Climate Change, Securitization and Greta Thunberg

A discourse analysis of Greta Thunberg speeches with focus on elements of securitization of climate change

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Abstract

This thesis is a discourse analysis of Greta Thunberg's rhetoric on climate change. Its aim is to describe how securitization of climate change are reflected. It is important to understand how security and threats are formulated in society today. The theoretical framework builds on a social constructivist approach and the Copenhagen School of securitization. The analysed material consist of speeches from Greta Thunberg. The case is particularly interesting since it do not regard a regular securitizing actor. The study deepens the understanding of the vital rhetorical elements of securitization of climate change. It describes what Greta Thunberg points out as the existential threat and referent object in securitization of climate change. It also discusses the possibility to determine full securitization within the frames of the Copenhagen School which is a main critique against the theory. By discussing the character of securitization the thesis unavoidably discusses the character of democracy and politization of important issues. The Copenhagen Schools offers new interesting perspectives on Greta Thunberg's speeches.

Key words: Climate change, securitization, Copenhagen School, Greta Thunberg discourse analysis
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1. Introduction

1.1   Introduction

Climate change is often described as one of the major challenges of our time. There is a strong scientific consensus that global warming is a result of carbon dioxide emissions caused by humans' burning of fossil fuels. Eventually, if fundamental changes are not implemented, this will cause dramatical changes in the environment that will impinge current life on earth. In parts of the word, human caused climate changes such as rising sea levels and drought have already forced people to flee their homes (UNHCR, 2019). Nevertheless, how diverse actors understand and relate to climate changes are socially constructed and takes form in different discourses. Nowadays there is a general understanding that climate change has to be dealt with in one way or another. But when leaders of the world are gathering at climate summits to reach solutions, there are limited progress in the negotiations. Environmentalists have tried to raise the priority of the question for decades, but consistently climate change comes second to other political questions of importance.

In August 2018 it was noted in the media that a 15 year old girl was sitting in front of the Swedish parliament, holding a sign reading "SKOLSTREJK FÖR KLIMATET" meaning "SCHOOL STRIKE FOR CLIMATE" in Swedish. This girl was Greta Thunberg, whose name is now well known around the world. Greta Thunberg went from being a sole protester to the leader of the global movement *School strike for climate*, later known as *Fridays for Future* (Reuters). Greta Thunberg and her movement are highlighting the severity of the situation and are trying to place the issue of climate change on top of the global agenda. The school strikes and demonstrations for action against climate change that started in Sweden spread around the world. A little more than one year after Greta Thunberg's first sole protest, at least 6 million people participated in the coordinated global climate strikes all around the world (The Guardian, 2019-09-27)[1]. Greta Thunberg and her movement have sparked giant debate. She has held speeches at the UN, been acknowledged by and invited to meet with

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[1] The movement itself estimates 7.6 million participants (Global Climate Strike)

world leaders. But parallel with great support the movement has been questioned and received critique from world leaders as well as other actors.

In her speeches, Greta Thunberg often refers to climate change as a security issue and an emergency situation that makes everything else irrelevant. She claims that the issue of climate change is not political, but rather an issue of survival. For example in her speech *Our Lives in Your Hands*, at the Climate March in Stockholm, 8 September 2018, she pleaded "So, please, treat the climate crisis like the acute crisis it is and give us a future".

According to the Copenhagen School, securitization is when an issue is formulated as a matter of survival and therefore takes priority over all other issues (Buzan et al., 1998:24). It is debated whether the environment is securitized or not, which depends on how the relevant audience receives/accepts the securitization (Balzacq, 2016: 499). In the media, the impact of the rapidly growing movement and raising climate awareness have been referred to as the "Greta Thunberg effect" (The Economist, Bloomberg). The Copenhagen school can help understand Greta Thunberg's influence and role in attracting attention towards the issue of global warming and climate change by formulating it as a security threat. Therefore, it is interesting to look closer at Greta Thunberg's speeches about climate change with securitization glasses on.

1.2 Problem formulation and purpose

The overarching purpose of this study is to look at how an issue such as climate change can become socially constructed as security issue by being formulated as such. Climate change is not a traditional security issue, although by some actors it is described as the "Ultimate security" issue (Myers, 1993; Buzan et al., 1998:71). Already in 1971, Richard Falk argued that environmental change was a security problem (Barnett 2003, 8; Scott, 2008:604). Attempts to securitize the environment to draw attention to the issue is not a new occurrence, but this specific case is interesting because of its magnitude and impact. This study will not be able to determine the status of a full securitization or not, but it will contribute to the larger debate considering climate change as a security issue or not.

The case of Greta Thunberg's climate activism is a highly topical social phenomenon in the world today, but is yet relatively unexplored within the scientific field of political science. Empirically, it is vital to understand how contemporary security issues are formulated and presented in public discourses and how some issues take priority over others. The Copenhagen School is relevant theory to highlight securitization in form of speech acts. By doing a discourse analysis of Greta Thunberg's speeches, the study describes how securitizing rhetorical elements are applied to draw attention to the issue of climate change. This can contribute to understand the movement, its impact and expansion better.

There are both advantages and disadvantages with securitization, but within the Copenhagen School, securitization is generally viewed as negative. On one hand, the security status attracts attention and priority to a question (Trombetta, 2014: 135; Buzan et al., 1998:26). On the other hand, when an issue become securitized it can be taken away from the open democratic debate, to be militarized and a question reserved for elites (Buzan et al., 1998:21, 24). The Copenhagen school is a biased towards desecuritization, since it does not recognize universal values (Hansen, 2011: 535). Greta Thunberg's activism are encouraged by many and viewed as a force engaging the public in environmental issues. Interdisciplinary, the case can question whether securitization always should be seen as negative, even when it regards action against climate change. Since if the Copenhagen School does not believe in universal values, it should prioritize democracy over every other value either. Empirically, the negative effects of securitization can give a more nuanced perspective when looking at the case.

Theoretically this case is particularity interesting since it is not a typical case of securitization and can give new perspectives to the theory and power relations. Greta Thunberg, started as a sole teenage activist. The Copenhagen school points at securitizing actors such as governments, political leaders and bureaucracies as more likely to lift an issue to the level of general consideration (Buzan et al, 1998: 24, 40). Balzacq (2016:502) means that the conviction that securitizing is done by elites stems from confirmation bias of choosing cases of successful securitization by elites reinforcing their power position. Greta Thunberg did not start from an elite position and the case is not an obvious case of successful securitization, thereby the study avoids this confirmation bias. By discussing and questioning what securitization is, the study indirectly discusses and questions what democracy is.

The Copenhagen school have been criticized for not being able to determine if a securitization is successful or not, because of the theoretical limitation in "measuring" the relevant audience

acceptance of a certain securitization (Balzacq, 2005:175; Balzacq, 2016:500; Strizel, 2007:362-363). By following the indications of a successful securitization according to the Copenhagen School and other researchers developing the theory, the thesis will discuss what could indicate a securitization and not. This study will contribute with relevant insights to the empirical case as well as it could contribute to highlight weaknesses in the theory and potentially develop it.

Therefore the purpose of this thesis is to answer the following research question below.

1.3 Research question

How is securitization of climate change reflected in Greta Thunberg's speeches?

1.3.2 Sub-questions

What rhetorical elements of securitization can be found in Greta Thunberg's speeches on climate change?

What constitutes the existential threat and referent object in Greta Thunberg's speeches on climate change?

Within the frames of the Copenhagen School securitization theory, are there indications that Greta Thunberg has contributed to securitization of climate change?

2. Theoretical framework

This chapter describes the theoretical foundation and framework of the thesis. It aims to contextualize the Copenhagen school by describing its background in a larger academic debate. It presents securitization in general and goes through its vital elements: *speech acts, securitising actors, threats and referent objects* and *audience*. To comprehend the empirical relevance of the theory it is important to understand the different possible effects of securitization and the theoretical bias towards desecuritization. Therefore, the chapter concludes with an overview of desecuritization and possible effects of securitization. Critique and theoretical considerations are incorporated through all sections of the chapter.

2.1 Copenhagen School

The security literature consist of several theories linked to the concept of security (Balzacq et al., 2015:103). The securitization concept is closest associated with the Copenhagen School of security (Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2015:92). Rather than viewing security threats as objective, the Copenhagen perspective highlights the discursive power in the security concept (Buzan & Hansen, 2009:214).

Traditionally security threats have referred to conflicts, wars and issues regarding the military sector. The post-Cold War era, with the growth of intra-state wars and an upswing for new security agendas such as human security (Duffield & Wadell, 2006: 2), sparked the debate questioning the military and state centrism (Buzan & Hansen, 2009: 187). The Copenhagen School emerged in the debate regarding a "widening" versus a "narrowing" of the definition of the security concept (Buzan et al., 1998:2-4). The aim of the Copenhagen School was to examine a widening of the security agenda by questioning the major focus on states and the military sector in traditional conceptualizations of security (Buzan et al. 1998:1). This development brought up the discussion of problems in the environmental and ecological sector as possible security issues (Scott, 2008:604). Compared to other security sectors, the history of attempts to securitize issues in the environmental sector is short (Buzan et al., 1998:71). A securitization can become institutionalized which is common in the military sector. The longstanding tradition of including military threats in the security agenda have

contributed to procedures and bureaucracies. (Buzan et al., 1998:27-28) Securitizing of the environmental issues are more difficult since it do not have the same tradition of being a security issue and do not yet have the same institutions. But environmental security problems can be dealt with in other sectors and seen through different perspectives such as the political, the military or the social welfare perspective for example (Buzan et al., 1998:74-75). Environmental security can regard many things from economics, hunger and poverty to migration and interstate wars (Buzan et al., 1998:84).

