



A Critical Discourse Analysis: The Securitization of Black Lives Matter by Fox News Media

MA Thesis - International Relations: Global Conflict

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1. Introduction	2
2. Literature review	5
2.1. The Global War on Terror and Minorities	6
2.2. The Securitization Framework	9
2.2.1. Broadening the Traditional Securitization Framework	10
2.2.2. The Divisive Nature of Securitization	12
2.3. Mediums and Tools of Securitization: The Audience and The Media	13
2.3.1. Media	16
2.4. Conclusion	17
3. Methodology	18
3.1. Data Selection	21
3.2. Hypothesis	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.3. Structure	22
4. Contextualizing The Audience and The Actor: 2015-2016 Socio-Political Sphere	23
5. Textual Analysis	28
5.1. The Framing of the BLM-law enforcement relationship	29
5.2. The Framing of BLM by Fox News	32
6. Discussion and Conclusion	36
7. Bibliography	41
8. Appendices	49

1. Introduction

“The FBI assess it is very likely Black Identity Extremist (BIE) perceptions of police brutality against African Americans spurred an increase in premeditated, retaliatory lethal violence against law enforcement and will very likely serve as justification for such violence...The FBI assess it is very likely incidents of alleged brutality against African Americans since then have continued to feed resurgence in ideologically motivated, violent criminal activity within the BIE movement...The FBI makes this judgement with the key assumption the recent incidents are ideologically motivated ”

(FBI Counterterrorism Division 2017, 2)

In 2014 the shooting of an African American boy Mike Brown, by law enforcement officers, in Ferguson Missouri created unrest and disappointment among the Ferguson population, the majority of which is African American (United States Census Bureau 2019). This injustice took place in the wake of the shooting of Trayvon Martin another African American boy whose killer, was also acquitted of all charges ("Herstory" 2019). These two unfortunate events, and many others before that, became the backdrop and catalyst for one of the most significant and popular social movements in the United States today, namely, the Black Lives Matter Movement (BLM). The main aim of the movement is to rally against “state sanctioned violence and anti-Black racism” ("Herstory" 2019). Between August 2014 - the month in which Mike Brown was shot – and August 2015 alone BLM had organized and planned approximately 780 protests in 44 of the 50 US states (Williamson, Trump and Einstein 2018, 401). According to Elephrame database there have been roughly 2675 BLM protests and other demonstrations within the last 5 years (“Read This List Of 2,677 Black Lives Matter Protests And Other Demonstrations” 2019).

On August 3rd of 2017 the FBI counterterrorism division released a report, which identified a ‘new threat’ to US law enforcement and as an extension to the US as a nation, they named this the ‘Black Identity Extremists’ (BIE) threat. The release of this report was met with much controversy, especially since the report seemed to be directed at Black/African American activists protesting police brutality, in other words, “the report broadly categorizes black activists as threats to national security” (Matthews and Cyril 2017). This has come at a time where black Americans have felt the need to stand up against police brutality towards people of colour.

Ironically, the FBI has securitized people who initially began protesting due to the fact that they were already criminalized and securitized to begin with. By labelling them Black Identity Extremist and painting 'them' as a 'threat' to 'us' the FBI has not only reinforced an already existing notion and created an environment that needs black activism, but as this thesis argues they have also worsened the situation and experience for Blacks/African Americans in the US by classifying those fighting for their rights as a threat to national security within the realm of the Global War on Terror (GWOT).

“The twenty-first century, is a defining moment in which black citizens today are experiencing racial terror in the United States” (Hooker 2016, 448); this statement made by Juliet Hooker, illustrates a truth in today's world that many do not want to accept and one that seems to have been overlooked within contemporary academia in the realm of securitization. The post-9/11 world has given rise to many studies and many angles at which scholars have decided to understand the ways in which the post-9/11 world has affected international, regional and national relations. When focusing on the effects of post-9/11 legislation on national policy, many have taken interest in examining the effects of this legislation on Muslim immigrants, - and now Hispanic immigrants - often backgrounding the effects these same policies have on other minorities. The aim here is not to minimize in anyway the effects that post-9/11 legislation and security policy has had on the Muslim and Hispanic people, it is merely to bring awareness to the fact that although the securitization framework has been applied in many studies and case studies and has also been a topic of research on its own, there is a obvious gap that remains unfilled. Much attention has been given to how these sentiments of xenophobia, nationalism and most of all securitization, affect migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. However, in the case of the US many have failed to look within the confines of the American borders and see how these developments are in fact affecting one of the longest suffering minorities in the United States, namely the African American population.

On the domestic level the GWOT has influenced and increased US domestic law enforcement powers in the “name of the war on terror” and “consequently, both public discussion and accountability with respect to the use of excessive force against people of colour and racial profiling have eroded significantly” (Ritchie and Mogul 2008, 178; Moeckli 2008, 32; Brown 2011, 652-653;) in the name of security. Consequently, within the principality of ‘governing through security’ (Moeckli 2008, 41) it is brought to the forefront that the deprivation

of the liberties pertaining to minorities are not as important as the security of the majority (Brown 2011, 665; Moeckli 2008, 3).

As a result of security governance since 9/11 “non-electoral political participation” has increased (Chebel d’Appollonia 2015, 125). “Security policy [has] provide [provided] new political stimulus for targeted groups [to] engage in non-electoral activities” (Chebel d’Appollonia 2015, 126), the correlation between these two aspects is an extremely interesting and relevant one in our contemporary times. The reason the correlation between security policy and non-electoral activities is interesting is due to the fact that security policies have visibly increased since 9/11 and “the immigration and counterterrorism policies implemented...have had severe consequences for specific groups identified as ‘security threat’” (Chebel d’Appollonia 2015, 15). The non-electoral activities that have been taken in opposition to these policies by affected groups, and the light in which these non-electoral activities have been portrayed by the media thus become an interesting topic to investigate.

One of the most known forms of non-electoral activity are public or street protests, which according to Williamson, Trump and Einstein are often “seen as anti-establishment” (2018, 402). Affected groups identified as ‘security threats’ within or as a result of security policies are then discriminated against, marginalized, stereotyped, and labelled the ‘other’. Being in such a position takes away individual political power as well as, if not mostly, political power from a group as a whole since they are often then discriminated against as a collective. This is why Williamson, Trump and Einstein refer to public protests as “the political strategies of the disempowered” (2018, 402).

Like van Dijk the goal of this thesis is to understand and illustrate how the written media is involved and plays a role in the continuity of a system of discrimination (1991, x), however this thesis looks specifically at the Black Lives matter movement and how it has been portrayed as a ‘threat’ by Fox News. As van Dijk mentions in his 1991 paper on press and racism, media continues to play a prominent role in the day to day life of right-wing media consumers (1991, x). Media in general provides and defines the ethnic situation for its audience and constructs an interpretive framework that forms their understanding of ethnic events (van Dijk 1991, x). This thesis aims to look at the media representation of a historically disempowered group in America who have recently drawn a lot of attention to themselves under the banner of Black Lives Matter. Looking at the fact that “political and social discontent only occasionally result in public

protests” Williamson, Trump and Einstein (2018, 402), the numerous and successful BLM protests are rather significant and make a powerful statement on injustices faced by the Black community. Nevertheless, in polarized/partisan America there is always a protest to a protest, an opposition to the opposition and seeing as a large part of the African American community politically identify with the Democratic party (Williamson, Trump and Einstein 2018, 403), the Republicans will hold an opposing position. Moreover, the objective of this thesis is to investigate and analyse the part conservative media has played in securitizing the BLM movement in the years leading up to 2017, namely between 2015 - 2016. Specifically the question this thesis aims to answer is : How can we see securitization of Black Lives Matter by Fox News through CDA?

The next section of this thesis is the literature review within this section the key theoretical literature and academic discussion consulted for this thesis are examined. Thereafter the methodology section will provide a more in-depth discussion of how this thesis will conduct its analysis of the securitization of BLM by Fox News using Critical Discourse Analysis. Thereafter the analysis chapter will be followed up by the discussion section, where the analysis will be discussed in further details before concluding.

2. Literature review

This literature review presents the academic discussion on the literature and theories that will be used as tools of contextualization, observation and analysis throughout this thesis. On a macro-level, this thesis looks at how in a post-9/11 world African Americans as a minority like any other have been affected by the normalization of ‘governing through security’. Therefore, the first section of this literature review will briefly discuss the Global War on Terror and the effects it has had and continues to have on minority groups. The second section of this literature review will look at the academic discussion on the securitization framework; as noted in the introduction the social phenomenon that this thesis is interested in investigating is how conservative media has securitized BLM protesting police brutality. This part aims to explore what securitization is, how it is achieved but also how the framework has been challenged within academia by other academics. Thereafter the literature review briefly interacts with the notions media and audience as tools for securitization.

2.1. The Global War on Terror and Minorities

There have been many permanent domestic and foreign policy changes in the realm of security since the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington DC on September 11th, 2001 (Brysk, Meade and Sharif 2013, 3). The Western world has been living in a state of emergency ever since and it has been affecting “millions of ordinary people without the most ancillary connection to terrorism...The war on terror has spilled over into a more general crackdown on non-citizens” (Brysk, Meade and Sharif 2013, 3). Nevertheless, this thesis explores and argues that in the case of minorities the same dynamic can be applied regardless of their legal status and thus this spillover into a more general crackdown has created, solidified and identified a distinction between ‘us’ and ‘them’ (Brysk, Meade and Sharif 2013, 2) emphasizing mostly religious and cultural differences. This ‘us’ versus ‘them’ is essentially presented as an identity rivalry where the ‘other’ is a threat to the identity of ‘us’ (Brysk, Meade and Sharif 2013, 2), “the political construction of migration as a security issue impinges and is embedded in the politics of belonging in western Europe” (Huysmans 2000, 751) and in the US.

