



Universiteit  
Leiden  
The Netherlands

## **The Securitization of Terrorism: A comparison between the EU's policy response after the terrorist attack in Madrid and Paris**

Straten, Merel van

### **Citation**

Straten, M. van. (2024). *The Securitization of Terrorism: A comparison between the EU's policy response after the terrorist attack in Madrid and Paris*.

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

License: [License to inclusion and publication of a Bachelor or Master Thesis, 2023](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/4197053>

**Note:** To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

# The securitization of terrorism

*A comparison between the EU's policy response after the terrorist attack in Madrid and Paris*



**Universiteit  
Leiden**  
The Netherlands

Master thesis – Public Administration: International  
and European Governance

June 7, 2024

Merel van Straten, S2215543

Advisor: Dr. B.J. Carroll

## Executive summary

In the past, a lot of research has already focused on all kinds of aspects of terrorism. As it is considered a big threat, people are interested to know how it develops and, more importantly, how to stop terrorist attacks from happening. After the attacks on the twin towers on 9/11, the EU decided to change their approach towards counterterrorism, as global jihadism appeared as a new kind of terrorism, threatening the western values.

A lot of previous research has focused on case reviews. However, this thesis focuses on the comparison between two attacks, the attack in Madrid in 2004 and the attack in Paris in 2015. This thesis discusses the following research question: *'What explains the different policy responses of the EU after the terrorist attacks in Madrid in 2004 and Paris in 2015?'*

As an explanation, this thesis focuses on securitization: the process which frames issues as existential security threats in order to justify extraordinary policy measures. This thesis further tests whether securitization is affected by the increase in internet use over time and the level of institutional trust, and can therefore explain indirectly the different policy responses.

In order to test the hypotheses, this thesis makes use of the data from the Eurobarometer: a survey about public opinion which is conducted every year among European citizens. The research makes use of a quantitative research method based on a most similar systems design.

The results show that no significant effect can be found between internet use and securitization. However, an effect between institutional trust and securitization can be found, which is significant for the group of people who tend not to trust the national institutions.

## Table of contents

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>1. Introduction</b>  | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>2. Literature review</b>   | <b>8</b>  |
| 2.1 Defining terrorism  | 8         |
| 2.2 Securitization theory   | 9         |
| 2.2.1 Influencing securitization: the internet                                  | 10        |
| 2.2.2 Influencing securitization: institutional trust                           | 11        |
| <b>3. Methodology</b>   | <b>13</b> |
| 3.1 Puzzle  | 13        |
| 3.2 Research design   | 13        |
| 3.3 Case selection  | 14        |
| 3.4 Sources   | 15        |
| 3.5 Variables and operationalization  | 15        |
| <b>4. Case 1: Madrid bombings in 2004</b>                                       | <b>17</b> |
| 4.1 The attack  | 17        |
| 4.2 Timing  | 17        |
| 4.3 Level of European integration   | 18        |
| 4.4 EU's policy response  | 18        |
| <b>5. Case 2: Paris attacks in 2015</b>   | <b>20</b> |
| 5.1 The attack  | 20        |
| 5.2 Timing  | 20        |
| 5.3 Level of European integration   | 20        |
| 5.4 EU's policy response  | 21        |
| 5.5 Differences with the response to the Madrid attack                          | 22        |
| <b>6. Results: the influence of internet use on the level of securitization</b> | <b>23</b> |
| 6.1 Level of securitization   | 23        |
| 6.2 Use of internet   | 24        |
| <b>7. Results: political trust</b>  | <b>31</b> |
| 7.1 Levels of institutional trust   | 31        |
| 7.2 Institutional trust and securitization                                      | 32        |
| <b>8. Conclusion</b>  | <b>36</b> |
| <b>9. Discussion</b>  | <b>38</b> |
| 9.1 Shortcomings  | 38        |
| 9.2 Validity and reliability  | 38        |
| 9.3 Recommendations for further research  | 39        |

**10. Bibliography .....40**

## 1. Introduction

The events in New York on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2001 mark a very important point in the history of counterterrorism policy. Not only the US was left shocked after the attacks on the twin towers, but also the European Union (EU) was shaken by these events and became more alert towards terrorist threats. Therefore, 9/11 marks a starting point of a European response towards counterterrorism, even though at the time Europe was not threatened directly (Hassan, 2010, p.446). However, this alertness was not entirely misplaced, as Europe also became the victim of several terrorist attacks on their soil in the two decades following 9/11. Nowadays, the threats within Europe remain acute, which leaves the fight against terrorism high on the European policy agenda (*Terrorism*, n.d.). In order to keep track of the developments of terrorism within the EU, Europol releases a yearly report on the trends and situations on terrorism within Europe. This report emphasizes the importance of fighting terrorism and the priority that it has been for both Europol and the EU (European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation., 2023).

However, this kind of monitoring and cooperation has not always come naturally and research shows that counterterrorism policy has mainly taken a leap forward after periods of crises (Andreeva, 2022; Casale, 2008; Hassan, 2010). Crises are considered to give opportunities for organizational learning and improving crisis management. Organizational learning enables us to learn from past failures and adapt to changes and uncertainty (Antonacopoulou & Sheaffer, 2014). Organizational learning in the context of fighting terrorism is especially important because the nature of terrorism as a crisis has a high degree of uncertainty because of the exogenous threat of terrorist groups (Brummel et al., 2023). The importance of learning and adapting is increased by the fact that these kinds of crises are man-made, and terrorist groups also show organizational learning in finding new ways to reach their goals and make use of new technologies (Kettle & Mumford, 2017).

Organizational learning in the context of terrorism in the EU can be considered to be the possibilities for the EU to learn from earlier crises in order to adapt their policy responses after major attacks. Responses to similar crises can be very different due to circumstances like European integration levels and acceptance of the necessity to act. The latter refers to the ability of politicians to securitize an issue. Securitization refers to the ability of elites to frame an issue as an existential security threat to a referent object that must be protected (Baysal, 2020 p.4). Following securitization, it is easier for member states to reach agreements on the steps that need to be taken and therefore, the EU is able to implement new regulations and policies at a much higher pace than without the emergence of a crisis.

The traditional school of securitization theory focuses mainly on the intentions of politicians to securitize issues. However, scholars found later on that other mechanisms like the use of internet and emotions can work securitizing as well (McDonald, 2008). As these mechanisms may differ over time, so can the levels of securitization be different as well. These difference in levels of securitization may then again bring about different policy responses to similar kinds of crises.

In the last two decades, the European Union has endured a lot of terrorist attacks, and the terrorist threat has been high. First there was the threat of Al Qaeda, which resulted in several attempts and actual attacks between 2003 and 2012. From 2013, this jihadist threat was replaced by IS, which nowadays is still a threat to the EU, although it shows a decrease in Europol's last trend report (European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation., 2023). In order to research the way in which terrorist attacks have been able to enforce European integration and to look at the development of the EU's response

after terrorist attacks, it is helpful to take a closer look at two major attacks in Europe over a long period of time. This gives us the opportunity to compare the EU's responses and the circumstances that might help or oppose European integration after a terrorist attack. These two events can be found in 2004 and in 2015.

The first event took place on March 11, 2004, in Madrid. 10 bombs exploded on four different trains in the center of the city. These attacks caused 191 deaths and more than 1800 injured (*Madrid Train Bombings of 2004 | Description & Facts | Britannica, 2024*). The perpetrators were part of the radicalized Islamic group 'Al Qaeda' (*The 3/11 Madrid Bombings, 2009*). In 2015 the events in Paris took place. On November 13, different attacks and attempts took place. A suicide bomber tried to enter the stadium de France, where 80,000 people were watching a game at the time. In the meantime, a team of gunmen also attacked different popular nightspots in Paris. The deadliest attack took place in concert hall 'Bataclan' where different gunmen occupied the venue (*Paris Attacks of 2015 - Response, Global Condemnation, Solidarity | Britannica, 2024*). The attacks all together caused the death of 130 people, and 368 people were injured. IS claimed responsibility, saying it was a response to the French airstrikes on IS targets in Syria and Iraq (*Terrorism - Europol Review 2015, n.d.*).

For the purpose of this thesis, I will be comparing these two terrorist attacks. Both attacks are considered to be among the deadliest terrorist attacks in Europe (Porter, 2015). European cooperation for counterterrorism known nowadays has its roots in the period following the 9/11 attacks in the US. Because the Madrid events in 2004 mark the first major terrorist attack in Europe after changing their approach to terrorism, the response to this crisis can be used as a starting point for research (*The European Union and the Fight to Counter Terrorism, n.d.*). From this point, the EU has had the chance to learn and adapt to jihadist threats. However, adapting and learning takes time. Comparing the events in Madrid to the events in Paris gives the EU that period of time, as they took place 11 years from each other. The events in Paris can also be considered a major attack, which might make both attacks similar in size and impact. However, the EU's response to both attacks shows differences. This brings us to the following research question: 'What explains the different policy responses of the EU after the terrorist attacks in Madrid in 2004 and Paris in 2015?'

Research in the field of terrorism and counterterrorism policy mostly focuses on one single event (Beydoun, 2016; Jungkunz et al., 2019; Reinares, 2010; Ruiz Estrada & Koutronas, 2016), in which Paris and Madrid are popular subjects to research. Therefore, a lot has been written about these events: about the causes of the attack (Reinares, 2010), the political implications (Moreno, 2005; Vasilopoulos, 2018), the response (Canel, 2012), and the actual timeline. Also, a lot has been written about European integration (Bures & Bätz, 2021; D'Amato & Terlizzi, 2022; Johannesson, n.d.; Schimmelfennig, 2018), for example about why some policy areas are easier to integrate than other policy areas (Genschel & Jachtenfuchs, 2016). Furthermore, policy research has been conducted examining the development of counterterrorism policy within Europe with both a positive (Kaunert & Léonard, 2019) and negative note (Keohane, 2008).

The research conducted for this thesis shall contribute to the existing research by offering a new point of view by conducting comparative research. It offers insights about the effect of securitization within the EU and the possible mechanisms that might enable or disable opportunities for securitization. A better understanding of how securitization is influenced and how it is able to influence the ability to take extraordinary measures in times of crisis can contribute to the development of policy after and in times of crises. It may offer insights about the circumstances under which it might be easier or harder to implement sustainable measures without citizens rejecting it.

In order to answer the research question, I shall conduct an explanatory comparative case analysis based on a most similar systems design. This analysis shall be based on a deductive quantitative research method in which different explanatory variables connected to securitization are explored.

This thesis shall have the following structure. First, I shall discuss the existing literature on both securitization and crises more thoroughly in the literature review. Secondly, I shall discuss the used methods and research design. Thirdly, both cases shall be discussed. Hereafter, I shall turn to the results of the conducted research and the conclusion and discussion.

## 2. Literature review

Responses to crises can be influenced by different types of phenomena. Taking a closer look at these phenomena can help examine the effects that could lead to differences in policy response. This chapter explains more closely what is meant by the used concepts in the research question. Firstly, it defines what is meant by crises and terrorism, and how terrorism is considered a crisis. Secondly, it dives deeper in the theory of securitization, which is used as the main explanatory variable in this thesis. Thirdly, this chapter shall focus on mechanisms which expand the securitization theory that might be relevant for the purpose of this thesis: the influence of internet and institutional trust. As this chapter gives more background info and builds up theory, the hypotheses shall be explained as well.

### 2.1 *Defining terrorism*

In order to be able to define terrorism, we start by looking at what is the actual definition of a crisis? Rosenthal et al. (1989) define a crisis as: ‘a serious threat to the basic structures or the fundamental values or norms of a social system, which, under time pressure and highly uncertain circumstances, necessitates making critical decisions (Brummel et al., 2023; Rosenthal et al., 1989).’ The fundamental norm or value that is being threatened by terrorism in Europe are the Western values (Hassan, 2010). Furthermore, the appearance of a terrorist attack is highly uncertain, as it is unknown when or where a next attack shall take place. If it was easier to predict, the institutions battling terrorism would be able to track the attack earlier and the actual attack would probably not happen. After the attack, there is not only a time limit in the matter of finding the perpetrator and ensuring safety for the citizens who were concerned in the attack, but it also requires a longer policy vision in trying to prevent a next attack and making the population feel safe again. Terrorist attacks can be considered as crises which are man-made and caused by an exogenous threat and have a short time span. Due to their unpredictability, they are very complex for governments (Brummel et al., 2023, p.52). Also, the transboundary character terrorism has, increases the complexity of these crises.

But what defines terrorism itself? The definition of terrorism has changed over time, as the origins of terrorism stem from as early as the aftermath of the French Revolution between 1792 and 1794 (Greene, 2017, p.413). It is important to acknowledge that terrorism is a social construct and therefore is influenced by society and the circumstances it finds itself in (Greene, 2017). Therefore, the definition central to this thesis is also prone to change and might not be as relevant within all scientific fields which may have other purposes.

