

T.C.
MARMARA UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

**RECONSIDERING SECURITIZATION IN THE AGE OF SOCIAL
MEDIA: A CASE STUDY ON HEALTH SECURITIZATION DURING
COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN THE UNITED KINGDOM**

Master Thesis

AZADE SAFİYE ERYİĞİT

İstanbul, 2021

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ÖZ

Sosyal medya günlük hayata entegrasyonunu güçlendirdikçe toplumlar da düşünme ve harekete geçme biçimlerini bu platformlara adapte ettiler. Devletlere karşı yahut devletin dikkatini çekmek adına birçok sosyal hareket, sosyal medya üzerinden örgütlenerek güçlendi ve etki yarattı. Tam bu noktada, bu tez sosyal medyanın halka bahsettiği bu gücü güvenlikleştirme teorisi ve iletişim teorileriyle paralel okuyarak halkın güvenlikleştirme sürecine dahil olmasını data analizi örneğiğinde tartışmaktadır. Bu tezde, (1) sosyal medya platformlarının halka güvenlikleştirme gücünü, yani güvenlik meselelerini belirleme ve daha fazla koruma sağlamaları için hükümete baskı kurmalarını sağladığı, ayrıca (2) güvenlikleştirme sürecindeki teorileştirilmiş rollerin eskiden olduğu gibi açık bir şekilde belirlenemeyeceği, fakat (3) güvenlikleştirme dilinin de devlet elitinin kullandığı kemikleşmiş güvenlikleştirme söylevlerinden farklı özellikler barındıracağı savunulmaktadır. Bu çalışma sunduğu teorik tartışmaları Birleşik Krallık'ın pandemi başındaki sağlık politikalarına dair bir data analizi ile inceleyerek, Twitter üzerinden “halkın güvenlikleştirmesini” vaka ile inceler ve destekler. Güvenlik kavramı devletle ilişkilendirilen bir konsept olması sebebiyle güvenlikleştirme örnekleri de bu zamana kadar devletler ve kurumlar üzerinden sunuldu. Bu tez hayatımıza derinden angaje olmuş sosyal platformların, güvenlik meselelerine etkisini “halkın” dâhil olması ve belirleme gücü üzerinden tartışması yönüyle literatürdeki diğer örneklerden kendisini ayırır.

Anahtar kelimeler: güvenlik, güvenlikleştirme, Twitter, sosyal medya, sağlık politikaları, Covid-19, Kopenhag okulu

ABSTRACT

As social media deepened its integration to the daily life, societies adapted the way they act and think in accordance with these platforms. Social movements against the states or to have state's attention, spread and created impacts with the help of social media. At this point, this thesis discusses this power that social media grants to the public in parallel to the theory of securitization and public's engagement to the process of securitization with a case study by presenting data analysis. In this thesis I hypothesize that (1) with the help of social media platforms people have more impact on setting security agendas and pressure governments to implement measures to provide protection therefore, (2) the roles in the process of securitization cannot be clearly detected as it was before. However, (3) the securitizing discourse is different in comparison to the rooted discourse of state elite while securitizing an issue. This study supports these hypotheses with a case study analyzing the Twitter data investigating the United Kingdom's Covid-19 pandemic policies at the beginning. So far, the concept of security was associated mostly with the state, therefore the securitizing actor was generally institutionalized. This thesis contributes to the literature by discussing the impact of these recently emerged and deeply engaged platforms with consideration of the public as a securitizing actor determining the security matters when state was not found sufficient.

Key words: security, securitization, Twitter, social media, health policies, Covid-19, Copenhagen School

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LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Units of Analysis.....	64
Table 2: Categorization of Tweets	68
Table 3 The Characteristics of Public's Security Discourse.....	75
Table 4 Verified Users' Occupations	81

LIST OF GRAPHS

Graph 1: Tweet Scatter during March.....	69
Graph 2: Distribution of Tweets According to Categories	71
Graph 3: Percentages of the Tweets According to Categories.....	71

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Diagram of Securitization.....	17
Figure 2: Barnlund's Transactional Model of Communication.....	43

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

API: Application Programming Interface

CS: The Copenhagen School

NHS: National Health Security

NYT: New York Times

OWS: Occupy Wall Street

UNSC: United Nations Security Council

WHO: World Health Organization

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

ICJ: International Court of Justice

IPPNW: International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War

IALANA: International Association of Lawyers against Nuclear Arms

INESAP: International Network of Engineers and Scientists against Proliferation

ICAN: International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons

BSY: Bina Swadaya Yogyakarta

TABLE OF CONTENT

ÖZ	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES	vi
LIST OF GRAPHS.....	vi
LIST OF FIGURES	vi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	vii
INTRODUCTION	1
1.THE POWER OF SECURITY	5
1.1 <i>Security as An Evolving Concept: Deepening and Broadening</i>	5
1.2 <i>I Say Therefore I Act: Securitization Theory by Copenhagen School</i>	14
1.3 <i>The Problem of Author and Audiences: How to Decide?</i>	19
1.4 <i>To Securitize or Not to Securitize: Cases of Securitization</i>	25
1.4.1. Covid-19 and Securitization	28
1.5 <i>State vs. Public as the Securitizing Actors</i>	31
1.5.1 NGOs and Media Outlets as Securitizing Actors	33
2. THE POWER OF INFORMATION	39
2.1 <i>Six Revolutions of Information</i>	40
2.2 <i>A Simultaneous Flow of Communication</i>	41
2.3 <i>Social Media as a Venue and As A New Way of Communication</i>	44
2.4 <i>A Bird Chirps and A User Tweets: What is Twitter?</i>	46
2.5 <i>Public as the Author of Securitization</i>	56
3. A CASE STUDY ON PUBLIC SECURITIZATION: THE UNITED KINGDOM’S PANDEMIC POLICIES.....	60
3.1 <i>Covid-19 Timeline in the United Kingdom</i>	61
3.2 <i>Case Selection</i>	63
3.3 <i>Method and Data Collection</i>	64
3.4 <i>Tweets’ Content Analysis</i>	68
3.4.1 Quantitative Perspective of the Tweets	69
3.4.2 Qualitative Analysis of the Tweets.....	72
3.5 <i>The Identity of the Authors</i>	80
CONCLUSION	84

BIBLIOGRAPHY	89
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INTRODUCTION

@BorisJohnson @MattHancock All this asking people to stay home isn't working #lockdownuk get the military in if necessary. It's the only way. Please drastic times - drastic measures! #coronavirusuk -@iamwhatiamCAS¹

Please listen to this. We need to protect people's lives. We must all now take responsibility in the UK. Everyone, please listen. Good people of Twitter do your thing. Spread the word to save lives. #lockdownuk -@_paulwainwright²

Drastic times require drastic measures indeed. Security is a concept that has been investigated for decades to comprehend when are these drastic times and what are these drastic measures. Security above all else requires a sense of precision or limits. Historically, these limits were determined and imposed by specific identities; consequently, the identification of whose security to provide was less complex of a dispute alongside with when and what were those drastic times and measures. Considering the recent studies in the field of international relations, security issues are mostly considered the state's concern and field of intervention. States determine the security agendas and decide whether an issue is a security problem or not and intervene if found necessary. However, the concept was broadly subjective; A threat to one was not threatening at all for the other. This peculiar existence of the concept brought about the manipulations with it. Securitization theory was an attempt towards the theorization of this manipulation. The Copenhagen School was basically arguing that even the utterance of the word security causes the issue considered as a security matter and, therefore, would allow to handle it with extraordinary measures, regardless of the issue. *Securitizing actor* (the author), who forms *the message*; in other words, *the securitizing act* delivers it to *the audience*. They emphasized one condition, though: People who are addressed should accept it as a security matter. It must be convincing for people to believe and give their consent and comply with the new measures.

¹ <https://twitter.com/iamwhatiamCAS/status/1241479509901225990> (22.03.2020)

² https://twitter.com/_PaulWainwright/status/1241488283961524226 (22.03.2020)

Until recently, the statesperson or the political elite was the prime subject in determining the security issues; however, as its role started to be questioned in the international relations discipline, the spread was inevitable for the security studies. The state mechanism started to become insufficient in understanding the public and engage with their needs. Critical schools flourished and questioned the role of the states and their determining power. This study is also a questioning of the role of the state in the securitization process.

Securitization theory considered the statespersons, elites, and intellectuals as the primary subjects who are capable of securitizing. However, with the new technologies, social media is granting this power to the public, as well. The thesis investigates the concepts that securitization theory established as the author, the audience, and the context. I will engage with their adaptation to the modern communication tools and reconsider the securitization theory in the age of social media and attempt to provide an answer to the question of "Does social media affect the process of securitization and opens new doors to new identities as securitizing actors?" In its essence, the study seeks an answer to the question of whether the public can securitize or not. With people starting conversations via online social platforms, the state's monopolistic power over security issues got weaker. The public started to affect the state's agenda with online pressures in the forms of social movements. People may gather under a "hashtag" and react against current policies and force governments to take action. While the issues of security were discussed among the statesperson, now, the public has an undeniable voice.

This thesis presents a story of these transformations, the transformation of the concept of security, the transformation of the spread of information, and finally, the transformation of the role of the public and the state in this process. In order to see these transformations and the communicative channel that social media establishes between the public and the government, this thesis presents a case study, investigating the United Kingdom's Covid-19 policies at the beginning of the pandemic and the public's reaction to these policies, voicing their security concerns via Twitter.

Before going through the outline, there are two points which clarifying them will be more beneficial for the study to be understood in the correct terms. People's declaring their own

opinions and reflecting their own concerns could be confused with public opinion. Even though initially the process is similar, in terms of their outcomes, securitization should provide legal enforcement while public opinion is mainly consisting of the voicing of a problem. Another point that needs clarification is that this legal enforcement does not necessarily have to include military forces on the streets. A security issue does not necessarily need to involve the matter in militaristic terms; it does not require "boots on the streets" for an issue to be considered as a security issue. It is mostly about people's acceptance and willingness to engage with the issue on a level different from politics and comply with extreme measures.

In this study, I will investigate the borders that got blurry in time, causing the formation of new roles for different identities in various contexts. In this thesis's scope, first, the concept of security is investigated to see the outcomes as the concept creates its own dilemma. Under this section, the emphasis is on deepening and broadening security, alongside a brief depiction of the debates on the definition of the concept and on the answers provided for the question of what security *is*. The section that searches for an answer to what security *does* comes after; in this scope, the theory of securitization is examined and reflected on the built literature. Eventually, what is attempted is to broaden the arguments on the concepts of *the author* and *the context* in terms of their relation to *the audience*.

Second, the roles played by the author and the context as the venue will be investigated further through the social media platform: Twitter. In order to understand how Twitter or basically any social media platform works, I will look into the basic premises of the communication theories and examine how these platforms change the way we communicate throughout history and how the theory of the speech act can be adapted to this specific platform. The role of the state and the role of the public as an author of the securitization will also be discussed in the second chapter. How Twitter affects the state as a sovereign actor is the question I will be attempting to answer by using the securitization theory and communication models.

The thesis will benefit mainly from two methodologies; while, the first two chapters embrace more qualitative work and ground the theoretical framework, the third chapter is engaging with more quantitative methodology, where the data analysis is included, formed with datasets fetched from Twitter. The case will be analyzing how the United Kingdom dealt with the virus

in the first place. The Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, ignored the warnings and insisted on continuing everyday life, and refused to take any caution against the virus. However, people were concerned with the news coming from other countries. I will demonstrate the results of the dilemma and examine what happens when the public's security understanding conflicts with the state's security understanding. The government's priority of economy or other agendas (e.g., BREXIT) over health resulted in backlash and worry. For the data analysis, the study benefits from content analysis alongside the indicators that data provided us. There are three units of analysis: The hashtags, tweets' texts, and the identity of the users. The hashtag is a significant selection because it is about setting the agenda; the tweets' texts present the message included in terms of discourse. The identity highlights the features of the securitizing actor.

Overall, neither the presentation of the literature on security, on communicative models, nor the method that data analysis engaged in this study is authentic and unseen; nonetheless, the combined reading of these three disciplines is the contribution that this thesis makes to the security studies. The dynamics in the securitization theory were not questioned in terms of communicative models or with data analysis when it needs an update considering the new social dynamics. The study does not hesitate while including new dynamics with the fear of broadening a definition because the process of adaptation to the recent developments is a requisition for progression in theoretical studies. Another emphasis should be on presenting this new dynamic (social media), which the public engages with for years, as we can observe from several social movements. A parallel reading of the securitization theory could contribute to both literatures while figuring out the role of social media in social movements. It could also clarify its role as a platform that grants specific power to the public to securitize.

1. THE POWER OF SECURITY

*"For magic consists in this,
the true naming of a thing."³*

-Ursula K. Le Guin

There are numerous analogies and examples that a person can give when it comes to the issues of security. Every person has the sense of being secure as a life-long persuasion unconsciously. Survival is one of our oldest inheritances. The instinct to stay alive is a powerful driving force for human beings. Our aim while seeking security is to prolong our lives by preventing damages. In such a scenario, we have two concepts to deal with in the beginning: Threat and security. A firm grasp of these two concepts would tell us profoundly about ourselves and about almost every systematic routine that people ever engaged in. However, the challenge is, these concepts are highly transformative, contextual, and relational.

Starting with a philosophical investigation of the concept may seem far from the basic premises of the study. However, by distinguishing a security matter from the other issues, this questioning will show us the various securities that might occur in different forms; hence it is considered beneficial and necessary. Seeing a few security perspectives will help us understand the basis of securitization and why the concept can grant power to those who use it correctly. This chapter will provide the literature on the concepts related to security and the theory of securitization.

1.1 Security as An Evolving Concept: Deepening and Broadening

Security is a concept that does not have a particular, precise definition; it could be expanded or capsulized. The closest we can get is the one that benefits from etymology. The etymological root of the word means "without troubling."⁴ For us humans to feel secure, there should not be an object of concern. Each person creates their sense of security. Our physical existence's safety

³ In the Wizard of Earthsea (1968), if a wizard knows a thing's or people's *true* name it grants them powers when they say it over that object or person.

⁴ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/security>

comes first; most primitive instincts resurface with the fear of death. Even though absolute security cannot be guaranteed, people create a sense of security at a certain level through agencies: houses, surveillance systems, the state, weapons, insurances, passwords. The ultimate value to protect is, essentially, our lives. Every action that people take as a precaution is a part of their impulse to feel secure about their lives, values, and environment. The utmost importance belongs to the physical existence followed by personal values.

The ontological ground for security, defining itself out of negation, creates its dilemma immediately. A definition often gives information on a concept as thoroughly as possible; thus, we can tell what it is when facing it. A definition can be made by delineating, depicting, describing, or negating by saying that what it is *not*. However, definitions that are made by negations are always less informative in comparison to affirmative definitions⁵. The drawback about security rises from this moment. The word "security" defines the status of safety through negation by itself, by lack of an object of concern, lack of trouble. However, defining an issue with the help of what it is not, instead of explaining what it is, causes the vagueness and indistinct limits that we mentioned earlier. Defining by negation creates opportunities for other ventures. Therefore, security becomes an open concept that might benefit from all those possibilities. However, even though we lack a unanimous definition, scholars seem to agree on one common point: The ambiguous nature of the concept gives those who hold it a considerable amount of power to justify and control extraordinary measures.

The nature of security requires distinctive ways of dealing with the issue because the concept has the power to justify extraordinary measures, as Waever suggests:

"The special nature of security threats justifies the use of extraordinary measures to handle them. The invocation of security has been the key to legitimizing the use of force, but more generally, it has opened the way for the state to mobilize, or to take special powers, to handle/existential threats. Traditionally, by saying "security," a state representative declares an emergency condition, thus claiming a right to use whatever means are necessary to block a threatening development."⁶

Even the utterance of the word *security* has the power to justify the measures that are generally not applicable. However, since the concept is not defined with precise borders, it is vulnerable

⁵ Horn, Laurence R. and Wansing, Heinrich, "Negation", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2020 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.) forthcoming URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2020/entries/negation/>

⁶ Buzan, B., Wæver, O. & De Wilde, J. (1998). *Security: A new framework for analysis*. Lynne Rienner Publishers. p. 21

to manipulations. The point that Waever made about "saying" will be discussed in detail in the next section on securitization. For now, it is enough to emphasize that the issues of security are essentially different from other issues since the risk of ignoring a matter of security is incomparable to other issues.

In order to prevent manipulations, there have been many attempts to define security, at least to set a guiding criterion. Nevertheless, due to its confusing nature, many attempts resulted in even more confusing conclusions. Buzan⁷ argues the nature of security requires vagueness like other essentially contested concepts; any attempt to the contrary is a misunderstanding of the concept itself. Security has been argued as an essentially contested concept not only by Buzan but also by other scholars. Inherently, several scholars argued otherwise and found Buzan's argument unsatisfying. Booth is one of the scholars that draws attention to the fact that "if we cannot name it, how can we ever hope to achieve it?"⁸ The concept's nature should not hold scholars back when it comes to its definition.

Security is roughly defined as "the alleviation of threats to cherished values; especially those which, left unchecked, threaten the survival of a particular referent object in the near future"⁹, from this definition, we can extract and emphasize specific parts. Security as a value stems from the need for values to be secured and protected. The state might be a repeated example in this case. State security emphasizes *the state* as a value to protect, and hence its security holds a considerable emphasis in the security agenda. Occasionally, conflict may occur between the various values. The debate on freedom generally stems from these conflicts. A choice between individual freedom and societal security conflicts inherently in terms of values. The surveillance systems can be given as an example of this conflict. One of the most problematic conflicts is compulsory military service; the highest value to protect, the life, is asked to be sacrificed when necessary for the value of the state. What we understand from security is basically to achieve survival as a status for our values, to prolong the lives of what we value by protecting them from possible threats. However, defining security out of its relation to merely values would be insufficient.

⁷ Buzan, B. (2008). *People, States & Fear: An agenda for international security studies in the post-cold war era*. Ecpr Press. p. 16; 374

⁸ Booth, K. (1991). Security and emancipation. *Review of International studies*, 17(4), 313-326. p. 317

⁹ Williams, P. D. (Ed.). (2012). *Security studies: an introduction*. Routledge. p.6.

The feeling of uncertainty creates security problems immediately. Consistent with some scholars, security most of the time depends not on the "elimination of threats but the uncertainties or not the production of safety but certainty and control."¹⁰ We should consider the possibilities of a condition that we feel secure. Even though we have all the protection, we can imagine we may still not be aware of the other possibilities that might cause us harm. Therefore, security is an *attempt* to secure and feel less threatened by the uncertainties. It is a strive to reach a level of certainty. The more you know about your environment, not only in terms of location but also the elements it consists of as an artificial structure, the more you shape demands to feel secure in that environment.

Huysmans has a different take on the issue of security in terms of a process: he defines security with the help of taking the concept as a thick signifier; he depicts it as an articulation of "particular ways of organizing forms of life."¹¹ This explanation is beneficial when explaining the formation of communities. Certain groups of people coming together and declaring others as not a part of their group is rooted in security since others seem like a threat.

The concept of security is highly integrated into the concept of insecurity. Since the latter's presence diminishes the former indefinitely and the impossibility of absolute security, we should consider the insecurity as the other half of security. The existence of threats, risks, dangers, and vulnerability pushes us to take action towards the construction of a secure space not necessarily only in physical forms but also in virtual environments.

"What is a threat?" is also another question that thrives for unity on its definition. Bourne defines threat as a concept that needs an enemy. Therefore, he argues insecurity roots from anticipating harm from an "*other*". In this vein, he excludes natural disasters or accidents even though they are harmful; they are not threatening because their intention is not deliberate. Hence, they cannot be calculated or responded to as an "*other*".¹² Even though the threat needs

¹⁰ Der Derian, J. (1995) 'The value of security: Hobbes, Marx, Nietzsche, and Baudrillard,' in Lipschutz, R. (ed.) *On security*, Columbia University Press

¹¹ Huysmans, J. (1998). "Security! What do you mean? From concept to thick signifier". *European journal of international relations*, 4(2), 226-255.

¹² Bourne, M. (2013). *Understanding security*. Macmillan International Higher Education. p.6

an identity, the security issues are broader in terms of the problems they deal with. The risks and vulnerabilities are also integrated into this concept as a part of insecurity. Environmental issues may not have an "other". However, they project risk; therefore, they are also issues of security. In times of potential risk, "vulnerability means the damage that might occur in a catastrophic event, so it relates to 'resilience', the ability to minimize the damage of an earthquake or terrorist attack." ¹³ There is another perspective towards the issue of insecurity. By emphasizing another element of security, we can engage with this new perspective. The feeling of security is highly dependent on the routines. Anything other than the routine may cause a disturbance. Rumelili argues that for the regions that are constantly in conflicts that are going on for ages, peace itself may cause anxiety. Since the conflict became a part of their routine, they may feel insecure about a potential resolution. She names this situation as "peace anxieties."¹⁴ This argument shows us that security is not just about reaching the ultimate level of peace and comfort. It depends on numerous dynamics, and the number of these dynamics is not defined so far.

Until now, the study has covered the different forms of securities; security as a condition, as a value, as a process, and as insecurities. Since the perfect definition of security does not exist, I wanted to demonstrate the parts and bits from it to construct an image of the obscurity and also to understand what is related to security so when the time comes, we will understand the attempts towards securitization by distinguishing these topics in discourse. In order to establish groundwork, I will provide a brief overview of how the scope of the security studies evolved, and then I will discuss the details of broadening and deepening of the field.

The concept of security was there from the beginning; many philosophers wrote about security and the role of the state's and individual's role in protecting life and property and provided various answers. We can follow a similar theoretical lineage through the philosophers' wanderings related to the issue of security. While the ancients are dealing with specific identities, the King, men, men with property, throughout the time, the scope broadens, and the

¹³Ibid. p.6-7

¹⁴ Rumelili, B. (Ed.). (2014). *Conflict resolution and ontological security: Peace anxieties*. Routledge. p.193

individual's concerns steps in, whomever he/she is. The security studies experienced a similar evolving process.