This notion of the ‘other’ being an identity threat to Europe and the US can only be grasped when it is made clear that western liberal democracies like the US and European Union member states identify themselves as being “peaceful people... [with] principles of liberty and dignity” (Brysk, Meade and Sharif 2013, 2). As a result, the ‘other’ is the opposite of peaceful, liberal and dignified. Essentially the few who carried out the 9/11 terrorist attacks, were used by western governments intentionally and unintentionally, and by power-hungry political parties, to demonize an entire people and religion. The premise so far has been that it is a result of 9/11 that immigrants/foreigners especially Muslims are being socially and judicially marginalized and discriminated against, however for decades before 2001 “western governments have responded to concerns raised by the so-called new immigration by linking immigration policy to other huge profile issues, including the fight against drug trafficking, crime and terrorism” (Chebel d’Appollonia 2015, 3). Although the association of immigrants with crime was a reality prior to 9/11, it is the events on 9/11 that led to the permanent legal and institutional changes (Brysk, Meade and Sharif 2013, 2), and has led to, not a new suspicion but an increased suspicion, by the general public towards not just Muslims but also other cultural, religious and ethnic minorities. The war on terror has only further magnified the association of minorities, migrants and asylum

seekers with the negative connotations that were already present within society and further institutionalised, normalized and expanded on them.

Minorities in the United States, especially the African American community, have had a history of criminalization and victimization by the US judicial system and by extension law enforcement (American Sociological Association - Department of Research and Development 2007, 2-4). In a sense, the war on crime and drugs that targeted and criminalized minorities has been rebranded as 'the war on terror'. In the case of African Americans, their criminalization goes as far back as slavery, "the racial taxonomies [that] to justify enslavement of Black people" (Owusu-Bempah 2017, 26), have been reused and "recreated throughout American history" (Owusu-Bempah 2017, 26). Prime examples of this recreation being in the "context of the war on drugs and crime" (Owusu-Bempah 2017, 26), in both contexts the negative racial taxonomies associated with African Americans were used to create a stereotype which labeled an entire race, especially young men "ominous criminal predator[s]...and thus the target of much police attention" (Owusu-Bempah 2017, 26). The American Sociology Association point to the fact that the policies which accompanied the 'war on drugs' and the 'war on crime' in the 1970s-1990s (American Sociological Association - Department of Research and Development 2017, 5; Owusu-Bempah 2017, 26) for the most part targeted minority groups and quote 1993 Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan who claimed that declaring a 'war on drugs' was essentially "choosing to have an intense crime problem concentrated among minorities" American Sociological Association - Department of Research and Development 2017, 5).

In the literature on 'war on terror' especially within the realm of critical terrorism studies much of the focus remains to be on the affects GWOT polices have had and continue to have on Muslims and in more recent developments Hispanics and have failed to focus on other minorities that have also endured the consequences of post -9/11 legislation. Sharif and Schairer do however shed light on the fact that over time, in the "enduring struggles against terrorism and extremeist" (Sharif and Schairer 2013, 18) the category extremists came to include "adversaries that may have never employed terrorists tactics" (Sharif and Schairer 2013, 17). As we have seen this has been the case with the labeling of BLM and other African American activist groups and individual members of such groups as Black Identity Extremists.

As the introduction has already stated on the domestic level the GWOT has influenced and increased US domestic law enforcement powers in the "name of the war on terror" and

“consequently, both public discussion and accountability with respect to the use of excessive force against people of color and racial profiling have eroded significantly” (Ritchie and Mogul 2008, 178; Moeckli 2008, 32). As previously mentioned this ‘governing through security’ (Moeckli 2008, 41) - which here means using the notion of security and needing to ensure ‘safety’ as the main tool in governing - on the national and domestic level that formed in the aftermath of 9/11 is not foreign, it is merely more apparent and extensive, “the war on terror continues but as an extension of the more general ‘war on crime’” (Moeckli 2008, 41; Ritchie and Mogul 2008, 183) and drugs. In 2008 Ritchie and Mogul observed that “the systematic abuse of people of color by law enforcement officers has not only continued since 2001, but worsened in both practice and severity” (2008, 178-179), this observation is continues to be true for Hooker in 2016 wrote that there is an increase in unarmed black persons killed by a police officer, and it “only continues to grow” (Hooker 2016, 449). More generally, an article published in 2015 on trends of killings of and by police show an increase in the ratio of killings by police to killings of police by civilians, where in the 1970’s the ration was 3.4 to 1 more recent data suggests that it has risen to approximately 7.8 to 1 (Zimring and Arsiniega 2015). As such there has been an increase in police brutality (Ritchie and Mogul 2008, 178-179) with respect to the more extensive war on crime - which has been rebranded as the war on terror - and the increasing power of domestic law enforcement in the name of security.

All in all, the literature demonstrates that on a domestic level the war on terror is in many ways a mirror image of the war on crime and drugs. It becomes evident that in all three ‘wars’ the legislative discriminations and racial profiling of minorities according to ethnicity, race and national origin were already present in the US, and that the GWOT only extended this legal activity. Politicians in DC used the crisis caused by 9/11 to reverse “far-fetching domestic and international” laws, one of which was the reverse - or as Sharif and Schairer call it ‘counterrevolution’ - of the “civil and minority rights revolution of the 1960s and 1970s” (2013, 26) giving them the power to ‘lawfully’ discriminate, racially profile and most importantly securitize certain groups (Sharif and Schairer 2013, 26). This post-9/11 climate created an environment in which even those who exercise their democratic and first amendment rights can be labeled as a potential threat, BLM and other African American activist groups who protest police brutality - which has increased in severity as a result of 9/11 domestic security policies - have experienced being securitized for their non-electoral participation/ protest of unjust policies

towards their community. In that sense the rise of BLM against police brutality can be contextualized within the Global war on terror and so can the effortless securitization of such groups by politicians, the public and the media.

2.2. The Securitization Framework

The literature on securitization illustrates that the Copenhagen School (CS) dominates the securitization framework, nevertheless the way in which the CS puts forward the framework has been challenged by various scholars in a sense that broadens the understanding of the securitization framework and what it means to securitize or be securitized. However, before delving into the literature and the ways in which various scholars have contributed and challenged the framework, it is vital to understand the basis of the securitization framework as presented by the CS.

The most common characterization and essence of securitization is its definition of being a 'speech act' (Balzacq 2005, 171). Roe explains 'speech act' as being a "call and response process" (Roe 2004, 281) where in order for an issue to be successfully securitized "an actor makes a call that something is a matter of 'security' and the audience must then respond with their acceptance of it as such" (Roe 2004, 281). Williams further explains that "what makes a particular speech act... 'securitization' is its casting of an issue as one of an 'existential threat'" (2003, 514); 'existential threat' meaning that something is a matter of security. The casting of an issue as an existential threat then leads to the "call for extraordinary measures beyond the routines and norms of everyday politics" (Williams 2003, 514). A prime example of extraordinary measure or alternative politics in response to an existential threat is the Patriot Act. The Patriot Act was the government's method of alternative politics in response to terrorism. This act allowed them to bypass the rights guaranteed by the fourth amendment and pass an Act that expanded the power of the government ("End Mass Surveillance Under The Patriot Act" 2019) and allowed for mass surveillance of US citizens (Evans 2002, 934); "much of this legislation chips away at the constitutionally protected rights of citizens and residents of the United States, including the Fourth Amendment's protection from unreasonable searches and seizures" (Evans 2002, 934). The threat of terrorism outweighed the rights of American citizens in this sense everyday politics was bracketed and actions that would not have been deemed

constitutional were deemed necessary for the sake of security, with the idea usually being that ‘this is the only way to ensure our security’.

Although the risk and danger of securitization is not explicitly expressed in these academic articles on securitization, Williams does express that in the securitization theory framework, “any referent object can be securitized by any actor” (Williams 2003, 525). As mentioned above, not only can any referent object be securitized but post-9/11 legislation and security policies have made it easier and acceptable to securitize any referent object. The securitization of BLM by the conservative media and later the FBI illustrates just how dangerous and facile it is to label or be labeled an ‘existential threat’ and face the consequences of that.

2.2.1. Broadening the Traditional Securitization Framework

The understanding of the securitization framework as merely a speech act is precisely what scholars like Thierry Balzacq, Matt McDonald, and Michael Williams challenge. This section will look at how the traditional securitization framework has been criticized for being too narrow and discusses how scholars have ‘broadened’ the framework in a way that makes it less rigid. It attempts to showcase the academic discussion of how the framework has come to be broadened in terms of context and circumstance, rather than solely the call and response process between actor and audience.

Although Balzacq disagrees with the fact that securitization is limited to ‘speech act’, he does identify it as being a vital component of the securitization framework, a perception shared by McDonald (2008, 566) - and argues that the concept of securitization is much more complex and much more broad (Balzacq 2005, 172) than has been previously presented by the CS. Balzacq further criticizes this understanding of the traditional CS framework by stating that “as a consequence, the concept of security as ‘speech act’ ‘lends itself too much to a distorted sense of [securitization] as having a fixed, permanent, unchanging [code of practice]’” (Gusfield 1981, 9 quoted in Balzacq 2005, 172). He then continues to argue that this mainstream perception of securitization “ultimately reduces security to a *conventional procedure* such as marriage or betting, in which felicity circumstances (conditions of success) must fully prevail for the act to go through” (Balzacq 2005, 172). He contends that securitization is dependent on circumstance and that it is actually strategic; this perspective is one that Matt McDonalds seconds and refers to in his article as ‘facilitating conditions’ (2008, 564, 567), the right conditions for securitization

attempts to be successful, including “the form of the act, the position of speaker and historical resonance of particular threats” (Weaver 200, 252-3 quoted in McDonald 2008, 567).

