Creating the threat and ignoring the response

A critical comparison of discursive motivation within resolutions concerning Libya and Syria

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Abstract

In the spring of 2011, the populations in Libya and Syria rose against their governments, taking part in what would become known as the Arab Spring. The similarities of the two countries' situations were striking, however the international response to the burgeoning crises diverged greatly. This study has tried to explain *how* – rather than why – interventions are motivated from discourse by looking at discourses within resolutions concerning Libya and Syria in the crisis' early years. To answer this question a comparative critical discourse analysis combined with securitization and de-securitization moves, as developed by the Copenhagen School, have been applied to four central resolutions concerning the two cases. The comparative analysis concluded that in both implicit and explicit terms the Libyan and Syrian discourses were constructed differently. This study further argued that a securitization of the Libyan conflict helped explain the intervention and similarly, a de-securitization of Syrian conflict helped explain the non-intervention. Overall this study tried to shed light on the paradoxical discursive treatment the two conflicts have endured while adding to the understanding on how linguistic structures and discourses motivate practice within the international environment.

Keywords: *Libya, Syria, securitization, discourse, threat, Security Council, resolutions, security, creation, Copenhagen School, critical discourse analysis*
Characters count: 61 288

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1   Introduction

Two months into what would become the Arab Spring of 2011, the United Nations Security Council concluded that the uprising within Libya was considered a threat to international peace and security. Well into its first weeks, the uprising towards then president Muammar Gaddafi had gained leverage and become more violent, promoting the Security Council to act accordingly. The consequent intervention as well as the resolutions and work leading up to it have been hailed as a textbook case of the seldom called upon international norm of protecting human security.[1]

Meanwhile, the Arab Spring had reached Syria, where unarmed protesters rose against president Bashar al-Assad. Similarly, the protests in Syria quickly turned violent as al-Assad sought to crush the burgeoning rebellion which caused the protesters to turn to arms themselves in response. However, the quick decision making characterized by the case of Libya has remained absent in Syria, a conflict well into its seventh year of violence at the time of writing.[2] The two different cases, although similar in many aspects, raises interesting questions around constructions of security, threats and how they affect the international environment.

1.1   Purpose and research question

The situations in Libya and Syria, do share similarities regarding the timing of the uprisings, the effects on the civilian population as well as their quick turn to violence. The question why these very similar situations have endured differing treatment from the international community sets the stage for questions concerning why interventions happen in some situations and not in others – when the conditions in both cases are seemingly close to identical. If the handling of Libya is considered the norm, how come the treatment of Syria has diverged so widely? As the death

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[1] International Crisis Group (2011a) "Popular Protests in North Africa and the Middle East (V): Making Sense of Libya", Middle East/North Africa Report N°107 Published 6 June 2011. Available at: https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/north-africa/libya/popular-protest-north-africa-and-middle-east-v-making-sense-libya, p.1,4; Tocci, Nathalie. (2016). "On Power and Norms: Libya, Syria and the Responsibility to Protect" *Global Responsibility to Protect.* 8:51-75, p.51-53.
[2] International Crisis Group (2011c) "Syria Conflict Alert" https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/eastern-mediterranean/syria/syria-conflict-alert; Tocci, 2016, p.51-53.

toll of people in the Syrian crisis continues to increase, one might ask if Syria in itself represents a bigger threat to stability, peace and security than Libya ever did.[3]

The broader aim of this essay is to analyze and understand how the intervention in Libya was motivated and how an intervention in Syria around the same time did not occur. This study aims to understand how four resolutions S/RES/1970, S/RES/1973 on Libya[4] and S/RES/2042, S/RES/2043 on Syria[5], adopted by the United Nations Security Council [UNSC], might be analyzed within a securitization framework in order to understand how and in what ways the two conflicts have been portrayed. Additionally, the language used in the resolutions will be examined through a critical discourse analysis to highlight differences and similarities, which might increase the understanding of the differentiating outcomes. Therefore, this study aims to answer the following research question:

How can we understand the portrayed motivations for intervention in Libya and respective non-intervention in Syria through a securitization framework?

There is no doubt that many factors played a role in determining the outcomes of the two cases. The more specific aim of this study is to deeply analyze the wording and dynamics manifested in the resolutions by the UNSC in order to understand *how* – rather than why – interventions are motivated from texts. This analysis aims to shed light on a particular part of securitization and also help understand the Libyan and Syrian cases, both separately and in relation to each other as they represent two similar situations with widely differentiating outcomes.

1.2   Disposition

Within the introduction previous research will be presented in order to position this study within the wider field of research. Following the section, the securitization theory and method of critical discourse analysis, both chosen the study, will be presented. Within this section the chosen frameworks, limitation as well as material and operationalization will be presented and elaborated on. Following this section, the results will be presented through an analysis of the material together with the chosen frameworks. After the analysis, a discussion and comparison of the results from the two cases will be conducted.

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[3] International Crisis Group (2012) "Syria's Phase of Radicalisation" Middle East Briefing N°33 Published 10 April 2012. [Electronic] Available at: https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/eastern-mediterranean/syria/syria-s-phase-radicalisation [Accessed: 2018-03-20].
[4] Security Council resolution 1970. (2011). S/RES/1970 (16 February 2011)*; Security Council resolution 1973. (2011). S/RES/1973 (17 March 2011).
[5] Security Council resolution 2042. (2012) S/RES/2042 (14 April 2012); Security Council resolution 2043. (2012). S/RES/2043 (21 April 2012).

1.3 Previous research

The conflicts related to the Arab Spring, both in its formation and effects, has been widely studied. In the Libyan case many scholars have focused on the UNSC's work leading up to the defining resolutions, which has deepened both our understanding of their work and the power play that defines modern international politics.[6]

A study by Rebecca Adler-Nissen and Vincent Pouliot[7] effectively highlighted the internal power play of the P5[8], and especially the P3[9], in relation to the non-permanent members of the council during the Libyan crisis. The in-depth study, building on interviews with diplomats involved in the decision-making process, gives a much-needed insight into the internal workings of the UNSC. Adler-Nissen and Pouliot further focus on the practice perspective of military interventions which provides a different explanation from geostrategic interests, military interest or norms, as they analyze the intricate power politics and moves beyond the traditionally structuralist explanations.[10] Their study shows how struggles within North Atlantic Treaty Organization [NATO], the United Nations [UN] and the European Union [EU] practically affected the power politics and influence over decision making.[11]

In a response to Adler-Nissen and Pouliot's research, Jess Ginkins and Jason Ralph explore and criticize the study on the grounds that it potentially misses the target of what it wanted to explain by focusing too much on the diplomat's competence or incompetence.[12] They argue that the actions of the P3 in the Libyan case hindered the same treatment of the Syrian conflict. They depict it rather as a power play in which the rest of the members, except for the P3, were arguably angered about the swift and dominant decision making in resolutions 1970 and 1973. This anger was then channeled into the following resolutions about the Syrian conflict.