For the purpose of this thesis, I will be using the EU’s definition of terrorism, as this thesis focuses on two events that happened within the EU and the main object of this thesis is to look at the EU’s response to these events. Therefore, it is important to have knowledge of their understanding of terrorism, as their policy response in the end is based on this definition. EU law uses the following definition of terrorism: “terrorist offenses are acts committed with the aim of: (i) seriously intimidating a population, (ii) unduly compelling a government or international organization to perform or abstain from performing any act, and (iii) seriously destabilizing or destroying the fundamental political, constitutional economic or social structures of a country or an international organization” (*The EU’s Response to Terrorism*, 2024).

This thesis will be focusing in particular on jihadi terrorist plots. From the 1990s up until now, Western Europe has been threatened by jihadist terrorist plots. Between 1994 and 2016, 135 well-documented plots can be distinguished with some kind of Islamic State (IS) link (Nesser et al., 2016, p.4). A narrow

definition of Jihadism is given by Nikki Keddie in 1994, which states that it can be defined as a movement that “calls for holy war against external non-Muslim enemies or practiced jihad against local rulers and enemies whom they considered not truly Muslim” (Sedgwick, 2015, p.36). However, this definition has also experienced some evolution, focusing more on the legitimacy of using violence as an efficient measure to reach their goal. Within this framework, Hegghammer (2006) distinguishes three varieties of Islamic violence: (i) the overthrow of governments, (ii) violence issued by regional separatists, and (iii) global jihadism (Hegghammer, 2006; Sedgwick, 2015). Where the first two elements can also more be found in Keddie’s definition, Hegghammer does add in the third dimension. Although Keddie’s definition sheds some light on the development of the definition, Hegghammer’s definition actually provides a definition that is more applicable to the cases in Madrid and Paris, as these can be considered as part of global jihadism.

This global jihadism could be considered differently from the domestic forms of jihadism. This new form had the aspiration to ‘produce large-scale devastation, possibly through the use of weapons of mass destruction and the exploitation of religious fervour for such criminal intents. Also, new terrorists set up networks which would operate worldwide (Casale, 2008, p.51)’.

With the development of global jihadism, a new threat was born at a scale that was not known before. As the world is also more connected than ever, global jihadism becomes easier, and so is targeting countries who do not share the same values. Before the attacks on the 9/11 in the US, western countries were not really threatened by jihadism. 9/11, and the attacks after, asked for more sustainable measures to fight this new enemy. As Europe became also victim of several attacks, the need for cooperation grew. Therefore, based on these developments, the first hypothesis is as follows: *H1: The European Union was able to take more sustainable measures in 2015 than in 2004.*

## *2.2 Securitization theory*

But how does a growing threat and increase of attacks turn into more cooperation? The theory of securitization is an approach which may provide an answer to this question.

A policy area for counterterrorism does not entirely exist. More, it relates to different policy areas as the battle against terrorism takes on a broad perspective to be efficient. Despite this being the case, researchers often link counterterrorism policy mostly to security issues and policies. Therefore, the conceptual framework of securitization theory is often used in the context of terrorism (McDonald, 2008, p.563).

The securitization theory was first developed in 1998 by a group of scholars under the Copenhagen Peace Research Institute and is well known as the Copenhagen School (Özcan, 2013, p.60). The Copenhagen School developed a framework that states that security threats should not only be approached from a military viewpoint but should be engaged by a larger group of policy areas. The previous understanding of security would not have been sufficient to describe and respond to the security needs (Özcan, 2013, p.61). The Copenhagen School was able to articulate a certain philosophy behind issues of securitization by putting an ethical dimension in the framing of security threats. Rather than assuming something is a security threat, the scholars were also asking: ‘why is something a security threat’, for instance, in order to be able to understand what is needed to resolve such a security threat thereafter (Özcan, 2013, p.61).

The development of the Copenhagen School was followed by the more concrete securitization theory. According to the main scholars in this subject, Buzan and Wæver, whether something is perceived as a security threat depends on the process of securitization. Buzan et al. define this process as: “the intersubjective establishment of an existential threat with a saliency sufficient to have substantial political effects” (Buzan et al., 1998; Hansen, 2011). This means that issues are only security issues if they are constructed as such by ‘securitizing actors’. These actors use speech acts in order to securitize certain issues (Leonard, 2007, p.7). Therefore, the articulation of security is crucial as it is able to structure and steer the following social practices (Stritzel, 2007, p.360).

Securitization within a specific area creates the claim to a specific right to do whatever is necessary to resolve the issue (Stritzel, 2007, p.360; Wæver, 1995, p.55). To be entitled to that certain claim, the actor should therefore frame the security threat as an existential threat to a referent object that must be protected (Baysal, 2020, p.4). This existential threat will create the saliency that can justify the measures that cannot be taken outside a crisis. This is an example of a political effect that Buzan et al. talk about in their definition of securitization.

The necessity of action does not only follow out of the words that are being used in the framing of the issue, but is also tightly linked with the concept of ‘performative utterance’, which describes the utterance of an issue by performing an action (Austin, 1962; Stritzel, 2007). The effect of this concept within the area of security can be found in ‘its potential to let an audience tolerate violations of rules that would otherwise have been obeyed’ (Stritzel, 2007, p.361). This also refers to the importance of the audience’s acceptance of securitized issues. Buzan et al. (1998) stress that an issue has only been securitized once the audience accepts it as such.

Securitization theory is a very useful theory in the field of security policy. As mentioned earlier, counterterrorism has a lot of common ground with security policy. Therefore, this theory may help explain differences in policy responses to different terrorist crises. Combining the securitization theory with the chosen cases and research object, I propose the following hypothesis: *H2: After the Paris attacks, terrorism was more securitized than after the Madrid attacks.*

However, securitization theory is not without flaws. Over the years, different critiques have been outed by scholars. An important line of critique is that securitization theory focuses too narrowly on just speech acts and the use of certain words. After the development of the Copenhagen School, scholars therefore started to research whether other mechanisms could also work securitizing, even though they don’t intend to be in securitizing in the way speech acts try to be. For instance, scholars started looking at the impact of mass media and the internet, as a way that not only words could influence citizens’ opinion, but images as well (McDonald, 2008). Furthermore, Van Rythoven (2015) dived deeper in the effect of emotions in threat construction. This followed out of the line of critique that securitization showed a lack of coherence about the influence of emotion. For the development of the remaining hypotheses, this thesis shall be focusing on the influence of internet on securitization, as well as the influence of trust on securitization.

### *2.2.1 Influencing securitization: the internet*

As explained above, speech acts were originally considered the main determinant of securitization. However, other processes or mechanisms can be securitizing as well. For instance, different authors have suggested the meaning of visual representations may work securitizing (McDonald, 2008; Möller, 2007; Williams, 2003). Furthermore, McDonald (2008) goes even further by suggesting that the

development of the securitization actually relies too heavily on intent of political actors. Securitizing actors can also be, for instance, the mass media. McDonald stresses that the fact that some mechanisms, besides just speech acts, may work securitizing, even though this does not mean that the intent behind these mechanisms is to justify certain governmental measures.

Following this line of critique, scholars have sought to expand the applicability of securitization theory. Looking further into the securitizing effect that images may have, one might be looking at the influence of the internet. Dolinec (n.d.) researched the effect that mass media have on the securitization of issues. Mass media are able to reach a large group of people in an easy and understandable way, which makes securitization easier and speeds up the process (Dolinec, n.d., p.13). Not only are the mass media considered as mediators in spreading speech acts of securitization, but also, they could be considered a securitizing actor. Dolinec (n.d.) explains that the mass media has the tendency to focus on more negative stories, as it attracts more audience. As negative stories may lead to larger threatening feeling, it increases the existential threat, leading to more securitization. Furthermore, two main functions of the mass media also speak for their securitizing role. Firstly, the informative function which makes them a mediator between both the government and the public (Siljanovska, 2014). This enables the government to spread the speech acts of politicians and to inform the public about the events that have led to the need for political action. Secondly, the agenda setting function, to be able to articulate the preferences of the public into political priorities. This may contribute to the acceptance by the public, as they are not only accepting extraordinary measures but also demanding them (Mccombs & Shaw, 2017).

During the last twenty years, the influence of media has highly increased. Nowadays, we do not just make use of traditional kinds of media like newspapers or the news, but with the development of the internet we gain access to the mass media more easily. This again may increase the influence the mass media has on our opinions. Politicians also make their way to these platforms, making use of X (formerly known as Twitter) and even Instagram or TikTok. Therefore, we might assume that it has gotten even easier to access the public and influence them, making securitization of issues again easier for securitizing actors. As increasing importance of mass media and social media could take place because of the growing importance and growing use of the internet, one could expect that the increasing possibilities for securitization mainly took place through the development of the internet. When comparing the crises in Madrid and Paris, this phenomenon could have affected the outcomes differently, as internet access played a far different role in 2004 than it did in 2015. As the internet usage has increased, we have also become to rely more on the internet, making it a source on which we rely on when forming opinions and gathering knowledge. Therefore, I propose the following hypothesis: *H3: The usage of internet has an effect on the levels of securitization which is stronger in 2015 than in 2004.* I not only expect to find an effect, but also a stronger effect in 2015 than in 2004, as I expect that not only the usage of the internet has grown, but also the impact that the internet has on our daily lives.

### *2.2.2 Influencing securitization: institutional trust*

When talking about terrorism, one should also take in mind that the importance of countering terrorism is determined by the fear people feel for possible future attacks. Even though terrorism poses a small risk for people, the level of public fear is high (Van Der Does et al., 2021). Van der Does et al. (2021) researched the relation between citizens' fear of terrorism and governmental trust. The results show a negative association between governmental trust and fear of terrorism, which means that an increase in governmental trust could bring about a decrease of fear and a less emotion-based risk perception. Van Rythoven (2021) discusses that on one hand, fear could undermine securitizing attempts from

politicians. On the other hand, we can see politicians who use fear as a means to securitize issues or for political gain (Ilbiz & Kaunert, 2023).

So, one could argue that fear and governmental trust are closely linked. The difference in a more emotional-based thinking and more rational-based thinking could then again be linked to the level of acceptance of securitization by the public. More emotional based thinking combined with a low level of governmental trust might decrease the level of acceptance, while rational-based thinking combined with a high level of governmental trust could increase the level of acceptance.

As securitization relies heavily on this acceptance by the public and the ability of politicians to convince the public, one could expect that the levels of institutional trust should affect the level of securitization. This makes trust in institutions a relevant determinant of securitization. Stivas & Cole (2023) have attempted to test this theory by researching the securitization of the Covid-19 pandemic in an environment of low political trust. However, their results showed a paradox. Even though Hong Kong seemed successful in securitizing the Covid pandemic, the trust and satisfaction in the governmental institutions was low at that time. They expected to find that low levels of trust and satisfaction would result in the failure of securitizing the topic. But the results showed the opposite. Therefore, they called it a paradox.

As the results from the Hong Kong study were inconclusive, it is relevant to test this hypothesis in a more common application context for securitization theory. As Stivas & Cole (2023) discussed themselves, securitization theory is not often used in the context of Covid-19. In the context of terrorism, where securitization is used quite often, the results of testing a relation between institutional trust and securitization would maybe be able to show conclusive results. This brings me to the following hypothesis: *H4: More institutional trust leads to a lower degree of securitization.*

The data from different issues of the Eurobarometer show that over the past decade, the EU has lost the trust of a lot of their citizens (Brosius et al., 2019). Also, the expansion of the EU to new policy areas and the enlargement of the EU has left more citizens critical towards the EU. This has also resulted in the rise of more Eurosceptic parties all over Europe (Harteveld et al., 2013). These developments give reason to believe that the governmental trust was higher during the attacks in Madrid than during the attacks in Paris. This leads to the following hypothesis: *H5: Institutional trust in 2015 was lower than in 2004.* Combining both the theories and the information on governmental trust, one could distinguish one last hypothesis: *H6: The high level of securitization in 2015 is an effect of the lack of institutional trust.*

### 3. Methodology

This chapter shall be focusing on the methods that have been chosen to conduct this research and to provide an answer to the research question. This chapter focuses firstly on the puzzle of this thesis. Secondly it discusses the research design, where after it will dive deeper into the justification of the case selection and the choice of sources. This chapter shall end with discussing the chosen variables and the operationalization.

#### *3.1 Puzzle*

Even though the terrorist attacks in Madrid in 2004 and in Paris in 2015 show a lot of similarities, for instance: both were jihadist attacks, which had a major impact on the EU and were followed by a wave of terrorism in Europe, the EU still had to both crises a different response. These differences mainly appear in the decisiveness and bindingness of the measures that were taken, which has consequences on the sustainability of the measures. Another major difference was the link between terrorism and migration, which was not present in 2004, but in 2015 it was a topic of discussion.

Comparing these crises can shed light on how the EU has been able to advance their response to fighting terrorism. This is especially interesting to examine because the EU entirely changed their view towards counterterrorism policy after the 9/11 attacks. Due to an increase of the terrorist threat as a result of jihadist groups targeting Western countries, the definition of terrorism changed entirely, which called for a different approach (Europol, 2004). Alongside this development, society has changed a lot as well over the years, due to for example the uprising and growing impact of the internet. New kind of development or large changes may bring about different opinions and reactions towards crises like terrorist attacks. But how can the EU use these changes in their advance? How does a changed society develop different levels of securitization, and how can these levels of securitization enable certain policy outcomes?

