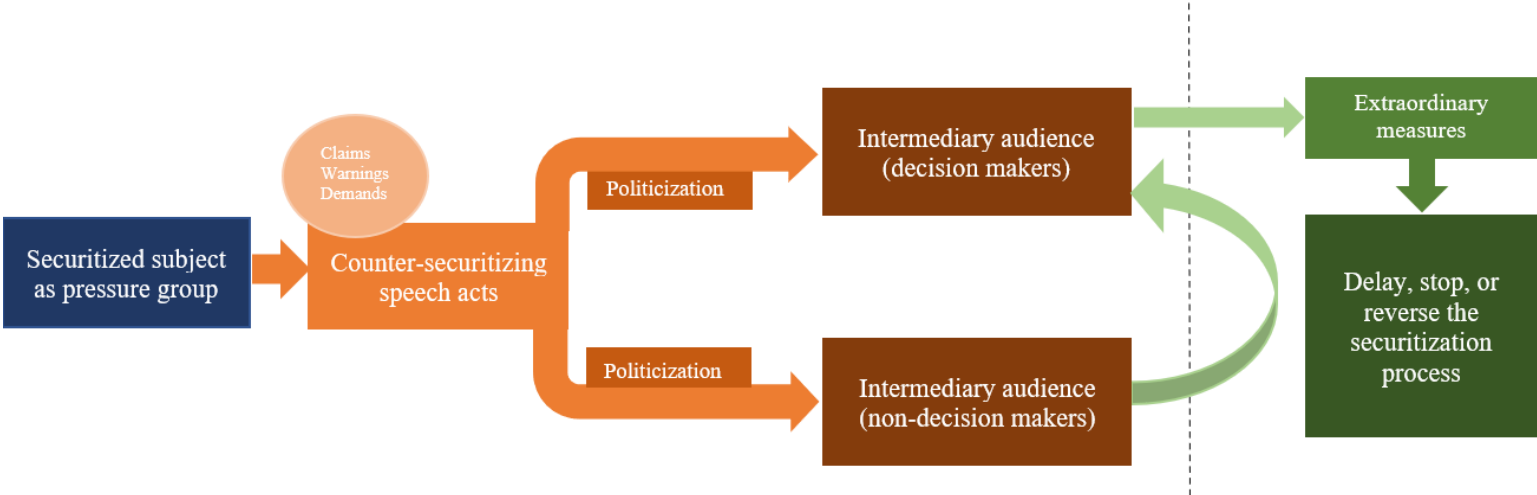
Overall, this research is socially relevant as it provides evidence that the actions of authoritarian states have detrimental effects on democratic countries and their residents. There is no clear evidence that transnational repression tactics are employed. Still, the possibility of experiencing repression can cause fear and affect the basic civil rights of residents. The topic of transnational repression should thus be raised on the agendas of democratic countries. Academically, this research provides analytical insights. The framework 'resisting authoritarian home-country repression and securitization' introduces new analytical elements into the framework of counter-securitization. It incorporates the pressure group, intermediary audiences, and politicization. This framework shows that diaspora members do not take direct actions against the securitizing actor, but instead go through intermediary channels. This way, they depend on the intermediary audiences to act. To fully grasp the process of resistance, it is important to include the perspective of the intermediary audiences. This will be discussed further in the following sub-chapter focusing on limitations and opportunities.

5.2 Limitations and opportunities

One of the limitations of this research is that the method of interviewing brought security concerns for the research population, which sometimes restricted them to communicate their perspective on certain topics clearly. This resulted in 'limited' data collection and I, as a researcher, had to interpret what the participant tried to communicate. An opportunity is that this restriction in communication also was a finding in itself.

Besides this, interviewing was important to understand the resistance tactics from the perspective of participants. Counter-securitization authors, such as Stritzel and Chang (2015), show that securitized subjects in their resistance construct certain narratives to convince their audience that they should be aware of a threat. This is what I expected to find as well. When I did not find too many of these constructed narratives through online participant observation, I believed that this was not a case of counter-securitization. This assumption was false. Participants taught me in interviews that a threat can also be constructed with the narrative of news articles. This shows that the type of methodology used, in this case interviewing, is crucial to understand someone's actions and to find support for a theory.

