Salafism: Between 'Buffer' and 'Breeding Ground'

Exploring the (de)securitization of Salafism in Dutch policy discourse between 2002 and 2018

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Introduction

What exactly the place of religion, language and culture should be in pluralist societies such as the Netherlands, has been a widely discussed topic for years. In the past decades, the Dutch debate has focused itself primarily on Salafism, an orthodox strand of Islam that has frequently made headlines. Some argue that 'Salafism has many beautiful things to offer' (Van Lansschot, 2016); that it is a natural phenomenon in 'healthy' societies (Smit, 2016); and that inhibiting it would infringe on our constitutional freedom of religion, creating an 'Iran-like caliphate' (Van Der Horst, 2018). Others, however, claim that Salafism is 'a bomb under our open society' of which the effects should not be downplayed (Pattiphilohy & Cousijn, 2019). Further, Salafism has been linked to the creation of *foreign terrorist fighters* and the stimulation of jihadist ideologies; a breakdown of liberal democratic values and the rule of law; and the promotion of social polarization, exclusion and intolerance (Ellian, 2016; Graaf, 2013; De Koning, 2011a; Verhofstadt, 2016).

Which one of these perceptions is correct, is difficult to say. Moreover, one might argue that the threat perception of Salafism depends on other factors than its objective dangerousness alone.
The current study follows this line of reasoning, in assuming that security issues are socially constructed by defining actors and their agenda's. They are not objective, but rather, subjective products of interests, beliefs and language. Therefore, regardless of whether Salafism constitutes an objective security issue, the perception of it as such will have real-life consequences.

In International Relations, this process of defining phenomena as security threats is dealt with by *securitization theory*, which argues that state actors have the potential to make a subject a matter of security, which allows them to deal with it in extraordinary ways (Buzan, Waever & Wilde, 1998, p. 25). Some claims have already been made about whether this dynamic can be observed in the discourse of the Dutch government on Salafism as well (Berger, Kahmann, El Baroudi & Hamdi, 2018; De Graaf, 2013; De Koning, 2011a). However, these studies are primarily focused on rather clear-cut forms of securitization, such as the implementation of security measures aimed at countering the Salafist movement. Hardly any scholars have systematically studied the *language* through which Salafism is understood as a (non-)security issue in the first place. This is unfortunate, because this shortfall could give rise to the erroneous suggestion that (threat) perceptions of Salafism are both static and objective, which impedes coming to a profound understanding of the phenomenon, and thus, the formulation of wholesome policy programs.

In an attempt to fill this gap, this thesis specifically centers around the discursive use of the term *Salafism* in Dutch security policy documents. As such, this thesis attempts to answer the following research question: 'To what extent did Dutch security policy actors (de)securitize Salafism between 2002 and 2018?'. In order to do so, a discourse analysis of policy documents, distributed by the three main domestic security actors in the Netherlands (the Ministry of Justice and Security; the General Intelligence and Security Service; and the National Coordinator for Counterterrorism and Security), will

be conducted. This discourse will be evaluated against the backdrop of the socio-political context that may have influenced this discourse.

In the first section of this thesis, the main principles of securitization theory are outlined. The second section goes into previous studies that have applied this theory to religion in general, and Islam and Salafism in particular. In the third section describes the specific methodologies used in the current study. The result-section is comprised of two parts. First, it gives an overview of the historical context of the Salafism-debate in the Netherlands, and second, it sets apart the findings of the actual discourse analysis. Finally, this thesis ends with a discussion and a conclusion, in which an answer to the research question is formulated.

1. Securitization Theory

Until a few decades ago, the traditional concept of security referred to military threats only. However, since the end of the Cold War, its scope has broadened to include many other elements (*referent objects*) as well, both at state level and at an individual level (Waever, 1993). Through this process, known as *securitization*, even phenomena that do not necessarily present an existential threat to statehood, can still be framed as a matter of state survival (Buzan, Waever & De Wilde, 1998). Securitization can thus be understood as an 'intensified' form of politicization (as the securitizing actor is usually the political elite, see Šulović, 2010; Waever, 1993) that mobilizes attention and resources to a specific issue, and in that way, allows for the implementation of extraordinary (policy) measures. The securitization process starts with a securitizing actor uttering a *speech act* with which an issue is defined as a matter of security. These speech acts become 'successful' *securitization moves* (Buzan, Waever & De Wilde, 1998), when phenomena are accepted by the target audience as constituting a threat to national security – regardless of the objective harmfulness of the securitized object.

Securitization theory is thus based on the assumption that *security* as a concept is not static, but rather fluid and constantly evolving: objects can be (de)securitized based upon the agenda's, priorities and objectives of a securitizing actor. The assumed expansion of the meaning of security to include other (non-military) threats, is a process that, according to some, follows from the welfare state's increasing responsibility to protect its citizens against all kinds of perceivably 'uncontrollable' risks (Beck, 2002; Trombetta, 2006). However, as Waever (1993) notes: '*The major problem with such an approach* [i.e. broadening the scope of 'security'] *is deciding where to stop, since the concept of security otherwise becomes a synonym for everything that is politically good or desirable'* (p. 2). It would lead to a politics where phenomena are increasingly understood in terms of prevention, (un)certainties and (ab)normalities (Schuilenberg, 2009; Graaf, 2011). In other words: through securitization, the concept of security loses its neutrality, and instead becomes a means of policy *agenda setting* (Graaf, 2013, p. 357). It is therefore that some argue that securitization theory contains an inherently normative claim about the nature of policy-making (Hansen, 2010). According to the scholars of the Copenhagen School, securitization's emergency-based character is thought to allow for repressive and exclusionary measures. Moreover, it would undermine the processes of debate and democracy upon which 'progressive policy-making' is founded (McDonald, 2011). To the Copenhagen School, then, processes of *desecuritization* are normatively superior to those of securitization (McDonald, 2011). The former, as well as two other variations to the concept of securitization, are discussed in the next section.

2. Desecuritization, Resecuritization and Maximization

Securitization theory has been supplemented with related concepts that indicate its opposite (*de-securitization*); its reappearance (*resecuritization*); or its maximization (*securitization climax* or *hyper-securitization*). These concepts, summarized in *Table 1,* imply that securitization is a not a binary phenomenon, but rather, a process that can manifest itself to a greater or lesser degree. In other words, they suggest that securitization is not static and might change throughout time. This section will therefore describe each variation briefly.

The first variation to securitization is *desecuritization.* Buzan, Waever and De Wilde (1997) define desecuritization as a 'shifting of issues out of emergency mode and into the normal bargaining processes of the public sphere' (p. 23). It has been claimed that securitization theory essentially *needs* desecuritization, since 'were there only securitisations, there would be only hyper-politicisation and no 'normal politics' for securitisation to separate itself from' (Hansen, 2012, p. 531). However, Hansen (2012) also notes that Buzan, Waever and De Wilde's definition implies that desecuritization entails a 'normal' level of politicization of previously securitized objects, rather than non-politicization of such objects.

Further, according to Hansen (2012, p. 540), the desecuritization process can take place in one of the following ways. First, desecuritization can occur through *stabilization,* which is founded on the concept of *détente.* It implies 'a discourse that holds that [the securitized object] has been sufficiently stabilised' (p. 540). Second, desecuritization can take the form of *replacement,* where *'*one issue [is] moving out of security while another is simultaneously securitised' (p. 541). The third manifestation of desecuritization is *rearticulation,* which means that an active political solution is offered for the security condition. In contrast to *stabilization,* with *rearticulation* the grievances that underly this security issue are in fact resolved, or at least presented as such. And finally, desecuritization can take the form of *silencing,* when 'an issue disappears or fails to register in security discourse' (p. 544). Since the silencing of a securitized issue is an implicit way of desecuritization – occurring only by virtue of its previous securitization – it could be difficult to measure. Moreover, uncovering such passive forms of desecuritization can be further complicated, when securitization of certain concepts has been come institutionalized[1] to the extent that explicit speech acts are no longer deemed necessary (Hansen, 2012). Nonetheless, the sudden disappearance of an issue from the security agenda should not be neglected, as it *could* be indicative of a shift in discourse as well.

Due to the limited scope of the current study, only three of Hansen's forms of desecuritization (*stabilization, rearticulation* and *silencing*) will be used in the discourse analysis. *Replacement* is

[1] Institutionalization is therefore not the same as desecuritization. In the former, the issue remains on the security agenda, but is no longer reinforced through a securitizing discourse. In the latter, the security issue is in fact withdrawn from the security realm (see also Lupovici, 2016).

deemed too broad a type of desecuritization which – perhaps more problematically – requires insights in the way in which security actors choose and prioritize their policy topics. Instead, this thesis introduces an additional category, the discursive *reinterpretation*[2] of a security issue, to the desecuritization framework. The way in which these concepts are incorporated in the methodology of the current study, will be discussed further in section 4.3.

Resecuritization, then, is, a relatively neglected phenomenon in International Relations and lacks a coherent definition (Prushankin, 2017). In securitization studies, it is generally understood as referring to situations where an issue makes a comeback to a state's security agenda (Åtland, 2009, p. 364; Lupovici, 2016). It thus constitutes the securitization of a previously desecuritized issue.

Further, securitization literature distinguishes two types of what could be considered security-'maximizations': *hypersecuritization* and the *securitization climax*. Among scholars, there are different perceptions about when an issue can be considered as 'hypersecuritized'. Originally, Buzan (2004) defined it as the 'tendency both to exaggerate threats and to resort to excessive countermeasures' p. 174). However, as noted by Hansen and Nissenbaum (2009), using 'exaggeration' as an indicator for hypersecuritization, suggests that there are objective, non-exaggerated threats, which goes against the constructivist assumptions of securitization theory. Hypersecuritization has therefore been redefined in various ways, such as a form of securitization that goes beyond what is considered a 'normal threat level' (Geelen, 2016, p. 12) or even 'a nearly permanent state of emergency' (Gardner, 2019, p. 105). This thesis, however, follows the least subjective definition by Silomon and Overill (2012), defining hypersecuritization as 'the concept of immediate large scale disasters hinging on scenarios that have yet to come true' (p. 15).

Finally, securitization of a certain issue might result in a *securitization climax* (Lupovici, 2016). Such climax has been defined as the situation where securitizing actors 'attempt to justify taking more intensive and exceptional measures than those previously accepted by the target audience' (p. 413). A securitization climax thus happens when a security issue reaches a peak in its perceived threat level. This usually follows upon the resecuritization of a previously (partly) desecuritized issue; but can also occur through a gradual intensification of securitization or it could follow upon institutionalization of the issue (Lupovici, 2016, p. 420-421). In all three variations, however, the climax is the result of a long-term process.

Securitization theory and these three variations thereof (maximization, desecuritization, resecuritization, see *Table 1*) constitute the main analytical framework of the current study. The next section will describe in further detail what studies have previously been conducted on the securitization

[2] This thesis argues that Hansen's (2012) categorization implicitly assumes that desecuritization occurs through *desecuritization moves* (see also Bourbeau, 2015) and is less well-fitted for the analysis of discursive desecuritization in the form of *speech acts*. Therefore, this thesis introduces an extra category, *reinterpretation,* which refers to the active redefining of previously securitized issues as non-threats.

of orthodox religion in general, and Salafism in particular – as well as the way in which the current study adds to the academic knowledge in this field.

Table 1

The Securitization Framework as Applied in the Current Study.

Concept	*Source*	*Definition*
Securitization	Buzan & Waever (2003)	a successful speech act 'through which an intersubjective understanding is constructed within a political community to treat something as an existential threat to a valued referent object, and to enable a call for urgent and exceptional measures to deal with the threat'(p. 491).
Variation 1: **Maximization**		
a. Hypersecuritization	Silomon & Overill (2012)	the concept of 'immediate large scale disasters hinging on scenarios that have yet to come true' (p. 15).
b. Security climax	Lupovici (2016)	the situation where securitizing actors 'attempt to justify taking more intensive and exceptional measures than those previously accepted by the target audience' (p. 413).
Variation 2: **Desecuritization**	Buzan, Waever & De Wilde (1997)	a 'shifting of issues out of emergency mode and into the normal bargaining processes of the public sphere' (p. 23).
a. Silencing	Hansen (2012)	'an issue disappears or fails to register in security discourse' (p. 544).
b. Stabilization	Hansen (2012)	'a discourse that holds that [the securitized issue] has been sufficiently stabilised' (p. 540).
c. Rearticulation	Hansen (2012)	'an issue is moved from the securitised to the politicised, due to a resolution of the threats and dangers, that underpinned the original securitisation' (p. 529).
d. Reinterpretation		when an issue is discursively reinterpreted as a non-threat or as a protective factor against other threats
Variation 3: **Resecuritization**	Åtland (2009)	a (previously desecuritized) issue 'makes a comeback to a state's security agenda' (p. 364).

3. The Securitization of Religion

Although high on the socio-political agenda of many Western countries, religion as a security issue remains an understudied topic, according to Balzacq, Léonard and Ruzicka (2016, p. 514). Among the research that *does* examine the relation between securitization and religion, there are generally two different outlooks on the matter. One the one hand, there are scholars who approach religion as a referent object of securitization. These studies hypothesize that religion is a pivotal part of one's identity and a state's *raison d'être* , and thus, 'threats against sacred objects are seen as existential threats' (Bagge Laustsen &Wæver, 2000, p. 719). Securitization of religion then refers to the idea that religious beliefs, practices and symbols need to be protected from hostile (either other religious or non-religious) forces.

On the other hand, there are studies that perceive religion as a threat against statehood in itself. This type of securitization occurs when secular states consider themselves threatened by a religious group, either external or internal to these states (Bagge Laustsen & Waever, 2000). It has been hypothesized that in these cases, the referent object at stake is not religion, but rather *secularism*, or the democratic liberties and processes that often accompany it (Bagge Laustsen & Waever, 2000, p. 721). Additionally Mavelli (2012), even observes a 'dominant underlying assumption in security studies that implicitly associates security with secularization' (p. 177). Others argue that this latter category in fact mirrors the former, as it simply takes *another type of religion* – Christianity, on which most Western liberal democracies are founded – as its referent object (Seikh, 2018).

Finally, it might not be secularism or Christianity, but rather the *national identity*, or even citizens' ontological security (the perception of continuity of one's Self, see Giddens, 1991) that is perceived to be under attack by a religious Other (Croft, 2012). Regardless of the emphasis that one chooses, within this latter approach – which takes religion as a *threat* instead of *being threatened* – the focus appears to generally be on Islam. The next section will broadly outline the current academic status of the securitization of Islam, before exploring the studies that specifically deal with securitization of Salafism in the Dutch context.

3.1 Securitization of Islam

The attacks of 11 September 2001 resulted in the Islam being overtly brought into the security realm (Cesari, 2009; Sunier, 2012). The hypothesized link between Islam, radicalization and terrorism soon became commonly accepted and continues to dominate Western security discourse (Fox & Akbaba, 2015; Motilla, 2018; Sunier, 2012). However, according to Mandaville (2013), this perceived threat of Islam is not only physical in nature, but also has a symbolic element to it, endangering the foundational values of a state. This invokes what he calls a process of '*dual securitization'* (p. 236), in which Islam constitutes a *compound threat*, similar to 'communism' in the Cold War era.

Nevertheless, it is not only in relation to 'physical' threats of terrorism and radicalization or 'symbolic' threats against national values that Islam is being securitized. Various scholars note how the securitization of Islam frequently merges with other phenomena, such as the securitization of immigration (Cesari 2009; Cesari, 2013; Kaya, 2010; Sunier, 2012) and the securitization of integration (Sunier, 2012). In these discourses, where the focus has shifted from the 'political' acquisition of nationality, to cultural adaptation, Islam is perceived as an inhibiting factor that requires to be controlled (Cesari, 2013; Sunier, 2012). This has resulted in what Sunier (2012) refers to as the '*domestication of Islam'*, constituting 'a process of containment, pacification and legitimization of Islam based on a national imaginary' (p. 1142). The result of this development is a paradoxical situation, where there seems to be both a hyperfocus on Islam as a governance and security issue, and a simultaneous academic and political neglect of the actual practices and beliefs among Muslims (Sunier, 2012).

Other studies have examined the attitudes that commonly facilitate such securitization of Islam. Cesari (2013) hypothesizes that the general perception of Islam as being essentially anti-Western and anti-modern in nature, arguably allows it to be treated differently (as in: securitized) from other religions (p. 84). It is a tendency that Pasha (2015) perceives as a form of Islamic 'exceptionalism' (see also Mandaville, 2013), resulting in the idea that Islam differs from other religions due to its pathological, violence-affiliated and irrational qualities (Pasha, 2015, p. 177). As a consequence, Islam is no longer perceived as a world religion, but as a 'problem cluster' (Mandaville, 2013, p. 237). Such exceptionalist approach to Islam, strokes with Edmunds (2012) assertion that the governmentality of Islam is in fact an exertion of Western power, manifesting itself either through formal institutions (such as legislation and regulation) or through informal attitudes. She claims that formal securitization of Islam has traditionally revolved around the topic of dressing (such as the regular political debates on *hijabs, burqas* and *niqabs*), suggesting that a need for securitizing measures arises when Muslims refrain from limiting their religious identity to their private lives (Edmunds, 2012, p. 76). The latter, informal securitization, which amounts to 'old colonial discourses of colonialism and Islamic backwardness' (p. 82), would then originate from the profound status anxiety that Western powers have been facing since the beginning of the post-colonial period (Edmunds, 2012).