As it is written and discussed in philosophical terms, International Relations scholars' also traced this process of deepening and broadening in line with the international systematic changes. Even though the First World War results showed that war was "too important to be left to the generals"¹⁵, up until Second World War, the security problems were remained highly engaged with the state and the professional military. Hence civilians were discouraged from talking about the issues of security. Scholars were also mainly focused on military issues and diplomatic history. During World War II, for the first time, extensive civilian involvement was observed and opened the way for the "Golden Age" of security studies. Between 1955 and 1965, security studies lived its Golden age under the name of "strategic studies."¹⁶ Nuclear weapons created a new ground for the military discussion on how it should be used; how could this type of weaponry be more valuable; the debate on deterrence and stability, etc. In the '70s, the field evolved from strategic studies to security studies and started to engage with different questions apart from war and strategy.¹⁷ The period after the Cold War prepared the field for the concepts mentioned above of deepening and broadening. This evolution of security studies was always integrated with international relations, which was also a new discipline. Security studies provided a major study field in the discipline by benefitting from the previous discussions; the struggle to define security was on the IR scholars' agenda once again.

Even though the concept lacks a unanimous definition overall, the attempts formed literature on the concept that talks to each other and relatively gives an idea not precisely about its limits but about its nature. In his article "The concept of security,"¹⁸ Baldwin presents his ideas on the concept and sheds light on the significant debates in the literature. He argues that the concept is not fulfilling the criteria to be an essentially contested concept, while he is vigorously

¹⁵ Walt, S. M. (1991). "The renaissance of security studies". *International studies quarterly*, 35(2), 211-239. p.214

¹⁶For instance, Milburn Thomas W(1959)., "What Constitutes Effective Deterrence?" *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 3, No. 2. Brody Richard A(1960). "Deterrence Strategies: An Annotated Bibliography," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 4, No.4. Snyder Glenn H.(1960) , "Deterrence and Power," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (June, 1960), Huntington Samuel, P. (1957). *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*. New York: Vintage. Schelling Thomas (1960). *The Strategy of Conflict* NY: Oxford University Press

¹⁷ Walt, S. M. (1991). "The renaissance of security studies". p.214

¹⁸ Baldwin, D. A. (1997). The concept of security. *Review of international studies*, 23(1), 5-26.

defending that there should be a particular set of criteria to assess the level of security. Predicating on this thought, he also highlights some questions in order to create a level of assessment. There are seven questions: "Security for whom?; Security for which values?; How much security?; From what threats?; By what means?; At what cost?; In what time period?"¹⁹. However, in conclusion, he also points out that these questions only shed a minor light on the matter, not the exact borders of the security problem. The questions of "Security of whom?" and "Security of which values?" are parallel to one another. How much security is enough? is the question that gives the concept its *almost* magical powers²⁰, the attempt to identify the threat, and searching for the means to protect ourselves against these threats by analyzing the cost and the duration of it, is the formulation. These are arbiter questions to the studies of security. The effort to identify whose security to protect and measures are the essential steps for the securitization theory. The search for answers to these questions will introduce us to the concepts of deepening and broadening.

The deepening of security is referring to the changes in the referent objects of security. When the answer is considered to this question historically, before establishing the modern state, the ruler was the only actor whose security mattered; Kings were the ones whose security should be concerned about. The values that required protection revolved around his status. Anything that was remotely related to the ruler's power and the position was treated as the ultimate value to protect. The threats were also determined with this dynamic: anything that might harm the ruler was the threat. After the formation of nation-states, the position of ruler changed with this formation. The Westphalian order modern state took the King's position or any privileged class and became the sole sovereign; hence, the values to protect became the homeland and national sovereignty from the territorial threats. The role of the French Revolution is undeniable when examining the formation of the concept of homeland. Neither religion nor the King had the power that states have in terms of security. Still, the state has the lion's share declaring and designating security issues since it is the sovereign mechanism determining threats. During the Cold War, while the nation-state and the protection of the homeland were stable, the threat has changed. Ideology played an unprecedented and unexpected role as a threat. Communism

¹⁹ Ibid. p. 23

²⁰ The reference belongs to the French philosopher Bourdieu, the detailed discussion on this magic will be presented under the securitization.

became the ultimate threat to the US. In the post-Cold War period, the answer to the question of whose security broadened and human security is added alongside the national security. Homeland was the ultimate value to protect alongside the problems that we share globally; environmental and health problems made their way into the security agenda. Starting from this period and still, effectively, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) defines and decides what a threat is and what is not. Until 9/11, non-state actors were not considered a threat; however, after that incident, the scope of what is considered threat broadened, and non-state actors also included in the UNSC agenda, and the war on terror started in order to provide national security.

The state is still the ultimate referent object to protect in the international relations spectrum. The military force still counts as the most effective way to achieve it; however, after the end of the Cold War, a broader range of issues got involved in the scope of security issues. There have been different attempts²¹ to broaden this range; Buzan's categorization of security sectors is the division that got acceptance among scholars in sorting security issues into the sectors. Buzan argues there are five security sectors: Military security, political security, economic security, societal security, and environmental security. Military security is conserving the security's traditional sense. He defines it as the interaction of military forces according to their perception of each other's purposes. Political security is emphasizing the stability of a state's political status quo. Not in a conservative sense necessarily but instead providing a well-functioning governing mechanism. Economic security is about providing a certain level of welfare to the public and maintaining the state's access to the global market, natural resources, etc. Societal security is an issue of identity. Alongside national identity, the customs, traditions, cultural inheritance, language, and religion as a part of society's identity must be protected as a set of cumulative values. Lastly, environmental security is about the preservation of the biosphere that all humans depend upon.²² These five sectors summarize what is in the scope of security issues and bring an unconventional understanding by considering social security into the debates of security

²¹ Bourne, M. (2013). *Understanding security* p.12 Herz studied the depletion of energy resources, food scarcity and environmental harm. Ullman (1983: 129) claimed that 'defining national security merely (or even primarily) in military terms conveys a profoundly false image of reality' and that doing so 'causes states to concentrate on military threats and to ignore other and perhaps even more harmful dangers.'

²² Buzan (1991) *People States and Fear* p. 19-20

studies in that era. It is beyond states, yet it is not solely focusing on the individuals. It considers them as parts of the societal groups.

While deepening is more about the referent object, broadening is more about the subject of security issues. Referent objects are basically what we should protect, while the referent subject is about how we deal with security issues getting more detailed and more varied every day. However, we cannot detach these two concepts from each other with a distinct border. Theoretical approaches to understanding security issues created their own perspectives and concepts: Broadening led to determining new referent objects. Years ago, when there was no internet, we could not store personal information online; however, personal information is now a referent object to protect because it could violate our private lives. Our lives do not just depend on physical existence; it consists of various elements. Many other small elements create our identities, and it counts as an ultimate value to protect. The studies about ontological security argue that our identities' security is as important as our physical security.²³ People may prefer minor physical damage instead of their data being publicly accessible online. There are TV series, movies, and books about how people feel threatened by the new technological developments which were not imaginable one hundred years ago.²⁴ Companies are trying to acquire more data on individuals in order to develop a user's experience and many untold purposes. The more they acquired knowledge about users, the more users feel and become vulnerable. People are suing companies about storing and selling personal data.²⁵ In the future, these threats may all be vanished; however, there will undoubtedly be new threats that we will be dealing with. Therefore, we cannot define security with distinct borders. We can say it is a status that there is no trouble to our physical existence and our previously acquired values or

²³ Kinnvall, C., & Mitzen, J. (2017). An introduction to the special issue: Ontological securities in world politics. *Cooperation and conflict*, 52(1), 3-11.

²⁴ For instance; Brooker, C.(Producer), Reisz, B., Jones, A., Bathurst, O., Huq, K., Lyn, E., Armstrong, J., ...(Directors) Channel 4, Netflix(2016-) (Firm),. (2011). *Black mirror*.

Nolan, J., Abrams J.J.(Producers) Joy, L., Wood, E. R., Newton, T., Hopkins, A., Wright, J., Harris, E., ...(Directors) Warner Bros. Entertainment Canada (Firm),. (2017). *Westworld*

²⁵E.g Skelton S. K (2021) *Facebook sued for data-sharing practices with third parties* <https://www.computerweekly.com/news/252496091/Facebook-sued-for-data-sharing-practices-with-third-parties> (18.08.2020)

Errick K.(2020) *Google Sued For Sharing Personal Data Of Opted-Out Chrome Users*

<https://lawstreetmedia.com/tech/google-sued-for-sharing-personal-data-of-opted-out-chrome-users/#:~:text=Users%20of%20Google's%20Chrome%20internet,to%20sync%20their%20Google%20account.> (18.08.2020)

identities. However, we may never define the depth or the scope of it because it will always change as the world continues its development.

The deliberations on the concept of security are not just limited to what we have covered. However, for the study, the scope is narrowed. In this section, the various perspectives on what security is and how it got transformed are emphasized due to their role in the coming chapters. Both the stress on the vagueness and the transformative sides of the concept will put certain bricks into their places and provide us with a better ground for further investigation.

1.2 I Say Therefore I Act: Securitization Theory by Copenhagen School

In 1996 McSweeney wrote a critique in reply to several scholars²⁶, especially Waever's book named *Identity, Migration, and the New Security Agenda in Europe*. Sweeney referred to this group of scholars as "Copenhagen School". Copenhagen School, as Huysmans states,

"has struggled how to move security studies beyond a narrow agenda which focuses on military relations between states while avoiding ending up being all-embracing inflated concept dealing with all kinds of threats to the existence well-being or development of individuals social groups and mankind."²⁷

The school is known for its contribution to security studies. Barry Buzan came up with five distinctive security sectors, even though in his subsequent studies, he acknowledged the sectors are not strictly distinguished, and they are interrelated to one another. The sectors helped security scholars as an analytical device to draw frameworks. On the other side, one of the most known scholars of the Copenhagen School²⁸, Ole Waever, elaborated on the concept of securitization. This concept finds itself room for discussion often among the issues of security studies. Waever's understanding of securitization alongside Buzan's and Jaap de Wilde's contribution created the central element of research for the Copenhagen School. The Copenhagen School's take on the securitization theory, even though considered the center of

²⁶ McSweeney, B. (1996). Identity and security: Buzan and the Copenhagen school. *Review of international studies*, 22(1), 81-93.

²⁷ Huysmans (1998) Security! What do you mean? p. 482

²⁸ Akgül-Açıkmeşe, S. (2011). Algı mı, Söylem mi? Kopenhag Okulu ve Yeni-Klasik Gerçekçilikte Güvenlik Tehditleri. *Uluslararası İlişkiler/International Relations*, 43-73. p. 72

the securitization, the supplements and contemporary takes on the matter accentuated the concept's protean sides. The Copenhagen School (CS afterward) is still maintaining its central position in the securitization debates; most studies refer to the concept with the initial formulation that the CS established.

However, my purpose in this chapter is not to present one school's perspective about the theory but to harmonize it with contemporary discussions and highlight particular vital elements of the process concerning the case study, e.g., the role of the author, the audience, and the context. These concepts are essential for the study in terms of their scopes. The initial theory was limited in attributing the role of a securitizing actor only to a certain class. This study aims to broaden this scope and alter the relation of author and audience. The context also has altered itself; social media is now a strongly integrated communication tool to our daily lives, and therefore the context should be considered with its new features.

Securitization is a subject that benefits from the constructability of concepts. Therefore, instead of engaging with the definition of what it is in the first place, looking at what *constructing* means in International Relations will be more beneficial. Until the constructivist scholars' studies on identities and international relations' basic concepts, such as anarchy and power, were considered given and fixed. Wendt,²⁹ Katzenstein³⁰, Adler, Barnett and Smith,³¹ Hansen³², and other theorists argued that these are not given and fixed but rather constructed. Identities, societies, security understandings, and even anarchy were not fixed but depended on what we³³ make of it.

²⁹Wendt, A. (1992). Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construction of power politics. *International organization*, 46(2), 391-425.

³⁰ Katzenstein, M. F. (1996). *The culture of national security: Norms and identity in world politics*. Columbia University Press.

³¹ Adler, E., Barnett, M., & Smith, S. (Eds.). (1998). *Security communities* (No. 62). Cambridge University Press.

³² Hansen, L. (2013). *Security as practice: discourse analysis and the Bosnian war*. Routledge.

³³ The agents have changed from one scholar to another. "We" here could be referred as an individual who is a part of society or a citizen of a nation. Constructivist scholars still criticizes Wendt's work for being state centric (e.g. Guzzini, S., & Leander, A. (Eds.). (2005). *Constructivism and international relations: Alexander Wendt and his critics*. Routledge), on the other hand in cases of dealing with the security issues the states are holding the upper hand. Wendt also replied these criticisms with a similar logic: The accusations about a theory of international politics of being state-centric is like accusing a "theory of forests for being tree-centric" (Wendt A. (1999) *Social theory of international politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p.9)

There are different elements in constructing a social phenomenon. The language was the constructive element that Copenhagen School has relied on their work upon. A word will embrace its meaning after many times and attempts of construction. Anyone can make up a word, but it takes time for people to embrace it and use it by meaning what it means for the person who came up with it. The culture, history, society, and many other factors shape the construction. Their traces and impacts are imposed on the language as a textbook example. In Lord of The Rings, the Old Entish language used by the Ents, the ancient trees, is described as an *unhasty* language; since the trees have a long life, they do not need to rush or shorten any answers. Their language does not have words for yes or no, but rather they tell the reasons for why an offer is accepted or not with long descriptions. Ünver puts this example into a theoretical framework:

"Linguistic relativism asserts that lexical, syntactic, and grammatical categories of the language a person speaks and how that person both understands the world and behaves in it have a systematic relationship. The nature of a particular language, including political language, influences the habitual thought of its speakers, and different language patterns yield different patterns of thought."³⁴

The Copenhagen School put its emphasis on the language and adopted the speech-act theory argued by Austin. In his book called "*How to Do Things with Words?*"³⁵ Austin investigates how utterances of some words are actually equal to taking action. He differentiates between sentences according to their relation to action, constative, and performatives; while constative sentences are basically statements that can be either true or false, performatives result in action. Betting, marrying, or promising are the textbook examples of the speech-act. You say a word, and just the utterance of it results in the performance of an action. According to Austin, a sentence can express three types of acts: locutionary act, illocutionary act/force, and perlocutionary act/effect. Locutionary act means the phase of utterance, saying the words; the illocutionary act is what is expected in terms of action after the word is said, where securitization occurs; and the perlocutionary effect is related more with the process that occurs afterward, this phase mainly depends on the response coming from the receiver. The perlocutionary act is not necessarily expected. However, the results after you bet and lost it, the

³⁴ Ünver, H. A. (2015). *Turkey's Kurdish Question: Discourse & Politics Since 1990*. Routledge. p.6-7

³⁵ Austin, J. L. (1975). *How to do things with words* (Vol. 88). Oxford University Press.

events that will follow afterward that might not be a part of the betting but somehow related to it, is the perlocutionary act.

Ole Wæver combined the constructivist approach towards security with the speech- act theory and formed the theory of securitization. He builds the concept of securitization upon his definition of security. Wæver argues;

"With the help of language theory, we can regard "security" as a speech act. In this usage, security is not of interest as a sign that refers to something more real; its utterance is the act. By saying it, something is done (as in betting, giving a promise, naming a ship). By uttering "security," a state representative moves a particular development into a specific area, and thereby claims a special right to use whatever means are necessary to block it."³⁶

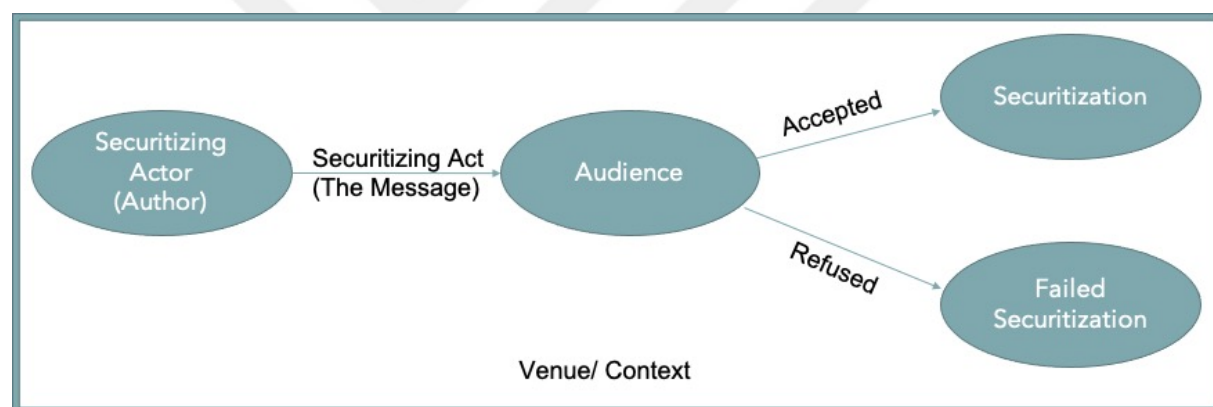


Figure 1: Diagram of Securitization

There is an essential division in Wæver's work. There are issues that are handled in the area of ordinary politics. If an issue cannot be dealt with in the domain of normal politics, there is security politics to handle it with extraordinary measures. Security politics is considered exceptional politics.³⁷ These two types of politics are defined almost in Clausewitzian terms. As war is the continuation of politics by other means,³⁸ security politics was also a continuation of an unsolved matter of normal politics by other means. As war makes using exceptional measures just, security as the mother of war has the power to justify the extreme measures.

³⁶ Wæver, O. (1995). "Securitization and Desecuritization" in Lipschutz, R. (ed.) *On security*, Columbia University Press

³⁷ Buzan, B., Wæver, O. & De Wilde, J. (1998), *A New Framework* p. 29

³⁸ Clausewitz, C. (1982). *On war* (Vol. 20). Penguin UK.

Therefore, Waever considers security politics negative while classifying everyday politics positively and believes normal politics is what we should achieve. In the long run, security politics may become a topic for securitization and open doors for power manipulations. However, in his latest works, Waever discusses how securitization could be effectively used and decides to negate the securitization and injecting politicization would damage the magic of securitization. As a theoretical solution, he argues we might be able to harmonize them.³⁹

Until Copenhagen School was interested in this concept, theoretical security studies were dealing with what is security; and since it was an ambiguous concept, there were plenty of issues about the concept to discuss. Bourdieu defines security as "an *almost magical power* which enables one to obtain the equivalent of what is attained through (material) force"⁴⁰ Magic is a good explanation if one cannot predict or explain what will happen and how did it happen. The magical nature of the concept made it much fertile for the constructivist approach. The language was another constructed structure that was shaped by the factors that security got affected. Hypothetically accepting the weaponized drones is common, and people started to use them against each other; drones will be a referent subject that is dangerous to our existence, and the word drones would not be as innocent as it is now and will be perceived as a threat. If someone shouts "Drones!", it may be out of excitement for now, and you can look at it by waving hands since you thought it has a camera on it, but if they started to resonate as a threat rather than a tool for filming from above, then it will cause people to run away from it. Waever sees these two ways of interaction between security and the speech and contributed the concept of securitization to the security literature. Waever's approach towards security was unseen in the security studies; however, it was not unique. Sociologists like Foucault⁴¹ and Bourdieu⁴² were already speaking about the power relations and the practices that affect the determining of threats and the methods to deal with them. Waever benefitted from philosophers and sociologists and applied similar dynamics to security studies, and brought the concept of securitization into the literature.

³⁹ Wæver, O. (2015). The theory act: Responsibility and exactitude as seen from securitization. *International Relations*, 29(1), 121–127. p.122-123

⁴⁰ Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language and symbolic power*. Harvard University Press. p.170

⁴¹ Foucault, M. (2019). *Power: the essential works of Michel Foucault 1954-1984*. Penguin UK.

⁴² Bourdieu, P. (1979). Symbolic power. *Critique of anthropology*, 4(13-14), 77-85.

As all these scholars questioned the role of security, some questioned why we need to securitize an issue in the first place. Viouri gathers the reasons under four points: "(1) Securitization for raising an issue on the agenda, (2) the securitization for deterrence, (3) securitization for legitimating past acts or for reproducing the security status of an issue, and (4) securitization for control."⁴³ These motivations are not apart from the definition of securitization in terms of its capability. We can consider these as a reminder while we move towards the discussion of the relation between the author and the audience since all motivations are built upon the relation between these two. All four points are the actions of the securitizing actor to convince or control the audience. The actor in this relation is considered fixed for so long; the securitizing actor is generally considered state, statespersons, elites, or intellectuals who are mostly the same people in many cases. That said, we should also consider the possibility that the people we called as the audience might be capable of the role of the securitizing actor with the new developments in communication platforms. In line with that, the next section will attempt to understand how to determine securitization by putting the issue of the author and the audience into the center of the question.

1.3 The Problem of Author and Audiences: How to Decide?

Securitization is a process according to CS; the author, who represents an institutional voice, points a finger to an issue and in a way frames it as a threat; this part is called the securitizing act. The audience who is receiving the message either accepts the referent object as a threat and allows and acknowledges the extreme measures that will come afterward ways to deal with the threat, which means it is a successful securitization or does not embrace the issue as a threat and reacts against the author's efforts to justify the unusual measures; in this case, this will only be an attempt and stays as a securitizing act but not a successful securitization⁴⁴. The point is to convince people that what the author declares is a threat to existence; it could be a virus, it could be a group of people, it could be sharp-pointed pens. If people accept it as a threat, they

⁴³ Vuori, J. A. (2008). Illocutionary logic and strands of securitization: Applying the theory of securitization to the study of non-democratic political orders. *European journal of international relations*, 14(1), 65-99. p.76

⁴⁴ Wæver, O. (1997). *Concepts of security*. University of Copenhagen, Institute of Political Science. p. 48-49

will support or resist the author while declaring lockdowns, ruling executions, or collecting pens.

