

# Threat Perception Politics

**A Comparative Case Study into the Difference in Threat Perception  
Between Terrorism and Climate Change in the United States**



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## **Abstract**

The 9/11 attacks and hurricane Katrina both claimed many lives. Still 9/11 was the onset for a 'Global War on Terror' going on to date whilst Hurricane Katrina has become all but a footnote in history. The goal of this paper is to explain why terrorism was regarded as an existential threat in the US while climate change and global warming were not. Also, by using both Threat Perception Theory and Securitization Theory to answer this question this paper wants to contribute to the broader academic debate within Security Studies between Traditionalists, Wideners and Critical researchers. The objective and intersubjective basis of threat were determined respectively by doing a literature study of various objective parameters and performing a speech analysis of several securitizing moves with regards to terrorism and climate change. Finally, threat perception was determined by looking at various polls conducted amongst the American public. This paper found that there is a clear objective basis to security in the form of aggregate power. Speech analysis also indicated a strong intersubjective component to security: it is at least partially a construction created by the rhetorical process of securitization. Despite these results neither theory was able to satisfactorily answer the research question. Threat Perception Theory has proven fundamentally inapt in dealing with security issues outside the statist-military realm and Securitization Theory suffered from a too broad conceptual framework. Instead of settling the aforementioned debate within Security Studies these results point to usefulness of an eclectic approach to studying security. Ideas and material conditions cannot be regarded as separate. Instead they seem mutually constitutive.

**Keywords: Climate Change, Copenhagen School, Securitization, Threat Perception Theory, Terrorism, Walt.**



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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

On September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 a series of terrorist attacks killed nearly 3000 people in the US (CNN, 2006). The reaction to this dramatic event was the declaration of a Global War on Terror: Afghanistan was invaded in October, Congress passed the PATRIOT Act granting the federal government several new powers and in 2003 Iraq was invaded as part of the War on Terror (Fierke, 2007, pp. 104-106). Four years later, in August 2005 hurricane Katrina killed 1954 (Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, 2006), here any large-scale political action stayed off. The Bush administration that was so active in counter-terrorism has continuously played down environmental threats (Fierke, 2007, pp. 104-107). Whilst the War on Terror is still being fought and became the longest war-effort in American history, climate change and global warming have still not gained priority on the American political agenda; the US is still one of the few countries that have not yet ratified the Kyoto protocol. The discrepancy in attention becomes poignantly clear by looking at the government budget in 2000: \$294 billion was spent on defence and military affairs versus only 8 billion by the Environmental Protection Agency (Executive office of the president of the United States, 2002, pp. 9-14).

Why are the reactions to these two phenomena so different? Both events claimed a large number of lives and both have the possibility of reoccurring. Still one caused a fundamental policy-shift, spurred a Global War on Terror and defined the entire Bush-presidency whereas the other has become all but a footnote in history. This discrepancy in threat perception of both phenomena is the subject of this paper. Threats are intuitively regarded as clearly visible objective facts firmly grounded in reality. Are they really? The lack of reaction to objective parameters such as fatalities could indicate that threats are primarily a construct, a shared understanding of what security is and who or what threatens it. The goal of this paper is to explain why some issues come to be seen as existential threats and others are not. This leads to the following research question:

Why is terrorism regarded by the US as an existential threat while climate change and global warming are not?

### **The Theories**

Two theories will be used to answer the research question posed above. Firstly, Threat Perception Theory (TPT) is a representative of the Rationalist School favouring a strong emphasis on the objective basis of threat. The theory argues that four factors determine the threat perception of states: aggregate power, comprising a states' resources such as population, industrial and military capability; geographic proximity, states that are nearby pose a greater threat than those far away; offensive power, states with large offensive capabilities are more likely to be perceived as threats than those that are militarily weak; lastly offensive intentions, states that appear aggressive are more likely to be perceived as threats (Walt, 1985, pp. 8-12). At first sight, these factors seem unable to explain the War on Terror. Al Qaeda's aggregate power, geographic proximity and offensive capabilities are all low. It is a terrorist organization that does not have the resources of even a small country, its headquarters are located far away from the US and it does not possess a standing army to attack with. Still terrorism was regarded as a threat to US national security. In the case of threat perception with regards to climate change the theory seems even less applicable. The narrow focus on military threats makes it inherently difficult for the theory to explain the dynamics of issues such as global warming because they are kept exogenous to the original model. The four variables are hard to apply to any threat that is outside the statist-military realm. Therefore, the theory seems unable to explain many of the real-world threats and the dynamics of threat perception in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Secondly the Copenhagen School's Securitization Theory (ST) will be used. This Constructivist Theory is much broader in scope and problematizes the constitution of threats itself: why are some actors and phenomena seen as threats whilst others are not? The theory argues that security is the outcome of a discursive process; threats are not found objectively but are social facts, based on a collective understanding (Ruggie, 1998, pp. 866-868). This collective understanding is constructed through securitizing speech-acts (Williams, 2003, p. 513). When an issue is accepted as a security issue this changes the dynamics of the political process. The issue is placed above normal politics and there is a call for emergency action. Not all securitizing moves are equally likely to succeed. The successfulness of any given securitization depends on: following the security form and grammar to construct a plot which includes existential threat, point of no return, and a possible way out; a position of authority for the securitizing actor, the features of the threat under discussion and the scale-level on which securitization takes place (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 33). This theory will also be applied to both cases to try and gain insight in the differing threat perception of terrorism and climate change.



### **Relevance and Implications**

It is expected that because of its intersubjective basis ST will be more successful than TPT in explaining threat perception in the two cases under scrutiny in this paper. It appears that states do not solely react to the kind of threats Walt specifies anymore. To thoroughly examine the usability of TPT it is given a fair chance by adapting the operationalization and adopting a favourable approach. So, in addition to answering the research question, this paper is also a test of the explanatory power of both theories. It will attempt to show the lacunae in the thus far dominant rationalist theories of threat perception whilst testing the applicability of its relatively new constructivist opponent. The scientific relevance of this paper is then twofold: attempting to solve the apparent inconsistency between TPT and threat perception in real life and on the other hand contributing to the academic debate within Security Studies by a comparison of both theories. Can the narrow TPT still explain threat perception in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Are threats primarily based in the objective or intersubjective realm and is ST able to retain analytical rigor with its broad conceptualization? This paper will attempt to answer these questions.

This paper also has a strong social relevance. It is expected that threat perception is at least partially influenced by the rhetorical process of securitization about which not much is known yet. Still Security Studies scholars have traditionally had an influence on national security policy and thereby on important real-world developments as well. This is why it is of critical importance to analyse if the threats that we react to are always 'real' and who might benefit from seeing certain phenomena as security. At the same time the threats that are kept off the agenda could be just as important; are we worrying about the right things? In critically studying both the objective and intersubjective elements of security as well as examining the specific rhetoric surrounding security this paper tries to gain insight into these issues.

### **Research Design**

This research will take the form of a multiple case study. Both theories will be applied to both cases; threat perception of terrorism in the period around the 9/11 attacks in 2001 and threat perception of climate change and global warming around the occurrence of hurricane Katrina in 2005. The material factors and the dynamics surrounding these events will be compared to threat perception as measured by various polls to test the validity of the theories.

This will be done in five chapters. Chapter 2 examines in-depth the theoretical framework of both theories and the points of tension and overlap between them. The third chapter will feature a detailed look at the methodology and research design; it will also feature an operationalization of both theories. The fourth and fifth chapters will feature the empirical test of both theories on respectively threat perception of terrorism and climate change. Finally, chapter six will offer a recapitulation of the important conclusions, a

definitive answer to the research question and a reflection of what this answer means for the broader theories as well as the scientific landscape. Furthermore, the limitations of this study and tips for further research will be given.

## Chapter 2

### Theoretical Framework

After a brief introduction to the field of Security Studies this chapter will consist of two parts, one for Walt's Threat Perception Theory (TPT) and one for Securitization Theory (ST). For each theory their place in the broader scientific field and theoretical core will be explained, eventual ambiguities will be explicated and resolved to enable good testing. Lastly, a critique of both their fundamental weaknesses and ambiguities will also be provided.