#### *3.2 Research design*

This thesis aims to dive deeper into the circumstances under which European integration is possible after a terrorist attack. Which circumstances help the implementation of policy responses after terrorist crises, and which opposes them. This thesis builds upon the theory of securitization. This theory states that high levels of securitization enable the government to take extraordinary actions towards an existential threat because citizens feel that the extraordinary situations call for extraordinary measures. Outside this situation, citizens would not have approved these kinds of measures so easily. This thesis builds upon the idea that after a crisis, like a terrorist attack, the EU may create a situation in which securitization among citizens is high, which creates the momentum for European integration (Stritzel, 2007). In order to find an answer to the research question, a comparative case analysis shall be conducted in which two major attacks within the EU shall be compared to each other.

The design of this research is deductive. Based on the theories discussed in the literature review, I will be testing what explains differences in crisis responses and the degree of organizational learning within the EU. The main focus is to explore the mechanisms under which securitization is possible, in order to find mechanisms that may have caused different policy responses in 2004 and 2015. Therefore, the aim is to test existing theories and illustrate their functioning within a counterterrorism framework. The research that is conducted for this thesis is based on a most similar systems design. This design is used for comparative research where the cases show great similarities, but the outcomes of the relevant variable differ (Toshkov, 2016, p.263).

### 3.3 Case selection

As shown earlier, the cases that were chosen are the events in Madrid in 2004 and in Paris in 2015. These cases were relevant to choose because of several reasons. Firstly, in order to research the degree of European integration of counterterrorism policy, I was looking for events with a certain time gap between them. Policy changes take time, so if I were to choose events that took place only one year apart, there would be a big chance that there would not be very much difference between the EU responses, as it did not have time to implement new regulations and policies. In the 11 years of time between the Madrid attacks and the Paris attacks, the EU should have been able to adjust their response to terrorist attacks and learn from prior mistakes. Therefore, the outcomes should show some differences as an effect of organizational learning and evolving European integration.

Secondly, this choice of cases is useful because both events show similarities in their impact and size. Both attacks are considered to be among the largest attacks in the EU during the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In both events, a lot of people were killed and injured, due to an attack that did not just take place in one spot somewhere in the city, but several places were targeted around the same time. The impact of both events was huge on the EU, as the attacks in Madrid are 20 years after the events still remembered every year, and their remembrance is still covered by European media ('Madrid's Wounds after the March 11, 2004 Attacks Are Still Open, 20 Years On', 2024). After the Paris events the EU also declared November 13<sup>th</sup> 2015 as a day of mourning, and a minute of silence was organized in memory of the victims (*Statement of the EU Heads and EU Institutions on Attacks in Paris*, n.d.). Both events were considered to be an attack and a threat to the entire EU, and the support to the affected country was great from both the EU and the member states separately.

Thirdly, the perpetrators of both attacks were part of a jihadist group. Al Qaeda claimed responsibility for the attacks in Madrid and IS was responsible for the Paris attacks. Al Qaeda seems to be the vanguard of global jihadism and has spread terrorist threats over the Western world in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Wright, 2017, p.5). However, since the death of their leader Osama bin Laden and the rise of IS, their impact in Europe has decreased (Wright, 2017, p.6). In 2014, the impact of IS started to grow, resulting in many jihadists, which posed a serious terrorist threat to the EU. This again resulted in different terrorist attacks, like the Paris attack in 2015. Nowadays, IS poses a complementary threat with Al Qaeda on the safety and security of Europe. Even though both groups have adapted different strategies towards their goals, their core ideology varies only a little, as IS started as a demerger from Al Qaeda (*ISIS vs. Al Qaeda*, n.d.). Furthermore, both attacks did not stand alone, but were part of a wave of events following a continuing terrorist threat during these times. The Madrid attack followed relatively soon after 9/11 and was followed by an attack in London a year later (Europol, 2004). The Paris attacks were accompanied by attacks in France, Belgium, Germany and the UK as well ('Who Was behind the Jihadist Attacks on Europe and North America?', 2017). Therefore, the security threats around the attacks in 2004 and 2015 are very similar.

Two of the main differences between the response to both attacks were that, firstly, the measures that were taken by the EU were much more focused on sustainable cooperation and sustainable measures in 2015 than in 2004. Which could have been influenced by the fact that the EU had more means to take more binding decisions. In 2004, the response was mainly stopped at the level of agreeing upon common goals, while in 2016 the EU proposed actual directives in order to fight terrorism. Secondly, a large difference was the fact that fighting terrorism became highly linked to the ongoing migration crisis in 2015.

### *3.4 Sources*

For the empirical part of this thesis, the data from the Eurobarometer is used. This is a survey among citizens in the EU measuring the public opinion about European issues which is conducted yearly (*Eurobarometer – Public Opinion in the European Union*, n.d.). A part of the questions is the same every year, so the data from these surveys is very useful when comparing different years to each other or to examine certain trends. There are also surveys available around the times both attacks took place, which makes the Eurobarometer very useful for this thesis as well. For this thesis, the Eurobarometers from 2005 and 2016 will be used, as these are the closest ones to the date on which the attacks took place.

### *3.5 Variables and operationalization*

As a most similar systems design prescribes, the research is based on cases that differ on a relevant aspect that the research searches to explain (Toshkov, 2016, p.263). The differing factor for these cases is the EU's policy response. The explanation for this difference is sought in the level of securitization. The research examines the circumstances that correlate with differing levels of securitization. Therefore, the level of securitization is the dependent variable in this research.

As the literature review showed, the ability to adapt new policies after a crisis is highly influenced by the level of securitization. As securitization levels differ, one would expect that the policy outcomes may be different as well. An issue is securitized if the public accepts it as such (Buzan et al., 1998). Therefore, this thesis shall be focusing on the degree of securitization by looking at public opinion. In order to measure this concept, it is operationalized by making use of a question from the Eurobarometer 2005 and 2016. This question asks whether the respondent considers terrorism an important issue for the EU or not. The data shows whether the respondent mentioned it or did not mention it. The more respondents mention terrorism as an important issue, the higher the issue is considered to be securitized. This operationalization does not fully align with the conceptualization of securitization, which is defined more by a process of framing an issue in such a way that the public accepts extraordinary measures to resolve the issue. This operationalization focuses more on the result of the securitization process, which is the acceptance of the existential threat by the public. Prioritizing terrorism as an important issue for the EU can be a determinant of acceptance as an existential threat. Prioritizing a certain issue may also imply that the citizens expect the EU to do whatever it takes to resolve the issue as much as possible, at a quick pace. Therefore, even though this variable does not fully measure securitization as such, it does measure important parts of securitization, which may justify the use of this variable as an operationalization of securitization.

The first explanatory variable is the use of internet. This variable is also operationalized based on the Eurobarometer. The respondents got the question to comment on whether they own an internet connection at home and a computer, smartphone, and laptop. I shall conduct a quantitative statistical analysis where I shall be testing whether there is a correlation between the use of internet and internet devices and whether the respondent considers terrorism a priority for the EU.

The second explanatory variable is institutional trust. As the trust in European institutions is linked to the trust in national governments and politics, I used the data stemming from the questions regarding having trust in political parties, the national government and European institutions. All these variables will be used for the descriptive part of the analysis, for the correlational part of the analysis I shall focus

on the trust in European institutions alone because the main focus of this thesis is the response of European institutions. The outcomes shall then explain whether a correlation is found between trust in European institutions and the degree in which terrorism is securitized among European citizens.

## 4. Case 1: Madrid bombings in 2004

Since the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, Europe was already made aware of a certain terrorist threat, as it considered the attacks on 9/11 not just an attack on the US, but also a direct threat to Europe. Therefore, this marks an important point in time where the EU wanted to drastically change their viewpoint on counterterrorism policy and wished more cooperation between member states in their fight against terrorism (Hassan, 2010, p.451). This threat was then followed by the attacks in Madrid in 2004, which were perceived as a declaration of war on democracy, which implied a direct threat towards western values (Hassan, 2010, p.456).

Before turning to the results from the data analysis, chapter 4 and 5 shall discuss the chosen cases. In order to discuss the similarities and, more importantly, the differences between both attacks, more background information about the attacks is needed. It shall also discuss the first hypothesis: *The European Union was able to take more sustainable measures in 2015 than in 2004*. This chapter shall discuss the attack in Madrid and provide an answer to a part of the first hypothesis. Firstly, it describes the attack itself, where after the developments and environment in which these events took place shall be considered. Furthermore, it focuses closely on the EU policy responses in the aftermath of the crises, both immediately afterwards and the long-term developments of the different policy proposals.

### *4.1 The attack*

On March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2004, between 07:39 and 07:42, ten different bombs went off in four different trains in Madrid. 191 people were killed and around 1800 people were injured. These bombings have come to be known as the deadliest terrorist attack in Europe in modern times (Turégano-Fuentes et al., 2008).

As the attack took place only three days before the national elections, the attack had major social and political consequences in Spain. In the research that was conducted after the attacks, there is little doubt that the attacks changed the outcomes of the elections. Before the attacks, it was expected that the populist party would retain their majority in Spain. According to scholars, the attack presumably caused a higher turn-out which resulted in the victory of the Socialist party (Reinares, 2010, p.86). After the election, Spain was left divided about who was responsible for the attack. Immediately after the attack, the Basque separatist group ‘Euskadi Ta Askatasuna’ (ETA) was held responsible, but this turned as different sources pointed towards the responsibility of jihadist group ‘Al Qaeda’. The evidence included a videocassette on which a man claimed responsibility on behalf of the group (Dannenbaum, 2011).

### *4.2 Timing*

As explained earlier, the Madrid bombings were the first jihadist terrorist attack on European soil after 9/11. However, it did not stand by itself. Reinares (2010) describes that the perpetrators of the Madrid bombings were part of a terrorist network which had planned several other attacks. Furthermore, the videocassette that was found consisted of a threat against Spain, stating that if it weren't to stop their actions in Iraq and Afghanistan, more attacks would follow. At the time of the attack, already several other networks all over Europe were discovered, pointing towards a very active Al Qaeda within Europe. This again resulted in the credibility of the threat (Dannenbaum, 2011).

Relatively short after the Madrid events, Europe was left shocked again after an attack in London. On July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2005, four bombs exploded in London's public transport. Three of the bombs were placed on the London Underground and the last one on a bus. These events left 52 people killed and 770 injured

(*London Bombings of 2005*, n.d.). In September 2004, Al Qaeda also claimed responsibility for these bombings (*London Bombings of 2005 | History, Facts, & Map | Britannica*, 2024).

Because both attacks are relatively close in time to each other, they are often called in one sentence. Therefore, it is important to also mention this attack, as EU policy responses do not just respond to the events in Madrid, but also to the London events. Therefore, both 9/11, the Madrid bombings and the London events should be considered linked together as they were all part of the first wave of jihadi terrorist attacks in Europe which were accompanied by a growing terrorist threat within the EU (Europol, 2004). Europol stated in their annual trend report that the threat from Al Qaeda posed the main security concern for the EU, not only because Europe had been targeted by the group, but also because a lot of recruitment for Al Qaeda was happening within the EU.

#### *4.3 Level of European integration*

Before turning to the EU's response to the crisis, it is important to look at the state of European integration of counterterrorism policies at the time. At the time, policies were still developed under the system of the Maastricht treaty. This treaty had divided the European policy areas within three pillars, which designed a framework of the EU's authorities for that specific policy area. Counterterrorism policy could be placed in both pillar two and three. The second pillar consisted of a common foreign and security policy, which was based on intergovernmental cooperation. The EU considered it a duty to maintain and enlarge the safety and security within the Union in a broad sense. The third pillar consisted of cooperation within justice and home affairs. Where the second pillar consisted of common policies, the third pillar only encouraged cooperation without establishing a common EU policy. Among the subjects that were included in the third pillar was the fight against terrorism and crime (*De Verdragen van Maastricht en van Amsterdam | Infopagina's over de Europese Unie | Europees Parlement*, 2023). Therefore, the EU did not really have the authority or a base upon which they could establish a common counterterrorism policy.

When the treaty of Amsterdam entered into force in 1997, some third pillar policy areas became European affairs, following the common decision-making method. Among these were migration, fighting fraud and justice cooperation (*De Verdragen van Maastricht en van Amsterdam | Infopagina's over de Europese Unie | Europees Parlement*, 2023). Even though counterterrorism policy influences all of these policy areas, fighting terrorism remained within the third pillar. However, together with the Treaty of Nice, which entered into force in 2003, the EU did establish a more deep cooperation among the third pillar policy areas (*Het Verdrag van Nice en de Conventie over de toekomst van Europa | Infopagina's over de Europese Unie | Europees Parlement*, 2023).

#### *4.4 EU's policy response*

After 9/11 and the Madrid attacks, Europe was first encountered with jihadist terrorism. Before these encounters, terrorist threats were mainly limited to internal historical conflict, while Islamic violence was linked to the Middle East (Friesen, 2007). However, this new threat demanded a united response from the EU. Even though the EU already proposed counterterrorism measures after 9/11, it wasn't until the first attack on European soil before the EU realized that these measures lacked implementation. Therefore, the main objective after the Madrid attack was to strengthen the measures that were adopted after September 2001 (Thieux, 2004, p.59).