The Copenhagen School is developed by Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde, who presented the analytical foundations of the theory in the book *Security: A New framework for Analysis* (Buzan et al, 1998). This book will play a central part as point of departure in this thesis theoretical framework. But critique and developments of the theory since 1998, will also be considered and incorporated in the theoretical framework. Buzan et al. wanted to extend the security agenda to a widening of different kind of threats in new sectors but realized that the concept could risk losing its meaning if anything could be classified as security. Therefore they came up with the following definition of *security issues*:

> *" They have to be staged as existential threats to a referent object by a securitizing actor who thereby generates endorsement of emergency measures beyond rules that would otherwise bind"* (Buzan et al., 1998:5).

The following subsections will go further into the meaning and analytical implications of this definition.

2.2 Securitization

Securitization is the process when an issue is constructed as a security issue. When something is labelled a security issue, it affects our way of thinking, talking and acting around it. Securitization theory is ontologically constructivist and do not view security as something objective to be discovered. Instead, it is intersubjectivity constructed by language and speaking actors (Buzan et al., 1998:26). Epistemologically Buzan et al. mean that we can study security and how a security issue is created by investigating: " Who can "do" or "speak" security successfully, on what issues, under what conditions, and with what effects?"

(1998:27). Can Greta Thunberg make a security issue out of climate change, under what conditions, and with what effects?

All public issues can be located somewhere on the *non-politicized-politicized-securitized* spectrum. A *non-politicized* issue means that it is not part of public debate, policies or government decisions. A *politicized* issue can either be a debated political problem or part of widely accepted public policy. A *securitized* issue lies outside the normal political procedure since it regards existential threats and emergency situations which justifies exceptional measures. (Buzan et al., 1998:23-24). The legitimization of exceptional measures is the core indication of a securitization. Archarya (2006:250) questions whether the securitized and the political always can be distinctly distinguished and viewed as separate. Some researchers views it more as a scale then two absolute conditions (Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2015:103). Any issue, at least theoretically, can be placed anywhere along the spectrum, in different times and places (Buzan et al., 1998:24).

The environment is an issue that have moved from being a non-politicized issue to a politicized issue, but it is an ongoing discussion whether it is securitized (Buzan et al., 1998:24). In 1971, Richard Falk published the book *This Endangered Planet* and was first to claim that environmental change is a security problem (Barnett 2003, 8; Scott, 2008:604). Lester Brown's *Redefining National Security* (1977), was also in the foreground of sparking the debate when analysing the link between climate change and food security (Barnett 2003, 8). Some researchers like Myers means that it is the "ultimate security" while others mean that including environmental security in the concept of security erodes the meaning of it (1993 in Buzan et al., 1998:71). Floyd argues that securitization is the only solution that can stop environmental degradation and that it is "morally legitimate" (2011:434 in Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2015:104). The advantage of a securitization of climate change is that it would bring assets to disposal and contribute to legitimize stronger international institutions with more actual power to take decisions (Howden, 2007 in Scott, 2008:605). But on the other hand, a securitization of climate change could engage institutions with other purposes at the national level and risk militarizing it (Scott, 2008:606). Barnett (2001:11) see the risk that environmental security would become an issue of national security rather than human security.

A *securitizing move* is the attempt to move something from the realm of regular politics to being more important. When someone argues that an issue should have absolute priority because of its higher importance in relation to other issues it is a sign of a securitization attempt (Buzan et al., 1998:24). The logic that follows a security issue is that "if we do not tackle this problem, everything else will be irrelevant" (Buzan et al., 1998:24). Because of the authoritarian character of the security logic, issues are moved away from the open democratic debate (Trombetta, 2014:133). Security is about survival and is perceived as a zero sum game and leaves no room for the political debate on how to solve the problem. Extraordinary measures such as military action becomes legitimized by argument of survival. (Buzan et al., 1998:21, Trombetta, 2014:132) Extraordinary measures refers to acts that breaks foundational rules and norms in the political realm. For example it can imply military force, secrecy, limiting rights and freedoms (Buzan et al., 1998:21, 24). When there is no time or room for the democratic political debate and the issue becomes de-politicized and securitized. De-politicization and securitization, is political in the sense that it is a reaffirmation of the hegemony, dominant relations and practices (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001). Just because there is a securitizing move, does not mean that an issue is securitized. An issue is securitized when the relevant audience accept it as such. (Balzacq, 2016: 499) Desecuritization is the opposite to securitization and means that a securitized issue shifts back to the realm of "normal" political debate (Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2015:4).

Security problems is speculations about what will happen if we act this way and if we do not act this way, it is about predicting possible future scenarios (Buzan et al., 1998:32). There are necessary and facilitating conditions for securitization to appear. The following subsections below goes through the necessary elements of securitization: speech acts, securitizing actors, audience, referent and objects and existential threats. Facilitating conditions for securitization to occur are discussed within each section regarding a specific element below.

2.2.1 Speech acts

Discourses and language are fundamental in the Copenhagen securitizing theory. It views security as a specific form of social practice that frames an issue as a security issue which affects the way we are thinking about acting around it. Threats are produced as threats by the discourse, therefore speech acts are an important transformation aspect in the Copenhagen School. Security is not held as a set value or condition, it is socially constructed by the speech

act by formulating it as such (Trombetta, 2014:132). In other words, the speech act are not referring to a "real threat", it is rather framing a certain phenomenon as a threat. (Buzan et al., 1998:26). Different issues can become threats/security issues if a political community perceives them as such (Trombetta, 2014:135) Environmental changes are happening, but relevant for this study is how these changes are interpreted. Because it is the social construct of a security issue that legitimises certain actions such as exceptional measures that potentially could slow down these environmental changes.

A convincing securitization generally follows what Buzan et al. (1998:33) calls the *grammar and logic of security*. It is not only the utterance of the word security that defines the speech act. A more common securitizing method comprises a depiction of a state of emergency: an existential threat, a point of no return and a solution that often demands for exceptional measures (Buzan et al., 1998:27, 33). The word security can appear without the significant grammar and logic of security, and mean nothing. The other way around, something can be described as a security issue without the word security being mentioned. Therefore it is the grammar and logic of security that defines a securitizing speech act. When it is argued that an issue is especially distinguishing, should be prioritized above everything else and when there is an incorporated understanding of an "existential threat, point of no return, and a possible way out" it reflects the logic of security (Buzan et al., 1998:33).

Metaphors to, or words associated with traditional security, such as war, conflict, crisis, emergency can indicate a securitization. Using the concept "climate crisis", when talking about environmental changes is an example of this. Even when discussing if something is a security issue or not, one can contribute to reproducing it as a security subject, just because it is spoken of in terms of security and leads our minds in that direction (Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2015:102-103).

In addition to written and spoken language, contemporary political communication also consist of visual images, therefore Hansen means that securitization analysis must consider both speech acts and visual images in the analysis (Hansen 2011:52, Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2015:103). Typical images associated with the issue of climate change could be melting icebergs, polluted waters or dried land. But pictures of an angry children holding signs begging the adult world to save their future sends messages about a serious situation.

2.2.2 Securitizing actors

A securitizing actor is an actor formulating a security issue, in written text or verbal speech. If the audience does not perceive something as a security issue the securitizing is incomplete (Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2015:95). In order for securitization to appear, it is therefore important that the securitizing actor is in an authoritarian position and has social and political capital to be able to convince the audience (Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2015:96). The securitizing actor are no longer always the state, but it is important that the actor that does this lifts the issue to a level of general consideration (Buzan et al., 1998:24), which can be harder for civil actors and activists for example. Therefore securitizing actors are often elites such as "political leaders, bureaucracies, governments, lobbyists and pressure groups" (Buzan et al., 1998:40), which shows a bias towards actors in positions of power as generally more accepted as securitizing actors by an audience (Bigo, 1994). It is important to note that the securitizing actor does not have to be a person with official authority, it is rather about the relation between the speaker and the audience (Buzan et al., 1998:33). There is a vital dimension of power relations in analysing securitization (Balzacq, 2016:502). It is easier for elite actors that traditionally have been associated with defining security to reinforce their concept of security as well as their position (Balzacq, 2016:502). Although, the power to deal with a security matter and the power to identify a security matter should not be confused (Balzacq, 2016:502). Some people are in a less privileged position when articulating security, but no one has the conclusive power to decide what is or what is not a security problem. (Buzan et al., 1998:32).

The scientific community, activists and NGO's such as Greenpeace and WWF have been trying to securitize the environment for decades. There are also examples of states that take initiatives to securitize parts of the environment in international law. Scott (2008:604) means that there are efforts that have had effect towards more global acceptance of viewing climate change as a security issue. For example, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and Al Gore received the Nobel peace prize in 2007 (Scott, 2008:605). But the success of moves to securitize the environment have been limited, mainly it has resulted in a politicization of the issue rather than a securitization (Scott, 2008, Buzan et al., 1998:77, 91). Scott writes that it is not very radical to suggest that climate change is a security issue, but in practice there are no signs of a successful securitization in global politics (Scott, 2008:604). Environmental

problems are still outweighed by other issues on the security agenda and it has remained a contested matter (Trombetta, 2008:585).