#### Security Studies and the Meta-theoretical Landscape

The field of Security Studies formed in the 1955-1965 period to the background of the Cold War. The first scientific inquiries in the field were meant mostly as a policy tool and focused on strategic issues such as nuclear deterrence (Fierke, 2007, pp.16-19). The end of the Cold War brought with it a host of new security-issues and areas of research. The security agenda began expanding away from its somewhat narrow initial focus. An academic debate emerged between three schools: Traditionalists, Wideners and Critical Scholars:

1. Traditionalists such as Walt, Gray and Ayoob argue that only military issues are to be placed within the concept of security. Expanding the research agenda too much would mean losing focus and damaging the field (Buzan, 1997, pp. 8-11).
2. Wideners such as Buzan, Nye and Waever see issues and referent objects other than those within the military realm as potential threats to security and argued that the concept of security had to be broadened accordingly. Environmental, economic, and health issues are some of the new elements that were introduced to the security agenda after the Cold War (Ibid.).
3. Critical Scholars such as Campbell and Krause & Williams question the very framework in which security comes into being. What are the background assumptions and discourses belonging to a culture in which security is defined? As such they challenge both Traditionalists and Wideners (Fierke, 2007, p. 102).

What is the place of the two theories within this academic debate? TPT is located firmly within the Traditionalist camp. Walt argues that Security Studies is: “ (...) the study of the threat, use and control of military force” (Walt, 1991, p. 212). ST is somewhat more difficult to place. It is somewhere between the Critical Scholars and the wideners (Buzan, 1997, p.13). As Wideners, they question the primacy of the military element and the state in the Traditionalist conceptualization of security (Buzan et al., 1998, p.1). As Critical Scholars they

problematize the constitution of security and threats; why are some actors and phenomena seen as threats whilst others are not?

TPT as a typically Rationalist theory uses a heavily materialist ontology, meaning that it regards reality as constituted of material brute facts, which are independent of the position of the observer. Of the four factors Walt specifies that three are solely material, only one – aggressive intentions – measures perceived intentions instead of material elements. The materialist ontology goes hand in hand with a positivist epistemology – i.e. it sees reality as something that can be objectively known and focuses on causal explaining of this reality. TPT tries to explain how threat perception came about by looking at the factors it deems to be influential (Christiansen et al., 1999, pp. 535-538).

ST is a Critical-constructivist theory. Christiansen et al. (Ibid.) place Constructivism somewhere in the middle of a meta-theoretical bow between the extremes of Rationalism – described above – and Reflectivism, which is in many ways the antithesis of Rationalism, using a subjectivist ontology and post-positivist epistemology. Contrary to TPT, ST uses an intersubjective ontology: the process of securitization relies on intersubjective acceptance of an issue as being about security, therefore facts are social facts: when a relevant audience accepts something as being security, it becomes security (Ibid.). Facts and ideas are mutually constitutive. Although the theories' intersubjective ontology sees systemic change as possible because reality is socially constructed, it emphasizes that social constructs often become sedimented and form relatively stable practices that we can study. So just as TPT, this theory uses a primarily positivist epistemology placing it at odds with most critical theorists that use post-positivistic epistemologies (Fierke, 2007, pp.101-103).

All in all, Security Studies is a broad scientific field spanning the entire aforementioned bow between Rationalism and Reflectivism. The theories under scrutiny here have a different theoretical background and focus. This results in differing natural strengths and weaknesses for each theory. The rationalist theory allows for a greater extent of analytical rigor but risks missing out on the *understanding* of phenomena and the world as it really is. The opposite is true of its critical constructivist counterpart. It rests on a broader ontology and provides richer understanding of aspects that the rationalist framework leaves behind. However, it lacks analytical rigor and tends to describe instead of giving causal explanations (Ruggie, 1998, pp. 882-883). In the concluding chapter it will be explicated how these different strengths and weaknesses worked out for the theories in this case study.

## Walt's Threat Perception Theory

TPT used in this paper is actually only a part of Walt's original Balance of Threat Theory. Walt's theory was originally meant as an improvement on Waltz' Balance of Power Theory, explaining alliance formation by states. Walt tried to improve on the theory by adding three factors to Waltz's original factor of aggregate power (Walt, 1985, pp. 3-9). Walt argues that there are four important factors determining the perceived level of threat; aggregate power, geographic proximity, offensive power and aggressive intentions.

Aggregate power measures the amount of resources a state has: the more resources, the greater the potential threat it can pose to others. Resources are measured in population, industrial and military capability and technological progress – the classic measures of national capabilities (Walt, 1987, pp. 22-23). Contrary to traditional Balance of Power theory Walt argues that aggregate power alone is not enough to explain alliance formation: the Allied forces had far more aggregate power than their opponents in both world wars, still the alliances remained largely stable, although one would expect states to balance the Allies and side with the Axis forces. Walt tries to explain this unexpected outcome by specifying three additional factors that determine threat perception (Ibid., pp. 264-266).

Firstly, geographic proximity measures how close states are to each other: states that are nearby will pose a greater threat than those further away, the ability to project power declines with distance (Ibid., pp. 23-24). Strong states react less to proximity, they have global interests and react more to aggregate power regardless of the location of its wielder (Ibid., pp. 29-30).

Secondly, offensive power or capabilities also play a role in threat perception by states. Walt gives the following definition: "Specifically, offensive power is the ability to threaten the sovereignty or territorial integrity of another state at an acceptable cost" (Ibid., p.24). States with large offensive capabilities are more threatening than those that seem incapable of attacking. This factor is partially based on aggregate power as a state with many resources will be able to generate more offensive power. But the efficacy with which a state converts resources into weaponry and the sort of weaponry –offensive or defensive – are important too (Ibid., pp.24-25).

Lastly, aggressive intentions play an important role. When a state is seen as aggressive, it is likely to be perceived as threatening as well and will provoke a reaction by other states. This variable introduces an immaterial element to TPT: States could still perceive a state with relatively little aggregate power as a threat if it is considered to have dangerous ambitions. Walt does not specify if these intentions are solely in the eye of the beholder, based on previous actions or declared intent. This will be clarified further in the operationalization.

Going back to Walt's example of alliance formation in the World Wars is a good way to see the explanatory power of these additional values. Germany and its associates were materially weaker throughout much of the Wars still the relatively large offensive capabilities, geographic proximity to many of the allied forces and in particular their extremely aggressive intentions made them to be perceived as a particularly large threat. This explains why the allied coalitions remained intact even as they were materially much more powerful throughout most of the period of analysis.

### **Conceptual Shortcomings**

The following paragraphs will explain the theories' background and the implications thereof for its analytical utility, additionally the theories most pressing shortcomings will also be explicated.

#### A Narrow Definition of Security

Placed firmly within the Traditionalist' camp explained above TPT uses a distinctly narrow definition of security: "(...) the study of the threat, use and control of military force" (Walt, 1991, p. 212). The subject of Security Studies is defined accordingly:

"It explores the conditions that make the use of force more likely, the ways that the use of force affects individuals, states and societies, and the specific policies that states adopt in order to prepare for, prevent, or engage in war" (Walt, 1991 p. 212).

In this definition the referent of security is the state and security effectively means *state* security. The threats to this security are always military in nature and posed by other states (Krause & Williams, 1996, p. 232). Although the security of individuals is also mentioned the state is the only actor that has control over this.

This focus – as any in the social sciences – is not objective, but based on ontological, epistemological and political choices defining what security is, and what it is not (Ibid., 1996, p. 234). What choices does Walt make? In the broader landscape of IR-theories Walt regards himself a Realist and sees Security Studies as comfortably fitting within the Realist paradigm (Walt, 1991, p.212). TPT's narrow understanding of security stems largely from the realist tenets of this theory that can be traced all the way back to Hobbesian thought: individuals must delegate their natural rights to a sovereign – i.e. the state – to avoid an anarchic 'state of nature' in which there is no law, no one is safe and war – or the threat thereof – is constant (Haftendorn, 1991, pp. 4-7) The security of individuals is inextricably tied to that of the state and its sovereignty, the state is thus the only one that can guarantee citizens their security. In Realist theory this state is treated as an individual, an autonomous rational unitary actor amidst similar actors. These others automatically become the source of insecurity because

they are rational actors acting in their own interest – ultimately by violent means – and on the international level there is no sovereign to avoid the state of nature. Thus the state is never secure and anarchy is the innate state of international relations.