Waever claims that "security is articulated only from a specific place in an institutional voice by the elites."⁴⁵ Elites here refer to statespersons, intellectuals, or people who hold positions of power. Security is mostly an agenda for states to determine and decide whether they will impose sanctions on the potential threat or not. The sovereign power decides what is to be done. CS claimed it as an intersubjective process in the initial formulation of securitization theory, but not a self-referential one⁴⁶. It means the perlocutionary act is a part of the securitization process: The audience should accept it. However, this argument brought about one of the essential criticisms of their dilemma between the author and the audience's role. McDonald argues that the problem about CS is, they argue that the author, in other words, securitizing actor, attempts to securitize an issue and the audience being the determinant factor; if the only actors that are determining what could be a security issue are the authors then this means the securitizing actor is the determinant, not the audience at all. The role of the audience is not specified; McDonald underlines the need "to draw the role of the audience into the framework more coherently, but in doing so, the CS will almost certainly need to downplay either the performativity effects of the speech act or the inter-subjective nature of security."⁴⁷ In this vein, this thesis is also an attempt at discussing the roles of the securitizing actor and the audience. Even though many theories still have the state as the sovereign and the determinant factor about the security issues, different dynamics affect states' decision-making mechanisms. Balzacq, Leonard, and Ruzicka, in their article called "Securitization Revisited", touch upon the undertheorized concepts of securitization theory and provide a modern revision to the concept. The article discusses four key concepts that have been discussed often within the scope of securitization studies: "The audience, the context, power relations, practices, and instruments."⁴⁸ In a similar vein, I will benefit from this conceptual categorization of the concepts; however, the question of audience is the central discussion that this article will engage with. The study aims to examine the

⁴⁵ Waever, O. (1995) 'Securitization and Desecuritization' p.54

⁴⁶ Balzacq, T. (Ed.). (2010). *Understanding securitisation theory: How security problems emerge and dissolve*. Routledge. p.3

⁴⁷ McDonald, M. (2008). Securitization and the Construction of Security. *European journal of international relations*, 14(4), 563-587. p. 573

⁴⁸ Balzacq, T., Léonard, S., & Ruzicka, J. (2016). 'Securitization'revisited: Theory and cases. *International Relations*, 30(4), 494-531. p. 499

audience in its relation to the concepts of *context* and *power relations*, which will be acknowledged as a traditionally defining feature of the securitizing actor.

So far, this thesis was tackling the question of what securitization is and the initial formulation of it by the CS; there is an author -securitizing actor-, a referent object -the values to protect-, and the audience- who is to be convinced that the referent object is in danger if not handle with exceptional measures- and the action of convincing occurs through speech-act when the issue is a matter of security. Even though this formulation is criticized based on its lack of consistency, in terms of the role of the audience and the securitizing actor or the insufficiency of the speech act all alone, it is still the reference point for the studies of securitization. The thesis presented the criticisms and the revisions towards the theory of securitization in general. In the following paragraphs, the concepts that are undertheorized by CS will be revisited for the study.

The problem about the concept of audience is rather a question than a problem in the first place. The question is, who is the audience? Who are the people that securitizing actor is demanding acknowledgment from? From a state-centric perspective, it could simply be the representatives in a parliament who should be convinced. When we consider this as the case, then the "real people," *the public* who will be affected by the new measures, will have no say on the matter; they could be protesting the decisions or refuse to follow them. Ken Booth criticizes this state-centric perspective since it lacks to indicate the problems of "real people in real places".⁴⁹ Considering this criticism, the reason for the securitization to raise an issue on the agenda should be contemplated once again.

Studies indicate international campaigns using securitization as a framing method resulting in a short-term positive; however, long-term negative results since when an issue is securitized, people's understanding of it changes, and the methods to deal with it are not approved in time.⁵⁰ We need to answer a few questions when discussing securitization: Who are the people in danger and need to draw attention to their security problems? Is it the state or a refugee who

⁴⁹ Booth K., 'Beyond Critical Security Studies', in Richard Wyn Jones (ed.) *Critical security studies and world politics* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005), p. 271.

⁵⁰ Duygulu Elcim, S. (2015). The Effects of Using Security Frames on Global Agenda Setting and Policy Making.

needs a higher voice when speaking about their security problems? The problems of national security are dealt with in the state mechanism; in that case, the parliament's opposition is who must be convinced. The public's consent is not often asked since it is assumed as represented through the parliament representatives, of course, in a democratic country. There are multiple audiences who should be convinced who have different expectations. I also argue that there are multiple securitizing actors alongside the state actors, elites, and any acknowledged power figures. The public is starting to engage with the role of authorship through communicative platforms, e.g., social media. When the public gains the power to designate their security agenda, then what would happen? This is the question I attempted to find answers, with this study.

There is another problem with the audience regardless of who the securitizing actor is: How do we know when the audience is accepted the securitizing act? This is another weak side of the securitization theory. Regardless of the securitizing actor's identity, who listens is the key element when we measure the acceptance. As we mentioned above, if the actor is a political elite, the parliament is the mechanism that they should convince. Roe gives the example of Tony Blair by introducing two new concepts, moral and formal support.⁵¹ Blair did not get moral support from the public who are not approving the British invasion of Iraq in 2003; however, he took the formal support he needed from the parliament. In this case, we see multiple audiences, and the one whose power dominates the others will be the audience. Balzacq et al. refer to this type of audience as the "enabling audience". Even though there are multiple audiences, the scholar should seek the enabling audience, which empowers the securitizing actor or any other authority to act towards their aim. In this case, the parliament as formal support was the enabling audience.⁵²

The power of securitization is significant. When there is an issue of power, we should consider its relation to the status of who holds it. The power relations between the securitizing actor and the audience affect the securitization. Balzacq uses this category to build steps towards the explanation of the importance of the context. He basically underlines, alongside *what* has been

⁵¹ Balzacq, T. (Ed.). (2010). *Understanding securitisation theory* p.8-9

⁵² Balzacq, T., Léonard, S., & Ruzicka, J. (2016). 'Securitization' revisited p. 500

said, it also matters that *who* said it, from *where* and he is on point while emphasizing these factors. However, even though the power relations are mostly top-down from state to public, with social media, the direction of this relation may need to be reconsidered because people who are protesting the policies on online platforms may cause a spiral effect and create a change and push governments to act in line with their wishes. Security is most of the time automatically relates itself with the state; therefore, from a critical point of view, securitization has been considered as a negative tool for states to benefit from. They consider the concept almost as a loophole and seen it as a method for states to control and manipulate the audience. However, we should consider the new communicative technologies that states simply cannot ignore. People have platforms to spread their ideas and even gather and protest via these platforms. This leads this study to the third essential element of securitization, which is the context or the venue.

Wetherell adapts prior contextual theories to security settings and underlines two types of contexts. The first one is the proximate setting that the participants take place, like meetings or summits; the other addresses the broader sociocultural accumulation of security practices.⁵³ Context is important because it affects the dynamics of communication between the author and the audience. The context could either empowers or disempowers the security actors.⁵⁴ Context-wise social media platforms are under the category of the former type of setting, participants are taking place, and they are in a continuous reaction flow. They reflect what they think, and others reflect on that. The immediate response and the dynamics of spreading the ideas and information are unseen compared to any other setting. You can sit in a room where there is a meeting, and the only response you will get is from the people in that room. However, on a stage like Twitter, you can share your opinions under a hashtag, and thousands or even millions of people can see that and interact with it. The problem with this issue could originate from the fact that these platforms are also misinformation tools. Since there are no widespread control mechanisms, people can spread any information, which decreases the platform's credibility. Further debates concerning the velocity of the spreading of misinformation and people's trust in social media platforms will be presented in the following chapter.

⁵³ Ibid.504

⁵⁴ Ibid. 504

The CS put their emphasis on the constructive power of language, and other theorists emphasized different perspectives. Williams draws attention to how images may affect the activity of securitization⁵⁵, Bourdieu,⁵⁶ Foucault,⁵⁷ and under the name of PARIS (Political Anthropological Research for International Sociology) School, Bigo⁵⁸ underlined the significant effects of practices and instruments on the feelings of *insecurity* and security. Balzacq harmonized all of these and presented his definition of securitization:

"an articulated assemblage of practices whereby heuristic artifacts (metaphors, policy tools, image repertoires, analogies, stereotypes, emotions, etc.) are contextually mobilized by a securitizing actor, who works to prompt an audience to build a coherent network of implications (feelings, sensations, thoughts, and intuitions) about the critical vulnerability of a referent object, that concurs with the securitizing actor's reasons for choices and actions, by investing the referent subject with such an aura of unprecedented threatening complexion that a customized policy must be immediately undertaken to block it." ⁵⁹

This definition quite wraps up all the possible dynamics that securitization theory got affected from so far. This definition gathers the bits and parts of the securitization theory that is presented until now. Before we engage with the thesis's main discussion, I want to present another part of a securitization. Securitization is one of the answers to the question of "what security does"; however, we did not see what securitization does in material terms. Theoretically, we saw what it should be brought about; to test if an issue is successfully securitized, there are various discussions, and we examine some of these methodological debates. But still, how do we know when an issue is successfully securitized? What is the criterion? So far, we repetitively emphasized the importance of the audience and their acceptance. However, this criterion confronted us with another problem: How do we know

⁵⁵ Williams, M. C. (2003). Words, images, enemies: Securitization and international politics. *International studies quarterly*, 47(4), 511-531.

⁵⁶ Bourdieu, P. (1990). The logic of practice, trans. R. Nice.

⁵⁷ Foucault, M. (1991). *The Foucault effect: Studies in governmentality*. University of Chicago Press.

⁵⁸ Bigo, D. (2002). Security and immigration: Toward a critique of the governmentality of unease. *Alternatives*, 27(1_suppl), 63-92.

⁵⁹ Balzacq, T. (Ed.). (2010). *Understanding securitisation theory* p.3

whether the audience has accepted it or not? What are the measures? In line with these questions, the problem of multiple audiences occurred. In contrast, one group of audience accepts the securitizing move others may not. In this case, by benefitting from Balzacq's work, the audience who gives power to the securitizing actor to form a policy and impose new measures is the primary audience.⁶⁰

In the following chapters, I will present the dilemma between two security issues. The first one is related to societal security in terms of its relation to the public's health security because it primarily concerns the global health agenda, and the other one concerns economic security. Scholars have disagreements about the securitization of an issue; it mainly roots from the securitization eventually gives power to the authorities to act freely in a broader domain without restrictions since it legitimizes extreme measures. Therefore, the scholars that see securitization as a negative tool and as an alternative defend *politicization*⁶¹ which keeps the problems on the level of normal politics rather than exceptional ones. Especially, societal security issues bring about various disturbances among the scholars. For this study's purposes, we can take the issue of global health and similar securitizing acts in the scope of societal security to examine in terms of securitization and various securitizing actors.

1.4 To Securitize or Not to Securitize: Cases of Securitization

One of the motivations of securitization, as we mentioned above, was its power to raise awareness, and global health problems are matters that require this awareness. This issue is mainly debated, with the HIV/AIDS being at the center of the discussions; however, we can show a new reference; the Covid-19 pandemic is the world's most recent health problem, which required strict measures to deal with it. These strict measures are the reasons why scholars discussed these issues in terms of securitization. The measures should be within the limits of reason; however, in times of emergency, they tend to broaden. If we start declaring every issue as an emergency, we give limitless power to act to the authorities. Another outcome of this constant declaration of security issues might be our desensitization against the warnings that

⁶⁰ Balzacq, T., Léonard, S., & Ruzicka, J. (2016). 'Securitization' revisited p.34

⁶¹ Buzan, B., Wæver, O. & De Wilde, J. (1998), A New Framework p. 29

declare an emergency; hence, the problem would continue to spread because the securitization would simply lose its power and impact. When it comes to issues of health or the environment, scholars are hesitant about whether to engage the issue with security politics or make an effort to keep that within the borders of normal politics. Elbe discusses in his article the securitization of HIV/AIDS and draws attention to what happens when the issue is securitized, the governments engage within military terms, and the issue would be no longer in the field of the civil society but rather in the military zone and also it opens a door for authorities to intervene and ignore civil rights and liberties.⁶² Even the armed forces may intervene in a health issue. Youde⁶³, another scholar against the securitization of health issues by presenting the example of avian flu, argues that the avian flu widened the gap between the West and the other countries. Especially for the Southern countries, the Western discourse has developed anxieties by presenting them as responsible for spreading the flu. This attitude developed as an act of securitization of a specific identity (Third World countries) through the securitization of a health problem.

When we consider all acts of securitization, they depend on basically determining a threat. These threats shift shapes according to the development level of the countries. While Third World countries are dealing with problems such as clean water, health, and food, developed countries do not see these as a threat to their daily lives. It is like Maslow's pyramid adapted to the range of development of the countries and the issues they value according to their development level. People who can supply their daily needs sufficiently are going one step higher. For the Western countries, as they develop, the threat was shifted into different problems. Currently, immigrants and refugees are considered to be a part of security issues in more developed countries.⁶⁴ For the Covid-19 virus, Trump has used the frame of "Chinese virus repetitively"⁶⁵. Donald Trump and the rising right-wing populist leaders in Europe often benefit from this discourse against refugees and imposing xenophobic opinions on the public.

⁶² Elbe, S. (2006). Should HIV/AIDS be securitized? The ethical dilemmas of linking HIV/AIDS and security. *International studies quarterly*, 50(1), 119-144.

⁶³ Youde, J. (2008). Who's Afraid of a Chicken? Securitization and Avian Flu. *Democracy and Security*, 4(2), 148-169.

⁶⁴ For instance, Krzyzanowski, M., Triandafyllidou, A., & Wodak, R. (2018). The mediatization and the politicization of the 'refugee crisis' in Europe. *Journal of immigrant & refugee studies*, 16, 1-14. Kaunert, C., de Deus Pereira, J., & Edwards, M. (2020). Thick Europe, ontological security and parochial Europe: the re-emergence of far-right extremism and terrorism after the refugee crisis of 2015. *European Politics and Society*, 1-20.

⁶⁵ BBC, Mach 2020. "Trump grilled on use of term 'Chinese virus'" <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-us-canada-51953315>

The frame "Chinese virus"⁶⁶ is another piece of evidence that was pulling an issue of health problem onto the basis of identity securitization. In this way, the public would feel threatened because the image of a dangerous virus is now combined with a certain type of identity. The health system in the United States is heavily criticized during the pandemic; this intentional use of the frame depicts an attempt towards diversion. If the people were to rise against the current health system and declare it a threat in terms of its inefficiency, this would be only a matter of the health system. However, with this frame, *the responsible of the virus* is implicated and targeted as a certain group of people, years of accumulating tradition of determining an enemy and imposing sanctions on a specific identity shaped Trump's discourse and directed people towards another reason instead of solely blaming health system. Der Derian, a scholar from the Critical School, reflects upon the identity problem and its relation to the occurrence of the national security concept as follows:

"Did not our collective identity, once isolationist, neutralist, and patriotic, become transfigured into a new god that was born and fearful of a nuclear, internationalist, interventionist power? The evidence is in the reconceptualization: as distance, oceans, and borders became less of a protective barrier to alien identities, and a new international economy required penetration into other worlds, national interest became too weak a semantic guide. We found a stronger one in national security."⁶⁷

For Covid-19, as it is valid for HIV/AIDS, some countries declared it as a Chinese construction or refused to acknowledge it as a threat to take precautions immediately, such as Britain. Finnemore and Sikkink presented a concept called norm cascade⁶⁸; the concept simply means when an issue gains momentum in the international system, it becomes easier for hesitant states to adapt. For the Covid-19, the drastic numbers of infected people and the death rates supported states to acknowledge it as a threat; however, until that cascade occurs and the numbers pushed states to take action, the suspicious attitude of states towards the virus caused dramatic results. Why were states not willing to take action immediately? The disease was fatal and created threats to people's lives. Therefore, it could be simply categorized as a matter of security. Why

⁶⁶Jérôme Viala-Gaudefroy, Dana Lindaman "Donald Trump's 'Chinese virus': the politics of naming" <https://theconversation.com/donald-trumps-chinese-virus-the-politics-of-naming-136796>

⁶⁷ Der Derian, J. (1995) 'The value of security' p.163

⁶⁸ Finnemore, M., & Sikkink, K. (1998). International norm dynamics and political change. *International organization*, 887-917. p. 893

the states who could benefit from the securitization empower their positions by declaring the problem as a national security problem did not follow that path? Even though this situation would justify extreme measures, they were not willing to take action. In this case, there was an opportunity cost by choosing a value (health) over other values (economics or diversion from other agendas) for the countries which did not benefit from this securitization. The virus was coming from a Chinese city and argued to be an artificial virus. *Could this be a Chinese project?* This suspicion is rooted in China's perception as a growing power/threat and the problem of desensitization. People adapt and start to believe less in issues that are declared as fatal security problems since there are plenty of them, a virus that will cause a lockdown in the world considered as a conspiracy theory. The case turns into a story of a liar shepherd. If every issue can be securitized, then in time, it means none of the issues can be securitized; you lose faith in the securitizing actors.

1.4.1. Covid-19 and Securitization

Even though this study focuses on the United Kingdom, a country that did not implement strict measures initially, several countries preferred the deal with the issue by using the power of security. Under this section, I will present states who performed the role of the securitizing actor during the process of the pandemic.

The Covid-19 pandemic has been dealt with, embracing different policies for each country; since the world was experiencing the virus altogether, there was not a single correct model to vanish the virus for all countries. The set of policies that was working for one country was not even implementable for the other. However, there was a repeating theme among several countries towards the securitization of the virus and to implement new measures almost on a militaristic level.⁶⁹ In this section, I will present several examples of the securitization of the virus in different countries.

Israel has become one of the countries that engaged with the extreme measures immediately after the spread started. The first case in Israel was confirmed on February 21st, 2020. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated on March 14th, "We are at war with an invisible enemy, the virus, and we'll deploy against it measures we've only previously deployed against

⁶⁹ For more: Akgül-Açıkmeşe, S.(2020) "Covid-19 ve Güvenlikleştirme", *Dış Politikada Kadınlar 2020 Almanağı*

terrorists. Some of these will be invasive and impinge on the privacy of those they would affect. We must adopt a new routine."⁷⁰ Israel is famously known as being a highly militaristic society. Therefore, Netanyahu chose to present the virus as an enemy and engaged with the measures they engaged with when they are in physical conflicts. According to Al-Monitor Mossad, Israel's national intelligence agency has "received instructions to obtain test kits and ventilators from wherever they can at whatever price and by whatever means." Since Mossad is not known for its peaceful profile but rather known for its militaristic engagements, these instructions could have even cause scenarios that physical conflict was on the table. As of now,⁷¹ Israel has the highest rate of vaccination of the population, with 52%.

Israel was not the only country engaging with the virus with a security language; French President Emanuel Macron also considered the Covid-19 pandemic as it is in a war and therefore requires implementing extraordinary measures on March 16th, 2020, and declared lockdown enforced by police. He stated, "We are at war, certainly in healthcare, we are not fighting an army, nor we are fighting another nation. The enemy here is invisible, elusive; it progresses. It thus requires a call to arms. We are *at war*."⁷² His twenty-minute statement included the phrase "We are at war" repeatedly (six times). This example presents a securitization example. Where an issue is ripped off from its context and securitized by using a militarized discourse, legitimizing the measures that will follow this statement because, in times of war, extreme actions could be legitimized easier since the nature of the war is chaotic and requires rather unordinary methods and tactics to defeat the enemy. The enemy that Macron and other state leaders draw is almost as dangerous as a terrorist or even more. By moving from the field of politics to the field of security, leaders open rooms for more maneuvers for their actions.

Hungary is another example that is fighting pandemic by presenting more powers to their Leader Victor Orban. On March 30th, 2020, Hungary passed a law allowing Orban to rule by

⁷⁰ I24News: "Israel: Unveiling broad coronavirus measures, Netanyahu says all leisure activities to be halted" <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel/1584216067-coronavirus-all-leisure-activities-to-be-halted-in-israel-netanyahu-says-unveiling-broad-measures>

⁷¹ March 28, 2021

⁷² BBC: "We are at war- Macron" 16, March 2020. <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/51917380>

decree.⁷³ Already powerful leader has been granted more power to rule without parliament's approval to declare state emergencies and implement measures as he found necessary.

Securitization has been criticized because it pulls an issue to a security level and grants the state more power to use. When these examples and many more are considered, we can see states embraced securitization as a methodology to deal with the virus but also to gain more power, as many critiques would assume. However, the case study examines in this thesis presents a different situation. The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom repeatedly stated the continuation of the daily lives. Why Boris Johnson did not choose to obtain more power while the door was open, why did he choose to embrace almost de-securitization of the ongoing pandemic, and most importantly, how did people react to this policy of the government?

What Johnson did might be calming for citizens if we were living in an isolated world. However, telling people who are getting their news and information worldwide that this situation is not dangerous as it seems caused a severe backlash against the government. People were informed about the situation; their neighbors were declaring lockdowns and total shutdowns while they were not taking any measures to deal with the virus. Rather, Johnson was shaking hands and saying that they were prepared. We cannot pinpoint what was the exact motive for Johnson's government to choose a different path; the British government could be prioritizing other political issues over an unknown virus. However, while other states declare this virus as a strong enemy and they are at war with this danger, people in the United Kingdom were left vulnerable and exposed to it. People reacted from this point of vulnerability, and both media and the public criticized the government's decision towards their policies on the continuation of daily lives. The international media mentioned the virus was fatal and required lockdowns, and using the face masks was crucial to stop or at least slow down the spread and keep the health system running. While people were exposed to international news spreading from social media or for older generations from television, the videos of people falling dead in the streets of China and Italy were circulating online (either they were true or false)⁷⁴, and their own government was acting with indifference to all these, they needed to make them hear their

⁷³ DW: "Hungary passes law allowing Viktor Orban to rule by decree": <https://www.dw.com/en/hungary-passes-law-allowing-viktor-orban-to-rule-by-decree/a-52956243>

voice to convince them this is a security issue which needs attention and implementing of the necessary measures; therefore, the backlash against the government took its place on Twitter along with other media outlets.

