



# LUNDS UNIVERSITET

## “France at war”

Hollande’s securitization of terrorism after the 2015 attacks  
and the reaction of the French public

# Abstract

As terrorism after the 9/11 attacks has emerged as one of the most important threats to international security, the political discourse used by world leaders regarding the topic is becoming more and more essential to study. One way to do this is by using securitization theory, which helps us understand how something becomes a security issue, and how security threats are socially constructed through the use of language. In 2015, France experienced two of the deadliest terror attacks in history, one in January and the next in November. The attacks had important consequences for French security policy. Through a discourse analysis of former French President François Hollande's public speeches and reviews of public opinion polls, this study examines Hollande's securitization of terrorism and the reactions of the French public. The acceptive response of the French public to Hollande's changing discourse allowed him to implement different policy actions. Indeed, after the November attacks, a more extreme securitization enabled the former President to gain support for more extreme security measures. The study thereby shows how one political leader can construct the same security threat differently within a short period of time in order to implement different security policies.

*Keywords:* Terrorism, security, securitization, Copenhagen School, audience, France, discourse analysis, Hollande.

*Words:*  
11.073

# Table of contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	<i>Terrorism and France .....</i>	<i>1</i>
1.2	<i>Previous research.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<b>2</b>	<b>Theoretical framework .....</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1	<i>Securitization theory .....</i>	<i>5</i>
2.2	<i>Criticism.....</i>	<i>7</i>
2.3	<i>The audience in securitization.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<b>3</b>	<b>Methodology .....</b>	<b>9</b>
3.1	<i>Research design.....</i>	<i>9</i>
3.2	<i>Case selection.....</i>	<i>9</i>
3.3	<i>Data/Material.....</i>	<i>10</i>
3.4	<i>Applied method: discourse analysis .....</i>	<i>11</i>
3.5	<i>Conceptualization and operationalization .....</i>	<i>13</i>
<b>4</b>	<b>Analysis .....</b>	<b>16</b>
4.1	<i>Context .....</i>	<i>16</i>
4.2	<i>The January attacks .....</i>	<i>17</i>
4.2.1	<i>Perceived threat against referent object .....</i>	<i>17</i>
4.2.2	<i>Referent object .....</i>	<i>18</i>
4.2.3	<i>Securitizing move and policy actions.....</i>	<i>19</i>
4.3	<i>The November attacks .....</i>	<i>20</i>
4.3.1	<i>Perceived threat against referent object .....</i>	<i>20</i>
4.3.2	<i>Referent object .....</i>	<i>21</i>
4.3.3	<i>Securitizing move and policy actions.....</i>	<i>22</i>
4.4	<i>Audience reactions .....</i>	<i>24</i>
<b>5</b>	<b>Discussion and concluding remarks .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>31</b>

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Terrorism and France

“Terrorism in all its forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security” (UNSCR 1566, 2004). It has gradually become common practice that the UN Security Council time and time again refers to and reaffirms this statement. After the 9/11 terror attacks, terrorism has emerged as a major, if not “the single most important security issue” (Jackson 2007, p. 394) in the world. This increased focus on the topic is only natural since terror attacks of all kinds have been carried out, including on Western soil, over the past decades. As a result of these, wars have been fought, states of emergencies have been declared, and extreme security measures have been implemented by policymakers. Therefore, it is both impossible and indeed undesirable that the topic is neglected by the field of peace and conflict studies. The “War on Terror” declared by former US President George W. Bush in 2001 is global, constant, and fought everywhere in the world. So, just like the attention given to terrorism is increasing everywhere else, in national as well as global politics, in the media, in the public, and in academic research, peace and conflict studies should continue to carry out research on terrorism.

One aspect of research on the topic deals with the discourse of terrorism. Terrorism is repeatedly used differently in the rhetoric of various actors, wherefore their discourses are important to study. In fact, terrorism discourse “has emerged as one of the most important political discourses of the modern era” (Jackson 2007, p. 394). The way terrorism is framed and communicated to the public by policymakers through different discourses has of course immense consequences for the way people perceive and react to it. This is not least true in a context of a crisis, such as the aftermath of a major terror attacks. In such settings, special attention is drawn to the topic. Policymakers are obliged to consider policy responses and terrorism becomes highly politicized. Analyzing discourses, a peace and conflict study approach can help unpack what hides behind the terrorism language, and how it affects the reaction of the public.

In many ways, France is a typical case of a European country recently experiencing a drastic increase in terror attacks on their soil. Many countries engaged in military conflicts in the Middle East and Africa have become the targets of terrorists. Perpetrators often have identity-based, religious motives and seek revenge for countries' political and military interference on foreign soil. However, France is one of the European countries that has been hit particularly hard. In 2015, the country experienced, within only a few months, two series of major terror attacks. These are the deadliest terror attacks in recent history carried out on French soil, and they led to the death of more than 150 people and injured over 400. All perpetrators acted with religious motives. They paid allegiance to either ISIS or Al-Qaeda and were categorized as religious extremists. These attacks led to considerable changes in French security policies. France is the only European country in modern times that has implemented the state of emergency as a result of a terror attack. This state of emergency, declared in November 2015, was extended five times and ended only after two years. Finally, France is one of the few countries that officially adopted a so-called "War on Terror" discourse, which was first introduced by George W. Bush after the 9/11 attacks. This concept has gained much attention in recent research. Through studying these discourses, we can gain a better understanding of this French "Guerre contre le terrorisme". Using securitization theory and discourse analysis, we can examine this in-depth by looking at securitization discourses, securitization moves and audience reactions.

In light of the above, the following paper will examine the following research question:

***How was terrorism framed as a security threat and securitized by François Hollande after the two series of terror attacks in France in 2015, and what was the audience reaction to this securitization?***

## 1.2 Previous research

Just as the attention given to terrorism as a growing security threat is increasing everywhere else, the topic has been dominating in many fields of academia. Endless amounts of theoretical as well as empirical research have been conducted. However, a lot of the research on terrorism has focused on the U.S. Some of this research has examined the discourse, rhetoric and securitization of the terrorist threat. Here again, much focus has been given to the

U.S., and the “War on Terror” rhetoric (Jackson 2005; Hodges 2011; Mral 2004). However, some research also exists on the case of France.

Terrorism in France has been studied in different academic fields. One of the most influential books in recent years has been political scientist Gilles Kepel’s “Terror in France: the rise of Jihad in the West” (Kepel – Jardin 2017). Published right after the 2015 attacks, it reviews the history of terrorism in France in order to explain the recent rise in terror attacks. He explains that the attacks are paroxysms of violence that long have been building up, and points to factors and conditions that contributed to the making of the current and future situation of terrorism in France.

Studies using securitization theory also exist. They have focused a lot on securitization related to migration and the rise of the far-right and Front National party (Bourbeau 2011; Sajed 2012; Stivas 2019). Naturally, securitization of terrorism has gained more focus after the attacks in 2015. In his recent book, “French Muslims in Perspective”, Downing writes a chapter on the securitization of Muslims and Jihadism in French society following the terror attacks, relating it to the Copenhagen School’s concept of securitization (Downing 2019, chap. 4). Dück and Luke have used securitization theory to compare political reactions to 9/11 in the U.S. and the November 2015 attacks in France, proving that there has been a successful establishment of a “War on Terror” macro-securitization. Pointing to similarities in the governments’ reactions, they argue that a common, global securitization of terrorism now exists (Dücker - Luke 2019). Bogain has questioned the discourse developed by Hollande in the wake of 2015 attacks (Bogain 2017). Using a discourse analysis to explore the discursive strategies deployed by President Hollande to legitimate France’s security responses to the attacks, she reveals that the defense of human rights served as an overall justificatory framework (ibid. p. 476). With a quantitative and qualitative approach, she draws on corpus linguistics and seeks to uncover lexical patterns behind the discursive construction of Hollande’s legitimation strategies (ibid. p. 480). Interestingly, Bogain argues that there is a general lack of research in English analyzing the terrorism discourse of French presidents (ibid. p. 479). In light of the recent terror events in France, this is relevant now more than ever.