#### Intellectual Coherence and Practical Relevance

This narrow focus excludes many phenomena from analysis. Still Walt as a Traditionalist argues against broadening the concept. The inclusion of non-military issues would overstretch it and make it lose its intellectual coherence. Although Walt is never explicit on what intellectual coherence is, he seems to argue that a concept is only useful when it provides sufficient focus and simplifies the complexities of reality (Owen, 2008, pp. 35-41). This is in line with the positivistic epistemology of this Rationalist theory outlined earlier: The causal explanations that Walt wants beg a clear and limited scope. Broadening the concept could lead to it eventually including all unpleasant things and issues such as pollution, disease, child abuse or economic recessions, according to Walt (1991, p. 213). A very broad range of issues under the rubric would make its meaning become void (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 2). However, the choice for a narrow scope creates several problems for the theory.

Firstly the empirical argument, it seems that Walt's focus on analytical clarity has come at the cost of adequately explaining threat perception in the real world. Walt's state based conception of security can effectively be equated with retaining sovereignty; states are the only actor with control over armies and are thus the only ones able to protect their citizens. But is retaining sovereignty always a legitimate criterion to be equated with security? This is doubtful; environmental threats, epidemics, civil war etc. all evidently pose a threat to the lives of individuals. AIDS for example caused an estimate of 1.8 million deaths in 2009 alone (UNAIDS, 2010). By comparison, the interstate conflict that Walt wants to limit security to has cost 'only' 3.3 million lives since the end of World War II (MacFarlane & Khong, 2006, pp. 134-136). This is but one example of a major threat to the security of citizens that is left out of analysis by equating security with sovereignty of the state. It is hard to maintain that AIDS is not a threat just because it does not threaten sovereignty. Every theory excludes, but it seems here that TPT excludes too many things that threaten the lives of many people to still give an adequate representation of what 'security' and 'threats' mean in the real world.

Secondly, the theory does introduce an immaterial component to threat perception but does not follow it through. Despite a heavily objectivist ontology Walt brings an interesting immaterial element into his theory. Aggressive intentions were included to improve the theory; not just a state's material means influence threat perception, their proclaimed or perceived intentions are as well. This bit of 'ideational causation' enabled Walt to explain the lack of balancing in the case of World War II. But he leaves the door ajar, still only allowing

threats to be perceived in threats to sovereignty. This way the potential explanatory power generated by this intersubjective path is not fully utilized.

Apart from arguing for intellectual coherence, Walt gives practical relevance as an argument for retaining a narrow scope:

If security studies succumbs to the tendency for academic disciplines to pursue “ the trivial, the formal, the methodological, the purely theoretical, the remotely historical- in short, the politically irrelevant” (Morgenthau, 1966:73), its theoretical progress and its practical value will inevitably decline (Walt, 1991, p. 222).

So if Security Studies wants to retain political relevance it must retain its focus on things that can be altered by policy: military power is the central mean to cope with security issues and is subject to political control, this is the subject of study. Keeping the field relevant for policy makers means preserving the narrow realist nature of the concept. This argument only has limited value. Policy relevance is never established unambiguously; a security concept enabling the incorporation of environmental issues or epidemics could be of use to many policy makers around the world dealing with these issues. For them these problems are far from ‘purely theoretical or remotely historical’. Actually, these comments seem more appropriate for the strategic Cold War studies of all-out nuclear war. A broadening of the concept to include phenomena that are – by killing many on a yearly basis – security issues would likely only enhance the policy relevance of the concept bestowing it with both practical and scientific relevance.

It can be concluded that TPT’s narrow focus on military violence between states is based on its Realist theoretical roots in combination with a objectivist ontology and positivist epistemology. Walt’s arguments for this narrow focus are solely negative: a narrow concept is better because a broader one could create conceptual difficulties. No real arguments in favor of a narrow scope are mentioned. Meanwhile, the narrow focus has undoubtedly generated several problems for the theory. It excludes a broad range of phenomena that – on the basis of the number of deadly victims caused – can be argued to be security issues. It eventually hurts the theories’ scientific and practical relevance and makes answering the research question in this paper seemingly impossible.

### **Conceptual Ambiguities**

Walt’s theory leaves some matters unspecified. The ambiguities lead the theory to exclude only little and make it hard to come up with empirical evidence that could contradict the theory. For example, as soon as one of the four factors is present – in any measure – it could in theory lead to a state being seen as threatening. Most importantly, these ambiguities make the theory hard to test. In this paragraph ambiguities concerning the relations and hierarchy

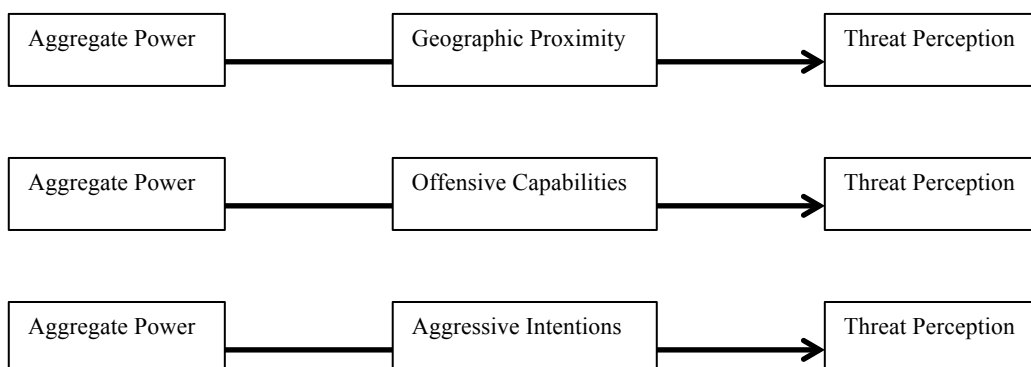


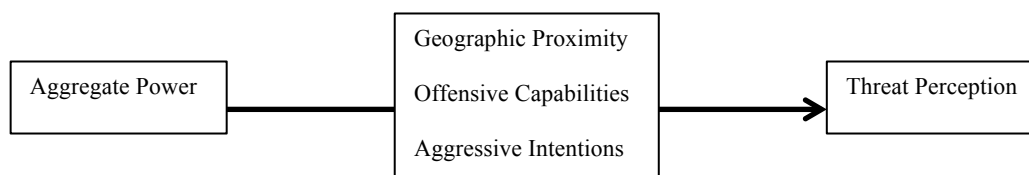
between the four factors, the focus of the theory etc. will be addressed and resolved. Then a conceptual model and several hypotheses will be specified.

Firstly, Walt does not specify the hierarchy between the factors. Are they all equally important in determining threat perception or are some more important than others? Walt argues this can differ per case: “One can not determine a priori, however, which sources of threat will be most important in any given case; one can only say that all of them are likely to play a role” (Ibid., p. 26). But in practice Walt does appear to see aggregate power as the most important factor. Analysis in his book always begins with aggregate power, only when this is insufficient to understand a certain alliance formation the other factors are brought into play. According to Walt: “By using balance of threat theory, we can understand a number of events that we cannot explain by focusing solely on the distribution of aggregate capabilities” (Walt, 1987, pp. 263-264).

Secondly, Walt remains unclear with regards to the relationship between the different variables (Walt, 1985, p. 12). Are there necessary and/or sufficient factors? It will be assumed in this paper that there is a hierarchy between the different factors – or variables – Walt specifies. Aggregate power is considered the most important factor in determining threat perception. It is a necessary condition without which a state cannot be perceived as threatening. It is not considered a sufficient factor however; it alone does not make a state perceived as a threat. This is where I disagree with Walt, he did seem to see aggregate power as a sufficient condition in some cases and only added the other factors if aggregate power did not provide an explanation. It will be argued here that at least one of these other factors has to be present. These additional factors are neither necessary nor sufficient. Not one of them alone would lead to a state being perceived a threat, and neither of them is necessary for it either. Instead, the more of them present and the higher their value the more likely that aggregate power will lead to threat perception (Goertz, 2006, p. 45)

**Figure 2.1 "Conceptual Models Threat Perception Theory"**





The conceptual models show aggregate power as the independent or explanatory variable. The level of threat perception is the dependent variable. There is a positive relationship between these variables: as the aggregate power of an actor increases, the perception of the actor as threatening/as a threat becomes stronger. The first three models are included to show that each of the factors has a separate effect on threat perception. The last conceptual model is the complete version in which all factors are included simultaneously. The factors are so-called mediating variables (Vennix, 2006, p. 117); without them aggregate power alone would not lead to perceiving an actor as a threat. The last model shows the relationship of the different variables vis-à-vis each other: the more of them present and the higher their value, the more likely that aggregate power leads to the perception of an actor as a threat.