The incorporation and emphasis of the phrase ‘strategic’ is an important addition to the theory of securitization, because according to Balzacq when understood as a strategic practice securitization can be seen to occur “within, and as part of a configuration of circumstances, including the context, the psycho-cultural disposition of the audience, and the power that both speaker and listener bring to the interaction” (Balzacq 2005, 172). In a sense, the understanding of securitization as strategic broadens the framework by taking other acts and contexts into account that the analysis of ‘speech acts’ on its own might not have allowed for (Williams 2003, 525). In understanding securitization of BLM by Fox News it is important to understand the circumstances in which this securitization has been taking place. Aspects such as the political climate, prior relations between Fox News audience and the African American community - or historical resonance - need to be taken into consideration in order to better understand, contextualize, and more importantly critically analyse the act of securitization and its success by Fox News. For example, by merely looking at the news articles without contextualizing it in the socio-political sphere at the time will not provide a holistic understanding of what is being said, why, and how.

To further emphasize the limitations of securitization as purely a ‘speech act’, Balzacq compares ‘speech act’ and ‘universal pragmatics’ and illustrates that both notions are “primarily concerned with fundamental principles (or rules) underlying communicative action. If the rules are not followed then the communicative action is distorted and thus not successful ‘felicitous’” (2005, 172). Therefore, understanding and perceiving the securitization framework through a ‘strategic’ lense will help in allowing to take into account more variables and is not limited by the following of certain rules. This broader framework of securitization and its emphasis on circumstance is vital to this thesis due to the various political and social conditions that have led to the rise of BLM and the social and political conditions that made securitizing them a reality. In addition to that, the broader framework fits with the flexible interpretive nature of Critical Discourse Analysis methodology that is used in this thesis, which will be further discussed in the next chapter.

2.2.2. The Divisive Nature of Securitization

The literature on securitization illustrates that there is a clear construct of ‘us’ versus ‘them’ that accompanies the securitization of an issue (Huysmans referenced in Roe 2004, 286; Williams 2003, 520). This is especially visible when it comes to the securitization of certain groups of people based on ethnicity, religion, national origin, especially “in the context of the post-2001 US-led ‘war on terror’” (McDonald 2008, 563), as mentioned in the section on ‘GWOT and Minorities’.

Paul Roe touches on the effects of securitization on minorities in his article ‘Securitization and Minority Rights: Conditions of Desecuritization’, in this article Roe draws on the work of Jef Huysmans who connotes securitization with creating of ‘in’ and ‘out’ groups (2004, 286), and this divisive nature of securitization “creates a new social order wherein ‘normal politics’ is bracketed” (Balzacq 2005; 171, Williams 2003, 514). Although within the literature on securitization consulted for this thesis Roe is the only scholar who focuses on minority rights within the realm of securitization, Balzacq and Williams similarly illustrate the dichotomous character of securitization. In his article ‘The three Faces of Securitization: Political Agency, Audience and Agency’ Balzacq states that personal and social identity of a securitizing actor has an effect on what is securitized, on what is seen as an existential threat (2005, 178-179). He also stipulates that the language used by the actor, or more specifically the “linguistic content can modify a context by investigating an individual group with a specific ominous tone” (2005, 181), in other words, the groups that are marginalized as a result of securitization are dependent on the ‘actor’s’ personal identification, their political goals and how they choose to voice identity and goals. Therefore, the linguistic analysis of Fox News articles is the best way to understand how in securitizing BLM they have exposed their own identity and goals. This perspective that Balzacq provides is mostly geared towards understanding the actor and the actor’s actions, he talks about the ‘pragmatic’ or strategic understanding of securitization as having two overlapping components (2005, 178) which he refers to as the ‘agent’ and the ‘act’.

Williams showcases this divisive nature of securitization by referring to the notion of ‘societal security’ (2003, 518) and framing the framework of securitization within the notion of ‘societal security’. According to Williams ‘societal security’ is when “a group is presented as threatened by dynamics as diverse as cultural flows, economic integration or population movements” (2003, 514). He claims that societal security was “designed to highlight the role that

‘identity’ plays in security relations” (2003, 518), essentially societal security is used to distinguish matters of identity from matters of sovereignty, whereas the former pertains to societal security the latter pertains to state security (Williams 2003, 519). Roe points to the fact that the Copenhagen School defines ‘societies’ as “politically significant ethnic, national or religious groups - collectivities that can act alongside, indeed even challenge, states in the international state system” (2004, 289). Evidently, societal security is dependent on the preservation of societal identity - the identity of a given collective or group - and when that identity is threatened or feels threatened, the obvious reaction is to strengthen that societal identity, this is what the CS puts forward (Roe 2004, 289). Ultimately the strengthening of one societal identity in response to a societal threat can be a societal threat for another social group causing them too to strengthen their societal identity.

The recent increase - or visible increase - African American and Black power movements including the Black Lives Matter (BLM) activist movement in the US are good examples of societal identity strengthening, with 780 Black Lives Matter protests occurring between August 2014 and August 2015 alone (Williamson, Trump and Einstein 2018,401). African Americans are a marginalized minority, making up only 12.1% of the total US population (Minority Rights Group 2018), with a contemporary and historical experience of being dehumanized and racially discriminated against; and in various occasions throughout history, as well as now, respond to their societal threat by strengthening their societal identity. In that sense and in the context of the US, black activist movements are born from a threatened societal identity and are collectives that challenge the state.

2.3. Mediums and Tools of Securitization: The Audience and The Media

Another important notion in the securitization framework which needs broadening is the notion of the ‘call and response act’ being a top down process. The notion that someone in power, more specifically a political elite makes the call that something is the matter of security and the audience then has to accept it in order for securitization to happen is not wrong, but it is merely one side of the securitization process. Scholars such as Matt McDonald and Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda point to the fact that more attention needs to be given to the role of the audience, not only when it comes to the success of securitization, but as an indication of what can be successfully securitized. Although McDonald’s focus is on securitization, Goode and

Ben-Yehuda focus on the notion of moral panic. When looking at the way in which Goode and Ben Yehuda explain the notion of moral panic it quickly becomes clear that a strong parallel can be drawn between the securitization framework and moral panic. The reason this thesis has decided to include moral panic, is because the literature allows for a broader understanding on how securitization can be both top-down, bottom-up and even come from the middle levels of society, namely the media. Moral panic is important for this thesis because it engages more in the role of the audience and elaborates on the notion of context that Balzacq and McDonald have brought up.

The notion of moral panic can be defined as being “responses to perceived existential threats – threats to particular individuals or institutions that come to be viewed as threats to a way of life, social norms and values, civilization, and even morality itself” (Brysk, Meade and Sharif 2013, 1, Garland 2008, 10). This definition in itself exposes the striking similarity between the securitization framework and the moral panic framework, in both cases there is a reaction to a perceived existential threat that creates a dichotomous environment within a given society. In moral panic theory these “agents responsible for the threat” are referred to as folk devils and are “stereotyped and classified as deviants” (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 1994, 149). The purpose of this thesis is to investigate BLM’s classification as ‘folk devil’ by Fox News.

One of the interesting observations made by Goode and Ben-Yehuda in their article ‘Moral Panics: Culture, Politics and Social Construction’ is the theorizing of whether or not moral panic is of hierarchical nature or not. They presented three models to theorize and investigate the possible origins of moral panic, namely the grassroot model (the general public) the elite-engineered model (those in positions of power) and the interest group theory (media, activists groups and unions) (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 1994, 161-166). Although all of these models have valid for and against arguments the conclusion that was drawn stated that none of the following was on its own is sufficient to explain the creation of moral panic, instead they all play a significant role as all three levels of society interact with one another (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 1994, 168).

Grassroot ↔ Interest Group ↔ Elite

Nevertheless, the grassroots model does play an important role because there needs to be a pre-existing fear about a certain group or issue within the general public or a societal section of the public (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 1994, 167) to provide the ability for a threat to become 'weaponized' as a moral panic and then as a result possibly securitized. Goode and Ben-Yehuda argue that despite what many believe, including the traditional theorizing about securitization framework, "politicians and the media cannot fabricate concern where none existed initially" (1994, 161), what they can do however is identify a sense of pre-existing fear and "catalyze assist, guide or trigger it" (1994, 161) as a means to their end.

These fears must be articulated; they must be focused, brought to public attention or awareness, given a specific outlet, harnessed to a mechanism of expression. And this almost inevitably entails some form of leadership and organization...this fear must be sharpened, broadened, articulated and publicly expressed by organized, movement-like activity launched by middle level interest groups.

(Goode and Ben Yehuda 1994, 167)

A good example of how these three societal levels interact in the creation of moral panic and securitization, is once again the example of the Patriot Act. Brysk, Meade and Sharif explain that instead of using "big-brother media manipulation or "manufactured consent" the Bush-Cheney Administration used its privileged knowledge of the threat to exacerbate existing fears rather than to mitigate them" (2013, 2), making the public believe they emergency politics such as the Patriot Act was necessary. In this case elite used fear already present amongst the public and capitalised on that, but the seeds were already present, and the media then followed thereafter.

Both Garland and Goode and Ben-Yehuda point to the role of the media and how they tend to exaggerate - often in favor of their political affiliations and ideology - issues that in most cases do not warrant that respective level of panic (Garland 2001, 9; Goode and Ben-Yehuda 1994, 159). This notion of media being a catalyst and their ability to exaggerate, highlight and background issues in favor of their political affiliations and ideology is precisely why broadening securitization to include moral panic will better help the analysis of this thesis, again this allows for further understanding of what it takes for securitization to be successful. Engaging with

aspects such as the political affiliations and ideology of a given media outlet allows for better comprehension of what, why, how and to whom they are reporting. It will also help uncover subliminal messages that might otherwise be overlooked.

2.3.1. Media

As we have come to see within the literature on securitization, an issue or group can only be securitized “through audience consent” (McDonald 2008, 566), and as the moral panic framework has illustrated there must be a valid pre-existing sentiment of fear of a certain issue for moral panic to be successful. Essentially without moral panic there can be no successful securitization. Without the media - which in this day and age has a broad reach - the exaggeration needed to create moral panic would be limited, “modern media is a central element of security relations” (Williams 2003, 524). According to Garland we are currently living in an “age of exaggeration, where the mass media regularly converge on a single anxiety-creating issue and exploit it for all it’s worth” (2008, 9), making unwarranted levels of panic more common and likely to take place.