Further, Kaya (2010) observes a vicious cycle in the securitization of Islam in the West, where 'structural outsiderism' (p. 54), xenophobia, and generally bad socio-economic prospects strengthen European Muslims in their Islamic identity. This reinforces the rigidity with which they practice their religion, affirming the dominant image of Islam as a threat to European societies (Kaya, 2010). This perspective can be criticized, however, on being overly simplistic and failing to acknowledge that a turn to a more fundamentalist Islamic approach might just as well arise from micro-developments, instead of trends at a macro- or meso-level, such as securitization (see Bilic, 2010). Kaya (2010) further argues that in order to escape this cycle of securitization, Muslims are increasingly compelled 'to express themselves through legitimate political channels rather than through culture, ethnicity and religion' (p. 61). This point of view seems contradictory to the developments observed by Seikh (2018), who points

out how since the 9/11 attacks, American Muslims have been urged to *depoliticize* their themselves, embracing a secularized and 'Western' version of Islam with limited political activities. Seikh's (2018) hypothesis would imply that the spiral of securitization – and thus, exclusion – that Muslims find themselves in (according to Kaya, 2010) is likely continue, unless the Muslim community manages to return to its individual or cultural variety, as opposed to its socio-political manifestation.

As this section indicates, there have been various ways in which Islam has been brought into the security realm. This trend, where securitization of religion increasingly seems to equate to the securitization of Islam, has also been observed in the discourse of the Dutch government (De Graaf, 2011; De Koning, 2011a; De Koning, 2014). The next section will outline the studies that have examined the latter, specifically with regards to the securitization of Islam's orthodox variety: Salafism.

3.2 Securitization of Salafism

Various scholars have described how throughout the years, Salafism has been framed as a threat to Dutch national security. For example, De Graaf (2013) shows the Dutch security services 'have come to perceive religious orthodoxy as undermining of the democratic order and social cohesion' (p. 357). Further, De Graaf (2013) argues that since the beginning of this century, the subject of the threat has shifted from terrorism, to radicalism, to orthodoxy and Salafism. Orthodox religions are thought to obstruct a nation in its achievement of certain cultural goals, such as democratization, unitization or emancipation. This results in what De Graaf calls both '*securitization* of religion' and '*culturalization* of security' (p. 369, emphasis added), where the latter indicates that governmental priorities have changed from protecting the nation state, to protecting a national identity and its shared culture. According to her, these developments create an undesirable and inaccurate depiction of Salafism, stimulating further polarization and increased feelings of insecurity.

These ideas have been echoed by others. For example, De Koning (2011a) argues that in the political debate, Salafism has mainly been perceived in light of 'dangerous' processes of radicalization. Yet, this perception would fail to recognize Salafism for what he believes it truly is, namely a 'utopic' social movement, that seeks to revitalize and reorganize Islam (De Koning, 2011a, p. 49). Moreover, this Salafist movement is not as preoccupied with socio-political reform as its often portrayed, De Koning (2012) argues. Instead, Salafism would be more about protecting identity and moral integrity at an individual level, where Salafism fulfills an existential 'meaning-making' quality in the lives of its practitioners.

Similarly, in commenting on their recent literature review of Salafism in the Netherlands[3], Berger, Hamdi and Kahmann (2019), claim that the Dutch governmental use of the word Salafism has become 'an accusation rather than a description' and therefore plea to get rid of this 'exotic' concept as a whole:

[3] See Berger, Kahmann, El Baroudi & Hamdi, 2018.

> "(…) everyone, including scholars, is extremely unhappy with the term Salafism. It is a term that has become detached from the reality of what Muslims do in the Netherlands. Can we get rid of it? That turns out to be less easy than expected. Scholars are stuck in their scientific methodology, and policymakers in the bureaucracy of their policy jargon." (Berger, Hamdi and Kahmann, 2019)

This quote reflects the findings of Roex (2013), who shows that even Salafists themselves would rather avoid using the term 'Salafism', since literature and the media portray it as being intrinsically linked to jihadism (p. 91).

However, while Berger, Kahmann, El Baroudi and Hamdi (2018) do pay somewhat more attention to the role of language in the discourse on Salafism than De Koning and De Graaf, they still mainly focus on (1) the various manifestations of orthodox Islam that are not acknowledged in the use of the term Salafism, and (2) the objective threat that Salafists might or might not pose to society. As such, these scholars fail to approach the issue on a discursive metalevel, by examining *how exactly* the meaning of Salafism been constructed in policy discourse in the first place, and how the definition of Salafism might relate to policy agendas that depend upon factors internal and external to the Dutch government. Answering these questions requires stepping away from an essentialist perspective on Salafism as a security issue, and instead, embracing a more anthropological approach in this debate.

A similar point of critique also goes for the research conducted by De Graaf (2013). De Graaf focusses more on policy responses (or 'successful' *securitization moves*, such as the establishment of new security bodies, agencies and 'action plans') as a way of securitizing Salafists, and less on the actual linguistics (i.e. the rhetorical structures that precede threat construction, see also Stritzel, 2002) that are used to make Salafism into a security matter in the first place. Since such *speech acts* can be considered the *input* that makes (extraordinary) policy responses feasible (Buzan, Waever & De Wilde, 1998), the current study therefore looks at securitization of Salafism at an earlier stage in the process. Finally, since this study uses 2018 as a cut-off point, it includes several recent developments that might have influenced the Salafism discourse in Dutch security policy – such as the rise and fall of ISIS in Syria and Iraq. As such, this thesis provides a more up-to-date representation of the current discourse on Salafism than for example De Graaf (2013), whose analysis only goes back as far as 2011.

In conclusion, where De Graaf (2013), De Koning (2011) and Berger, Kahmann, El Baroudi and Hamdi (2018) all assume that the concept of Salafism intrinsically contains characteristics that make normative statements about the appropriateness of its use in certain discourses possible, this thesis assumes that rather, our understanding of Salafism is inherently shaped by its use in discourse. It therefore moves away from these objectivist and essentialist perspectives on Salafism, and towards a critical understanding of the concept. As such, the current analysis starts at the roots of what is considered reality in the social constructionist school: *language*. How exactly this study of language will be conducted, will be discussed below.

4. Methodology

This thesis centers around the following research question: 'To what extent did Dutch security policy actors (de)securitize Salafism between 2002 and 2018?'. An attempt at answering this question will be conducted by means of a contextualized discourse analysis of publications of three Dutch security actors (AIVD, NCTV, Ministry of Security and Justice). The reason this thesis focusses on discourse at a national government level, and not on other relevant discourses such as those of the media and the general public, is twofold. First, securitization theory specifically aims to describe the construction of security issues by *state* actors – since it is used to explain the policy implications that a security-based definition of a subject might incur. Second, the Dutch government finds itself in an especially strenuous position when it comes to Salafism. While politicians have publicly stated their concerns regarding a perceived uprise in Salafism, political interference in citizens' religious affairs are limited by the freedom of religion, thought and conscience, as defined in article 6 of the Dutch Constitution or article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Finally, the position of the Dutch government is further complicated when it comes to policy making on Salafism, due to the presence of various religiously inspired political parties in the Dutch House of Representatives. Most of these parties are Christian in nature, although the role that religion plays in their political program, varies. For example, the Christian-Democratic party (*Christen-Democratisch Appèl, or* CDA) is considered less rigid in its application of the Bible than the protestant-orthodox *Christen Unie* (CU) or the reformed-orthodox party known as the *Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij* (SGP) (Keultjes & Kok, 2017). With regards to the latter, Wagemakers (2015) argues that there appear to be some remarkable similarities between the SGP and Salafists, in terms of their general approach to religion, politics and value system (p. 41). This complicates the directness with which the Dutch authorities can approach Salafism as a policy matter. While some researchers plea that still more insights into what exactly sets apart orthodox Islam from other orthodox strands of religion (Berger, Kahmann, El Baroudi & Hamdi, 2018), in this thesis, it is hypothesized that securitization of Salafism is the Dutch government's way of 'touching' an otherwise 'untouchable' topic. The rationale here would be that if Salafism cannot be *criminalized,* it at least has to be *securitized* (De Graaf, 2013).

The methodology that will be used to test this hypothesis, is twofold. In order to fully grasp the historical context in which the Dutch policy debate on Salafism has taken place, the developments internal and external (i.e. political and social) to the Salafist community in the Netherlands will be examined. After this contextualization of the debate, a primary-source discourse analysis is conducted, in which the focus will be specifically the linguistic *securitization* (through speech acts) of Salafism in a policy context. The specific methodology used for this second part of the study, is discussed below.

4.1 Data Selection

For the second part of this study, the subject of analysis consists of 115 documents originating from Dutch governmental security actors, published between 2002 and 2018. There are two reasons for choosing this time period. First, political awareness of terrorism, home-grown jihadist networks and the role of Salafism within these developments, only started to develop in the beginning of the 21st century. Due to the 9/11 attacks, the emergence of the *Hofstadgroep* and the murder of Theo van Gogh (see section 5.3.1 on security context) Islam and variations thereof were placed high upon the political agenda (Graaf, 2013; Koning, 2011a). In other words, there suddenly was a reason to perceive religion from a security perspective. Second, and related to this fist reason, is the fact that there are rarely any policy documents stemming from before 2002 that even mention Salafism, which makes it safe to assume that there was not yet a policy approach (let alone a securitized one) on this topic.

For all documents the *publicizing actor* constitutes a main criterium for selection. Only documents published by one of the three domestic security actors in the Netherlands, are being included in the selection. In the Netherlands, that would be the National Terrorism and Security Coordinator (NCTV[4]), the General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD, as part of the Ministry of Domestic Affairs) and the Ministry of Justice and Security (MoJS). Admittedly, this choice might have effects on the found results. Salafism as a policy topic is not exclusively dealt with by security actors, but also by, among others[5], the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. It could thus be argued that looking at Salafism only from the security side of the policy spectrum then, invokes the risk of selection bias. It might for example be the case that in security policy documents, there is a focus on Salafism in relation to national security threats (such as terrorism), instead of perceived tensions between Salafism and general societal values (such as principles of equality).

Nonetheless, this thesis follows the premise that securitization inherently *equals* an issue being dealt with by security actors. It precisely this transfer of an issue from the social (or any other) realm, into the security sphere, that constitutes securitization (see Waever, 1993). In other words, it is argued that an issue is not a security issue until it is in fact incorporated into the policy agenda of one of the three abovementioned actors. Only examining the documents of these actors, then, will indeed not lead to general conclusions about whether or not Salafism is perceived as a *politicized issue*. However, it *will* allow for conclusions about Salafism being considered as a *securitized* one.

[4] The NCTV is strictly speaking part of the Ministry of Justice and Security. However, since the NCTV is the national authority on terrorism and related affairs – and autonomously publishing material on these topics – it is considered an independent body in the current study.

[5] Until 2012, Salafism also frequently appeared on the agenda the Minister of Asylum Affairs and Integration, whose title was later changed to Minister of Integration, Immigration and Asylum. This Ministry, which was officially part of the Ministry of Domestic Affairs, ceased to exist when the Rutte-II administration took office in 2012. Integration and asylum policies then became part of the Ministry of Domestic Affairs and the Ministry of Security and Justice.

Similarly, desecuritization of Salafism by *security* actors does not necessarily signify that Salafism is also no longer a policy priority for *social* actors. Floyd (2019), following Miller (2007), argues that a desecuritizing actor could be the agent that is 'remedially responsible' (due to 'an actor's causal role in bringing about a state of affairs' (p. 188)) for the previous securitization. In the current study, these remedially responsible actors would then be the Ministry of Justice and Security, the AIVD or the NCTV. However, desecuritization could also be prompted by a different actor, if that actor bears the 'unique capacity' to desecuritize (Floyd, 2019, p. 189). For the current study, this means that active desecuritization of Salafism could also lie with other governmental bodies, such as the Ministry of Social Affairs or the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which have the capacity to approach the topic from a non-security perspective. This study's focus on security actors thus makes it possible that securitization trends are inflated, while desecuritization trends are suppressed. This effect will be considered in the analysis of the findings.

In total, three types of publications will be examined (see *Table 2* and *Appendix 3*). The first two categories contain general security policy documents of a recurring nature, distributed by the NCTV and the AIVD. These documents consist of National Threat Assessments (*DTN*'s, category 1.1) and their corresponding Policy Implication Letters (*Beleidsbrieven,* category 1.2); Annual Intelligence Reports (*AIVD Jaarverslagen,* category 2.1); and Annual Intelligence Strategies (*AIVD Jaarplannen,* category 2.2). The NTA's and the AIVD Annual Reports generally serve the purpose of 'objectively informing press, the general public and politicians' about the state of affairs regarding the national terrorist threat (NCTV 2016, p. 3[6]). The other two categories (Policy Implication Letters and AIVD Annual Strategies) serve a more 'internal' purpose, and are specifically aimed at informing other security actors (such as the MoJS) and members of the Parliament about security policy strategies. Nonetheless, the frequent distribution of all four types of documents, could potentially shed light on the security discourse on Salafism throughout the observed timeframe. Moreover, they allow for the coding of passive desecuritization (*silencing*) when they no longer mentioning Salafism as a security issue.

Finally, the third category consists of other 'core' publications by the MoJS and its security partners. Unlike the first two categories, selection in the third category is based on *document content*, rather than on publicizing actor or document type alone. Here, documents distributed by one of the three security actors, containing the word *'salafisme'* (or any variation thereof, such as *'salafisten'* or *'salafistisch'*) three times or more. These generally extensive documents mostly contain studies, analyses and overviews for policy-making purposes. In these documents, security actors shed light on one specific (or a series of interrelated) phenomenon/-a, in order to provide policy makers with in-depth background information on a topic of interest. This thesis assumes that these 'core' publications outlines the general framework, or the dominant discourse, which the first two categories of documents are built upon.

[6] See also https://www.aivd.nl/onderwerpen/jaarverslagen

Table 2

Three Categories of Selected Documents

Cat.	Responsible Actor		Type of Documents	Scope	Nr. of Documents
1	*National Coordinator Terrorism and Security (NCTV)*	1.1	National Terrorism Threat Assessments (*DTN*)	24/01/2002 – 10/09/2018	48
	Ministry of Justice and Security	1.2	DTN Policy Implication Letters (*Beleidsbrieven*)	13/03/2013 – 10/09/2018	16
2	*General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD)*	2.1	Annual Intelligence Reports (*Jaarverslagen*)[7]	29/04/2003 – 02/04/2019	17
		2.2	Annual Strategies[8] (*Jaarplannen*)	10/01/2006 – 20/12/2018	14
3	*Ministry of Justice and Security; NCTV; AIVD*		Other core publications on Salafism and related topics[9]	03/06/2004 – 09/08/2016	20
					Total: 115

4.2 Data Analysis

After data collection, an attempt at answering the research question of this thesis will take place by method of *discourse analysis*. Discourse analysis as a scientific method is founded on the premise that there is an underlying meaning to written or spoken words – a meaning that can be uncovered through systematic studying of the (often implicit) ways in which specific phenomena are defined and framed (see Gee, 2004). It is a method that is specifically suitable for the analysis of texts and speeches of a political nature, since – in contrast to methods of content analysis – it deems that discourses are intrinsically shaped by their historical and social context (see Hardy, Harley & Philips, 2004). This social-constructivist notion (i.e. the idea that meanings are fluid and everchanging, instead of static or stable) also lies at the heart of securitization theory, which makes it the preferred method of the current study.

In this thesis, discourse analysis is conducted by using a flexible coding scheme (see *Appendix 2*, which is based on the coding framework in *Appendix 1*). For each text element that makes a reference

[7] Via https://www.aivd.nl/documenten?onderwerp=Alle+onderwerpen&type=Jaarverslag&pagina=1
[8] Although the exact strategy and focal points of the AIVD are confidential, a publicly available summary of the AIVD's general planning is published on an annual basis.
[9] See Appendix 2. Rapports and studies that have been commissioned by MinJ&V, but were conducted by other (independent) research bodies, are excluded from this selection.

to Salafism, this scheme will be filled in manually. The scheme contains indicators of securitization and its variations as described in section 2 of this thesis. Furthermore, the scheme is *flexible* – combining both inductive and deductive methods of analysis – in the sense that the scheme can be adapted throughout the process of data collection. Categories might be added or changed, in order to better address the research question at hand, or to incorporate other interesting aspects of word-use that might otherwise be lost. This qualitative analysis is therefore an *iterative process*, where the results will be used for further specification of the coding scheme.

After this qualitative analysis, the documents will also be coded quantitatively, as a way to uncover the broad discursive trends that Salafism has been subjected to between 2002 and 2018. The following sections will explain in further detail how this coding will take places, as well as the indicators which are being used and how these are operationalized.

4.3 Operationalization

The basic theoretical concept for the discourse analysis is *securitization*, referring to whether an object (here: Salafism) is considered a security concern in policy documents (following Bourbeau, 2015).[10] However, securitization theory does not provide a fixed set of indicators with which (variations of) securitization can be measured. As Williams and Balzacq (2011) note, 'the coding itself should conform to the research question. If the investigator is interested in "securitization frames", s/he codes for words, sentences… having to do obviously with threat images' (p. unknown).