This leaves us with a gap which this paper hopes to help fill out. What is missing is a discourse analysis, using the Copenhagen School model of securitization as a practical tool in the empirical research, and with its main focus on analyzing and examining the reaction of the French public to François Hollande’s securitization of terrorism. As we will see now, the Copenhagen School model can, combined with more recent and updated literature on the

audience as an actor, provide a solid base for such an aim. With this approach, we discover that Hollande's securitization discourse changed considerably between the two attacks and we can establish a link between his securitization discourse and his policy actions in the aftermath of the attacks. Thus, this approach can contribute to the field and the theoretical framework by revealing how the same security issue can be securitized in different ways within a short timeframe in order to legitimize different security policies.

## 2 Theoretical framework

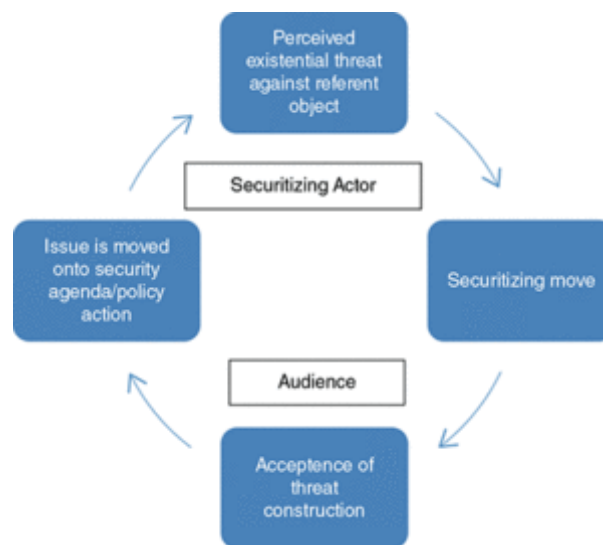
### 2.1 Securitization theory

Securitization theory has in the last decades become one of the most prominent approaches when studying security. It emerged in the late 90s with the influential book by Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde (the so-called “Copenhagen School”) “*Security: A New Framework for Analysis*” (Buzan et al. 1998). The book presented a constructivist response to the traditional approach to security, and a new idea on the very nature of security: “Security is the move that takes politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue either as a special kind of politics or as above politics. Securitization can thus be seen as a more extreme version of politicization” (ibid. p. 23). Moving away from the classical state-centric and objectivist view of the security concept, the book explores the question: when does something become a security issue? According to the authors, the answer is that something does not become a security issue simply because a real existential threat *exists*, but instead becomes it when a threat is *presented* as such. In other words, the core question to examine is not whether or not something actually *is* a security issue, but instead how something *becomes* a security issue.

More concretely, the security analysis framework focuses on non-military aspects of security and seeks to examine how security is socially constructed and embedded in asymmetric power relations. Security is constructed through the use of language, which is therefore key when studying security. It is a discourse and an act occurring in a well-defined context and with consequences for how reality is perceived (Buzan et al. 1998, pp. 24-26). The process through which an issue is constructed as a security issue is called securitization. This builds upon Austin’s concept of what in language theory is called a “speech act”, which discusses the performativity of words and basically states that “by saying the words, something is done” (ibid. pp. 26, 32; Austin 1975). Ultimately, security does not rest with objects or subjects, but among subjects (Buzan et al. 1998, p. 31). The securitization process is therefore best seen as an interaction between two actors that together negotiate the security



act: the securitizing actor and the audience (ibid. pp. 25-26; Sjöstedt 2017, p. 3). The securitizing actor is the one that securitizes an issue by performing a securitizing move and can in theory be anyone. However, it is usually believed that the securitizing actor needs to be someone that represents a broader collective and have to have some degree of authority over an audience (such as a political leader, an international organization etc.). The audience is the subject towards whom the securitizing move is directed. It needs to accept the move before the issue can be defined as securitized. The securitization process is best described through the identification of various steps:



*Figure 1: Conceptualizing the securitization process (Sjöstedt 2017).*

As shown in Figure 1, four of these steps can be identified:

- 1) The securitizing actor identifies something as existentially threatened, and therefore requiring extraordinary emergency measures and actions outside normal politics (Buzan et al. 1998, pp. 35-36). This “something” is called the referent object and can take any forms, as long as it is an object of particular value worth defending (Hayes 2012, p. 66).
- 2) In order to move an issue away from politics and into the area of security, the securitizing actor performs a “securitizing move”. This move is used to try and legitimize the use of extraordinary means against the socially constructed referent object (Buzan et al. 1998, pp. 35-36).

- 3) The audience accepts, both that the referent object is a thing of value, and that it is existentially threatened in the way claimed by the securitizing actor (Hayes 2012, p. 66).
- 4) The issue is moved into the sphere of security, and the extraordinary measures are implemented through policy actions, often characterized by power centralization. We then have a case of successful securitization. In this way, a successful securitization is not decided by the securitizing actor but by the audience (Buzan et al. 1998, p. 31).

This process is continuous, and the steps therefore do not necessarily always happen in the same order.

## 2.2 Criticism

Securitization theory has evolved a lot since it first was launched back in 1998. New concepts and understandings have been added, and it has been used frequently to do different types of empirical research. It is therefore important to take into account more recent research and updated literature when using it. New concepts such as de-securitization or re-securitization have been developed, and debates in critical security studies have led to the emergence of the “Welsh School” and the “Paris School” (Sjöstedt 2019 pp. 9-10). The Copenhagen School framework has been criticized in many ways and it is difficult to provide a complete overview. Stritzel has been one of the biggest critics, pointing to several flaws in the securitization theory: the concept is not sufficiently elaborated and justified, the authors’ reflections suffer from severe tensions and contradictions (which Wæver himself also has acknowledged, see Wæver 2003), and the operationalization is difficult because the Copenhagen School has not provided sufficient applications to empirical analysis themselves (Stritzel 2007, p. 359; Stritzel 2014, chap. 1). Balzacq agrees that many aspects of the securitization process suffer from important under-theorizations (Balzacq 2011). Others argue that the Copenhagen School focuses too much on the role of the speech act and discourse (outlined by most contributors to the book *Securitization Revisited: Contemporary Applications and Insights* edited by Michael Butler, 2019). Also, some researchers point to the fact that the theoretical framework is too Eurocentric and unsuited for empirical studies outside the West (McDonald 2008; Wilkinson 2007). Others explain that the approach is too state-centered and leaves the act of securing threatened people exclusively to the state (Hough

2008, pp. 9, 18). Testifying the importance and continuous relevance of securitization theory, a heated debate has again emerged very recently. Two researchers Howell and Richter-Montpetit have accused the theory of being structured by civilizationism, methodological whiteness, and antiblack racism (Howell - Richter-Montpetit 2020).