Another issue needs to be addressed before hypotheses can be posited. Walt's theory is originally only about the threat perception of states. This was a conscious choice in Walt's endeavour to keep the research agenda of Security Studies limited to statist and military phenomena in order to retain intellectual coherence. This is broadened to 'actors' in this paper. This adjustment will allow TPT to analyse the non-state actors in this paper. Another adjustment to the hypotheses concerns their deterministic nature. Walt's original theory formulates probabilistic hypotheses but as this is a case study these could not be tested here.

TPT can be summarized in one background condition and four hypotheses. These are presented below, under each hypothesis is a so-called shadow hypothesis specifying the criteria for its falsification.

Background condition: Aggregate power is a necessary factor for an actor to be perceived a threat.

TPTH1: If an actor with aggregate power is geographically proximate, it will *ceteris paribus* be perceived to be a threat.

TPTH1 is considered falsified if an actor is considered threatening without having aggregate power and being geographically proximate. Or if an actor is not considered a threat whilst having aggregate power and being geographically proximate.

TPTH2: If an actor with aggregate power has offensive capabilities, it will *ceteris paribus* be perceived to be a threat.

TPTH2 is considered falsified if an actor is considered threatening without having aggregate power and offensive capabilities. Or if an actor is not considered a threat whilst having aggregate power and offensive capabilities.

TPTH3: If an actor with aggregate power has aggressive intentions, it will *ceteris paribus* be perceived to be a threat.

TPTH3 is considered falsified if an actor is considered threatening without having aggregate power and offensive intentions. Or if an actor is not considered a threat whilst having aggregate power and offensive intentions.

TPTH4 Geographic proximity, offensive capabilities and aggressive intentions have a reinforcing effect, the more of them present in an actor with aggregate power and the higher their value, the more likely threat perception will be.

TPTH4 is considered falsified if an actor is considered threatening without being geographically proximate, without offensive capabilities or aggressive intentions or if an actor is not considered threatening despite its geographic proximity, offensive capabilities and aggressive intentions.

## Securitization Theory

What is security according to Securitization Theory (ST)? The core of ST lies in its constructivist background. Security is the survival of a particular object in the face of an existential threat. A rhetorical process establishes what this existential threat is. Because of the intersubjective ontology mentioned earlier, the definition of security becomes extremely broad: anything can in principle be a threat. The only demand is that a relevant audience accepts it as such. The act of constructing this shared meaning is called securitization. Securitization is the subject of security studies: What actors under what conditions and with what effects can successfully securitize which issues (Buzan et al., 1998, p.26)?

A securitizing move is considered successful when a certain issue is successfully established as an existential threat – i.e. something that threatens the very existence of the referent object – with a relevant audience. If this happens a certain platform is created in society through which it becomes possible to take measures that could otherwise not be taken. An issue is then considered securitized. When security is successfully invoked a different political logic comes into play: a state of emergency is created and the use of extraordinary means to handle the threat is justified (Ibid., p. 27). So, the securitizing actor is allowed to break free of the rules and/or constraints it would be normally bound by because the issue has to be dealt with.

Securitization is a so-called speech act, meaning that the utterance itself is the act like saying “I do” in front of the altar (Ibid., 24-26). It is herein that the core of its intersubjective ontology lies; saying something can create a certain reality as long as we all accept it. This represents a clear departure from the objectivist ontology that was retained in Traditionalist TPT, where security had to have a strong materialist base in resources, proximity and capability.

Securitization establishes a degree of urgency to an issue and places it at the top of the political agenda. In this sense securitization is an extreme form of politicization; the higher the degree of politicization the higher the priority on the policy agenda (Ibid., pp.20-24). Paradoxically, securitization is also opposed to politicization because the extreme priority associated with security issues often places an issue outside the realm of normal – democratic – politics (Ibid., 29).

The intersubjective nature and broad definition of security used by ST enable the theory to include all the issues Walt wanted to keep off the security agenda, and more. Epidemics, floods, migrations, the environment etc. can all be security issues as long as the rhetorical process of securitization is successful. The process of securitization itself differs a little per sector. The Copenhagen School distinguishes between five sectors: military, environmental, economic, societal and political. Each with its own specific dynamic. In the military sector threats are usually posed by military actors directed against the survival of the state in the environmental sector a threat could be the survival of human life on earth, etc. (Ibid., pp. 26-27).

### **Security Actors and Facilitating Conditions**

Even though in principle anything can be security according to ST, some issues are more likely to be securitized than others. This is determined by so-called facilitating conditions. Buzan et al. specify four: following the ‘rules of the act’, the position of the securitizing actor, the objective characteristics of the issue, and the scale level of the referent object.

Firstly the following of the rules of the act, the person or group of people making the securitizing move – the securitizing actor – should follow the rules of the act and make use of the ‘grammar of security’ by using a specific structure constructing a plot that includes an existential threat to a specific referent object, a point of no return and a possible way out (Ibid., p. 33). The more accurate this rhetorical structure is formed and the more of the above three elements are present, the more likely successful securitization will be.

Secondly, the actor needs to have a position from which the securitizing act can be made. The chance of successful securitization depends on the relationship between the securitizing actor and its audience. The securitizing actor needs to have a certain measure of

social capital, a position of authority with its audience: if the audience to which the threat is presented is inclined to believe the speaker or consider him or her as having a legitimate voice on that specific issue they are more likely to accept the securitizing move.

Thirdly, securitization is more likely to occur if a phenomenon has traits which can be commonsensically seen as threatening – e.g. a nearing enemy army would be easier to securitize than a budget deficit (Ibid., pp. 32-34). Buzan et al. remain vague with regards to this criterion. The criteria that will be used in this research will be explicated in the operationalization.

Finally, the scale level of the referent object – that which is presented as being threatened – is important. This spectrum ranges from the micro scale – individuals, small groups, etc. – to the system level –e.g. humankind. Generally referent objects on the middle scale-level, which is predominantly made up by states, have been the most successful in being securitized. Reason is the strong identification that is generated on this level by a dynamic of rivalry with other limited collectivities. This strengthens the ‘we’-feeling within the own collectivity (Ibid., pp. 36-38). Within this middle scale-level, the state is the most successful actor in securitization. The state is historically endowed with security tasks and structured to these purposes over time (Ibid., p. 40). Therefore the authoritative position of securitizing actors on the state level is usually higher. Additionally, a state usually has very clear rules with regards to who can speak on its behalf while this legitimacy is usually more problematic with actors on other scales (Ibid., p. 41).

### **Conceptual Ambiguities**

As with TPT the relations and hierarchy between the different variables remain largely unspecified. This section will remove ambiguities and inconsistencies in order to enable a proper testing of the theory.