The operationalization of the indicators with which securitization is measured in the current study, is therefore partly inspired by previous research on this topic, and partly by the nature of the analyzed documents. This is the inductive-deductive combination that makes linguistic ethnography possible. Vuori (2008) argues that the rhetorics that accompany *securitization moves*, consist of four components: a *generic claim* ('something is dangerous'), a *generic warning* ('if nothing is done, the danger will be realized'), a *generic demand* ('something should be done') and finally, *propositional content* (proof or reasons to support the claim/warning). These principles have been contextualized by Stritzel (2012) in the following way, making application to the current study possible:

1. *Generic claim*: Contextualized description of the danger
2. *General warning:* Contextualized description of the consequences of inaction
3. *Generic demand:* Contextualized description of an action plan

[10] It should be mentioned here, that it would be theoretically more accurate to speak of (successful) securitization when a *securitization move* is in fact accepted by the target audience (Buzan, Waever & De Wilde, 1998, see also section 1 of this thesis). In the current study, however, the emphasis is on (de)securitizing *speech acts*, which means that the actual 'successfulness' (i.e. the extent to which Salafism is accepted as a (non-)security threat, in that it triggers a new policy approach) is not part of the analysis. Regardless of the real-world effects that a (de)securitized discourse on Salafism may have, text elements may still be coded as *(de)securitization* when they exhibit such speech acts.

4. *Propositional content:* Contextualized presentation of proof or reasons

These indicators of securitization have been further adapted to fit the specific purpose of this study. (see also *Appendix 1* for a complete operationalization of the indicators). With regards to *generic claims*, the current study distinguishes between (1) claims about either the *nature* or the *scope* of Salafism in the Netherlands; (2) claims about Salafism in relation to its/other Islamic subtypes; and (3) claims about Salafism's direct or indirect relation to security threats and securitized concepts.

Further, in the analysis of *general warning*s, specific attention will be paid to the *referent object* that is at stake, whether implicitly or explicitly, as well as the (hypothetical) *consequences* linked to Salafism as a security threat. The current study deviates from Strizel's (2012) abovementioned conceptualization, however, since warnings which explicitly mention *inaction* as the cause of a specific consequence, will be considered an *implicit demand*, thus belonging to the third rather than second category. The reasoning behind this is that some of the selected documents (especially National Threat Assessments and Annual Intelligence Reports, but also some of the 'core' documents) consist of security analyses and intelligence information, which are ultimately an *inspiration* – but not an *instruction* – for policy approaches and priorities. It is unlikely for these background documents to contain explicit policy recommendations. The operationalization of implicit demands as described above, thus leaves more room for the coding of more subtle, indirect forms of policy nudging.

On the other hand, an emphasis on *explicit demands* and *propositional content* is considered more likely to be observed in documents that serve rather active policy-making purposes, which would be the NTA Policy Implication Letters and the AIVD Annual Strategies, as well as some of the core documents of category 3 in *Table 2*. Elements are coded as demands when calling for active (e.g. the implementation of measures) or passive (e.g. urging for cautiousness) controls. Finally, text elements will be coded as propositional content when they provide additional information that supports the formulated claims or warnings. Here, following Kingdon (1984), a distinction is made between statistical (e.g. '80% of Salafists…') and non-statistical (e.g. 'it has been shown that some Salafists…') as proof.

Since the current study is based on the assumption that the (de)securitization of Salafism is likely to fluctuate throughout time, variations of securitization will be coded as well. It is assumed that desecuritization can take the form of either an active 'unmaking of securitization' (Huysmans, 2006) or a passive fading of the security issue (Hansen, 2012). Therefore, both two active forms (*stabilization, rearticulation*) and one passive form (*silencing*) of desecuritization, as described by Hansen (2012), will be coded for. Hansen's (2012) fourth (passive) manifestation of desecuritization (*replacement*, where one security issue is replaced with another) is not included in the analysis, since uncovering it requires a different approach that falls beyond the scope of this thesis. In short, texts claiming that *changes within* the condition (i.e. the Salafist community in the Netherlands), whether in scope or in nature, cause Salafism to no longer constitute a threat, will be coded as *stabilization*. When the desecuritization takes

place due to Salafism being perceived as politically 'resolved', text elements will be coded as *rearticulation.* The mere absence of securitization would be considered *silencing.*[11]

Moreover, this thesis introduces a new type of desecuritization, called *reinterpretation*, which will be used in addition to Hansen's categorization. *Reinterpretation* allows for the coding of text elements where a purely discursive reinterpretation of an issue can be observed. For example, when a text element refers to Salafism as 'a legitimate claim to our freedom of religion', 'a protective factor against jihadism' or 'a normal social development', it will be coded as reinterpretation.

Resecuritization, then, is operationalized as the process where previously (actively) desecuritized objects once again enter the security-realm. Here, any securitization of Salafism that chronologically follows upon an element of active desecuritization (by the same actor), will be coded as *passive* resecuritization. Additionally, text elements that explicitly mention the reappearance of Salafism as a security issue (such as mentioning a 'reemergence' or 'renewed focus/attention' on the topic) will be coded as *active* resecuritization.

Finally, maximization of securitization is defined as an optimal degree of securitization reached through either 'a gradual intensification of necessary measures' in the case of a securitization climax (Bourbeau & Vuori, 2015, p.2) or the use of multidimensional disaster scenarios that have not yet taken place, in the case of hypersecuritization (Hansen & Nissenbaum, 2009, p. 1164). However, since a securitization climax is a development that takes place overtime, it cannot be identified in one single document. Whether one or more securitization climaxes exist, will therefore only be determined after all texts have been analyzed. Hypersecuritization, on the other hand, *can* be observed in individual documents. Since Hansen en Nissenbaum (2009) do not provide an operationalization of 'multidimensional disaster scenarios', a text will be coded as hypersecuritization when it mentions three or more hypothetical consequences of Salafism that *could* be realized in the near future.

4.4 Coding

The operationalization of the variables as mentioned above, constitutes the main framework of the discourse analysis in this study. However, applying this qualitative method would first require uncovering the most important trends in the security discourse on Salafism throughout the observed time period. In other words: in order to examine *how* Salafism has linguistically been made into a (non-) threat, one would first need to know *if* and *when* this (de)securitization of Salafism took place. For this

[11] As briefly mentioned in section 2, *silencing* can be interpreted in varying ways. If security documents suddenly fail to mention a specific issue, this could indicate *either desecuritization* (i.e. the issue is no longer perceived to be a matter of security) *or institutionalization* (i.e. the issue is still considered a matter of security, but this discourse has become so politically ingrained, that its active reinforcement is deemed unnecessary) of that issue. Differentiating between these two – very different – motives behind the silencing of an issue, is not an easy task, as it requires insight into the decision-making processes that underlie security policy and its related publications. This thesis therefore follows the literature (Hansen, 2012), in that it typically interprets silencing as a form of desecuritization, *unless* there are reasons to object to this reading.

purpose, the analyzed documents are being quantitively coded as well. Each document will be assigned a value ranging from -1 to 1.5, corresponding to the dominant discursive pattern in the document (see *Table 3*).

Negative values indicate that active desecuritization (stabilization, rearticulation or reinterpretation) is the dominant pattern in the document, with -1 and -0.5 referring to strong and moderate desecuritization. Here, 'moderate desecuritization' refers to the observation that the dominant discourse in the document is one of desecuritization, but that it also contains some text elements which are securitizing in nature. 'Strong desecuritization' implies that the document in full is approaching Salafism as a non-threat. Passive desecuritization – or silencing, which occurs when a document does not mention Salafism at all – is coded with a 0.

Finally, positive values are corresponding to strong (1) and moderate (0.5) securitization, with maximization or hypersecuritization being coded as 1.5. Documents are considered 'moderately securitizing' when they predominantly see Salafism as an (indirect) social threat, but not necessarily a (direct) security threat. Documents that do perceive Salafism to constitute a threat against national security, on the other hand, are coded as 'strong securitization'. For hypersecuritization, the criterium of multiple (here: three or more) threat scenario's applies.

Table 3

Quantitative Coding Scheme

Value	**Discourse Type**	**Indicators**
-1	Desecuritization (strong, active)	The document *only* refers to Salafism as a non-threat, whether through *stabilization, rearticulation,* or *reinterpretation*
-0.5	Desecuritization (moderate, active)	The document *mostly* refers to Salafism as a non-threat, whether through *stabilization, rearticulation,* or *reinterpretation*
0	Desecuritization (passive)	The document does not mention Salafism
0.5	Securitization (moderate)	The document contains *at least one claim, warning* or *demand* in which Salafism is being perceived as *a threat against society or democracy*
1	Securitization (strong)	The document contains *at least one claim, warning* or *demand* in which Salafism is being perceived as *a threat against national security*
1.5	Hypersecuritization (maximization)	The document contains at least *three or more hypothetical* (i.e. not yet realized) *consequences* relating to the threat(s) that Salafism perceivably poses

4.5 Validity and Limitations

The methodology of the current study, as outlined above, has its limitations. As previously mentioned, discourse analysis as an academic method is grounded in social constructivism, which assumes that social reality is constructed through interaction with others (McKinley, 2015, p. 1). The way it is applied in this thesis, it is also a post-structuralist method, implying that such interactions do not necessarily refer to an 'objective' reality external to them, but rather, they constitute a reality of their own (see Panizza & Miorelli, 2013). In their interpretation, then, the researcher himself plays a key role, since that words, definitions and (con)texts are inherently subjective, since they are perceived through the colored glasses of the interpreter (White, 2004). Additionally, as Rampton (2007) notes, approaching discourse analysis as *linguistic ethnography* (or: *linguistically sensitive discourse analysis*, p. 596) inherently creates tension between the subject of examination (language) and qualitative methods of analysis (also language). In other words: studying discourse creates a discourse in itself. This is an obstacle that the current study faces as well.

These limitations make it difficult to determine the reliability and validity of the findings. While their effects could be mitigated through the use of a multiple coder system, such design falls outside of the scope of this study. Therefore, this thesis it will try to overcome the abovementioned issues by providing full transparency about how the results have come about. The researcher will aim to make the findings as objectifiable as possible, by capturing findings in a (flexible) coding scheme; thorough operationalization of the used concepts and codes; and solid substantiation of the claims made in relation to the findings. Moreover, the discursive patterns and concepts as uncovered through this study, will be substantiated with empirical examples, as a way to improve the reliability of this study. Finally, the quantitative coding of the analyzed documents should provide the findings with a greater degree of objectiveness.

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5. Historical Contextualization

One could argue that the way in which Salafism in all its varieties has been framed – respectively (de)securitized – throughout the years, is first and foremost a reflection of changes in (1) developments within the Salafist community, (2) interrelated (securitized) threats, such as terrorist organizations and their attacks, both at home and abroad, and (3) the political parties (and their agendas) that are represented in the Dutch government. With regards to the latter, for example, the Netherlands has seen seven different government administrations since 2002. The policy priorities of the administration at large and the political parties that the Ministers of a coalition belong to, have differed over the years. However, they cannot be considered separate and isolated time slots: what happened during one administration, influenced those administrations following it. Similarly, the external (threat) developments that the Netherlands faced in this period of time, influenced the way in which policy was made, and, therefore, the extent to which certain phenomena were perceived as a threat to national security. Therefore, instead of focusing only on the developments *within* the Salafist community, specific attention will be paid to the developments outside of the objective condition. In doing so, the focus will be on the societal and political developments that have shaped the perception of Salafism as a security issue (see also Kingdon, 1984). However, this does not imply that Salafism's discursive reality can be considered completely independent from the objective condition, and therefore, a brief overview of the most important developments with regards to the scope and nature of the Salafist community in the Netherlands is included as well. In the next section, the historical developments in these three fields (the internal sphere; the external security sphere; and the external political sphere) will be discussed, as a way of contextualizing the Salafism debate.

5.1 The Internal Context

5.1.1 Defining Salafism

First of all, understanding how Salafism is used in policy discourse requires insights in the theological nature of this phenomenon. Salafism is an orthodox strand of Sunni Islam that aims to return to what are believed to be the 'pure' or authentic roots of Islam (Poljarevic, 2014; Meijer, 2009). The term Salafism comes from the Arabic phrase *al-salaf al-salih,* which literally translates to 'pious predecessors', referring to the first three generations of Muslims in the seventh century (Meijer, 2009). Salafists are generally opposed to modernism and modernistic interpretations of Islam (Anjum, 2016). Therefore, Maher (2016) describes Salafism as 'a philosophy that believes in progression through regression' (p. 7).

Salafism generally centers itself around five core principles, namely *tawhid* (monotheism), *hakimiyya* (the rule of God), the rejection of *bid'a* (innovation), *takfir* (declaring a fellow Muslim an

unbeliever, or *kafir*) and *jihad* (the holy war) (Maher, 2016). Nonetheless, the global community of Salafis cannot be considered a homogenous group, as there are many different interpretations and variations of its principles (Maher, 2016). Salafism is therefore generally divided into three different sub-types: a political, puritan and jihadist variety (Roex, Stiphout & Tillie, 2010; Wiktorowicz, 2006). To political Salafists, politics are a means to achieve their ultimate goal of a establishing sharia-ruled state. They theoretically decline the use of violence, unless it is a matter of self-defense. Puritan Salafists, on the other hand, are not politically active. According to them, engagement in politics violates the belief that God is the only and ultimate ruler of human kind (Wiktorowicz, 2006). Puritans do not favor the use of violence and are primarily concerned with living their personal lives in accordance with the Quran. Jihadism, also known as militant Salafism, is the most radical strand (Egerton, 2011). It propagates armed combat as a means of establishing an Islamic caliphate. Not surprisingly, it is this type of Salafism that has received most extensive media-coverage, especially regarding the rise and fall of the so-called Islamic State in Syria in Iraq. Thousands of young men and women travelled to the Middle East, where they picked up arms to wage *jihad,* the Holy War. The implication has been that Salafism has become mainly perceived through the prism of jihadist violence, which, according to some, is an undesirable development (De Koning, 2011; De Koning 2018). Before diving into the processes of *securitization* that underly this prism, the next section will set forth the different viewpoints on Salafism as an objective security threat.

5.1.2 Salafism in the Netherlands

Salafism made its way to European societies in the 1960s, through Saudi-Arabian funding of charities, mosques and other Islamic institutions, which engaged in *dawah* (the proselytization of Islam) on its behalf. The movement expanded in the following decades, primarily due to immigrants from Islamic countries and European expats in Saudi-Arabia that brought the Salafi ideology with them on return (Amghar, 2009; Roex, 2013). In the Netherlands, this trend started in the mid-eighties, with the arrival of Islamic activists from the Middle East (De Koning, 2011b; Roex, 2013). An increase in Saudi-sponsored organizations, such as As-Soennah in The Hague and El Tawheed in Amsterdam, as well as the development of new information technologies, further accelerated this process (Roex, 2013).

However, it remains difficult to determine the exact scope of the Salafist community in the Netherlands. The most recent estimate dates back to 2010 (see Roex et al., 2010). In this study, it has been estimated that out of the 850.000 (mostly Sunni) Muslims living in the Netherlands, approximately 8% adheres to a Salafi subtype (Roex et al., 2010, p. 226). This percentage appears to be slightly higher among Moroccans (12%) than among those with other cultural backgrounds. However, Geelhoed (2011) points out that Dutch converts also make up a relatively large part of the Dutch Salafist community. Further, the Dutch security service estimated in 2007 that among those that adhere to Salafist ideologies

in the Netherlands, approximately 2500 individuals can be considered "hardened" Salafists that are willing to actively engage in its practices (AIVD, 2007).

It should however be noted that it is likely that these numbers are not an accurate not reflection of current day reality. The (geo)political and security sphere in the Netherlands (and beyond) changed a lot since these estimates were conducted. Moreover, religious interpretations are not fixed and might change over time, which makes it unlikely that the current scope of the Salafi community in the Netherlands is similar to its scope ten years ago. Finally, as mentioned before, Salafism in itself is a contested subject, which makes accurate measurement difficult. Salafists do not constitute one homogenous group, with large differences in practices and beliefs existing among them (e.g. with regards to the use of violence, see Harchaoui & Madkouri, 2009; Berger, Kahmann, El Baroudi & Hamdi, 2018). It can therefore be questioned to what extent one can make statements about the scope of 'the' Dutch Salafist movement at all (see Hamdi, 2019).

Regardless of these measurement difficulties, it is generally believed that the Salafist community in the Netherlands has been increasing since the beginning of this century. Whether this growth should be considered a cause, or rather an effect, of an increase in Gulf-State interference in Dutch religious institutions, is disputable. Either way, the amount of mosques that sustain financial relations with Salafist organizations in the Middle East doubled between 2014 and 2018, from thirteen to more than thirty (Holdert & Kouwenhoven, 2018). The expanded profileration of Salafism that these Saudi sponsorships supposedly bring along, has been a topic of political debate for years. Additionally, throughout the years, Salafists have become more engaged in spreading their believes through *dawah* activities outside of their mosques as well (De Wever, 2016). It is specifically their transferring of Salafist ideology through Islamic education, charities and the internet which gained frequent political and public attention.