## 2.3 The audience in securitization

Most relevant for this thesis, however, is the debate on the audience as an actor. As we have seen, the audience plays a crucial role in the securitization process. According to Buzan et al. an issue is securitized only if and when the audience accepts it as such and “if no signs of such acceptance exist, we can talk only of a securitizing move, not of an object actually being securitized” (Buzan et al. 1998, p. 25). Many have suggested to pay more attention to the role of the audience in the securitization process and argued that effective empirical securitization research needs to be audience-centered (Léonard - Kaunert 2011, p. 61; Balzacq 2005). However, several unclarities can help explain why this can be challenging. Although the audience is so central in the securitization process, it is often considered as one of the problematic parts of the theory that lacks clarity (Léonard - Kaunert 2011, p. 58). As argued by McDonald, this can be due to the fact that the audience as an actor is difficult to conceptualize (MacDonald 2008). Also, it is very difficult to measure the audience’s reaction and acceptance of the securitization move (ibid.). Furthermore, a securitizing move can be directed towards one or multiple audiences such as governments, parliaments, organizations or the general public, depending on the securitizing actor’s intentions and expected outcomes (Sjöstedt 2017, p. 5). This can make it difficult to choose a unit for analysis. As a result of this, the audience has been and still remains one of the most under-researched aspects of securitization theory, and it needs further investigation (Roe 2008, p. 615; Léonard - Kaunert 2011; Côté 2016). This only adds to the relevance of this study. As will be elaborated in the following section, this paper examines the broader French public as the audience.

# 3 Methodology

## 3.1 Research design

This study is qualitative and takes the form of a small-N comparative case-study of two cases of terror attacks in France in 2015. As the two chosen cases present both similarities and differences, they are an ideal choice for a comparative study. The level of analysis is the national level in France, which gives the analysis a high level of internal validity and lower level of external validity (Halperin - Heath 2012, pp. 208-209). Thereby, the findings tell a lot about the securitization of terrorism in the particular historical and national context of France in 2015. The comparison will allow me to examine differences and similarities in the securitization of terrorism and in the audience reaction to it in two similar contexts. The analysis is two-fold, firstly analyzing the securitization of Hollande, and secondly examining and discussing the reaction of the French public.

## 3.2 Case selection

As mentioned earlier, France has in recent years been hit particularly hard by terror attacks. The year of 2015 was especially harsh for France that was the target of several major attacks: between January the 7<sup>th</sup> and the 9<sup>th</sup>, the shooting at Charlie Hebdo and the attack at the Hypercacher Supermarket. A few months later, on the 13<sup>th</sup> of November, the deadliest terrorist attack in France since WW2 targeted the concert venue Bataclan, the Stade de France and several Parisian cafés and restaurants. All of these terror attacks were classified as religious extremist terrorism. They are of central importance, because they led to the beginning of a French “Guerre contre le terrorisme” (François Hollande 2015b) and thereby considerable changes in French security policies. Both the nature and scale of the two attacks, the securitization discourse and the audience reaction were in some ways similar, in other ways different. After the first attack, although much of the opposition called for a state of

emergency, few concrete new policy actions were initiated. Following the second one on the other hand, many new political actions were taken, and the state of emergency was declared. In light of the above, this thesis will be limited in time and space to the case of France and will focus exclusively on the year of 2015. I have chosen to focus on the discourse of former French President Hollande in the immediate aftermath of both attacks, analyzing speeches he held up until one month after them. As for the examination of the audience reaction, I also primarily focus on examining the reaction of the French public in the immediate aftermath of the attacks. Because we are interested in the crisis situation, the reaction of Hollande, his policy measures and the reaction of the French public, this is a sufficient limitation.

The limitation in time and space makes the findings mostly valid to the case of France in 2015, but they remain interesting for further contemporary studies of terrorism, and I believe the relevance of the findings go beyond the case of France. Terrorism is a dominating topic and a big security threat in many countries. The political aftermaths of various terror attacks in Europe in recent year present similarities: often, the political discourse is sharpened, terrorism is strongly securitized, and extraordinary measures are demanded, taken and often widely accepted among the public. The findings of this study can therefore be used as a point of departure for many other cases of securitization of terrorism and reactions to terror attacks in Western countries.

### 3.3 Data/Material

Firstly, the background information and facts on the attacks that I will use are from the Encyclopædia Britannica. Then, like for any kind of textual analysis, I will use texts as my primary data source for the discourse analysis. I use a total of nine public speeches held by François Hollande after the attacks. Most of them were collected from the database of the French government on [www.elysee.fr](http://www.elysee.fr) or from their official video channel on [www.dailymotion.com/elysee](http://www.dailymotion.com/elysee). One of the speeches was held before the French parliament and is therefore collected from the Parliament's website <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr>. Finally, one speech in English is from an official video found on the website of the media The Guardian (<https://www.theguardian.com>). All of these texts are therefore publicly available. The original versions of the texts were used for the analysis, but the citations used in the thesis have been translated by the author. I have picked the speeches that are directed towards my chosen audience, the French general public. Even though one was held before the

Parliament and one before the Armed Forces, all of them were communicated through the media, transmitted either in tv or in the news to the larger public, and are therefore relevant when examining the chosen audience. This sample of speeches is largely sufficient for the purpose of this study, not least keeping in mind the length restriction. These texts are seen as the “major” and most prominent speeches held by Hollande after the attacks. In addition to this, many of the same patterns can be observed in the speeches, which is only natural since it is difficult for a president to suddenly change opinions or discourse in cases like these. Therefore, I do not think that selection bias is a problem in my case, and I have not found it necessary to choose more than a handful of speeches.

Another part of the study uses publicly available polls and surveys that pose questions to the French population’s relation to terrorism, their response to both terror attacks in 2015 and their opinion on François Hollande. Almost all of the surveys were carried out by the “Institut Français d’Opinion Publique” (IFOP). This is a respected institute and was one of the first to do opinion polls in France. It does surveys in about 50 countries around the world, and regularly publishes reports on “the French and the terrorist threat”. The reliability of the poll institute is also reflected in its many citations in various of the biggest French media. The methodology of the surveys is the same in all of them. The institute asked questions to a representative sample of 1000 to 2000 French citizens over the age of 18, and the interviews were carried out through online questionnaires. Finally, two additional polls were collected from the French newspaper “LeParisien” and the English research firm “Harris Interactive”.

The material used for this thesis is therefore both primary data (the speeches) and secondary data (the polls). The primary data gives a low potential for bias, as it has not been treated by others. The secondary data and especially the opinion polls are handled more carefully, since it has been collected and communicated by others and therefore represent less credible sources.

### 3.4 Applied method: discourse analysis

As Buzan et al. explain in their book, “the way to study securitization is to study discourse” (Buzan et al. 1998, p. 25). Hayes argues likewise that “since securitization is a speech act, empirics should focus on the discourse” (Hayes 2012, p. 72). To use the method of discourse analysis for this research is therefore the obvious thing to do. My discourse analysis is based on the assumptions of Fairclough. In his view, discourse is not a neutral way to describe the

world, but rather a way of “signifying the world, constituting and constructing the world in meaning” (Fairclough 1992, p. 64). Political discourses therefore are not neutral reflections of reality, but construct the reality through language (Jackson 2005, p. 147). This language becomes an action through which actors can change the world and form realities and how these are perceived (Jørgensen - Phillips 2002, p. 61). Furthermore, discourse analysis can be used in order to reveal how specific political and institutional practices are normalized (Jackson 2005, p. 147).

Fairclough criticizes linguistic discourse analysis approaches for concentrating exclusively on textual analysis and for working with a simplistic and superficial understanding of the relationship between text and society. Instead, with his approach, text analysis can be used to shed light on the links between texts and societal processes and structures (Jørgensen - Phillips 2002, p. 64). Such a discourse analysis allows you to draw conclusions on what political, ideological and social consequences, a certain discursive practice has (ibid. p. 92). That is what is needed in order to be able to apply the securitization theory to the chosen case and to examine the audience reaction to the securitization move. This discourse analysis also allows me to take into account the social interaction between the securitizing actor and the audience, which, as previously mentioned, is both central to the theory and to the main purpose of this research. Fairclough and Fairclough also explain that the purpose of a speech can be to convince “an audience that a certain course of action is right (Fairclough – Fairclough 2012, p. 18). This fits with the aim of a securitization theory and the chosen focus on an audience reaction. In continuation of this, at the end of an analysis, and as will be done in this paper, “audience research can be carried out in order to find out how readers interpret” texts (Jørgensen – Philips 2002, p. 88). Finally, as Jørgensen and Phillips also underline, unfortunately, very few discourse analysts do this (ibid. p. 87). This once again underlines the importance of this study. The discourse analysis method is well suited to be applied together with the securitization theory, and the two constitute the ideal combination to answer the research question.