Both these studies set the stage for the Libya – Syria dynamic, in which the UNSC's internal workings have been the main focal point of analysis. Expectedly, while not explicitly a part of this study, the NATO-led Libyan intervention of 2011 has been the subject of many studies, covering aspects from its actual and perceived

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[6] Reykers, Yf (2017). "Capacity, legitimacy or hegemony? A multi-tier explanation for NATO's involvement in the Libya crisis". *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*. 15(4): 366-385
[7] Adler-Nissen, Rebecca – Pouliot, Vincent. (2014). "Power in practice: Negotiating the international intervention in Libya". *European Journal of International Relations*. 20(4): 889–911.
[8] The United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia and China.
[9] The United States, the United Kingdom and France.
[10] Adler-Nissen – Pouliot, 2016, p.896.
[11] Ibid., p.890.
[12] Gifkins, Jess. – Ralph, Jason. (2016). "The purpose of United Nations Security Council practice: Contesting competence claims in the normative context created by the Responsibility to Protect". *European Journal of International Relations*. 23(3):630–653, p.638.

legality to its adherence to international norms.[13] Notably Alex J. Bellamy has devoted time to mapping and studying the Libyan conflict and the following intervention, both its limitations in being a military intervention and its quick acceptance as norm in the international environment.[14]

Continuing in the same tracks, a study by Alex J. Bellamy and Paul Williams touched upon the activism from states behind the resolutions, noting commitment from especially the UK and France.[15] Bellamy and Williams argue that a new 'politics of protection' has emerged, characterized by four aspects: the UNSC's framing of crises in terms of human protection; a willingness from the UNSC to authorize the use of force even when the host state did not consent; that regional organizations are influencing both the framing of the security issue and the range of options available; and that the international environment has manifested a willingness to work through the UNSC in these matters.[16] They further argue that the close examination of protocols and resolutions might be fruitful in order to map different nations standpoints and help expose vulnerabilities inherited in the UNSC's structure.[17]

This study argues that the two cases of Libya and Syria might provide insightful additions to these already conducted studies which have had either a strong focus on the state-actors behind the UNSC-decisions or a focus on the systemic approach by using NATO as a point of analysis. This paper's aim is not to extend these studies, nor is it to expand on the legality of the conflicts or their handling and response within the framework of a just war theory. Rather, it seeks to deepen the understanding of how discursive practices in supranational organizations were used to motivate the politics of intervention or non-intervention. This issue has, as demonstrated, been part of studies and research before but, as this study argues, not been given the depth and space it deserves.

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[13] Gifkins, Jess (2016). "R2P in the UN Security Council: Darfur, Libya and beyond". *Cooperation and Conflict.* 51(2):148-16.
[14] Bellamy, Alex J. (2008). "The Responsibility to Protect and the problem of military intervention". *International Affairs.* 4: 615-639; Bellamy, Alex J. (2014). "From Tripoli to Damascus? Lesson learning and the implementation of the Responsibility to Protect". *International Politics.* 51(1):23–44.
[15] Bellamy, Alex J. – Williams, Paul D. (2011). "The new politics of protection? Côte d'Ivoire, Libya and the responsibility to protect" *International Affairs* 87(4): 825-850, p.841
[16] Ibid., p.844.
[17] Ibid., p.847.

2 Theory

The securitization theory, in its original referred to as the Copenhagen School [CS] as developed by Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde in *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*[18], provides a sophisticated framework for understanding and analyzing security and formation of threats in the contemporary international environment. It emerged as a constructivist response to the traditional security complexes which had dominated the context of the Cold War era. The theory of securitization is based on the practice of taking politics 'beyond the established rules of the game', which renders the theory to be understood as an extreme version of polarization in politics. The spectra for understanding the issue ranges from *non-politicized* (not a concern), to *politicized* (being part of concerns, regulations or policies) to *securitized* (an existential threat in need of extreme measures, often outside the traditional bounds of procedure).[19] By focusing on security as *survival,* the framework illustrates how a certain issue can be pushed to pose an existential threat through the use of *language*. This existential threat in turn makes it legitimate to claim a range of necessary, extraordinary measures to counter it, thus also legitimizing new forms of power.[20] By focusing on creation of discourse, securitization becomes a self-referencing practice, as explained by the authors: [security] "[…]is thus a self-referential practice, because it is in this practice that the issue becomes a security issue–not necessarily because a real existential threat exists but because the issue is presented as such a threat."[21].

Building on this, the process of securitization is the easiest way of understanding the concept comprehensively. Firstly, it mainly consists of two actors, the *referent object* (the threatened object that has a claim to survival) and the *securitizing actor* (the agent making the securitizing claim that the referent object is threatened).[22] Secondly, the process of securitization could be made into three levels or stages consisting of; (1) the referent object and existential threat are identified by the securitizing actor; (2) the securitizing actor uses a securitizing move (often discursive) to suggest that the referent object is threatened; and (3) the audience accepts the threat against the referent object.[23]

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[18] Buzan, Barry., Wæver, Ole. & de Wilde, Jaap. (1998). *Security: A New Framework for Analysis.* Boulder: Lynne Rienner.
[19] Buzan *et al.*, 1998, p.24.
[20] Ibid., p.21–23.
[21] Ibid., p.24.
[22] Ibid., p.36.
[23] Ibid., p.25–26, 40.