Finally, with regards to the organizational structure of the movement, Roex (2013) argues that the Salafi community in the Netherlands is rather decentralized, compartmentalized and hybrid in nature. Its factions are small and operate trans-locally, engaging both in competition and cooperation with other Salafi networks. The movement has thus far failed to formally organize itself and lacks one distinct leader or group that could be considered a representative of all Dutch Salafists, which allows all factions to make their claim to a 'true' interpretation of Islam (Roex, Tillie & Stiphout, 2010).

While the securitization of Salafism in the Dutch policy discourse is to some extent a reflection of the abovementioned characteristics and developments within the Salafist community, it is not a one-on-one translation of condition into policy. The two other, external spheres that are thought to have impacted the way in which Salafism might be introduced or removed from the security realm – the security context and the political context – will be discussed in the following sections.

5.1.2 Salafism as an Objective Security Issue

While there are some common understandings on the main characteristics of Salafism as a stand of orthodox Islam (as set out in the previous section), it remains what Gallie (1955) calls an *'essentially contested concept'* (p. 169). For starters, opinions vary as to whether the division of Salafism into three independent subtypes is in fact an artificial categorization. Some would argue that different subtypes of Salafism in reality constitute a continuum where non-violent (political and puritan) versions of Salafism can be considered pre-stages of its jihadist (and/or *foreign terrorist fighting*) variety (Ellian, 2016) – which would make non-violent Salafists a security risk. Others point at Salafism as a threat to liberal democracy and its values or to the model of inclusive pluralism (Graaf, 2013; Verhofstadt, 2016). Still others consider Salafism, in all its manifestations, a 'natural' element of all pluralist societies, that should be treated as such (Smit, 2016). These perceptions will be outlined in this section.

In the Netherlands, there are broadly speaking two sides in the political debate on Salafism: those who believe that Salafism is dangerous, and those who think it is not. An example of someone belonging to the former, is the mayor of Arnhem, Ahmed Marcouch, who has been warning about the respective danger that Salafism poses to society for years on end (Jong, 2017; Weijts, 2018). On the other side of the spectrum is the mayor of Rotterdam, Ahmed Aboutaleb, who in 2018 controversially stated that "every Muslim is a bit Salafist", including himself, and thereby implying that Salafism is a normal social phenomenon (Talbi & Kathmann, 2018). This clash of perspectives between two Islamic mayors – both coming from the same (social-democratic) political party (*Partij van de Arbeid*) – sparked large social and political upheaval in the Netherland (Talbi & Kathmann, 2018).

These two sides are similarly present in the academic debate on Salafism. When it comes to the use of violence, some claim that at an individual level, a (jihadist) Salafi ideology should be considered *prerequisite* of any radicalization process into violent jihadist extremism (Rahimullah, Larmar, & Abdalla, 2013). Roex, Stiphout and Tillie (2010) claim that it is mainly those that fall into the category of *fanatical born-agains* that pose a risk in this respect. According to their study, there is a moderate to strong relation between Salafism and the support of a theocratical model of society, and a moderate to weak relation between Salafism and the legitimization of violence in the pursuit of this model (Roex, Stiphout & Tillie, 2010, p 294).

At a macro level, however, there is little knowledge as to *whether* (and if so, to what extent) the scope or nature of a Salafist community within a society relates to the risk of its members' engagement in violence. Some case studies suggest that such a relation might be present. It has been argued that the formation of the Hofstadgroep can be perceived as a reaction to this group's exclusion of the (non-violent) political and puritan Salafist movement in the Netherlands (De Koning & Meijer, 2011; Schuurman & Horgan, 2016). However, as Schuurman and Horgan (2016) note:

> '(…) this falling out with the Salafist movement does not appear to have formed a direct motive for violence. While the group felt a strong disdain for Salafists, moderate Muslims, and Dutch organizations claiming to represent the interests of Muslims in the Netherlands, clear indications that this sparked a concrete desire to use violence are lacking.' (p. 59)

Additionally, Roex, Stiphout and Tillie (2010) found that puritan and political Salafist preachers generally decline *jihadi* ideology and the use of violence – where some of them are even actively assisting in the police investigation of *jihadi* cases (p. 295). It for these reasons that Roex (2014) pleas for a more nuanced interpretation of the Salafi movement, arguing that its members are 'not by definition a threat' (p. 59). Some go even a step further, in claiming that non-violent Salafism can have a preventing effect on violent jihadism, which according to De Graaf (2010) was the dominant trend in the Netherlands between 2004 and 2010.

Second, with respect to Salafism as an objective threat to democracy and the rule of law, Salafists in the Netherlands appear to be a 'normal' orthodox movement (Roex, Stiphout & Tillie, 2010). This implies that while some freedom is lost at an individual level, most of Dutch non-violent Salafists decline too stringent interpretations of their ideology, and therefore, allow exceptions to be made. This means that in practice, most Salafists in the Netherlands embrace the democratic state model and its practices. Not all scholars agree. For example, Verhofstadt (2016) argues in his book *Salafism versus Democracy* that Salafism seeks to undermine the foundations of our liberal democracy and its core values, such as the freedom of expression and the principle of equality between man and woman.

The third threat that Salafism has been associated with, is a decline in social cohesion growing intolerance. For example, Klandermans et al. (2016) have observed interaction effects between orthodox Islamists and anti-Islam extreme-right groups. Both ends of the radical spectrum seem to invoke negative counterreactions in the other – leading to a spiral of polarization. Although their research was limited to the UK, France, Germany and Belgium, Klandermans et al. (2016) argue that it is not unlikely that similar developments are present in the Netherlands as well – especially since the latter's multiculturalist societal model is similar to those of the UK and Belgium (p. 18).

To conclude, there is no consensus on the objective security threat that Salafism poses. Nonetheless, it should be emphasized that this thesis is descriptive rather than normative in nature, in that it does not attempt to make any claims about the *accuracy* regarding the ways in which Salafism has been represented in Dutch policy discourse. This study therefore follows Šulović (2010) in arguing that when security is perceived as a social construct, 'the relevance of distinction between "real" and "perceived" threats seizes to exist' (p. 3). This is assumption lies at the heart of securitization theory. The extent to which Salafism has been (de)securitized in the Netherlands between 2002 and 2018, then, should be regarded in coherence with broader developments internal and external to the Salafist community. These developments will be discussed in the next section.

5.2 The External Context

5.2.1 The Security Context

Between 2002 and 2018, there have been various security-related incidents and developments in Dutch society might have influenced the policy discourse on Salafism. These phenomena have all come to constitute security threats of their own – although some to a larger degree than others. This section will outline the most important ones.

The issue of Islam-inspired violent extremism in the Netherlands, first became apparent through the emergence of a radical, home-grown Islamic movement known as the *Hofstadgroep*, between 2003 and 2008. The group had gotten its name from the Dutch secret service (AIVD), which considered the planning of attacks on Dutch government as its main objective (Gommans, 2008). Its members were mainly young Moroccan Muslims, predominantly from Amsterdam and Den Haag (Frankhuijzen, 2006). In 2006, after the murder of a well-known Dutch opinionist by a *Hofstadgroep*-member (discussed hereafter), the network was put on the European list of terrorist organizations. Nine out of fourteen trialed members of the network were eventually convicted for participation in a terrorist organization. However, in appeal in 2008, all members of the network were released, since the High Court ruled that the Public Prosecution failed to prove that there existed 'close cooperation' and 'cohesion in violent ideology' between those accused. This decision was overruled two years later, when the Supreme Court decided on a revision of the case based on a too strict interpretation of the 'terrorist organization' by the High Court (NOS, 2010).

Some consider the High Court's dismissal of the *Hofstadgroep*-case as an example of how the judicial powers tried to counter securitization tendencies of the government administration (De Graaf & Eijckman, 2011). Nonetheless, both in the political and in the public debate, the emergence of the *Hofstadgroep* was understood as a manifestation of the dangers of Islamic orthodoxy (De Graaf, 2013), which was amplified by the events in 2004. Although the *Hofstadgroep* never succeeded in committing mass violence, one of its most prominent members, Mohammed Bouyeri, managed to commit a small-scale, high-impact terrorist attack by murdering the controversial journalist, writer and opinionist Theo van Gogh. The murder of Van Gogh occurred on the 2nd of November 2004 in Amsterdam – where Bouyeri used both a small firearm and a knife on Van Gogh in broad daylight. The attack caused large political and public upheaval, and is considered to be one of the first Islam-inspired terrorist attacks in the Netherlands. In 2005, Bouyeri was charged and found guilty with murder with terrorist intent, and sentenced to lifelong imprisonment.

The event further sparked securitizing responses within the Dutch government. In public and political discourse, the murder of Theo van Gogh was perceived as an attack against the freedom of speech. This inspired calls for heightened protection measures for 'prominent opinionists and those participating in

the social debate' (Cliteur, 2004, p. 6). Additionally, the focus of the Dutch security service increasingly moved towards the mapping of processes of 'radicalization', which eventually led to the publication of the rapport *Van Dawa tot Jihad* ('From Dawa to Jihad', AIVD, 2005). This marked a shift towards a more proactive and preventive approach in Dutch counterterrorism policy (Hameeteman, 2011), in which Salafism came to play a pivotal role (De Koning, 2014). In that same year, the NCTV published its first national threat assessment, determining that the threat of an attack in the Netherlands remained 'substantial'.

This 'substantial' threat level was also a reaction to several large scale European attacks, which had kept the Dutch government on its toes. The Madrid-bombings of 2004, which left 191 dead and over 2000 injured, still counts as the largest Islamist terrorist attack on European soil to date. The fact that the attack was considered a retaliation for the Spanish government's support of the US invasion of Iraq, instilled fear among the Dutch public – The Netherlands being an ally of the US regime as well (Roor, 2009; Ruijs, 2009) A year later, a similar large scale terrorist attack was successfully carried out in London, where 56 people died and almost 800 were injured. In the Netherlands, the London attack did not cause as much political upheaval as the Madrid bombings (Roor, 2009). However, at an international level, both attacks marked a shift in the European debate about international security, especially with regard to the exchange of visa information to track suspect individuals (Ruijs, 2009). It additionally caused the EU to adopt a new counterterrorism strategy in 2005, in which the Netherlands, being the EU chairman in the second half of 2004, played an important role (Roor, 2009).

In the years that followed, Islamic terrorism eventually faded to the background of the Dutch security agenda. Jihadist networks were perceived to be 'under control', and the national threat level was scaled-down to 'limited'. Focus shifted from home-grown jihadist networks, to developments abroad (predominantly in relation to Al-Qaeda in Pakistan and Afghanistan) as well as other forms of activism and social unrest, such as the release of Geert Wilders controversial anti-Islam movie *Fitna*. These developments were reason for the NCTV to shortly heighten the national threat level to 'substantial' in March 2008, which was soon to be returned to 'limited' in 2009.

Things changed when the public and political sphere became aware of the sudden flow of European *foreign terrorist fighters* to Syria and Iraq, a couple of years later. Between 2012 and 2018, the Netherlands have witnessed the departure of approximately 300 individuals – of which a third female – to these areas, in order to join jihadist insurgencies such as the Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) and Ha'yat Tahrir al-Sham. The issue foreign fighting became further complicated in 2015, when it became apparent that with the decline of ISIS' territory, a significant amount of fighters and their families wanted to return to their home countries. However, the Dutch government has been (and still is) reluctant to actively bring back Dutch nationals in Syria and Iraq, even though international political pressure to change this policy has been rising. According to recent estimates, there are still approximately 160 individuals (> 9 years old) with Dutch nationality in the conflict zone. Circa 60 others have already returned (AIVD, 1 May 2019).

The phenomenon of departing and (later on) returning Dutch foreign terrorist fighters, was unprecedented in both scale and nature. It quickly became a security issue in the political debate, which allowed for 'hard', risk-based policy measures (Van Den Bos, 2017). Such securitized measures include, among others, the detention of returnees in the maximum security prison in Vught; policy proposals to criminalize the departure to and stay in terrorist-controlled areas; seizure of national passports of potential departees; and revoking the citizenship of those joining the conflict. However, these repressive counterterrorism measures were supplemented with 'soft' approaches, such as community projects aimed at promoting social resilience and counternarrative initiatives (Bakker, 2015). This combination of repression and prevention became the core of the Dutch Comprehensive Approach to Jihadism (*Integrale Aanpak Jihadisme*) that was launched in 2014.

However, homegrown extremism and foreign fighting were not the only threats on the minds of Dutch politicians. Similar worries were expressed about the sudden upsurge in large scale attacks, often claimed to be committed by Islamic State-affiliates, in several European capitals such as Paris (2015), Berlin (2016) and Brussels (2016). The general perception was that it was not a matter of *whether* the Netherland would become a target, but *when* (Holman, 2019). The threat level in the Netherlands was raised to 'substantial' for the second time since its introduction in 2005 (Bakker & De Roy van Zuijdewijn, 2016), but the large-scale terrorist attack that was feared for, did not actualize.

This section showed that the Netherlands has seen several incidents and developments that might be of relevance to the perception of Salafism as a security threat. However, the way in which these events have shaped Salafism discourse, cannot be regarded independent of internal political affairs that occurred during the observed time period. These developments – the composition of coalitions on the one hand, changes in Ministers of Justice and Security on the other – are discussed in the next section.

5.2.2 The Political Context

Government administrations 2002-2018

This thesis hypothesizes that policy discourse is shaped not only by factors internal to the condition, but also through developments external to the Salafist community in the Netherlands. As mentioned before, the Netherlands has seen seven government administrations, led by two different Prime Ministers, between 2002 and 2018. This section will consider the security priorities that these administrations put forward in general and with regards to security policy in particular.

In the first part of 2002, the administration in charge operated under Prime Minister Wim Kok, who entered his second term. The coalition consisted of Social Democrats (PvdA), Conservative Liberals (VVD) and Progressive Liberals (D66). High on the policy agenda were matters of integration- and asylum-policies. After a chaotic election period mid-2002, during which one of the country's most prominent politicians, Pim Fortuyn, was assassinated, the first administration, Balkenende I, took office

from July 2002 until May 2003. This coalition consisted of mainly Christian Democrats (CDA), Conservative Liberals and a populist right-wing party known as *Lijst Pim Fortuyn* (LPF). Due to the murder of Pim Fortuyn earlier that year, security became a pivotal issue on the policy agenda. Related topics, such as immigration, continued to receive a lot of attention. Internal frictions and tensions within the LPF, ultimately led to the collapse of the coalition in 2003.

When Prime Minister Balkenende was reappointed, his second administration lasted until July 2006. This administration was mostly representing CDA, VVD and D66. During Balkenende II, immigration and asylum policies became even more of a priority as they were subjected to a conservative shift, in which 'integration' became a key-word. This led to the enhancement of strict integration- and language-requirements for non-Dutch citizens.

After D66 lost its trust in the coalition, the CDA and VVD continued their governing in what became Balkenende's third administration, which remained in charge from July 2006 until February 2007. It was considered a transitional coalition that merely severed the goal of setting up new parliamentary elections (NOS, 2010). After these had taken place, the fourth and final term of Prime Minister Balkenende lasted until October 2010. This coalition was comprised of CDA, PvdA, D66 and a small Christian orthodox party known as *Christen Unie* (CU). On the security agenda of Balkenende IV were various issues, but terrorism and violent extremism had become a lot less prominent (see Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2007), perhaps due to the relative 'quietness' the Netherlands was experiencing in this respect (De Graaf, 2013). This remained to be the case when Prime Minister Mark Rutte's first administrative term (main parties: VVD and CDA, with tacit support of right-wing populist party *Partij voor de Vrijheid* (PVV)) took off in October 2010. While the front man of the latter, Geert Wilders, did not shy away from making controversial statements about Islam (Parool, 2011), these statements did not affect the priorities of the security policy actors, who were facing profound cuts in their budgets at the time (De Graaf, 2011).

However, things changed during his second term, which started in November 2012 with a coalition made up out of Conservative Liberals and Social Democrats. The rise of ISIS and its effective recruitment of European youngsters, put counterterrorism on the top of security interests once again (Witte, Jacobs & Muis, 2015). But where the Rutte II administration was focused mainly on (potential) departees to ISIS-controlled areas, as well as managing the flows of refugees to Europe, Rutte III – which took office in November 2017 and consists of VVD, CDA, D66 and CU – had to deal with the aftermath. On this administration's agenda, emphasis was – and currently still is – on the threat that returning foreign fighters and their families might pose to society (Isitman, 2017).

Overall, when looking at the political composition of all seven administrations between 2002 and 2018, it is striking that in two administrations, Balkenende IV and Rutte III, the Christian orthodox party (CU) is part of the coalition. Additionally, out of the seven coalitions that have been discussed in the previous section, Rutte II was the only so-called 'purple' administration, consisting of mere 'blues'(Liberals) and 'reds' (Social Democrats), without participation of Christian parties. This

underscores what De Graaf's (2013) perceives as the artificialness of the assumed 'separation of church and state' in the Netherlands – where religion has always played a key role in Dutch politics. The securitization of Salafism may in this regard have been halted or even reversed (through desecuritization) by administrations in which either CDA or CU took part, as a means of avoiding delegitimization of the coalition. At the same time however, since securitization is in essence a populist way of mobilizing means and public support for certain measures, a securitizing discourse might be more prominent in administrations where conservative-populist parties (LPF, PVV) are part of the coalition.