However, as Jørgensen and Phillips argue, the main problem of Fairclough’s approach in empirical research is how to “demonstrate empirically that something is in a dialectical relationship with something else” (Jørgensen - Philips 2002, p. 93). This criticism is relevant for my case: how is it possible to tell, whether the reaction of the French public is a direct reaction exclusively to Hollande’s discourse, and not to for example the media’s coverage, the terror attacks themselves or the discourse of other French politicians? It is hard to isolate the different factors that played a role in the reaction of the French public. Surely, this reaction

was a combination of many things. However, as earlier argued, it is a necessary choice to break the empirical analysis down into several actors and explanatory factors, both for the feasibility of this research, and in order to keep the findings relevant and not overgeneralizing.

### 3.5 Conceptualization and operationalization

Conceptualizing and defining terrorism is a complicated matter and there is to this day no universal definition, although the UN has been working on it for a long time (Neumann 2009, p. 6). As the aim of this study is not to examine in-depth the different definitions of terrorism, nor to normatively assess which one is the best, terrorism will here be conceptualized as “the deliberate creation of fear, usually through the use (or threat of use) of symbolic acts of violence, to influence the political behavior of a target group” (ibid. p. 8). For this study, we are more interested in the terms used by Hollande to describe terrorism, and how the audience perceives it. Therefore, it is more important to be aware that in his discourse, the phenomenon of terrorism takes many forms and is associated with different words such as: “Islamism”, “Islamic terrorism”, “Islamic/Islamist extremism”, “Radicalism”, “Fundamentalism”, “Jihadism” or “Salafism”. These have to be seen as political concepts, having different connotations and used with specific aims. As Hollande uses these different names and phrases to describe the phenomenon of terrorism, they have to be included in the conceptualization of terrorism. Generally, what can be said, is that the perpetrators of the attacks all paid allegiance to groups that are designated as terrorist groups by the United Nations (UNODC, 2018). Hence, there is no doubt that the cases analyzed in this paper are cases of terrorism.

Two further points are important to outline before proceeding with the conceptualization. First, the purpose of this paper is not to assess normatively François Hollande’s securitization of terrorism after the terror attacks (for an interesting investigation on normative analysis of securitization, see Rita Floyd’s theory of a “Just Securitization” in Floyd 2011 & 2016). The basic assumption here is that securitization processes are not necessarily negative, as not all emergency measures are expressions of power or repression, but rather can be necessary for allocating institutional actions and resources. Secondly, despite all of the previous mentioned criticism, I agree with Taureck and her claim that “the analytical goal of securitization theory (...) is namely to offer a tool for practical security analysis” (Taureck 2006, pp. 53-54). Thus, this is how I will use securitization theory and the Copenhagen School in the analysis.



Using the conceptualization of the securitization process shown previously, here is how I will apply it to my case. The securitizing actor I have chosen is the former French President François Hollande. At the national level in France, some actors hold more power than others to designate security threats, securitize issues and shape security policies. The President in France is the commander-in-chief and in times of crisis, he is granted special powers. François Hollande was therefore the main actor in shaping France's response to terrorism after the attacks (Bogain 2017, p. 479). This makes him a relevant securitizing actor to look at.

In line with other authors, I acknowledge that the audience is best seen as several different entities and needs to be conceptualized as comprising different audiences (Salter 2008; Vuori 2008, p. 72; Balzacq 2005). Thus, one is able to narrow down the concept to something measurable in the analysis, and this can help avoiding the danger of drawing overgeneralizing and precipitated conclusions. Additionally, as argued by Sjöstedt, I agree that it is "precisely the malleability of what constitutes the securitizing agent and the audience (...) that makes the theory suitable for analyzing a broad range of issues, contexts, and actors" (Sjöstedt 2019, pp.1-2). As Roe has suggested (Roe 2008), I have therefore found it legitimate to break down the audience into several entities and focus exclusively on the French general public as the audience. This conceptualization could easily both be broadened (and include e.g. the French parliament), or on the contrary be narrowed further down (people with a particular political standing, specific age groups etc.). In sum, for the sake of both the length, relevance, available data and the feasibility of this research, the French public seems like a good choice.

To examine what the securitizing actor (Hollande) through his discourse presents as the perceived threat towards the audience (the French public), I look in the speeches for parts where he describes terrorism, the nature of the attacks and the perpetrators. Then, I examine what he describes as the referent object, as existentially threatened by terrorism by looking for parts in the speeches where he describes for the audience what terrorism attacks, and what the terrorists' aims are. I then analyze the discourse of the securitizing move in the speeches, by looking for Hollande's answers to the question of how the terror threat should be handled. In continuation of this, I review the policy actions implemented by Hollande. Finally, and this is the main goal of the analysis, I examine the reaction of the French public to the securitization of President Hollande and compare the population's opinions with Hollande's discourse using the polls and surveys. The structure of the answers to these questions is divided into first the January attacks and then the November attacks. However, I have chosen to have the analysis

on the reaction of the public in one section at the end. This eases the comparison of the two cases and emphasizes my arguments. To clarify this conceptualization, operationalization and use of data, and using Sjöstedt’s model for the securitization process, the following figure can be drawn:

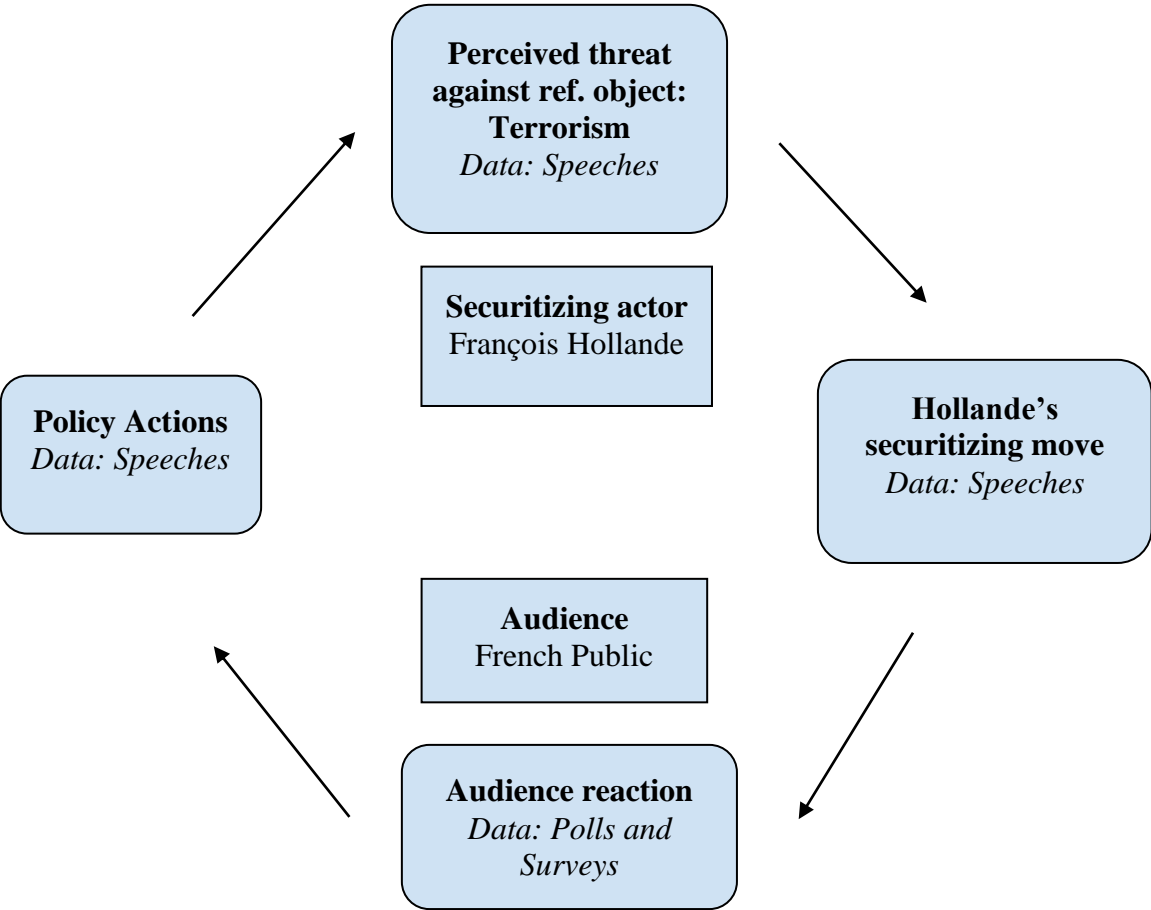


Figure 2: Conceptualization, operationalization and use of data.

In sum, the four questions I will try to answer in this thesis are: what is the threat, according to Hollande? What is threatened, according to Hollande? How should the threat be dealt with, according to Hollande? What does the audience think of Hollande’s answers to these three questions? The answers to these questions form the base for a final discussion on differences and similarities in the two chosen cases, and on securitization theory in a broader perspective.

# 4 Analysis

## 4.1 Context

The January attacks were a series of terrorist attacks that happened between January the 7<sup>th</sup> and the 9<sup>th</sup> 2015. On January the 7<sup>th</sup> the two brothers Chérif and Saïd Kouachi attacked the offices of the satirical newspaper “Charlie Hebdo” in Paris, killing 12 people and injuring 11. The newspaper was known among others for their caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad, and the perpetrators payed allegiance to Al-Qaeda. A few hours later, 32-year old Amedy Coulibaly shot a jogging man just outside Paris in Fontenay-aux-Roses. The day after, he shot a police officer in the suburb of Montrouge. On January the 9<sup>th</sup>, the Kouachi brothers took two hostages in an office in Dammartin-en-Goële. At the same time, Amedy Coulibaly attacked the Kosher supermarket Hypercacher in Paris, killing four people and taking several hostages. Continuously in contact with the Kouachi brothers, he told police officers that he would kill the hostages if the brothers were harmed. In a coordinated attack, the French Armed Forces stormed both the building in Dammartin-en-Goële and the Hypercacher supermarket and killed both the brothers and Coulibaly (Britannica 2020a). These terrorist attacks were the deadliest France had experienced since the 60s and marked profoundly the whole country. The motives behind them were categorized as Islamic extremism and Al-Qaeda claimed responsibility for all of the attacks, arguing that they were coordinated and had been planned for a long time.

On November the 13<sup>th</sup> 2015, a series of six coordinated terrorist attacks led to the death of 137 persons and injured 413. During a football match where President Hollande was attending, three suicide bombers blew themselves up outside the Stade de France in Saint-Denis. At the same time, several mass shootings and another suicide bombing occurred in cafés and restaurants at different locations in Paris. That evening, the shooting and hostage-taking at the Bataclan theatre during a metal concert made 90 casualties. The perpetrators had French or Belgian citizenship, and several of them had recently returned from Syria. The day after, ISIS claimed responsibility for the attacks and Hollande stated that the group had

received help from inside France in order to organize the attacks (Britannica 2020b). ISIS explained that the attacks were a response to Hollande's foreign policy, a retaliation for French airstrikes in Syria and Iraq, and an ideological objection to Paris as a capital of abomination and perversion. This is to this day the deadliest terrorist attack in France after WW2 and, in the immediate aftermath, President Hollande declared the state of emergency on the entire territory.

As we will see now, the discourse of President Hollande after the attacks was characterized by a strong securitization of the issue. When analyzing the speeches, it appears clearly that they contain the components of a securitization: a description of the threat and the referent object, of the emergency and exceptional situation and a securitizing move targeting an audience and legitimizing policy actions.

## 4.2 The January attacks

### 4.2.1 Perceived threat against referent object

Already on January the 7<sup>th</sup>, the President declares in a tv-transmitted speech that the terrorism threat is very real (Hollande 2015a). He uses different words to describe the threat: "terrorism and fundamentalism" and explains that France has been "threatened for years by obscurantism" and this "extreme violence" (ibid.). As for the perpetrators, he describes them as "assassins" belonging to "terrorist organizations that France knows well", but also uses many other terms such as "jihadists, fundamentalists, terrorists" or "fanatics" and extremists" (ibid; Hollande 2015c; Hollande 2015d). He underlines that the threat comes both from inside and outside the country. It is thus both internal and external (Hollande 2015c). This discourse, characterized by a large number of names and terms used to describe the threat and the terrorists, results in a diffuse image of what the security threat exactly is, and it does not provide a concrete answer to who the enemy actually is. In this way, there is no subject against which you can retaliate, and this description therefore suits a more defensive policy response to the threat, as we will get back to later on when looking at the policy actions and the securitizing move.

The associations he uses also focus on presenting the enemy as cowards, barbarians and mad which is expressed when he describes the attacks as “cowardly” and as “murders” or uses terms such as “barbarity” (Hollande 2015a) and “mad-men” (Hollande 2015b). By using these associations, the threat is presented as being abnormal and exceptional, and the perpetrators as not belonging to the “ordinary society”. This rhetoric is often also used to describe “lone-wolf terrorists” that are “exceptions” to the norm. Thus, Hollande tries to convince the public that, even though the terrorism threat is real, the perpetrators are exceptions to the norm, and this can in a way downplay the threat a bit. Furthermore, this type of rhetoric is a way of demonizing the terrorists.

Finally, he tries to dissociate the threat with the Muslim Religion, by saying that the threat has “nothing to do with the Muslim religion” and instead points to other ideologies like “racism” and “anti-Semitism” (Hollande 2015b). This strengthens the diffuseness of the perceived threat but is also a way of avoiding acts of revenge in the days after the attacks.

#### 4.2.2 Referent object

Although Hollande points a few times to the territory and a few exposed places such as “schools, places of worship, synagogues, mosques, churches and temples” (Hollande 2015c) as referent objects, his focus here is clearly on the Republic as a whole and on the different values that it represents:

It is the Republic as a whole that has been attacked. The Republic equals freedom of expression; the Republic equals culture, creation, it equals pluralism and democracy. That is what the assassins were targeting. It equals the ideal of justice and peace that France promotes everywhere on the international stage, and the message of peace and tolerance that we defend (...) in the fight against terrorism and fundamentalism (Hollande 2015a).

A few days later, additional similar values are added such as “freedom as whole”, “equality between men and women” and “dignity” (Hollande 2015c). Designating the referent object as being values of Human Rights that are accepted universally is a way of appealing to the rest of the world. Also, he points out that terrorism threatens the French secularism or “laïcité”, which, it should be underlined, is a very important part of the French Republican identity, and explains that it is “affected, wrinkled, and challenged by terrorists” (Hollande 2015c). In

short, the referent object is described as being abstract values more than concrete physical places or territories.