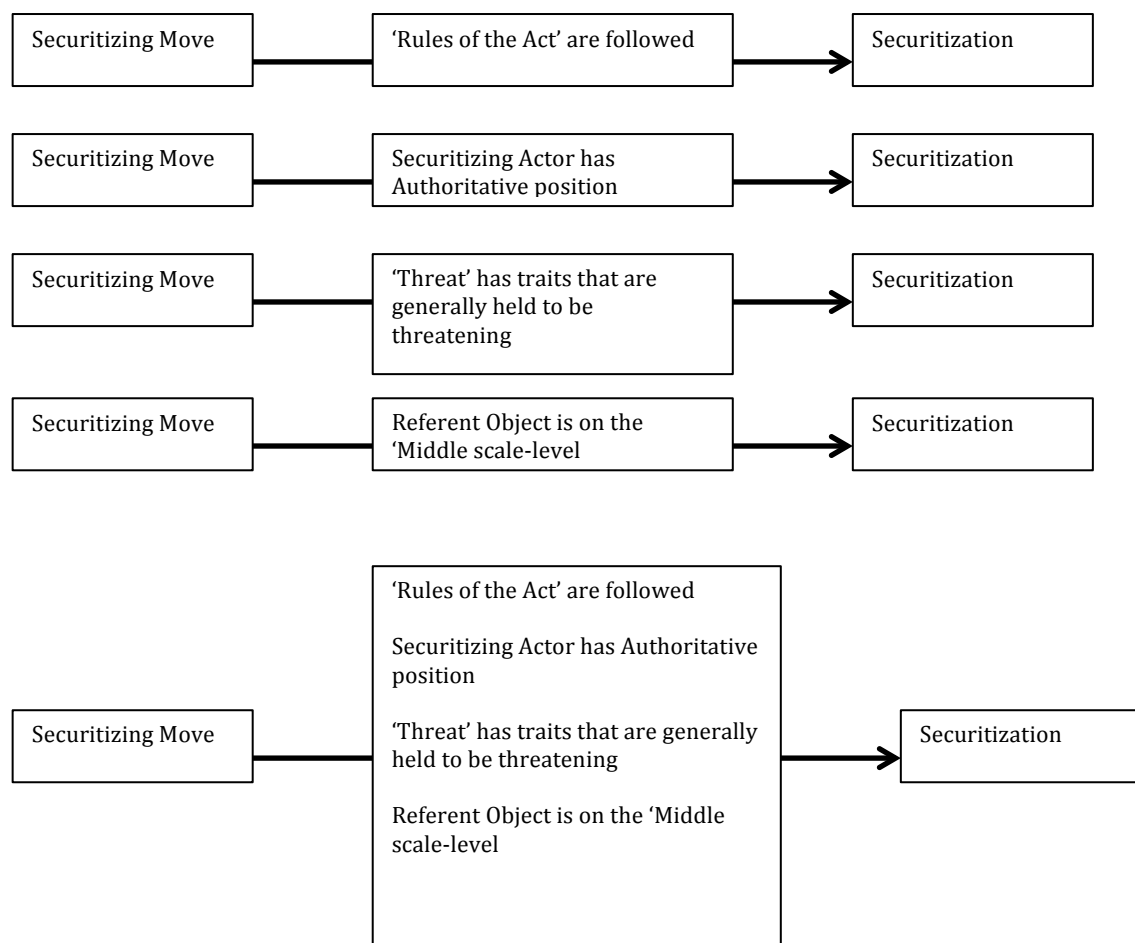
Firstly, the making of a securitizing move will be regarded a necessary or background condition: securitization is impossible without a securitizing move. Although Buzan et al. do not explicitly state the making of a securitizing move as a necessary condition their book suggests the same:

Threats and vulnerabilities can arise in many different areas, military and non-military, but to count as security issues they have to meet strictly defined criteria that distinguish them from the normal run of the merely political. They have to be staged as existential threats to a referent object by a securitizing actor (...) (Buzan et al., 1998, p.5).

Securitization is not a sufficient factor as the making of a securitizing move does not automatically result in securitization.

Secondly the relation between the different variables remains largely unspecified in the theory. Buzan et al. do indicate that they see the facilitating conditions as increasing the chances of successful securitization. Here it is assumed that the making of a securitizing move is a necessary condition without which securitization cannot occur. It is not a sufficient condition however because at least one of the four mediating variables need to be present in order to lead to securitization. These four mediating variables have a positive influence on the relationship between the securitizing move and successful securitization: the more conditions present and the higher their measure the more likely successful securitization will be (Vennix, 2006, p.117). Again, these variables are not sufficient conditions because none of them can lead to securitization by themselves. Also, none of the variables is by itself a necessary condition for securitization; at least one of four needs to be present but it can be either one.

**Figure 2.2 "Conceptual Models Securitization Theory"**



Again several conceptual models are included to show the separate effect of each variable on securitization. The securitizing move is the independent or explanatory variable and securitization is the dependent variable. There is a positive relationship between these

variables. Each of the four factors in the models leads to securitization; the more of them present, the higher the likelihood of successful securitization. These are mediating variables: without any of these a securitizing move would not lead to securitization.

As with the adjustments made in TPT, here too the original probabilistic hypotheses will be adjusted into a deterministic form in order to enable testing in the case-study format used in this paper. The hypotheses are presented below, under each is a so-called shadow hypothesis specifying the criteria for its falsification.

Background condition: Securitizing move is a necessary factor: a securitizing move has to be made in order for securitization to occur.

STH1: If a securitizing move is made and the 'rules of the act' are followed, the securitizing move will *ceteris paribus* be successful.

H2 will be considered falsified if securitization is not successful whilst the rules of the act are followed.

STH2: If a securitizing move is made and the securitizing actor has an authoritative position, the securitizing move will *ceteris paribus* be successful.

H2 will be considered falsified if securitization is not successful whilst the actor has an authoritative position.

STH3: If a securitizing move is made and the issue designated as an existential threat has traits that are generally held to be threatening, the securitizing move will *ceteris paribus* be successful.

H3 will be considered falsified if securitization is not successful whilst the issue securitized has traits that are generally held to be threatening.

STH4: If a securitizing move is made and the referent object is located on the middle scale-level, the securitizing move will *ceteris paribus* be successful.

H4 will be considered falsified if securitization is not successful whilst the referent object is on the middle scale level.

STH5: Following the rules of the act, an authoritative securitizing actor, a referent object on the middle scale and traits that are generally held to be threatening have a reinforcing effect on each other; the more of these factors present and the higher their value, the greater the chance a particular securitizing move has of being successful.

STH5 is considered falsified if a securitizing move is successful without following the rules of the act, having an authoritative securitizing actor or a referent object on the middle scale with traits that are generally held to be threatening or if an actor is not considered threatening despite the presence of all the aforementioned factors.

### **Conceptual Shortcomings**

ST claims to improve upon Traditionalist theories such as TPT by its broader scope. This scope does indeed seem to make the theory more flexible, but at what cost?

The flexibility in expanding security stems from the broad definition the Copenhagen School uses: “Security is the survival of a particular object in the face of an existential threat” (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 27). Neither the object, nor the threat is defined any further so instead of limiting security to a certain sphere practically anything can be security. This circumvents the aforementioned problems of a narrow scope but does make the ST susceptible to Walt’s earlier criticism of endangering intellectual coherence: with little or no presumed objective basis to security practically anything can be security (Williams, 2003, pp. 513-515). But Buzan et al (1998, p.2) argue that widening the concept does not have to come at the cost of analytic utility or intellectual coherence:

By placing the survival of collective units and principles – the politics of existential threat – as the defining core of security studies, we have the basis for applying security analysis to a variety of sectors without losing the essential quality of the concept (Ibid., pp. 27-28).

So by defining the core of Security Studies as ‘the politics of existential threat’ the research area of Security Studies is drastically widened whilst limiting it to a certain rhetorical process at the same time. The intersubjective ontology and constructivist nature of ST allow it to analyse a securitizing move as a speech act. This way the criterion for security is not the avoidance of things considered harmful or destructive, but a specific rhetorical structure: when a speech act does not use the security grammar it is not security (Ibid.). So ST seems to cleverly succeed in widening the concept of security whilst retaining a certain core of its meaning – i.e. a specific rhetorical process. Copenhagen scholars claim they have the benefits of a broader scope without the problems Walt and other Traditionalists mention.

Still their inventive approach also causes some potential problems. Buzan et al. never clarify to what extent an objective basis is needed. They call securitization an “essentially” intersubjective process but never give an example of objective threats. This makes it difficult to specify the variable ‘facilitating objective features’. The authors seem to leave the objective basis behind completely, the argument being that because no theory of security has yet been able to provide an objective measure of security, “real security” simply cannot be



measured. Therefore the focus should be on studying the dynamics and processes (Buzan et al., 1998, pp. 30-31). But leaving the objective basis behind completely is problematic for three reasons:

Firstly, one cannot deny that a certain objective reality – however thin – exists without succumbing to a completely subjectivist, post-positivistic worldview that is of little informative value. The recognition of social construction could enhance the explanatory power of ST but it should not deny the existence of any form of objective reality. Jutta Weldes argues that the representation of any issue faces ‘reality constraints’ (Weldes, 1996, p. 286). She gives the example of the Cuban Missile Crisis. The missiles in this crisis were actually placed; there is no way around this fact. Therefore any interpretation of the situation must necessarily recognize this fact – i.e. the missiles can be seen as a reality constraint on the construction of a plausible representation of reality. These reality constraints limit the freedom of securitizing actors in constructing a certain plausible intersubjectively shared understanding of a threat. In other words: securitization is not plausibly a case of ‘ideas all the way down’. Therefore, in this paper an objective basis to security is presupposed in the sense that an issue presented as a threat has to be deadly. This criterion will be explained further in the operationalization.