Different securitizing actors can agree that climate change is a security issue, but still have different understandings on the nature of the problem, in other words, what is the threat and what does it pose a threat to?

2.2.3 Threats and referent objects

When analytically deciding if something can be considered a security issue or not, Peoples and Vaughan-Williams (2015:9) recommend the following formula: *Existential Threat to a Referent Object = A security issue.* Buzan et al. also mean that security is about survival and a security issue is when something is "posing an existential threat to the survival of a referent object" (Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2015:93). The referent object is what the securitizing actor consider should survive (Buzan et al., 1998:30, 36). When something is representing an "existential threat" it legitimizes use of exceptional political measures to save it. Another quality of security issues is that it because of its urgent character it gets priority over other issues. In traditional security theory the referent object have been the state, but security can be applied to other sectors than the state and military sector. According to the Copenhagen School there are no universal existential threats since they are socially constructed and can be represented differently depending on the referent object (Buzan et al., 1998:21) Buzan et al. means that if an approach to security applicable to other sectors than the military sector should be possible, other referent objects than the state must be allowed in the analysis (1998:8). But nevertheless the Copenhagen school has also been accused of being state centric (Buzan & Hansen, 2009:215). Actors can securitize threats on each other's sides, so called counter securitization (Buzan et al., 1998: 44-45). This dynamic is easy to imagine when it regards wars and conflicts, but can also appear between discourses with opposing worldviews.

The analysis and mapping of security threats are made easier by dividing the world into sectors, such as the environmental sector for example, but is it important to keep in mind that they are still part of a lager more complex whole (Buzan et al., 1998:8). Since securitization is a matter of priority above everything else, it affects all sectors, and just not the most apparent one as the environmental sector for example (Buzan et al., 1998:176). Buzan et al. mean that what is perceived as an existential threat can differ in different sectors, therefore these sectors

should be treated as separate to make the analysis manageable, but in reality sectors overlap (Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2015:97).

There are a wide range of possible referent objects in the environmental sector. Securitizing can regard "the survival of individual species (tigers, whales, humankind) or types of habitat (rain forests, lakes)" (Buzan et al., 1998:23) which is relatively concrete. But the referent object can also be preservation of the planetary climate and biosphere to what humans consider normal (Buzan et al., 1998:23). Sometimes it is hard to distinguish if it is an existential threat against the planet itself or against the conditions it offers that are prerequisite for human civilisations, that are being securitized in the environmental sector.

The levels of analysis are discussed in the Copenhagen school (Buzan et al., 1998:5-7), which mainly focuses on the level of the state and societal identities as the most relevant reference objects to the theory (Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2015:100). By focusing on reference objects on the middle of the scale (Buzan et al. 1998:36), the individual and the global level are often excluded (Buzan & Hansen, 2009:213). At the same time, Buzan et al. writes that during the cold war, humankind as a whole received status as a referent object under an existential nuclear threat. Climate change has the potential of eventually achieving the similar status as a global securitization.

There are some facilitating conditions that can make something more likely to appear as a security issue. Some things are also more likely to be perceived as threats when it has historical connotations of being a threat or danger. (Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2015:96). Buzan et al. (1998:33) gives the examples of "tanks, hostile sentiments, or polluted waters". The context is an important factor for the probability of something to be accepted as a security threat. Security issues are often institutionalized but it can also be ad, hoc (Buzan et al., 1998:27-28). A recent natural disaster affecting a lot of people can increase the likelihood of the audience to perceive climate changes in general as a security threat. Dramatical short term events, like natural disasters, are more likely to result in securitizing moves (Buzan et al., 1998:73). Hurricane Catharina in the US is a common case as an example of that (Scott, 2008: 604). Most successful securitization have been local according to Buzan et al., 1998:92). Buzan et al. (1998:83) separate the securitization that takes place in conjunction with natural disasters and emergencies and the securitization of creeping disasters affecting living conditions gradually. But a global securitization of environmental issues would come from

predictions about the future, not actual disasters (Buzan et al., 1998:74). There are many different kind of existential threats against different refence objects that can be articulated as security issues in the field of environmental issues. At the surface securitization of the environment often use strategic parts of or the environment as a whole as referent object. But when digging deeper, it is often the function it has for certain levels of human civilization that is the referent object. (Buzan et al., 1998:75). When it comes to natural disasters the existential threat is rarely the nature in itself, it is the natures reactions to the lifestyles of human civilizations. Therefore, the paradox in securitization of environmental changes is that the only way of saving the human civilisations (referent object) is to change them. This might be a reason to why climate change is hard to securitize, the referent object and the threat are the same. When analysing, it is important to consider the presentation of the referent object (Buzan et al., 1998:76). Is it the nature in itself or rather human civilization?

There are two agendas to take into consideration when analysing environmental issues: the scientific and the political. The scientific agenda exists in the context of natural sciences and contributes with authoritative assessments about environmental threats. The political agenda constitutes the decision making and policy process concerning how to deal with these environmental issues which reflects the degree of politicization and securitization. (Buzan et al., 1998:71-72). The political agenda is shaped by factors such as public opinion, government, and media. In this way, the political agenda on environmental issues are depending on the presumed urgency of the problem. The state is a common referent object when arguing that climate changes can cause conflict and migration. Norman Myers was one of the first presenting the environment as a security problem when arguing that recourse scarcity could induce violent conflict (1986 in Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2015:103). Barnett (2001) means that there are hidden interests in neo-malthusian statements about the peoples in the global south and violent conflict (Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2015:103). To portray environmental degradation as a security threat causing conflict is an environmentalist strategy for drawing attention to the problem and giving it the status of a military threat. But it is questionable how efficient this strategy is and it can result in nationalism (Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2015:116-117). Securitization of the same subject can build on different grounds, human security and national security for example. Many advocates of the securitisation of climate change are environmentalists with concern for the environment and the security of the people living in areas at risk. But there are also securitizing actors concerned with the issue because of the potential risk of having to deal with massive climate

induced immigration or conflict (Tomretta, 2014:135). Climate induced migration it is often presented as a phenomena that will take place in the future. Baldwin writes that climate induced migration "will" or "may" occur due to climate change (2015:80). But when it is discussed as an ongoing problem in the present, the concept is often criticized on the ground that it is hard to distinguish climate changes as the sole cause of migration. The decision to migrate often involves a range of aspects (Tombretta, 2014:134), such as labour markets, land tenure and political context (Baldwin, 2015:80). Environmental degradation could also be seen as a hindering factor for migration, since it can cause lack of resources which is a prerequisite for migration (Tombretta, 2014:134). Rainfall decrease and drought are even proved to decrease international migration (Bettini, 2013:67).

In other words an environmental existential threat and referent object can be depicted in many different ways. Buzan et al. (1998:79) divides the into three ideal types:

1. *Threats to human civilization from the natural environment that are not caused by human activity*

This ideal type regards events like natural disasters where human activity is not considered having an impact. For example it could be large meteorite strikes, earthquakes or volcanic events. However, the human agency are often debated when it comes to different kinds of natural disasters since there are often an indirect impact. This is often securitized at a local level.

2. *Threats from human activity to the natural systems or structures of the planet when the changes made do seem to pose existential threats to (parts of) civilization.*

This regards humans living beyond the carrying capacity of the planet and refers to the use of fossil fuels and non-reusable materials, emission of greenhouse gas and pollution that are securitized at a global level. But it can also regard environmental exploitation at a regional and local level that ruins smaller ecosystems. The designated referent object can be either the whole human civilization or a local or group depending on the level of securitization. But humans are in focus as both the referent object and the threat.

3. *Threats from human activity to the natural systems or structures of the planet when the changes made do not seem to pose existential threats to civilization.*

The referent object here is the nature in itself and how human activity destroys the planets ecosystems, threatens its animals and habitat.

2.2.4 Audience

It is important to distinguish successful securitization from a securitizing move and speech act. Buzan et al. (1998:25) means that an emergency measure does not need to be adopted for something to be a security issue, only be generally accepted by the relevant audience (Buzan et al., 1998:25). The securitizing move is done by a securitizing actor, but it is an intersubjective process since the audience also have to perceive it as a security threat. In democracies it must be legitimised publicly why something is moved away from the political sphere (Buzan et al., 1998:28).