There is a consensus on the relationship between media and the creation of discourse and public opinion, much of which is considered a two-way street. As mentioned above, public opinion and fears cannot merely be fabricated by the media and politicians, there needs to be a pre-existing set of beliefs and notions amongst the public which can then be amplified by mediums such as the media (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 1994, 161). What the media presents and deems worthy of presenting - commonly known as ‘news’ values in the field and literature on Journalism/Communications - “are not neutral, but reflect ideologies and priorities hold in society” (Bell 1991, 156 quoted in Bednarek and Caple 2014, 137). In addition to being a catalyst and ‘loudspeaker’ of the rumblings already present amongst the public, when it comes to language, written or verbal “there exists no neutral way to represent a person” (Machin and Mayr 2012, 77) or any given issue for that matter. What this suggests is that when presenting the news, each news outlet whether it be a news article, a televised report, or a tweet will always inevitably present/frame events in a way that reflects their personal own personal ideology/ideological stance. As van Dijk states “the mass media provide an ideological framework for the interpretation of ethnic events. This framework may also act as a legitimation for prejudices and discrimination against minority groups” (1991, 7). Understanding this is key to the analysis of

the representation and securitization of BLM in conservative media. In other words, although media might choose to magnify or reduce the importance of what is already being said in the public they are able to present it in a way that affects the way it is consumed and as a result understood and interpreted. Although they get their ‘material’ from the ‘grassroot’ the media has agenda setting powers and framing power (Scheufele and Tewksbury 2007, 11) that allow them to provide this ideological framework mentioned by van Dijk.

According to Scheufele and Tewksbury there is a “correlation between the emphasis that mass media place on certain issues and the importance attributed to these issues by mass audience” (2007, 11) this is what they refer to as agenda setting, purposely giving one issue more coverage than other makes it more important than other issues at that time. A good and recent example of this is the amount of news coverage given to the Notre-Dam fire on April of 2019 where no one died in comparison to the still ongoing Sudan revolution - which also officially started in April of 2019 ("Sudan's Violent Political Crisis Explained" 2019) - where there have been casualties. In the way in which Scheufele and Tewksbury explained agenda setting giving more coverage to Notre-Dam, which yes is a historical monument, shows that the lives lost in Sudan are deemed less important by the media than the burning of an old building. Agenda setting in that sense might not be as useful for this thesis due to the fact that one would have to engage in an overview of events and determine the proportion of coverage attributed to that event or issue. However, it does show that the media has influence over public opinion and what they deem important as a result of agenda setting techniques. Framing on the other hand is a useful notion, for it refers to “ the assumption that how an issue is characterized in news reports can have an influence on how it is understood by the audience” (Scheufele and Tewksbury 2007, 11), this is essentially one of the main tools that will be used in analysing Fox News articles on BLM, how are they presented and what does this mean ?

2.4. Conclusion

This literature review discusses the post-9/11 era that we find ourselves living in and how it has given rise to the securitization of immigrants and minorities. Furthermore, it has looked at the dichotomous environment needed and created for successful securitization and how the central role of the audience in accepting an issue as being securitized. Additionally, the literature has illustrated that there has been a significant focus on the securitization of migration mostly

pertaining to Hispanics and Muslims, an issue that we in Europe are exposed to almost daily with the current rise of the right. However there seems to be a gap in the literature on the securitization of minorities when it comes to the African American experience in the US, especially having established that the GWOT spill over has led to a more general crack down on ordinary people (Brysk, Meade and Sharif 2013, 3). African Americans are as much a minority as any other ethnic, religious or cultural group, in fact they have one of the longest experiences in regards to discrimination in the US, they have been victims to criminalization, bigotry and inequality for centuries yet, the literature on GWOT and securitization fail to illustrate the effects domestic WOT policies have had on these people and how they have come to be perceived for standing up against the injustice they continue to endure. This thesis will investigate how conservative media, more specifically Fox News, have used their platform to play a part in the creation of securitization of the activist movement Black Lives Matter, how in the greater context of the war on terror BLM advocates and the movement as a whole are represented and framed as being a societal threat. In other words, how can we see securitization of BLM by Fox News through CDA?

3. Methodology

Throughout his years of research Van Dijk has repeatedly illustrated that “ethnic and racial minority groups always have been and continue to be portrayed negatively or stereotypically by the press...as a problem, if not as a threat” (van Dijk 1991, ix). In the case of this thesis, the focus will be on the way in which Black Lives Matters, and their advocates or participants have been portrayed by the conservative media, namely Fox News. This thesis focuses on this issue because it stems from a societal problem that has become more apparent over the years. In the years leading up to the 2016 elections and since Trump, the US has become more politically and socially polarized, with both Democrats and Republicans pointing fingers at one another. Consequently, there has been an increase in resistance and protests against not just police brutality against African Americans, but also increased resistance against continuous “social, economic and cultural oppression of minorities, [that] have brought limited civil rights” (van Dijk 1991, ix), more specifically as a result of the WOT.

It is because the media holds such power over public opinion that it is important to analyze how they portray ideologies that are different from theirs and what interpretive

framework they provide for their audience. I have found that the best way to understand and uncover the way in which the BLM movement's interaction with the police has been interpreted and put forward by the conservative media in terms of securitization is to perform a CDA investigate and carry out this research. The reason that I have chosen to focus on written media is because performing CDA on text is an effective way of looking at what van Dijk refers to as "implicit and indirect meanings in texts" (Machin and Mayr 2012, 30). When looking at text we can see in what way ideas and notions are put forward and framed. We can see this by looking for words that have been either used or omitted, overlexicalization (to over stress), structural oppositions, conversational or technical language and many more. These will be characteristics that will be paid attention to in this analysis of conservative media for the purpose of this thesis. More generally this thesis will be looking at the rhetoric used and the way it is used to convey certain ideas and notions to the public. Here are a couple of good examples of CDA that Machin and Mayr provide in their book 'How to do a Critical Discourse Analysis':

Youths attack local family homes

Machin and Mayr point to the word choice of this sentence, more specifically the decision to use 'family homes'. They point to the fact that "the words 'family' and 'home' suggest something safe and stable that is cherished in society" (Machin and Mayr 2012, 32). The word choice here was obviously chosen to highlight and grasp the reader's attention in addition to communicating that family homes "need to be protected and therefore produces moral outrage" (Machin and Mayr 2012, 32). Having used 'local buildings' or 'local addresses' would have had a less impactful effect on the reader (Machin and Mayr 2012, 32).

Another good example provided by Machin and Mayr is the following:

Muslim man arrested for fraudulently claims benefits

In this case specifying that the man is muslim is unnecessary, it is an overlexicalization. Whether or not the man was muslim has nothing to with the fact that he 'fraudulently claimed benefits'. As Machin and Mayr point out "there are many possibilities that could have been used to characterize the man" (2012, 77), depending on the narrative that the writer aims to bring

forward. In the context of the GWOT and anti-immigration era, specifying Muslim plays into the negative discourse on Muslims that is already present within society, the choice made by the author collectivizes ‘Muslims’. Hence, we can understand it as a conscious decision by the author to collectivize rather than individualise the situation, which allows for an entire social/religious group to be labeled ‘fraudulent’. Machin and Mayr present alternative manners in which this man could have been characterised which would change the connotation e.g. “an asian man, a British man a Midlands man, a local office worker, a Manchester United supporter, a father of two young daughters” (2012, 77). Each of these alternative characterizations provides a different understanding and contextualization to varying audiences.

The aim of performing CDA in this thesis, is to look at the way in which conservative media authors “set up a basic shape of a social and natural world through their...text” (Machin and Mayr 2012, 30). The objective is mostly to look at the word choices by Fox News journalists and analyse, understand and illustrate how their “word choices set up different discourses...‘lexical fields’” (Machin and Mayr 2012, 30). Lexical fields as Machin and Mayr explain, referring to Van Dijk, are discourses and fields that point towards “certain kinds of identities, values and sequences of activity which are not necessarily made explicit” (Machin and Mayr 2012, 30). In other words, the words used or not used create a discourse or feed into a discourse that points towards “identities, values and sequences of activity”. Seeing as this thesis will focus on the conservative media outlet Fox News, there is already a set ideological background with which to conduct this CDA.

The reason this thesis has chosen to use CDA as the method of analysis is due to the fact that the characteristics and components that make up CDA perfectly align with components and characteristics of the securitization framework and reasons for the rise of activist groups such as the Black Lives Matter Movement. “CDA deals primarily with the discourse dimensions of power abuse and the injustice and inequality as a result of it” (van Dijk 1993, 252), power abuse, injustice and inequality as a direct result are evident throughout African American history and continues to be evident today. Furthermore, it is a more suitable manner with which to observe how we can see the securitization of BLM in the Fox News articles.

3.1. Data Selection

The main focus of the thesis is uncovering and analysing discourse created by Fox News in relation to the BLM activists and supporters; and investigate how as a result, BLM has been securitized by the network. This CDA will be based on a data pool of 33 Fox New articles, the initial time span for this CDA was 2014 - 2016, however further research demonstrated that the year 2014 produced an insignificant number of useful articles in relation to the topic at hand. Therefore the timeframe was altered to 2015 - 2017. Upon the alteration of the timeframe, the data indicated that 2015 and 2016 had significantly larger amounts of data than 2017. To make the analysis of the data more accessible and comprehensible, I have created a line graph (see Figure 1) to illustrate how the 40 articles consulted for this CDA have been spread out over the years in question. Figure 1 provides an overview of the data as a whole and becomes evident that the coverage of BLM and law enforcement officers in relation to BLM began to increase in 2015 and reached its peak in 2016, whereas no relevant data was found in 2014. It was unexpected to find no articles that fit the necessary data selection criteria in 2014, especially since the criteria for data selection was not that extensive. The reason relevant articles were expected to be found on BLM and law enforcement pertaining to the year 2014 was due to the fact that the BLM had at that point already been active for a year ("Herstory" 2019) and due to the fact that between August 2014 and August approximately 780 BLM protests had taken place in 44 of the 50 US states (Williamson, Trump and Einstein 2018, 401). Figure 1 shows the sudden increase of relevant articles in 2015 and that the peak of articles published on BLM/law enforcement was reached in 2016.