#### 4.2.3 Securitizing move and policy actions

The securitizing move of the President appears clearly in all of his speeches. First of all, the exceptionality, gravity and urgency of the situation is emphasized clearly, and he calls the situation an “exceptional” and “particular” moment that calls for “immediate” reaction and represents a “test” for the country (Hollande 2015c). He uses this to legitimate his reaction, which he also describes as “exceptional” (ibid.). The internal operation undertaken in response to the attacks has no equal, and the emergency plan VIGIPIRATE, deploying extra police forces, has been brought at a level that has “never been seen before” (ibid.). Also, the rapidity of the reaction is “exceptional and unprecedented” and has never been seen in France’s recent history (ibid.). These quotes clearly point towards a discourse that fits the securitization theory’s idea that, in the securitizing move, the securitizing actor will, after describing the threat, require extraordinary, emergency measures and actions outside normal politics in order to respond to the threat.

When describing more concretely what the response to this exceptional moment should be, Hollande stresses the role of each person and calls for unity and solidarity of all his fellow citizens, which he describes as “the best weapon” (Hollande 2015a; Hollande 2015b). Standing united, remaining true to the French libertarian values in order to fight division and separation will allow France to vanquish her enemies and fight terrorism (ibid.). This way of framing the response is well suited for the described referent object. As earlier explained, it is the French values that are threatened by terrorism. Now, Hollande explains that these values at the same time are the best response to the threat. These are values that are shared by most French, and it is therefore also a way of appealing to the majority of the people and uniting the whole country. As for the role of the state, he emphasizes that it should act firmly and by using force but “in respect with the existing legislation” (Hollande 2015d). Hollande also argues that the military programming law should not be changed just because of this event. He describes that these threats were well known already before the attack (ibid.). He also calls several times for the need to be “vigilant”, which is first and foremost the responsibility of the state but also of each citizen (Hollande 2015b). The policy actions taken after the attacks were in general very few and mostly defensive and protective in their nature. The VIGIPIRATE

plan (also drawn from the word vigilance) is, according to Hollande, the state's best weapon, and it allows for the deployment of police forces everywhere where there is a hint of a threat (Hollande 2015a). The implementation of this plan resulted in the deployment of 10,500 police officers across France in the most vulnerable areas. Thus, the security response can be characterized as being mostly defensive. Unity, vigilance and the VIGIPIRATE plan extending the number of police forces are all protective measures in a response to a terror attack. As we will see now, this defensive strategy changed radically after the November attacks.

## 4.3 The November attacks

### 4.3.1 Perceived threat against referent object

As with the previous case, the terrorist threat is referred to with many different terms in Hollande's speeches after the November attacks. Some of the same terms such as "jihadists", "fanatics", "barbarians", "assassins", "cowards" or "obscurantism" (Hollande 2015f; Hollande 2015g; Hollande 2015i) are used to describe the threat. Again, the threat is in a few cases described with abstract words, such as in the formulation: "we know the enemy: it is hatred" (Hollande 2015i). This is, as explained in the previous case a way of demonizing the enemy. However, the discourse is fundamentally different in many ways. The most obvious difference is the discourse of war. The attacks are "an act of war", and France is now "at war with terrorism" (Hollande 2015f; Hollande 2015g). This time, the threat is also personified: the enemy is a terrorist, jihadist army "Daesh" that owns an army, financial and oil resources and occupies a territory (Hollande 2015h). This is a crucial difference, because having a concrete enemy against whom you can retaliate allows for a much more aggressive and offensive response. In the first case, although Al-Qaeda claimed responsibility for the attacks, Hollande did not link them to the organization directly in his discourse. He did not point specifically to Al-Qaeda as being the enemy.

Like with the January attacks, the threat is described as being both external and internal, and the acts as being prepared, organized and planned from the outside, while having internal implications with "young radicalized Islamists" in France and Europe (Hollande 2015f; h).

The enemy is not only an enemy of France, but of Europe and the whole world (Hollande 2015g). Furthermore, although Hollande this time uses words like “Islamists” and links the enemy more directly to Islam, he still insists like with the previous case on dissociating the threat with the Muslim world: “we are not engaged in a war of civilizations, because these assassins do not represent one”, but they represent a “jihadist ideology” and a “misguided Islam that denies the message of their sacred book” with a “crazy cause” (Hollande 2015g; i). The comment on civilization is a strong rhetorical move and is especially interesting, because it is a way of dehumanizing the terrorists. We also see this in several other speeches, where Hollande for example describes the threat as being “fanaticism that wants to submit humans to an inhuman order” (Hollande 2015i). Finally, it is worth noting that the threat is presented as one that will endure over time (Hollande 2015g). This stands in contrast with the previous case, where the madness of the perpetrators was emphasized, portraying them as being exceptions to the norm.

This time, the way of framing the threat is much more extreme, aggressive and offensive, and therefore it is legitimate to respond more aggressively. Now there is a concrete enemy against whom offensive retaliation actions are possible. The threat necessitates a strong and firm response that will give France the necessary means to fight terrorism over time. As we will see further down, this is exactly what Hollande undertook in his securitizing move and policy actions.

#### 4.3.2 Referent object

As with the previous case, the focus when describing the referent object is clearly on values and ideals rather than on concrete places or territories. The aggression is against “our country, against its values, against its youth, against its way of life” and the terrorists fight France because “France is a country of freedom, because we are the homeland of Human Rights” and they only want to “damage the French soul” (Hollande 2015f). The targets of the attacks were this time different, and where Hollande in the previous case emphasized values of freedom and more specifically the freedom of speech, it is now much more focused on diversity. Thus, explaining that the target of the terrorists was the “whole of France”, he describes this as being the “France which loves life, culture, sport, celebration. France regardless of color, origin, background, religion (Hollande 2015g). According to him, “the France the assassins wanted to kill was youth in all its diversity” (ibid.). This is again a way of bringing together



the French people. Finally, as with the previous case, he underlines several times that it is the whole world that is threatened, and not simply some countries over others (Hollande 2015g; h), which is a way of appealing to the rest of the world. In sum, the discourse on the referent object is very similar than with the previous case. The focus is on values, although they change slightly from emphasizing freedom in the first case and diversity in the second.

### 4.3.3 Securitizing move and policy actions

Already on the evening of the attacks, Hollande explains in a speech on national tv that “terrorist attacks of unprecedented scale are underway in the Paris area” (Hollande 2015e). Thus, the securitizing move has already begun. This rhetoric continues in the days after the attacks, and he states many times that the current circumstances are exceptional (Hollande 2015g; h). Also, he explains that with these acts of war, the enemy has taken a “new” step (Hollande 2015g). The situation is therefore graver than in January. Stressing the urgency of acting upon these exceptional circumstances, Hollande declares that France has to go even “beyond emergency” (Hollande 2015g). An issue can hardly be more securitized.

As he explains, this enemy is “not out of reach” (Hollande 2015g). Examining further the discourse regarding what should be done about the threat, it is likewise more extreme. There is this time no doubt that it is the responsibility of the state to act as the provider of security, and its main weapon is the “exceptional procedure” of the implementation of the state of emergency. Compared with the previous case, there is a much bigger emphasis on the role of the state in the response to the threat.

“In the face of war, the country must make the appropriate decisions. All measures to protect our fellow citizens and our territory are taken with the implementation of the state of emergency. The country will act (...) with all the means which are appropriate and, on all grounds, nationally and internationally. Against terror (...) the authorities of the state have to be firm, and we will be. (...) faced with terror there is a Nation that knows how to defend itself, knows how to mobilize its forces, and which once again will defeat the terrorists” (Hollande 2015f).