Secondly, lack of an objective basis could also have negative consequences in the real-world political context. Invoking security sets political priorities, intensifies executive powers, strengthens claims to rights of secrecy and often justifies the use of force. It changes the way politics is conducted into a more authoritative, coercive and aggressive direction. Securitization it seems is in many ways antithetical to good democratic politics. It is therefore that Buzan et al. argue to avoid excessive securitization and promote desecuritization (pp. 208-211). Which in turn seems contradictory to their objective of widening the scope of Security Studies to include almost everything possible, spreading the anti-democratic tendencies of security politics into more policy areas.

A last point of criticism can be made with regards to the under-specification of the audience. For all the deepening and widening Buzan et al. propagate in their theory, the audience as an actor is left behind. Buzan et al. do mention this actor but keep the character of the audience exogenous to their model. Because security can only be intersubjectively established the audience is of critical importance. It is not plausible that the audience is simply a homogeneous group. The large differences between audiences could be an important factor in deciding the successfulness of a securitizing move or determining its form. Salter has done further research into this and finds four audiences: popular, elite, technocratic and scientific. That each accept securitization on different grounds, these can be classified as four different ‘settings’, each shaping the speaker-audience relationship differently (Salter, 2008, pp. 326-331). This nuance enhances the explanatory power of the theory. For example, the

securitization of global warming could be different amongst scientists and the elite level (Ibid.). Although it would be both informative to incorporate the possible effects of different audiences, this paper will regard the audience as a homogeneous group due to lack of time and space.

## Chapter 3

# Operationalization

To test the hypotheses formulated in the preceding chapter the various variables in these hypotheses will now be operationalized. This chapter also describes and justifies the research design used in this paper.

### Research Design

#### Multiple Case Study

The research in this paper is a multiple case study with two cases:

- Threat perception with regards to terrorism in the period around the 9/11 attacks. The period of analysis is 1998-2004, this seven-year period makes it possible to analyse threat perception shortly before 9/11 and in the period after the attacks. This way the effect of the attacks and their aftermath can clearly be seen;
- Threat perception with regards to climate change and global warming around the occurrence of Hurricane Katrina. In this paper the 2002-2004 period will be analysed. Again, this period makes it possible to analyse threat perception shortly before Katrina and in the period thereafter. This way the effect of the hurricane – or lack thereof – can clearly be seen.

The multiple case study design was chosen because of the explorative nature of this research. Threat Perception Theory (TPT) is tested in two new areas that are a challenge to its narrow definition of security. The theory will thus be used in a new way with an alternative operationalization, which fits better with the explorative model. At the same time Securitization Theory (ST) is still new to the game and still in an early phase of testing and operationalization. Also the emphasis on rhetoric favours an in-depth study into a small number of cases to gain a deeper understanding of the way securitization works (Gerring, 2007, 38-41).

#### Case Selection

The cases in this paper were selected according to the most similar case design, meaning that they share important similarities but show a different outcome on the dependent variable (Gerring, 2007, pp. 131-134). Both terrorism and climate change can be seen as threatening because they have both have taken a large number of lives and have the possibility of reoccurring. Still threat perception and the eventual reaction were practically opposite for both issues: the 9/11 attacks led to a Global War on Terror while Katrina's destruction seemed to have little consequences whatsoever.

Apart from attempting to answer the research question this paper wants to contribute to the scientific debate within security studies that was described in the previous chapter. To do so both theories have to be subjected to a solid test. This is another reason for the case selection both cases present a challenge to the theories under scrutiny.

On the face of it, it is difficult to apply TPT to the cases because both of them are outside the theories' original scope: terrorists are non-state actors and hurricanes – difficult even to describe as 'actors' – do not use military force. The theory will be widened in its operationalization to include non-state and non-military threats. This can be regarded as a test of last resort. If the theory is still unable to meaningfully analyse the cases and provide an answer to the research question this would be a strong argument against the usability of the theory for the broad group of security issues outside the statist/military realm.

The challenge for ST lies elsewhere. The Copenhagen School claims to be able to analyse security in any form because of its focus on security as a rhetorical construct. But the theory is vague at points and raises the suspicion of excluding little. In general, not much actual tests of the theory are known. Will the theory succumb to the Traditionalists' criticism of being too wide and therefore meaningless?

### **Operationalization**

Below the concepts from the various hypotheses will be defined and operationalized. The first part of the operationalization will feature the definitions that will be used in this paper. The second part operationalizes the different variables and defines how they will be measured. For TPT each variable will be analysed separately for both of the cases in order to enable the theory to measure both climate change and terrorism.

#### Definitions

##### Terrorism

The working definition used here is a combination of Title 22 of the United States Code, section 2656(d) (Ruby, 2002, pp. 9-12) and the work of Kaplan (1981, pp. 35-36):

*“Terrorism” is politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or individuals, intended to create a fearful state of mind in an audience different from the victims, to influence this audience.*

This is a relatively narrow definition of terrorism. It excludes actions by state forces against its own civilians and violence that is conducted for non-political reasons. The reason this definition is used is that it is closest to the way the US government – the country in which threat perception will be measured – sees terrorism.

### Existential Threat

An existential threat is something that threatens the survival of a particular referent object. Although anything could in principle be the threatened object in this paper it is the survival of the US. So, an existential threat is something that threatens the existence of the United States (Buzan et al., pp. 20-22). Survival is understood here as internal sovereignty. A sovereign state is a state with a defined territory, a government and population on which it exercises *de facto* administrative control (Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, 2010). Consequently, the following definition will be used:

*An “existential threat” is something that threatens the United States government, population or territory.*

### Climate Change, Global Warming and Hurricanes

Climate change is here defined in line with the definition of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). In article 1, paragraph 2 of the convention the following definition is given:

*“Climate change” means a change of climate, which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods (United Nations, 1992).*

Although often used interchangeably, global warming and climate change are not the same. The following definition of global warming will be used:

*“Global warming” is the gradual increase of the temperature of the earth’s lower atmosphere as a result of the increase in greenhouse gases since the industrial revolution (United Nations, 1992).*

The UNFCCC is a widely respected actor and policy makers often use the definition. Although the science behind both climate change and global warming is still debated by some, these UNFCCC definitions are relatively uncontroversial.

As climate change is a very broad concept it becomes difficult to research its direct manifestations. In this paper hurricanes were chosen as a representative of a potential consequence of global warming that threaten security in a more direct way. The NOAA releases various seasonal activity outlooks and predictions on severity of the hurricanes (NOAA, 2011). To be able to use their data the same definition will be adopted:

*“Hurricanes” are cyclones with maximum 1-minute surface winds of at least 74 mph.*

### Actor

To enable a broadening of TPT 'states' will be replaced by 'actors' as possible threats:

*An "actor" is a subject within a system that has the ability to affect this system with its behaviour.*

Thus understood entities and phenomena other than states can 'act' too – e.g. terrorist organizations and hurricanes.

### Securitizing Actor

Anyone can in principle be a securitizing actor. It is someone or a group that performs the security speech act – i.e. an attempt to label a certain issue as 'security'. Examples are: political leaders, bureaucracies, governments, lobbyists, pressure groups etc. (Buzan et al., 1998, pp. 36-40). In this paper a securitizing actor is defined as follows:

*A "securitizing actor" is an actor who securitizes a certain issue by declaring something – a referent object – existentially threatened (Buzan et al., 1998, p.36).*

## Variables

### Al Qaeda's Aggregate Power

The measurement of aggregate power is inspired on the measure commonly used to measure national resources, the Composite Index of National Capabilities or CINC-index. Consequently the aggregate power of Al Qaeda will be measured in three dimensions: financial, military and size.