1.5 State vs. Public as the Securitizing Actors

In this study, I embraced a different methodology rather than chasing after only discourse; for the purposes of the argument, I examined the people who are using Twitter as the securitizing actor, and therefore the tweets they post became the elements that I should analyze in order to understand its effects. Do these tweets cause people to think a specific matter has an "unprecedented threatening complexion" ⁷⁵and be willing to take steps just because *someone* said it so?

Balzacq argues, "language does not construct reality; at best, it shapes our perception of it."⁷⁶ because language cannot change issues' essence. He gives the example of a typhoon and argues, "threats are not only institutional; some of them can actually wreck entire political communities regardless of the use of language."⁷⁷ These cases are the ones where we actually can benefit from the securitization of an issue. A typhoon is dangerous by the necessity of its essence; however, in a political spectrum where every issue is declared as a matter of national security, people tend to believe less in the discourses of the securitizing actors. However, if the states only declare emergencies when there is an actual emergency, then people would know that there is actually a problem and take precautions, and even if it does not change the essence of the threat, it could affect the results drastically. Even though we can speculate on the matter, we do not have evidence that if a town would face a typhoon threat and the authorities announced its coming, people tend to take precautions without considering whether it is true or not; because of its dangerous essence. In this case, after an earthquake, while expecting a higher magnitude, people tended to listen to every expert on TVs and following accounts that are providing information about the earthquakes and the level of anxiety about the expected earthquake ascends, but in time the trust in the news and so-called newly appearing earthquake

⁷⁵ Balzacq, T. (Ed.). (2010). *Understanding securitisation theory* p.3

⁷⁶ Ibid. p. 12

⁷⁷ Ibid.p.13

experts decreases and people learn to survive among this misinformation by determining trusted sources, authorities and deal with the constant anxiety. As credible sources share calming news, people's level of anxiety starts to decrease in time.⁷⁸

In the case of securitization, for the sake of the study, I will ground my work on the studies that argue in times of emergencies, people tend to believe more in what is said. However, the growing gap between the state and the public causes the difference between the agendas and opens a way for the need of various securitizing actors. Nevertheless, as the gap grows, people tend to be more willing to determine their own agenda, especially in societal security matters. In the book called "Why Nations Fail?" Acemoğlu and Robinson discuss the constructing power of the creative destruction and give examples to various sovereigns who did not allow the new machines that can manufacture more in comparison to human labor. One of the examples belongs to a priest-to-be, William Lee, who designed a machine that free many people from hand-knitting. When he asked for a patent to Queen Elizabeth the First, she simply refused to give a patent to the machine. He repetitively turned down by the King of France and by James the first, the successor of Elizabeth the first.

All these sovereigns rejected to grant a patent because "It would throw people out of work, create unemployment and political instability, and threaten royal power. The stocking frame was an innovation that promised huge productivity increases, but it also promised creative destruction."⁷⁹ This provides a perspective when the values to protect do not match the public and the state mechanism. The stocking frame was the immigrants and refugees of that period. Political stability is what is under threat for the state; on the other hand, the public could benefit from the machines, and it is actually helpful for them in perspective. The values they wanted to protect caused the public to work more. Therefore, the gap between the state and the public matters in terms of security. On one side, the state securitizes machines, causing the formation of groups such as Luddites, who destroy textile machines because they were afraid they would

⁷⁸ For further information: Oh, O., Kwon, K. H., & Rao, H. R. (2010, December). An Exploration of Social Media in Extreme Events: Rumor Theory and Twitter during the Haiti Earthquake 2010. In *Iciss* (Vol. 231, pp. 7332-7336).

⁷⁹ Robinson, J., & Acemoglu, R. (2012). *Why nations fail*. New York: Crown Publishing Group. Chapter 7.

be out of jobs because of them. On the other side, people needed to work more because of the late adaptation to new technologies. The problematic identity, the enemy, was the machines for them. This securitization of the machines caused countries to develop slower in the long run. Even though we encounter many doomsday scenarios caused by the robots invading earth, we can now integrate new technologies into our lives. The technological developments are replaced in discourse with a certain group of people that would steal the residents' jobs. The discourse against the new technologies is not valid or supported anymore; it would not bring any votes; therefore, there are different identities that occur to securitize. However, even though the state discourse tries to catch the societal problems, there are issues that would not benefit their political position. Therefore, the gap still exists, and that gap provides society to organize and reflect.

1.5.1 NGOs and Media Outlets as Securitizing Actors

Securitization is mainly attached to authority figures; however, securitization of every issue does not benefit the governments or authorities each time. There are times that securitizing an issue costs more than not securitizing it, or prioritizing another issue would be more beneficial over a security issue. In the case of the United Kingdom, we cannot simply detect what caused the government to choose not to act at the beginning; it might be their simple negligence, prioritization of economic interests, or they might be dealing with the BREXIT agenda and prioritizing that over any other. However, as a result, we know they followed a different path from other countries until the pandemic reached an undeniable point as a security threat. In cases when the public is suffering from a problem and the government is not simply engaging with that problem, there are several possible scenarios that have been observed in reply to the authorities during history. Under this section, I will present non-governmental organizations and their activities about certain cases where states were not engaging with these emergency issues. The securitizing role of the NGOs will be presented with several examples. There are cases in which their securitization attempts resulted in success, and there are cases in which these attempts did not find a response from the authorities and failed. However, these examples are important for the study to show the role of the securitizing actor was not only limited to a certain class of people who are somehow related to the political authority. There are newly emerging identities who are using the power of securitization in the position of the securitizing

actor; therefore, it opens a door for the public to be in that position with these newly emerging social media platforms.

During the Cold War period, states embraced the proliferation policy for nuclear weapons, and immediately it turned into an arms race. Because the thought occurred if each country had them, it would balance the international system rather than let a single powerful country hold nuclear weapons. Scholars argued reciprocal proliferation would balance the international system⁸⁰, and as a result of this belief, nuclear deterrence was included in the defense doctrines in the meantime. However, there were people who were disturbed by the proliferation of nuclear weapons since they were way too dangerous *to assume* that the countries would not use them if they all had one. After the Cold War, even though NGOs and nuclear abolition activists raised voices, Nuclear Weapon States were unwilling to move towards disarmament. Against the Nuclear tests and the proliferation, World Court Project took the issue to the International Court of Justice and requested their advisory opinion.⁸¹ In 1996, ICJ declared their expectations of the states as disarmament of nuclear weapons in all aspects. After their ruling in the same year, United Nations General Assembly also adopted a resolution "to commence multilateral negotiations leading to the conclusion of a nuclear weapons convention prohibiting the development, production, testing, deployment, stockpiling, transfer, threat or use of nuclear weapons and providing for their elimination."⁸² The International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), the International Association of Lawyers against Nuclear Arms (IALANA), the International Network of Engineers and Scientists against Proliferation (INESAP) prepared a book called "*Security and Survival: The Case for a Nuclear Weapons Convention*" explaining several aspects of the nuclear weapons and how should state follow a path in the process of disarmament.

In 2007 several NGOs gathered and launched International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). As Hall states, "while governments remain as the ultimate decision-makers,

⁸⁰ Waltz, K. N. (1981). The spread of nuclear weapons: More may be better: Introduction. Sagan, S. D. (1994). The perils of proliferation: Organization theory, deterrence theory, and the spread of nuclear weapons. *International Security*, 18(4), 66-107.

⁸¹ Dalaqua, R. H. (2013). "Securing our survival (SOS)": non-state actors and the campaign for a nuclear weapons convention through the prism of securitisation theory. *Brazilian Political Science Review*, 7(3), 90-117. p.97

⁸² UN General Assembly. (1996), Resolution adopted by the General Assembly 51/45. Advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons (A/RES/51/45 M) 10 December, 1996. <http://www.un.org/documents/resga.htm>

it is NGOs that allow citizens across the globe to partake in the political process and make their voice heard."⁸³ Scientists, scholars, ordinary citizens repeatedly raised their concerns about "the threat" of nuclear weapons by using the elements of a securitizing discourse. As of 2021, we know that there are still thousands of nuclear weapons that exist worldwide; it is still an ongoing process. However, the role that NGOs performed as the securitizing actors for the case of disarmament shows us that there are actors other than political authorities who are using the power of securitization to raise awareness about an issue that states choose not to engage. With the efforts of NGOs, the nuclear weapons threat started to be discussed. Even though we cannot argue NGOs successfully securitized nuclear weapons, we can claim they played a major role in bringing disarmament discussions to the international agenda, which in the future might be considered as the first steps of the successful securitization of nuclear weapons.

Another example is NGOs securitizing poverty in Indonesia. Two Indonesian organizations Bina Swadaya Yogyakarta (BSY) and CD Bedhesta are the two non-governmental organizations engaged with the securitization of poverty when Indonesia was going through a serious economic crisis between 1997 and 1998⁸⁴. Even though they both started to engage with the community by answering their needs and helping them by providing healthcare, in time, they started embracing a securitizing language to draw the government's attention to the problem of poverty and engaged with mobilization. Activists of CD Bedhesta declared that the "thick-skinned local leaders in village decision-making had generated *a threat* to the poor, especially those who are less connected to the local leaders through kinship, political affiliation, and comradeship" (emphasis added)⁸⁵ The executive director of the organization stated "We simply cannot let the poor people become the victims of the greedy local leaders who disburse development fund for their political and personal purposes. Thus, we must take development (initiatives) away from these swindlers and speculators and give them back to the people"⁸⁶ The language openly targets a privileged group as a threat to the poor people. Even though CD Bedhesta could not take legal support from the government, which they openly target, they encourage villagers to be more self-reliant. BSY also embraced a similar line of thought and

⁸³ Hall, X. (2005) "Abolition is the only way: introduction to the NGO presentations". Presentation given on 11 May, 2005 at the 2005 NPT Review Conference. NY <http://www.un.org/en/conf/npt/2005/statements11may.html>

⁸⁴ Hadiwinata, B. S. (2004). Securitizing poverty: The role of NGOs in the protection of human security in Indonesia. *Presentation, Singapore*. P.20

⁸⁵ Ibid. p.22

⁸⁶ Ibid.

engaged with a similar discourse. They launched a program named "Project Support to Homeworkers' Response to the Economic Crisis". This program also aimed a similar goal towards being self-reliant. They achieved to support new initiatives and micro-entrepreneurs in poor villages and increase production; as a result, without government support, people helped each other and create momentum. We can say unlike the disarmament campaign for nuclear weapons, the target audience here was not states. The NGOs tried to raise awareness among the public against the government's negligence about poverty in the country by targeting people who are in the government. The audience they wanted to convince about this threat was the public. Poverty was already a problem and a threat to their well-being; however, NGOs humanize this threat put it in the form of an enemy carrying the local leaders' face. Here the securitizing actors were NGOs, and the audience was the citizens because they could create more impact in comparison to their leaders and authority figures.

A similar example is observed in Bangladesh; a study examines the securitizing language presented in the most popular, English-language, and influential three newspapers in the country: The Daily Star, New Age, Bangladesh Today.⁸⁷ As the study examines, even though Bangladesh suffered from misgovernance for decades, they have an active media presenting the misgovernance. The newspaper writers are journalists, academics, and policy analysts who are well-educated, trying to draw attention to the misgovernance of Bangladesh in any way they can. While doing that, they engage with securitizing discourse repetitively. Here is an example was written by The Daily Star newspaper's assistant editor wrote in 2005: "We no longer enjoy the most fundamental of freedoms - the freedom from fear. If you cannot even go to campaign in your constituency without fear for your security - if you cannot hold a political rally for fear of death- then where can you go and what kind of politics can you engage in?"⁸⁸ Similar pieces carrying the concern of being killed in cross-fires or not being subjected to arbitrary arrests are given a place in the newspaper articles by different writers. They are simply worried about the government because rather than the state providing security to the public, they threaten them and become a threat to their well-being. At this point, even though this is a security matter,

⁸⁷ Barthwal-Datta, Monika. "Securitising Threats without the State: A case study of misgovernance as a security threat in Bangladesh." *Review of International Studies* (2009): 277-300.

⁸⁸ Ibid. p.293

people cannot expect the state to securitize their misgovernance; they try to engage with the individuals of the society to raise awareness, and while doing that, they might embrace a securitizing language.

Another study examines 38 campaigns' discourses conducted by NGOs to test whether embracing a securitizing language would carry the campaign to success.⁸⁹ The campaigns included in the study are engaging with campaigns ranging from HIV-AIDS, blood diamonds to sweatshops and women mutilations, examining a broad scale. The results show among these 38 campaigns, we cannot build a direct causal link that a securitized campaign would be more successful or claim the number of campaigns engaging with securitizing discourse is increasing.⁹⁰ However, it still provides us NGOs are also engaging with securitizing discourse to reach their aims, and this also means they are engaging with the role of the securitizing actor overall. Blood diamonds campaign is among the campaigns which embraced a securitizing language and reached success in political terms.

These examples are included in the study to show the role of the securitizing actor is not only limited to state-related political authorities; NGOs, media, civil society are also being part of the political issues and as states engaging with political matters with security language to raise more awareness and draw attention these newly emerging actors are also engaging with similar methods to achieve similar goals. In this thesis, it has been argued that social media grants the public certain power to securitize issues; however, it does not do it with this purpose people use these platforms to reach their goals. Social media is not the securitizing actor, but it gives a certain power to the people who are using it. It is simply a platform that people use to share their lives and experiences but also to create an impact or to solve a problem from time to time. There will be thousands of different voices, but the ones who are resonating with other people will be shared more and will spread more, and if it creates the necessary momentum, then it might achieve its goal and securitize the issue; if not, then it will remain just like a tweet among millions of other tweets. Social media platforms offered a reasonable ground for people to

⁸⁹ Duygulu-Elcim, Ş.(2020) “Değişen Güvenlik Alanında Sivill Toplum Aktörlerinin Güvenikleştirme Stratejilerine Eleştirel Bir Bakış: Hedefler ve Sonuçlar” *TASAM*.

⁹⁰ Ibid. 488

inform each other and organize when needed, even though it brought about its own advantages and disadvantages, which will be discussed thoroughly in the following chapter.



2. THE POWER OF INFORMATION

Information is famously paired with power. The ones who hold information known as the ones who also holds power. How did this equation evolve over time? Does information still belong to a specific class? In this chapter, starting from these questions, I will draw a framework that embraces the answers and demonstrates the communication models, which will help us understand social media and its impact on securitization.

This chapter aims to harmonize two different pieces of literature; so far, the literature on security and securitization in the international relations discipline is presented and discussed, including the contemporary debates; from now on, related discussions on the communication literature will be presented. At the end of this chapter, I aim to finish the theoretical framework in harmony with these two disciplines.

Starting with the printing venture, new media is expected to empower the state; however, its impact turned out to be the opposite, the fact that information belongs to a certain class started to shatter.⁹¹ Newspapers have simply symbolized a rebellion against the state monopoly of the information. Dissemination of the information was aimed inside the public; however, the sovereigns over the information were anxious about this rebellion. Hence the censorship became one of the fortresses for information, symbolizing that the information still belongs to the sovereign. The sovereign wants to hold power to determine the enemy, decide on the exception, the issues of the country, and set the agenda. However, printing spread these to the public and involved them in the process. The public had an opinion about these issues and hence the opportunity to disagree and question those decisions. Censorship became a natural defense developed by the sovereign since the power it holds with information could change hands.⁹² Many countries experienced this procedure when faced with printing machines; the machines were declared as security problems since the power to disseminate information could form an

⁹¹ Jazić, Ž. (1998). Paul Kennedy: Preparing for the Twenty-First Century. *Politička misao: časopis za politologiju*, 35(4), 257-261.

⁹² Robinson, J., & Acemoglu, R. (2012). *Why nations fail* 200-202

opposition and, worse, the spread of these opposing ideas among the public. Ibrahim Muteferrika, who brought printing to the Ottomans in 1727, was not able to print in more than 17 books in 14 years due to strict control over his work. After he died, his family also could not continue his business due to strict censorship. As Acemoğlu and Robinson put it⁹³, these new developments cause the fear of creative destruction, and they argue for states, the best thing to do is to catch up rather than resisting and falling behind. In order to understand what the dissemination of the information is capable of, I will examine the steps of this spread and see how the monopoly of states and sovereigns over information has collapsed and what this collapse caused in the long term in terms of security issues.

This chapter presents Twitter and social media platforms' features and attempts to explain how they differ from the previous communicative tools and how these differences create an impact. To understand the Covid-19 related Twitter analysis in the third chapter, I will examine this platform's role as a context granting unaccustomed roles to different identities in terms of securitization.

2.1 Six Revolutions of Information

There are six information revolutions until the age of social media in the world of communication.⁹⁴ The dissemination of the information started with the invention of writing around 3400 BC, and after that, the second revolution was the print media around the 15th century; even though literacy and having access to the books was a privilege, this was a significant development. The third revolution was the mass media's occurrence; newspapers reaching out to the public led people to participate in politics in the 19th century. The liberal hope for this new public sphere was about these platforms offering a more democratized political spectrum eventually. The fourth revolution being the inclusion of entertainment inside the world of mass media at the beginning of the 20th century, the fifth is that people had these tools inside their homes to communicate and socialize, which was starting to be common in the late 1900s, and Fang did not openly put the sixth one; however, he caught a glimpse of the age

⁹³ Ibid. p. 173

⁹⁴ The following information on the 6 revolutions of information are all taken from: Fang, I. (1997). *A history of mass communication: Six information revolutions*. Taylor & Francis.

we live in and draw a picture of the age of social media's interactivity in both directions; therefore, the last part is radically different from the other revolutions, in terms of its interactivity. After the print media, the television came and broadcasted news to people's houses. However, these new tools, like television, still protected the basic premise of the one-way communication models. There were a sender and the party who received the message. Only this time, the number of receivers was a lot more than it used to be; also, the profile of the receivers was drastically different. The reaction of the public to the received information was not a part of these communication models. From the previous chapters, we can remember this reaction is also considered a perlocutionary act in Austin's speech act theory. Therefore, the level that we expect securitization to occur was not achieved yet. This chapter will focus on the distinctive changes that the sixth revolution has provided us to discuss securitization through social media.

The chapter will start with the theoretical basis by presenting Barnlund's communication model, and by considering this model as the basis, I will put social media and its basic premises under the microscope to understand how it works and how it changes the ways we communicate. Eventually, at the end of this chapter, the question I attempted to answer is how social media provides a ground for ordinary people/citizens the right to securitize by eliminating the traditional media outlets and alters the relation between the author and the audience.

2.2 A Simultaneous Flow of Communication

There are two known and most accepted models of communication; Shannon and Weaver model the first one⁹⁵ formed out of a sender, a message, and a receiver, which was moving only towards one direction; however, Barnlund⁹⁶ came up with a second model called *the transactional model of communication*, his model is one of the most systematic models and also a very complex one when other communication models considered. The theory's basic premise was predicated on the postulations that communication is *dynamic, continuous, circular*,

⁹⁵ Shannon, C. E., & Weaver, W. (1949). *The mathematical theory of communication*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

⁹⁶ Barnlund, D. C. (1970). A transactional model of communication. *Language behavior: A book of readings in communication*, 43-61.

unrepeatable, and inherently *complex*.⁹⁷ What Barnlund infer from these postulations, in the model of communication, the activities of sending and receiving are simultaneous. An interpersonal dialogue includes parties who engage with the processes of decoding and encoding, but apart from these essentials, which many scholars already point, Barnlund adds a set of cues; public cues, private cues, and nonverbal behavioral cues. To explain these new concepts briefly, decoding is the process we attribute meaning to a word or an action of ours; encoding is when it is accepted by the other party, and the cues are invisible elements that are surrounding the dialogue. The conditions of a venue that is open to the public, or the conditions that offer us a private dialogue or even just a symbol, can provide us an understanding without speaking. Instead of explaining each of these in detail, I find it more beneficial to give place to a scene from a movie called: “A portrait of a lady on fire”⁹⁸. In the movie, an artiste (Marianne) paints a portrait of a young woman (Héloïse); while painting, Marianne starts to tell her observance of Heloise because her main job is to observe her and put these into her portrait. She counts a number of behaviors that Heloise does while she was happy, angry, nervous, or sad. In reply to these on-point observations, Heloise starts to tell the artiste’s behaviors too that she does in different situations, even though observing Marianne is not her job. She says, “When you’re observing me, who do you think I’m observing?”. We can see here, a dialogue occurs between two people, even just looking at one another, in two simultaneously occurring channels. In a dialogue, there is a non-stop continuous flow of information between two parties. In this case, the one who is looking at something is also looked at; there is a continuous circular movement in the conversation. The basic premise of Barnlund’s transactional model of communication provides us a systematic picture of this dynamism with various elements.

⁹⁷ Akin, J., Goldberg, A., Myers, G., & Stewart, J. (Eds.). (2013). *Language Behavior: A Book of Readings in Communication. For Elwood Murray on the Occasion of His Retirement* (Vol. 41). Walter de Gruyter. p. 52

⁹⁸ Sciamma, C. (2019). *Portrait of a Lady on Fire*. Neon.