Amount of Articles on BLM and Law Enforcement vs. Years

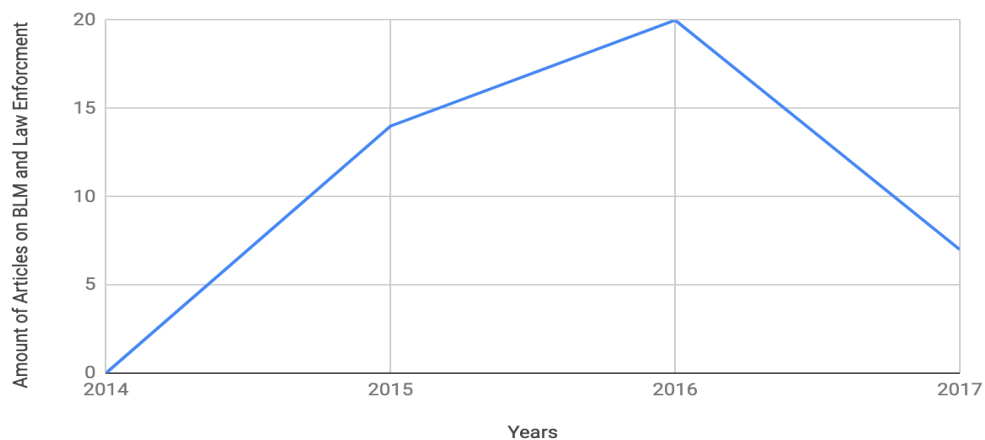


Figure 1: Amount of articles on BLM and law enforcement vs years.

This visual representation of the data resulted in the years 2015-2016 becoming the main timeframe of focus, which means that the 40 articles that were initially used to create this graph have been reduced to 33 articles published in 2015-2016. Having read all 33 articles, the analysis will be based on the articles most relevant to the thesis topic.

Since the aim of this thesis is to analyze the securitization of BLM, the articles were chosen based on the mention of BLM or law enforcement, - or with relation to either - in the headline. In order to find the relevant data an advanced search was performed, and the articles were picked by the simple criteria mentioned above. Because we are looking at the securitization of BLM by Fox News, I found it important to include the Fox News discourse created in relation to law enforcement, since BLM first and foremost started to oppose police brutality. The only way to create a threat is to identify a society that is under said threat.

The reason this thesis has chosen to focus on Fox News is because it has “has become one of the most influential right-wing media voices in the US since it first aired...[in] 1996” (Sommerlad 2018). In a survey conducted by ‘data for progress’ “3,215 US voters were asked...where they get their news from” (Ray 2019) and in that survey 62% of Republicans answered that they got their news for Fox News (Ray 2019). This number provides a decent indication that Fox News is consumed by the majority of Republicans and as a result has a broad reach. Therefore Fox News has been the media outlet chosen for this thesis.

3.2. Structure

The structure of the analysis will be as follows, in order to better interpret, analyse and later discuss the finding, chapter 4 provides the contextualization of both the actor, the audience and BLM. The contextualization chapters focuses on the socio-political sphere in 2015-2016 for the audience and actor and provides a more general contextual information for the BLM as it is important to be informed on what the movement stands for and what their goals are in order to understand how they are securitized and possibly also why they are securitized. Chapter 4 first starts with the information on BLM and then continues on to explaining the relevant 2015-2016 socio-political sphere pertaining to the relevant audience and by extension Fox News, since they are the news source of choice for 62% of Republicans (Ray 2019) and reflect ideologies and

priorities in relation to their audience (Bednarke and Caple 2014, 137). In Chapter 5 the analysis relevant Fox News articles consulted for this thesis will be conducted, mostly looking at how certain issues are framed and what language is used to do so, in order to expose the discourse created, specifically in terms of securitization. Finally, chapter 6 is the discussion and conclusion chapter where the analysis, context and literature are looked at together in order to discuss how we can see - or have seen- the securitization of BLM by Fox News through CDA, before presenting the concluding remarks.

4. Contextualization

As the literature review has illustrated, in order for an issue to be successfully securitized or have a chance at successful securitization there needs to be facilitating conditions, only then are we able to understand the hows and whys of a specific securitization process. This is especially true in terms of the actor since they have an influence on what is securitized (Balzacq 2005, 178-179), but also the audience since they create the basis for what becomes securitized. Therefore, this chapter aims to provide information for the purpose of attaining a better level contextualization and analysis of the Fox News articles and how we can see BLM as being securitized within those articles. Essentially this chapter deals with the social conditions of interpretation and social conditions of production (Fairclough 1989, 25) which are crucial to interpreting the creation of certain discourse in relation to the social conditions at the time. Most of this chapter deals with the socio-political condition in 2015-2016 in relation to the actor and the audience, however it starts by briefly outlining the goals and purpose of the BLM movement as this too is relevant for interpretation purposes, for it provides us with the ability to comprehend how the securitizing actor has come to see and eventually frame them as a threat.

4.1. About the Black Lives Matter Movement

The BLM movement stands against the historical systematic and intentional targeting of Black people by an inherently white system (“Herstory” 2019). The perception of BLM is that African Americans and other people of color continue to live in a society in which practices such as “mass incarceration and the techniques of racialized policing on which it depends...have exposed the refurbished, but no less ruthless, framework of white supremacy” (Rickford 2016, 38). BLM needs to be understood in terms of the historical African American experience of

oppression and marginalization, which later became criminalization and in the age of GWOT continued to be emphasized, as the southern poverty law states “Black lives matter because they have been marginalized throughout our country’s history and because white lives have always mattered more in our society” (Cohen 2016). BLM represent the intolerance of the African American vulnerability with regards to police encounters but also with regards to “racist violence” (Rickford 2016, 35). What the movement has been most known for however is its unapologetic denunciation and whistle blowing of the disproportionate levels of police violence towards unarmed African American individuals, this was the premise on which the movement was founded back in 2013 (“Herstory” 2019). They see the African American community as in need of “local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes” (“Her story” 2019).

4.2. The Audience and The Actor: 2015-2016 Socio-Political Sphere

Black Lives Matter was founded in 2013 however, as the data selection section illustrates, the initial intention of conducting the CDA with 2014 as part of the timeframe was not possible due to the lack of coverage on BLM by Fox News at the time. Appendix 1 displays the headlines of the Fox News articles consulted for this CDA along side the date that it was published, looking at the dates of all the articles published in 2015 reveals that in that year the majority if not all of the articles, that referred to BLM or the police in relation to BLM, were published in the second half of 2015. Coincidentally the most significant development to happened in the second half of 2015, more specifically on June 16th of 2015, is the official announcement by Donald J Trump of his candidacy for the Presidential race (DelReal 2019). Arguably a mutual relationship can be drawn between the rise of Trump and the visible increased acceptability of discriminatory perspectives that would otherwise have been deemed inappropriate and ‘unacceptable’, after all discriminatory policies and ideas were a significant part of Trump’s campaign. These are some of the exclusionary, racist and xenophobic subjects that Trump spoke about during his campaign:

As a Presidential candidate, Trump made all sorts of racist comments - suggesting that Mexican immigrants are criminals and rapists, proposing a ban on Muslims entering the

US, Saying a US judge should recuse himself from a case simply because of his Mexican heritage, and deploying dog whistles about 'law and order'

(Lopez 2017)

In this quote Lopez illustrates the rhetoric the public was openly exposed to by Trump during his presidential campaign. Having a valid presidential candidate who expresses such ideas and perspectives, during nationally/internationally televised debates, interviews and speeches, and reaching vast audiences sets an example that this is now acceptable. Lopez references the scholars Brian Schaffner, Matthew MacWilliams, and Tatishe Nteta who conducted a study called "Understanding White Polarization in the 2016 Vote for President: The Sobering Role of Racism and Sexism" and uses the data from this study's findings to illustrate that there was a correlation between the voter's level of sexism and racism and their likelihood to vote for Trump (Lopez 2017). The original tables from the study by Brian Schaffner, Matthew MacWilliams, and Tatishe Nteta included other candidates, however Lopez isolated the data on Trump to better display the correlation, Figure 2 shows Lopez's graphs. Figure 2 (created with data from Schaffner, McWilliams and Nteta) shows that the correlation between sexism and racism and probability of voting for Trump is much stronger than the correlation between economic dissatisfaction and the probability of voting for Trump.