Actors that influence decisions in the field of security and are affecting the dynamic of a sector are so called *functional actors.* (Buzan et al., 1998:36) Buzan and al. offers the example of a polluting company as a functional actor in securitization of the environment, but often it is the government or the military that have the decisive power then it comes to declaring exceptional measures. There can be several possible functional audiences (Balzacq, 2016:500) An issue can be securitized within a certain political community, while others perceive the issue differently (Buzan et al., 1998:30). Securitization moves can target either elite or general audiences (Léonard & Kaunert, 2011). When it comes to the environment both the elite and general audience could be seen as relevant. Although the Copenhagen School recognizes the importance of the audience acceptance of a securitization, the role of the audience is not given enough consideration in the theory (Balzacq, 2016:499). The process of securitizing is described as an intersubjective negotiation between the securitizing actor proposing a threat and the audience refusing or accepting it (Strizel, 2007:362-363). However it is not clear what the criteria for the relevant audience is, how to determine if the securitization is accepted by the relevant audience and if the support is moral or formal (Balzacq, 2005:175, Balzacq, 2016:500;Strizel, 2007:362-363). Balzacq argues that the audience is even more crucial than the securitizing actor, because the success of securitization is depending on the perception of the issue as a security issue (Balzacq, 2005:182)

There are different suggestions for indications of accepted securitization. The audience can function as support of a more moral character or formal support (Balzacq, 2016: 500). The media can be seen as a relevant audience for accepting securitization moves of other actors. For example, if the media reproduces a securitization without questioning it, it could be an indication of successful securitization. The media can also be a securitizing actor, which further complicates the question of relevant audience. Another suggestion to determine a successful securitization is to look at the institutionalization of a question. Legislation or change in policy could be an example of such an indication (Balzacq, 2016: 499). But even if change in laws and policy change are more concrete, it is not evident to distinguish how significant that change might have to be or the audience relevant for implement this shift (Balzacq, 2016: 500). Others have suggested to focus on the "enabling audience" with power and authority to act in a specific sector (Balzacq, 2016: 500)

2.3 Desecuritization

The concept desecuritization was launched by the Ole Wæver, one of the founders of the Copenhagen School (Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2015:100-101). Desecuritization is the opposite to securitization, when an issue is moved from being a security issue to a normal issue in the political sphere. The issue in question is goes from "emergency mode" to a "bargaining process" and is treated like any other political issue. (Buzan et al., 1998:4). It is important to understand de-securitization in order to understand securitization. An issue needs to be a securitized issue before it becomes de-securitized. Security might be associated with something positive, but securitization is generally viewed as negative. Therefore, there is a bias towards desecuritization, as it is seen as the preferable option in a long term perspective, in securitization theory (Buzan et al., 1998:4, 29, Hansen, 2012:526). Even so within the theory, desecuritization is relatively unexplored and underdeveloped upon compared to its opposite securitization (Hansen, 2012: 527). Securitization is the privileged concept in the theory that desecuritization always relates to (Hansen 2012, s. 530). The potential normative and political dimensions in the preference of desecuritization over securitization in the Copenhagen School is subject for discussion (Hansen, 2012: 526). At the same time as Copenhagen School normatively aims for desecuritization, it the denies the concept of

emancipation (Hansen, 2012: 527), which is central in other securitization theories as the Aberystwyth School for example.

Desecuritization is dependent on the acceptance of the audience (Hansen, 2012:32). How likely an audience is of accepting the desecuritization depends on how institutionalised the securitization of an issue is (Hansen, 2012:32). Desecuritization occurs as a result of speech acts, but there are no such thing as a "desecuritization speech act". If an actor would express something in style with to "this issue is not an existential threat anymore", it would rather be securitizing then desecuritizing since it invokes the grammar and logic of security (Hansen, 2012:530). Hansen (2012) has developed the concept of desecuritization by dividing it into four ideal types: *change through stabilization*, *replacement*, *rearticulation* and *silencing*.

Change through stabilization is a relatively slow and gradual move out of the security discourse into a political discourse. The larger issue can still exist, but the it is not talked about in security terms anymore. The most typical example of this kind of desecuritization is the détente of the Cold War. (Hansen, 2012: 529, 539)

Replacement is when another issue becomes securitized and replace the securitized issue on the security agenda (Hansen, 2012: 529). If a new issue is presented as a more powerful threat by a more relevant actor, the former alarming character of an earlier security issue can fade, when the new security issue takes its place (Hansen, 2012: 541).

Rearticulation is when a political solution or resolution to a security threat is presented, thereby it is moved from the security agenda to the political agenda. Rearticulation is more direct then change through stabilization and replacement. (Hansen, 2012: 529, 452). If the basic threats of a security issue have not been addressed, rearticulation are some in some ways akin to silencing (Hansen, 2012: 554).

Silencing is when desecuritization also brings depoliticization of an issue. When depoliticization happens through silencing, there is a risk that potential marginalized groups stay insecure, but without attention or acknowledging of the situation. (Hansen, 2012: 529, 544) This can also be the case when something is never securitized, but it does not mean that everything that is no securitized is desecuritized. (Hansen, 2012:445)

It is called asecurity is when an issue is not spoken about in terms of security an issue can also become apolitical (Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2015:94,102). The Copenhagen School has received critique for normatively privileging desecuritization, because desecuritization can also contribute to repressing an issue or even depoliticizing it (Buzan & Hansen, 2009:216-217) It is therefore very important to contextualize the desecuritization. Buzan and Hansen (2009:216) highlights that the Copenhagen School and securitization theory lacks the ability to recognize "the silent security dilemma", which refers to a situation when potential referent objects have limited or no possibility to speaking its security problem. The method of the Copenhagen School builds on analysing the articulations of security problems. If an issue is not able to be explicitly articulated as such, could it not be a security problem? This critique can be linked to the critique of the Copenhagen School being very Western-centric, assuming political rights and free speech for example (Buzan & Hansen, 2009:216).

2.4 Possible effects of securitization

Event though, there is a general tendency to aim for desecuritization within the Copenhagen School (Buzan et al., 1998:4), there are both advantages and disadvantages to securitization. The upside of securitization is that resources and energy are dedicated to this specific issue (Buzan et al., 1998:24). When an issue is securitized it is prioritized over everything else since the security logic follows "if we do not tackle this problem, everything else will be irrelevant" (Buzan et al., 1998:24). The term "environmental security" has been frequently used to drawing attention to the issue of environmental degradation (Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2015:101). Securitization can be strategic since it has a prioritizing imperative, that can help attract attention to environmental issues for example (Trombetta, 2014: 135; Buzan et al., 1998:26). By securitizing climate changes, environmentalists can try to mobilize action and resources to their cause. One must be aware that to securitize or accept a securitization is always a political choice, since there are always specific interest behind (Buzan et al., 1998:29).

The Copenhagen school's aim to desecuritize, even when it comes to issues such as a securitization of the environment, rest on the assumption that we could and should not identify universal principles, therefore it is better if issues are politicised (Hansen, 2012: 535). Buzan et al (1998:29) even views long term securitization as a failure to deal with the issue in

a democratic way in normal politics. When an issue is securitized it also becomes de-politicized. It is problematic when complex issues are no longer in the political debate, but instead perceived as antagonistic issues which makes the solution to the problem seem evident and the complexities/variety of solutions are lost (Trombetta, 2014:136). Another possible outcome of securitizing environmental issues is the risk of militarising climate policy (Hartmann, 2010:242). Securitization of a problem bring about emergency politics which comprises limited deliberation, participation and bargaining in favour for a more militarized approach (Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2015:100).

3. Method

This chapter will describe the research design of the study and motivate choice of theory, method, case and material. It will describe discourse analysis and specify the particular analytical tools used in the analysis. Ontological and epistemological considerations will also be discussed as well as the limitations of the study.

3.1 Discourse analysis

The aim of this study is not to objectively determine if climate change is a security threat or not, it is to describe a social construction of climate change as a threat (Buzan et al. 1998: 26, 33-34). The Copenhagen School of security means that the only way we are able to study security is to trough discourse (Buzan et al., 1998:29). Hence, discourse analysis is the most relevant method to study securitization. By studying verbal and written speech acts the elements of securitization can be identified in the specific rhetorical structure consisting of the "grammar and logic of security" (Buzan et al. 1998, s. 176).

The foreground figure of discourse analysis, Michel Foucault, defines discourse as "practices that systemically form the objects of which we speak" (Foucault, 1972:49). Discourses consist of meanings, conversations, explanations, reports, stories, anecdotes and narratives, which constitutes all kinds of verbal and written interactions like conversations (Potter & Wetherell 1987:3,7). Terms and concepts used in a certain rhetorical way form discursive patterns typical for a specific discourse (Potter & Wetherell 1992:90). Inevitably discourses reproduce, stabilize, strengthen, confirm or question power structures (Boréus & Bergström 2018:20). Language is not a neutral instrument, it always reflect a certain perspective. Seemingly neutral facts change meaning depending on social context (Boréus & Bergström 2018:255). Discourse analysis is an instrument to discover how some discourses are made possible while others are made taboo and how this result in privileging some perspectives and excluding others (Winther Jørgensen & Philips, 1999:110). Studying discourses reveals power structures in societies (Boréus & Bergström 2018:255). Groups of society can have varying interests and different discourses have various implications for these groups. Power is not always positive or negative, or god or bad. But it is important to be aware that power is always there (Boréus

& Bergström 2018:256). Discourses compete with each other of establishing their view as the most commonly accepted (Boréus & Bergström 2018:256). A dominating discourse can achieve the status of hegemony, become institutionalized and stay relatively unquestioned (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001:262), which can explain why some issues are more likely to be associated with security than others. The discourse that forms a particular identity of a phenomena is both a product of and constitutive of policy (Hansen, 2006:23). Discourse analysis can be used to criticise power structures (Esaiasson et al, 2017:214), however it is not the purpose of this study.