On March 25, 2004, the EU established the 'declaration on combating terrorism', which consisted of new agreements and reestablishments of former agreements in their fight against terrorism. Firstly, the EU agreed upon the deadline of June 2004 for the implementation of legislative measures based upon the framework decisions made after 9/11. Furthermore, the decision focused on several aspects of counterterrorism: (i) strengthening border controls and document security, (ii) developing EU guidelines for a common approach to combating terrorism, (iii) developing a revised EU plan of action to combat terrorism, (iv) sharing of intelligence, (v) preventing the financing of terrorism, (vi) measures to protect transport and population, and (vii) international cooperation (The European Council, 2004).

As planned, in June 2004, a new action plan was adopted which consisted of a series of measures. This action plan was actually a substantiation of the declaration with more open actions, for instance, to protect Europe, maximize the capacity for counterterrorism address the factors that support the recruitment of terrorists (Casale, 2008). It was not until the aftermath of the London bombing in 2005 that member states decided on the implementation of certain measures that were already adopted as a matter of urgency. These measures consisted among others of the European Arrest Warrant, the strengthening of Schengen and greater controls on trade, transportation and passports (Casale, 2008).

In December 2005, the EU approved another change in measures with a new EU Counter-Terrorism Strategy. The main targets were to protect, prevent, pursue and respond (Council of European Union, 2005). By adopting all these different declarations and measures, the EU showed the importance of establishing policy in order to fight terrorism, however, Thieux (2004) describes that the EU's response was only partial, reactive and with a short-term view. Even though the measures have strengthened the capacities of European institutions like Europol and Eurojust, the actual implemented measures focused too much on the judicial and police authority than on a strategic security and defense policy (Casale, 2008; Thieux, 2004).

As discussed before, the level of European integration was low for security and defense policy as it was part of the third pillar, so the EU lacked a common policy. So, as only cooperation could take place this could explain why the set of measures and documents remained on the level of setting targets and establishing a common vision to fight terrorism, rather than taking concrete common steps towards a more sustainable response. Furthermore, the measures show that every time a new document is established, the member states re-establish their goals and why it is important to prioritize counterterrorism policy. Therefore, these first results show signs towards accepting the hypothesis. The EU policy response in 2004 was indeed mainly focused on short term visions and less binding declarations and action plans. After discussing the attack in Paris, I will have a more complete view of whether to accept or reject the hypothesis.

## 5. Case 2: Paris attacks in 2015

In 2014 and 2015, there was a big increase in jihadist attacks in the EU. Although the attacks itself experienced an increase, the threat itself had already been identified by Europol, as they already discussed it in their 2011 annual trend report (Andreeva, 2020; *TE-SAT 2011*, n.d.). From that year on, Europol kept consistently reporting that the jihadist threat was increasing and that IS had the capacity to organize attacks in Europe. However, the EU member states remained without action (Andreeva, 2020). This changed after Europe was again shocked by actual terrorist attacks in 2014, 2015 and 2016. The events in Paris on November 13<sup>th</sup> were a low point in this wave of attacks, as it was marked as the most severe terrorist attack since the attacks in Madrid in 2004 (Bartholomew, 2016). This chapter shall take a closer look at the events of that evening, the timing of the event and the European response after the attacks.

### 5.1 *The attack*

On and around 9:20 PM on November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2015, both the stadium and several nightspots were attacked. In the stadium, three persons were discovered wearing bomb belts when trying to enter the stadium. All three detonated their belts when they were not able to get into the stadium. These attackers did manage to kill one person and left 10 persons seriously injured (Mouhanna, 2021).

Twenty minutes later, three other men attacked concert hall ‘Bataclan’, where at the time a band was playing. The attackers started to fire on the audience and occupied the concert hall for more than two hours. When French security forces stormed the venue, two of the three men detonated their suicide belts and the third exploded spontaneously when being hit by the police. The attack in Bataclan was the deadliest of that night, killing 89 people and left more injured (*Paris Attacks of 2015 | Timeline, Events, & Aftermath | Britannica*, n.d.). At another place in Paris, another group of three men attacked terraces of three different restaurants. They fired assault rifles, which killed 39 people. These men were also wearing bomb belts, which one of them detonated. The other two escaped (Mouhanna, 2021).

As a response to the attacks, the French president declared a state of emergency and three days of national mourning. The day after the attack, IS claimed responsibility for the attacks (‘What You Need to Know about Paris Attacks and the Situation in France’, 2022). Not only France, but all Europe was left shocked after these events, and lots of other countries expressed their sympathy (*Reactions to the Paris Attacks in the EU*, n.d.).

### 5.2 *Timing*

As was the case with the Madrid events, so did the Paris attack not stand alone. As briefly discussed in the introduction of this chapter, in the period between 2014 and 2016, Europe was shaken by an increase of jihadist terrorist attacks. In the beginning of 2015, Paris had already been the victim of a terrorist attack, which targeted the French satiric magazine ‘Charlie Hebdo’. In 2016, two other mass casualty attacks took place in Brussels (March 2016) and Nice (July 2016), both of which were also claimed by IS (Nesser et al., 2016, p.3).

### 5.3 *Level of European integration*

In the eleven years that had passed between the events in Madrid and Paris, the level of European integration has changed as well. The most important development was the establishment of the Lisbon

treaty in 2007, which was implemented in 2009 (*Het Verdrag van Lissabon | Infopagina's over de Europese Unie | Europees Parlement, 2023*). This treaty amended the treaty that established the EU.

Under the Lisbon treaty, the three pillars disappeared as the third pillar was absorbed into the first pillar. The result was that the former intergovernmental structure disappeared and the policy areas of security and justice, police and judicial cooperation were incorporated into the ordinary legislative procedure. This made it possible for the EU to use legal instruments like regulations, directives and decisions (*The Treaty of Lisbon | Fact Sheets on the European Union | European Parliament, 2023*). As counterterrorism policy is closely connected to the policy areas that were transferred into the EU's jurisdiction, this could have implications for the ability to take new measures regarding counterterrorism as well. So where in 2004 the EU had fewer possibilities to take strict measures, this possibility has changed due to the implementation of the Lisbon treaty.

#### *5.4 EU's policy response*

But did the EU also make use of this newly established opportunity in taking new measures after the Paris attacks? The wave of attacks in and around 2015 showed that, according to the EU, the EU has lacked to take the necessary security measures that were needed to maintain a high level of freedom within the EU (*Five Lessons Learned from the Terror Attacks in France, n.d.*). Therefore, the main focus after the attacks was to strengthen the control on who enters and leaves the EU. However, it remained hard to find cooperation because of mistrust between member states, which led to gaps in the security policy, of which terrorists could take advantage of. This struggle shows a search for balance between on one hand ensuring freedom of movement within the EU without too many obstacles, while on the other the EU also needs to take security measures in order to fight terrorism (*Five Lessons Learned from the Terror Attacks in France, n.d.*).

The first response of the EU was to improve and strengthen the use of available tools and call for better coordination among the institutions involved in counter-terrorism policy. The EU needed Europol and Eurojust to work together more closely, but also to make use of the EU internet referral unit, the European Counter Terrorism Centre and to work more closely with Frontex (Bigo et al., n.d.). By enhancing this cooperation, the EU focused on both the strengthening of information sharing between member states and to strengthen the external borders of the EU so it becomes harder for terrorists to enter the EU.

An important thing that influenced the response of the EU towards the Paris attacks was that there was made a link between terrorism and migration, asylum and borders in the EU (Bigo et al., n.d.). Therefore, it makes sense that a lot of the measures that were taken were directed towards a better controlling the borders and the inflow of migrants and asylum seekers.

Looking at concrete actions that the EU has taken, their main focus was to strengthen cooperation in general. As showed, different European institutions started working together more closely. However, the EU also wanted to improve operational cooperation of cross-border police by promoting Joint Investigation Teams. Furthermore, the European Commission (EC) proposed a revision of the Firearms Directive to control the acquisition and possession of firearms. Also, the EC proposed a revision of the Framework decision on combating terrorism, by means of establishing a new directive harmonizing the criminalization of offences linked to terrorist travel (Bigo et al., n.d.).

### *5.5 Differences with the response to the Madrid attack*

As predicted by the different levels of European integration, the response to the Paris attacks made use of more binding legislation, as the EU proposed more directives. Also, the aim was more at harmonizing a common response by the EU as a whole. This needed better and more cooperation. However, this was an aim that was already established in 2004, as this new terrorist threat needed to be fought together instead of individually. This would have needed cooperation then. This shows that the persistence to cooperate and to trust each has not been solved in the 11 years time between both attacks.

By using directives, which are more permanent than the declarations which were agreed upon in 2004, the EU has been able to take more sustainable measures in fighting terrorism. There is much more control for whether a member state lives up to the agreements put down in the directive than the agreements that were made in a declaration. Looking at these differences, these chapters may lead to the conclusion that the first hypothesis can be accepted. By making use of more permanent measures, which were possible under the new treaty, the EU shows indeed a more sustainable policy response after the terrorist attack in Paris than it did after the attack in Madrid.

What also has been new is the link between terrorism and migration in 2015, which could be influenced by the migration crisis that was going on in Europe as well at the time. Bigo et al. (n.d.) also discusses the impact that the populist parties could have had on framing migration as the cause of terrorist attacks and the role that social media has had in spreading this opinion. As a similar crisis was not happening in 2004, this could have impacted the actual response of the EU as well. Furthermore, this statement is interesting in the light of the other results, as they will be looking at whether the level of securitization of terrorism was influenced by the level of trust the people had in institutions and the use of internet.

## 6. Results: the influence of internet use on the level of securitization

As the literature review in chapter 2 already set out, the degree of securitization can be highly influenced by the mass media and the usage of internet. This chapter shall discuss the results from the empirical tests between internet use and the level of securitization. Firstly, this chapter focuses on hypothesis 2: *After the Paris attacks, terrorism was more securitized than after the Madrid attacks*, by looking at the distribution of the independent variable. Secondly, it shall discuss the development of internet use in the EU and the correlation between internet use and the level of securitization. Hereafter I shall conclude whether to accept or reject hypothesis 3: *The usage of internet in 2015 has an effect on the levels of securitization which is stronger in 2015 than in 2004*.

The empirical tests have been done by making use of the data from the Eurobarometer from Spring 2005 and Spring 2016, which both are the questionnaires taken most directly after the events in Madrid and Paris took place. This chapter shall put forward the results from the empirical tests.

### 6.1 Level of securitization

In order to test what may have influenced the different levels of securitization in 2005 and 2016, it is important to test whether the levels of securitization were actually different in both years. As the literature review showed, securitization is considered to have taken place once the public accepts it as such (Buzan et al., 1998). Making use of the data from the Eurobarometer, securitization is operationalized as the amount of people who consider terrorism an important issue that is facing the EU. Therefore, to test the hypothesis I made use of questions A26 (2005 questionnaire) and A5 (2016 questionnaire), which were: ‘what is the most important issue that is facing the EU?’ The question had multiple answer options, of which one was ‘terrorism’. Table 1 and figure 1 show descriptive data from both years.

From the distribution of this variable, we can conclude that the level of securitization was far higher within the EU in 2016 than in 2005. Only 6.8% of the respondents mention terrorism as an important issue in 2005, where 34% of the respondents mention it in 2016. In both years, the samples were quite similar, with only a difference of 2000 respondents, which means the total numbers show a similar development. This means that hypothesis 2 can be accepted based on this data. This implies that terrorism was indeed more securitized after the Paris attack than after the Madrid attack.