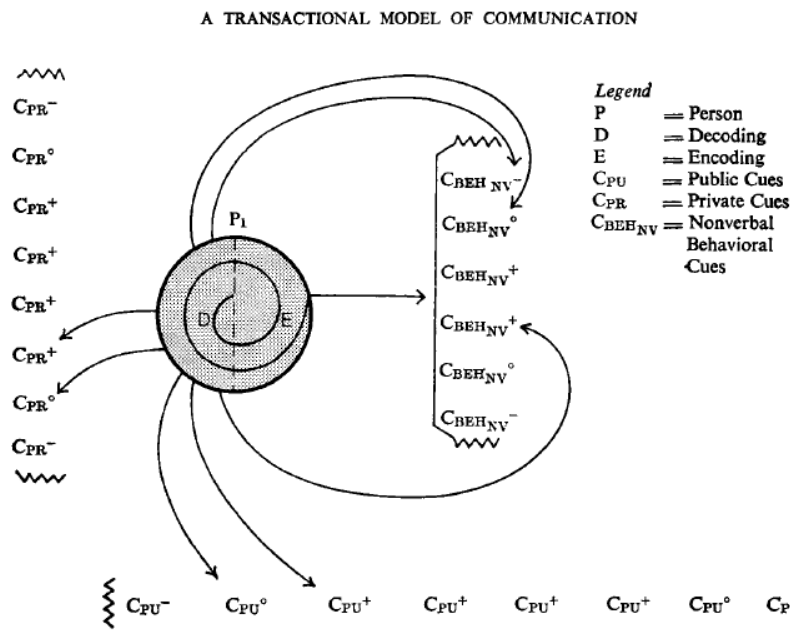


Figure 2: Barnlund's Transactional Model of Communication

Communication inherently consists of a two-way flow in its natural order. The question here is, “How this issue applies to our case?”. When we acknowledge that there are two channels simultaneously transmitting information to one another, the question of “Who is the sender?” arises. The sender is the key subject in creating the message, but if we send and receive at the same time, how we will clearly detect *the* message. Specifically, for the case of securitization, so far, we attributed the role of the author (or the sender in terms of communicative theory) to the statespersons or the elites. However, adopting this model to the securitization theory would bring in a new perspective. In adaptation to this specific model, securitization would be an example of instant dialogue. One could try to point fingers at an issue, but if the audience does not approve, they simultaneously give the author other messages in the direction towards de-securitization of that matter or indifference about the issue, and hence, the roles change instantly. The author now becomes the one who receives a message in the first place and turns out to be the receiver and approaches the matter with an indifference which was attempted to be securitized. In the following parts, the role of the author in communicative theory will be questioned in detail; however, in order to reflect on what kind of author we are talking about in the social media era, the dynamics of social media will be investigated in the following paragraphs.

2.3 Social Media as a Venue and As A New Way of Communication

Social media offers users a decentralized many-to-many communication model. You can share a photograph among many other people that could reach millions of people. These platforms are primarily created in the late 2000s, and since then, they gained importance day by day, and now, they are deeply integrated into social life. These communication tools, even though, at this point they carry mostly the purpose to advertise, value the user experience, and spend a considerable amount of money to advance that experience so that people keep spending more time on the platforms. Naturally, the time spent on these platforms helped these firms to gather immense amounts of data and improve their algorithms accordingly. The benefits and the problems that these metadata causes are another issue that scholars often discuss in terms of democracy and digital media, which will be examined in the study.

A real-life dialogue gets help from its being reactionary; you say something, and you get a reply, and most of the time, you do not need to wait a day or two to get a response. It is fast, and as mentioned priorly, it is, in fact, simultaneous. However, a tool used for communicative purposes disrupts this simultaneous flow because the message is now delivered via *a medium*. There were different methods and tools to communicate throughout history, and the communication evolved towards only one purpose: To offer people a life-like dialogue with a minimum amount of noise and delay. Applications offer people the delivery of their messages almost at the exact second. The video calls provide a basis for people to see one another, even they offer side features, for checking if the other party sees the message or whether the message is delivered. These checking mechanisms are ways to control dialogues, and many apps provide these features to their users to offer healthier, faster, and life-like dialogues. The closer they can create this life-like model where we can receive and send messages in seconds, or in other words, as the time is shortened between these two actions (sending and receiving), people will be more attached to these channels to build social networks. These platforms are currently upgrading their applications by adding more layers to communication channels, for instance, making them available to live broadcasts. You are put in a position that provides you to get and give reaction to the other party instantly. Social media platforms provide channels that people can communicate with, even a platform like Instagram, which aims for people to share their photographs with other users, now has a solid integration to instant messaging, story sharing,

and live broadcasting. Platforms aim to get more speed in the communicative channels. The faster the interface companies provide to the users; the more users can look at, engage with, or communicate in shorter periods of time. Given the fact that they are now the primary tools for people to create networks and communicate, we can say that these companies succeeded in their initial goal.

Even though these platforms aim for a similar experience with real-life, they offer different experiences that people instead choose over real-life experiences. Many teenagers with a growing age scope prefer texting rather than speaking on the phone.⁹⁹ These mediums *shape the way we communicate*. In real life, if you are standing up against a person, that person would expect you to say something; otherwise, if you stand up and just be silent, it would not be considered normal behavior. Even your stance without saying anything actually delivers a message. However, if you have an account and stay quiet on social media, no one expects you to speak. This option, to follow dialogues or news from an approachable distance and have the right to remain silent or speak up if wanted, is an important reason when signing up to these platforms. Although, these expectations might change depending on your popularity and activity on the platforms in the process of time. If you are a public figure, then when an event occurs, people may wonder what you will be saying; however, it is still not the same for the ordinary participants of social media.

Nevertheless, we can say that these mediums shape how we communicate and our expectations from other people. Tüfekçi¹⁰⁰ in her famous work, argues, “as technologies change, and as they alter the societal architectures of visibility, access, and community, they also affect the contours of the public sphere, which in turn affects social norms and political structures.” McLuhan¹⁰¹ takes a step back and presents an argument on a bigger picture scale: “The technologies are not only the inventions which people use but also are mediums which re-invent people.” Technologies re-invent: How we think, communicate, and act.

⁹⁹ Sarla, G. S. (2020). Texting or Calling: A Comparison. *Journal of Open Source Developments*, 7(2), 18-21. p.20

¹⁰⁰ Tufekci, Z. (2017). *Twitter and tear gas: The power and fragility of networked protest*. Yale University Press.p.6

¹⁰¹ McLuhan, M., Gordon, W. T., Lamberti, E., & Scheffel-Dunand, D. (2011). *The Gutenberg galaxy: The making of typographic man*. University of Toronto Press. p.28

So far, this chapter included the discussions of why people use these platforms, why these platforms are so eager to develop themselves, and how these tools affect people's lives.¹⁰² As of now, we will focus on a specific platform: Twitter; and draw a framework around this distinct type of social media. In terms of Twitter, the following parts will answer these questions: what are the essential characteristics of Twitter, why is it important in terms of this thesis, is there any connection between Twitter and political activism, and do people trust Twitter? Eventually, by considering these answers, I will conclude the chapter with Twitter's possible connection to the process of securitization and move towards the data analysis in order to present this possible relation.

2.4 A Bird Chirps and A User Tweets: What is Twitter?

Twitter is a microblog founded in March 2006 and launched after four months in July by Jack Dorsey, Evan Williams, Noah Glass, and Biz Stone, but Jack Dorsey is known as the figurehead of the company. Twitter aimed to provide people a platform to share their life updates in 140 characters or less; however, the network mapping was different from the other platforms: The reciprocity was not a condition. People could be following whomever they want, but this would not necessarily mean that the followed party needs to follow them back. In terms of individual user accounts, this was different compared to Facebook's binary system; you add someone as a friend, and if they accept, you would be in each other's lists. Twitter removed this principle and provided a basis for people to follow and interact with friends, celebrities, statespersons even when they do not accept you as an acquaintance. To this day, it is still argued as one of the most attractive features of Twitter; you can react to a public figure without their confirmation. On Facebook, these known figures either preferred to stay anonymous or not accept anyone as friends because if they do, they will see thousands of unrelated people's updates on their wall. Therefore, known people chose to stay out of Facebook and not open their social lives to the public; however, Twitter broke this *wall*. The principle of reciprocity was abolished; these known people could share what they think with thousands of people and still only see what they are following and interested in, in their timeline. Therefore, Twitter had

¹⁰²Also, there are newly appearing documentaries about these issues on popular streaming platforms. E.g Rhodes L.(Producer), Orlowski J.(Director) Exposure Labs(Firm) *Social Dilemma* (2020).

the advantage of including people who are publicly known figures. This slowly existing bridge between the public and the known figures got completed with Twitter's contribution. Now, people can reach these known figures through various platforms. Twitter started its life limited to tweets that are formed mostly out of 140 characters, recently in 2017, this number doubled and became 280 characters since the company thinks languages such as Korean, Chinese, or Japanese could tell more in comparison to other languages, which are mostly had to cram their tweets to express them in 140 characters.¹⁰³

In time Twitter's role broadened from a platform that people share their life updates and share entertaining content to a new media platform that people share the news as journalists. As Twitter spread around the globe, traditional media outlets started to become insufficient. The concept of citizen journalism was empowered. An article written in 2011 argues when an event occurred, such as the Mumbai bomb blast or downing of Flight 1549, the people in the field shared photographs and information, and traditional media used this information to present the news; traditional media benefits from the social media which is turning into a primary source for the news since people are able to share immediately.¹⁰⁴ Similarly, in Texas shooting with the hashtag #UTShooter, people reached information way before the traditional media via Twitter.¹⁰⁵ Now in 2021, almost anything occurring in public space finds itself a place on the internet way faster than in the traditional media; even though most of these traditional mainstream channels have their own social media branches; citizen journalism feeds the news when there is no one in the field and getting there would take hours. The traditional media I am referring to here is basically TV channels and internet websites; apart from these, print media readership is almost extinct. Even the castles of the print media like New York Times (NYT) or The Guardian are all available online, and even their own writers were arguing print media was in decline and social media is an essential way to disseminate information¹⁰⁶. The emphasis here may be put on the word *dissemination*. Social media is not just sustaining the news for the mainstream channels; it is also seen as a better way to spread the information. It is

¹⁰³ Giving you more characters to express yourself By [Aliza Rosen](https://blog.twitter.com/official/en_us/topics/product/2017/Giving-you-more-characters-to-express-yourself.html) and [Ikuhiro Ihara](#)
https://blog.twitter.com/official/en_us/topics/product/2017/Giving-you-more-characters-to-express-yourself.html

¹⁰⁴ Murthy, D. (2011). Twitter: Microphone for the masses? *Media, culture & society*, 33(5), 779-789.

¹⁰⁵ Holton, A. E. (2012). Case of the# UTShooter: The public working with, for, and around the news media. *Journal of Applied Journalism & Media Studies*, 1(2), 125-142.

¹⁰⁶ Murthy, D. (2011) Twitter: p. 786

faster, and it is definitely a lot cheaper. However, the dynamics of spreading the news on these platforms require an interrogation of the algorithm. You can post a tweet about cats which can go viral, while a tweet about a person who needs immediate help may be unanswered.

Twitter is defined as a decentralized, many-to-many platform. The decentralization of the algorithm offers users the “*American dream*”.¹⁰⁷ The studies towards understanding which kind of behavior helps a tweet to get more interaction remain unanswered. We know specific dynamics such as retweeting spreads more rather than favoriting the tweet; people who have more followers have more influence. However, what could provide a user more interaction or followers is relatively unknown since there is no particular pattern. The studies that try to measure the impact and tweet based on activity, popularity, and influence reach a conclusion that we cannot know for sure and pinpoint a certain type of behavior that causes *the cascade*.¹⁰⁸ We can depict a simple network in Twitter as a conglomeration of nodes and ties. Nodes as the users, and edges as the interpersonal ties between users. There is not a central node in the cascade behavior; any node can trigger the action. This basically means regardless of the activity, popularity, or the influence of the user, any user can create a cascade behavior. This side of the algorithm is what we can name the “American dream”: Anyone can start an initiative, and it may go viral as long as it finds its own path towards the cascade.

Twitter offers users a simple interface, it is easy to use; this is one of the reasons why it has 330 million monthly active users, and on a daily basis, it has almost 166 million active users, according to recent data analysis by the company Hootsuite in 2020.¹⁰⁹ Other fundamental features of Twitter and basically any other social media tool could be summarized as follows:

- (1) The users create the content; as long as they/we share, there is something to be looked at.
- (2) There are tags for people to label almost everything, the materials or the people in a photograph, so that other users would know, and you can tag people on a post just to notify others you are with them.
- (3) People evaluate each other's posts with likes, retweets, or

¹⁰⁷ Adams defined American Dream as : “The American Dream is that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement.” Adams, J. T. (2012). *The epic of America*. Transaction Publishers. p.xvi

¹⁰⁸ Riquelme, F., & González-Cantergiani, P. (2016). Measuring user influence on Twitter: A survey. *Information processing & management*, 52(5), 949-975.

¹⁰⁹Sehl, K. (2020), Top Twitter Demographics That Matter to Social Media Marketers: <https://blog.hootsuite.com/twitter-demographics/>

commenting via mention or retweeting; last but not least, (4) the platforms help users create a network with mutual interests or common problems using hashtags or following each other etc.¹¹⁰ These four pillars are the key characteristics of almost any social media tool, and as far as we know, these help them grow and become embedded into our social lives. All four of these elements are used when analyzing an event about social media since they are all linked; however, the fourth one opens another door for a debate.

Social media offered liberals hope for a more democratic ground; in a way, it was an *agora*¹¹¹ for every human to gather and discuss political matters. It was even better, in comparison to Ancient Greece, because there were no limitations in front of citizenship. It was a platform for people to share their thoughts and ideas with many people; this exchange of ideas even occasionally led to social movements and protests. Arab Spring is called Facebook Revolution¹¹² since people used the platform as a communicative tool and spread their thoughts. In 2011, Occupy Wall Street movement¹¹³; in 2013, Gezi Protests in İstanbul¹¹⁴ and recently with the hashtag #BlackLivesMatters the protests in the USA gained momentum¹¹⁵, these and many other protests benefitted from social media platforms to gather and act with a common goal. Therefore, it was written as a beacon of hope by scholars¹¹⁶ since they offered the power to the public to voice their problems, and if it is ignored, then organize and gather with these platforms and protest in the streets. However, the criticism was also expressed by scholars immediately; the action of writing and criticizing online was actually causing *slacktivism*¹¹⁷. This concept is brought by Morozov, arguing that people actually started to criticize the decisions from where they sat, they sign for campaigns that would help nothing but only their conscience, and basically, these easy ways to participate in the movements caused pacifism and

¹¹⁰ Lerman, K. (2007, November). User participation in social media: Digg study. In *2007 IEEE/WIC/ACM International Conferences on Web Intelligence and Intelligent Agent Technology-Workshops* (pp. 255-258).

¹¹¹ Agora is the name of the place where citizens of Ancient Greece gather and talked about their problems. Also is a center for socialization and dialogue.

¹¹² Taylor, C. (2011). Why not call it a Facebook revolution? *CNN Tech*.

¹¹³ Conover, M. D., Ferrara, E., Menczer, F., & Flammini, A. (2013). The digital evolution of occupy wall street. *PloS one*, 8(5), e64679.

¹¹⁴ Tufekci, Z. (2017). *Twitter and tear gas*.

¹¹⁵ Carney, N. (2016). All lives matter, but so does race: Black lives matter and the evolving role of social media. *Humanity & Society*, 40(2), 180-199.

¹¹⁶For instance, Carpentier, N., Dahlgren, P., & Pasquali, F. (2013). Waves of media democratization: A brief history of contemporary participatory practices in the media sphere. *Convergence*, 19(3), 287-294. Tufekci, Z. (2017). *Twitter and tear gas: The power and fragility of networked protest*. Spinner, M. (2012). The Effects of Social Media on Democratization.

¹¹⁷ Morozov, E. (2009). From slacktivism to activism. *Foreign policy*, 5(September).

actually led to doing less. Also, Toffler, another scholar on the effect of new technologies in the 1990s, shares a similar line of thoughts and argues, with these new tools to reach information, people will be exposed to too much information, and since they do not develop a filter in terms of checking which are true and which are false, they will become more passive rather than deciding on thought and act towards it¹¹⁸. Tüfekçi offers an answer to this criticism, even though it does not make it go away completely, by pointing that in some countries, even tweeting or signing up a petition is a way to stand against the status quo politically.¹¹⁹ Another worth mentioning issue would be the reaction coming from social media became undeniably important at a level that the parties who are being reacted against can hardly ignore. In the next chapter, I present a senior cabinet member's statement saying that the U.K government declared the lockdown because they cannot resist the media pressure any longer.¹²⁰

Social media profiles turned out to be an extension of identity. People, brands, political parties, candidates are now learning the ways to polish their profiles and invest in that field, too. The lynch culture, exposing one another, and other methods that users do in order to discredit a company or a person are now almost as influential as going out on streets and protesting. A successful campaign to discredit could be way more effective since it spreads faster with a cascade behavior. There are limited numbers of states, governments, companies, and institutions; however, online users are growing faster every day. Therefore, they care about their online profile because it is visible to other potential followers, clients, or voters, etc. Aside from the companies, statespersons, or institutions, ordinary citizens also do care about their profile, their online security. This type of security is essentially different because it is not about their survival; however, it is about their values because, at the end of the day, we share and promote our values, not necessarily in a political way. Security here should be considered as a value since it is regarded with its relation to our values, in a routine part of our identity.

¹¹⁸ Toffler, A. (1970). *Future shock*, 1970. *Sydney. Pan*.

¹¹⁹ Tufekci, Z. (2017). *Twitter and tear gas*. Intro. p. 16

¹²⁰ Raynar G. (2020) Cabinet ministers admit there is no lockdown exit plan as they wait for Boris Johnson's return <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/04/17/cabinet-ministers-admit-no-lockdown-exit-plan-wait-boris-johnsons/> (20.01.2021)

In many of the writings about how technology affected our lives, you can see harsh criticisms nowadays. There are many scholars¹²¹ who argue that these platforms are indeed causing the decline of democracy by having the power to manipulate the metadata they have against the people and affecting their decisions. The last burst of these rumors was in 2016, the U.S presidential elections; many people believed that there was an intervention via the social media platforms.¹²² They directed the voters towards voting for Trump and showing advertisements against Clinton; they manipulated the timeline according to what the user has followed or liked previously. The company named Cambridge Analytica was openly stating its impact on the campaigns by getting help from these data and providing voters what they want to see by adapting it to their candidate¹²³. Also, since they are aware of the weak points of these platforms, they manipulate the discourse towards other candidates; even though the information is true or false, they benefit from the fact that when it is out there, it will grow and spread regardless of its validity. The secretly filmed video of Alexander Nix is telling how they can manipulate election was released by Channel 4.¹²⁴

These present us an essential argument in the case that people tend to believe what they saw in social media. Studies show that people believe in social media in times of emergencies more in comparison to normal times and check these platforms before they do anything else.¹²⁵ When it comes to the issues of security, they are categorized under emergencies, which require exceptional measures to deal with. Therefore, people want to learn about the problem as fast as they can. In these cases, traditional media comes short in providing news fast; even though they have more fact-checking mechanisms, they cannot compete with the dissemination speed of social media information. It is prevalent for people to feel an earthquake and go to Twitter to see if other people felt that too and in minutes, #earthquake takes its place on the list of trending topics. Either true or false, people share, and since the stories that are unlikely to happen will

¹²¹ E.g. Fuchs, C. (2017). *Social media: A critical introduction*. Sage., Runciman, D. (2018). *How democracy ends*. Profile Books, Gibson, R. K. (2020). *When the Nerds Go Marching in: How Digital Technology Moved from the Margins to the Mainstream of Political Campaigns*. Oxford University Press. Sunstein, C. R. (2018). *# Republic: Divided democracy in the age of social media*. Princeton University Press.

¹²² Chen, A. (2018). Cambridge Analytica and our lives inside the surveillance machine. *The New Yorker*, 21, 8-10.

¹²³ Cambridge Analytica - The Power of Big Data and Psychographics CEO Alexander Nix <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n8Dd5aVXLCc>

¹²⁴ Cambridge Analytica Uncovered: Secret filming reveals election tricks <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mpbeOCKZFfQ>

¹²⁵ Toriumi, F., Shinoda, K., Kurihara, S., Sakaki, T., Kazama, K., & Noda, I. (2011). How disaster changes social media. In *Proceedings of the 7th Conference of JWEIN*.

get more attention, people may share false news just to get more interaction. Studies towards developing fact-checking mechanisms¹²⁶ are spreading in almost every country that uses these platforms actively; however, for now, it cannot be held under complete control. The problems about social media that is mentioned above could be called the several consequences of having the freedom to speak without identity. This problem of anonymity became more unacceptable for several countries; they started to prepare bills to control social media.

As stated earlier in the chapter, information is famously paired with power. The state had monopolistic control over information and its dissemination until recently. This power that information grants to states come from its power to mobilize and impact the public. An authority figure could simply disseminate information to mobilize the masses. However, if the authority over information changes hands, it could be used against the sovereign, hence the resistance of the monarchs or political leaders to keep the information limited to a certain class of people occurs. The examples given about censorship show us how important for states or for any sovereign figure to control the information to which the public has access. Not needing the examples from the past, the information is still holding an important role for politics since it has an undeniable impact on the public's opinion.

Trump, during his presidency, use the phrase “fake news” 2,000 times¹²⁷ and accused international channels and newspapers of spreading wrong news and trying to manipulate public opinion, which is publishing news about his tax payments and criticizing his policies. He actively engaged with Twitter to disseminate the information from his perspective, and he adamantly continued his discourse about the “fake news” against several media outlets. A journalist stated about Trump that “he weaponized the term against the press, but dangerous misinformation has proliferated under his watch.”¹²⁸ This example shows how during his presidency, Trump tried to securitize fake news and tried to impose his news with media outlets connected to him. Another fight against fake news was occurring in France in 2018. French Government plans to pass a bill to prevent the spread of fake news, which is able to affect the

¹²⁶ For further information Unver, A. (2020). Fact-Checkers and Fact-Checking In Turkey. *EDAM Research Reports*.