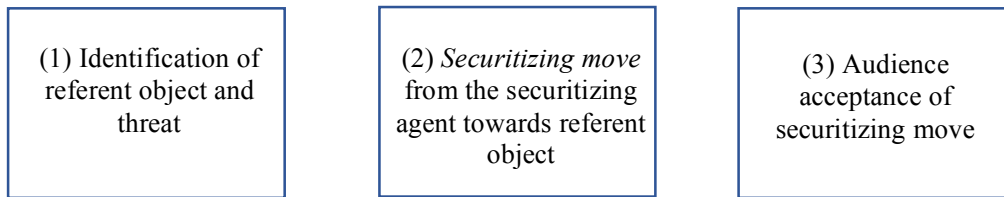| (1) Identification of referent object and threat	(2) *Securitizing move* from the securitizing agent towards referent object	(3) Audience acceptance of securitizing move

Figure 1: Conceptualization of the securitization process.[24]

As evident above, securitization as a process can only be understood in relation to the referent object, i.e. the threatened object, and its' relationship with the threat as well as the securitizing actor. When the securitizing actor uses discourse to identify the referent object as threatened it is referred to as a *securitizing move,* which is the key concept of securitization as it is through this practice that the threat is created.[25] Theoretically, anything can be constructed to constitute a security threat against any referent object – making security and threats highly subjective, ambiguous and open for interpretation.[26] However, in practice is has been noted that security is not entirely subjective and has a dimension of objectivity, as there exists social limits to what can or cannot be securitized.[27]

2.1   De-securitization

De-securitization is the process of moving certain issues into the sphere of ordinary politics by not labelling or not treating them as threats.[28] The process in itself can be likened with securitization in reverse and is ambiguous in the same way that the issues in de-securitization might be considered part of 'objective threats' or not. As observed by Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde, it is more difficult to pinpoint threats lesser than existential, which is why the process of de-securitizing is arguably more complex compared to securitization.[29]

The process of de-securitization has been elaborated on by several scholars, both as a separate issue and as part of bigger developments from the original CS. However, it remains a divider as de-securitizing ultimately alters the relationship between the securitizing moves.[30] In a study by Jonathan Luke Austin and Philippe Beaulieu-Brossard the power-relationship between the two acts are explored and they conclude that the act of de-securitization, as opposed to securitization,

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[24] Ibid., p.17,25.
[25] Ibid., p.25,36.
[26] Ibid., p.36.
[27] Ibid., p.36,39.
[28] Ibid., p.29.
[29] Ibid., p.23,39.
[30] Austin, Jonathan Luke – Beaulieu-Brossard, Philippe. (2017). "(De)securitization dilemmas: Theorising the simultaneous enaction of securitization and desecuritization". *Review of International Studies.* 44(2):301-323, p.319.

constitutes the 'removal of threat', which in part renders it to be considered as positive.[31] However, they also underline that the positive baseline of de-securitization paradoxically can be understood as oppressive and provoking – not unlike securitization.[32]

2.2 Theoretical framework

The CS, as previously explained, will be used as the foundation for the framework in this study and considering its aims, to understand the use of motivations, only the 'securitizing move' and 'de-securitizing move' will be in focus. The removal of the referent object and securitizing actor as components in the analysis, including the removal of the audience, are arguably the biggest changes from the original CS framework as it renders the securitization theory to be considered broken or unsuccessful.[33] However, this removal is supported within developments of the CS theory which criticizes the usage of audience. Rita Floyd[34] elaborate on this issue and argues that the audience is not a sufficient analytic concept as it stems from how security *should* be done rather than being the product of empirical observation on *how* security is done. This renders the securitization to be dependent on the normative concept of the 'audience' and thus limits the *illocutionary* force – what is meant – contrary to *perlocutionary* force – what is done.[35] Building on this elaboration, the concept of the audience in this study will thus be removed from the analysis with support from Floyd. Regardless, it is also important to note that without the audience only securitizing moves can be observed.[36]

Regarding de-securitization, this study will use the CS definition in combination with the earlier mentioned elaboration of its definition. Within the analytical process, de-securitization will be defined as trying to manage and not accelerate security concerns, contrary to securitization which is defined as the acceleration of concerns.[37] Questions on how one finds the securitization moves relies upon the speech act theory and the notion that security does not need to be specifically mentioned in order to see a designation of threat or securitization move.[38] This is also especially true for de-securitization as it is inherently more implicit than securitization, as previously discussed. By these implicit meanings one might convey the same message of securitization or de-securitization, but without the

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[31] Austin – Beaulieu-Brossard, 2017, p.322.
[32] Ibid., p.321.
[33] Buzan *et al.,* 1998, p.25.
[34] Floyd, Rita, 2011. "Can securitization theory be used in normative analysis? Towards a just securitization theory". *Security Dialogue*. 42(4-5):427-439.
[35] Ibid., p.428.
[36] Buzan *et al*., 1998, p.25.
[37] Austin – Beaulieu-Brossard, 2017, p.321.
[38] Buzan *et al.,* 1998, p.27,29.

usage of key words or phrases.[39] 'Security', 'threat' and similar or related words which might define a securitization or de-securitization are thus ambiguous terms which may be used differently in different contexts.[40]

Regarding the spectra for understanding the issue, the range will primarily encompass *politicized* and *securitized.* To label an issue *non-politicized* in this study will become difficult as the issues are presented in UNSC resolutions, thus originating from the level of politicized.[41]

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[39] Balzacq, Thierry. (2005). 'The Three Faces of Securitization: Political Agency, Audience and Context'. *European Journal of International Relations.* 11(2):171–201, p.177.
[40] Buzan *et al.,* 1998, p.27-28.
[41] Ibid., p.24.

3   Method

In this chapter the selected research method and its methodological foundations will be presented, as well as its limitations and assumptions. The research method chosen for this particular study will be presented and its application on this case will be explained through the operationalization where both theory and method will be combined. The method is based on how it's presented in Marianne Jørgensen and Louise Philips' book *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method.*[42] Furthermore, the method of choice will be related to the material chosen for the study.

3.1   Discourse analysis

Departing from the constructivist standpoint elaborated on earlier in the theory, the assumption of this study is that view of the world is subjective and thus, no objective reality exists. Furthermore, we both affect and are affected by the language we use to describe and interpret the world, which adds to its subjectivity. Closely related to this subjectivity is the method of discourse analysis. Within the constructivist assumptions and more specifically, within discourse analysis, one interprets the usage of language and the context in which it is presented in order to analyze the world. As Sandra Halperin and Oliver Heath[43] puts it: "[…] the goal of discourse analysis is to explore the relationships between a discourse and reality in a particular context.".[44] This general explanation of discourse analysis will serve as an introduction to the more specified method of critical discourse analysis [CDA] as elaborated by Norman Fairclough, which will be used in this study. Central to discourse analysis is the analysis of discourse in *context*, in order to understand how language and text construct practice in reality.[45] Discourse, often referred to as 'spoken and written language', is defined differently according to specific methods, but for the purpose of this chapter and study it will hereon be defined as 'written language'.[46]

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[42] Jørgensen, Marianne – Philips, Louise. (2002). *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method.* London: SAGE Publications

[43] Halperin, Sandra – Heath, Oliver. (2017). *Political research. Methods and practical skills.* Glasgow: Oxford University Press.