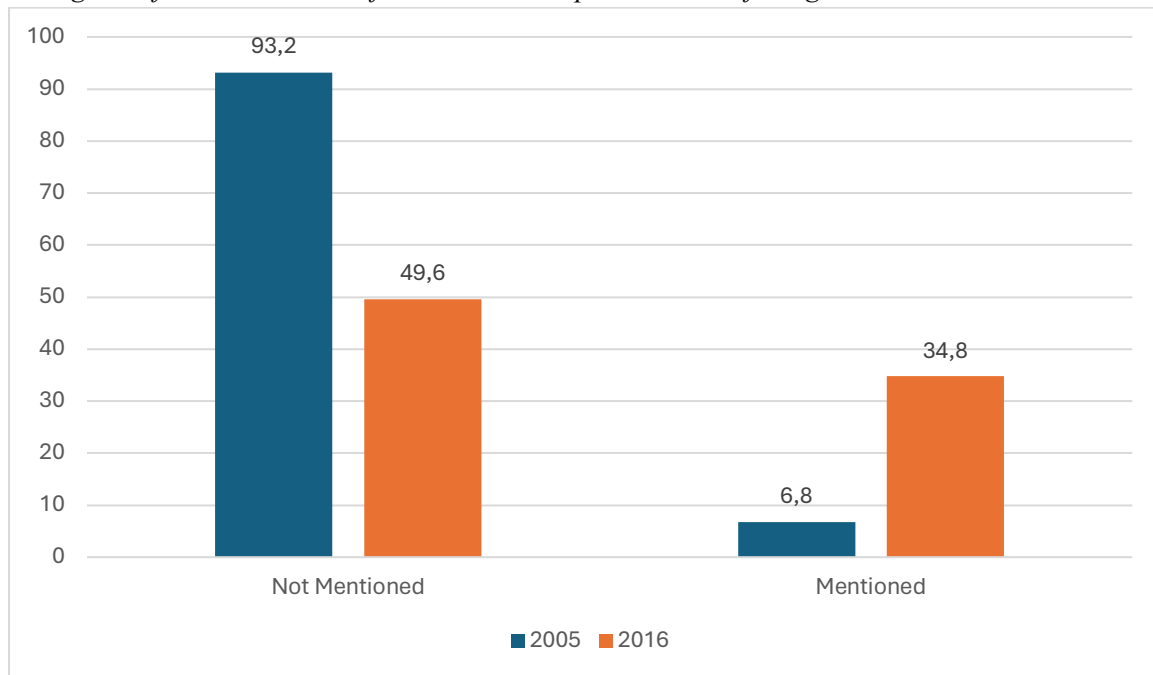
**Table 1**

*Descriptive statistics for the variable ‘important issues facing the EU: terrorism’*

|                      | 2005  |            | 2016  |            |
|----------------------|-------|------------|-------|------------|
|                      | N     | Percentage | N     | Percentage |
| <b>Not mentioned</b> | 27328 | 93.2       | 16348 | 49.6       |
| <b>Mentioned</b>     | 2000  | 6.8        | 11470 | 34.8       |
| <b>Total</b>         | 29328 | 100        | 27818 | 87.4       |

**Figure 1**

*Histogram of the distribution of the variable 'important issues facing the EU: terrorism'*



## 6.2 Use of internet

But how can we explain this difference in securitization, even though in both years Europe was shaken by a similar massive terrorist attack? This thesis turns then to the use of internet. As the internet is a relatively new development, the importance of it, and the use of it, has increased massively over the last twenty years. As the literature review already set out that internet can be a great catalyst of securitization, I therefore test the influence of the internet and social media on the opinion of the public towards terrorism. The following hypothesis is tested: *The usage of internet in 2015 has an effect on the levels of securitization, which is stronger in 2015 than in 2004.*

To test the use of internet, I make use of question D46 in both the questionnaire of 2005 and 2016. The question asks: which of the following goods do you have? Among the options were 'an internet connection' and 'a computer'.

**Table 2**

*Descriptive statistics for the variables 'having internet connection' and 'owning a computer' in 2005*

|                      | Internet connection |            | Owning a computer |            |
|----------------------|---------------------|------------|-------------------|------------|
|                      | N                   | Percentage | N                 | Percentage |
| <b>Not mentioned</b> | 18274               | 62.3       | 14585             | 49.7       |
| <b>Mentioned</b>     | 11054               | 37.7       | 14743             | 50.3       |
| <b>Total</b>         | 29328               | 100        | 29328             | 100        |

**Table 3***Descriptive statistics for the variable 'having internet connection' in 2016*

|                      | N     | Percentage |
|----------------------|-------|------------|
| <b>Not mentioned</b> | 9375  | 28.4       |
| <b>Mentioned</b>     | 23612 | 71.6       |
| <b>Total</b>         | 32987 | 100        |

As tables 2 and 3 show, has the number of respondents who have an internet connection almost doubled between 2005 and 2016. Therefore, we can conclude that internet has an increasing importance in the lives of Europeans. Furthermore, the questionnaire in 2005 only asked about owning a computer, but these questions have been expanded to owning a laptop and a smartphone as well. As owning a laptop and smartphone has gained importance over the years, I did not only include the descriptive statistics for owning a computer, but also for owning a laptop and owning a smartphone in table 4 below.

**Table 4***Descriptive statistics for the variables 'owning a computer', 'owning a laptop' and 'owning a smartphone' in 2016*

|                      | Owning a computer |            | Owning a laptop |            | Owning a smartphone |            |
|----------------------|-------------------|------------|-----------------|------------|---------------------|------------|
|                      | N                 | Percentage | N               | Percentage | N                   | Percentage |
| <b>Not mentioned</b> | 19337             | 58.6       | 14608           | 44.3       | 12206               | 37         |
| <b>Mentioned</b>     | 13650             | 41.4       | 18379           | 55.7       | 20781               | 63         |
| <b>Total</b>         | 32987             | 100        | 32987           | 100        | 32987               | 100        |

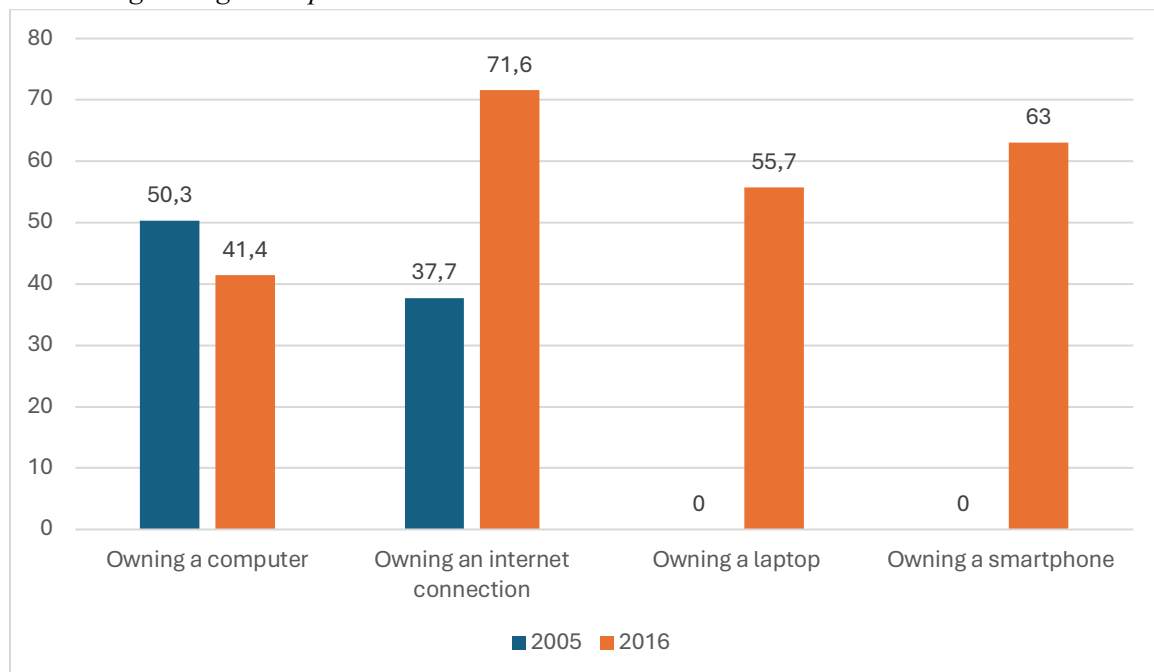
**Figure 2***Mentioning having a computer and internet connection in 2005 and 2016*

Figure 2 above shows more clearly the development of owning a computer and internet connection between 2005 and 2016. As a comparison of the tables 4 and 2 also shows, there is a percentual decrease of respondents who mention owning a computer. The development can also be caused by the increasing popularity of the laptop and smartphone in 2016. Both devices have become a more common thing to own in 2016 than in 2005. As the figure shows, both percentages of owning a laptop and owning a smartphone are even higher than the percentage of owning a computer in 2005. Furthermore, comparing mentioning owning an internet connection in 2005 to 2016, a serious increase can also be distinguished from 37.7% to 71.6%. Adding these results together, we may conclude that the impact of internet has increased. The increase of owning an internet connection shows that more people have access to internet more easily. The influence of internet devices has also increased, as the results show that internet is not only been used on computers, but more on laptops and smartphones, devices that can be brought with you and make people use internet wherever they want. Therefore, the impact of internet on the daily life of European citizens has increased between 2005 and 2016.

As the results above show, we are able to conclude that both the levels of securitization and the use of internet were much higher in 2016 than in 2005. However, in order to be able to get an answer to the hypothesis, we need to test these two variables to see whether they show a correlation. Both the internet connection variable and the terrorism as important EU issue are considered variables on a nominal level. Therefore, I have conducted a Chi-Square test, to test the correlation between both variables. The results are shown in the following tables.

**Table 5**

*Crosstable of owning an internet connection \* important issues EU: terrorism in 2005*

|                            |               | <b>Important issue EU: terrorism</b> |           |       |
|----------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------------|-----------|-------|
|                            |               | Not mentioned                        | Mentioned | Total |
| <b>Internet connection</b> | Not mentioned | 17000                                | 1274      | 18274 |
|                            | Mentioned     | 10328                                | 726       | 11054 |
|                            | Total         | 27328                                | 2000      | 29328 |

**Table 6**

*Results Chi-Square test 2005*

|                       | <b>Owning an internet connection</b> |           |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------|
|                       | <b>Value</b>                         | <b>Df</b> |
| Pearson Chi-Square    | 1.768*                               | 1         |
| Continuity correction | 1.705*                               | 1         |
| Valid N               | 29328                                |           |

*Note: \*P<0.2*

The outcomes in 2005 (table 5 and 6) describe that there is no significant correlation between owning an internet connection and considering terrorism an important issue for the EU for the population in 2005. The Chi-Square showed a significance level below 0.2, which is higher than the significance threshold of 0.05. Based on these outcomes, we can conclude that in 2005, the availability of an internet connection did not significantly influence the population's opinion on terrorism as an important issue within the EU. However, these first results do not take into account the effect that other variables could have on both the dependent and independent variable. In order to get more reliable results, it is important to consider these effects. Therefore, in the results below, I have stratified for the variable 'age'.

In order to do so, I have created a new variable in the dataset from the Eurobarometers, creating three categories. The ‘young’ category resembles respondents from 15-40. The ‘middle’ category resembles respondents from 41-65, and the ‘old’ category resembles respondents who are 65+. The outcomes are presented in tables 8 and 9 below. Introducing the variable age shows different insights, as the results have changed comparing to the results above. These results show that for the relation between internet access and terrorism as an important issue, there can be found significant effects for the respondents who are 15-40 years old ( $P<0.02$ ) and respondents who are 65+ ( $P<0.001$ ). Therefore, the hypothesis should only be rejected for the middle-aged people.

**Table 7**

*Crosstable internet access and important issues: terrorism stratified for age in 2005*

|               |                        |               | <b>Important issues: terrorism</b> |           |
|---------------|------------------------|---------------|------------------------------------|-----------|
|               |                        |               | Not mentioned                      | Mentioned |
| <b>Young</b>  | <b>Internet access</b> | Not mentioned | 5841                               | 463       |
|               |                        | Mentioned     | 5310                               | 353       |
| <b>Middle</b> | <b>Internet access</b> | Not mentioned | 6665                               | 472       |
|               |                        | Mentioned     | 4491                               | 305       |
| <b>Old</b>    | <b>Internet access</b> | Not mentioned | 4494                               | 339       |
|               |                        | Mentioned     | 527                                | 68        |

**Table 8**

*Chi-Square outcomes in 2005*

|        |                       | <b>Value</b> | <b>Df</b> |
|--------|-----------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Young  | Pearson Chi-Square    | 5.796*       | 1         |
|        | Continuity correction | 5.623*       | 1         |
|        | Valid N               | 11967        |           |
| Middle | Pearson Chi-Square    | 0.304        | 1         |
|        | Continuity correction | 0.264        | 1         |
|        | Valid N               | 11933        |           |
| Old    | Pearson Chi-Square    | 14.884**     | 1         |
|        | Continuity correction | 14.254**     | 1         |
|        | Valid N               | 5428         |           |

*Note: \* $P<0.02$ , \*\* $P<0.001$*

Looking at the results from 2016, table 10 shows that the correlation found between owning an internet connection and considering terrorism an important issue is significant. This implies that owning an internet connection did influence framing terrorism as an important EU issue significantly in 2016. So now not only we may conclude that the internet had more impact on the lives of EU citizens in 2016, but this may also mean that internet is used differently, so it influences the opinions of EU citizens towards terrorism more. However, when including the variable age again, the results differ. When including age, a significant correlation between terrorism as an important issue and owning an internet connection is only found for young respondents (table 12). Both the middle and old aged categories show no significant relation. Therefore, we may only accept the hypothesis for people between 15 and 40 years old. Including age as an extra variable, makes the results from these inferences more precise. This means that the variable age can be a relevant confounder variable for this relationship.