Ministers of Justice and Security 2002 – 2018

Since the domestic security policy agenda mostly belongs to the Ministry of Justice and Security (MoJS), it is hypothesized that potential securitization of Salafism will most likely take place in documents originating from this department. Therefore, it also worth looking at the various ministers that have represented the MoJS over the years. During the first two Balkenende-administrations, this was Piet Hein Donner, a Christian Democrat (CDA). As Minister of Justice and Security, Donner was particularly preoccupied with defending the act against blasphemy – an act that had become controversial after the murder of Theo van Gogh. At the end of his term in 2006, Donner caused large political upheaval, after he had controversially stated that – by rule of majority – introducing sharia in the Netherlands should be a possibility, if that is what the people want (Stein, 2006).

During Jan-Peter Balkenende's third term in 2006, Donner was replaced by Ernst Hisch Ballin, who represented the same party as his predecessor. Two years after is appointment, PVV-frontman Geert Wilders had allegedly planned to burn and tear up pages from the Quran as part of his contentious, anti-Islam movie called 'Fitna' (Volkskrant, 2008). Although known as a hard-grained official, Hirsch Ballin had responded emotionally to the incident. He considered Wilders' representation of Islam as a militant religion an inaccurate portrayal that 'does not resonate with the majority of Dutch Muslims' (Weeze & Kleijwegt, 2008). This is not surprising, considering the large role that religion has always played in Hirsch Ballin's private life, which simultaneously fueled his political endeavors to counter religious exclusion (Weeze & Kleijwegt, 2008).

When Mark Rutte was appointed as Prime Minister, Ivo Opstelten, member of the Conservative Liberals (VVD), became minister of Justice and Security. While Opstelten was involved in drawing up what later became to be known as the *Comprehensive Action Plan to Combat Terrorism* (Actieplan Aanpak Radicalisering), he remained opposed to the criminalization of radical Islamic organization Hizb-ut Tahrir (De Volkskrant, 2014). In 2015, Opstelten was replaced with Ard van der Steur (VVD), who had become notorious for his populist utterances – and who initiated an investigation into Gulf-State funding of Islamic institutions in the Netherlands (Leistra & Wytzes, 2015; Lengkeek, 2015). However, following a political scandal, Van Der Steur was in turn replaced with Stef Blok (VVD) in

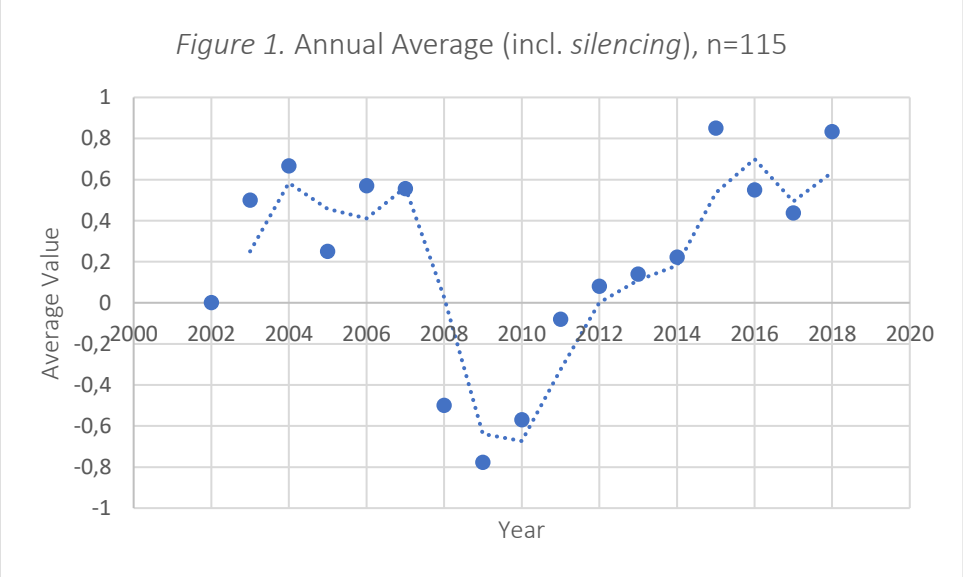
2017. Blok was responsible, among other things, for the seizure of the passports of several suspected jihadists. He also pled against female police officers wearing *hijabs*. Lastly, at the start of Rutte's present term, in 2017, Ferdinand Grapperhaus (CDA) was appointed to lead and represent the MoJS. Grapperhaus recently stated that The Netherlands has to remain 'cautious' with regards to Salafism and that it needs to 'counter' it (BNR, 2019). He specifically warned for the fanatism of Salafists and their anti-democratic tendencies.

As this section has shown, there are have been various developments internal and external to the Salafist community, both at a political and a societal level, which may have shaped the Salafism security discourse throughout 2002 and 2018. While it would be unrealistic to link every single development to a potential shift in Salafism discourse, these developments do provide us with a general idea of what type of changes one might observe when examining the security discourse on Salafism. How this discourse has in fact manifested itself in the selected time period, will be discussed in the next chapter.

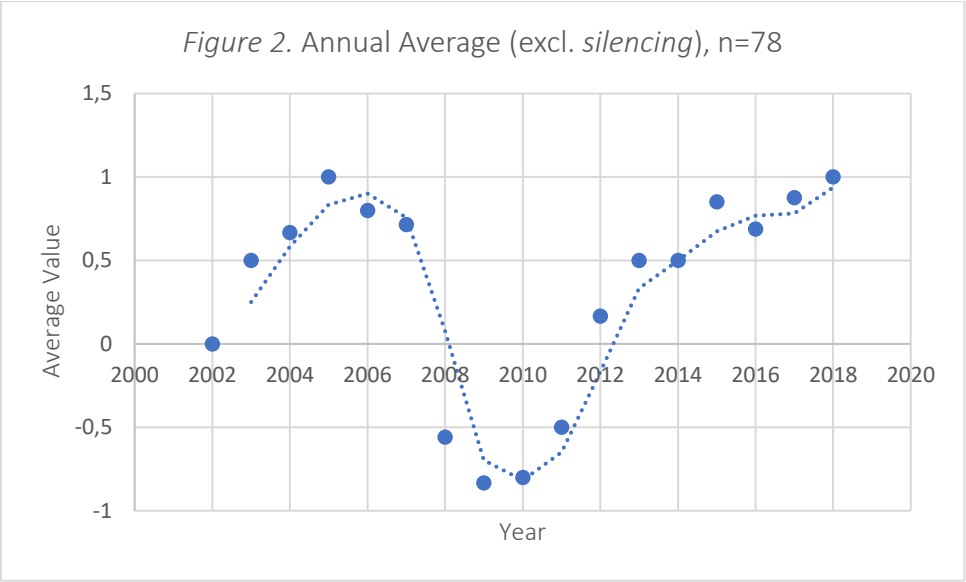
6. Discourse Analysis: Results

6.1 Overview of Discursive Trends

Before exploring the qualitative nature of the (de)securitization of Salafism in Dutch security policy discourse, this section will provide an outline of the general trends within this discourse. As mentioned in the previous section, all documents have been coded, according to their type of (de)securitization. When averaging these scores per year, a pattern appears. As shown in *Figure 1*, the first couple of years following upon 2002, Salafism is moderately securitized. This changes after 2007, when the trendline steeply drops to below zero, which is indicative of desecuritization. Still, it should be kept in mind that this trend of desecuritization might be somewhat suppressed, due to the nature of the examined documents (i.e. documents published by security actors), which are likely to have a natural emphasis on securitization. A slow but steady reintroduction of Salafism to the security agenda – kown as *resecuritization* – can be observed from 2012 onwards.



As mentioned earlier, the meaning of passive desecuritization, or *silencing*, remains ambiguous, since the omission of Salafism in security policy documents could also be indicative of securitized *institutionalization* (i.e. where a topic has become so widely accepted as a security threat, that reiteration of that threat is no longer required. See Lupovici, 2016) rather than desecuritization. *Figure 2* therefore shows the trendline that appears when only documents with negative or positive (non-zero) values are considered. Naturally, this implies that the range of average values becomes larger, while the overall pattern remains the same.



6.2 Securitization: 2002 – 2007

As can observed in the figure above, between 2002 and 2007, Salafism was generally considered a security issue. This next section will outline the dangers that were thought to accompany Salafism, following Hansen's (2012) four elements of securitization: generic claims, generic warnings, generic demands and propositional content.

6.2.1 Generic Claims about Salafism

In all analyzed documents published between 2002 and 2007, securitizing claims are made about Salafism. In the analysis of these claims, one can distinguish between on the one hand, indirect (social) threats, and on the other, direct (security) threats. With respect to the former, the documents mostly refer to three indirect dangers (the threat of its 'intolerant' ideology; the threat of ambiguous manifestations and 'façade politics'; and the threat of the professionalization, expansion and a 'cunningness' of the Salafist movement) and one direct one (the threat of radicalization towards violent jihadism and/or terrorism). However, before examining how these threat perceptions have taken shape, this section will first set out the more general claims on Salafism. In other words: how security actors demarcated Salafism as a phenomenon – and specifically, what was thought to set Salafism apart from other (securitized) strands of Islam.

(1) Salafism defined

Throughout the beginning years of this century, Dutch security actors have attempted – but failed – to come to a consistent definition of Salafism. Throughout these years, Salafism has been interpreted in

various ways, from being a 'radical-political Islamic' movement (AIVD AR, 2002, p. 40), to a form of 'radical Islamic-puritanism' (*Van Dawa tot Jihad,* AIVD, 2004, p. 25) or 'Islamic neo-radicalism' (*Radicale Dawa in Verandering*, AIVD, 2007, p. 35). While these descriptions seemed to imply that according to the security actors, 'radicalism' was a defining characteristic of Salafism, other documents suggested that rather, radical beliefs were to be viewed as a potential side-effect of the Salafist ideology (e.g. *Saoedische invloeden in Nederland*, 2004, p. 5).

Apart from radicalism, 'orthodoxy' appeared to play an equally important role in the security actors' understanding of Salafism. In 2006, the AIVD Annual Report described Salafism as: 'an ideological movement, that aims to return to the 'pure Islam' as practiced at the time of the Prophet. Often conservative and ultraorthodox' (p. 11). However, this last sentence was excluded from its definition in the reports that followed, suggesting that 'conservative and ultraorthodox' were no longer considered qualities intrinsic to Salafism. Yet, despite this omission, 'orthodoxy' remained one of the most frequently used qualifications of Salafism. In fact, the only qualification of Salafism that appears to be relatively consistent throughout time *and* among the different security actors, is that of Salafism being considered a form of orthodoxy. This ranges from Salafism being equated to 'regular' orthodoxy (NTA 08, 2007, p. 7), to it being perceived as 'very orthodox' (*Saoedische Invloeden in Nederland,* AIVD, 2004, p. 1), 'radically orthodox' (AIVD Annual Report, 2002, p. 41) or even 'ultra-orthodox' (*Van Dawa tot Jihad,* AIVD, 2004, p. 26). In the latter document, the AIVD defined 'ultra' as 'an extraordinary or exaggerated form of a known political inclination' (p. 15). 'Orthodox' is then described as a 'strict adherence to the traditional (mostly religious) teachings, in accordance with all requirements of the doctrine' (p. 16). This qualification of Salafism as being 'ultraorthodox' remained a commonly accepted element in security policy discourse until 2015, after which it was almost completely abandoned.

Finally, the actors exhibited an ambivalent approach to the relation between Wahhabism and Salafism. In 2002, the AIVD report *Rekrutering for the Jihad in Nederland* explicitly differentiated between these two phenomena, claiming that although Wahhabis reject the concept of modern statehood fully, Salafists, by comparison, aim for the establishment of a 'relatively modern' state governed by Islamic rules (p. 31). Two years later, however, the AIVD abandoned this differentiation altogether, referring to Wahhabism and Salafism as being synonyms of each other (*Saoedische Invloeden in Nederland,* AIVD, 2004, p. 2).

When it comes to the subtypes of Salafism itself, perspectives have shifted as well. In 2004, the AIVD was the first to differentiate between two different types of Salafism. It distinguished *salafiyya ilmiyya* from *salafiyya jihadiyya* (*Saoedische Invloeden in Nederland,* 2004, p. 2), where the former would typically adhere to the Saudi Arabian kingdom, the latter referring to what now is commonly called 'jihadism'. This dichotomy did not last long, however. The Dutch security actors seemed to prefer the three-way split between political Salafism, a-political Salafism and jihadism. This differentiation, which is loosely based on Wiktorowicz' (2006) classification of politico's, puritans and jihadi's, was

first introduced by the AIVD in 2007 (*Radicale Dawa in Verandering*, p. 38) and quickly adopted by all security actors. However, its application has been rather inconsistent. At times, the entire modern-day Salafist movement is referred to as inherently 'puritan' (*Jihadisten en het Internet,* NCTV, 2007, p. 49), while other documents reserve this term for the *apolitical* faction of Salafism only (*Salafisme in Nederland,* NCTV, 2008, p. 8). Similarly, some reports emphasize the resemblances between jihadism and (a-)political Salafism, suggesting that these factions are difficult to separate (e.g. *Saoedische Invloeden in Nederland,* AIVD, 2004), while other documents describe how the two types are 'diametrically opposed to each other' (*Radicale Dawa in Verandering,* AIVD, 2007, p. 38).

Although between 2002 and 2007 there were still many unclarities about the defining characteristics of Salafism and its relation to related concepts, there were less inconsistencies with regards to its threat perception. The four types of claims made about Salafism as a threat concept, will be outlined in the following paragraphs.

(2) Indirect threat: an intolerant ideology

There is a myriad of claims in which Salafism is perceived as an indirect security threat. In its 2002 Annual Report, the AIVD described Salafism as a movement which seeks to exert influence over (mostly Moroccan) youngsters and their religious beliefs. In doing so, 'conscious attempts are being made to close the youth off against Western influences and keeping them aloof from the surrounding society' (p. 41). It was believed that Salafism would inhibit Muslims' integration processes, discourage their political participation, isolate them from society, limit gender equality and the freedoms of other minority groups– and ultimately, it was considered a potential cause of radicalization. These beliefs sparked a discourse in which Salafists were framed as outsiders, 'living in [their] own orthodox world, far removed from contemporary Western society' – and its community as mostly attracting youth with criminal backgrounds (AIVD AR 2002, p. 41). In 2003, the AIVD added the dangers of youth being 'recruited for jihad' and Salafists promotion of a 'climate of intolerance' (AIVD AR 2003, p. 35). The Salafist ideology was further perceived as essentially conflicting with the democratic legal order – it being considered intrinsically anti-Western and 'highly intolerant' – which could supposedly lead to polarization and interethnic tensions (AIVD AR, 2006). In its 2004 publication called *Van Dawa tot Jihad,* the AIVD introduced two new concepts to this list of threats, those being *exclusivism* ('the preaching of (religious and cultural) intolerance, (…) denouncing and excluding disbelievers, including 'liberal' Muslims', p. 22), and *parallelism* ('the full or partial rejection of non-Islamic governments and striving for the establishment of an autonomous territory under sharia law', p. 22).

In 2007, three core documents were published in which Salafism and these 'dangerous' characteristics played a pivotal role. Most notable is the AIVD Report called *Radicale Dawa in Verandering*, which contained an extensive list of all long-term and risks associated with Salafism or 'radical *dawah'*, as the document coined it. In this document, the AIVD exhibited a discourse of

hypersecuritization, describing various short term scenario's to which the threat of Salafism could lead. These scenario's ranged from polarization to the inhibition of the constitutional rights of specific social groups, to 'disturbance of the democratic legal order' and terrorism (p. 63 – 73). In the longer term, it could further lead to 'the formation of a large intolerant isolationist and anti-democratic mass movement that could become a factor in serious inter-ethnic and inter-religious tensions in Dutch society' (*Radicale Dawa in Verandering,* 2007, p. 77).

(3) Indirect threat: ambiguous manifestations and 'façade politics'

In addition to the supposedly intolerant nature of Salafist ideology itself, security actors were equally focused on the threats posed by certain *manifestations* of Salafism. Most attention was paid to the influences of Saudi Arabian NGO's in the Netherlands (AIVD AR 2004; AIVD AR 2005), *dawah* activities by Salafist centers, through conferences, literature or audiovisual material (AIVD AR 2004) and the activities of foreign imams or Salafist scholars (AIVD AR 2003; AIVD AR 2004). Especially this focus on the latter group is surprising, since in 2004, the AIVD concluded that 'there is an undercurrent in the Salafist mosques that is more radical than its leaders' (*Saoedische Invloeden in Nederland,* 2004, p. 7), which would be a plea for putting the security spotlight on Salafist followers, rather than their leaders.

Furthermore, the AIVD occasionally described how more imams were adopting 'a more moderate approach' to their ideology (AIVD AR 2004; AIVD AR 2005). While this ascertainment could have provided an additional incentive to move towards a discourse of desecuritization, the AIVD, on the contrary, interpreted this 'moderation' as being 'insincere', and attributed it to external pressure from local authorities and security actors – such as the intelligence service itself (AIVD AR 2005, p. 38). The emphasis was placed on the negative side-effects that accompanied this development, such as waterbed-effects (i.e. radicalization processes are shifting *outside* of Salafist centers, which made it harder to moderate and control these developments). Moreover, the AIVD questioned the durability of these effects, as Salafist preachers might 'relapse' into radicalism, when external pressures ceased (AIVD AR 2005, p. 38). This perceived insincerity of ideological moderation of Salafist preachers, led to the introduction of the term '*façadepolitiek'* ('façade politics') in 2006 (AIVD AR, 2006, p. 26). It referred to Salafists feigning a moderate ideology in order to avoid public or political upheaval or repercussions, while in reality, they still adhered to undesirable or 'dangerous' beliefs and practices. The threat of façade politics continued to play an important role in the securitization of Salafism in the years that followed.