The financial dimension is understood as the centrally managed portion of the budget of a specific organisation measured in US Dollars per year. Terrorist organizations such as Al Qaeda have a very secretive and disparate financial structure (Basile, 2005, p. 169). The U.S. government bases its assessments on CIA data but these are classified. Therefore this paper will use the intercepted funds by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) as a measure of financial power. The OFAC is part of the U.S. Treasury Department and annually reports the number of funds intercepted from a specific organization (OFAC, 2001, p.1). The more it intercepts, the higher the Al Qaeda's budget – and thus its financial power – is considered to be. The measure is not ideal as it is influenced by the efficacy of the OFAC but it is the best indication publically available. Also it is measured annually making data comparable (Shapiro & Siegel, 2007, pp. 407-409). The indicator 'OFAC Intercepts' will be continuous in character, blocked funds will be compared to the preceding year to determine if they were lower or higher.

The military dimension is measured in the number of fatalities caused by Al Qaeda attacks in a specific year. This result-oriented measure is better than measuring arms expenditures of military personnel because terrorist organizations typically use non-traditional methods of warfare. This measure gives a good indication of the efficacy of a terrorist organisation and as such of its 'military' power. The data for the number of casualties Al Qaeda made in a specific year are gathered from a UN report (United Nations Security Council, 2002, pp. 27-28). Data on the nationality and location of victims would be helpful; it is expected that victims of western/American descent would have a deeper impact on threat perception. Unfortunately this information is not available. The indicator 'Al Qaeda Casualties' will be continuous.

Lastly, the size of a terrorist organization will be measured. Because of the covert nature of Al Qaeda it is impossible to accurately determine its size: estimates range from several hundred to several thousand members (Bajoria & Bruno, 2011). From the total group of members a distinction can be made between 'core members', 'affiliated fighters and funders' and 'adherents'. Here only the first group will be counted as they have the most power in the organization and are easier to count than the other two larger and looser-knit groups. Experts' estimates of the size of this core group still vary greatly but there is a broad consensus on certain developments of Al Qaeda's size over the years (The Wall Street Journal, 2011). This trend will be used to assess the organizations size.

These indicators will be measured separately in order to be able to clearly show the distinctive development of each.

#### Hurricanes' Aggregate Power

Operationalization oriented on national resources and power is useless to measure hurricanes' aggregate power. Instead the Accumulated Cyclone Energy (ACE) index for the Atlantic Basin will be used. This is a wind energy index – i.e. the sum of the squares of the maximum sustained surface wind speed calculated every six hours for all storms (NOAA, 2011). It is measured as the percentage of the 1981-latest year median. This variable has four categories ranging from 0 to 300%

- means from 0-71% are classified as a below-normal season;
- 72-111% is a near-normal season;
- 112-135% is an above-normal season;
- above 135% is a hyperactive season (NOAA, 2011).

Put simply, the higher the ACE-index, the longer the duration and the higher the intensity of all hurricanes combined in a specific season. As intensity and duration are good predictors of the potential damage a hurricane could do, the ACE-index will be used to measure hurricanes' aggregate power.

### Geographic Proximity

Geographic proximity is considered to have two dimensions: proximity of Al Qaeda headquarters and US presence. Another dimension that was considered was the location and nationality of casualties of terrorist attacks. Fatalities in far-off places and of non-American or Western descent are likely to be of less influence on threat perception than an attack at home. Unfortunately data are not specified to include nationality and location, so the possible effects of nationality and spread of the victims cannot be researched here.

Al Qaeda's location cannot be pointed out on a map like a state. Because headquarters are usually the place where an organization is most powerful, the location of Al Qaeda's headquarters will be used as a substitute for a state capital. Although most information is classified relatively reliable assessments of the whereabouts of Al Qaeda can be obtained in various UN Security Council documents or reports by the U.S. Department of State (Bajoria & Bruno, 2011). This indicator 'HQ Proximity' will then measure the distance in kilometres from the area that a terrorist organization is believed to have its headquarters to the capital of the US, Washington DC.

Apart from their headquarters terrorists can be present anywhere. If Al Qaeda were to have active cells within the US in a specific year it would drastically increase its geographic proximity. Therefore an indicator measuring the presence of Al Qaeda's members in the U.S. in a particular year will be included. 'U.S. Presence' will be a dichotomous variable with the following values: 1: presence of al Qaeda cells on U.S. soil; 0: absence of Al Qaeda cells on U.S. soil. The variable will be constructed using information from the media and other secondary sources because official data are classified.

### Geographical Risk

For hurricanes, constantly moving at a high speed, geographic proximity is not an adequate measure. Instead geographical risk will be measured to capture the geographical element of TPT. This variable consists of two dimensions, the number of hurricanes predicted and the number of hurricanes predicted to make landfall (NOAA, 2012b).

The number of hurricanes predicted is measured by the estimates by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The NOAA gives a yearly outlook of the hurricane season - from 1 June till 1 November - based on wind patterns, air pressure and ocean temperature in combination with large-scale climate factors and models that directly predict seasonal activity. The NOAA predicts the number of named storms, hurricanes and major hurricanes. The last two categories are combined to form the number of predicted hurricanes indicator.

This will be compounded with the expected number of hurricanes to make landfall on US soil. Although this indicator is notoriously inaccurate – NOAA stopped publishing these



data in 2008 for this reason – they are still included because they were considered to be an indicator of geographical risk before.

The two indicators will be used separately to determine the measure of geographical risk. Apart from these numerical measurements the tone of the yearly outlook report will be taken into account.

#### Al Qaeda's Offensive Capabilities

This variable will be similar to the military dimension of Al Qaeda's aggregate power. Measuring the number of fatalities by attacks in a specific year gives the best estimate of how well developed a specific organizations' offensive capabilities are. Especially when this organization does not use traditional military methods of warfare.

#### Hurricanes' Offensive Capabilities

Hurricanes' offensive capabilities will be measured using two dimensions covering human and material damage (Blake, Landsea & Gibney, 2011, pp. 2-5). The indicator 'Hurricane Casualties' which is the total number of direct fatalities caused by a hurricane in the U.S. in a specific year will measure the human dimension. The indicator 'Hurricane Cost' is an aggregate of the material damage of hurricanes in a specific season measured in US Dollars.

Both indicators are continuous. They will be retrieved from the NOAA's monthly weather summaries. Because damage and death toll cannot be accurately predicted the variables value is based on the preceding year – e.g. offensive capabilities of hurricanes in 2006 are determined by looking at the data from 2005.

#### Al Qaeda's Aggressive Intentions

TPT does not specify on what elements the perception of an actor's aggressive intentions are based. This paper looks at public statements by Al Qaeda leaders to determine the organizations' intentions and evolving ideology. This measure was chosen because it is simpler and more specific than a state's own interpretation of an actor's behaviour. Analysis will focus on utterings by Osama Bin Laden as leader of Al Qaeda but also feature statements by his deputy Ayman Al Zawahiri – considered to be Al Qaeda's chief ideologue. Speeches and the assessment thereof will be gathered from a Congressional Research Service Report for Congress on Al Qaeda's statements and evolving ideology (Blanchard, 2007, pp. 1-3). The language used, the measure of specificity to a threat – is it directed to a certain region, state or person? – will be key in determining the level of offensive intentions. This is a qualitative and interpretative process, which will be explained and explicated for each year of analysis.

### Hurricanes' Aggressive Intentions

This variable will not be measured for hurricanes; natural phenomena such as hurricanes do not act intentionally.

### Securitizing Move

A securitizing move will here be defined in accordance with Buzan et al. (1998, p.24):

*A "securitizing move" is the act of presenting something as an existential threat to a particular referent object (Ibid.).*

This paper will focus primarily on presidential rhetoric. The president, as head of state and commander in chief of the US is a logical and legitimate authority on matters of US national security. Analysis will focus on State of the Union (SotU) speeches. These speeches outline national priorities and the legislative agenda for the coming year, making them a good moment to assess the importance of specific policy issues. Another advantage is their comparability because they are held every year around the same time

The speeches will be studied using interpretative textual analysis into the rhetoric and linkages that are made (Merskin, 2004, p.166): are Al Qaeda and/or climate change presented as existential threats to US national security and if so how? Besides a qualitative assessment the SotU's will also be analysed by means of a quantitative speech analysis. A word count will be done counting the following words:

- Al Qaeda;
- Terrorism;
- WMD's;
- Threat (in relation to terrorism, WMD's, both or other issues).

Also, the location of paragraphs in the speech dealing with terrorism will be recorded. Although it is not possible to quantitatively decide when a securitizing move is made – actors who securitize do not always use the word "security" (Buzan et al., 1998, p.33) – the quantitative measures are useful as they make comparison and analysis of trends easier.