[44] Ibid., p.339.

[45] Ibid., p.337.

[46] Jørgensen – Philips, 2002, p.68-70.

3.1.1 Critical discourse analysis

Characteristics of CDA include the assumption that language form the way we see the world and is thus not a neutral communicative element but instead highly subjective one.[47] These assumptions around language makes the method particularly efficient in analyzing and identifying patterns, relations and interactions of power within societies and relationships.[48] Furthermore, CDA also highlights the discursive context and concludes that the discourses and the processes that affect the context are also co-dependent and thus must be analyzed together.[49] The addition of context highlights the critical aspect of the method, in the sense that it aims to understand and show how language is not politically neutral.[50] CDA is thus defined as highlighting how discourse is a factor in securing power and hegemony in relationships between text, discursive practices and broader practices.[51]
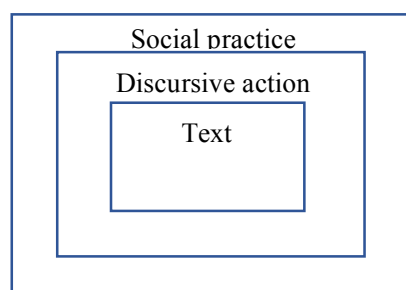
Figure 2: Conceptualization of CDA's model of a communicative event.[52]

As shown above, CDA is seen to be composed of three levels; text (the linguistic features and meaning); discursive action (the processes related to the text's consumption and creation); and social practice (the wider practice in which the discourse belongs). This model of analysis is in its entirety called the 'communicative event'.[53] If one wants to examine the full 'communicative event', the analysis should cover all three dimensions; (1) an analysis of the linguistic structure and discourse of the text; (2) an analysis of the production and consumption of the text and which discourses that are articulated within as well as; (3) a consideration about whether the text restructure or reproduce existing discourses in a broader social practice.[54] As the separation of the discursive sphere and non-discursive sphere, i.e. the textual-level, is kept intact, the method's

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[47] Halperin – Heath, 2017, p.378.
[48] Jørgensen – Philips, 2002, p.70.
[49] Bergström, Göran – Boréus, Kristina. (2012). "Diskusanalys" in (eds.) Bergström, Göran – Boréus, Kristina. *Textens mening och makt.* Lund: Studentlitteratur. p.356-416, p.356-357.
[50] Jørgensen – Philips, 2002, p.60-64
[51] Ibid., p.62-63.
[52] Ibid., p.68.
[53] Ibid., p.68.
[54] Ibid., p.67.

analytical point of departure leans towards explanatory and interpretive rather than descriptive.

3.2   Methodological framework

As Jørgensen and Philips argue, there is no fixed procedure for conducting a study and especially in qualitative and discourse analysis, one must be free to choose a research design which matches the research question and material.[55] Looking back at the aims of this study; to understand how discursive practices were used to motivate the politics of intervention and non-intervention, only parts of the CDA method presented above becomes relevant.[56] Only the first level is an appropriate fit for the aims of this study and its research question, as the goal is to highlight and examine the use of motivation rather than including the creation of discourses and their wider social inherence. As this study does not aim to see how discursive practices were produced and consumed, the second level of analysis becomes irrelevant and moreover, as the aims are not to understand the wider social practices in which the use of motivations is placed, the third level will also be excluded from analysis. Additionally, Fairclough himself argue that the levels of CDA can be analytically separated in order to benefit the scope of the analysis, which is why this study has chosen only one of three levels.[57]

The other dimensions, while providing a beneficial framework for wider analysis and a broader inclusion of context and production, are too broad for the scope of this study. However, some context according to the theoretical framework of securitization, outside of the definition of level three's 'social practices' will be included in the analysis. This is in order to illustrate the context of the resolutions, as the addition of context highlights the critical aspect of the method. Even if they are similarly described these should not be attributed the third level of analysis but instead be seen as part of the theoretical framework. This study will thus follow and include the assumption that texts can never be understood or analyzed without a relation to the wider context.[58] As this study draws on the CDA conceptualization it will focus more on the discourse and its building-blocks, i.e. how the text makes available what is considered both explicit and implicit.[59] Additionally, as with traditional discourse analysis, this study does not intend to highlight the actors' motives or reasons behind their discursive practices, even if this is part of the conceptualization as it is shown in Figure 2.[60] Instead the discourses will be treated separately from their origins, only focusing on their inherent meaning and words usage.

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[55] Ibid., p.76-77.
[56] Ibid., p.79.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid., p.70.
[59] Bergström – Boréus, 2012, p.376.
[60] Halperin – Heath, 2017, p.381.

3.3   Limitations

It is important to note that the method and theory does not aim nor claim to study underlying motives or agendas within the actors or their discourses. Both the theory and the method have inherent limitations in their subjectivity in this regard, an issue especially evident when they are combined.[61] This limitation is not however, a weakness in his particular study, as the study itself is subjective and does not claim to show the objective reality. The theory also carries the assumption that security is textual and can be established and analyzed through texts and linguistic techniques, which limits the scope of study to only written texts and not speech or practice.[62] Inherent to both the method and theory is also the notion that no combination of theory and method can show everything, which means that this analysis and study will only highlight some of the possible issues and meanings, an issue which is especially relevant for understanding the subjectivity of the interpretations.[63]

3.4   Material and selection

The material for this study is based on resolutions regarding the two conflicts of Libya and Syria that have been adopted by the UNSC. Consisting of two resolutions in each case, they have been chosen based on their central importance for the conflict in order to benefit an equal comparison. The resolutions similarities in length, period adopted, which will be of additional benefit in the results and analysis. In the Libyan case the resolutions were chosen based on their central position in the conflicts early stages. In the Syrian case many resolutions are extremely short and only serve the purpose of renewing the mission's mandate, which is why the two arguably most comprehensive resolutions – in relation to the Libyan ones – in the early years of the conflict have been chosen. Additionally, since security is fundamentally about priority, it becomes relevant to examine the resolutions of the UNSC as it can be argued that they reflect a set of priorities.[64]

In the Libyan case, resolution S/RES/1970, adopted by the UNSC the 26th of February 2011 and resolution S/RES/1973, adopted by the UNSC on the 17th of March 2011, have been chosen.