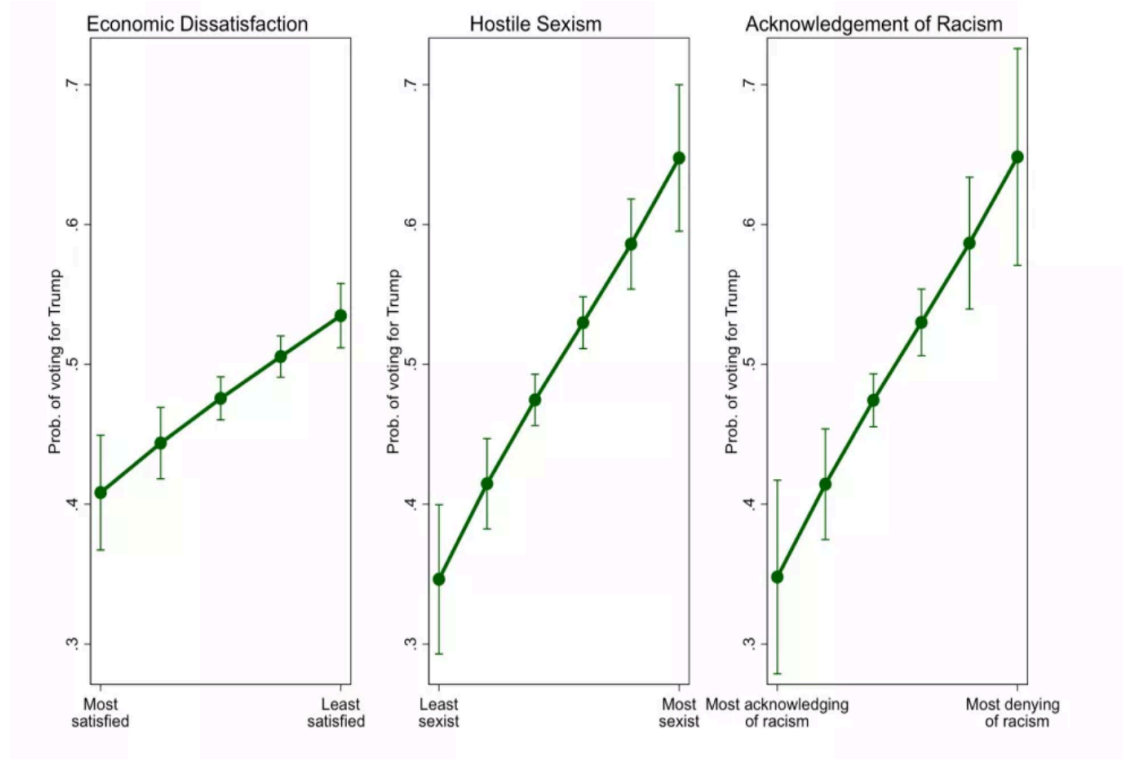


Figure 2: Predicted probability of voting for Trump based on values of economic dissatisfaction, racism and sexism.

Source(s): Lopez, German. 2017. "The Past Year Of Research Has Made It Very Clear: Trump Won Because Of Racial Resentment". *Vox*.

As Lopez states there is a substantial amount of evidence in the form of quantitative research and studies that point to the fact that “Trump’s rise was driven by racism and racial resentment” (Lopez 2017). A survey conducted by the Pew Research Center shows that “most Americans (65%) – including majorities across racial and ethnic groups – say it has become more common for people to express racist or racially insensitive views since Trump was elected president. A smaller but substantial share (45%) say this has become more acceptable” (Horowitz, Brown and Cox 2019), signifying that there is a consensus on the relationship between Trump and racial insensitivity. Trump shattered the notion of what was acceptable and unacceptable to talk about regarding race and sex, in other words Trump shattered the ‘political correctness’ within US (Goldberg 2016).

Goldberg writes that during Trump's electoral campaign there was a common notion amongst the public, which was that they hated not being able to freely express and speak their minds due to the standard of 'political correctness' (Goldberg 2016). Goldberg goes on to explain that for Trump supporters this notion of 'political correctness' was associated with democrats/liberals and their "obsession with diversity" (Goldberg 2016). Essentially the attention attributed to diversity and equality for minority and marginalised groups had made white America (conservative white America) feel neglected "it has encouraged white, rural, religious Americans think of themselves as a disadvantaged group whose identity is being threatened or ignored" (Lilla 2016). The notion of societal security can be identified amongst Trump's support base, he essentially provided white, rural, religious Americans with the feeling of being able to and needing to strengthen their identity that they had felt had come under threat. In other words there was a pre-existing sense of discontent with the fact that white Americans could not freely express themselves in the way that they wanted, and that their needs as a people were being backgrounded as a result of the attention that had been given to diversity and inclusivity of minorities.

This idea that the white American identity is being threatened has been reflected by Trump's election to office in 2016. The fact that he won by constantly talking about and creating a dichotomous environment, as Lopez's quote has illustrated shows that there was a pre-existing fear and idea that white's were being treated unfairly, there was a real notion of "white vulnerability" (Lopez 2017) amongst Trump's audience. 'White vulnerability' is the "perception that whites, through no fault of their own, are losing ground to other groups" (Fowler, Medenica, Cohen 2017). This notion of 'white vulnerability', is the belief that white American society is under threat, was stated as a reason for why 41% of white millennials that voted for Trump (Fowler, Medenica, Cohen 2017). In a poll conducted by NPR, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, 55% of white Americans "believe there is discrimination against white people in America today" (Gonyea 2017). A similar poll conducted in the South by Winthrop University found that approximately 46% "of white Southerners polled said they agree or strongly agree that white people are under attack in the U.S." (Thomsen 2017). This illustrates that there was a pre-existing fear of losing the white identity and status to other groups, hence the notion of being disadvantaged and being attracted to Trump's policy ideas which were "an overall endeavor to create a kind of racial protectionism,

to socially engineer a world in which whites - the unheralded disadvantaged class in America - once again have a deck stacked in their own favor”(Cobb 2017).

All in all the rise and election of Trump illustrated that there was not just seeds of fear but also consent amongs the audience to securitize minorities, there was a pre-existing moral panic that white america was loosing ground and getting the short end of the stick, hence the conservative and Trump supporters were open to non-white american securitization. As previously mentioned, what the media presents and deems worthy of presenting “is not neutral but reflect ideologies and priorities that society holds” (Bell 1991, 156 quoted in Bednarek and Caple 2014, 137), in this case the society is the white American society and Fox News represents that society.

Finally, we can see that on one side we have the white Americans feeling disadvantaged and vulnerable and on the other side we have the BLM addressing the systematic disadvantage and vulnerability experienced by the African American community. Essentially, we have two communities fighting if not competing for their societal security.

5. Textual Analysis

In this chapter critical discourse analysis will be conducted on the news articles by Fox News in relation to BLM, more specifically focusing on how BLM is represented and how this representation lead to the labeling of the movement as an existential threat. The contextualization section has uncovered the important role that identity plays in the 2015-2016 socio-political environment in relation to both the audience and the actor. Because initial analysis alluded to a common theme of BLM being a threat to American society, this chapter will at how BLM has been framed as an existential threat to ‘American society’. In this sense, American society will be defined as it has been by Fox News and their target audience; namely, consisting of white, rural, religious Americans. This analysis will look at how BLM is framed as being a threat to the American society first by looking at how the relationship between BLM and the police has been framed and second by looking at how the movement as a whole has been framed. In the discussion section these two topics of analysis will be brought together and placed into the broader context of American society and national security. Overall the news articles consulted for this thesis consist more of coverage by Fox News on what has been said by certain speakers than actual journalistic opinion pieces. Thus, much of it is not what has been said by Fox News

per se, but what specific actors' speech Fox News has chosen to represent and share with their audience and also how they have chosen to share it in terms of quoting verbs. In addition to that, previous interaction with the texts have given light to the fact there is no clear separation or differentiation made by Fox News in terms of national identity and national security, these two 'referent objects' are spoken about in a manner that suggests that interdependent and interconnectedness, hence why the analysis focuses specifically on how BLM has been presented by Fox News, in order to make the analysis more fluid.

5.1. The Framing of the BLM-law enforcement relationship

The narrative of the relationship between BLM and law enforcement is the most apparent narrative amongst the Fox News articles, although not always explicitly stated Fox News is able to establish an 'us' versus 'them' dichotomy. The trend that was found amongst the articles is the vilinization or even criminalization of BLM and the victimization of police officers. The following analysis shows examples of the narratives presented in the framing of BLM-police relationship portrayed by Fox News:

“An Attack on American Society': Critics Say Black Lives Matter Endangers Cops”

Source(s): “‘An Attack On American Society’: Critics Say Black Lives Matter Endangers Cops”. 2015. Fox News Insider.

On the surface this headline is rather straightforward, in the first half of the headline Fox News identifies and claims that there is an attack on society and in the second half Black Lives Matter is endangering cops. The best way to analyse this headline is to split it into separate phrases of analysis, in this case, it has been split into three parts:

1. ‘Attack on American society’
2. ‘Endangers Cops’
3. ‘Critics say’

‘Attack on American society’: Fox News catches the attention of the reader by stating in factual manner that ‘American society’ is being attacked or is under attack. The verb ‘attack’ is placed in the present tense, meaning that the attack on society is happening as we speak. The phrase ‘American society’, creates a sense of unity and identity, ‘we Americans are under attack’ meaning that those accused of doing the attacking are being set apart from ‘American society’ creating an ‘us’ versus ‘them’ scenario. As previously mentioned in the literature review section ‘American society’ is considered part of ‘western society’ which is identified as being a “peaceful people... [with] principles of liberty and dignity” (Brysk, Meade and Sharif 2013, 2), here again the people attacking the ‘American society’ are thus the opposite of all the positive that American society stands for. The phrase ‘Attack on American society’ begs the question of who is American society? Who represents this society? These questions lead us to the analysis of the second phrase.

‘Endangers Cops’: The fact that the Cops are the ones who are ‘endangered’ illustrate that they are the representatives of the ‘American society’ that Fox News was referring to. Essentially cops in danger means society in danger. The primary duty of cops is to “protect people and property” (Johnson 2018), their job is to “keep citizens safe” and enforce the law, hence why they are at often times referred to as law enforcement officers. The phrase ‘endangered cops’ is also evidence of a structural opposition, this means that “these oppositions are opposing concepts” (Machin and Mayr 2012, 39). Cops represent safety yet they are endangered, the notion of danger and safety are put into opposition of each other, good vs bad. If those in charge of keeping citizens safe are in danger, then who will keep the citizens safe? American society is thus under attack.

‘Critics say’: by using the phrase ‘critics say’ Fox News is not specifying who exactly said that Cops were being endangered by BLM, they are not sharing the source of this information. This vagueness can be identified as anonymization. According to Machin and Mayr anonymization is often used “to avoid specification and developing a detailed and coherent argument” (2012, 83). Anonymization is an easy and common way for newspapers to sound legitimate, especially since “we rely on journalists to have legitimate sources” (Machin and Mayr 2012, 83).

Overall BLM has been associated with committing an attack, this sets up a perception of BLM as a threat, especially since the term ‘attack’ is one that is often associated with war or combat. The threat alert is highlighted by that fact that BLM, an activist movement is seen as endangering the first line of defence, namely law enforcement officers and painting them in a light that makes them seem defenseless to the ‘so-called’ influences of the BLM movement. The portrayal and notion of the defenseless first line of defence, stress the threat of this group to national security.