¹²⁷ Woodward, A(2020) “Fake News: A guide to Trump’s favorite phrase- and the dangers it obscures” <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-election/trump-fake-news-counter-history-b732873.html>

¹²⁸ Ibid.

public's opinion.¹²⁹ This bill will empower the government to intervene in the media outlets as well as digital platforms in terms of censorship and implementing sanctions between a range from imprisonment to pecuniary punishment. In 2020, Germany accepted an amendment against fake news with more strict sanctions forcing several social media companies to give personal information of users, even IP addresses in certain cases, as a part of the previously accepted provision called the Network Enforcement Act, also known as NetzDG.¹³⁰ These “wars” against disinformation are engaging with extreme measures to avoid the possible effects that news could cause to show us the impact of social media's importance in disseminating and generating news. Governments want to hold them under control because they have the potential to change public opinion.

These recently appearing bills or boards of inquiries¹³¹ are acting towards news as they might consist of a potential threat. Even though they refer to the types of news as fake news, one could simply be cynical about the objectivity of the government towards each news. The ones which could harm their profile could be labeled as fake news and could be taken down with these measures. The censorship was not unprecedented during history; as people came up with new platforms to spread information, authorities constantly struggled to figure out new ways to deal with them. Because the information has its undeniable power and as now states shape the international system, and they are the units that are holding power, they also explore new ways to deal with the social media since it grants any people to provide and share information.

The securitization of fake news¹³² leads us to consider since the fakeness of information is highly questionable and far from being objective, we can almost say the ones that are being securitized are not only limited to the fake ones but also could cause the securitization of any kind of news. The expression of the word “fake” is open to interpretations, and hence it is open to manipulations.

¹²⁹ <https://www.gouvernement.fr/en/a-bill-against-the-manipulation-of-information>

¹³⁰ Bonifacic, I. (2020). *Germany's updated hate speech law requires sites to report users to police*. Engadget. Retrieved from <https://www.engadget.com/germany-netzdg-update-171502170.html>

¹³¹ The United Kingdom formed a Board of Inquiry to investigate these news sources and prevent them if necessary however the measures are not extreme as implemented in Germany or in France.

¹³² For more; Ergül, M. Securitization Of Fake News. Master Thesis. Middle East Technical University 2020 <http://etd.lib.metu.edu.tr/upload/12625714/index.pdf>

Another critical point that requires an emphasis that the impact of this fake news. If the news that is not going through a checking mechanism poses a threat to the states, it means they are impactful. They carry a potential that governments cannot deny, and hence they wanted to pass bills that legitimize extreme measures when dealing with the dissemination of certain opinions. This part is vital for the study to show that these platforms are not just socializing platforms for people to post personal ideas; they have the potential to cause change. Therefore, states want them under control and try to prevent people from thinking that they could post whatever they want and have no responsibilities, with these bills they repeatedly remind people and social media companies that there are consequences to their actions and the platform that is offering free speech is not free from the state authority.

By this point, we covered scholars who think that Twitter offers a platform for mobilization in the social movements¹³³ and scholars who argue that it actually causes pacifism and damages the democratic system by making people vulnerable to manipulations by companies. The discussions regarding these are rather indirectly tied with this thesis in terms of showing how social media plays an essential role in determining the agenda. Scholars agree they affect either in a positive or a negative direction, but none argues that they are irrelevant; therefore, this gives us the liberty to say that social media indeed plays an important role in setting the agenda for social problems. The traditional media outlets so far were entitled to set the agenda; however, for people who follow both traditional media and social media, social media is the determining factor in terms of agenda-setting because people consider it as an information source.¹³⁴ Another point mentioned above was the institutions or known people's consideration of their profile to the public. These types of profiles care about the reaction that people will show if they engage in behavior that the people would not approve, since the public can be anonymous, but they cannot. This basically shows us that the reaction that is coming from the online users has an impact or even a type of pressure for the profiles that are promoting or attached to a public identity. There is a limited number of public figure profiles, but the number of public user accounts is almost limitless. We can understand from this comparison is simply

¹³³ Segerberg, A., & Bennett, W. L. (2011). Social media and the organization of collective action: Using Twitter to explore the ecologies of two climate change protests. *The Communication Review*, 14(3), 197-215.

¹³⁴ Veenstra, A. S., Iyer, N., Hossain, M. D., & Park, J. (2014). Time, place, technology: Twitter as an information source in the Wisconsin labor protests. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 31, 65-72.

that the public's reaction is not invisible; on the contrary, social media has an impact on setting the agenda and even intervening in the ongoing processes of the decision-making mechanisms.

People are using social media for many purposes; to share their daily lives, to follow other friends and family and to be updated about their lives, to get information about the world, or their country, city or their community, to entertain themselves, to organize events, and to react to the content that is being shared by their network, etc. Nevertheless, human beings are creative, and there will always be forms of using these platforms in ways that we cannot imagine. For now, we will focus on these features of social media, which makes them powerful at the end of the day. A theory called the *cute cat theory* was mentioned by Tüfekçi, a theory that originally belongs to Zuckerman¹³⁵. He uses this theory in order to make a point about where these platforms get their political powers from. If a platform includes your latest cute cat photographs and similar funny videos that people spend time watching, getting updates from their grandchildren, sharing their graduations and family photos, etc. shows that it also has non-political functions that many people use. This is the exact reason why it is a powerful tool for political purposes because it is harder for states to censor them since plenty of users use them for different purposes. The censorship would only cause their adverse reaction against the government. Either they would not allow the platforms to integrate into people's social lives like China or risk facing a backlash that worked up Arab Spring in the first place. The government blocked access to the online platforms, and people got worried about their family because they could not reach them and came to Tahrir square to check upon them, which led to a growing number of people in the square. Consequently, the backlash against the government increased just because the government tried to block the communication in the first place.¹³⁶ The attempt to stop the spread of the movement reminds the censorship occurring during history starting from the printing, as we mentioned previously, which also did not end with success for the government because the progressive communities who adapt to these new technologies are observed to be more developed.¹³⁷

¹³⁵ Zuckerman, E. (2014). Cute Cats to the Rescue? *Participatory media and political expression*, 131-154.

¹³⁶ Tufekci, Z. (2018). How social media took us from Tahrir Square to Donald Trump <https://www.technologyreview.com/2018/08/14/240325/how-social-media-took-us-from-tahrir-square-to-donald-trump/> (14.07.2020)

¹³⁷ Robinson, J. A., & Acemoglu, D. (2012). *Why nations fail*

Until now, the characteristics of social media are presented with an emphasis on Twitter. The questions we answered were related to its features and whether it is efficient or not in several fields: The impacts on the social life are presented alongside its political power and the roots of this efficiency. On this ground, I want to add the layer of securitization and consider Twitter and its influence in consideration of its process.

2.5 Public as the Author of Securitization

The combination of all the information this chapter has about the ways of communication, communication modeling, and social media's adaptation on this model with an emphasis on Twitter's characteristics leads us to a specific integration of the securitization theory into these new technological methods of communication. Until recently, the status of power equated with a status that holds the information; however, the power shifted its orientation when the public started to gain access to information. This shift from a certain class towards the public is explained earlier. When the essence of a security issue is examined, we immediately realize its relation to the information. As a result of information, people feel threatened about their existence. Naturally, where this information is coming from plays a crucial role; it should come from an authority. Because the credibility of the information is what matters in the first place, to make people trust the information, the author should hold a credible authority. However, now, social media provides first-hand information faster and more transparently without filters. It has access to places where traditional media cannot even get in. People look into social media when an event occurs because it is the fastest way to reach information. The users are not professional journalists that can provide information with detailed research. However, the technological tools help ordinary citizens to film videos, take photographs, and open live broadcasts. These developments decrease the need for a professional journalist crew since they reflect what is happening second by second. Mobile phones provide equipment to an ordinary citizen to become a potential journalist to demonstrate what they witness. Transparency is an important element in the issues of security as much as speed. People demand to know what is happening in these transparent societies. Governments or traditional media use filters in order to prevent chaos; therefore, people opt for more transparent tools. Neither the information nor the credibility belongs to a certain class anymore. Thus, while Waever had a point when he was

writing, the securitization was made with the words of certain authority figures in the '90s; now, it is flawed because the informative authority does not belong to that figures.

Earlier, when comparing the communication models, Barnlund's model was emphasized in terms of its consideration of a simultaneous flow, and with this simultaneity, the question of whom the author is surfaced. Now, in the age of social media, how will we ever decide who is the author and who is the audience? In an age where journalists provide the news from social media users, how will we determine who the real journalist is and who actually providing the news for people? Societies use these applications and embed them in their social lives with a growing age scale; children, youngsters, adults, and even older generations use them to be notified of the news around them. Leaving the psychological, economic, or democratic impacts of these, I rather focused on their agenda-setting in case of security emergencies. There are plenty of examples that give us how they helped to set an agenda and increase awareness or even sparked a social movement. In the following chapter, examples of Twitter hashtags that have caused an impact will be presented. This chapter gathers the studies that are about Twitter's impact on social life. However, it is not merely a literature review, but it is also a study that presents the traces of an evolving study field.

Starting with the Arab Spring in 2011, Tüfekçi's work embraces both the field study and the computational side, where she collects and analyzes data from Facebook and Twitter. Social media was important for the movement since it provided a ground for people to communicate with one another and the foreign press. The political disturbances first were only voiced on social media but then with an event organization, people gathered, and this was the beginning of a historic protest against the political sovereign. The same year, another movement has started called Occupy Wall Street (now on OWS), which was also started with people's disturbances against the corruption and the unequal distribution of wealth and started a movement. The protest started with activists camping in Zuccotti Park, and then the movement went viral online with the hashtag #OccupyWallStreet. People supported the movement and spread it among friends; however, the expected change required a fundamental structural one. As a result, we cannot see a fundamental structural change; the problems about unequal payment, the corruption in the system still goes on; however, the study shows the range of the

movement broadened due to Twitter hashtag and online communication¹³⁸. This again demonstrates the impact that these networking applications have. A very similar example again studied by Tüfekçi and took place in Turkey: Gezi protests.¹³⁹ Not a success in terms of political outcome but definitely a systemic intervention, and this movement was also powered by social media, people communicated through Twitter about the police interventions, etc. These are a few examples that show us whether with expected results or not people gather via Twitter or any other platform; they contemplate, they act and expect a change, and these expectations could spread again via social media.

Social media is also strong when it comes to deliberation. People share their ideas and thoughts not only with each other, but they also share with the parts of the related mechanism. To elaborate further, #cdnpoli is a hashtag that Canadians use to share their ideas concerning Canadian politics; people use this hashtag to share their political opinions, but the political elite could also benefit from the hashtag in order to see what the public thinks and demands. Obama organized an event on Twitter called “Twitter Town Hall”¹⁴⁰, which basically invited people to ask him questions, and he replied with 140 characters since the website was limiting the characters with that number; back then, the event was hosted by the founder of the platform: Jack Dorsey. Recently Turkish Health Minister Fahrettin Koca asked his followers to send him their questions and demands about the pandemic during the cabinet meeting and so that he could voice them.¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ Tan, L., Ponnampalani, S., Gillham, P., Edwards, B., & Johnson, E. (2013, August). Analyzing the impact of social media on social movements: a computational study on Twitter and the Occupy Wall Street movement. In *Proceedings of the 2013 IEEE/ACM International Conference on Advances in Social Networks Analysis and Mining* (pp. 1259-1266).

¹³⁹ Tufekci, Z. (2017). *Twitter and tear gas*

¹⁴⁰ Pilkington, E.(2011) Barack Obama becomes first US president to host a Twitter town hall, *The Guardian*, <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2011/jul/06/barack-obama-twitter-town-hall> (09.05.2020)

¹⁴¹ @drfahrettinkoca: “Bakanlar Kurulundayım. Ne diyeceğim dışardan alacağım duyumlara bağlı. Maske+ Sosyal mesafede an itibarıyla artış var mı?”

“I am in the Council of Ministers. What I will say depends on what I will hear from you. Do people pay more attention to the warnings about using masks and social distancing at the moment? ”

<https://twitter.com/drfahrettinkoca/status/1270377411419537408> (15.10.2020)

In Turkey, it is not uncommon for people to face legal punishments or to undo a decision because of people's reaction from Twitter en masse¹⁴², and we also know that it is not rare for other countries. The intervention of Twitter in the governments' decision-making is another conundrum to deal with by measuring various parameters; for this thesis, I intend to test whether or not the process of securitization occurs through Twitter and alters the relations between the author and the audience.

¹⁴² Aktan S.(2020), "Türkiye'de adaleti artık sosyal medya mı sağlıyor?" <https://tr.euronews.com/2020/08/19/turkiye-de-adaleti-artik-sosyal-medya-mi-sagliyor>

3. A CASE STUDY ON PUBLIC SECURITIZATION: THE UNITED KINGDOM'S PANDEMIC POLICIES

In previous chapters, the theoretical basis was provided with contributions from different pieces of literature. In this chapter, I will present a case study in order to ground the theoretical debates that have been demonstrated and test whether Twitter enables the public to play a role in the process of securitization. The theory of securitization postulates that the securitizing actor should be either a political elite, statesperson, intellectual, or a person of great influence. However, with Twitter and similar social media platforms, the public has a chance to set their own agenda and pressure the government towards their will. This chapter examines an example of those pressure movements in the United Kingdom against the government's negligence about the Covid-19 virus.

The world is dealing with an ongoing pandemic.¹⁴³ A disease caused by acute respiratory syndrome (SARS-CoV-2) affecting people to suffer from serious health problems in various forms. Since the virus is unknown, the effects and treatment remain obscure, too (even though recent studies developed several vaccinations, for now, there is no common treatment with medicine or any other method apart from vaccines). The virus spreads faster and more aggressively compared to other similar diseases. Also, because there is no known treatment for it, the virus causes drastic numbers of losses. People who have chronic diseases and the elderly are high-risk groups due to their weakened immune systems. The first cases are reported in December 2019 in Wuhan, China. As of now, there are 109.7 million reported cases and 2.41 million deaths caused by the virus.¹⁴⁴ Since the virus is spreading with a respiratory passage, people are advised to stay in their homes and wear masks, wash their hands often, use alcohol-based hand-rubs, and not touch their faces to prevent the spread. So far, one-fourth of the cases are from Europe, and it was considered to be the center of the pandemic¹⁴⁵ until the U.S experienced an aggressive spread. There are 24 million cases in Europe, while in the U.S, there

¹⁴³ All the following information related to Covid-19 is provided from the World Health Organization's website. https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab_1

¹⁴⁴ <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/> (Feb 16, 2021)

¹⁴⁵ <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/covid-19-pandemic>

are 27 million cases in total¹⁴⁶. Not just in Europe but in many other countries, governments implemented lockdowns to keep the health system working. However, for several countries implementing measures took so long, and the decisions made were considered late, and the countries ended up with paralyzed health systems. The issue could be easily categorized as a matter of security since it is posing an existential threat. Then, we could ask the question, “why did governments not benefit from the power that security provides and implement these extreme measures at once to protect their citizens?”. The answer is hidden in a dilemma: The dilemma that occurs between two securities: the security of public health vs. the political/economic security of their country. In the following sections, the United Kingdom's explained case will help us unravel this dilemma by looking at it from both perspectives.

3.1 Covid-19 Timeline in the United Kingdom

The first confirmed cases from the United Kingdom were reported on the 31st of January 2020¹⁴⁷; however, since the BREXIT has the priority was on the government’s agenda, the virus did not face strict precautions, and it was underestimated. On the 1st of March 2020,¹⁴⁸ the number of cases increased to 111 in total, and the daily cases increased from 5 to 22. However, Prime Minister Johnson advised people to continue with their everyday lives.¹⁴⁹ At that time, other European countries were implementing more strict measures like lockdowns in Italy, Spain, and France. On the 5th of March, 2020 first death caused by the virus was reported in the UK. On March 13th, the number increased to 798 cases and 8 deaths. The chief scientific advisor Sir Patrick Vallance set out the government’s strategy as building a sort of “herd immunity,”¹⁵⁰ which means letting virus spread among people and expect to develop a type of immunity. His statement was indirectly addressing the sacrifice that the government subtly gave consent to. In the following days, due to the reaction they received from citizens and the global community,

¹⁴⁶Europe: <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/cases-2019-ncov-eueea> The United States: <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/us/>

¹⁴⁷ All the information above about Covid-19 cases in the UK provided from the article published in the Guardian on 29th April 2020. Conn, D., Lawrence, F., Lewis, P., Carell, S. (2020), Revealed: the inside story of the UK's Covid-19 crisis, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/29/revealed-the-inside-story-of-uk-covid-19-coronavirus-crisis> (20.09.2020)

¹⁴⁸ The dates in the study afterwards -if not stated otherwise- all took place in the year 2020.

¹⁴⁹ Johnson warns people about a “possible, very significant expansion was clearly on the cards” and adds it is important that people “go about business as usual.” <https://www.ft.com/content/21dd83c8-5c8f-11ea-b0ab-339c2307bcd4> (25.01.2021)

¹⁵⁰ Stewart H. Busby M. (2020) “Coronavirus: science chief defends UK plan from criticism” <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/13/coronavirus-science-chief-defends-uk-measures-criticism-herd-immunity> (18.09.2020)

health secretary Matt Hancock denied the herd immunity approach as a part of government strategy¹⁵¹. In the meantime, the virus was spreading, and people continued to go to their works or schools. The measures to deal with the pandemic were not enough since they were just consisting of Prime Minister Johnson's advice: To wash hands while singing happy birthday twice.¹⁵²

Johnson's failure in fighting coronavirus affected his public image severely. People criticized his negligence heavily. He was skipping Cobra meetings which were set up to discuss national emergencies by the government. He ignored all the warnings coming from World Health Organization, other countries experiencing the virus, or the United Kingdom's own scientific committee. The government's scientists published a report on the cautions that should be raised awareness, such as not to shake hands.¹⁵³ The same day Johnson told the press: "I'm shaking hands continuously. I was at a hospital the other night where I think there were actually a few coronavirus patients, and I shook hands with everybody, you'll be pleased to know. I continue to shake hands."¹⁵⁴ The government denied postponing sporting events and continuously sent the message to prevent panic among the public; even after WHO declared the spread of the virus as a "Global Pandemic" the government refused to implement new measures. Between March 10th and 13th, Cheltenham Festival took place with the attendance of more than a quarter-million people, and Prime Minister Johnson stated that "banning such events will have little effect on the spread"¹⁵⁵. His negligence caused a spike from 200,000 cases to 1.3 million cases in 9 days. Finally, on March 23rd, the UK declared lockdown, a senior cabinet source told the

¹⁵¹ McGuinness, A. (2020) "Coronavirus: Health Secretary Matt Hancock attacks 'flawed goal' of herd immunity"
<https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-health-secretary-matt-hancock-attacks-flawed-goal-of-herd-immunity-12103263>
(18.12.2020)

¹⁵² "The best thing you can do is to wash your hands with soap and hot water while singing Happy Birthday twice."
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a9xgJp6m5_Q

¹⁵³ (2020) "SPI-B return to SAGE on the use of behavioural and social interventions on a Covid-19 epidemic in the UK"
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/882717/20-spi-b-return-on-use-of-behavioural-social-interventions-03032020.pdf (13.10.2020)

¹⁵⁴ The Guardian Staff (2020) "How coronavirus advice from Boris Johnson has changed"
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/23/how-coronavirus-advice-from-boris-johnson-has-changed> (09.11.2020)

¹⁵⁵ Merrick, R., Wood, V. (2020) Coronavirus: Government to bow to pressure with ban on mass gatherings as case numbers rise
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/coronavirus-latest-uk-mass-gatherings-ban-events-sports-infection-a9401846.html> (09.11.2020)

Telegraph, “We didn’t want to go down this route in the first place – public and media pressure pushed the lockdown, we went with the science.”¹⁵⁶

The mentioned public pressure is reflected via social platforms. The government’s efforts were towards the normalization or even de-securitization of the virus, and therefore this clash between the public and the government created a backlash on social media. People were anxious about their health while Prime Minister Johnson acted like there is nothing to be worried about. We can simply argue he was acting in the framework of *raison d’état* and prioritizing the state’s economic sustainability; however, many indicators show that he was simply being negligent about the disease.¹⁵⁷

From the perspective of the public, they were not protected by the state against a threat; therefore, people started to get furious and critical of the government. Johnson’s discourse was facing serious criticisms, and especially between March 17th and 22nd, people gathered under the hashtags that are demanding lockdowns enforced by the laws. Eventually, on the 23rd of March, Boris Johnson declared a total lockdown in the UK.

3.2 Case Selection

This open clash between public health security and the government’s approach to the issue resulted in furious backlash from the public. This chapter presents an analysis of how this backlash reflected on the government. To analyze this backlash, I chose hashtags that under people demanded lockdowns for their own safety. Under the hashtag “#lockdownnow”, people reflected their thoughts, worries, and advice about the pandemic, and under #lockdownuk, people act in solidarity against the government's negligent policies. There were three reasons why I choose the United Kingdom as the case study. First, Europe is considered one of the most affected continents from the coronavirus, especially the United Kingdom, and still has the most cases in Europe. Second, in comparison to other countries, the number of people who are using

¹⁵⁶ <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/04/17/cabinet-ministers-admit-no-lockdown-exit-plan-wait-boris-johnsons/>

¹⁵⁷ This website gathers a timeline showing Johnson’s insistence on not to take cautions against the virus and how his policies towards de-securitization resulted <https://timeline-of-failure.com/>

Twitter is more in the UK, and third, the government's resistance to depict the virus as it is not a threat directed me towards the United Kingdom as the sample to be examined.