In the Syrian case, resolution S/RES/2042, adopted by the UNSC the 14th of April 2012 and resolution S/RES/2043, adopted by the UNSC the 21st of April 2012, have been chosen.

Regarding period of time, the Libyan resolutions were adopted relatively close in time which benefits the mapping of their discourse as the period is isolated. The

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[61] Buzan *et al.,* 1998, p.177.
[62] Ibid., p.176.
[63] Jørgensen – Philips, 2002, p.79.
[64] Buzan *et al*., 1998, p.177.

Syrian resolutions were adopted with less than a month between them, which argues for the materials relevance in relation towards each other in the upcoming analysis.

In order to illustrate context of the resolutions, data and descriptions will be provided from the International Crisis Group [ICG] and Uppsala Conflict Data Program [UCDP]. The data provided is chosen based on its objectivity and will not include detailed descriptions of specific events taking place, but instead try to show the general context in which the resolutions were written. Data includes both number of deaths in the conflict during the relevant years, provided by UCDP, and reports and briefings from ICG published before and around the resolutions adoptions. These are included with the purpose of giving context to discourse, which is a, as previously elaborated on, fundamental criteria for CDA. They further serve the purpose of contrasting the subjective analysis of the discourse with more objective contextual elements, which gives the study a depth and relation to the actual situations on the ground. They will not however the main focus of analysis and will thus only be provided in the beginning of each case.

3.5   Operationalization

The purpose of combining the CDA and securitization theory is to find the discursive elements within texts, which motivate certain arguments and to compare the results of these discursive elements in the two chosen cases. Tools which will be used on the material are analysis of wording, grammar as well as placement and context of paragraphs.[65] Linguistic structures as well as placement of words and phrases will be systematically highlighted and analyzed in each resolution. As with CDA, words are at the center of understanding and thus attributes great meaning to the wording's explicit and implicit meaning. Consequently, in this study it will be clearly marked and explained when something is understood as security or not and if the words found are understood explicitly or implicitly. Even when or if security is explicitly stated it will be examined and analyzed in order to understand the textual context of the word. As threats can be created without being clearly mentioned as such, the systematic analysis of the phrases and paragraphs will help to find the implicit meaning. To illustrate and facilitate the arguments put forward, quotes and paragraphs from the resolutions will be presented throughout the analysis.

A securitization move is understood as an issue which is urgent and beyond the political sphere, in the sense that it is not treated as politics. A de-securitization move will be defined as the non-securitization, i.e. treating the issue as politics, a politicization without a sense of urgency. A de-securitization is thus passively defined against the active act of securitizing and could consequently be likened with doing nothing. To aid the analysis it will be clearly marked when something is understood as a securitizing or de-securitizing move. Furthermore, the

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[65] Jørgensen – Philips, 2002, p.80.

securitization and de-securitization moves will not be measured according to intensity, but instead only be defined as existing or not. The specific focus on the moves will allow for a deeper analysis and interpretation of the texts as they are examined outside their discursive origins or creations. It will also allow for a more straightforward comparison of the resolutions in the analysis as neither their different backgrounds nor productions are considered or accounted for. A securitization of an issue will in this study also be equivalent to a securitization move and labelling or calling an issue a politicization will be the equivalent of a de-securitization.

Each case and its resolutions will be analyzed according to the original order of their paragraphs to facilitate an easier understanding of the chronological elements – i.e. that chronology and placement is important and should thus be part of the analysis. The study qualifies as comparative as the aim is to compare the two cases in order to map any differences or similarities between them, as well as to more accurately find the resolutions inherent meanings. In the comparison of the results, the findings will thus be discussed without chronological order or specific system in order to facilitate a deeper discussion.

4   Analysis

In this section, the material will be analyzed according to the operationalization presented in the previous chapter and the results will be divided into sections according to the four different resolutions. In relation to each case a context will be provided through the data collected by UCDP and ICG.

4.1   Libyan case

The Libyan resolutions, adopted in February and March of 2011 at the start of the conflict, gives this study a small window in which to provide contextual elements. While the intent of the demonstrations initially was peaceful, there were clearly violent elements present and the repression of protesters in Libya by Gaddafi's army was indeed real. However, as with all conflicts the exact situation is difficult to pinpoint as many of the sensational reports and claims made at the start of the conflict have been difficult to verify outside of the single source, as other witness accounts diverged.[66] There is no doubt however that when the peaceful protests rose in mid-February of 2011, the country was shocked at the death tolls it brought as the regime sought to crush the rebellion.[67] During 2011, the first year of conflict and the year of the resolutions' adoptions, the number of deaths were recorded to be 2 082 in total. The year after, 2012, the death toll had decreased significantly to a total of 78 deaths.[68]

4.1.1 Resolution 1970

The resolutions first few paragraphs, mentioning 'grave concerns'[69] at the situation in Libya, is a fitting introduction as they are representative for the rest of the resolution as well.

> *Deploring* the gross and systematic violations of human rights[…]
> expressing deep concern at the deaths of civilians, and rejecting

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[66] International Crisis Group, 2011a, p.4-5.
[67] International Crisis Group, 2011b, p.2.
[68] Uppsala Conflict Data Program. (2018a). "Libya". [Electronic] Available at: http://ucdp.uu.se/ [Accessed: 2018-04-26]
[69] S/RES/1970, 2011, p.1.

> unequivocally the incitement to hostility and violence against the civilian population made from the highest level of the Libyan government[…][70]

This quote from the first few paragraphs of resolution 1970 illustrates several important issues. Firstly, the usage of 'gross and systematic violations' is severe as it creates an urgency as well as a planned violation from the perpetrator. Secondly, systematic violations of human rights are considered to be among one of the most severe violations that can be committed. Furthermore, each of these represent a securitization move in themselves. Adding to the severity of the securitization is the fact that violence also stems from the highest level of Libyan authorities, which makes the construction of threat and securitization move quite evident.