My role as a researcher throughout the research process is also important to reflect on. As a Dutch citizen and researcher, the research population included me as an audience member. Participants communicated threat constructions during interviews and this method appeared to play a crucial role in analyzing the counter-securitizing speech acts. Although this aspect provides new opportunities for data collection, a limitation is that I was torn between being an objective researcher and a (subjective) concerned audience. Throughout the process, it was thus important to reflect on the effect of my political bias on this research, my role as a researcher, and my narrative in enabling the threat construction of the Chinese Government; do I, with my research, stimulate or enable counter-securitization? I acknowledge that my political bias in favor of the Hong Kong narrative could have influenced the CCP threat narrative produced in this thesis. I am aware that there is also another side to the story; which is the pro-CCP narrative. The pro-CCP narrative has not been explored in this thesis and limits the ability to present a complete picture on the issue of Hong Kong.

There are also limitations and opportunities regarding the analytical framework. The absence of a clear framework to analyze diaspora resistance against home-country repression and securitization, created opportunities to be creative and merge ideas to understand the data collected. This thesis merged the insights from securitization and transnational repression to grasp the resistance of diaspora members. Looking through various analytical lenses, created

the opportunity to develop a framework that shows how diaspora resistance against home-country repression and securitization can be explained.

A limitation is that this framework is only able to explain the actions of the intermediary audiences as desired by the securitized subject. This research did not allow me to explore how the intermediary audiences act in reality. Regarding the actions of the host-country government, questions that arise are: what is the role of the Dutch Government, as a host-country government and audience? What do they do or want to do? Are Hong Kong diaspora members heard by the Government? And what does this say about how 'successful' diaspora members in the Netherlands are in achieving their goals of pressuring the Chinese Government and resisting home-country influence? To be able to answer these questions, further research into this topic is necessary.

5.3 Future research

Regarding future research, two main elements can be explored. First, this thesis gave the first draft of a possible framework in which the resistance of members of a diaspora in a democratic host-country to home-country repression and securitization can be understood. However, this framework is currently based on one small-scale research and cannot serve as a definitive framework. Future research could focus on other diaspora groups in democratic host-countries trying to resist authoritarian home-country repression and securitization. This can be done by including Hong Kong diaspora members from various democratic countries in large-scale research or by focusing on other repressed groups, such as Turkey's Kurdish diaspora, the Chechen diaspora, or the Uyghur diaspora.

Another element that deserves attention in future research is the perspective of the intermediary audiences. It will be interesting to explore the actions of the host-country government as an intermediary audience. This focus helps to understand whether diaspora members are heard by the government in their resistance and how successful they are in achieving their goals. Socio-politically, this focus is relevant as the host-country is a sovereign state with certain prerogatives in relation to its citizens as well as to its international interests. A question that can be asked is: what are the wider political ramifications of the securitization dynamic between the authoritarian home-country government, as a securitizing actor, and diaspora members, as a securitized subject and pressure group, from the perspective of the host-country government?

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Appendices

Appendix 1: List of participants

	Name[72]	Identified as	Type of Interview	Date[73]
1	Emily	Hongkonger in the Netherlands*[74]	Semi-structured interview; Informal conversation	26 March 2021; Feb-May 2021
2	Liam	Hongkonger in the Netherlands*	Semi-structured interview; Informal conversation	2 April 2021; Mar-May 2021
3	Dylan	Hongkonger in the Netherlands*	Informal conversation	Mar-May 2021
4	Andrew	Hongkonger in the Netherlands*	Semi-structured interview	19 March 2021
5	Anson	Hongkonger in the Netherlands*	Informal conversation	Mar-May 2021
6	Shum	Hongkonger in the Netherlands*	Semi-structured interview; Informal Conversation	26 March 2021; Mar-May 2021
7	Cheung	Hongkonger in the Netherlands*	Informal conversation	Apr-May 2021
8	Amber	Hongkonger in the Netherlands*	Informal conversation	May 2021
9	Suki	Hongkonger in the Netherlands	Semi-structured interview; Informal conversation	7 May 2021 7 May 2021
10	Carmen	Hongkonger in the Netherlands	Informal conversations	May 2021
11	Wendy	Hongkonger in the Netherlands*	Semi-structured interview	10 May 2021
12	Jade	Hongkonger in the Netherlands*	Semi-structured interview; Informal conversation	10 May 2021 7 May 2021
13	Katy	Hongkonger in the Netherlands	Semi-structured interview	11 May 2021

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[72] All the names are pseudonyms to guarantee full anonymity of the participants.