The policy actions of Hollande as a result of the attacks were many and much more extreme than with the January attacks. Besides the state of emergency, they included: a declaration of war against ISIS and military intervention through air strike in Syria; a strong reinforcement of armed and security forces deployed throughout the French territory; extra money and

staffing for all areas linked to security; the closure of the French borders; increased prison sentences for acts of terrorism; expelling foreign nationals suspected of terrorism; ordering all public authorities to detect suspicious behavior through the radicalization agenda; ordering schools to report suspected radicalization to the police; a new law to increase surveillance of the internet and international communications; a change in the education system to help instill and reinforce Republican values and punish suspicious behavior and an order to intercept French citizens on their way back from Syria (Bogain 2017, p. 478). Also, Hollande made an attempt to make changes in the French Constitution, proposing to strip anyone condemned for terrorism of his or her French nationality and codifying the state of emergency by giving it constitutional force. In this way, he meant the Constitution would be more fit to combat terrorism. It is highly unusual to propose changes in the Constitution in France, and the Parliament also rejected the proposition.

Although the state is described as being the principal actor in providing security, Hollande also underlines again every citizen's response and resolution, humanity, and brotherhood as a weapon against terrorism (Hollande 2015i). He emphasizes the responsibility of each one and calls on everyone to demonstrate the virtues of perseverance, unity, lucidity and dignity and argues that social cohesion is one of the best responses to the threat (Hollande 2015f; Hollande 2015g). However, even though he also appeals to every citizen, it remains clear that the state that now plays the biggest role as security provider and agent for change. This stands in contrast to the January attacks, where the role of the citizens was more emphasized, and the state only implemented very few new security measures.

When describing how France should respond, Hollande again uses the discourse of war, which fits his new perception and description of the terror threat. He explains that France will defeat the enemy together, with the forces of the Republic and with the weapons of democracy (Hollande 2015i). He also states that "terrorism will not destroy the Republic because it is the Republic that will destroy it" (Hollande 2015g). Words such as "defeat", "forces", "weapons" and "destroy" clearly belong the semantic field of war. Again, the response is therefore framed as necessitating more extreme measures than with the previous case. Finally, because terrorism is threatening the whole world, he also explains that it is the responsibility of the international community to fight it and calls for "the unity of all" (Hollande 2015g).

To sum up the points made in the above analysis of Hollande's securitization of terrorism after the January and November attacks, a few key words for each step of the securitization

process can be identified. The table below thus summarizes main similarities and differences in Hollande’s securitization discourse:

<b>Theoretical concepts</b>	<b>January attacks</b>	<b>November attacks</b>
<b>Threat</b>	Terrorism Defensive Diffuse	Terrorism Offensive Concrete (ISIS) War
<b>Referent object</b>	Values Freedom National/international	Values Diversity National/international
<b>Securitizing move</b>	Exceptionality and urgency Defensive Unity Mostly the citizens	Exceptionality and urgency Offensive Unity Mostly the state Use of force
<b>Policy response</b>	VIGIPRATE plan Within framework of the law Increase of police forces (protective)	State of emergency Limitation of rights for security Extra money for all areas linked to security Strikes in Syria Attempt to revise the Constitution

*Table 1: Differences and similarities in Hollande’s securitization after the two attacks.*

### 4.4 Audience reactions

We will now move on to the next step of the analysis, where the audience reaction of both attacks will be compared in one shared section. President Hollande was the main interlocutor in the days after the attacks and the above analyzed speeches were very influential for the perception of the French public. As we will see now, the reactions of the French public both coincided and differed from the messages Hollande sent in his speeches, and there are definitely several links between Hollande’s securitization discourse and the reactions of the audience.

The first relevant part to look at, is whether or not the audience accepted terrorism as a security threat. On the 1st of January 2015, 80% of the French population thought that the

terror threat in France was high. In the days after the January attacks, it was 93%, and in the immediate aftermath of the November attacks, it was 98% (IFOP 2018). In between the attacks, the percentage fell down to 85% but after November it remained, and still remains today stable at around 95% (ibid.). This tells us that French public have largely accepted terrorism as a real security threat. In fact, in a survey preceding the presidential elections in 2017, the fight against terrorism was the most important topic for a majority of voters when choosing their candidate (IFOP 2016a). However, even if terrorism was largely acknowledged as a threat, it was not necessarily perceived in the same way Hollande wanted it to be. As explained earlier, Hollande makes a great effort in his speeches to try and dissociate the terror threat with Islam. On January the 8<sup>th</sup>, 29% of the population saw “Islam” as a security threat, whereas 66% meant that only “radical Islamists” posed a security threat in France. One month later, after various speeches from Hollande, the opinion changed to 32% vs. 62% (IFOP 2016b). Thus, the opinion changed oppositely to what Hollande argued for in his speeches, which shows that the public did not necessarily share the exact same perception of the threat that Hollande presented in his discourse.

Hollande’s general popularity in the polls rose from 18% to 40% after the January attacks, and then to 50% after the November attacks. However, as the so-called “rally ‘round the flag effect” explains, a political leader’s popularity most often does rise in times of crisis. This is therefore important to keep in mind. When zooming in on the topic of terrorism, you find that the population’s trust in Hollande and his government in fighting terrorism and procuring security to the citizens remained practically the same before and after both attacks (around 50%) (IFOP 2015b). Thus, Hollande became more popular but his efforts to try and persuade the French that he and the state apparatus were the provider of security for the citizens did not have a significant impact.

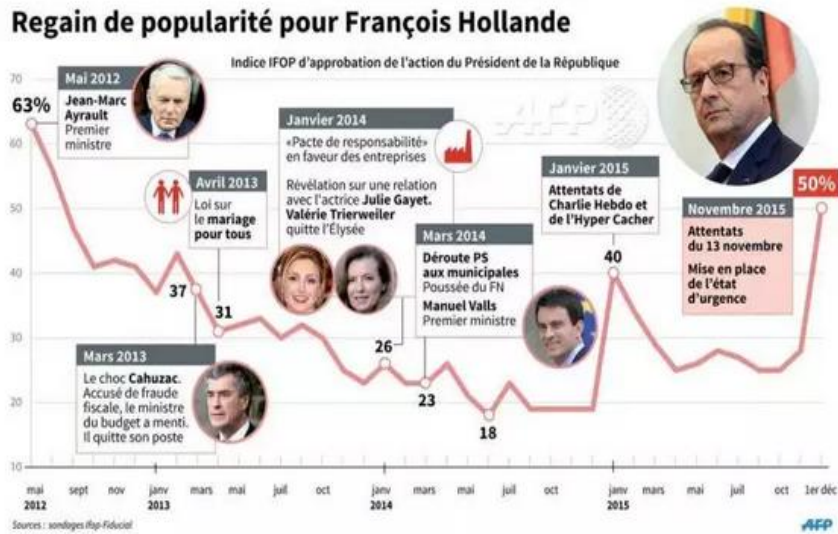


Figure 3: Popularity of Hollande from his election until December 1st, 2015 (LeMonde 2015)

At the same time, the policy actions and measures taken after both attacks were approved by at least 80% of the population (IFOP 2015c). This counts for almost all of them including the state of emergency. After the November attacks, 84% of the population stated they would accept more control and limitation of their liberty if this could help the state in the fight against terrorism (IFOP 2015b). In June 2016, although only half of the public found the state of emergency effective in fighting terrorism, 86% wanted it to stay in place or be tightened further with more restrictions (IFOP 2016a). So, even if only half the population trusted Hollande and the government in fighting terrorism, the French public largely agreed with his policy actions undertaken in the aftermath of both attacks.