The following paragraph explains the condemnations from, among others, the Arab League, the African Union as well as the Organization of the Islamic Conference[71], echoing the concerns of serious violations of human rights voiced by the UN. The support from different organizations, and the fact that it is highlighted early on within the resolution, speaks for the urgency and international element of the Libyan issue. While an international issue in itself might not be a securitization, this paragraph speaks for the securitization rather than politicization of an issue as it is of clear concern for several different, religious and regional organizations.

Through the creation of an independent commission the resolution also creates a securitization move, concluding that it seeks to investigate the alleged crimes. A politicized, or de-securitizing move in this case would be no investigation, or possibly an investigation on other issues in the conflict, e.g. political monitoring. The paragraph is in the context thus interpreted as a securitizing move.

> *Considering* that the widespread and systematic attacks currently taking place in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya against the civilian population may amount to crimes against humanity[…][72]

Repeating the use of 'systematic' within the context of 'widespread and systematic attacks currently taking place' reinforces the initial usage if the word even more. That the violations are currently taking place furthermore adds to the securitization move, as this is a concrete threat towards civilians and as it is ongoing it might be stopped. The paragraph ends with a reference that the attacks might amount to 'crimes against humanity', arguably the most severe allegation one can make in a resolution. The usage of that phrase makes this paragraph a clear securitization as the mere existence of the phrase increases the conflict's level of urgency from being politicized to be an existential threat in its own right.

> *Recalling* the Libyan authorities' responsibility to protect its population[…][73]

By explicitly calling upon the responsibility the Libyan authorities have to protect its' citizens, the text simultaneously implies that the government is not

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[70] S/RES/1970, 2011, p.1.
[71] Referring to a statement by the Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference
[72] S/RES/1970, 2011, p.1.
[73] Ibid., p.2.

capable of doing that. If it was considered capable it would not be part of the resolution. Combined with the phrase 'holding account those responsible', the text again creates an urgency and threat formation around the government – earlier in the resolution established to be the main violator. At the same time these phrases also imply the need for control in the conflict as the Libyan government is depicted to have lost control. Within the context both of these phrases qualifies to be securitizing moves.

As the resolutions concern a nation state, a reaffirmation of the state's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity is in order. In this resolution the paragraph reaffirming just that is placed on the second page[74], well into the resolution. The act of only reaffirming the sovereignty of Libya on the second page has the effect of undervaluing the Libyan state's integrity, making the possibility for intervention or consultation in the crisis more accessible.

> *Mindful* of its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security[…][75]

By including the UNSC primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security the resolution highlights how the situation in Libya represents a threat to security. The inclusion of this paragraph thus constitutes a securitizing move. This particular move is reinforced throughout the rest of the resolution by the inclusion of a detailed arms embargo, travel bans and asset freeze.[76] The resolution also decides that Member States[77] have the right to take immediate and necessary measures in order to uphold these additional securitizing moves. The phrase 'take measures' implies that Libya is presented to constitute such a threat that maintaining order, peace and security is of the highest concern, thus making it a securitization move in the clearest sense.

4.1.2 Resolution 1973

Resolution 1973 illustrates the stiffened tone towards Libya from the previous one. Starting with the failure of Libyan authorities to comply with previous demands, this resolution effectively shows that the authorities are incapable of cooperation.

> *Deploring* the failure of the Libyan authorities to comply with resolution 1970 (2011), *Expressing* grave concern at the deteriorating situation, the escalation of violence and heavy civilian casualties[…][78]

The next paragraph, using the words 'deteriorating situation' makes the case that the situation in Libya is increasingly destabilizing and causing 'heavy civilian

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[74] S/RES/1970, 2011, p.2.
[75] Ibid., p.2.
[76] Ibid., p.3-6.
[77] Members of the United Nations.
[78] S/RES/1973, 2011, p.1.

casualties'.[79] The quoted paragraphs, positioned in the beginning of the resolution, effectively sets the tone for the remaining paragraphs. The resolution continues to reiterate the Libyan authorities' responsibility to protect its citizens[80] – an aspect already touched upon in the analysis of the previous resolution – still holds the same construction of securitizing move. However, the constant projecting of responsibility of their population on the Libyan authorities suggests that an emphasis is placed on their failure in protecting civilians. By suggesting that the Libyans need protection, the resolution is de facto using securitization moves by concluding that they are not safe. This creates a threat and securitizing move in the same sentence while moving beyond politics towards the creation of the threatening issue.

In the following paragraphs the subject of gross and systematic violations is brought up again, with the addition of specifically mentioning 'torture and summary executions'.[81] As these issues are severe in their own right, they also constitute a securitization move in the context of the resolution. The securitization moves are reinforced once again with a paragraph, repeated from previous resolution, where it concludes that the crimes in Libya might amount to crimes against humanity.

> *Determining* that the situation in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya continues to constitute a threat to international peace and security[…][82]

The above paragraph is perhaps the clearest and most concrete securitization move within all of the examined material. To explicitly label Libya as a threat, not only towards themselves, but towards international peace and security creates a global responsibility to handle the situation and with it, a global threat. The issue is clearly securitized and considering the previous paragraphs containing e.g. 'crimes against humanity' and 'systematic violations of human rights', the securitization move is without question. The creation of a no-fly zone also explicitly creates a threat around Libya as it is combined with the intent to create safe areas as 'a precautionary measure'.[83] The precaution measures taken highlights an interesting aspect as this implicitly assumes that the violence will continue, thus creating yet another securitization move.

> *Authorizes* Member States […] to take all necessary measures […] to protect civilians and civilian populated areas[…][84]

The wording 'all necessary measures' is the core of this particular securitization move as it allows for undefined measures. The above quote illustrates this clearly as it concludes that the situation in Libya is of such high concern that other states are called upon to protect civilians.

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[79] S/RES/1973, 2011, p.1.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid., p.2.
[83] Ibid., p.2.
[84] Ibid., p.3.