3.3 Method and Data Collection

For the analysis, I fetched the tweets in the span of these five days. Between the 17th and the 23rd of March, I gathered the tweets that have been posted from the United Kingdom under the tag #lockdownnow and #lockdownuk. There are three units of analysis; the first unit is the hashtags, the second unit is the tweets itself, and the third is the examination of the tweet owner's profile in terms of their occupation.

Unit of Analysis	Example
The Hashtag	#Lockdownuk, #LockdownNOW
The Tweet's Text	"People are spreading the virus around; declare lockdown immediately."
The Identity	Writer, Politician, Comedian, etc.

Table 1: Units of Analysis

The study tackles the question of could *public* securitize an issue and therefore alter the relation between the author and the audience; to answer this question, we must examine various parameters. The first unit is a constant one; deciding which hashtags to examine will limit the first unit. Therefore, the parameters I will focus on primarily concerns the second and the third unit. The second unit answers the question of what the public is saying, what is key to their discourse under these hashtags. In terms of analyzing the elements of the discourse, I benefitted from Neuman's method of content analysis.¹⁵⁸ It would also be more accurate to state that the study engages with quantitative data with qualitative analysis since the tweet's texts/discursive elements are one of the primary units of analysis, and securitization is highly engaged with the elements of the language.

¹⁵⁸ Neuman, W. L. (1997) Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches, 3rd edn, Allyn & Bacon, Boston, MA.

There were 7332 tweets under #lockdownuk; among them, I focused on the top (based on their interaction) 150 tweets. The filtering of the other countries was not necessary for this hashtag since it was a local one. A similar process was also followed for the #lockdownuk; 3266 tweets have been posted under the hashtag, filtering the tweets posted from the UK¹⁵⁹ left us with 745 tweets.¹⁶⁰ I also took the first 150 tweets, which got the most interaction based on their numbers of retweets.¹⁶¹ I read each tweet and categorized them in consideration of their content. In total, among 10598 tweets, I examined the discourse and content of the 300 most interacted tweets. The categorization was also based on these 300 tweets. For the third unit of analysis, I also categorized the identities of the owners of these most interacted tweets and checked whether or not they are verified¹⁶² and who are the rest of the people. Even though anonymity was an obstacle, I still had an overview of the user profile to analyze. This analysis helped the argument in order to prove that these are ordinary citizens, not authority figures who are traditionally acknowledged as securitizing actors.

Before moving forward, the details about the formation of the dataset would be beneficial in terms of understanding the methodology that has been used for data collection. Twitter Application Programming Interface (API) shares the data with users to help developers with their studies. So far, people were able to use the API and integrated it into their python packages for users to benefit from; Tweepy¹⁶³ is one of the packages that gives users historical data. However, they could only offer the tweets from the last 30 days. Since Twitter got a new policy for providing historical data, they banned the packages from directly accessing the data because they decided to offer premium developer accounts that give access to historical data. To get historical data without having a premium developer account, I combined two packages and managed to gather a dataset that was from 8 months ago. I used *snsrape*¹⁶⁴ to gather URL links

¹⁵⁹ Even though the hashtag originated from the UK it spread across the globe and got support from other countries like India, Pakistan, the United States, and Canada who are demanding lockdowns in the meantime. However, since this study only examines the reaction from the UK, I excluded the other countries.

¹⁶⁰ The data set is a collection of almost eleven thousand tweets, it does not have all the tweets posted with these hashtags. Due to limitations of the packages, we can gather only a part of the whole data, therefore we can say that it is a representational sample group of the tweets that has been posted with these hashtags.

¹⁶¹ The reason that study is based on retweets is explained in the second chapter. As the studies has shown retweeting benefits the spreading of a tweet the most.

¹⁶² “Verified” status is granted by Twitter to known public figures, statespersons, influencers.

¹⁶³ <https://github.com/tweepy/tweepy>

¹⁶⁴ <https://github.com/JustAnotherArchivist/snsrape>

for each tweet and then fetched the tweets with Tweepy. I generated tables with the following information: The date of the tweet, the username, the tweet text, the location information, the language of the tweet, the number of favorites, the number of retweets, the number of followers that the owner of the tweet has, and the number of the people that the owner of the tweet was following. In terms of avoiding any possible complications, I will present two separate graphics for each hashtag; the table that presents the categorization, on the other hand, will be common for both.

To support my findings, I gathered an additional dataset that includes the tweets that were posted between March 1st and 16th under the tag #lockdownnow to compare and see if people were sending tweets about lockdown from the beginning of the pandemic regardless of the government's discourse. To claim causality between the timeline and the declaration of the lockdown, I checked if the pressure on the government increased over time.

Once I collected the data, I categorized them into six: entertaining tweets, tweets that are encouraging public solidarity, tweets that are attempting to communicate with the government, tweets that have bits of advice for the public, tweets that are carrying informative purposes about the pandemic, and tweets that have surveys about the pandemic. The tweets, including polls, are only under the #lockdownuk. This categorization is based on the characteristics of the tweets. The following table presents the names of the categories, the explanation of what these categories include in terms of context, and one tweet example is given for each category. These categories will help us see the dominant, repeating theme of the tweets under these hashtags. In the following section, the analysis of the number of retweets, the number of tweets based on the categories, and the discourse of the tweets will be examined to provide an answer to the question "are these tweets presents a securitizing act?" and if they are "what are the characteristics of public's securitizing discourse?"

Category	Explanation	Example
Communicating with the Government	The tweets that are criticizing the government's policies aggressively and demanding lockdowns or testing. Both advising new policies and criticizing the de facto measures are under this hashtag since they are directed towards certain statespersons or political elite.	(Tweet 1) “PM still giving out ‘advice’ and ‘recommendations’ to people who interpret this is as ‘doesn’t have to be followed’ – this is beyond negligent. It’s time for RULES. @BorisJohnson @Conservatives #LockdownNow #Covid19UK”
Informative	Tweets that are informing people with reference to other information sources.	(Tweet 2) “The study found that people with COVID-19 who didn’t get diagnosed, likely because they didn’t feel very sick, were the source of at least two-thirds of documented COVID-19 cases in China in the early days of the outbreak”#LockdownNow https://t.co/pBNwfh12bf
Entertainment	Tweets that are posted by people to share their experiences of the pandemic with an entertaining discourse under the tag #lockdownuk	(Tweet 3) “People who’ve ridiculed me for keeping my CDs and DVDs will be eating their words when we’re in lockdown, and the interweb breaks because 40million people are trying to FaceTime #lockdownuk “
Advising Public	Tweets that are including mostly reprehension directed towards the public.	(Tweet 4) “These brave mums, dads, sons, daughters, husbands, wives don’t have a choice – we do!!!🔴STAY AT HOME🔴 ##LockdownNow https://t.co/UvidipAK2b ”

Public Solidarity	Tweets that are encouraging people to stick together in solidarity by using religious discourse or motivational speaking, also support given to the health workers are gathered under this category.	(Tweet 5) “Solidarity with all mum carers on this very strange Mother’s Day. Worrying times but we will all get through this. #LockdownNow #StayHomeSaveLives”
Polls	Tweets that are including surveys to measure public opinion about the issues concerning the pandemic.	(Tweet 6) “Poll: How would you rate @BorisJohnson on his handling of Corona Virus? #BorisJohnson #covid19UK #coronavirus #COVID19 #CoronaVirusUpdate #Uklockdown #lockdownuk #SelfIsolation”

Table 2: Categorization of Tweets

3.4 Tweets’ Content Analysis

In this section, I will attempt to demonstrate a reactionary chain in the government mechanism. I argue governments take measures in reaction to many dynamics among social media. This study includes tweets that are assumed to cause pressure on the government, and among those tweets, I will look for traces of securitization. I categorized the tweets based on their discursive elements. The categorization above (Table 2) shows the dominant categories.

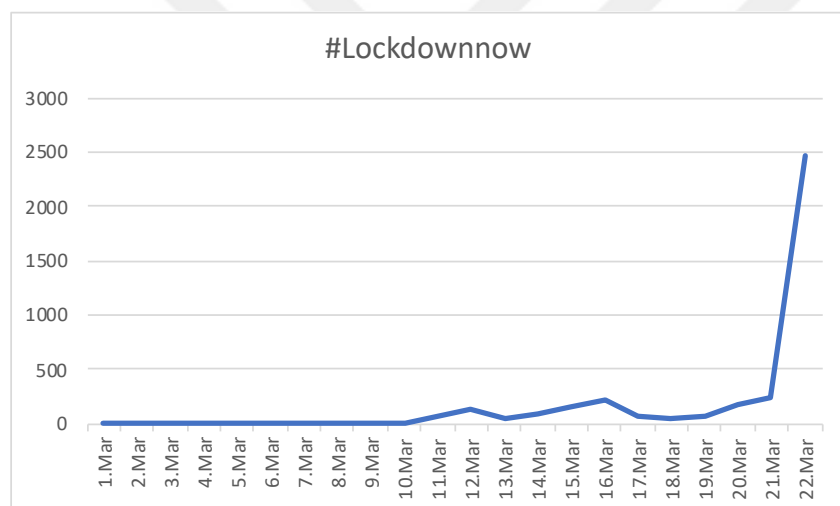
With the help of the categorization, we would be able to reach several conclusions both in qualitative and quantitative terms. I will be analyzing the data we have, based on both content and discourse analysis¹⁶⁵. This methodology will help us understand data, both in numerical and contextual terms. To pursue this method, I will examine the content with its two perspectives. First, I will present the quantitative analysis, analyzing the data by looking at the

¹⁶⁵ Discourse analysis is here is not applied as of interdisciplinary approach to study discourse and the linguistic elements of the sentences but in terms its literal meaning where I analyzed the general discourse.

numbers of tweets and interaction distribution for each category. After looking at the dataset from a macro perspective, I will engage with the qualitative methodology by analyzing the discourse of the tweets by presenting examples of the elements of securitizing discourse from a micro perspective.

3.4.1 Quantitative Perspective of the Tweets

Before moving to the analysis of the categorized tweets, I will present the graphic below (Graph 1) to set an example of how social media pressure got responses from the government by demonstrating the number of tweets posted starting from the 1st of March until the 23rd. Regarding the government declared lockdown officially on the 23rd, we must analyze the tweet scatter to show whether people's reactions grew over time or was it on the same level.



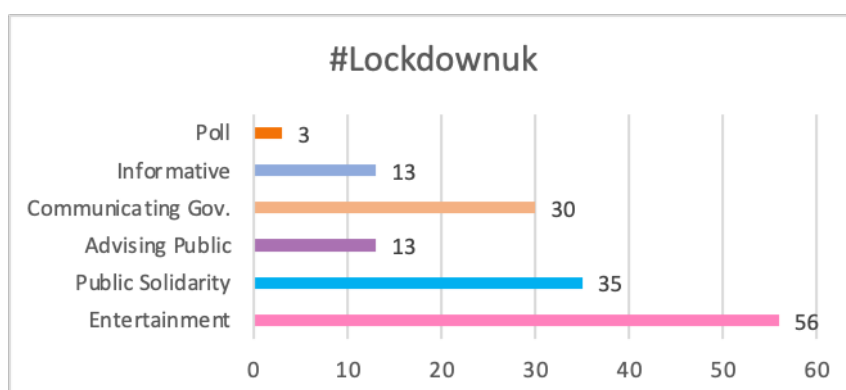
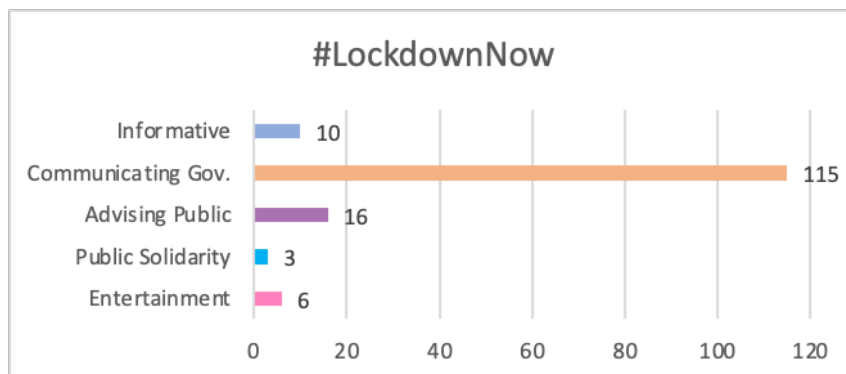
Graph 1: Tweet Scatter during March 2020

We can see there are ups and downs regarding the number of posted tweets until the 22nd; on the 22nd, however, there is an incomparable boost from 250 tweets to 2477 tweets in one day, which is the day before the government declared the lockdown. When we combine what politicians state about declaring the lockdown because of public pressure, with this timeline (Graph 1), which indicates a drastic increase, it presents us a strong indicator of the public's pressure on the government towards securitizing the issue. Even though the timeline checks, we cannot directly build a causal link. In order to present a transparent causal chain, I will demonstrate which categories have more tweets and got more interactions in this chapter to detect what was public's motivation and what did they aimed with their tweets.

The graphs below show the distribution of tweets according to the established categories. When these characteristics are considered, we would expect the category of communicative tweets to be dominant in order to be able to argue any kind of securitization.

The analysis reveals that almost all of the most interacted tweets are consisting of tweets directed towards the government. Under the hashtags lockdownnow and lockdownuk, as the wording's nature requires, people *demand* lockdown and *advice* policy suggestions to the government. In essence, the public openly demands a lockdown which will be enforced by the laws because this would be more deterrent in comparison to advising.

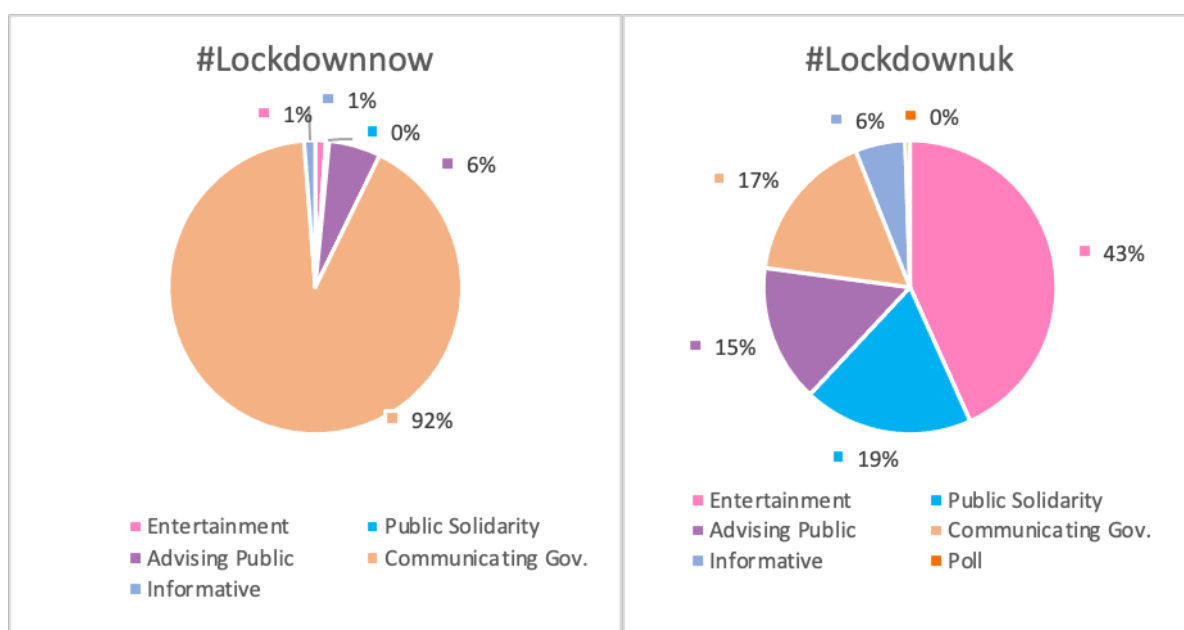
Only by looking at the distribution of the tweets based on categories, we can see, especially under the #lockdownnow people are mostly trying to make the government hear their voices. Under the #lockdownuk, there is a slightly different picture; while #lockdownnow is focused on demanding and advising, #lockdownuk seems to offer people a platform to share their experiences. Unlike the #lockdownnow, the tweets under #lockdownuk have closer percentages and comparably had more interactions. #Lockdownuk seems to offer a similar platform for people to share their thoughts and experiences.



Graph 2: Distribution of Tweets According to Categories

Under the #Lockdownnow, the second category following the “communicating with the government” is the one including advice for people. This advice is consisting of people reaching other people in order to make them stay at home. These two categories both roots from the distrust against others. People do not think other people will be cautious and therefore try to use state mechanism to implement the law on others. The state is desired to be used as a tool to punish other people who could cause harm or spread the virus per se. Cautious people named these types of people who do not care about the virus and continue to go out as “#covidiot”. The category that has tweets with this hashtag is mostly under advising to the public.

Below, *Graph 3* presents the interaction dissemination among categories. One-third of the most interacted tweets are entertaining under #lockdownuk; the following category is public solidarity which people motivate each other, encourage to help the unfortunate, and praising National Health Service workers for risking their lives for public health. Under this hashtag, people post notices for adopting animals or raise awareness and offer support for people who might be suffering from domestic violence. Tweets that are advising the public what to do or not to do are again retweeted more. Even though there are fewer tweets in comparison to other categories, people spread this advice more when it is compared to informative tweets.



Graph 3: Percentages of the Tweets According to Categories

The most interacted tweets under #lockdownuk are primarily from the 19th of March 2020; people were advising one another to stay at home and share how they could spend time at home; however, tweets under #lockdownnow mainly consist of from the tweets posted on 22nd; therefore people are more hesitant as the days go by, and the numbers increased by multiplying.

Among 300 tweets, 206 of them are posted with the same motivation: To survive. They are either directed towards the government or the public; they are all concerned about their survival. With informative tweets or even entertaining ones, people tried to communicate with others who share the same experience with the same concerns. Considering these tweets were posted at the beginning of the pandemic, the anxiety was spreading as solid and fast as the virus.

The quantitative part helped us to see a timeline that indicates the government replied public with a lockdown as they demanded with the help of social media, but it also provided us a picture that shows what people are actually interested in during this process. Helping each other as a community, advising one another, and most importantly, demanding from the government what it takes to stop the virus. We can see these in numbers, but discourse also is an essential element for this thesis since securitization is strongly attached to the language. The next chapter will engage with discursive elements of these tweets in order to detect the traces of securitization.

3.4.2 Qualitative Analysis of the Tweets

Securitization by the state actors was not unprecedented; on the contrary, matters of security are mostly associated with the state in the first place. However, what this thesis brought to attention is relatively new and thus needs theorization. In this section, I will analyze the discourse of the tweets that have been posted under both hashtags. In order to pursue this end, I will first draw attention to the characteristics of the public securitizing discourse and emphasize the differences from the state discourse. Differentiating the methods of public securitization from the state's will benefit us while analyzing the discourse of the tweets according to the categories.

In 2012, a TED Talk given by Lieutenant General Mark Hertling was quite different in comparison to many other talks in terms of security. He was talking about obesity on the stage, in his military uniform, declaring obesity as a threat to America's national security.¹⁶⁶ Obesity is a health problem primarily; however, Mark Hertling was pulling this matter to another ground by ripping it out of its essence as a health problem, but rather depicting it as a threat to national security, similar to a terrorist. This talk became one of the textbook examples of the act of securitization. A representative of a position of power talking about an unrelated issue in security terms in order to emphasize its cruciality. However, we cannot expect the same discourse for the public securitizing act since the public is emphasizing what the state has been missing. Therefore, there are different characteristics of discourse between the public and the state when they wanted to justify extraordinary measures in addressing an issue as a security matter.

First, their position in terms of being affected by the securitization of an issue is essentially different. Especially considering the pandemic as an example, while securitization means a sacrifice from their freedom for the public, it grants the state more power to act.

Public deals with security issues from a different perspective in comparison to the state. If a citizen's house is burnt, the citizen hardly considers it as a national security problem. The issues they deal differ, since the state is a legal entity and human beings are not. Regardless of what the threat is, a threat to the state will be automatically considered as a threat to national security; however, people as individuals do not always experience security issues with all their communities. A man can fear spiders, and it is hardly a threat to all humanity. A pandemic is experienced with all humanity; however, people will prioritize different values, they will be concerned for their lives, their own values, and families. Against these general concerns, rather than claiming something as a threat to national security, public securitization voices individual concerns. In terms of levels of analysis, the public engages with security issues on an individual level. Personal concerns are raised with demands for more measures.

¹⁶⁶ Obesity is a National Security Issue: Lieutenant General Mark Hertling at TEDxMidAtlantic 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sWN13pKVp9s>

A state has the public as an enabling audience when forming government in democratic countries. However, it already has the power to act on its own decision. If a state wants the military to be involved in an issue, it can send the troops. The public may not be pleased with their decision; however, the only thing that the public can do is to either protest or wait for the next election to vote for someone else. Nevertheless, the state mechanism has the power to do so; the public does not. They cannot command the military to protect them if they feel threatened. Therefore, the public will be demanding securitization from a higher authority, unlike the state. The fundamental difference between them, the state can implement security measures without support from the public, while the public needs to convince the state as it is destitute to its implementing power.

Last but not least, the public is not a homogenous entity; there are people who will be demanding more security while others do not have concerns on an equal level, therefore, not willing to sacrifice their freedom for it. People who are more concerned try to raise awareness among the public, as they show the same effort to convince the state that the issue is a security problem that requires more measures. In health security cases or environmental security, even though states are also essentially dependent on them, the public and state differ while setting their agenda and taking action.

In total, if we observe these three characteristics mentioned below, which are also supported with tweets, we can see the signs of public securitization: They will be showing an effort (1) to draw attention to personal concerns about their survival, their values, and the environment from an individual point of view, and as a result of these concerns, (2) *a demand* for more security from an authority figure is observable. Last, they will (3) try to convince other people to comply with these extreme measures.