3.1.1 Discourse analysis and the Copenhagen School of securitization

Discourse analysis have grown to become a popular method with a range of different orientations, therefore it is important to specify which kind of discourse analysis and this study will apply (Boréus & Bergström 2018:253-254). Buzan et al. describes the technique for a Copenhagen School discourse analysis quite simply " read, look for arguments that take the rhetorical and logical form defined here as security" (1998:177). But in Lene Hansen's book *Security as Practice - Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War* (2011), a discourse analysis suiting the Copenhagen school is developed. This thesis takes methodological inspiration from Hansen (2006), but do not share the central focus on foreign policy, identity and the state as main referent object since this study strives for global perspective.

The goal of a securitizing speech act is to sway the dominating discourse in its favour. The securitizing actor wants to convince the relevant audience of a certain world view comprising an existential threat against a referent object. Rhetoric is central in securitizing speech acts due to the (direct or indirect) goal of persuasion. To identify patterns of rhetoric elements that reflects the grammar and logic of security, the thesis takes methodological influence from rhetoric discourse analysis within discourse psychology. Discourse psychology is a social constructivist approach to discourse analysis developed within social psychology as a critique against cognitivism that views language as representations of the world, while social constructivists views language as what is constructing the world (Winther Jørgensen & Philips, 1999:97, 104). Attitudes, such as notions of security threats, are socially constructed in processes and social interactions between people. Psychological processes are not viewed as private and stable, instead they are intersubjective and flexible (Winther Jørgensen & Philips, 1999:103). Rhetorical psychology describes the rhetorical social categories that

people make use of in social interactions such as speeches and conversations (Winther Jørgensen & Philips, 1999:103). Discourse psychology is focused on the rhetorical structure of texts and speeches and how it urges social action (Winther Jørgensen & Philips, 1999:115).

Speech acts can be spoken or written language. But when it comes to speech acts such as speeches, more than the mere formulations matters for how the message is perceived. Hansen emphasizes that language is not always verbal. Body-language and sign language or material symbols can play an important role in how an issue is perceived by the audience (2001:122 in Hansen 2006:23). In addition to the spoken and written speech acts, visual images will also be included in the rhetorical analysis because of its importance to contemporary political communication (Hansen, 2011).

3.2 Fundamental ontological and epistemological considerations

The theoretical background of the Copenhagen School and discourse analysis is social constructivism. According to social constructivists "reality" cannot be separated from language since language always comprise certain representations of reality. No representation of reality is neutral, therefore it is irrelevant to talk about another reality than the socially constructed one (Boréus & Bergström, 2018:27). Discourse analysis is both methodology and theory at the same time. "Without theory there is nothing but description, and without methodology there is no transformation of theory into analysis" (Hansen, 2006: 1).

Discourse should be studied in itself, not as representing something else "real". The method if not formed to discover hidden agendas or underlying motives(Buzan et al. 1998, s. 176), which could be regarded as a weakness of the method, but on the other hand it is not the aim of the theory. The central focus is on how something is presented by the securitizing actor and received by the audience and world. The theory builds on the belief that discourses affect policies and how the world is formed and are therefore relevant (Buzan et al. 1998:177). Language is epistemologically and ontologically fundamental since it constructs "reality" by giving meaning to different phenomena and the material world (Hansen, 2006:17). By talking about something in a particular way, it contributes to create its identity, regardless if it is "objects, subjects, states, living beings or material structures" (Hansen, 2006:18) There is no

objective truth behind the linguistic representation, it is just the production and reproduction of intersubjectivities (Hansen, 2006:18). Language is social and political since it formulates policy discourses that forms policies (Hansen, 2006:17). When a policy discourse is articulated it constructs problems, object, subjects and policies (solutions and particular directions for action). By choosing aspects of a phenomena other aspects are left out (Hansen, 2006:19)

Things are always relative to something else, it is defined by being compared to something different or *Other,* some things are privileged while others are devaluated, which is the discursive juxtaposition (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001). The relativity in social constructivism have been criticized for opening up for "alternative facts" such as denial of climate changes at the expense of action against "real" problems. In defence of social constructivism it is important to recognise its purpose of highlighting different problem representations to describe discursive dynamics. For example how certain interests are prioritized while others are not (Winther Jørgensen & Philips, 1999:116). Thus, this thesis is interested in describing a representation of climate change as a security problem. It will also discuss whether the consequences of framing it as such, without evaluating if these consequences should be considered god or bad, or true or false.

3.3 Research design

To answer the research question *How is securitization of climate change reflected in Greta Thunberg's speeches?* the analysis will be divided into three individual sections concerning the sub-questions:

- What rhetorical elements of securitization can be found in Greta Thunberg's speeches on climate change?

- What constitutes the existential threat and referent object in Greta Thunberg's speeches on climate change?

- Within the frames of the Copenhagen School securitization theory, what indicates that Greta Thunberg has contributed to securitization of climate change?

Hansen means that clear constructions of the *existential threat* and *referent object* should be identified in the text, since discourse analysis is "located at the level of explicit articulations" (Hansen, 2006:41), they are however situated in a context which has to be taken into consideration, but never implicit (Hansen, 2006:42). Also to assure the reliability and high intersubjectivity of the study and it is vital to analyse only explicit constructions of securitization and not exaggerate or downplay these. (Hansen, 2006:45).

The analytical process involves going through the material to identify themes and patterns of rhetorical terms and expressions (Boréus & Bergström, 2018:297). By doing this several times the distinguishing and recurring themes in the entire material can be divided into a coding system and fragments of the texts can then be placed in categories (Boréus & Bergström, 2018:289). Throughout the close reading of the text, some themes are rejected and some new will appear. It is important to be open for all kind of different themes since to avoid confirmation bias is it essential that not only themes that agrees with the theory are identified. For example, discursive themes that collide should be uncovered and discussed (Winther Jørgensen & Philips, 1999:119). When the central themes and rhetorical patterns are identified they will be compared to the central elements of the theory. The analysis of the material will be structured by the themes, a discussion of its accordance to the theory and exemplified with representative quotations from the material.

3.3.1 Case and material selection

When applying discourse analysis there are no natural limits, therefore it is important to be transparent and motivate the limitations of discourse, case and speech acts well (Boréus & Bergström, 2018:288-289). Securitization of climate change is a broad topic covering a contemporary polarized debate containing several opposing and overlapping perspectives. It could be studied in numerous different way, but this study focus on a case limited to speech acts of Greta Thunberg. The reason for choosing to study Greta Thunberg as a securitizing actor of climate change is the massive attention she has accumulated highlighting the severity of climate change since August 2018. She gave rise to the global movement *School strike for climate*, later known as *Fridays for Future* (Reuters) and her influence on peoples and political leaders over the world been referred to as the "Greta Thunberg Effect (The

Economist, Bloomberg). When looking at the Copenhagen School criteria for securitizing actors, Greta Thunberg is not a traditional securitizing actor. Buzan et al. (1998: 31) writes that securitisation are more likely to be enforced by authorities and elites since they have the social and political capital to convince a broader audience. Greta Thunberg started as a sole activist with a little voice, but as she gained more attention in the media, her message travelled around the world and inspired to a global movement, her position changed. In 2019 Greta Thunberg was chosen the person of the year by Times magazine (Times magazine).

A sole activist is in a less privileged position then a state or institution, when it comes to articulating a security issue, but what determines if somebody can be a securitizing actor is the ability to lift an issue to the level of general consideration (Buzan et al., 1998:24). When it regards climate change, Greta Thunberg now seem to be in a position to call more attention to the issue then many states and bureaucracies. The high global level of support and participation in the demonstrations Fridays for future and invitations to speak at conferences in the UN and World Economic Forum can be regarded an indication of one kind of power position. As Balzacq highlight that the power to deal with a security issue should not be confused with the power to identify and articulate a security issue (2016:502). It is not only the support for Greta Thunberg that makes her a relevant securitizing actor, she sparks a huge debate which contributes to placing the issue of climate change and security high up on the agenda. Many political leaders, the American president Donald Trump and the Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro for example have expressed their criticism against her and her point of view (The Guardian, 2019-12-30). It is especially interesting to study speech acts from Greta Thunberg since she is a contemporary unexpected and unique securitizing actor.

Since security is socially constructed by speech acts (Trombetta, 2014:132), the analysing material will consist of speeches by Greta Thunberg. Buzan et al. writes that the text subject to analysis should be chosen on the criteria of importance in a certain community (1998:177). If securitization can be found in the central texts, the arguments are likely to be generally accepted among the audience. Hansen (2006:82) recommends to methodologically select primary text to analyse such as speeches for example. The speeches analysed in this study are taken from the book *No one is too small to make a difference* which is a collection of Greta Thunberg's big speeches at climate rallies and different global forums and organizations. One speech at the UN's Climate Action Summit in New York the 23 September 2019 are also included in the analysis, since it was a big speech held after the speech collection was

released.[2] Greta Thunberg has held big and important speeches after this point, but no more speeches held after this will be included in the analysis since this study must be limited. One disadvantage with studying a current phenomenon is that it consistently appears new interesting material and since it is not over yet, it is impossible to comprehend the extent and impact of certain speech acts and situations. At the same time, this is a qualitative study and the available analysed material already contains relevant and interesting elements of securitization. The advantage of studying this contemporary matter is that the findings can contribute to give additional perspectives and understand it better.