In addition to this example there is a clear role assigned to BLM as the perpetrator and the law enforcement as the victims. When talking about BLM in relation to the police words and phrases such as ‘anti-police rhetoric, ‘against the police’, ‘endanger police’, are common, they have even gone as far as referring to the movement as a “war on cops” (“The War On Cops: The Big Lie Of The Anti-Cop Left Turns Lethal” 2016). Titles such as:

“It's Open Season On Law Enforcement Across This Country”

Source(s): “Sheriff: ‘It's Open Season On Law Enforcement Across This Country’”. 2015. Fox News

‘Open season’ is a hunting term, referring to a “period in the year when it is legal to hunt particular animals” (“Open Season Definition in The Cambridge English Dictionary” 2019), however in this case they refer to the legal hunt of law enforcement by BLM. While setting BLM up as the predator/hunter, once again we see the victimization of the police by putting them in the position of the hunted. The interesting part however is the notion that this is ‘legal’, meaning that nobody - the government in this case - is stopping BLM and insinuating that they should be stopped.

To further emphasize the threat that BLM poses to police officers and by extension American society, stories about the “ anti-cop climate affecting police recruits” (McKay 2016), in stories as such the BLM is once again put in structural opposition to law enforcement, creating a lawless-lawful binary. The notion of BLM as a threat to American society seems to be a recurring theme in the reporting on BLM by Fox News.

5.2. The Framing of BLM by Fox News

In order to successfully show that one group threatens the identity of another group, it is important to show how the group in question is different and how these differences are threatening. As we have seen in the literature on securitization the ‘us’ and ‘them’ dichotomy is a vital aspect of securitization. A common trend can be established when it comes to the created discourse surrounding BLM identity, these common trends are: Vilification, criminalization and racialization, of the BLM movement. The following analysis illustrates evidence and examples of how this is done.

Villainization

“I need all white people to move to the back – make space because this is a Black Resistance March,” one of the leaders yelled from the bed of a pickup truck. “I need all white people to move to the back and make room for the black and brown brothers and sisters.”

Source(s): Starnes, Todd. 2016. “Black DNC Protest Tells Crowd: “White People To The Back””. *Fox News*.

“You will appropriately take your place in the back of this march because it will be truly led by the black and brown community and that’s it,” she roared

Source(s): Starnes, Todd. 2016. “Black DNC Protest Tells Crowd: “White People To The Back””. *Fox News*.

Todd Starnes exposes the audience to these quotes without any contextualization of what the resistance march was about, furthermore, he uses metalinguistic verbs to represent the protest leader who is speaking. Metalinguistic verbs are verbs such as ‘yelled’ and ‘roared’ which “represent[s] how someone has spoken” (Machin and Myre 2012, 57). Quoting verbs as such are used to “encourage a... particular interpretation of events” (Machin and Myre 2012, 58). These quoting verbs used by Starnes not only provides an interpretive framework, but it also communicates a discourse. Instead of using the verbs ‘yelled’ and ‘roared’ the words ‘asked’ and

‘said ’ could have been used, these verbs are of a more neutral nature (Machine and Myre 2012, 59). The overtly communicated discourse that is presented using the verbs ‘yelled’ and ‘roared’ in association with a Black woman, is the discourse and stereotype of the ‘the angry black woman’. The discourse “characterizes these women [black women] as aggressive, ill tempered, illogical, overbearing, hostile, and ignorant without provocation” (Ashley 2014, 27), this overt discourse in combination with the fact that the woman is demonstrating in the name of the black community and asking the white supporters to go to the back, allows for a collectivization of black protesters and activists as divisive, aggressive and hostile. It creates an image of the aggressive ‘other’ which places them in a position of being a threat to ‘us’, this in its entirety is an example of villainization, but also racialization, as they have chosen speech used to represent the DNC protest March was that of a Black protestors asking the white protesters to go to the back.

Criminalization

Suppression is usually associated with what is missing from a text (Machin and Myre 2012, 85), in other words, what the author chooses to leave out. Nevertheless, in this case what is meant by suppression, is what is omitted in the reporting of the news in general and in doing so highlighting aspects and events that the author wants highlighted. In the preparatory analysis of all the 33 articles consulted for this CDA, it became evident that Fox News wanted certain events publicized that “draw attention to certain aspects of identity that will be [is] associated with certain kinds of discourses” (Machin and Myre 2012, 78), namely BLM movement and its supporters as criminals. When criminalizing the movement and members of the movement fox news often uses representational strategies, and collectivization techniques (and example of which we have seen in the vilification example).

“A member of the Black Lives Matter movement who was active in the protests in Ferguson, Missouri was arrested and charged last month with human trafficking and prostitution”

Source(s): “Black Lives Matter Member Reportedly Charged With Human Trafficking And Prostitution”. 2016. Fox News.

“Black Lives Matter leader defends looting in Yale lecture”

Source(s): Chiaramonte, Perry. 2015. ““Black Lives' Leader Defends Looting In Yale Lecture””.

In the first and second quote representational strategy is used “to draw attention to certain aspects of identity that will be associated with certain kinds of discourses” (Machin and Myre 2012, 78). The discourse here being that both members and leaders of the group either condone or participate in criminal activity. Criminals are seen as dangerous and the opposite of law abiding who seen as being are exemplary, this is an example of structural opposition technique refers to point to ‘difference of qualities’ (Machin and Myre 2012, 39).

A more general observation in terms of criminalization, is the utilization of words such as ‘anti-American’, ‘violence’, ‘attack’, ‘disrupt’ and ‘endanger’ the connotations of which is threatening. By using such words when reporting on the BLM it creates a discourse that characterizes BLM as a threat, further playing into the notion of being vulnerable, in this case vulnerable in terms of violence.

Racialization

The use of racialization emphasizes the ‘us’ versus them ‘dichotomy’ and further stresses otherness of those within the movement and those who the movement represents. Words and phrases such as ‘inherently racist’, ‘seperatist movement’, ‘racist’, and ‘hateful’ are often used when describing the BLM movement and its goals, ascribing to them a divisive and exclusionary characteristic. By exposing its audience to quotes such as “all the white people to the back”, Fox News is making a point that expresses the possibility becoming secondary citizens in ‘their’ America. In that sense, Fox News is creating a discourse which represents BLM as a blacks only movement, interpreting the movement as “only black lives matter” and white lives do not, this had led them to associate BLM with “preaching racial superiority” (Sheriff Clarke: Black Lives Matter Should Be Labeled As A Hate Group 2016). This divisive nature ascribed to BLM visible in titles such as:

“Do all Lives Matter or only Black ones?”

Source(s): “Do All Lives Matter Or Only Black Ones?”. 2015. Fox News.

This headline once again points towards the ‘us’ versus them dichotomy, so ‘their’ lives matter but not ‘ours’?

Fox News has attempted to confirm the notion that BLM only care about black lives above all other American they have done this by once again employing the suppression technique and covering stories that provide the audience an interpretive framework that aligns with their discourse. Here is an example:

“Decorated Marine Attacked By Robbers Asking If ‘Black Lives Matter’”

Source(s): "Decorated Marine Attacked By Robbers Asking If 'Black Lives Matter'". 2016. Fox News Insider.

Once again, this sentence can be split into three parts:

1. Decorated Marine vs
2. Robbers asking if ‘black lives matter’
3. Attacked

On the surface this headline states that a marine was attacked by robbers asking if black lives matter, however the lexical tools used in this headline provide additional information.

Decorated Marine: by using the adjective ‘decorated’ before ‘marine’, Fox news is employing overlexicalization. Overlexicalization can be understood as a form of “over-persuasion...and is normally evidence of ideological contention” (Machin and Myre 2012, 38) here the overlexicalization is used to emphasize the ‘goodness’/ exemplariness of the marine. There was a need here to express that the Marine was decorated, this is also an example of the use of

functional honorifics which provides a greater sense of authority (Machin and Mayr 2012, 82) and respect in relation to the Marine and also distinguishes them from the robbers. The honorifics and overlexicalization in relation to the Marine can be seen as a structural opposition to the robbers who attacked him, stressing the idea of good versus bad.

Robbers asking if black lives matter: Robbers is a negative word in itself, it is associated with the criminal act of stealing the belongings of other people, however in combination with “asking black lives matter” once again created a collectivized identity for the BLM movement as a criminal and violent and confirming this identity, while putting it in opposition to the ‘decorated Marine’ who serves his country to protect Americans. Additionally, robbers are not usually associated with attacking but with stealing, in that sense they are using a double negative to describe the asligents.

Attack: Connotes the same negative meaning as in the analysis above. The attacking of a Marine, who’s to duty is to serve and protect Americans and their freedom, could be understood as an attack on America once more and more specifically their freedom. Essentially the image that is being drawn here is that if you do not believe that ‘only’ black lives matter, no one is safe from being attacked not even those we depend on to protect our borders from foreign threats.

In general discourse created here is that those who do not believe or agree that black lives matter and only black lives matter run the risk of being the victim of a criminal act by supporters of the group. What does stand out is that the ethnicity/race of the assailants was not specified, but was however implied by the fact that they asked, “black lives matter”. This suggests that there is an unspoken idea that BLM activists and supporters are all black, again racializing the group.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

The textual analysis has shown that Fox News presented BLM as a threat by villainizing, criminalizing and racializing the movement. Villainization and criminalization could be considered the same, seeing as they both create an aggressive and dangerous ‘other’ who is framed as threatening the safety of the exemplary citizens who constitute American society. The

fact that villainization and criminalization were accompanied by racialization is not surprising considering the historical racial taxonomies that continue to exist today; the association of crime with African Americans existed throughout American history (Owusu-Bempah 2017, 26). Much of what Fox News covers has to do with the position of law enforcement in the environment that BLM has created and the relationship between the movement and the police. Additionally, much of what was reported on Fox News is mostly based on the ascribed identity of BLM and their ascribed goals. To find evidence of securitization we must however not only look at the speech act but also look at the speech act “within or as part of a configuration of circumstances, including context, the psycho-cultural disposition of the audience, and the power that both the speaker and listener bring to the interaction” (Balzacq 2005, 172). Ultimately the only way we can see how BLM has been securitized by Fox News is by looking at the textual analysis - speech act analysis - conducted in chapter 5 within the or as part of a configuration of circumstances.