4.2   Syrian case

The Syrian conflict had at the time of the resolutions' adoption been ongoing for more than a year. In a report by the ICG from the 10th of April 2012, days before the first of the two chosen resolutions was adopted, ICG conclude that the Syrian conflict's dynamics have severely worsened. Violence has caused neighborhoods to be subjects of heavy bombardment with no regards for civilians and consequently many innocent lives had been lost. The report also mentions the massacre of entire families, including children, in Homs during 2012.[85] During the conflict's first year, 2011, a total number of 3 917 people were killed according to UCDP.[86] It is furthermore interesting to mention that the number of deaths due to the conflict deteriorated severely in 2012, the year of the two resolutions' adoptions, with a total of 38 998 recorded deaths.[87]

4.2.1   Resolution 2042

The resolution starts out with reaffirming the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria.[88] An early reaffirmation of this kind manifests a show of support for the Syrian authorities and reaffirms the reassurance that the Syrians can handle their issues themselves, without outside interference. The early reaffirmation also speaks for the importance of focusing on Syria as a unit instead of focusing on the violence being committed within that unity.

   The continuation of the resolution becomes quite the opposite from the previous paragraph. Starting off with a condemnation of the widespread violations of human rights committed by the Syrian authorities and armed groups, the resolution shifts the blame of violence to the Syrian government and away from the citizens. This constitutes a securitizing move as it suggests the government and other armed groups within Syria violates human rights. It does not however underline that the government is responsible for its people, which makes the sentence somewhat ambiguous. Continuing in more or less the same tracks, the resolution recalls that those responsible shall be held accountable but does so without the implication of urgency, thus constructing a de-securitizing move.

Condemning the widespread violations of human rights by the Syrian authorities[…]*expressing* its profound regret at the death of many thousands of people in Syria[…][89]

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[85] International Crisis Group, 2012, p.1,7.
[86] Uppsala Conflict Data Program. (2018b). "Syria" [Electronic] Available at: http://ucdp.uu.se/ [Accessed: 2018-04-26]
[87] Ibid.
[88] S/RES/2042, 2012, p.1.
[89] Ibid.

As illustrated in the quote above, the resolution expresses its profound regret at the death of many thousands in Syria, but again, does so without any implication that the issue is urgent or dangerous, i.e. a threat. Consequently, these sentences, while implying that this is a conflict where people die at the hands of their government, do not highlight the need for action or urgency. Rather passively the resolution expresses regret but present no concrete creation of threat or securitizing move. Furthermore, the usage of 'regret' arguably constitutes a de-securitizing move as the word in itself expresses an implicit sadness that nothing could be done, or that one was unable to do something rather than expressing a wish to do something.

> […]*supporting* the Envoy's call for an immediate and visible implementation by the Syrian government of all elements of the Envoy's six-point proposal in their entirety to achieve a sustained cessation of armed violence in all its forms by all parties[…][90]

By recalling the implementation of the six-point plan the resolution keep the focus on the political part of the crisis, affirming that a political solution is in place and should be followed. Through this discourse the resolution also de-securitizes the situation, making it a politicized, controlled conflict rather than securitized. Even though the wordings, e.g. 'urgent' and 'immediate' suggest that the issue might be securitized the explicit focus on politics in this context brings the issue back to politicized. The usage of phrases with political elements present in them underlines the discourse's politicization of the conflict. This form of de-securitization move is further illustrated through the quote below.

> […]including through commencing a comprehensive political dialogue[…][91]

Continuing to build on politicizing the issue in the following paragraphs, where the resolution focuses on the authorization of an UN advance team that will monitor the implementation of the cessation of violence. The most notable phrase within these paragraphs is the underlining that the team's safety and freedom of movement is of primary responsibility of the Syrian government.[92]

> […]guarantee the safety of the advance team without prejudice to its freedom of movement and access, and stresses that the primary responsibility in this regard lies with the Syrian authorities[…][93]

The remarkable thing about this paragraph is the absence of a notion that the Syrian authorities has a primary responsibility for their citizens, rather the focus is entirely on Syria's responsibility for the safety of the UN personnel. This shift in focus constitutes both a securitizing move, as it suggests that the UN personnel is threatened, while simultaneously de-securitizing the Syrian population's right for

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[90] S/RES/2042, 2012, p.1.
[91] Ibid., p.2.
[92] Ibid., p.2.
[93] Ibid., p.2.

protection. The interpretation of the phrase is thus that the resolution fails to recognize that a situation where thousands of people regrettably has died constitutes a threatening situation. Consequently, this paragraph constructs a de-securitizing move through discourse.

4.2.2 Resolution 2043

This resolution starts off similarly to the previous resolution by reaffirming the territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of Syria, which has the same implications as de-securitizing move as previously highlighted. Regarding a paragraph mentioning displaced persons, the resolution only expresses appreciation towards the countries assisting the Syrians who 'have fled across Syria's borders as a consequence of the violence'.[94] Noting that the displacement has occurred due to the violence in this context constitutes a securitization move since it implies effects for other countries besides Syria. However, continuing through the paragraphs in the resolution, there is an absence of descriptive words. As a result, the UNSC resolutions deplore the situation in Syria of its threatening status, effectively treating it as politicized at most and securitized in very limited instances. The constant referral to the implementation of a peace process also creates a non-threatening situation as it implies that a peace process and implementation of proposals is the appropriate way ahead.

> *Expressing* concern over ongoing violence and reports of casualties which have escalated again in recent days […] and *noting* that the cessation of armed violence in all its forms is therefore clearly incomplete[…][95]

The quote above it refers to the cessation of armed violence, which in light of the recent escalation and casualties should be a big security concern and thus would be manifested in the discourse.[96] The escalation and fact that the cessation is incomplete is in itself an objective security threat, and arguably should be treated as such through securitization moves. This phrase is however understood as a de-securitization as it does not treat the issue at hand with the urgency it objectively holds. The de-securitization in the case above becomes clear in the sense that the resolution repeatedly calls for 'a cessation of violence' and urges the Syrian authorities to implement the six-point political proposal, despite the clear notion that the violence has escalated, and that the casualties are increasing. It is, in addition, even more of a de-securitizing move as it is noted in the resolution that the cessation of violence was broken. In spite of this, the reemerging violence is still not treated as a bigger threat to security. Looking at the choice of words, the escalation is not the first one as the text uses 'again'. This makes the de-

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[94] S/RES/2043, 2012, p.1.
[95] Ibid., p.2.
[96] Ibid., p.2.

securitization even more clear, that the issue is continually being treated politically even though there have been escalations before.

> […]call for immediate and visible implementation by the Syrian government of all elements of the Envoy's six-point proposal[…][97]

In the same context as the quote above the resolution uses the phrase 'monitor and support the implementation'[98] to describe the United Nation's Supervision Mission in Syria's mandate. The usage of 'immediate' suggests the existence of a securitizing move. However, in this case, it is the wording related to a politicization of the Syrian issue that takes center stage. By referring to support for and implementation of political goals the resolution constructs the sentence as a de-securitized and politicized issue.