(4) Indirect threat: expansion, professionalization and cunningness

In 2005, the NCTV published its first three issues of the National Threat Assessment – yet without making any references to Salafism. It was only in 2006 that Salafism became a topic of interest for the NCTV as well. However, instead of focusing on the 'problematic' nature or ambiguous manifestations of the Salafist ideology, the NCTV rather highlighted the *expansion* of the movement as a threat in itself. This was not necessarily a new approach, since the growing scope of the Salafist community appeared to be the primary reason why the AIVD came to see it as a security issue in the first place. However, the NCTV seemed to put a lot more emphasis on it, describing the 'spreading' (NTA 06, 2006, p. 4), 'increasing' (NTA 07, 2006, p. 4) and 'advancing' (NTA 05, 2006, p. 3) of the movement, which was thought to 'quickly gain influence' both online and offline (NTA 05, 2006, p. 3). Later on, the 'professionalization and automatization' of the movement was added to this threat (*Radicale Dawa in Verandering,* AIVD, 2007, p. 33), which caused the AIVD to express its fear of a 'domino-effect' (p. 39) and the threat of a Salafist 'mass movement' (p. 77).

Finally, the NCTV read a certain cunningness into the Salafist movement in the Netherlands. It described the emergence of a new generation of Salafist preachers 'who are all too aware of the rules of the game' in the Dutch legal order (NTA 08, 2007, p. 6) and who 'use linguistics and new technologies to their advance'. In short, these three elements – the expansion; professionalization; and an increasing 'slyness' of the Salafist community– continued to constitute the main justifications underlying the securitization of Salafism between 2002 and 2008.

(5) Direct threat: radicalization, jihadism, and terrorism

Nonetheless, the threat perception of Salafism was not limited to the social sphere. Between 2002 and 2007, Salafism was also explicitly framed as a national security threat, due to its assumed links with radicalization, jihadism and terrorism. However, as appears from the documents in this time period, security actors were still unsure as to how to describe the relationship between Salafism and these other security issues. In its earlier documents, the AIVD emphasized 'the danger', 'the risks' and 'harmful side-effects' of Salafist *dawah* due to its assumed facilitating role in processes of radicalization (AIVD AR 2003, p. 53).

In 2004, however, the AIVD appeared to be less certain of the causality between these security phenomena, noting that Salafism '*might be* associated with radicalization processes within Muslim communities and encouragement or even support for terrorist violence' (AIVD, *Saoedische Invloeden in Nederland,* 2004, p. 1, emphasis added). The link between these phenomena was also perceived to be more indirect, in referring to Salafist youth as being 'vulnerable' or 'susceptible' to jihadist ideology (AIVD AR 2004, p. 34-36), thus replacing the dangers of *radicalization* with the threat of *recruitment.*

As such, Salafists became both an object and a subject of securitization – as they were simultaneously the cause and the effect of a growing jihadist community.

Nonetheless, in 2006, the AIVD started to adopt a less ambivalent stance in these matters, referring to Salafism as 'the seed of violent jihadism' (*De Gewelddadige Jihad in Nederland*, p. 56) and claiming that 'the process of radicalization (…) usually starts when youngsters begin taking classes at one of the Salafist centers' (p. 38). To the AIVD, Salafism was 'a source of inspiration for jihadism worldwide' (*Radicale Dawa in Verandering*, 2007, p. 12), leaving no doubt that the Salafi ideology served as an instigator in the radicalization process. The key difference between jihadism and Salafism according to the AIVD, then, would be in jihadists' reliance on conspiracy theories (*De Gewelddadige Jihad in Nederland*, 2006). Yet surprisingly, only one year later the AIVD claimed that 'among Salafists, there is a strong believe in conspiracy theories' (*Radicale Dawa in Verandering*, 2007, p. 22), thus once again abandoning the distinction it had previously made.

In comparison to the AIVD, the NCTV seemed to take a more nuanced approach in the assumed Salafism-radicalization relation, claiming that 'to *certain individuals*, [the Salafist ideology] *could* be a step towards radicalization and a *possible development* towards a *willingness* to use violence*'* (emphasis added, NTA 08, 2007, p.4). Additionally, with regard to Salafists' online activities, the NCTV pointed out that Salafist-inspired websites could even potentially serve as a 'buffer' against violent jihadism, 'depending on the susceptibility of the individual' (*Jihadisten en het Internet*, 2007, p. 94). As such, the NCTV seemed to suggest that Salafism as an ideology is essentially non-threating, but that there are individual root causes at work which make it either a buffer or a breeding ground for radicalization towards violent jihadism. With these considerations, the NCTV already started to exhibit some signs of desecuritization – the discourse which would become more prevalent in the years to follow.

6.2.2 Generic Warnings against Salafism

Underlying the direct and indirect threat perceptions that were outlined in the previous section, are various referent objects that are thought to be threatened by the Salafist movement. Failing to countering the Salafist threat, then, would increase the potential harm that these referent objects faced.

First, with respect to the threat of (violent) radicalization towards jihadism or terrorism, the Dutch *national security* constituted the main underlying referent object, albeit often indirectly. Only once, the AIVD explicitly mentioned this 'security' as a referent object of Salafism (*Radicale Dawa in Verandering*, 2007, p. 59). Yet, the actors' use of strongly securitized – sometimes military-like – expressions (e.g. the 'advancing' of the movement (NTA 05, p. 3) a 'Salafist offensive' (NTA 05, 2006, p. 8), 'Salafist forces' (NTA 05, 2006, p. 7), 'sense of urgency' (NTA 08, 2007, p. 7), Salafists' 'mobilization' of Muslims (NCTV, *Jihadisten en het Internet*, 2007, p. 94) do seem to suggest that Salafism was indeed perceived as a threat against Dutch national security as a whole.

Second, according to the AIVD, Salafism as a *social* threat was believed to endanger, among others, the following referent objects:

> 'Western views on equal rights for men and women (in particular women's right to participate in public life in the same way as men), the freedom of expression, respect for pluralism of life philosophies, personal autonomy, the secularist character of society, and so on' (*Van Dawa tot Jihad*, 2005, p. 21).

Other documents mention Salafism as threat against Western values (AIVD AR, 2004, p. 37), 'the democratic legal order' (AIVD AR, 2005, p. 37) and 'political or religious dissidents' (AIVD, *De Gewelddadige Jihad in Nederland*). In the years that followed, the AIVD narrowed the latter group down to Jews and Shiites in particular (AIVD, *Radicale Dawa in Verandering*, 2007, p. 31) and it introduced additional referent objects, such as various governmental bodies (subsidiaries, consultancies), interest groups and social organizations (*Radicale Dawa in Verandering*, 2007, p. 36). Moreover, the emphasis shifted to moderate Muslims as a referent object threatened by the Salafist ideology. This was mainly for two distinct reasons. On the one hand, Muslims were believed to be at risk of ideological indoctrination by Salafist preachers who might stir up their feelings of exclusion and marginalization (AIVD, AR, 2006). Similarly, moderate mosques faced the risk of intimidation and ideological or administrative takeovers by their Salafist equivalents (AIVD AR, 2006). On the other hand, however, moderate Muslims and their institutions were perceivably at risk of demonization and condemnation (*takfir*) by Salafists. Thus, paradoxically, the danger of both *inclusion* and *exclusion* by the Salafist community, made moderate Muslims into a referent object.

Finally, in this regard, Salafism also functioned as a referent object in itself. As mentioned in the previous section, the AIVD occasionally referred to Salafists being 'vulnerable' or 'susceptible' to recruitment by jihadists (AIVD AR 2004, p. 34-36). These text elements suggest that the real threat existed outside of the Salafist community, which challenges the assumption that jihadism would 'arise' out of Salafism. Yet, this vulnerability still made Salafism a risk factor from a security perspective, and therefore, a referent object and a threat at the same time.

6.2.3 Generic Demands and Propositional Content on Salafism

The claims about and warnings against Salafism as mentioned above, led in some cases to a specific call for action. Nonetheless, such demands remained limited in sum, as the general emphasis of the documents seemed to be on providing claims and warnings, rather than advising on policy measures. This is not surprising, considering that between 2002 and 2007, most documents dealing with Salafism were threat- and intelligence analyses. The NCTV's National Threat Assessments were not yet accompanied by Policy Implication Letters, and the AIVD Annual Strategies rarely made any reference

to Salafism. Still, demands were not entirely absent. In some of its Annual Reports, the AIVD actively urged for the 'containment' of the 'the radicalizing and anti-integrative effect' that would emanate from certain Salafist imams (AIVD AR 2002, p. 42). Similarly, in 2006 the NCTV highlighted the need for 'countermeasures' (NTA 04, p. 8), and a 'multidisciplinary local and national approach' (p. 12). Other demands were more passive in nature, such as the actors' calls to 'to keep an eye on' the Salafist community (NCTV, NTA 04, 2006, p. 12) or to 'closely monitor the developments' within the movement (AIVD AR 2006, p. 47). Yet, since these demands were occasional and no increase in their intensity was observed, they did not constitute a securitization climax.

Finally, at times, the claims and warnings about Salafism's dangerous characteristics were supported with propositional content: text fragments that did not contain any claims or warnings themselves, but which were used to substantiate or legitimize the threat perception as put forward in the documents. This content was generally non-statistical in nature, and frequently referred to developments abroad, such as the emergence and advancement of Salafist movements in Belgium, Germany and France (e.g. AIVD, *Radicale Dawa in verandering,* 2007, p. 48; NCTV, NTA 11, p. 5).

6.3 Desecuritization: 2008 – 2011

6.3.1 Salafism Redefined

The previous years of securitization had established the definitional framework through which Salafism became generally understood. These explicit definitions remained largely untouched, although some minor changes did occur. When Salafism made its introduction as a security policy topic, it was mostly referred to as an 'ideology' (e.g. AIVD, *De Gewelddadige Jihad in Nederland,* 2006), a 'religious movement' (e.g. AIVD, AR 2009, p. 3), a 'community' (e.g. NCTV, *Salafisme in Nederland,* 2008, p. 19), a 'lifestyle' (AIVD, *Weerstand en Tegenkracht,* 2009, p. 9), or even as an 'interpretation of everyday reality' (AIVD, AR 2004, p. 36). However, in 2010, security actors slowly started to adopt a more refined approach, increasingly referring to Salafism as a 'religious spectrum' which would harbor various beliefs and practices, rather than viewing it as one homogenous group. This perspective was first coined by the NCTV in 2010 (*Operationeel Actieplan Polarisatie en Radicalisering 2010*, p. 6) – which later reiterated this need for differentiation, since 'some Salafists *do* exhibit strong connections with society, political engagement, and critical capacities' (NCTV, NTA 23, 2010, p. 9). This more nuanced definition continued to find frequent resonance in the publications of the AIVD and the NCTV.

Additionally, as already seen in the previous section, the NCTV started to put emphasis on the individual differences with regard to radicalization towards jihadism. In documents where Salafists *were* perceived as a liability from a security perspective, it was frequently in a passive form, with Salafists supposedly being vulnerable to external influences that might lure them into violent jihadism. Although this discourse was generally more lenient, or even sympathetic, towards the Salafist community, in some

cases, it created questionable forms of argumentation. For example, the NCTV stated in 2008 that 'Salafists are susceptible to radicalization because their ultra-orthodox doctrine is also shared by many extremists' (*Trendanalyse Polarisatie en Radicalisering*, 2008, p. 15), which seems to encompass a form of logically flawed deductive reasoning.

Finally, the security actors even came to redefine the assumed relation between Salafism and jihadism altogether, claiming that 'although some prestigious scholars see jihadism as being part of Salafism, it certainly has its own ideology' (NCTV, *Ideologie en Strategie van het Jihadisme*, 2009, p. 18) – thus redefining jihadism as existing independently of the Salafist ideology. Generally speaking, however, the redefining of Salafism as a non-threat occurred largely through more implicit forms of desecuritization. In the following sections the discursive use of reinterpretation, rearticulation, stabilization and silencing will be discussed.

6.3.2 Reinterpretation of 'Moderation'

In 2008, the security discourse on Salafism started to shift. In a report called *Salafism in Nederland,* the NCTV started to pay more attention to the differences between various strands of Salafism. Although the negative effects that were believed to accompany Salafism still played an important role, the NCTV focused on the existence of 'tensions' rather than framing it as 'threats'. Additionally, the NCTV altered its interpretation of the moderating trends in the speeches of Salafist preachers. These trends were earlier regarded with mistrust, and to the AIVD, they were a form of insincere 'façade politics' (as discussed in section 6.2.2). To the NCTV, on the other hand, 'this moderation – whether sincere or not – is a positive development' (p. 6), since it indicated that Salafist mosques are open to interaction with their non-religious surroundings (*Salafisme in Nederland,* 2008). This signaled the reinterpretation (or redefining) of a previously securitized manifestation of the Salafist threat. Further, in *Salafisme in Nederland,* the NCTV was the first to call non-violent Salafism a 'social fact (…) that, in the long term, society might have to learn to live with' (p. 68). As such, the NCTV distanced itself from previous perceptions of Salafism – even explicitly describing how the general understanding of Salafism has, for a long time, been influenced by the AIVD, who 'perceives the phenomenon [Salafism] only from a security perspective' (p. 45). With these text elements, the NCTV implicitly seemed to plea for a new, non-securitized course with respect to Salafism.

6.3.3 Rearticulation of 'Resilience'

However, it is not only through discursive reinterpretation that Salafism was redefined. As became apparent in the 2008 report *Trendalayse Polarisatie en Radicalisering*, there were other developments at play which instigated the desecuritization of Salafism. These were predominantly trends of *external* desecuritization (or *rearticulation*), such as an expansion of 'moderate counter-movements' within the Islamic community (NCTV, *Trendalayse Polarisatie en Radicalisering*, 2008, p. 27). The NCTV further

emphasized how ‘moderate mosques are reclaiming the territories they lost to Salafists over the years’ (NTA 14, 2008, p. 4), The AIVD picked up on these trends as well, putting the emphasis on the moderation of Salafist preachers as a result of media coverage, political pressures and critiques from the Moroccan communities in the Netherlands (AIVD, AR 2008). The desecuritization of Salafism was further supported by the general belief that (orthodox) Muslims were frustrated by Salafist preachers’ inconsistent application of Islamic principles to their own lives. Additionally, younger Muslims ‘simply do not have the energy it takes’ to uphold a puritan lifestyle, according to the AIVD (*Weerstand en Tegenkracht*, 2009, p. 9).

In short, the threats posed by Salafism were thought to be annulated by external forces, interventions and an increased resilience against the Salafist ideology among moderate Muslims. Simultaneously, the danger that Salafism was thought to pose was also diminished by developments internal to the Salafist community. These will be discussed in the next section.

6.3.4 Stabilization of the Salafist Ideology

With regards to *internal* desecuritization (or *stabilization*), the NCTV noted in 2008 that the ideological gap between jihadism and (a-)political Salafism appeared to be widening (*Trendanalyse Polarisatie en Radicalisering*, p. 27). This renewed perspective found resonance in its National Threat Assessments, in which the NCTV reported on Salafists’ ‘mild responses’ to the release of the provoking anti-Islam movie *‘Fitna’* (NTA 13, p. 5), and acknowledged an increased resilience against jihadist ideologies among Salafist centers (NTA 15, p. 4). Likewise, the AIVD noted in its Annual Report of 2008, how ‘to some extent, Salafist centers developed ‘self-cleansing capacities’, some of them even denying access to youth with extremist beliefs’ (p. 30).

This active desecuritization continued in 2009 and 2010. In *Ideologie en Strategie van het Jihadisme* (2009), the NCTV defined political Salafists as not being necessarily ‘opposed’ to Western governments, but rather, they were perceived as merely being ‘critical’ of Western interventions in Islamic countries and certain integration policies, such as the burqa ban (p. 36). According to the NCTV, political Salafists would prefer ‘reform over violence’, just as they would refrain from denouncing the legitimacy of Western authorities. Moreover, the NCTV argued that although tensions could arise between Salafists’ lifestyles and the legal order of the country in which they reside, ‘they usually deal with these tensions in a pragmatic manner’, while keeping their interactions with ‘disbelievers’ to a ‘polite minimum’ (*Ideologie en Strategie van het Jihadisme*, p. 45). Furthermore, the NCTV insisted on the broad ideological variation within the Salafist stream, ‘where besides intolerant purists, there are also many believers who adapt the doctrine to their daily life in a Western society’ (NTA 18, p. 4). In 2010, the NCTV even seemed to revise the threat associated with foreign preachers, when it pointed out that the Salafist mosque As-Soennah published an interview with a Saudi scholar, who emphasized the

good relations between Muslims, Christians and Jews and the importance of Muslims abiding the law and the social order of the (Western) countries in which they live (NTA 21, p. 7).