To draw attention to personal concerns to their survival	<i>Demanding</i> for more security from an authority figure	Convince other people to comply with these extreme measures
(Tweet 7) “Johnson knew herd immunity would cost lives Johnson knew it was to protect economy Johnson still won't support poorest UK Johnson still not testing people Johnson hiding true figure Johnson refuses to close borders #lockdown #LockdownNow”	(Tweet 8) “Not sure why some can't believe UK will be in lockdown, Italy has done it, France has just started. As the UK government cut police numbers by 20%, we could well have some army on the streets to enforce it. #lockdownuk #coronavirusuk”	(Tweet 9) “Why on earth are shops like @Waterstones still open? People picking up books, handling them and putting them back ... utter madness. Do the responsible thing and close your shops now #coronavirus #COVID19 #coronapandemic #coronacrisisUK #LockdownNow #lockdownUKnow”

Table 3 The Characteristics of Public's Security Discourse

As hypothesized, the dataset is filled with concern and demands for a policy that prioritizes the security of public health; therefore, we can say that there is an attempt towards securitization of the virus. Considering the state's action towards changing the current policies and implementing new measures as a result of these demands, we can claim this movement as a successful securitization. In the following paragraphs, the tweets that have been presented as examples carry these three characteristics of public securitization alongside a more detailed discourse analysis based on their categories.

At the beginning of the pandemic, many people or even governments could not comprehend the results that this virus could cause. Even though many countries share their experiences with grave warnings, other states which did not experience the results did not implement measures

immediately. Therefore, people got angrier with the authority figures since there were warnings all over the information channels, and they chose to continue with their normal lives against all odds. So, there are two origins of anger; one is against the government because they were deaf against the warnings, and even when it came to their doorstep, they preserved their actionless stance until it is too late; the other roots from the anger against other people who did not comprehend the threat as it is and considered it as an insignificant issue. The vulnerability against this threat and being held responsible for other people's decisions bring about the anger in two forms directed towards two different directions. Below, I will be presenting more examples from tweets with highlighting their discursive elements to show the aspects of securitization.

(Tweet 10) “People are not heeding the advice and many people being needlessly **endangered**. Leadership is urgently **required** by a Govt that has been behind curve from day 1. **Johnson/Cummings** all over place on this. #LockdownNow.”

This is one of the examples among tweets directed towards the government; it accuses the government and urges them to deal with the issue. It also accuses people of not heeding advice¹⁶⁷ however it still holds the government responsible for not doing enough.

The example below (Tweet 11) is directed towards people, informing them about the future projections and warning them by reminding them what could happen as a result of this security problem. It emphasizes the possible consequences and makes an effort to make people understand the severity of the situation.

(Tweet 11) This is an **Emergency**, it's nothing you've seen before:1050 cases (that we know of). 7 deaths already ICU beds predicted to be full by April. We have a chance. IF you **STAY AT HOME!** Let doctors try to help as many as we can, or **we lose both them & you**. #doctorsarescared #lockdownnow

¹⁶⁷ Even though while categorizing I had to put tweets under one category, they could carry more than one category's characteristics.

However, both behaviors essentially present a concern for security, and therefore both discourses are built upon the struggle towards securitizing the issue. They try to convince both people and the state that the virus could only be dealt with exceptional measures. To elaborate further, I will include some tweets to help us analyze the discourse in general from the dominant categories. With this method, I aim to support my claim about the origins of anger, directed towards two different subjects, and also draw more attention to the securitizing attempts in the tweets.

(Tweet 12) “@BorisJohnson FOR GOD’S SAKE **LOCK US DOWN** - this country is full of stupid people - we’ve had proof of that for years! #🤡 #COVIDIOT #COVID—19 #coronavirus #StayHomeSaveLives #lockdownuk #LockdownNow”

(Tweet 13) “Our **letter to the UK govt** calling for **immediate lockdown, support for the vulnerable and scaling up of testing & contact tracing**. If you work in public health, please consider adding your signature. #lockdownuk #shutdownnow”

Under the category of Communicating Government, we have tweets that mention Johnson directly in the tweet or directed towards the UK government to give policy suggestions. Even though the tweet also has elements of anger towards the public (Tweet 12), the user is trying to reach the government to do something. The user here is infuriated because of other people’s negligence, and he is willing to sacrifice his own freedom by prioritizing his health. The state is the only mechanism that can achieve this by implementing strict measures. The reflection of this dynamic on the process of securitization should be considered in this case. Tweet 13 is solely trying to reach the government by collecting online signatures in order to suggest and show the relation of the demand for public health security in terms of extraordinary health policies.

Another category I will be giving place to is advising the public. Under this category, people make an effort to convince other citizens and suggesting them what to do to avoid spreading the virus. However, as in Tweet 14 below, it might sometimes occur in an aggressive mode.

(Tweet 14) “What it is going to take people? Literally, someone in **your close family dying?** You utter utter utter **d*ckheads. GO HOME AND STAY THERE!!!!!!**”

#lockdownUKnow#coronavirus#CoronaCrisisuk #coronavirusuk #LockdownNow
'Unprecedented' crowds despite warnings <https://t.co/U0MsfVNX8G>”

This tweet (14) from the category of advising the public is also a reflection of the anger towards the public. The user shares a news link from the BBC website saying there is an unprecedented crowd against the warnings in Wales. The belief in warnings faded with news such as this one. Therefore, people believed the only way is to implement measures that will be enforced by law. Here, the discourse is built upon a possible threat and tries to force people to empathize with reminding them that “people who lost their lives could be your loved ones, this virus could harm you”.

(Tweet 15) “Never done a video of me before but #SocialDistance thing compliance I've had enough **ITS NOT WORKING!** We're all adhering to the "requests" but MANY aren't! **If I lose ANY of my loved ones I'll be coming for @CMO_England @uksciencechief & @BorisJohnson!** #lockdownuk Just #lockdown! <https://t.co/xrTcgve8fX>”

(Tweet 16) “Dear UK, During this crisis @BorisJohnson has been flip-flopping and **dithering like a cat** near an open door. @jeremycorbyn on the other hand, right from the start of this crisis, has been calm, concrete, bold and decisive. You voted for the wrong leader. Regards, Tom #lockdownuk”

These tweets (15,16) are from the category criticizing the government; people are holding the government responsible for the security of their health and seeing Johnson as an incompetent leader since *his* decisions affect the results, not ordinary citizens. People share online posts with a video of them warning people and talking to the government to take action because they consider this platform as a way to reach both of them and looking at these tweets from a broader perspective would tell us how people are concerned about their lives and how they are trying to do something either by convincing the government or convincing fellow citizens.

During this period, people replied to Boris Johnson's posts or retweeted them with comments. Between the 10th and 22nd of March, he posted 39 tweets, and each tweet got abundant reactions,

most of them being critical of the PM. Here are several examples Boris Johnson got as a reply to his tweets.

(Tweet 17) “@neocomment95: You should **resign.**”¹⁶⁸

(Tweet 18) “@dkx1_: stop and look at Italy, **we will be like them if YOU do not act now**”

People reacted against his negligence and his efforts to normalize and de-securitize the issue, faced with harsh criticisms. Johnson was not effective enough to de-securitize this issue, and he was also late for taking necessary measures; therefore, people considered him incompetent, and this adjective still seems to cling on to his position.¹⁶⁹

Under his tweet about supporting NHS workers, people wrote:

(Tweet 19) “@mikedeaddman3: And you can help them by not forcing them to use bin bags as PPE. **#boristhebutcher we will never forgive or forget**”

And there are many other tweets about demanding a lockdown or more severe measures or criticizing the lack of these measures.

(Tweet 20) “@444truman: It’s absolutely barbaric that every other country is taking **far more drastic measures** than us, were **just getting told to wash our hands?! What do they know that we don’t?**”

(Tweet 21) “@roryhaczewski: **Make it mandatory for people to stay indoors PM.** Otherwise, you will have members of the public **not taking this seriously.** Some of the ignorance to the situation is immensely staggering.”

The head of the government may not take every issue seriously; however, he insisted on his position far more than it could be forgotten or could be easily compensated. In the first chapter, I gave place to Balzacq’s argument stating that if an issue is essentially a security issue, like a

¹⁶⁸ These tweets has been posted as replies to Johnson’s tweets between March 10 to 22. Here is the link of the query: [https://twitter.com/search?q=\(from%3Aborisjohnson\) until%3A2020-03-22 since%3A2020-03-10&src=typed_query](https://twitter.com/search?q=(from%3Aborisjohnson) until%3A2020-03-22 since%3A2020-03-10&src=typed_query)

¹⁶⁹Freedland, J. (2020) “This government's incompetence is no accident. It was inevitable” <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/oct/02/incompetence-brex-it-johnson-cummings-pandemic> (03.01.2021)

typhoon, it does not require securitization.¹⁷⁰ I argued if we know about it before it comes, it should be securitized because it affects the consequences. However, depicting a typhoon as it is not a threat causes distrust to that position. Johnson and his government basically tried to depict a typhoon as it was only water, while every information source said otherwise. People had to pressure the government towards securitization of the issue; even though it means a sacrifice from their liberty, they gave their consent since the security of their health, their existences' continuity was more important.

Against the unknown, people experience vulnerability and despair since the results are also unpredictable, and in their times of weakness, they turn their faces towards the state because, as Hobbes picture it, people sacrificed their own power and strength and gave it to the state, so that state could offer them protection when needed.¹⁷¹ A Hobbesian reading could also answer the anger towards the public. However, among this distrust, in the categories of public solidarity and entertainment, we can see how people try to compensate and help each other against the virus or the government's negligent policies. Nevertheless, we are safe to say that under these hashtags, people try to offer solutions by accepting the problem; none of the tweets were trying to convince people that there is not a threat. The acceptance of the issue as a security problem can be seen under the hashtag clearly. Only Boris Johnson and members of the government as strong figures refused to implement the measures that the public wanted for their securitization. However, at the end of this social movement on Twitter, Johnson also could not stand against the pressure and declared the lockdown on March 22, 2020.

3.5 The Identity of the Authors

By determining the identity of the author, we will be able to understand if there is an importance of the identity in terms of social status. Did the tweets get more interaction were sent by statesperson, journalists, influencers, or were they just ordinary citizens?

The last unit of the study tackles the question of identities: Who are these people sending these tweets? It is essential to understand this so that we can know whether the author and the

¹⁷⁰ See footnote 73

¹⁷¹ Hobbes, T. (1980). *Leviathan* (1651). *Glasgow* 1974.

audience in securitization theory are actually changing places. As priorly mentioned, there are 150 tweets coded from both hashtags, making a total of 300 tweets listed as the most interacted tweets based on retweet numbers. There were 139 different users under #lockdownuk and 135 users under #lockdownnow. There are five verified accounts under lockdownnow; two of these verified accounts belong to statespersons (one of them being a member of the parliament in the opposing camp, the other is a retired MP), one of them is an epidemiologist, and the other two account owners are writers. There are freelance writers, journalists, YouTubers; however, most of the users are ordinary citizens concerning about their health. #Lockdownuk does not draw a different picture from #lockdownnow; however, more verified accounts are tweeting under this hashtag. There are 13 verified accounts; 5 of them are known comedians, there are three writers, two university professors, one actor, one medical doctor, and one journalist. The rest of the users who do not have verified accounts are not different from the users under #lockdownnow.

Verified Account Categories (Based on Occupation)	#Lockdownuk	#Lockdownnow
Statesperson	2	-
Academics	1	2
Comedian	-	5
Journalist	-	1
Writer	2	3
Actor	-	1
Medical Doctor	-	1

Table 4 Verified Users' Occupations

We cannot say the most interacted tweets are posted only by verified accounts or accounts with the most followers. A user posts tweets with 61 followers that went viral, while tweets posted from accounts with more than ten thousand followers ended up getting two favorites. There is not any particular calculation considering the Twitter algorithm that explains what causes this cascade behavior. However, at the end of the cascade, we see the reaction coming from the public resulted in a lockdown.

As a result, we can see the reaction under these hashtags came from worried citizens; the issue was a matter of security, and the public reacted against a government that refuses to take action.

Security is a concept that is argued to be granted powers to the positions who hold it. In an emergency time like this, the government could implement measures that people would not normally comply with; however, the government also had a security issue. Compared to health security, economic or political security concerns remain relatively unimportant for the public because it is not as visible as the results that this virus could cause in the near future.

For the government, the situation presented a difficult dilemma: An economy that is under regression could result in a lost election; however, a growing economy while every country is suffering from economic problems could gain votes. On the other hand, implementing measures for an unknown virus, claimed to be dangerous, was found unnecessary in the first place. However, the problem with the virus was people's negligence in the first place. Therefore, the only way to avoid its fatal consequences was to take precautions without letting its spread. The government did not prioritize the public's health security and tried to push the normal life as a measure while the public was worrying about their survival; this was considered a mistake and criticized harshly afterward. When it comes to choosing between an unknown threat to people's lives versus a threat to the economy, people do not prioritize the economy. The public demanded a lockdown, and in return, a day after the boost of the hashtag, the government declared the lockdown. Twitter and social media platforms are not sticks to enforce laws; however, they are a way to create pressure on the governments when governments prioritize profit or other values. Its transparency and power to spread information help ordinary people to be heard. The fact that the state mechanism is not in a vacuum should be acknowledged. It is not free from what the public is going through, even though it is almost a self-functioning mechanism. Claiming every issue that the public brought up to the state would be considered a security issue would be flawed; this thesis considers these platforms among many other dynamics with their power to create an impact and consider this impact in consideration with security issues.

In the initial formulation of the securitization theory, the status of the author to the statesperson, elites, or intellectuals; they were holding the positions to set the security agenda and implement the measures as they see fit. However, now, through social media, people set another agenda and point at fingers in the opposite direction, and make the securitization occur towards their desired direction. The state could still be the mechanism that implements the law; however,

determining the law is the part where securitization got its power from, and with social media, we can see the integration of ordinary citizens into the process of securitization.



CONCLUSION

Security was considered as an almost magical concept that offers power to the people who know how to benefit from it. Accordingly, it was also a concept that its definition can differ in line with your identity. These differences brought about the questions this study attempted to answer while discussing the theory of securitization in consideration with communicative theory and with the help of data analysis. Securitization theory is basically arguing that the utterance of the word security, in other words labeling an issue as a security matter, justifies the extreme measure that people would not comply with in the first place. However, also this power was closely related to the problem of identity: The identity of the author who decides whether it is a security issue or not. At first, the author was considered to be consisting of a certain ruling class. Yet again, the changeability of identities led us to reconsider this limit. The information does not have a monopoly over it anymore; it still preserves its relationship with power; however, now it is open to public access. Therefore, the public has the power of information, and by considering these new dynamics, the securitization theory is questioned if the authors are still limited to a certain class and how did social media affect the dynamics of securitization?

In the first chapter, the study engaged with the theoretical part of security and the theory of securitization. I presented different answers to the efforts to understand what security is. By carrying this variety of answers in mind, I moved onto the part where I present securitization and criticisms against it. By holding onto the most important criticism for the purposes of this study, I engaged with the question of the author and the audience. The question of how to determine the author and audience has become one of the main pillars of the study. Securitization theory was arguing they were both equally important in the securitization process; however, if the audience determines the agenda and transfers the issues only chosen by certain people, then what is the role of the audience: Either to accept or to refuse what is already determined. To set an agenda in which the audience's concerns were reflected was not a part of the securitization. With the integration of new social dynamics into people's lives, this direction has changed. The audience now has a platform to voice their own concerns. The question of how to measure when the audience accepts the securitization was another critical

problem. The answer was to gain formal support to let the securitizing actor do whatever needs to be done; the outcome should be allowing the author to justify their measures. Overall, this chapter provides an understanding of the concept of security and the measurements of securitization for the coming chapters.

The second chapter connects the security literature to the communication theories. A classical model of communication with one side sending the message and the other party receiving was not enough to explain contemporary communicative tools; therefore, a more complex model is embraced and adapted into the securitization theory. Barnlund's model of communication was more explanatory when the new dynamics were considered. The model was more inclusive of the elements surrounding a dialogue, but most importantly, it was arguing the flow of communication is coinciding in two different directions. A sender was a receiver at the same time. This model helped the study in terms of showing the possibility of an author being an audience at the same time. This embraced model lightened the way when the research was moving towards understanding the dynamics of social media. The features of social media and specifically Twitter was covered in this second chapter. A decentralized method of communication with many senders and many receivers was offering a new way of transferring the message. Under this section, the effects of social media were discussed by presenting debates about its relation to democracy, information, and the examples of several social movements that spread from these platforms. Considering the fact that social movements occur from the gap between the public and the government as an intervention and attempt to raise awareness of the social problems, they are mostly attempting to securitize. People consider issues of the environment as a threat to their future; however, governments may have other priorities that can conflict with the securitization of the issue; in these cases, they show an effort to put these issues on the agenda. The threats in the public eye might differ from the *raison d'état*.

The third chapter is the analysis of this "different priorities" problem. 2020 was the year of the pandemic; with the help of a contemporary example, I wanted to examine the new social platforms' impact on setting the agenda. I worked with two datasets gathered from the tweets under two hashtags from Twitter: #lockdownnow and #lockdownuk. The United Kingdom was one of the latest countries that implemented measures against the virus therefore faced with

severe loss and heavy criticisms. Boris Johnson, the prime minister, hesitated to decide on a lockdown and directed people towards continuing with their normal lives. People showed their reactions via Twitter, and the day before the lockdown decision, people send thousands of tweets addressing the government. The analysis of the discourse of these tweets and the numbers shows the traces of securitizing actors' discourses and governments declaring the day after the burst of backlash on Twitter shows us a possible dynamic that could affect the government's behavior towards the public decision. Taking tweets' common characteristics into account, the features of public securitization is distinguished from the state's securitization in this chapter. By considering these characteristics, the study considers securitization as a successful one. We cannot have a claim about the direct causality that Johnson saw the tweets, and he could not resist them anymore; however, the positive correlation between the public's reaction and the government action is worth considering; also, the cabinet member's statement supports the claim. Harmonizing the knowledge we have acquired from the first chapter; security might mean a sense of certainty and control. The dilemma that the United Kingdom has faced was the unknown consequences of the virus for the state economy and well-being, and when we look at it from the public's eyes, the threatful consequences for their health. The state should provide a sense of control about the issue to make people feel safe; however, they failed in the United Kingdom.

This part where the study includes data analysis with a touch of discourse analysis is not unique; there are many studies that are examining the social movements that originated or got stronger with the help of social media. The originality and the contribution that this study makes to the literature roots from its tie to the theory of securitization. Grounding one part to the theory and the other parts to the data analysis, this study can be adapted to many examples. The conflict that the gap between the state and the public created will result in social efforts for the public to draw attention. Recently states are adapting to these new dynamics and consider public concerns since the public have access to information, and even the tiny disturbance causing by the government's mistakes is known and causes the loss of votes. They engage with the public via Twitter, they listen and act according to Twitter, various examples are presented in the second and third chapters to this engagement.

In the initial formulation of securitization, as repetitively emphasized throughout the study, the securitizing actor is considered to be a statesperson or an intellectual; however, social media providing a new ground, a new platform for people to raise awareness and draw attention to their concerns. The online reaction gets a response somehow from the government. Even though this example belongs to an agenda on the state level, there are social movements that people started online and spread across the globe and initiate steps towards social justice. The reason I study securitization with communicative theories is that the most accepted models are not enough for us to understand these new dynamics of social communication and also the theory that securitization lays its ground; the speech-act theory is highly dependent on the communication.

A study cannot be without its limits; this study was limited to Twitter, therefore, lacks a general view on the impact of all the social media tools. Also, the securitization in this thesis is considered to be attempted in a democratic country where people may have an impact on the government with their reaction against them. For other regimes, the communication channel between state and public may be far too disconnected; therefore, it is not possible for the public to pass on their demands to be considered. Another obstacle that limits our scope is that we are still experiencing the pandemic; this is an ongoing process; therefore, anything that can come up in the future might cause the de-securitization of the matter either by the public or the government. However, since the main argument of this thesis is not relevant to whether the securitizing act is the right thing to do or not, it is about being capable of securitizing.

For further investigation, a broader range of social media tools might be present a diversity between platforms. How people react on Facebook is different from Instagram or Twitter. A digital ethnographic study would also help in terms of understanding people's attitudes towards online securitizing attempts between platforms. A question for further studies could be towards understanding how states use social media in terms of building a bridge between the public and the state mechanism in security matters; this would offer us a chance to investigate both ways of this relationship.

The study presents the conundrum behind determining the definition of the concept of security alongside the determination of the identities. One cannot simply mark a party in a dialogue as

a sender or a receiver if both parties are sending messages in different forms to one another at the same time. If the winds are kind enough, people could spread their security concerns based on just their words. They send their concerns directed towards their government in our analysis: Would not that mean they still consider the state as the securitizing actor since they have the power to implement those measures?

The answer to this question is both yes and no. Sovereign is considered as who he decides on the exception.¹⁷² The exception could be the extreme measures which the problem will be dealt with, or it could be setting the agenda in the first place, determining who is the enemy and what is the threat. We cannot simply transfer all to one party. We can only argue that the monopoly of the state over social security matters is over. People are as qualified as states to set the agenda, determine the enemy, and decide on the exception. The state may accept it and implement measures that people demand; in this case, it could be considered as successful securitization, or they could simply ignore it; in that case, this would be only an attempt towards securitization. The part that matters is that the public now has a role as a securitizing actor, and for the cases of public concerns and the audience is the state mechanism. This change in the roles broadens the scope of securitization; besides, in the age of post-truth, the reassessment of the scope and the definition of roles for theories is indispensable. This would bring solutions and also problems into the mechanism, the perspective we consider them -either problems or solutions- depends on how we approach the act of securitization.

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