> […] to guarantee the safety of UNSMIS personnel […] and *stresses* that the primary responsibility in this regard lies with the Syrian authorities[…][99]

The UNSC furthermore calls upon the safety of the mission's personnel, in itself a logical demand, but notes that this concern is primarily the responsibility of Syrian authorities. The peculiar aspect here is that there once again exists no reference to the Syrian authorities or government being responsible for their own people, which in the context could be expected to appear. Like the paragraph in the previous resolution, this too constitutes a securitizing move as it suggests the UNSMIS personnel is in need of protection, while simultaneously de-securitizing the issue by not giving the Syrian population the same treatment.

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[97] Ibid., p.2.
[98] Ibid., p.2.
[99] Ibid., p.3.

5 Discussion and comparison

Within the results from the Libyan case, the focus on vocabulary was a central component in the numerous securitization moves manifested. Through the usage of words which had more implicit meaning, e.g. 'urgent', 'gross' and 'precaution', the Libyan discourse was throughout colored by an underlying sense of stress and urgency. In the case of Syria, the vocabulary was noted to be much more passive, mentioning, e.g. 'regret', 'plan' and 'solution', which affected the discourse to be less active and less precautionary. The difference at this micro-level does not contribute to any groundbreaking differences between the cases but rather shows on a fundamental level how words, regardless of context, matter. Especially the choice of the word 'regret' in the Syrian case illustrates the passive language used in the resolution. It also makes the statement quite peculiar in the situation as it is a wording one would more commonly associate with a situation where nothing could be done. This can be contrasted with the Libyan case were a similar phrase expressed a deep concern over civilian deaths in general, which brings up a sense of 'worry' and the need for action, as it is a more active choice of words.

The explicit vocabulary characterized by the Libyan discourse saw a significant shift towards what was defined as a more passive, reassuring discourse in the Syrian case. Through maintaining focusing on solutions to the political aspects of the conflict rather than urging involvement, the de-securitization was implicitly imposed as subtext within the Syrian discourse. Even if some securitization moves were observed in the Syrian case, e.g. condemnation of the human rights violations, they were often outnumbered by de-securitizations, in the form of politicizations, which rendered the initial securitization moves to have a limited impact on the portrayal of the conflict.

The second comparison can be found within the slightly wider perspective of phrases within the discourse. Here we immediately see a clear-cut difference between the two discourses. The Libyan case, focused around wide securitization moves e.g. by creating an urgency in each paragraph. Phrases such as 'systematic human rights violations' and 'threat to international peace and security' are both securitizing discourses in themselves but additionally they also helped by supporting the smaller securitizing moves defined in the Libyan discourse. With regard to this dynamic in the Libyan case, the Syrian case becomes the odd-one out. As neither phrases were present in the Syrian discourse, thus not even addressing the possibility of those issues to be present in the conflict. Looking at the Syrian case one finds a completely different set of moves used. Focusing on politicization, the Syrian discourse succeeded in moving away from definitions of threat or security, instead looking at political solutions. Comparing how the different discourses take on relatively similar paragraphs, the paragraph explaining that the

authorities in each country had failed in complying with the previous resolutions serves a good measurement. In the Libyan case, concerned the cessation of violence was conditional and included promises that if Libya does not handle the situation someone else will do it in their stead. In the Syrian case this issue was not addressed, except for the notion that the cessation of violence was broken and that the political plan should be implemented in order to prevent the same situation from happening again.

Overall, this study argues that the Libyan case has been subjected to a wide range of securitizing moves, ranging from the earlier mentioned vocabulary to encompassing entire paragraphs within the resolution. A noteworthy aspect, not initially brought up in the analysis, is the fact that the Libyan case saw little de-securitization or politicization. This further speaks for the strong securitization moves manifested in the discourses as well as the frequency of it. Within the resolutions' context this study argues the conflicts' impact was not relative to the discursive motives that were created around them. This study thus argues that the Syrian conflict in itself constituted an objectively bigger threat against international security than the Libyan conflict did during that time. The conflict in Syria, arguably the more severe case of the two, has through discourse been constructed, or rather deconstructed, as a threat. The Libyan case, although severe, is shadowed by the severity of the Syrian case, as approximately 100 times as many people died in the Syrian conflict than in the Libyan conflict during the examined two years. While not denying the severity of the Libyan conflict, it is important to highlight differences within cases like this, as it is the purpose of a comparison.

Within this conducted study, the case of Syria becomes a prime example of showing how *not* addressing an issue removes it from the agenda as well as from the concerns. Simultaneously, the case ambiguously draws attention to that fact that in the absence of addressing an issue, a space for expressing this very absence is often created within the explicit discourse. However, this dynamic might be difficult to pinpoint in single-case studies, which is why a comparison often is beneficial. A clear example of this dynamic is the phrase 'international peace and security', which is only ever written twice in total between the resolutions, both times within the Libyan discourse. In the comparison it becomes evident that even though Syria could be considered to pose the same kind of threat as Libya, the Syrian case was designated a de-securitization by specifically not addressing the issue of 'international peace and security'.

Comparing the results and with regards to the above discussion, this study clearly arrives at the conclusion that the discourses concerning the two conflicts of Libya and Syria were presented widely different within the respective resolutions. The results speak for a securitization of the Libyan conflict, which in turn partly explains the intervention, and a de-securitization of Syrian conflict, which partly also explains the non-intervention.

5.1   Concluding remarks

This study, while aware of the subjective limitations of the results, has nonetheless been able to contribute to the wider field of research by illustrating the paradoxical discursive treatment the two conflicts have endured. Hopefully, in-depth studies like this will continue to add to the understanding on how linguistic structures and discourses motivate practice within the international environment. While not claiming to show the full picture, this study has hopefully shed light on a particular issue of securitization, threat construction and de-securitization, which might be of use in more comprehensive analysis of UNSC resolutions. Furthermore, through the combination of critical discourse analysis and aspects of the securitization framework, this study has been able to add to the understanding of how discourses, but also texts and linguistic structures in its wider definition, work with context in an in-depth analysis. Through the above analysis and comparison, this study has hopefully contributed to the awareness of the intricate and implicit discourses and textual understandings that underpin international politics.

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