In a similar manner, the AIVD reported that in recent years, Salafist centers had distanced themselves from the use of violence and that these centers had become increasingly resilient against jihadist ideologies (*Lokale Jihadistische Netwerken in Nederland,* 2009, p. 13). It even described how Salafism might be able to function as an 'alternative, non-violent discourse' to jihadism (p. 12), which could inhibit further expansion of the latter. This ultimately led to the claim that 'Salafist centers do no longer constitute a breeding ground for jihadist terrorism', with violent radicalization having 'almost completely disappeared' from these centers (AIVD, *Weerstand en Tegenkracht*, p. 7*;* AIVD, AR 2009). The replacement effects that the AIVD feared would occur, were not realized, and the agency even started to question the previously assumed causality between Salafism and jihadism altogether, claiming that 'the extent to which [Salafism] can form a breeding ground for jihadism, needs to be examined' (p. 13). The NCTV concluded that 'from a counterterrorism perspective, organized Salafism in the Netherlands does not have to be a policy priority anymore' (NTA 23, p. 9) – and called to 'refrain from viewing it [the Salafist movement] entirely as a security issue' (p. 9).

6.3.5 Passive Desecuritization: Silencing

As seen in the previous sections, between 2008 and 2010, the descuritization discourse on Salafism was predominantly *active* in nature (i.e. desecuritization through reinterpretation, rearticulation and stabilization of threats). In 2011, however, this desecuritization almost exclusively took on the passive form of 'silencing'. Salafism was not mentioned in any of the National Threat Assessments, nor was it referred to in the AIVD Annual Strategy or any other core publications. The only reference to Salafism was made in the AIVD Annual Report 2011, where the AIVD claims that 'the threat arising from these [Salafist] movements, is currently limited' and that the service 'has not observed any activities that pose a threat to national security' (p.15). This makes it fair to assume that the silencing observed in the other documents was indeed due to the security actors perceiving Salafism as a non-threat.

6.4. Resecuritization: 2012 – 2018

6.4.1 Salafism Redefined, Once Again

After this period of desecuritization, Salafism slowly but surely made its comeback to the Dutch security policy agenda in 2012. In the years of resecuritization that followed, the security actors' definition of Salafism became more intertwined with the activities of the movement, and less with its ideology. The AIVD had made its first mention of '*dawah-Salafism'* in 2007 (*Radicale Dawa in Verandering*), and while the NCTV was quick to copy this terminology – referring to 'the *Salafist dawah* in the

Netherlands' already in 2008 – *dawah-Salafism* only became an integrated part of security discourse after its resecuritization, between 2013 and 2015.[12] According to the AIVD, the term described 'the strands within Salafism that want to achieve their goal – the creation of a society based on their views on "pure Islam" – through *dawah*' (*Transformatie van het Jihadisme,* 2014, p. 9). The term dawah-Salafism seemed to replace the distinction between 'violent' (jihadist, or 'non-dawah') and 'non-violent' ((a-)political, or 'dawah') Salafism, which took central stage in its earlier publications. The use of this term is nonetheless confusing, considering that in 2015, the AIVD and the NCTV considered engagement in dawah to be a defining characteristic of all three Salafist subtypes (a-political, political and jihadist) (*Salafisme in Nederland,* 2015, p. 5). After 2015, the term then disappeared just as suddenly, with no mention of it in the years that followed.

Additionally, in 2015, the AIVD defined Salafism as 'a collective term for a spectrum of *fundamentalist* movements within Sunni Islam' (*Salafisme in Nederland,* 2015, p. 4, emphasis added). This perspective, which defines Salafism as a form of 'fundamentalism', instead of the terminology of 'radicalism' or 'orthodoxy' which it had used earlier, was echoed by the NCTV in some of its National Threat Assessments (e.g. NTA 44, 2017; NTA 47, 2017), even using fundamentalism as a synonym for political Salafism in NTA 46 (p. 6). Yet this approach changed once more, when in 2018, the AIVD explicitly dubbed Salafism as 'the most well-known variety of *radical* Islam' (AIVD, AR 2018, p. 13). Later on, it used 'radical Islam' as a synonym for Salafism (AIVD AS 2018, p. 3), thus returning to its starting definition of 2002.

6.4.2 Passive Resecuritization of Salafism

It was mainly as a form of propositional content of related threat developments, that Salafism first made its reintroduction as a security issue. In 2012, the focus of the security actors shifted towards so-called 'radical' or 'militant' Salafists and their political activities abroad – mostly in response to the 'Arabic Spring'-revolutions in North Africa and the Middle East (NCTV, NTA 29), but also in countries closer to home, such as Belgium and Germany (NCTV, NTA 30; NCTV, NTA 31). With regard to the latter, the NCTV increasingly reported about violent clashes between extreme right or anti-Islam organizations and Salafist groups. Still, according to the NCTV, these incidents in neighboring countries did not give rise to an increased threat level in the Netherlands (NTA 30, p. 4). The AIVD, on the other hand, did start to express its concerns about the ease with which 'Salafist-jihadist networks' in North Africa and the Middle East were able to contact Muslims in the West (AIVD, AR 2012, p. 26). With these text fragments, the AIVD prompted the passive resecuritization of Salafism in the Netherlands.[13]

[12] *Dawah* here refers to the proselytization of the Quran, which is a central concept in contemporary Islam.
[13] 'Passive', since the reintroduction of Salafism as a security topic was not (yet) made explicit. Rather, it constituted the securitization of an issue following upon its previous desecurization. See also section 4.3.1.

It is worth noting that in these text fragments, Salafism was once again equated to its jihadist variety – an approach that had been explicitly abandoned in the previous years. While in 2007, in reference to Wiktorowicz' three-fold classification of Salafism, jihadists were considered to constitute a *subtype* within the Salafist movement, in 2012 the NCTV suggested that what it considered to be a 'renewed Salafist offensive against Germany' (emphasis added) was a 'manifestation of the jihadist threat' (NTA 31, p. 4) – thus seemingly inversing Wiktorowicz' approach. Surprisingly, the AIVD followed this line of reasoning, speaking of 'Salafist-jihadists' instead of 'jihadist-Salafists' in its 2012 Annual Report (p. 26).

6.4.3 Active Resecuritization of Salafism

In the years that followed, the shift from desecuritization to resecuritization of Salafism became more straightforward. In 2013, the AIVD reemphasized that 'the *dawah*-Salafi currents in Europe and the Islamic world are inherently very anti-democratic and anti-Western' and that even though in recent years 'they have explicitly turned against the cause of international jihad', dawah-Salafists are still 'in favor of a defensive jihad against 'unbelieving' dictators in the Islamic world, against the impending advancement of Shiites, and against Western occupation of Islamic territory' (AIVD, AR 2013, p. 13). Furthermore, the AIVD noted that in the Netherlands, Salafist leaders would experience increasing scrutinization by jihadists, which had induced a 'decline in the resilience of Muslims' against violent jihadism (AIVD, AR 2013, p. 13). This implies that Salafism – here approached as 'victimized' referent object – once again became a security threat through its own vulnerability. It suggests that where ten years earlier, the growth of the Salafist movement itself provided the main underlying reason of the securitization of Salafism, it was now the expansion of a related securitized phenomenon – jihadism – which provided the legitimization of its resecuritization.

In 2014, the AIVD made this change in its threat perception explicit. In *Transformatie van het Jihadisme,* it noted that only four years earlier, the agency 'had still been able to conclude (…) that dawah-Salafism functioned as an 'alternative discourse', which had partially contributed to a decline in the expansion of jihadism' (p. 34). 'However', it added, 'this trend has changed'. The 'strong expansion of jihadism in the Netherlands', as observed by the AIVD, was considered to be the effect of an increasingly intolerant and anti-democratic Salafist discourse; a growing overlap between Salafist and jihadist communities; and Salafists' continuing ambivalence with regard to the legitimacy of jihad in Syria (*Transformatie van het Jihadisme,* 2014). According to the security actors, 'Salafist preachers operating outside of the established (Salafist) Muslim communities' played an equally important role in these developments – which led the Ministry of Justice and Security to stress the 'necessity of countering' these preachers (NTA 31 PL, 2014, p. 2). It ultimately caused the security actors to conclude that Salafism had become 'less of a buffer and more of a jihadist breeding ground again' (AIVD, *Transformatie van het Jihadisme,* 2014, p. 5).

6.4.4 New Generic Claims

This reviving threat perception of Salafism, was in many ways similar to its securitization as observed between 2002 and 2007. Like in previous years, the AIVD distinguished between social and security threats: 'The threat posed by Salafism is twofold: both because of its anti-integrative and anti-democratic and polarizing nature, and because of the [danger of] radicalization into jihadism' (AIVD, AR 2014, p. 14). Regarding its assumed social hazards, emphasis was again on the Salafists' tone of voice being strongly anti-integrative, anti-democratic, intolerantly isolationist and hostile against dissenters, most specifically Shiites (AIVD, AR, 2014, p. 19). Related phenomena, such as the spreading of *dawah* through educational activities and Salafist organizations with 'obscure' financial structures, made a simultaneous comeback to the Dutch security policy agenda. As a security threat, Salafism was once more – and perhaps unsurprisingly – considered a risk factor for radicalization towards (violent) jihadism, predominantly because of the 'strong ideological similarities' between the two ideologies (AIVD, AR 2014, p. 19).

There were, however, also new elements to the actors' claims about Salafism as a security threat. Salafism's reintroduction as a security issue relied heavily upon its assumed relation to the *foreign fighting* phenomenon, as well as the emergence of ISIS' so-called caliphate in Syria and Iraq. With respect to the former, the AIVD considered Salafists' role to be threefold*:* (1) among those who embarked to Syria were many followers of Salafist preachers; (2) those returning from the battle field often sought refuge in the Salafist community, and (3) Salafist preachers were often impeding contact between their followers and the Dutch government, 'generally inhibiting [government] efforts to counter those attempting to travel abroad [to Syria]' (AIVD, AR 2014, p. 19). Regarding the latter, the AIVD noted that 'although Salafists reject ISIS' caliphate, this is [merely] for procedural reasons', as they supposedly disputed ISIS' political and religious authority to proclaim this caliphate. Nonetheless, Salafists would generally consider the battle in Syria and Iraq a legitimate one, and ISIS' 'fierce opposition against Shiites' was equally 'well-understood' by Salafists, according to the AIVD (AR 2014, p. 19).

In light of these developments, the AIVD released another core publication specifically on the topic of Salafism in 2015 (*Salafisme in Nederland*). In this document, the agency stated that the 'nature' of the Salafist movement had not changed since 2009, thus negating the desecuritization that took place between 2008 and 2012. However, according to the report, 'the context has changed, and with it, on the one hand the forms of expression and the "space" that the Salafist spectrum allows itself, and on the other hand the concerns about the Salafist ideology' (p. 14). The AIVD additionally stressed that these concerns did not apply to the jihadist faction alone, since the strand of Salafism that practices 'dawah', might equally resort to 'antidemocratic means' (p. 12).

6.4.5 Minor Discourses: A More Nuanced Approach

During the resecuritization of Salafism, however, there also appeared to be more room for minor discourses, which tried to approach the topic in a more nuanced manner. While the democratic system constituted a main referent object of the publication *Salafisme in Nederland* (2015), the AIVD specifically emphasized that 'most Salafist *do* accept the Dutch democratic legal order' (p. 13) and that 'anti- and undemocratic tendencies should not be viewed *solely or even primarily* as a security problem' (p. 12, emphases added). The document also conveys a large amount of self-reflection. The AIVD seems very well-aware of the negative side-effects that a too strong or repressive discourse might incur, such as further polarization due to '[Salafists'] even further withdrawal from society'. The agency also specifically stressed the neutrality of the government in religious affairs, as well as the 'diverse and dynamic' nature of the Salafist movement, which would make it 'undesirable to label the entire Salafist movement as a problem' (p. 14). The NCTV seemed to follow this course, acknowledging the government's own role in countering polarization, warning for increasing 'us-them dichotomies' within the public debate (NTA 38, p. 4), and highlighting the importance of differentiating between the social and security issues arising from Salafism (NTA 39, p. 4). The NCTV also acknowledged that the government's 'hard approach' to Salafism, in fact strengthens Salafists' discourse and increases the risks of radical countermeasures (NTA 40, p. 5), and that 'the sometimes non-nuanced portrayal of that [Salafist] movement, will have a negative influence on the image of Islam as a whole' (NTA 39, p. 5). As such, the NCTV indirectly emphasized the need for a well-balanced approach in the Salafism debate.

6.4.6 Hypersecuritization

Hypersecuritization of 'Problematic Behavior'

Still, these nuances did not amount to actual desecuritization of the topic. In 2016, the Ministry of Security and Justice, together with the Ministry of Social Affairs, published the policy letter *Concretisering Aanpak Salafisme*, in order to elucidate the Dutch approach to Salafism. The document stressed the danger of Salafist educational facilities in which Salafists supposedly impose their ideas on children. Related threats are 'group-think' and 'social pressure', which would infringe on individual's rights to freedom of expression 'under the guise of an appeal to the freedom of religion'(p. 1). The document contained an equally strong call for action, with references to 'interventions' (p. 11), 'counterbalancing' their activities (p. 5) and 'enforcement' of measures (p. 5), as well as the government's intention to 'disturb, confront, and interact' with individuals who exhibit 'problematic behavior' (p. 5). Most importantly, the document placed emphasis on the need for social emancipation and the creation of resilience among Muslims, as well as the (shared) social responsibility to support those who 'dare to speak up against the problematic behaviors exhibited by Salafists' (p. 5, see also MoJS, NTA PL 41, p. 6).

What constituted these so-called 'problematic behaviors', then, was clarified in a simultaneously released document, called *Normatief Kader Problematisch Gedrag* (2016). This document differentiated between eight types of 'problematic behavior' – ranging from social alienation and isolationism to terrorist acts – which largely resembled the list of threats which the AIVD associated with Salafism in 2007 (see *Radicale Dawa in Verandering*). Both documents relied heavily upon future (risk) scenario's and potential, not-yet-realized dangers – which is indicative of a discourse of hypersecuritization.

Hypersecuritization of 'Instigators' and Gulf-State Funding

In 2016, the Ministry of Justice and Security and the NCTV started to put their focus on one specific manifestation of Salafism, namely the threats supposedly posed by 'hate speeching imams' and radical preachers coming from abroad, often referred to with the term '*aanjagers',* or 'instigators'. In this respect, the Ministry of Justice and Security spoke of 'growing concerns' (NTA 39 PL, p. 2) and even potential 'threats against national security' (NTA 38 PL, p. 2). Accompanying these warnings were securitized demands, such as enhanced visa-procedures, alongside calls to 'keep a close eye' on the activities of and statements made by these 'intolerant' non-Dutch imams (NTA PL 38, p. 5).

In addition to these reports, the AIVD wrote in 2017 that 'a striking development within the Salafist movement in the Netherlands is the increasing extent to which Salafist instigators push aside their ideological differences to jointly achieve their goals in the name of Islam' (AIVD AR, 2017, p. 15). Among the joint 'goals' would then be the monopolization of Islamic education and (mental) health institutions. Remarkable is that the AIVD continued to describe its endeavors to '(…) raise awareness about such activities from a security perspective', even though the activities it refers to are mainly social threats (e.g. 'intolerance, antidemocratic activities and polarization', p. 15). Similarly, the NCTV highlighted that 'from a security perspective, active antidemocratic tendencies are the biggest concern' (NTA 45, 2017, p. 7), even more so than socio-cultural isolationism – which used to take central stage in previous documents. The moderate, nuanced approach to Salafism that security actors plead for some years earlier, seemed to have been abandoned.

To the AIVD, these Salafist 'instigators' were also a key component of the radicalization-threat that was thought to accompany Salafism, since these instigators exhibited an 'ambivalent stance towards (violent) jihadist ideologies' – where this 'ambivalence' was being defined as the fact that they did 'not explicitly distance themselves from [jihadist ideologies]' (AIVD, AR 2018, p. 16). This curious way of framing created a false dichotomy, suggesting that 'if you're not with us, you're against us' – a discourse that, paradoxically, exhibits the polarizing tendencies which Salafists are being accused of.

Finally, in National Threat Assessment 46, the NCTV also applied a discourse of hypersecuritzation, referring to the many potential scenario's that Gulf-State funding of Salafism could invoke: 'intolerance against dissenters, tensions between groups in society and activities that violate Dutch democracy and the rule of law, (…) radicalization towards jihadism, (…) money laundering, fraud or even terrorist

financing' (p. 7). This hypersecuritized discourse is substantiated with strong terms such as 'strenuous position', 'tensed relations', 'tensions', 'difficulties', 'danger' and 'risk' (NCTV, NTA 46, p. 7), and are, in a later issue, accompanied by the Ministry's calls for 'decisive action', 'a joint inventive approach', the deployment of 'measures' such as 'confrontation, law enforcement and (…) countering the elements of Salafism that are harmful to our society' (MoJS, NTA PL 48, p. 2).

Discussion and Conclusion

This thesis aimed at answering the following research question: 'To what extent did Dutch security policy actors (de)securitize Salafism between 2002 and 2018?'. In answering this question 115 documents published by three security actors (AIVD, NCTV and the Ministry of Justice and Security) have been subjected to a discourse analysis. Overall, it has become clear that within the observed timeframe, three dominant security discourses can be distinguished.