3.4 Reflexivity and situatedness

When formulating a research question, inevitably one chooses to focus on certain "realities" by not asking a number of other questions (Hansen, 2006:73). As this thesis builds on a social constructivist worldview, it is important to recognize reflexivity (Winther Jørgensen & Philips, 1999:111). Boréus and Bergström (2018:293) problematize the social constructivist approach epistemological implications and that the discourse analysist are not able to put herself in an objective position outside the discourses. Therefore it is important to consider the researchers own role as an analyst of a security issue. Even when discussing if something is a security issue or not, it can contribute to reproducing it as a security object. Security analysts can easily become securitizing actors (Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2015:102-103), at least they play a role in constructing and deconstructing security (Buzan et al., 1998:33). There are different securitizing actors, but it is the analyst that estimates the mobilized support and securitization process (Buzan et al., 1998:34). It is not theoretically possible for the analysis to determine if the securitized issue is a "real threat" or not. To be able to express oneself on these issues, one has to rely on other ontological principles then in this analysis (Buzan et al., 1998:35) which is also what distinguish the securitizing actors from the analysists. Buzan et al. (1998:34) means that one of the advantages with this approach is that one could contribute with an evaluation of the advantages and disadvantages of securitizing a certain problem.

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[2] The whole list of the speeches are found in the references.

3.5 Limitations

One of the Copenhagen Schools most criticized limitations is the methodological inability to evaluate the support of a securitization among the relevant audience, in other words to decide if the securitization attempt has been successful or not. Discourse analysis is limited to merely observing language. It is impossible to determine causal effects with discourse analysis (Boréus & Bergström, 2018:297), because who decides "how much discourse matters" for something to be securitized. (Hansen, 2006:25). Balzacq (2005: 176) means that the Copenhagen School overlooks the context that can explain how efficient the effect of languages can be. The Copenhagen School means that the way something is made a security problem is through language, since it is not an objective condition. When there are no way to decide the impact of context and audience, there is a vital practical dimension of the theory that is missing (Balzacq, 2005:178). Strizel means that it is difficult for empirical studies to decide on the relevant audience and if it is persuaded of the securitization or not (2007: 363). It is important to be aware of this methodological limitation. Hence this thesis will not attempt to prove a full securitization or not. But it will take the possibility to discuss the suggestions of indications on acceptance of securitization from other researchers such as Balzacq, and compare them to the case. This will hopefully contribute to testing the developments of the theory as well as give insights to the case in question.

4. Analysis

4.1 What rhetorical elements of securitization can be found in Greta Thunberg's speeches on climate change?

4.1.1 Theme: A matter of survival

Survival is a very central theme in the material reminding the audience that this is a question regarding life and death. The rhetorical arguments consistently returns to pointing out that increased climate change is posing an existential threat to survival. The argument of survival are the core to legitimizing securitization (Buzan et al., 1998:21, Trombetta, 2014:132). The following quotations are examples of this theme:

> "Our lives are in your hands" (Climate March, Stockholm, 8 September 2018)

> "You have stolen my dreams and my childhood with your empty words. And yet I'm one of the lucky ones. People are suffering. People are dying. Entire ecosystems are collapsing. We are in the beginning of a mass extinction, and all you can talk about is money and fairy tales of eternal economic growth. How dare you!" (UN, Climate Action Summit, New York, 23 September 2019)

It is clear that the argument of survival are frequently returned to. But the Copenhagen School are interested in the specific description of something posing "an existential threat to the survival of a referent object" (Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2015:93). Further down in the analysis, under section 4.2, the specific representation of the dynamic of what is considered to pose a threat and what is being threatened will be discussed.

4.1.2 Theme: A state of emergency

When securitizing something, it is common to highlight the emergency of the situation (Buzan et al., 1998:27, 33) and there is a recurring theme of emergency in the material. There are quotes referring to climate change as an emergency.

"The climate and ecological emergency is right here, right now. But it has only just begun, it will get worse." (National Assembly in Paris, 23 April 2019)

"If our house was falling apart our leaders wouldn't go on like you do today. You would change almost every part of your behaviour as you do in an emergency." (European Parliament, Strasbourg, 16 April 2019)

Greta Thunberg frequently comes back to the "if our house falling apart"-metaphor in her speeches. She refers to the extensive devastated reactions and support it accumulated when the Notre Dame was burning and compares its proportionality to the damages that are ruining the world that we live in to increase the sense of emergency among the audience. In her speeches, Greta Thunberg, have expressed several times that she do want people to panic. She reasons that if you panic, at least you understand the severity of the situation.

"My name is Greta Thunberg. I am sixteen years old. I come from Sweden and I want you to panic" (European Parliament, Strasbourg, 16 April 2019)

"Adults keep saying we owe it to the young people to give them hope. But I don't want your hope, I don't want you to be hopeful. I want you to panic, I want you to feel the fear I feel every day. And then I want you to act, I want you to act as if you would in a crisis. I want you to act as if the house was on fire, because it is." (World Economic Forum, Davos, 25 January 2019)

The exhort to treat climate change as a crisis can be placed within the theme of emergency. By asking people to talk about climate change as a crisis, because if it is recognized as a crisis or emergency situation attention, recourses and action are generated towards the issue (Trombetta, 2014:133).

"So, please, treat the climate crisis like the acute crisis it is and give us a future" (Climate March, Stockholm, 8 September 2018)

4.1.3 Theme: Call for extraordinary measures

The emergency and crisis rhetoric is a means to legitimize extraordinary measures which is also a recurring theme in material.

> "If burning fossil fuels was so bad, that it threatened our very existence, how could we just continue like before? Why were there no restrictions? Why wasn't it made illegal?" (Declaration of Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, Parliament Square, London, 31 October 2018)

In an acute crisis, the normal course of action, foundational rules and norms are put aside in order to solve the crisis. Different kind of freedoms and rights can be limited for example (Buzan et al., 1998:21, 24). One common extraordinary measure is to move the issue away from the political debate, because of the urgency in a crisis situation there are not always time for the democratic decision making process (Buzan et al., 1998:21, Trombetta, 2014:132).

4.1.4 Theme: Depolitization

Depolitization and securitization is part of the same process moving issues away from the democratic debate in favour of the authoritarian logic of security (Trombetta, 2014:133). Greta Thunberg frequently argues that her message is not political and that it is necessary to think outside the current political frames, which corresponds well with the theory of securitization.

> "This is not a political text. Our school strike has nothing to do with party politics. Because the climate and the biosphere don't care about our politics and our empty words for a single second. " (Climate March, Stockholm, 8 September 2018)

> "Until you start focusing on what needs to be done rather than what is politically possible, there is no hope. We cannot solve this crisis without treating it as a crisis" (UN Climate Change Conference, Katowice, Poland, 15 December 2018)

> "Today we use 100 million barrels of oil every day. There are no politics to change that. There are no rules to keep that oil in the ground. So we can't save the world by playing by the rules. Because the rules have to be changed." (Declaration of Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, Parliament Square, London, 31 October 2018)

One could argue that everything is political, even unquestioned norms. Laclau and Mouffe (2001) means that a depoliticized issue is a reaffirmation of the dominant practices. The depolitization theme in Greta Thunberg's speeches can be seen as a wish for a new dominant practice. At the same time as this de-securitization theme can be seen as contradictory to another theme in the material.

4.1.5 Theme: Science

Greta Thunberg urge people to listen to science. In the speeches she backs up her arguments by referring to science and underlines that she checks the facts with researchers on the topic. Natural science has an authoritarian weight when it comes to issues regarding the environment and climate change (Buzan et al., 1998:71-72)..

> " When I tell politicians to act now, the most common answer is that they can't do anything drastic because it would be too unpopular among the voters. And they are right, of course, since most people are not even aware of why those changes are required. That is why I keep telling you to unite behind the science. Make the best available science the heart of politics and democracy" (European Parliament, Strasbourg, 16 April 2019)

The Copenhagen School are dividing the environmental issues in two agendas – the political and the scientific (Buzan et al., 1998:71-72), while Greta Thunberg want them to merge. This quote is also interesting since Greta Thunberg states that not enough people are listening to science. This is interesting from a politization-securitization perspective and could possibly be seen as a collision between discourses.

4.1.6 Theme: Priority over everything else

One overarching theme in the material is that the issue of climate change is the single most important issue in the world. Because if the world would become an unliveable place, no other issue will even be able to exist, therefore climate change should be distinguished from regular politics and take absolute priority. Buzan et al. writes that the logic of security as "if we do not tackle this problem, everything else will be irrelevant" (Buzan et al., 1998:24). It is often argued that all focus and resources must be directed at solving this particular problem (Buzan et al., 1998:33).