Another interesting aspect to look at is related to the discourse of war. As mentioned earlier, the discourse of war was a big part of Hollande's securitization after the November attacks. He was definitely *the* actor that introduced this discourse, already at the very moment the attacks were taking place. Therefore, there is a high probability that the audience reaction is directly related to his discourse. While almost no one believed that France was in a state of war before the November attacks, 59% did in the days after them. Only a minority (41%) thought that France had witnessed an attack but did not tip into a situation of war as a result of this (IFOP 2015b). This is especially interesting when taking into account the fact that France, after the January attacks actually had thousands of foot soldiers deployed in Mali with the purpose of fighting terrorism. So even though this definitely could be described as a state of war, very few among the French public believed this was the case. Furthermore, when looking at the policy actions typical to a state of war undertaken after the November attacks,

such as the retaliation bombings in Syria or the state of emergency met strong support in the population. In November 2015, 85% of the French population supported the French intervention and its fight against jihadists and ISIS in Syria (ibid.). These statistics show that a large majority in the French public accepted Hollande's way of framing the security situation as being a state of war, and also his argument that this required extraordinary measures. Thus, the audience reaction to his securitizing move was positive.

Then we have the question of values. As earlier argued, all of the analyzed speeches of Hollande focus a lot on this topic. This counts in every part of the securitization process and, although very oversimplified, one can state that Hollande after both attacks continuously claims that "it is evil values that are threatening, good values that are threatened, and good values that will save us". The reaction of the French public after the January attack was stunning. Almost 4 million people went out in the streets in the days following the attacks, and with the slogan "Je suis Charlie" an international movement for solidarity and support of freedom of speech and press was created, with 5 million hashtags on Twitter. When people in the streets were asked why they were participating in marches, their answers coincided with Hollande speeches: 92% stated they wanted to show the "unity of the French people against terrorism" and 92% stated they were there to "defend the fundamental values of the Republic" (Harris Interactive, 2015). This shows that the public both accepted Hollande's idea that the values of the Republic were referent objects, and that these values also were the best response to the threat.

The reactions after the November attacks were not of the same extent, and no marches of the same scale were organized. A survey from the newspaper "LeParisien" showed that, while "solidarity" was the dominant feeling of the public after the January attacks (46%), "anger" had taken over with 56% after the November attacks, where only 31% felt mostly solidarity (LeParisien 2015). Although Hollande in the same way appealed to the unity of all citizens as a response to the security threat like with the previous attacks, the sentiment of the French population had changed. This feeling of anger now dominating reflects better Hollande's war rhetoric and the previously described feeling among the French public of being at war. Thus, the sentiment in the audience was that terrorism now had to be fought with more extreme measures, instead of with unity and marches in the street. It thereby coincided best with Hollande's new discourse of war, and not so much with his emphasis on unity and solidarity that he nevertheless had characterized as the best weapons to fight terrorism both after the January attacks and after the November attacks.

All in all, the reaction of the French public was, for the most part, in both cases receiving and positive to Hollande’s securitization. The almost unanimous acceptance of terrorism as a security threat and of the policy measures implemented by Hollande, together with his increased popularity, all point towards a positive and acceptive reaction. Interestingly, Hollande succeeded in convincing most of the public that France was in a state of war after the November attacks. This had not been the dominant opinion after the January attacks, where Hollande did not adopt the war discourse. Although Hollande called for unity and solidarity among French citizens as the best response to the security threat in both cases, the public only reacted positively the first time. The second time, the feeling of anger had taken over. This could very well be related to the more extreme war discourse that Hollande also adopted.

In order to sum up the points brought forward examining the reaction of the French public to the securitization of terrorism by President Hollande, a few key findings can be identified. The table below thus summarizes the main findings in the analysis of the audience reaction:

<b>Reactions</b>	<b>January attacks</b>	<b>November attacks</b>
Acceptance of terrorism as a security threat	Yes	Yes
Popularity of Hollande	Increased	Increased
Acceptance of Hollande’s policy/security measures	Yes	Yes
Being in a state of war	No	Yes
Dominating feeling	Solidarity, unity	Anger

*Table 2: Reactions of the French public after the two attacks.*

## 5 Discussion and concluding remarks

Analyzing Hollande's discourse after the two terror attacks clearly points to a securitization of terrorism. The exceptionality of the situation is underlined many times in order to legitimize certain extraordinary policy measures. A comparison of Hollande's discourse in the aftermath of the 2015 January and November attacks reveals both similarities and differences in this securitization. The adopted discourses show a direct link to the policy measures Hollande wanted to implement after the attacks. Although similarities exist in the framing of the threat, the 2<sup>nd</sup> series of attacks triggered a much more offensive discourse of war and now included a concrete enemy: Daesh. With this change of discourse followed more extreme measures. The discourse clearly pursued a purpose of legitimizing this new security policy and very specific political actions. Thus, in order to legitimate war-like actions (such as airstrikes in Syria, the implementation of the state of emergency etc.), Hollande needed to sharpen his discourse, and use war rhetoric in his speeches. The referent object was in most cases the same and focused mostly on liberal values when explaining what was threatened by terrorism, also explaining in both cases that the threat was both internal and external to the French borders.

The reaction of the French public to the securitization was for the largest part positive. It is interesting to see that the French public reacted in favor of what Hollande argued for in his discourse, and almost unanimously accepted the threat as being real, and thought of the fight against terrorism as the most important factor in the 2017 elections. Still recently, over 90% of the French population see terrorism as a threat to their security (IFOP 2018). The French public mostly agreed with Hollande's framing of the threat, what he presented as referent object, and with his securitizing move and policy response. When Hollande changed his securitization discourse after the November attacks, the French public reacted accordingly.

The basic assumption in the Copenhagen School's securitization theory is that anything can be constructed as a security threat through discourse and the use of language. Interestingly, in this study, we have seen that the same security threat can be securitized in different ways. Of course, these two attacks varied in scale and in targets. However, even though two different terrorist groups, Al-Qaeda and ISIS, each claimed responsibility for one of the series of attack, they both belong to the same kind of security threat, namely Islamic extremist terrorism in France. Within only a few months, the same securitizing actor



securitized the same threat towards the same audience differently, in order to legitimize different policy actions. Indeed, what this study has shown is that an almost identical terrorist threat can be securitized in different ways according to which policies a political leader wants to implement as a security response to it. With only a few months in between the attacks, Hollande succeeded in changing the securitization of a similar threat and gaining public support for very different security responses. In this way, it can be claimed that the same securitizing actor can manipulate the same audience through specific discourses to react differently to the same security threat, and thereby be convinced to accept different securitizing moves and different policy actions as a response to this security threat. Returning to securitization theory, it may be that, examining the securitization of issues, the final policy actions is the most relevant factor to look at, when trying to understand a specific discourse. In this way, what a securitizing actor is aiming to achieve politically maybe more important than what the security threat is, or whether or not there actually is a security threat. At the end of the day, the policy actions are the main goal of securitizing an issue, and if the same threat can be securitized differently in order to legitimize very different policy measures, then looking at the implemented policies is key to understand a specific discourse.

Terrorism is in these years emerging as one of the most important security threats, and securitizations of the issue is becoming more and more common. As previously noted, securitization research focusing on the audience reaction is sparse. In this paper, we have seen that even though the audience as an actor can be difficult to grasp, interesting findings remain achievable. Narrowing down the concept to one specific audience as unit of analysis makes it easier to measure and conceptualize. It is precisely the flexibility of the concepts that makes securitization theory fit to analyze a variety of issues and actors. In the case of France, studies focusing on the reactions of other audience actors (such as the French parliament) to Hollande's change in securitization discourse or choosing other securitizing actors (such as other politicians) could arrive at interesting conclusions and explore other aspects of the matter. This study has shown that, even within a short timeframe and national context, the securitization of terrorism as well as the reaction of the broader public can vary quickly. Continuously examining the securitization of the topic is therefore of central importance in order to understand how the phenomenon evolves. Many cases, actors and levels of analysis exist that can form interesting points of departure for further empirical studies.

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