[73] Informal conversations sometimes found place over a longer time span. Therefore, no specific dates are included for conversations that lasted longer than one day.

[74] Participants with * behind their description are Hongkongers who actively voice their opinion against the activities of the Chinese Government.

14	Alan	Hongkonger in the Netherlands*	Semi-structured interview; Informal conversation	12 May 2021; May 2021
15	Celia	Hongkonger in the Netherlands	Informal conversation	May 2021
16	Jasmine	Hongkonger in the Netherlands	Semi-structured interview	16 May 2021
17	Sophia	Hongkonger in the Netherlands*	Semi-structured interview	18 May 2021
18	Ying	Hongkonger in the Netherlands	Semi-structured interview (e-mail)	12 May 2021
19	Alison	Hongkonger in the Netherlands	Semi-structured interview (e-mail)	12 May 2021
20	Eliz	Hongkonger in the Netherlands	Semi-structured interview (e-mail)	12 May 2021
21	Madelyn	Hongkonger in the Netherlands	Semi-structured interview	25 May 2021
22	X	Dutch member of the NL4HK	Informal conversation	Mar-May 2021
23	X	Dutch Hong Kong activist	Informal conversation	3 March 2021
24	X	Dutch Hong Kong activist	Informal conversation	6 March 2021

Appendix 2: Interview questions

This list of interview questions serves as an example of the type of questions I asked during interviews. During interviews, I did not necessarily ask the questions in this order. Also, due to the format of the semi-structured interview, there was an opportunity for discussion and follow-up questions.

<u>Introduction</u>

- Introduction: MA student Conflict Studies and Human Rights, Utrecht University
- Main goal research: aim to understand how Hongkongers in the Netherlands respond to the activities of the Chinese Government in light of the Hong Kong national security law.
- Purpose of interview: This interview will be used to analyze my research questions and will be one of many interviews. Direct answers to the questions might be used in the final text of my thesis.
- Informed Consent
    - Your identity will stay anonymous. You can use a different name in the interview and I do not need any personal details.
    - I want to make clear that the conversation will stay anonymous. I would like to use your insights for my analysis.
    - Do you have any security concerns? And what do you propose to alleviate those concerns?
        - Risks: participating in the interview might put you more at risk of breaching the Hong Kong national security law, but I promise that I will protect your identity as much as I can.
        - Benefits: the research can be beneficial for you, because I will take your answers seriously, I will listen to them and it can be a relief to share your viewpoint.
    - You do not have to answer the questions if you do not want to.
    - You can stop the interview anytime you want to.
    - You can make it clear if you do not want certain answers to be used in the research. If this is the case, I will not use your answers
    - Before the interview starts, I would like you to (verbally) agree to participate in the research to show me that you agree with the terms of the interview.

- If you do not mind, I would like to take notes during the interview and I would like to record you so that I don't forget anything you have said.
- What to expect: In the interview, I will first ask you some general questions. Hereafter, I will ask questions about the Hong Kong national security law, Hong Kong activism, your social media activity, and your expectations of the international community.

General questions

- When did you move from Hong Kong to the Netherlands?
- Why did you move from Hong Kong to the Netherlands?
- Do you currently have family living in Hong Kong?

Hong Kong National Security Law

- How do you relate to politics back home in Hong Kong?
  - What is your opinion of the latest developments in Hong Kong?
- In June 2020, the Hong Kong National Security Law (NSL) was implemented.
  - What is your opinion on the NSL?
  - How can the NSL affect you as a Hongkonger in the Netherlands?
    - How do you cope with the NSL?
  - What are the consequences or risks for you when speaking up about home-country politics after the implementation of the NSL? What do you think can happen when you breach the NSL?
  - Did you already hear of Hongkongers abroad breaching the NSL or facing problems because of the NSL? Can you explain what happened to these Hongkongers?
  - What tactics do you believe the Chinese Government employs against Hongkongers abroad?
- You just described what the risks are when you continue to speak up about home-country politics. Can you explain how this affects you?
  - o Results in not speaking up – why do you decide not to speak up?
  - o Results in speaking up – why do you decide to speak up? Also: see further questions.
  .