> "It's the only world we've got." (Goldene Kamera Film and TV Awards, Berlin, 30 Mars 2019)

> "What we do and don't do, right now, will affect my entire life, and the life of my children and grandchildren" (Declaration of Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, Parliament Square, London, 31 October 2018)

> "No other current challenge can match the importance of establishing a wide public awareness and understanding of our rapidly disappearing carbon budgets that should and must become a new global currency in the very heart of future and present economics." (World Economic Forum, Davos, 25 January 2019)

> "We need to focus every inch of our being on climate change, because if we fail to do so then all of our achievements and progress will be for nothing and all that will remain of our political leaders' legacy will be the greatest failure of human history" (European Economic and Social Committee, "Civil Society for rEUnaissance" Brussels, 21 February 2019)

4.1.7 Theme: The only solution

Since security is a zero sum game it does not leave room for discussions or alternative ways to solve or view an issue (Buzan et al., 1998:21, Trombetta, 2014:132). A securitization often presents the issue as a point of no return and one possible and necessary way out (Buzan et al., 1998:33), this is a theme reflected in the material as well. Greta Thunberg means that the solution to stop Greenhouse gas emissions no matter what is the only and obvious solution to

the issue. With weight from research and natural science she argues that there are no other possible way out of this crisis.

> "We already have the fact and solutions" (Declaration of Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, Parliament Square, London, 31 October 2018)

> "The climate crisis is both the easiest and the hardest issue we have ever faced. The easiest because we know what we must do. We must stop the emissions of greenhouse gases" (Houses of Parliament, London, 23 April 2019)

> "But the solution is black and white: we need to stop the emissions of greenhouse gases" (Facebook, Stockholm, 2 February 2019)

4.1.8 Theme: Metaphors to traditional security sectors

Another theme in the material is metaphors to issues that refers to traditional security issues such as war.

> "How do you 'solve' the greatest crisis that humanity has ever faced? How do you 'solve' a war?" in *Can You Hear Me?* (Houses of Parliament, London, 23 April 2019)

Issues that are associated with or are close to traditional security issues are more likely to be perceived as threats because of historical connotations to danger (Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2015:96). In the same way by comparing climate change to contemporary political crises or societal situations and questions, Greta Thunberg attempts to highlight the importance of the issue in relation to other issues.

> "If our house was falling apart, you wouldn't hold three Brexit emergency summits, and no emergency summit regarding the breakdown of the climate and eco systems." (European Parliament, Strasbourg, 16 April 2019)

4.1.9 Theme: Natural disasters

Natural disasters and dramatical environmental events are closer associated with traditional security and emergencies. Therefore it is often referred to as a consequence of gradual climate change to underline its severity (Buzan et al., 1998:83).

> "This is a cry for help. To all the newspapers who still don't write about and report on climate change, even though they said that the climate was "the critical question of our time" when the Swedish forests were burning this summer" (Climate March, Stockholm, 8 September 2018)

By referring to forest fires or other dramatical events or natural disasters close in time. The audience associate the issue with an unpleasant feeling and are more likely to listen and act in order to prevent these.

4.2 Visual rhetorical analysis

Hansen (2006:23) underlines the importance of body language. When Greta Thunberg is holding her speeches, her face is often very serious showing deep concern. At the speech at the UN Climate Action Summit in New York the 23 September 2019, Greta shows an angry side and it looks like she have tears in her eyes. This body language contributes to give the audience a feeling of emergency.

Material symbols can also have a rhetorical effect (Hansen, 2006:23). Two of Greta Thunberg's most symbolic attributes are her yellow raincoat and her hair in two long braids. Yellow is a colour that attracts attention and are often associated with "emergency" or "warning". The classical raincoat can remind the audience of whether and the climate subconsciously. Two braids are a typical hairstyle for children and by emphasising that she is a child she reflects innocence and it is clear what generation she represents.

The audience is not only the people listening to Greta Thunberg's speeches live. The bigger audience are those viewing them on news on TV or through other media. The picture they see

with other children listening to Greta, also holding signs asking the world to save their future, is also emphasising a severe situation.

4.3 What constitutes the existential threat and referent object in Greta Thunberg's speeches on climate change?

Climate change can be described as a security issue in several different ways. To understand how the problem is represented it is central to determine the framing of what *threat* poses an existential threat to what *referent object* (Peoples and Vaughan-Williams, 2015:9). The state is a common referent object in securitization theory, as well as in application of the Copenhagen School (Buzan & Hansen, 2009:215). There are no references to the state as a central reference object in the material of this study. There are rather a theme of a global securitization as Greta Thunberg makes it clear that the issue concerns the whole wold and that the nature and all humans are involved.

> "Some people say that we are fighting for our future. We are not fighting for our future, we are fighting for everyone's future" (European Economic and Social Committee, "Civil Society for rEUnaissance" Brussels, 21 February 2019)

4.3.1 Theme: Existential threat – living beyond the carrying capacity of the world

It is clearly stated in the material that it is the existential threat and the reason to why we are in this situation is the human capitalist lifestyle involving consumption, flying and burning fossil fuels that emit to much greenhouse gases that is the cause of the problem. Greta Thunberg frequently comes back to the unsustainability of living beyond the carrying capacity of the world.

> "We are about to sacrifice our civilization for the opportunity of a very small number of people to continue to make enormous amounts of money. We are about to sacrifice the biosphere so that rich people in countries like mine can live in luxury. But it is the sufferings of the many which pay for the luxuries of few." (UN Climate Change Conference, Katowice, Poland, 15 December 2018)

"And someone is to blame. Some people - some companies and some decision makers in particular - has known exactly what priceless values they are sacrificing to continue making unimaginable amounts of money. I want to challenge those companies and those decision makers into real and bold climate action. To set their economic goals aside and to safeguard the future living conditions for human kind. I don't believe for one second that you will rise to that challenge. But I want to ask you all the same. I ask you to prove me wrong. For the sake of your children, for the sake of your grandchildren. For the sake of life and this beautiful living planet" (World Economic Forum, Davos, 22 January 2019)

There is one clear representation of the existential threat, but material holds two different framings considering the reference object: human civilisation and the nature in itself.

4.3.2 Theme: Referent object – human civilization

Greta Thunberg often refers to human civilization as referent object in her speeches.

"Either we chose to go on as a civilization or we don't" (World Economic Forum, Davos, 25 January 2019)

"Humanity is now standing at its crossroads" (Extinction Rebellion Rally, Marble Arch, London, 23 April 2019)

This theme matches well with Buzan et al.'s (1998:79) second ideal type of environmental securitizations *Threats from human activity to the natural systems or structures of the planet when the changes made do seem to pose existential threats to (parts of) civilization*. This is a typical securitization referring to human exploitation causing environmental consequences that effects humans.

4.3.3 Theme: Referent object – the nature in itself

Another recurrent referent object is the earth, its animals and nature.

> "We need to protect the biosphere, the air, the oceans, the soil, the forests"
> (European Economic and Social Committee, "Civil Society for rEUnaissance"
> Brussels, 21 February 2019)

> "Nor does hardly anyone ever mention that we are in the midst of the sixth mass
> extinction, with about 200 species going extinct every single day." (Declaration
> of Rebellion, Extinction Rebellion, Parliament Square, London, 31 October
> 2018)

This theme is similar to Buzan et al.'s (1998:79) third ideal type of environmental securitizations *Threats from human activity to the natural systems or structures of the planet when the changes made do not seem to pose existential threats to civilization.*

However, these two different framings of the central referent object do not have to be contradictory. Both human civilization and the nature in itself represent referent objects. The only one of Buzan et al.'s (1998:79) ideal types of securitization that are not reflected in the material is the constellation of threat and referent object are *Threats to human civilization from the natural environment that are not caused by human activity.*

4.3.4 Theme: Children's future

A central theme in Greta Thunberg's speeches is the focus on the future of children. A deep disappointment is directed towards adults holding them responsible for climate changes. Greta Thunberg is underlining that something is wrong when it is innocent children are the ones worrying the most about this issue. She also highlight how children are not able to vote and do not have the same political influence at the same time as they will be affected the worst.

> "The future of all the coming generations rest on your shoulders" (Climate
> March, Stockholm, 8 September 2018)

> "You are failing us. But the young people are starting to understand your
> betrayal. The eyes of all future generations are upon you. And if you choose to
> fail us, I say: We will never forgive you." (UN, Climate Action Summit, New
> York, 23 September 2019)

>"We live in a strange world where children must sacrifice their own education in order to protest against the destruction of their future." (Goldene Kamera Film and TV Awards, Berlin, 30 Mars 2019)

This theme is not an obvious element in securitization theory, but it is interesting to discuss in the light of the theory. Children are an extra vulnerable group and could also be considered a referent object in the material. The expressions could be interpreted as an attempt from children trying to securitize themselves. It is uncommon that exposed groups are able to securitize themselves because of their limited possibility to put its security issue on the agenda (Buzan & Hansen, 2009:216)

4.3.5 Theme: Climate justice

Climate justice is neither a typical theme in the Copenhagen School, but it is interesting on the same ground as the previous theme of children's securitization. Extra exposed groups are securitized in the speeches while the privileged groups are pointed out responsible.

>"Where the people who have contributed the least to this crisis are the ones who are going to be affected the most." (Goldene Kamera Film and TV Awards, Berlin, 30 Mars 2019)

"The bigger your carbon footprint – the bigger your moral duty. The bigger your platform – the bigger your responsibility" (World Economic Forum, Davos, 25 January 2019)

>"These all disastrous trends being accelerated, by a way of life that we, here in our financially fortunate part of the world, see as our right to simply carry on" (European Parliament, Strasbourg, 16 April 2019)

4.4 Within the frames of the Copenhagen School securitization theory, are there indications that Greta Thunberg has contributed to securitization of climate change?