**Table 9***Crosstable of owning an internet connection \* important issues EU: terrorism in 2016*

|                            |               | <b>Important issues EU: terrorism</b> |           |       |
|----------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------------|-----------|-------|
| <b>Internet connection</b> |               | Not mentioned                         | Mentioned | Total |
|                            | Not mentioned | 4344                                  | 2860      | 7204  |
|                            | Mentioned     | 12004                                 | 8610      | 20614 |
|                            | Total         | 16348                                 | 11470     | 27818 |

**Table 10***Results Chi-Square test in 2016*

|                       | <b>Value</b> | <b>df</b> |
|-----------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Pearson Chi-Square    | 9.418*       | 1         |
| Continuity correction | 9.333*       | 1         |
| Valid N               | 27818        |           |

*Note: \*P<0.005***Table 11***Crosstable internet access\*important issue EU: terrorism stratified for age in 2016*

|               |                            | <b>Important issue EU: terrorism</b> |               |           |
|---------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------|-----------|
|               |                            |                                      | Not mentioned | Mentioned |
| <b>Young</b>  | <b>Internet connection</b> | Not mentioned                        | 638           | 389       |
|               |                            | Mentioned                            | 4516          | 3330      |
| <b>Middle</b> | <b>Internet connection</b> | Not mentioned                        | 1410          | 959       |
|               |                            | Mentioned                            | 5295          | 3798      |
| <b>Old</b>    | <b>Internet connection</b> | Not mentioned                        | 2296          | 1512      |
|               |                            | Mentioned                            | 2193          | 1482      |

**Table 12***Chi-Square results*

|        |                       | <b>Value</b> | <b>Df</b> |
|--------|-----------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Young  | Pearson Chi-Square    | 7.772*       | 1         |
|        | Continuity correction | 7.586*       | 1         |
|        | Valid N               | 8873         |           |
| Middle | Pearson Chi-Square    | 1.283        | 1         |
|        | Continuity correction | 1.230        | 1         |
|        | Valid N               | 11462        |           |
| Old    | Pearson Chi-Square    | 0.300        | 1         |
|        | Continuity correction | 0.275        | 1         |
|        | Valid N               | 7483         |           |

*Note: \*P<0.005*

However, as the internet connection variable did show a significant effect in general, it gave opportunity to test some other variables as well. The 2016 questionnaire also consisted of some questions regarding how often the respondents used internet at home. I tested this variable as well in order to test the relation

between time spend on the internet and considering terrorism an important EU issue. The results could show if the effect of internet on terrorism as an important EU issue would be increased if respondents spend more time on the internet. The results are showed in tables 13 and 14 below.

**Table 13**  
*Crosstable of important issues in the EU: terrorism and Internet use frequency at home in 2016*

|                                |                             | <b>Important issues EU: terrorism</b> |              |              |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Internet use frequency at home |                             | Not mentioned                         | Mentioned    | Total        |
|                                | Every day/ almost every day | 9834                                  | 7024         | 16858        |
|                                | 2 or 3 times a week         | 1543                                  | 1099         | 2642         |
|                                | Once a week                 | 489                                   | 308          | 797          |
|                                | 2 or 3 times a month        | 179                                   | 105          | 284          |
|                                | Less often                  | 279                                   | 183          | 462          |
|                                | Never                       | 2657                                  | 1776         | 4433         |
|                                | No internet access          | 1367                                  | 975          | 2342         |
|                                | <b>Total</b>                | <b>16348</b>                          | <b>11470</b> | <b>27818</b> |

**Table 14**  
*Chi-Square test results*

|                    | <b>Value</b> | <b>Df</b> |
|--------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 8.937        | 6         |
| Valid N            | 27818        |           |

*Note: P: 0.177*

The results in table 13 and 14 show no significant effects between the frequency internet is used and framing terrorism as an important EU issue. Therefore, we cannot conclude that the amount of time spent on the internet significantly influences people’s opinion towards terrorism. This test was also conducted twice, the second time I controlled again for the variable age. These results are not shown here, because the outcomes were not any different from the ones that are shown in the tables above. Therefore, even when stratified for age categories, no effect can be found.

All together, after looking at these results, a few conclusions can be made. Firstly, higher levels of securitization can be found in 2016 than in 2005, based on the descriptive statistics from the variable ‘important issues EU: terrorism’. Therefore, the second hypothesis can be accepted (*After the Paris*

*attacks, terrorism was more securitized than after the Madrid attacks*). After taking a closer look at the impact of internet on people's daily life, the results show that the use of internet has increased massively over the 11 years gap between the attacks in Madrid and Paris. More people have an internet connection, and internet is not only used on a computer anymore, but also on laptops and smartphones, which more than half of the people mention owning. However, whether the increased levels of securitization are an effect of the increased use of internet cannot be concluded in general. One could even say that the effect has decreased, as in 2005 a significant effect is found for people between 15 and 40 and 65+, this effect has only been found for people between 15 and 40 in 2016. Furthermore, no effect was found between how often respondents use the internet and whether they framed terrorism as an important EU issue. The answer to the third hypothesis (*The usage of internet has an effect on the levels of securitization, which is stronger in 2015 than in 2004*) is that this hypothesis should be rejected. Even though the results show an increased popularity and use of internet in 2016, the results do not show a correlation between the increasing use of the internet and increased securitization.

## 7. Results: political trust

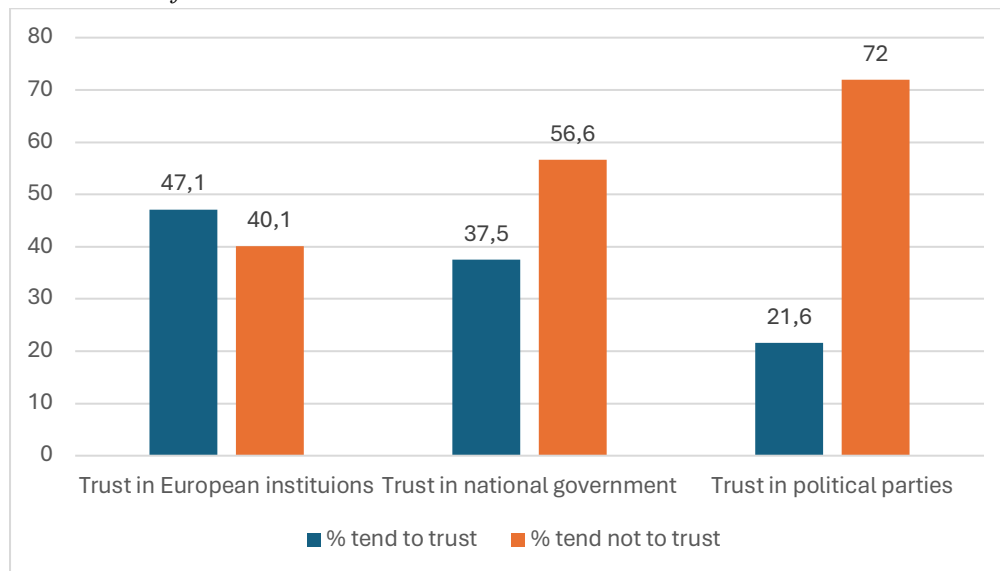
In this chapter, I shall further look into the effect of institutional trust on securitization. These results will focus on the following three hypotheses: *H4: More institutional trust leads to a lower degree of securitization*, *H5: Institutional trust in 2015 was lower than in 2004*, *H6: The high level of securitization in 2015 is an effect of the lack of institutional trust*. As seen in the prior results, we may accept there was a higher level of securitization in 2015 than in 2004 based on the data that has been used for this thesis. Therefore, these results will not look any further into the levels of securitization in 2005 and 2016.

### 7.1 Levels of institutional trust

What were the actual levels of institutional trust in 2005 and 2016? For this question I used the descriptive statistics from the variables ‘trust in European institutions’, ‘trust in national government’, and ‘trust in political parties’. These variables are all mentioned in question A7 in 2005 and A8 in 2016. Respondents were to mention whether they trust the institution or not. The question asks about both trust in political and apolitical institutions on the national and international level. As this thesis focuses on policy responses of the EU, the further results will focus on the trust in European institutions as a dependent variable. However, including trust in national institutions can be helpful to see the bigger picture, as the trust in European institutions is often related to the levels of trust in national institutions. This is mainly due to a lack of information and/or knowledge about the EU. (Brosius et al., 2019). The figure below shows the distribution of this variable in 2005.

**Figure 3**

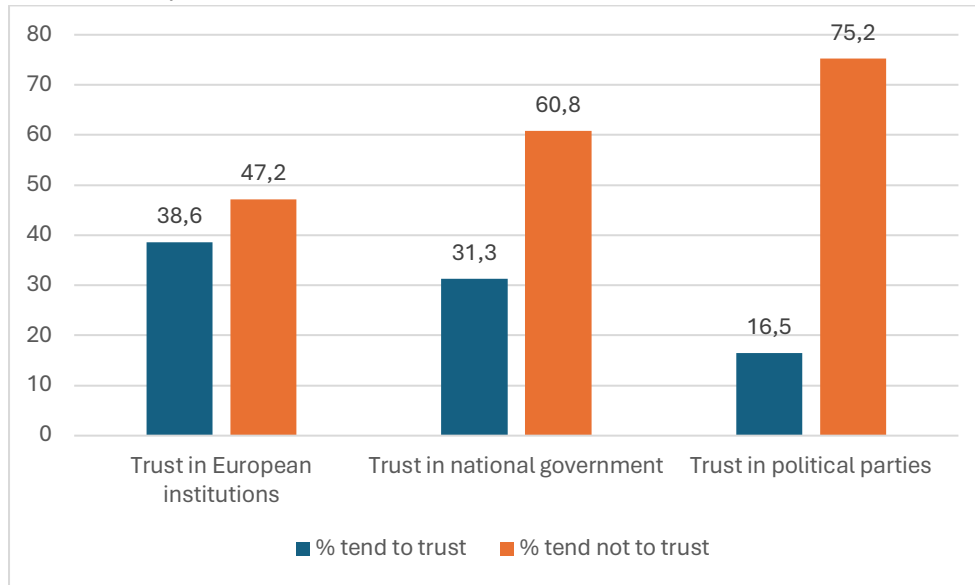
*Distribution of trust in institutions in 2005*



The same table can be made for the Eurobarometer in 2016, making use of question A8. This results in the following distribution.

**Figure 4**

*Distribution of trust in institutions in 2016*



Something that is striking for both the results in 2005 and 2016 is that the levels of distrust are high. This is especially the case for the trust in political parties. Another striking thing is that the level of distrust has increased in all categories. This increase is the highest for the trust in European institutions. In 2005, more than half of the people showed trust in European institutions. In 2016, this is the other way around. Based on these data, we could conclude that hypothesis 4, institutional trust in 2015 was lower than in 2004, can be accepted. As all these categories show an increase, it is plausible to state that the general trend of institutional trust has declined between 2004 and 2015, which leads to accepting hypothesis 5: Institutional trust was lower in 2015 than in 2004.

### *7.2 Institutional trust and securitization*

In order to test whether there is a correlation between institutional trust and considering terrorism as an important EU issue, a Chi-Square test was used. As both of the variables are binary, this is the suitable test. As mentioned before, these results shall focus on testing the relation between European institutions and terrorism as an important issue. However, as the trust in national institutions could be a predictor of the trust in European institutions, the trust in national government and political parties shall be used as control variables to be able to identify possible confounding variables. The table below shows the outcomes of the Chi-Square test results in 2005.

**Table 15**

*Chi-Square test results of the relation between trust in European institutions and important issues for the EU: terrorism in 2005*

|                       | Value | Df |
|-----------------------|-------|----|
| Pearson Chi-Square    | 2.174 | 1  |
| Continuity correction | 2.102 | 1  |
| Valid N               | 25567 |    |

*Note: \*P<0.001*

**Table 16***Chi-Square test results 2005, controlled for trust in national government*

| <b>National government</b> |                       | <b>European institutions</b> |    |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|----|
|                            |                       | Value                        | Df |
| Tend to trust              | Pearson Chi-Square    | 6.122*                       | 1  |
|                            | Continuity correction | 5.924*                       | 1  |
|                            | Valid N               | 10072                        |    |
| Tend not to trust          | Pearson Chi-Square    | 22.012**                     | 1  |
|                            | Continuity correction | 21.669**                     | 1  |
|                            | Valid N               | 14623                        |    |

*Note: \*P<0.02, \*\*P<0.001***Table 17***Chi-Square test results 2005, controlled for trust in political parties*

| <b>Political parties</b> |                       | <b>European institutions</b> |    |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|----|
|                          |                       | Value                        | Df |
| Tend to trust            | Pearson Chi-Square    | 2.702                        | 1  |
|                          | Continuity correction | 2.527                        | 1  |
|                          | Valid N               | 5890                         |    |
| Tend not to trust        | Pearson Chi-Square    | 13.175*                      | 1  |
|                          | Continuity correction | 12.954*                      | 1  |
|                          | Valid N               | 18627                        |    |

*Note: \*P<0.001*

Based on these results, a correlation is found between trust in European institutions and considering terrorism an important EU issue. However, without controlling for any variables, the results are not significant, which actually means no correlation is found. When looking at the results after controlling for the variables trust in national government and political parties, some results actually do show significant outcomes. When controlling for trust in national government, both groups who tend to trust and not tend to trust the national government show a significant effect between trust in European institutions and considering terrorism an important EU issue. Therefore, we can conclude that the trust in national government actually affects this relationship, as the outcomes differ from the results without including the control variable.

When controlling for the trust in political parties, a significant effect between trust in European institutions and considering terrorism an important EU issue is found for the group that tends not to trust political parties. This would suggest that this variable also affects the relationship between terrorism as an important EU issue and trust in European institutions. More concrete, it shows that the effect is only present for people who tend not to trust political parties. Based on these outcomes, we can conclude that both trust in national government and trust in political parties might be related to the dependent and independent variable and therefore suggest they might be confounding variables.