First, between 2002 and 2007, Salafism was predominantly perceived as a security issue. Following the theoretical framework of Vuori (2008) and Stritzel (2012), the security actors made use of claims, warnings and – to a lesser degree – demands and propositional content, which legitimized Salafism's place on the security policy agenda. In 2008, however, this trend was reversed, with Salafism increasingly being viewed as a non-threat. This desecuritization occurred through the rearticulation, stabilization, silencing (following Hansen, 2011) and the reinterpretation of the topic. Eventually, it made a comeback as a security issue in 2012, through claims and warnings which were both similar to, and different from, its previous securitization. This resecuritization was mostly passive, but also found frequent active acknowledgement from the security actors. Eventually, between 2016 and 2018, this newfound security discourse even led to the hypersecuritization of three specific manifestations of Salafism – 'problematic behavior' arising from Salafism; (foreign) Salafist preachers; and Gulf-State funding – with these phenomena being linked to various dangerous scenario's that had yet to materialize (following Silomon & Overill, 2012). Regardless, a securitization climax (where actors continuously make demands for increasingly repressive measures) was not observed.

Discursive trends in historical perspective

These observed shifts in the security discourse on Salafism did by no means come about autonomously. As with most security discourses (see Waever, 1993), the security actors' approach to Salafism was largely depending on factors external and internal to the Salafist community in the Netherlands. In the first part of this study, some of the factors that are likely to have had an impact on the Salafism discourse, have been described. Among these are terrorist incidents at home and abroad, shifts in government administrations and political priorities, replacement of Ministers, and changes within in the Dutch Salafist movement itself. However, while some careful statements can be made about the ways in which these factors have influenced the Salafism discourse, it should be noted that connecting these social and political developments to specific discursive changes is very difficult – if not impossible – and this thesis does not aspire to uncover such causal relations.

That is not to say that the discursive trends should be kept entirely isolated from their historical context. As we have seen in the previous sections, the security policy agenda in the Netherlands was at the beginning of this century heavily influenced by the homegrown *Hofstad*-network and the terrorist

threat that emerged from this group. Specifically the attack on Theo van Gogh by Mohammed Bouyeri, a member of this network, in 2004, has probably made a large contribution to the securitization of Salafism in the Netherlands. In the years that followed, however, the respective lack of jihadist activity and terrorist violence in the Netherlands – alongside other developments that took the government's focus away from the matter, such as the 2008 economic crisis and its military involvement in Afghanistan– contributed to Salafism's declined security priority. This changed in 2011, when several terrorist attacks in Europe, the emergence of ISIS in Syria and Iraq, and simultaneous flows of European foreign fighters towards this conflict zone prompted the reintroduction of Salafist as a security topic.

At the same time, political developments within the Dutch political system may equally have influenced the security actors' Salafism discourse. For example, it is possible that the inclusion of two political parties with a religious (albeit Christian) basis, CDA and CU, in the Balkenende IV administration, could have an accelerating effect on the desecuritization of (orthodox) religion in general and Salafism in particular, from 2007 onwards. Similarly, the introduction of the conservative-liberal party of Geert Wilders, known as the PVV, in the Rutte I administration of 2010, may have stimulated the resecuritization of Salafism in the following years – as this party adhered to a strong anti-Islamic agenda. Nonetheless, one should restrain from drawing strong conclusions in this regard, as electoral behavior in itself is once again a reflection of broader public sentiments and social or security developments at an (inter)national level.

Furthermore, it is not only abovementioned external developments that have governed the discourse on Salafism: changes in the Salafist community themselves might have been of similar importance. Throughout time, different aspects of the Salafist movement have been emphasized – ranging from a fear of Salafist administrative takeovers of moderate Islamic mosques, the influences of foreign preachers and 'instigators', Islamic education, Gulf-State funding, and potential ties to terrorist organizations. As can be expected, the actors' emphasis frequently corresponded to specific cases or incidents that had made headlines at the time – such as the activities of controversial Salafist preachers in the Netherlands.

Additionally, from the documents it became apparent that between 2002 and 2007, it was specifically the expanding scope of the Salafist movement that constituted a key factor in its securitization. In other words, the *growth* of the movement seemed to legitimize the fear of its *nature.* Similarly, the period of desecuritization appeared to be governed by the security actors' observation that the Salafist movement was no longer expanding. The AIVD framed this lack of growth as a result of an increase in Muslim resilience and Salafist preachers' more moderate tone of voice. Yet, it is still possible that this causal relation runs differently, with Salafism's lowered security priority leading to a bias in the agency. In addition to this, it is worth mentioning that during its desecuritization from 2008 to 2011, Salafism was no longer considered a *threat* – but it was nonetheless still seen as a social *problem.* Its ideology was still perceived as being anti-Western, anti-integrative and polarizing, but according to the actors, this did not cumulate in a security issue. This observation corresponds to Hansen's (2012) claim that

desecuritization of a security issue, does not necessarily need to result in a simultaneous *depoliticization* of the topic. Ultimately, it gives rise to the belief that the security discourse on Salafism predominantly had been guided by its respective expansion or decline, rather than some fixed characteristics.

Inconsistencies in the Salafism discourse

From these observations, it becomes clear that the Dutch security discourse on Salafism has shown remarkable inconsistencies – both throughout time and among the actors. Not all of these discrepancies can be attributed to the observed changes in security discourse – as sometimes, the actors shift in their understanding of Salafism *within* a specific discourse. However, it is still relevant to provide an outline of the most important contradictions, as they suggest that the security actors' variability runs deeper than mere political opportunism: they indicate that there seems to be a general confusion about what Salafism entails and how its ideology and activities should be understood.

This first becomes apparent in the fact that security actors generally failed to provide a coherent demarcation of Salafism's relations to other Islam interpretations (such as Wahhabism, radicalism, fundamentalism or Islamism). For example, where some documents considered Salafists to be inherently 'radical', other documents suggested that radicalism is the main characteristic which differentiates respectively 'dangerous' Salafists from the 'non-dangerous' ones. And while some security policy documents framed Salafism as being a *part of* the radicalization process, in others, Salafism is understood as a *pre-stage* of this process.

Additionally, between 2002 and 2018, the security actors also frequently adjusted their understanding of Salafism's own subtypes (switching between 'non-violent' Salafism', '(a-)political' or 'puritan' Salafism, and 'dawa-Salafism'). It seems to be specifically unclear how the actors view Salafism's relation to jihadism, as some documents speak of 'jihadi-Salafism', where others refer to 'Salafi-jihadism'. This relationship is even more obscured, with Salafism sometimes being considered a 'buffer' against jihadism, while at other times, it is perceived to be a jihadist 'breeding ground'. Still others approach Salafism as a referent object that needs protection from (recruitment by) jihadist forces, thus placing the 'threat' outside of the Salafist community. This also became apparent in Salafism's desecuritization, where the one hand, desecuritization was based on an increased resilience of the Salafist community against jihadism and extremism (*rearticulation*). On the other hand, however, the AIVD simultaneously emphasized the increased resilience from (orthodox) Muslims against Salafism itself. This once again illustrates how Salafism has been simultaneously an object and a subject of security –which corresponds to the claims made by Bagge Laustsen and Waever (2000) that religion as a security issue can constitute both a *threat* and a *referent object.*

Moreover, the actors are inconsistent in their threat perception of Salafists' activities. For example, it is considered problematic when Salafist preachers are vocal about their ideology, but it is similarly dangerous when they are *not*, since this is generally being interpreted as a form of harmful 'façade

politics' alongside the risk of a waterbed-effect, with radicalization processes shifting 'to the streets' where they can no longer be monitored or controlled. Further, on the one hand, Salafist centers in general became securitized, because of their supposed ties to (terrorist) organizations and Saudi Arabian NGO's, accompanied with a lack of financial transparency. On the other hand, however, Salafist preachers who worked *outside* of these centers were equally considered an issue, de to their supposed engagement in the transferal of intolerant ideas. Similarly, it was considered contentious when Salafists engaged in political affairs – since this constituted 'undesirable influences' – but it was equally problematic when they were *not* politically active, as this would point at Salafists' 'isolationism' or a lack of willingness to participate in society. This paradox mirrors the observations made by Seikh (2018) and Kaya (2010), who respectively argued that the securitization of Islam had resulted in both *politicization* and *depolitization* of Muslims' activities. Ultimately, these contradictions give rise to the belief that *any* type of Salafist behavior could essentially be interpreted as constituting a social or security threat, depending on the political climate at any given time.

Finally, inconsistencies appeared both *among* and *within* security actors' separate discourses. Actors did not shy away from abandoning definitions or distinctions they had previously made. It was specifically the AIVD, being responsible for the largest among of core publications, that often switched approaches. However, although the NCTV usually followed the discursive trend as set out by the NCTV, this was not always the case. For example, during the resecuritization of Salafism from 2012 onwards, the NCTV and the AIVD seemed to differ in their approach to Salafism, as the AIVD highlighted the (national) security-threat perspective, while the NCTV put emphasis on the social aspects of these threats. This was even explicitly mentioned in 2016, when the NCTV actively distanced itself from the strict security approach of the AIVD – a differentiation that matched the more nuanced discourse which the NCTV seemed to adhere to at the time.

Conclusion

This study has shown that between 2002 and 2018, the security discourse on Salafism has varied a lot. But where Buzan, Waever and De Wilde, as founding fathers of securitization theory, would argue that the desecuritization of topics such as Salafism is normatively superior to their securitization (see McDonald, 2011), this thesis refrains from making such claims. In fact, one might insist that it is only reasonable that the extent to which Salafism is considered a security topic (and accordingly, which elements of the movement or its ideology are emphasized) has fluctuated throughout time, in correspondence to social and political developments. Flexibility and the ability to adapt policies to new realities, is arguably an important quality of policy makers that are active in quickly evolving spheres, such as the security sector.

However, as this thesis has shown, the differences in definitions and the inconsistencies in the understanding of Salafism vary to such vast extents, that it leaves the impression that there is a profound lack of knowledge on Salafism as a social phenomenon among Dutch security actors. Regardless of

whether the actors' ambivalence to the topic is truly due to such knowledge gap, or whether it acts as a sophisticated means to enhance policy priorities – it remains highly doubtful that the observed discursive ambivalence contributes to the efficiency of the Dutch security policy. In this light, further academic exploration of Salafism and its nature – either from a social or a security perspective – might contribute to a more profound understanding of this movement and its ideology. As such, scholars could provide the theoretical framework that could lead to the formulation of a consistent and univocal definition of Salafism among security actors. Finally, it would be worthwhile to examine the extent to which the observed inconsistencies are also present in the discourse on related security topics, such as radical Islam and jihadism. Such inquisitions could contribute to more efficient, reliable and evidence-based (security) policymaking, for example in the identification of target-groups and the measurement and evaluation of government policies.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Operationalization of Codes

General Information *(coded per document)*

- Date of the document
- Official document nr.
- Title of the document
- Publicizing actor
- Type of document (*Kamerbrief; Handeling; Kamervragen; Other*)
- General topic of the document
- Total count of Salafism-references

Securitization (*coded per in-text Salafism-reference, if applicable*)

1. **[Claim]** *Description of Salafism as a threat.*
    - **1.1 What general statements are being made about Salafism *as a threat*?**
        - E.g. qualifications, such as 'dangerous', 'unpredictable', 'threat'
        - E.g. quantifications, such as 'growing', 'expansion', 'large'
        - Other
    - **1.2 Does the text make (a) reference(s) to other Salafist or Islamic subtypes?**
        - E.g. 'fundamentalism', 'jihadism', 'extremism', 'political Salafism', etc.
    - **1.3 If so, what is the nature of the reference(s) in relation to Salafism? ***
        - Specification/clarification ('the jihadist variety of Salafism…');
        - Similarity ('Salafism and extremism are both…');
        - Opposition ('Salafism differs from extremism in…');
        - Other

    *(**NB.** If the reference expresses *causality* ('Salafism can result in extremism') it will be coded as a direct threat concept, see 1.4.1)

    - **1.4 What threat concept(s) is Salafism being linked to?**
        - **1.4.1 Salafism as (a) direct threat(s):**
            - Terrorism; foreign fighting; radicalization
            - Polarization; degradation of social cohesion; discrimination against other social groups
            - Undermining of the democratic order/Rule of Law
            - Other
        - **1.4.2 Salafism as an (indirect) manifestation of (an)other securitized issue(s):**
            - Immigration; migration
            - Integration; cultural assimilation
            - Unwanted foreign interference from Gulf States
            - Islamic education
            - Hate speeching imams/preachers
            - Other

2. **[Warning]** *The implication(s) of the supposed threat.*
    - **2.1 What is the referent object at stake, either *implicitly* or *explicitly*?**
        - National security
        - National identity/culture
        - Secularism
        - Other
    - **2.2 What are the (potential) consequences of the threat?***
        - E.g. '*further* polarization', '*more* inequality', '*continuing* social insecurity'

*(**NB 1**. Will most be linked to the direct or indirect threat (in 1.4.1/1.4.2). If a consequence is mentioned that has no relation to a previously mentioned threat, it will be coded as a new direct/indirect threat).

(**NB 2**. If the consequence *explicitly* depends on (in)action (e.g. '*if Salafism is not countered*, polarization will be likely to rise'), then the first part will be coded as an **implicit demand** (see 3.1)).

(NB 3. If the consequence consists of >2 different elements (e.g. '*if Salafism is not countered, X, Y and Z will happen*), they will be coded as **hypersecuritization** (see below)).

3. **[Demand]** *A call for action.*
    - **3.1 Does the text make a call for action?**
        - E.g. implicit action: 'if nothing is being done…'
        - E.g. (explicit) *active* action: 'we need to counter/control/implement/etc.'
        - E.g. (explicit) *passive* action: 'staying aware of', 'remaining vigilant', etc.
        - Other

4. **[Propositional content]** *The provision of additional information.*
    - **4.1 Does the text provide other information to support the claim and/or the warning?**
        - Statistical (e.g. '80% of Salafists…')
        - Non-statistical (e.g. 'research by XY has shown that…')

5. **[Other]** *Other indicators of securitization that have not yet been coded for.*

<u>Desecuritization</u> (*coded per in-text Salafism-reference, if applicable*)

1. **[Stabilization]** *General description of Salafism as a non-threat (due to internal factors).*
    - **1.1 What statements are being made about Salafism as a non-threat (due to changes within the Salafist community)?**
        - E.g. qualifications: 'changing in nature', 'new generation', 'countermovement'
        - E.g. quantifications: 'decreasing', 'smaller', 'downscaling'
        - Other

2. **[Rearticulation]** *General description of Salafism as a non-threat (due to external factors).*
    - **2.1 What statements are being made about Salafism as a non-threat (due to political solutions)?**
        - E.g. 'due to arrestations of core figures', 'due to the closing of an Islamic school/mosque', etc.

3. **[Silencing]** *Passive desecuritization: Salafism is not mentioned in security policy documents*

4. **[Reinterpretation]**
    a. **What new interpretations are introduced that define Salafism as a non-threat? Such as:**
        - As a claim to freedom of speech
        - As a claim to freedom of religion
        - As a (normal) social phenomenon
        - As being threatened/victimized/discriminated against
        - As a legitimate counterreaction to right-wing extremism/populism
        - As being a protective factor against jihadism/extremism
        - Other

5. **[Propositional content]** *The provision of additional information.*
    4.2 Does the text provides other information that supports the stabilization and/or the warning?
        - Statistical (e.g. '80% of Salafists…')
        - Non-statistical (e.g. 'research by XY has shown that…')

6. **[Other]** *Other indicators of desecuritization that have not yet been coded for.*

<u>Resecuritization</u> (*coded per in-text Salafism-reference, if applicable*)

1. [Resecuritization] *A previously desecuritized issue reentering the security realm.*

- **Does the text securitize Salafism where it was previously desecuritized?**
    - Actively (e.g. 'reappearance', 'reemergence' is mentioned in the text)
    - Passively (securitization follows upon desecuritization)

<u>Hypersecuritization</u> (*coded per in-text Salafism-reference, if applicable*)

1. [Hypersecuritization] *Future scenario's consisting of >2 hypothetical consequences.*

- **Does the (potential) consequence of the threat (see Sec. 2.2) consist of 2 or more hypothetical elements?**
    - E.g. . '*if Salafism is not countered, X, Y and Z will happen*

Appendix 2. Coding Scheme

Doc Nr.	Date	Title	Topic	Actor	# of References

Code/indicators		Text element (page nr.)
Securitization		
Claim	1. General statements	
	2a. Subtype reference	
	2b. Subtype relation	
	3. Threat concept	
Warning	4. Referent object	
	5. Consequences	
Demand	6. Call for action	
P. Content	7. Additional Info	
Other	8. Other	
Resecuritization.	1. Resecuritization	

Code/indicators		Text element (page nr.)
Desecuritization		
Stabilization	1. Non-threat internal	
Rearticulation	2. Non-threat external	
Reinterpretation	3. Non-threat discursive	
Silencing	4. Not being mentioned	
P. Content	5. Additional Info	
Other	6. Other	

Code/indicators		Text element (page nr.)
Hypersecuritization		
Hypersecuritization	1. Scenario	
Other	2. Other	

Main Discourse (Conclusion)	Qualification	Corresponding Value

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