Hong Kong activism

- How do you engage in home-country politics? How do you speak up?

Related to diaspora members part of the NL4HK
- Since when are you part of the NL4HK?
- What is your current role in the NL4HK?
- Can you explain what you as part of the NL4HK currently would like to achieve? Are there measures you would like to see taken?
- Can you explain how you or the NL4HK are trying to achieve these goals?
  - How successful do you think you can be with this?
  - Can you give examples of goals you have already achieved within the NL4HK?
- You just described the goals you want to achieve by speaking up. Can you explain to me how the NSL (or other actions from the Chinese Government) might make this more difficult?

Related to diaspora members outside the NL4HK
- Do you know the activist group the NL4HK or any other group supporting Hong Kong?
  - If yes, can you explain to me what your opinion is about these groups?
    - Do you follow these groups? Do you engage with these groups?
      - If yes, what motivates you to engage with these groups/follow these groups?
      - If not, why did you decide not to engage with these groups?
- Can you explain to me what your goals are when you speak up about the Hong Kong situation, or when engaging with the activist groups? What do you want to achieve?
- How are you trying to achieve the goals you just stated?
- How successful do you think you can be with this?

Social Media
- Do you share information on Hong Kong on social media? If yes what?
- Why are you active on social media?
- How does the information you share relate to the goals you stated before?

Expectations of the international community
- Can you explain how you see the role of, for example, the international community, China, or the Netherlands in the Hong Kong cause?

- ○ Is there anything you would like the Netherlands, China, or other countries to do? What measures would you like to see taken?
  - ○ What do you expect the Netherlands to do about the Hong Kong situation?

Conclusion

- Thank you very much for this interview. I appreciate your cooperation. Again, everything you have said in this interview will stay anonymous.
- Do you have anything else to add that might be interesting or important? Or do you want me to ignore some answers?
- What did you think about this interview? Do you have any tips for me?
- Did I ask any questions in an insensitive way? If yes, please tell me so that I can be more careful next time.
- Do you know other people who might know a lot about these topics and who are willing to do an interview?

Appendix 3: Declaration of originality / plagiarism

Declaration of Originality/Plagiarism Declaration

MA Thesis in Conflict Studies & Human Rights Utrecht University

(course module GKMV 16028)

I hereby declare:

• that the content of this submission is entirely my own work, except for quotations from published and unpublished sources. These are clearly indicated and acknowledged as such, with a reference to their sources provided in the thesis text, and a full reference provided in the bibliography;

• that the sources of all paraphrased texts, pictures, maps, or other illustrations not resulting from my own experimentation, observation, or data collection have been correctly referenced in the thesis, and in the bibliography;

• that this Master of Arts thesis in Conflict Studies & Human Rights does not contain material from unreferenced external sources (including the work of other students, academic personnel, or professional agencies);

• that this thesis, in whole or in part, has never been submitted elsewhere for academic credit;

• that I have read and understood Utrecht University's definition of plagiarism, as stated on the University's information website on "Fraud and Plagiarism":

"Plagiarism is the appropriation of another author's works, thoughts, or ideas and the representation of such as one's own work." (Emphasis added.)[75]

Similarly, the University of Cambridge defines "plagiarism" as " … *submitting as one's own work, irrespective of intent to deceive, that which derives in part or in its entirety from the work of others without due acknowledgement. It is both poor scholarship and a breach of academic integrity*." (Emphasis added.)[76]

• that I am aware of the sanction applied by the Examination Committee when instances of plagiarism have been detected;

• that I am aware that every effort will be made to detect plagiarism in my thesis, including the standard use of plagiarism detection software such as Turnitin.

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[75] https://students.uu.nl/en/practical-information/policies-and-procedures/fraud-and-plagiarism
[76] http://www.plagiarism.admin.cam.ac.uk/what-plagiarism/universitys-definition-plagiarism

Name and Surname of Student: Esmeralda Vane

Title of MA thesis in Conflict Studies & Human Rights:

Where authoritarianism and democracy meet: Resistance and submission of members of the Hong Kong diaspora in the Netherlands to Chinese authoritarian repression and securitization

Signature	Date of Submission
	August 2, 2021