The same tests were done for the data from the Eurobarometer in 2016. The results are shown in the tables below.

**Table 18**

*Chi-Square test results for the correlation between trust in European institutions and important EU issues: terrorism in 2016*

|                       | Value    | Df |
|-----------------------|----------|----|
| Pearson Chi-Square    | 33.172** | 1  |
| Continuity correction | 33.021** | 1  |
| Valid N               | 24336    |    |

*Note: \*P<0.05, \*\*P<0.001*

**Table 19**

*Chi-Square test results 2016, controlled for trust in national government*

|                            |                       | <b>European institutions</b> |    |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|----|
| <b>National government</b> |                       | Value                        | Df |
| Tend to trust              | Pearson Chi-Square    | 0.203                        | 1  |
|                            | Continuity correction | 0.181                        | 1  |
|                            | Valid N               | 7606                         |    |
| Tend not to trust          | Pearson Chi-Square    | 70.405*                      | 1  |
|                            | Continuity correction | 70.109*                      | 1  |
|                            | Valid N               | 15952                        |    |

*Note: \*P<0.001*

**Table 20**

*Chi-Square test results 2016, controlled for trust in political parties*

|                            |                       | <b>European institutions</b> |    |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|----|
| <b>National government</b> |                       | Value                        | Df |
| Tend to trust              | Pearson Chi-Square    | 0.566                        | 1  |
|                            | Continuity correction | 0.510                        | 1  |
|                            | Valid N               | 4068                         |    |
| Tend not to trust          | Pearson Chi-Square    | 67.346*                      | 1  |
|                            | Continuity correction | 67.094*                      | 1  |
|                            | Valid N               | 19243                        |    |

*Note: \*P<0.001*

In 2016, the results in general have changed. Where the effect did not show any significance in 2005, it does show significance in 2016. One could therefore conclude that in 2016, the trust in European institutions has an effect on whether respondents consider terrorism an important EU issue. This would mean that not only trust has decreased over time, but also that the impact that trust has on considering terrorism an important issue has gain importance, so people are more led by their institutional trust in their opinion on important issues.

When looking at the results from including the control variables ‘trust in national government’ and ‘trust in political parties’, the outcomes differ. Both when controlling for the trust in political parties and the trust in the national government, the outcomes only show a significant effect for the group who tend not to trust the political parties/national government. Therefore, we may not conclude that people are led more by their levels of institutional trust in general, but only when they tend not to trust the national

institutions. So, when European citizens tend not to trust the national institutions, they are more likely to let their institutional trust weigh in whether they consider terrorism an important EU issue.

Based on these results, we may conclude that the impact of trust in European institutions has increased, as in general a significant effect is found in 2016, where it was not found in 2005. However, this development has mainly affected the people who tend not to trust the national institutions. The results show that two confounding variables can be recognized: trust in political parties and trust in national governments. Not only the distrust in institutions, both national and international, has increased over time, but people let this distrust lead them towards mentioning whether terrorism is an important EU issue.

As the Chi-Square test can only predict whether there is an effect but not the direction of the effect, these results do not contain sufficient evidence to whether we can accept or reject hypothesis 4 (*More institutional trust leads to a lower degree of securitization*) and hypothesis 6 (*the high level of securitization in 2015 is an effect of the lack of institutional trust*). However, the results do show that there is a correlation between institutional trust and securitization in the EU, which has increased over time. The lack of institutional trust does play a role in this correlation, as a significant effect between trust in European institutions and considering terrorism an important EU issue is only found in the group of people who tend not to trust the national institutions.

## 8. Conclusion

This thesis has focused on the possible explanations for the differences in policy response after the attacks in Madrid in 2004 and Paris in 2015. The research question was as follows: *'What explains the different policy responses of the EU after the terrorist attacks in Madrid in 2004 and Paris in 2015?'* To answer this question, this thesis has focused on securitization as a main explanatory factor, which was divided into internet and institutional trust as an explanatory variable to different levels of securitization in 2004 and 2015.

The outcomes of the research that has been conducted have been divided into two sections. The first part focused on the descriptive part: what were the differences between 2004 and 2015? These outcomes provided an answer to hypothesis 1, 2 and 5: *H1: The European Union was able to take more sustainable measures in 2015 than in 2004. H2: After the Paris attacks, terrorism was more securitized than after the Madrid attacks. H5: Institutional trust was lower in 2015 than in 2004.*

A description of the chosen cases confirmed that the EU did indeed take more sustainable measures in 2015 than in 2004. The description showed that this could have been highly influenced by the fact that the EU functioned under a different treaty in 2015 than in 2004, which gave the EU the possibility to take more binding measures. The implementation of these measures could be controlled better as well because implementation could be forced upon the member states. By making use of directives instead of agreements and action plans, the EU took more long-term measures in order to fight terrorism.

The data from the Eurobarometer showed that the issue of terrorism was indeed more securitized after the attack in Paris than after the attack in Madrid. The results showed an increase of 28%, which led to the conclusion that moving forward, we could take it as a given that the issue of terrorism was more securitized after the Paris attacks than after the Madrid attacks.

The data from the Eurobarometer showed also that hypothesis 5 could be accepted. The descriptive statistics showed a distribution of the variable institutional trust in political parties, national governments and European institutions. All of these categories showed an increase of respondents who mentioned they tend not to trust the institution. Therefore, overall, we can conclude that the level of institutional trust has decreased between 2004 and 2015.

The second section of the outcomes focused on the empirical test of the correlation between both internet usage and levels of securitization and institutional trust and levels of securitization. The following hypotheses were tested in the second section: *H3: The usage of internet has an effect on the levels of securitization, which is stronger in 2015 than in 2004. H4: More institutional trust leads to a lower degree of securitization. H6: The high level of securitization in 2015 is an effect of the lack of institutional trust.*

The results show that internet usage can have an effect on the level of securitization. However, this result is only visible for young people. Furthermore, the results do not show any increase in securitization once people use the internet more often. Therefore, for the most part, hypothesis 3 should be rejected. Even though the usage of internet may for some people have an effect on the levels of securitization, this effect has not increased between 2004 and 2015, which means the impact of the internet did not increase significantly.

The results of the institutional trust tests were insufficient to reject or accept the hypotheses, as the results could only find whether there is a correlation, but not the direction of the correlation. However, the results did show a correlation between institutional trust and securitization, which increased over time. Furthermore, the results showed that the effect is bigger for the group of people who tend not to trust the national institutions.

The literature review showed that the levels of securitization could influence the policy responses of governments. High levels of securitization could mean that the policymakers are able to take more decisive actions with less drawback from the public. Securitization has been used as a mediating variable through which different policy responses appear after similar terrorist attacks. Therefore, to formulate an answer to the research question, one can say, based on the outcomes of this thesis, that differing levels of securitization could explain the EU's different policy responses after the Madrid and Paris attacks. These different levels of securitization could be affected by the level of trust in European institutions. Furthermore, this effect is mainly found for people with low trust in the national institutions. This thesis also searched for an explanation in the increase of internet usage over the years. The results show that this cannot explain the different EU policy responses.

Looking at the contribution to existing theories, this thesis can be used to enrich the literature about unconscious mechanisms that have an effect on the way in which issues can be securitized. As the literature already briefly set out, securitization theory is slowly moving away from the idea that securitization is only induced by the intent of politicians in order to get acceptance for the extraordinary measures. This thesis has given insights about institutional trust and internet usage and how that affects levels of securitization. As we live in a society where institutional and governmental trust is low, this might have implications in the way politicians are able to securitize issues in times of crises. Therefore, these insights may add to the securitization theory that the way in which securitizing attempts from politicians may be received by the public differently under different circumstances regarding the usage of internet and institutional trust.

Despite all these outcomes, this thesis also has its shortcomings. In the last chapter I shall reflect on this research, the ways in which it could be improved, and I shall give recommendations for further research.

## 9. Discussion

Writing a thesis can be a stressful and difficult period. All things considered, I can be satisfied with the process, even though I ran into some difficulties. Some of these difficulties were easier to overcome than others. Looking back on the thesis, I can distinguish several shortcomings to this research. This last chapter shall discuss these shortcomings, the implications for the validity and reliability, and give recommendations on further research.

### *9.1 Shortcomings*

The first and most important shortcoming I have found is that the research design does not fully link with the research question. As I chose securitization as a main explaining factor of differing policy responses, I focused on variables that might explain the differing levels of securitization. Although I explained the relationship between securitization and policy responses in the theoretical part of the thesis, I was not able to test the relationship between the policy responses and securitization. So, although securitization could actually be a mediating variable, I could only test it as a dependent variable. To test the effect on policy responses empirically, a research design based on a more qualitative approach would be more effective, as that kind of research would give more insights into why certain choices were made by the EU. Unfortunately, I did not have the means nor the time or network to conduct this kind of research. However, this does have implications to the internal validity as the research does not fully answer to the posed research question. Part of the research is still based on just the assumption that securitization is linked to certain policy responses.

A second shortcoming can be found in the results. As it was not possible to include a lot of control variables, the results cannot with certainty explain whether there is a correlation between the variables. This touches again upon the internal validity of the thesis. I cannot state with certainty that the effect that was found is not caused by other variables that were not included in the results. For example, a large indicator that was not included in the results but was touched upon in the case description was the impact that the level of European integration might have had on the difference in policy response. At the time the Madrid attack took place, the EU was far less integrated than at the time the Paris attacks took place. This resulted in more means for the EU to take on the fight against terrorism and to work together as a whole. This could have had an effect on the decisiveness of the response. However, I have not been able to implement this effect any further through the thesis.

A third shortcoming refers to the data that was used. The Eurobarometers that have been used were the ones in 2005 and 2016. These questionnaires were administered almost a year after the attacks took place, which is quite some time. The first direct effects after the attacks might have faded by then, even though the first reaction of the citizens might have been bigger and filled with more fear. This could have resulted in much higher levels of securitization. Furthermore, the high levels of securitization could have been influenced by other events as well and might not have been only affected by the attacks in Madrid and Paris. Therefore, this data is not quite as precise as one would wish to measure the effect of the attack on levels of securitization.

### *9.2 Validity and reliability*

As shortly explained in section 9.1, the validity of this research is low. As I have not been able to test empirically a possible correlation between the policy response and levels of securitization, the research only partly answers the question and does not fully measure what it is supposed to measure.

Despite the low level of validity, the research does show a higher degree of reliability. By using the Eurobarometer for the data that has been used, I made sure that the sample was reliable and representative for the European population. For all the tests I have used SPSS, which shows reliable outcomes as it reduces the chances for miscalculations. If this research would be conducted again, there is a high chance that the outcomes would be the same.

### *9.3 Recommendations for further research*

My main recommendation for further research is to, as shortly mentioned before, conduct qualitative research to find out the reasons behind the choices that the European Union made after both the attacks. This could give insight to what was deemed possible at the time, why those choices were made and what interests the policymakers had to consider. This kind of research would give more precise outcomes and would merely be based on the actual reality of the obstacles that European policymakers must take when responding quickly to a terrorist attack. However, this kind of research was not possible to conduct for this thesis due to lack of time, means and the right connections. Even though this means that this research could not give the kind of insights I had hoped starting the thesis, it does give insights in how the internet and institutional trust may affect the levels of securitization. These insights can help discover how securitization takes place and what kind of mechanisms may increase or decrease the levels of securitization. These insights may have practical use for politicians and policy makers in order to assess how they can influence securitization and benefit from levels of securitization when implementing new policies. Even though further research is required, the outcomes of this thesis may be a starting point and an inspiration.