The socio-political context and psycho-cultural disposition of the audience can both be found in chapter 4, the rise of Donald Trump further exposed the psycho-cultural disposition of the Republican/conservative audience, this refers to the sentiment of disadvantage, vulnerability and threat that was present amongst the respective audience. Chapter 4 provides a glimpse into these pre-existing grievances and fears that were spoken to by an elite who was then elected to office the following year. At the same time Fox News was reproducing the same rhetoric, which included the casting of BLM as a threat not just to national security, but also to ‘American society’ as they know it, which can be interpreted as white America. Here we can see all three levels of society identified by Goode and Ben-Yehuda, namely, the grassroots level, interest-group level and elite-engineered level, interacting with one another to create moral panic. In the case of Fox News, the creation of moral panic is linked and used to securitize BLM in a way that reflects the ideologies and priorities of their audience in addition to reflecting their own ideology and political affiliations. As the literature has demonstrated, moral panic and securitization are often not mutually exclusive and, in many ways, depend on one another for success. Without moral panic there could not be successful securitization and without a certain degree of securitization there would be no significant moral panic. Hence the reason as to why Fox News can be seen as simultaneously creating moral panic by securitizing BLM and securitizing BLM by creating moral panic.

There is a clear sympathy on Fox News' part towards law enforcement officers, this is primarily shown by the way in which they were depicted as victims of the BLM. There was a constant 'us' versus 'them' dichotomy through the creation of binaries such as, perpetrator-victim, unlawful-lawful, predator-prey, by constantly creating such binaries Fox News managed to collectivize the 'other' - they are predator and we are victim – in a manner that depicted them as opposing the share norms and values held by Fox News and their audience (Machin and Myre 2012, 82). Additionally, by framing American society as being primarily comprised of police, the threat that BLM poses is being framed on a national level, which presents BLM as a national security threat. As discussed in the analysis, the police can be seen as the first line of defence of national security and the fact that they are presented as being situated in an anti-cop climate created by the BLM movement means that BLM has created an environment that threatens national security's first line of defence. It is not abnormal for groups such as BLM or individuals for that matter who participate in non-electoral activity to be seen as being anti-establishment (Williamson, Trump and Einstein are often 2018, 402). Nevertheless, in this case the anti-establishment element was emphasized far more by Fox News due to the fact that BLM is known for primarily protesting against police brutality, which resulted in them being accused of spreading anti-police rhetoric to such an extent that Fox News accused them of starting a 'war on cops', again stressing the perception of BLM as a threat to national security. The use of terms such as "open season" stresses the threat faced by law enforcement, while covertly alluding to the disapproving legality of such an environment as a result of BLM. It also points to the fact that the government has failed to take action against the movement.

The overall analysis shows that there is a consistent dichotomous environment being created which is one of the key features in securitization process, but as we have seen in the literature review it is also a key feature in both societal security (Williams 2003, 514) and the politics of belonging, where the 'other' is a threat to the identity of 'us' (Brysk, Meade and Sharif 2013, 2). We can see the fear expressed by the audience in chapter 4 being echoed by Fox News' coverage BLM and issues pertaining to BLM, this echo specifically illustrates the element of societal security being felt, the fear of 'losing ground to other groups'. This is expressed by the way in which Fox News discredits the BLM reasons for existing by vilinazing, criminalizing and racializing them. The notion of white American vulnerability and disadvantage is brought over in the way in which Fox News represents BLM as a racially divisive group excluding white

America and the importance of their lives. The framing of the BLM movement as standing for ‘only black lives matter’ and posing questions such as “do all lives matter, or only black ones?” feeds into the sentiment of the ‘threat’ faced by white America.

The ease with which BLM movement and its supporters have been portrayed as a threat for a great deal came from the existing stereotypes within American society. We can see a reuse of the racial taxonomies Owusu-Bempah talks about, in pre-9/11 America, the stereotypes of African Americans during the period of the war on drugs and the war on crime which labeled and collectivized an entire race as “ominous criminal predator[s]” (Owusu-Bempah 2017, 26). This was to be expected in the contemporary war on terror era that we live in today as it is a mere rebranded war on drugs and crime which only further emphasizes the already existing stereotypes. The literature on securitization points to historical resonances as one of the many facilitating conditions that can contribute to whether or not securitization of a group or issue is successful. As we have seen the war on terror further emphasized and magnified the stereotypes that were already in existence, making it easier for the media or politicians to amplify them and use them as a means by which to taint certain groups, in this case BLM. These pre-existing racial and ethnic taxonomies are thus more likely to be accepted and believed by a specific public/audience. Vilinizing and criminalizing the BLM movement as a whole and individual African Americans that identify with the cause of the movement only confirms that BLM is a threat and should be seen as a threat, hence re-emphasizing the need for police attention and suspicion of African Americans in general.

The discourse that has been created by Fox news presents BLM as a threat to American society in two ways, 1) BLM is a threat to national security, the only solution to which would be the institutionalization of BLM as a security threat 2) BLM as a threat to white American identity by framing them as an excluding, aggressive other, willing to assault white Americans who do not support BLM. We can see the reflected priorities and ideologies of the Fox News’ audience within the discourse it has created. Fox News took the existing seeds of vulnerability, disadvantage, and fear amongst its public and used these themes when reporting on BLM, making the audience more receptive and accepting of this BLM discourse. Chapter 4 illustrates that the Republicans/conservatives voted for Trump was due to the fact that he spoke to their grievances. Hence, it is no surprise that with the election of Trump and securitization of BLM by Fox News -both echoing the public opinion - that in 2017 BLM was officially classified a threat

to law enforcement and by extension to national security. This once again illustrates the three levels of society working together.

Overall it can be said that the CDA provided evidence of the securitization of BLM by Fox News. BLM has been presented as an existential threat to national security and American society as defined by the Republican/conservative audience. Additionally, the securitization of BLM can also be seen as coming from a place of societal identity strengthening. The shared sentiment by Fox News and its audience of losing ground to another group resulted in the necessity to strengthen their societal identity, and being a majority within society, gives them the securitizing power and platform that the African American community does not possess.

Due to the limited scope of this paper this thesis was unable to perform more textual analysis on a larger amount of data. Another aspect that could be looked at in further research is the role played by political polarization in the securitization of BLM by Fox News.

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8. Appendices

Appendix : Titles and dates of the 33 sources consulted for the CDA of this thesis, in no particular order. The color red indicates the sources from 2015 and the color orange in sources from 2016.

Number	Date	Title
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1	October 8th 2015	Black Lives' Leader Defends Looting In Yale Lecture
2	July 29th 2015	Tantaros: 'Black Lives Matter, Just Not in Democratic Cities'
3	August 27th 2015	Black Lives Matter boos Washington DC mayor's anti-crime plans
4	November 17th 2015	Paris attacks: Black Lives Matter drops F-bomb on City of Light
5	August 22nd 2015	Minister to Black Lives Matter: 'Why Are You Not Cleaning Up Your Own Community?'
6	August 31st 2015	'An Attack on American Society': Critics Say Black Lives Matter Endangers Cops
7	October 6th 2015	OUTRAGEOUS Dunkin'

		Donuts Employee Writes 'Black Lives Matter' on Cop's Cup
8	September 2nd 2015	Meet the Black Marine Vet Who's Speaking Out Against Black Lives Matter
9	October 19th 2015	Do all lives matter or only black ones?
10	September 2nd 2015	'Who needs this?' Police recruits abandon dream amid anti-cop climate
11	September 1st 2015	Sheriff: 'It's Open Season on Law Enforcement Across This Country'
12	May 22nd 2015	Hundreds protest Washington state police shooting of shoplifting suspects

13	August 13th 2015	'His Life Matters': Black Officer and White Police Chief Share Powerful Photo
14	July 31st 2016	Sheriff Clarke: Black Lives Matter Should Be Labeled as a Hate Group
15	May 19th 2016	Black Lives Matter member reportedly charged with human trafficking and prostitution
16	December 30th 2016	Black Lives Matter offshoot embraces anti-Semitism, engages with terrorists
17	July 9th 2016	Giuliani: I've Saved More Black Lives Than Black Lives Matter
18	June 5th 2016	Outrageous WATCH: BLM Activist Uses Orlando Vigil to Criticize White Attendees

19	August 20th 2016	Black Lives Matter Gets \$100M From Liberal Foundations
20	July 29th 2016	Moment of silence for fallen cops marred by jeering at DNC convention
21	July 27th 2016	Black DNC protest tells crowd: "White people to the back"
22	August 3rd 2016	Student facing 50 day suspension for saying 'All Lives Matter'
23	February 17th 2016	Outrageous: Decorated Marine Attacked by Robbers Asking If 'Black Lives Matter'

24	July 11th /2016	Former Civil Rights Leader: Where Was BLM When 9yo Was Shot in CA?
25	November 2nd 2016	Four men arrested in attack on Alabama teen who said 'Blue lives matter'
26	July 14th 2016	How anti-police rhetoric is endangering law enforcement
27	July 13th 2016	Donald Trump on racial tensions in America
28	July 31st 2016	Anti-cop climate having mixed results on police recruiting
29	June 25th 2016	White police officers don't

		unfairly target black suspects, study says
30	July 8th 2016	The war on cops: The big lie of the anti-cop left turns lethal
31	March 18th 2016	Report: More cops buying insurance to protect against job-related lawsuits
32	April 11th 2016	'The Entire Criminal Justice System Is Now Being Branded as Racist and Oppressive'
33	July 11th 2016	Giuliani: 'Inherently Racist' BLM Movement Ignores Black-on-Black Crime