According to the Copenhagen School a securitization is complete only when the audience accept the issue as a security threat as presented in the speech acts (Buzan et al. 1998:83). The global attention, large number of demonstration participants indicates that many people share Greta Thunberg's concern over climate change. In September 2019 at least 6 million people participated in the coordinated global climate strikes all around the world (The Guardian, 2019-09-27)[3] and Time magazine appointed Greta Thunberg the person of the year 2019 (Time magazine). There seem to exist a big moral support for Greta Thunberg's securitisation of climate change. But she have also endured criticism from many levels in society and sparked a large debate. According to Peoples and Vaughan-Williams (2015:102-103) debating an issues security status, can contribute to reproducing and establishing it as a security issue.

One suggestion to check if the audience accept the saucerization is if the media are contributing to reproduce the securitization (Balzacq, 2016: 500). Greta Thunberg's movement and their message have accumulated massive attention in the media and spread across the world due to traditional and social media. On the other hand, it has not been unquestioned. The Oxford dictionary chose "climate emergency" as the word of the year 2019, which means that it is the most prominent and prominently debated term that year (Oxford Languages). But within the frames of the Copenhagen School it is hard to decide "how much" positive and negative media attention is enough to determine a securitization. However, the media coverage of the movement and its effects is a very interesting topic for further research.

To decide if climate change are securitized one has to consider if the relevant audience with the power to influence decisions regarding the issue are accepting the securitization, so called functional actors (Balzacq, 2016:500). When it comes to climate change, both the elite and general audience are relevant. The general moral support for Greta Thunberg's securitization

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[3] The movement itself estimates 7.6 million participants (Global Climate Strike)

of climate change are affecting public opinion and political leaders. There is an elite of people in power positions standing in line to meet with her, taking pictures with her and showing their support. On the other hand, it does not mean they it will result in further actions as consequence. Balzacq suggest that it is relevant to look at the institutionalization of a securitization, for example if there have been a shift in policy or legislation (Balzacq, 2016: 499). Institutionalization could indicate that the "enabling audience" in the specific sector are accepted a securitization (Balzacq, 2016: 500). In the end of November 2019 the European Parliament declared Climate emergency and urged its member states to commit to net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 (European Parliament). But there were critique accusing the statement od only being a symbolic gesture without sufficient action behind. (The Guardian, 2019-11-28). This shows that there are also complex to measure "how much" institutionalization that is enough for a full securitization (Balzacq, 2016: 500). Even if Greta Thunberg gets her voice heard some political communities, the international political system are often described as anarchistic and there are clearly still powerful states that do not share her social construction of the issue. Just one example is the US formally starting to withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement the 4 November 2019.

Greta Thunberg's movement Fridays for future builds on school strikes and the main target group are children and teenagers. They could be considered an irrelevant audience because of its less privileged position in influencing global political decisions and lack of ability to vote. On the other hand, the commitment and dedication of the children seem to have had an enormous effect on adults, media and political elites that have helped the movement and Greta Thunberg to lift the issue to the a high level of consideration. Otherwise Greta Thunberg would not have been invited to meetings with world leader and to speak at the UN and World Economic Forum. This might be an example where securitization actually can help a certain group out of the so called "silent security dilemma" that Buzan and Hansen warns for (2009).

One of the fundamental elements of securitizing is extraordinary measures, which implies going reprioritization of regular norms, rules and routines (Trombetta, 2014:132). That children are striking from school to protest against climate change goes against compulsory school attendance, which can be considered a fundamental norm today. This could be an expression of extraordinary measures indicating that there is an audience of children following Greta Thunberg's call for extraordinary measures.

5. Conclusion

How is securitization of climate change reflected in Greta Thunberg's speeches?

Discussing if Greta Thunberg have securitized climate change highlights the shortcomings in the Copenhagen School when it comes to determining if the relevant audience have accepted the securitization. It is clear that the role of the audience is complicated to determine within the frames of the theory. Since the Copenhagen School is building on social constructivist assumptions, it is not the purpose of the theory to explain causal effects. However, this could be an interesting possibility to examine in future further research with another probably quantitative method.

Balzacq and other researchers underlines the limitation of the Copenhagen School and means that the audience is even more relevant than the securitizing actor (2005:175, 182). But securitization is an intersubjective process (Strizel, 2007:362-363) and the very idea needs to come from somewhere if the audience are even considering it. Therefore it is always important to look at how threats are constructed in society today. By looking at the rhetoric of Greta Thunberg, it is clear that she uses the grammar and logic of security to raise attention towards the issue of climate change. By describing it as a security issue, she aims to raise the level of consideration.

Greta Thunberg's rhetoric reflects a clear securitization attempt since all the vital rhetorical elements of securitization can be found in the analysed material. Climate change is described as a matter of survival for both the human civilization and the nature in itself. It is these two global referent objects that are frequently referred to in the speeches. But within the referent object of human civilization, children and people living in extra vulnerable parts of the world are pointed out as the most exposed referent object groups. The existential threat is described as the problem that too many inhabitants of the world are living beyond its carrying capacity due to a capitalist lifestyle. Greta Thunberg urges people to call climate change a crisis and treating it as an emergency. She argues that it should be prioritized over every other issue since climate change are not dealt with, there will be no issues that would be relevant to deal with if the whole human civilization would go under. She calls for extraordinary measures

and depoliticized the debate by highlighting the scientific agenda as the only solution. Even if Greta Thunberg have the power to formulate a securitization, it is important to remember that it does not mean that she have the power to deal with it (Balsacq, 2016:502).

In 2019 the Oxford dictionary chose "climate emergency" the word of the year (Oxford Languages) and the European Parliament declared "climate emergency (European Parliament). This indicates that securitization of climate change is a relevant contemporary approach. But within the frames of the Copenhagen School, it is impossible to determine if Greta Thunberg have contributed to increased securitization of climate change. It is a social constructivist theory that cannot measure causal effects. It is important to note that Greta Thunberg is just one actor trying to securitize climate change. There is no doubt that before Greta Thunberg, the issue was high on the global agenda. There have been many securitization and politization attempts before her that probably have opened up the possibility for her message to " get through the noise". Greta Thunberg's securitization attempt is part of a long and large process. However, it is interesting why it was just this teenager from Sweden that were able to accumulate the massive attention across the world.

The attention received thanks to Greta Thunberg securitization of climate change is furthering the question. But there are negative aspects of securitization as well. Because if climate change becomes securitized, it will be depoliticized and people might get distanced from it. On the other hand, securitization might be the only possible solution to save the earth and human civilization. In the material, there is a possible collision between discourses. The securitizing rhetoric is prominent at the same time as Greta Thunberg sometimes makes references to democracy and politization. This is a contradiction according to the Copenhagen School. At the same time if children, teenagers or young people are the biggest audience that are convinced by Greta Thunberg's speech acts, it highlights another aspect of democracy. The children today are the ones whose life will probably be affected the most by climate change, while they have no power to impact the decisions or vote for leaders with impact on decisions regarding climate change. How democratic is that? The issue lifts the big question on what democracy really is. One of the main critiques of securitization is that it removes the issue from the open democratic debate (Hansen, 2012: 535). But of you do not have a voice in the current political system, like children do not have today, the attempt to securitize might be the only possible course of action. Hansen (2012:527) questions the Copenhagen Schools normative aim for desecuritization since it sometimes denies emancipation and this case is an

example of why it can be complicated to always advocate for desecuritization. Securitization could be a tool to turn the global action on climate change around. The argument for privileging desecuritization in the Copenhagen School is that no values are universal and it is therefore better if issues are politicized (Hansen, 2012: 535). But if no values are universal, the idea of what democracy is can also be questioned. Why should todays political system be privileged over the securitising of climate change if no values are universal? One could also argue that Greta Thunberg is contributing to more/better democracy by engaging people who do not have a great opportunity to influence the decision-making, even when it is their future it regards. By discussing what securitization is, inevitably one discusses what democracy is.

It would be interesting to investigate desecuritization of climate change and its four different ideal types. But for something to be desecuritized it first needs to be a security issue first. If climate change would become an established security issue in the future, it would be interesting to look at the opposing discourse and if desecuritizing techniques are utilized. An observation is that critique against Greta Thunberg's approach to climate change relatively often seem to depict it as a-security or even a-political which is the biggest threat to the visibility of an issue. For example, the current president of the USA is either denying climate changes or just do not care about doing something about it (BBC). A discourse that are silencing the issue of climate change might have contributed to the challenges of putting climate change on the agenda earlier.

One limitation of the Copenhagen School is that it is very western-centric assuming a democratic liberal political system. Since this issue regards a global securitization and the international system are anarchistic, securitization are not always opposing democracy, but anarchy. Greta Thunberg has a global perspective in her speeches and underlines that climate change need to be treated as a security issue across the whole world. This would imply a more cosmopolitical international system (Buzan et al., 1998:22), which would limit the position of the state. This might explain the reactions from leaders from superpowers like, Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin. Since the state traditionally have been the central referent object to security, the global world challenges this position and the Westphalian system. Considering this, the critique might also be interpreted as a possible counter securitization.

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