## 10. Bibliography

- Andreeva, C. (2020). The EU's counter-terrorism policy after 2015—"Europe wasn't ready"—"But it has proven that it's adaptable". *ERA Forum*, 20(3), 343–370. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12027-019-00570-0>
- Andreeva, C. (2022). The evolution of information-sharing in EU counter-terrorism post 2015: A paradigm shift? *Collective Securitization and Crisification of EU Policy Change*, 134–159.
- Antonacopoulou, E. P., & Sheaffer, Z. (2014). Learning in Crisis: Rethinking the Relationship Between Organizational Learning and Crisis Management. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 23(1), 5–21. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1056492612472730>
- Austin, J. L. (1962). *How to do things with words*. Clarendon Press.
- Bartholomew, R. E. (2016). The Paris terror attacks, mental health and the spectre of fear. *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 109(1), 4–5. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0141076815625070>
- Baysal, B. (2020). 20 Years of Securitization: Strengths, Limitations and A New Dual Framework. *Uluslararası İlişkiler / International Relations*, 17(67), 3–20.
- Beydoun, K. A. (2016). Beyond the Paris Attacks: Unveiling the War Within French Counterterror Policy. *American University Law Review*, 65(6).
- Bigo, D., Carrera, S., Guild, E., Guittet, E.-P., Jeandesboz, J., Mitsilegas, V., Ragazzi, F., & Scherrer, A. (n.d.). *The EU and its Counter-Terrorism Policies after the Paris Attacks*.
- Brosius, A., van Elsas, E. J., & de Vreese, C. H. (2019). Trust in the European Union: Effects of the information environment. *European Journal of Communication*, 34(1), 57–73. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0267323118810843>
- Brummel, L., Carroll, B. J., Toshkov, D., & Yesilkagit, K. (2023). *Literature Review, Conceptual Framework and Methodology*.
- Bures, O., & Bätz, S. (2021). European Union and the fight against terrorism: A differentiated integration theory perspective. *Asia Europe Journal*, 19(1), 75–104. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10308-020-00590-3>
- Buzan, B., Wæver, O., & De Wilde, J. (1998). *Security: A new framework for analysis*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Canel, M.-J. (2012). Communicating strategically in the face of terrorism: The Spanish government's response to the 2004 Madrid bombing attacks. *Public Relations Review*, 38(2), 214–222. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2011.11.012>
- Casale, D. (2008). EU Institutional and Legal Counter-terrorism Framework. *Defence Against Terrorism Review*, 1(1), 49–78.
- Council of European Union. (2005). *The European Union Counter-Terrorism Strategy*.
- D'Amato, S., & Terlizzi, A. (2022). Strategic European counterterrorism? An empirical analysis. *European Security*, 31(4), 540–557. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2022.2029847>
- Dannenbaum, T. (2011). Bombs, Ballots, and Coercion: The Madrid Bombings, Electoral Politics, and Terrorist Strategy. *Security Studies*, 20(3), 303–349. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2011.599199>
- De Verdragen van Maastricht en van Amsterdam | Infopagina's over de Europese Unie | Europees Parlement*. (2023, September 30). <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/nl/sheet/3/de-verdragen-van-maastricht-en-van-amsterdam>
- Dolinec, V. (n.d.). *THE ROLE OF MASS MEDIA IN THE SECURITIZATION PROCESS OF INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM*.
- Eurobarometer – Public opinion in the European Union*. (n.d.). Retrieved 9 May 2024, from <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/screen/home>
- European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation. (2023). *European Union terrorism situation and trend report 2023*. Publications Office. <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2813/302117>
- Europol. (2004). *Terrorist activity in the European Union: Situation and trend report (TE-SAT). Five lessons learned from the terror attacks in France*. (n.d.). Retrieved 10 May 2024, from <https://www.eppgroup.eu/newsroom/five-lessons-learned-from-the-terror-attacks-in-france>
- Friesen, K. (2007). The Effects of the Madrid and London Subway Bombings on Europe's View of Terrorism. *HUMAN RIGHTS*.
- Genschel, P., & Jachtenfuchs, M. (2016). More integration, less federation: The European integration

- of core state powers. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 23(1), 42–59. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2015.1055782>
- Greene, A. (2017). DEFINING TERRORISM: ONE SIZE FITS ALL? *International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, 66(2), 411–440. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020589317000070>
- Hansen, L. (2011). The politics of securitization and the Muhammad cartoon crisis: A post-structuralist perspective. *Security Dialogue*, 42(4–5), 357–369. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010611418999>
- Harteveld, E., Meer, T. van der, & Vries, C. E. D. (2013). In Europe we trust? Exploring three logics of trust in the European Union. *European Union Politics*, 14(4), 542–565. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1465116513491018>
- Hassan, O. (2010). Constructing crises, (In)securitising terror: The punctuated evolution of EU counter terror strategy. *European Security*, 19(3), 445–466. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2010.526935>
- Hegghammer, T. (2006). Global Jihadism After the Iraq War. *The Middle East Journal*, 60(1), 11–32. <https://doi.org/10.3751/60.1.11>
- Het Verdrag van Lissabon | Infopagina's over de Europese Unie | Europees Parlement.* (2023, September 30). <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/nl/sheet/5/het-verdrag-van-lissabon>
- Het Verdrag van Nice en de Conventie over de toekomst van Europa | Infopagina's over de Europese Unie | Europees Parlement.* (2023, October 31). <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/nl/sheet/4/het-verdrag-van-nice-en-de-conventie-over-de-toekomst-van-europa>
- Ilbiz, E., & Kaunert, C. (2023). Securitization, fear politics, and the formation of an opposition alliance in competitive authoritarian regimes. *Democratization*, 30(8), 1604–1624. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2023.2252346>
- ISIS vs. Al Qaeda: Jihadism's global civil war.* (n.d.). Brookings. Retrieved 11 April 2024, from <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/isis-vs-al-qaeda-jihadisms-global-civil-war/>
- Johannesson, E. (n.d.). *TAKEN TO COMBAT THE NEW THREATS FACING EUROPE?*
- Jungkunz, S., Helbling, M., & Schwemmer, C. (2019). Xenophobia before and after the Paris 2015 attacks: Evidence from a natural experiment. *Ethnicities*, 19(2), 271–291. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468796818757264>
- Kaunert, C., & Léonard, S. (2019). The European Union's Response to the CBRN Terrorist Threat: A Multiple Streams Approach. *Politique européenne*, 65(3), 148–177. <https://doi.org/10.3917/poeu.065.0148>
- Keohane, D. (2008). The Absent Friend: EU Foreign Policy and Counter-Terrorism. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 46(1), 125–146. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5965.2007.00770.x>
- Kettle, L., & Mumford, A. (2017). Terrorist Learning: A New Analytical Framework. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 40(7), 523–538. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2016.1237224>
- Leonard, D. S. (2007). *The 'Securitization' of Asylum and Migration in the European Union: Beyond the Copenhagen School's Framework.*
- London bombings of 2005.* (n.d.). Retrieved 21 April 2024, from <https://www.btp.police.uk/police-forces/british-transport-police/areas/about-us/about-us/our-history/london-bombings-of-2005/>
- London bombings of 2005 | History, Facts, & Map | Britannica.* (2024, April 16). <https://www.britannica.com/event/London-bombings-of-2005>
- Madrid train bombings of 2004 | Description & Facts | Britannica.* (2024, February 9). <https://www.britannica.com/event/Madrid-train-bombings-of-2004>
- Madrid's wounds after the March 11, 2004 attacks are still open, 20 years on. (2024, March 11). *Le Monde.Fr.* [https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2024/03/11/madrid-s-wounds-after-the-march-11-2004-attacks-are-still-open-20-years-on\\_6608461\\_4.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2024/03/11/madrid-s-wounds-after-the-march-11-2004-attacks-are-still-open-20-years-on_6608461_4.html)
- Mccombs, M., & Shaw, D. (2017). The Agenda-Setting function of mass media. *The Agenda Setting Journal*, 1. <https://doi.org/10.1075/asj.1.2.02mcc>
- McDonald, M. (2008). Securitization and the Construction of Security. *European Journal of International Relations*, 14(4), 563–587. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066108097553>
- Möller, F. (2007). Photographic Interventions in Post-9/11 Security Policy. *Security Dialogue*, 38(2), 179–196.
- Moreno, L. (2005). The Madrid Bombings in the Domestic and Regional Politics of Spain. *Irish Studies in International Affairs*, 16, 65–72.

- Mouhanna, C. (2021). Reforms and Unexpected Events: The Influence of Terrorist Attacks on Policing Strategies. *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*, 15(1), 288–298. <https://doi.org/10.1093/police/paab013>
- Nesser, P., Stenersen, A., & Oftedal, E. (2016). Jihadi Terrorism in Europe: The IS-Effect. *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 10(6), 3–24.
- Özcan, S. (2013). *SECURITIZATION OF ENERGY THROUGH THE LENSES OF COPENHAGEN SCHOOL*. 2(2).
- Paris attacks of 2015 | Timeline, Events, & Aftermath | Britannica*. (n.d.). Retrieved 26 April 2024, from <https://www.britannica.com/event/Paris-attacks-of-2015>
- Paris attacks of 2015—Response, Global Condemnation, Solidarity | Britannica*. (2024, February 20). <https://www.britannica.com/event/Paris-attacks-of-2015>
- Porter, G. (2015, December 14). *The Paris Attacks and the Evolving Islamic State Threat to France*. Combating Terrorism Center at West Point. <https://ctc.westpoint.edu/the-paris-attacks-and-the-evolving-islamic-state-threat-to-france/>
- Reactions to the Paris attacks in the EU: Fundamental rights considerations*. (n.d.). [dataset]. [https://doi.org/10.1163/2210-7975\\_HRD-9992-2015015](https://doi.org/10.1163/2210-7975_HRD-9992-2015015)
- Reinares, F. (2010). The Madrid Bombings and Global Jihadism. *Survival*, 52(2), 83–104. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396331003764629>
- Rosenthal, U., Charles, M. T., & Hart, P. (1989). *Coping With Crises: The management of disasters, riots and terrorism*. Springfield III.
- Ruiz Estrada, M. A., & Koutronas, E. (2016). Terrorist attack assessment: Paris November 2015 and Brussels March 2016. *Journal of Policy Modeling*, 38(3), 553–571. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpolmod.2016.04.001>
- Schimmelfennig, F. (2018). European integration (theory) in times of crisis. A comparison of the euro and Schengen crises. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 25(7), 969–989. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2017.1421252>
- Sedgwick, M. (2015). Jihadism, Narrow and Wide: The Dangers of Loose Use of an Important Term. *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 9(2), 34–41.
- Siljanovska, L. (2014). THE INFORMATIVE FUNCTION OF THE MEDIA: NEGATIVISM AND THE IDEOLOGICAL COMPONENT OF NEWS. *Mass Communication*, 3.
- Statement of the EU heads and EU institutions on attacks in Paris*. (n.d.). Retrieved 11 April 2024, from <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/11/14/joint-eu-statement-terrorist-attacks-paris/>
- Stivas, D., & Cole, A. (2023). *Countering the Covid-19 pandemic in Hong Kong. A Successful Securitization in an Environment of Low Political Trust*. <https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-2571613/v1>
- Stritzel, H. (2007). Towards a Theory of Securitization: Copenhagen and Beyond. *European Journal of International Relations*, 13(3), 357–383.
- Terrorism*. (n.d.). Europol. Retrieved 6 April 2024, from <https://www.europol.europa.eu/crime-areas/terrorism>
- Terrorism—Europol Review 2015*. (n.d.). Retrieved 7 April 2024, from [https://www.europol.europa.eu/annual\\_review/2015/terrorism.html](https://www.europol.europa.eu/annual_review/2015/terrorism.html)
- TE-SAT 2011: EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report*. (n.d.). Europol. Retrieved 26 April 2024, from <https://www.europol.europa.eu/publications-events/main-reports/te-sat-2011-eu-terrorism-situation-and-trend-report>
- The 3/11 Madrid Bombings: An Assessment After 5 Years | Wilson Center*. (2009, April 10). <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/the-311-madrid-bombings-assessment-after-5-years>
- The European Council. (2004). *Declaration on combating terrorism*. *The European Union and the fight to counter terrorism*. (n.d.). Retrieved 7 April 2024, from <https://www.robert-schuman.eu/en/european-issues/386-the-european-union-and-the-fight-to-counter-terrorism>
- The EU's response to terrorism*. (2024, March 6). <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/fight-against-terrorism/>
- The Treaty of Lisbon | Fact Sheets on the European Union | European Parliament*. (2023, September 30). <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/5/the-treaty-of-lisbon>

- Thieux, L. (2004). European Security and Global Terrorism: The Strategic Aftermath of the Madrid Bombings. *Perspectives*, 22, 59–74.
- Toshkov, D. (2016). *Research Design in Political Science*. Red Globe Press.
- Turégano-Fuentes, F., Pérez-Díaz, D., Sanz-Sánchez, M., & Ortiz Alonso, J. (2008). Overall assessment of the response to terrorist bombings in trains, Madrid, 11 March 2004. *European Journal of Trauma and Emergency Surgery*, 5.
- Van Der Does, R., Kantorowicz, J., Kuipers, S., & Liem, M. (2021). Does Terrorism Dominate Citizens' Hearts or Minds? The Relationship between Fear of Terrorism and Trust in Government. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 33(6), 1276–1294. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2019.1608951>
- Van Rythoven, E. (2015). Learning to feel, learning to fear? Emotions, imaginaries, and limits in the politics of securitization. *Security Dialogue*, 46(5), 458–475. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010615574766>
- Vasilopoulos, P. (2018). Terrorist events, emotional reactions, and political participation: The 2015 Paris attacks. *West European Politics*, 41(1), 102–127. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2017.1346901>
- Wæver, O. (1995). Securitization and Desecuritization. In *On Security* (pp. 46–86). Columbia University Press.
- What you need to know about Paris attacks and the situation in France. (2022, March 23). *Le Monde.Fr*. [https://www.lemonde.fr/en/archives/article/2022/03/23/what-you-need-to-know-about-paris-attacks-and-the-situation-in-france\\_5979045\\_113.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/en/archives/article/2022/03/23/what-you-need-to-know-about-paris-attacks-and-the-situation-in-france_5979045_113.html)
- Who was behind the jihadist attacks on Europe and North America? (2017, June 14). *BBC News*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-40000952>
- Williams, M. C. (2003). Words, Images, Enemies: Securitization and International Politics. *International Studies Quarterly*, 23(3), 511–532.
- Wright, R. (2017). *The Jihadi Threat ISIS, al-Qaeda, and beyond*. United States Institute of Peace.