Apart from the State of the Union addresses, several other important and interesting speeches and documents with regards to Al Qaeda and climate change will also be analysed.

With regards to terrorism:

- Presidential address by Bush on the eve of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. A special address to the nation as a reaction to the attacks (CNN, 2001a)
- Bush's speech before a joint session of Congress on September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2001. These speeches are very rare, signifying their importance (CNN, 2001b). This was the speech wherein Bush first declared the War on Terror.
- Bush's 2002 commencement speech at West Point Military academy (Bush, 2002b).
- Bush's update on the war on terror in December 2003. Bush talks about the status of the invasion of Iraq and links the dangers of terrorism to the situation there (Bush, 2003b).
- Bush's press conference after being re-elected in November 2004. Bush clarifies policy priorities for the coming four years (Bush, 2004b).

Because no securitizing moves were found in the SotU's with regards to climate change and global warming, securitizing moves by other government actors were selected in order to be able to analyse the dynamics of securitization here too. Here, securitizing moves were selected on the basis of relevance and availability. In the 2002-2008 period the following securitizing moves were found:

- A contract study done for the Pentagon assessing the implications of abrupt climate change for U.S. national security (Schwarz & Randall, 2003). The study was leaked in 2004.
- A 2007 report by the Center of Naval Analysis focussing on the potential threats of climate change (CNA, 2007).
- A 2008 report by the National Intelligence Council titled: The world by 2025 (NIC, 2008).

#### Successful Securitization

Buzan et al. remain unclear as to what successful securitization is. They seem to only require consent among the relevant audience:

We do not push the demand so high as to say that an emergency measure has to be adopted, only that the existential threat has to be argued and gain enough resonance for a platform to be made from which it is possible to legitimize emergency measures (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 25) .

Contrary to Buzan et al. the legitimate breaking free of rules and procedures by emergency measures will also be analysed in this paper. This element is included because it allows for a more specific measurement of the success of a securitizing move, getting people to support

emergency measures is harder than getting them to agree on an issue as threatening. Consequently securitization will be treated as a two-stage process and successful securitization becomes a variable with two dimensions: the stage of identification and the stage of mobilization (Roe, 2008, pp. 615-62).

First the stage of identification, this is the acceptance by a relevant audience of a certain issue being 'about security'. The audience in this paper will be voting-age U.S. citizens. After a securitizing move has been made, a look will be taken at various polling data on threat perception. If there is a significant increase after a securitizing move it can be said that this move was successful in the first stage.

With regards to terrorism various polls will be used as indicators for the identification dimension. Gallup has conducted polls with the questions: "*Now, thinking for a moment about terrorism, how worried are you that you or someone in your family will become a victim of terrorism -- very worried, somewhat worried, not too worried, or not worried at all?*" and "*How likely is it that there will be acts of terrorism in the United States over the next several weeks -- likely, somewhat likely, not too likely, or not at all likely?*" If a respondent is very worried or somewhat worried about an attack on him/her self or his/her family this can be translated into perceiving terrorism as a threat. Both datasets originally used a Likert-scale but will here be converted to dichotomous variables with the categories "Worried/Not Worried" and "Likely/Not likely" to clearly show a trend in the data (Gallup, 2011). The polls were chosen on the basis of availability, comparability and ability to approach the measurement of threat perception as close as possible.

With regards to climate change polls were more difficult to find. They were chosen based on accuracy in measuring threat perception. Several polls are used here in complementary fashion in order to minimize data-gaps. The possible effects of differing questions or lack in polls will be explicated in the analysis. The basis of analysis will consist of two questions from two different datasets. First: "*Thinking about what is said in the news, in your view is the seriousness of global warming – [ROTATED: generally exaggerated, generally correct, or is it generally underestimated]* (Newport, 2010a)?" This question gives an indication as to how serious the public sees the issue of global warming. Despite the fact that this question is indirect – being based on rhetoric in the news – it is a good indication as to how serious the public saw the issue of global warming. The major advantage is that these data are available yearly making them comparable. The second set of data asks respondents if protecting the environment should be a policy priority for Congress and the President (Pew Research Center, 2011a). These data are compounded with the same question on global warming specifically for 2007 and 2008. The best measure of threat perception of global warming is the question whether respondents considered global warming a serious threat in their lifetime. This question was asked only in 2002, 2006 and 2008 (Newport, 2010a).

Despite the limited availability, a combination of these data should enable us to see a trend in the level of identification with the threat of climate change.

Secondly, the stage of mobilization follows the state of identification and measures the acceptance of emergency measures by the audience – public permission – and formal institutions – formal permission. If an issue is successfully securitized emergency measures will be legitimate in the eyes of the audience and formal institutions (Roe, 2008, pp. 629-633). It will be analysed here if the government is able to obtain both formal and public permission for taking emergency measures – these can thus be seen as two indicators. Popular acceptance will be measured by looking at opinion polls. Formal permission will be measured by looking at emergency measures taken in the period of analysis. Although the taking of emergency measures does not imply their approval it is an adequate gauge of formal permission. In a democratic country policy measures have to be approved by representatives of the people. So this is an indirect measure of their approval.

With regards to terrorism, public permission is measured by two polls. One conducted by Pew Research Centre in 2001, 2003 and 2006, asked respondents if they deemed it necessary to give up various civil liberties in order to curb terrorism in the U.S. Giving up civil liberties is a break away from normal democratic politics and the law in the US and as such constitutes an emergency measure (Pew Research Center, 2011c, p.1). Another poll done in 2001, 2002 and 2006 asked respondents directly if they were in favour of various anti-terrorism policies – e.g. mandatory carrying of ID-card, monitoring of personal phone calls and emails etc. By combining these indicators an assessment can be made as to how legitimate the emergency measures taken after 9/11 were in the eyes of the American public. Formal permission will be measured by budget allocations for the War on Terrorism, the money allocated to a certain issue is best evidence of its priority. Other interesting changes in government policy will also be analysed. The choice of these instances will be justified in the analysis.

With regard to climate change public permission was measured using polls in a study by Curry, Ansolabehere, & Herzog that asked respondents if they agreed with a statement on global warming as a serious problem that needed immediate action in 2003 and 2006 (2007, pp.16-17). Furthermore Pew has yearly data available asking respondents if global warming requires immediate government action for 2006 and 2007 (Pew Research Center, 2010, p. 16). Formal permission – or the lack thereof – will be measured by looking at various policy measures with regards to climate change that were taken in the period of analysis. Their respective legitimacy and meaning will be explicated in the analysis.

### Threat Perception

Threat perception for TPT will be measured in the same way as the ‘stage of identification’ under the variable ‘successful securitization’ above. These data are expected to give a reliable indication of threat perception for Walt’s theory.

### Rules of the Act

Buzan et al. (1998, p.33) state that a securitizing move has a higher chance of success when it accurately follows the ‘grammar of security’. There are three elements to the rules of the act:

- An existential threat to a specific referent object that is valued by a group of people;
- A point of no return, the threat has to be handled now, otherwise it will be too late;
- A possible way out – i.e. the proposal of emergency measures.

With each securitizing move it will be analysed to what extent these elements were present. This way of analysis also enables a closer look at the exact process of a specific securitizing move: what was the referent object, how was this threatened etc. Also, it could give insight into additional processes – such as linking threats together – that cannot be specified a priori but could prove important in understanding the process of securitization. The variable is continuous, the extent to which the rule of the act were followed will be determined on the basis of the analysis of the rhetoric in a specific securitizing move.

### Authoritative Position of the Securitizing Actor

Actors that are in a position of authority are more likely to be seen as legitimately ‘speaking security’ and as such are more likely to be successful in securitizing an issue (Ibid., pp. 31-35). Authority is regarded here as having two dimensions: formal and informal authority.

Formal authority refers to the actors’ legitimacy to ‘speak security’ on behalf of the state with regard to a certain subject. For this legitimacy it becomes crucial to look at who can speak security on whose behalf and under what conditions (Ghughunishvili, 2010, p. 22). Here, securitizing actors are regarded to have a formally authoritative position when they are regarded the responsible actor by the relevant audience – i.e. US voting age citizens. In the case of the president the authoritative position can be relatively unambiguously established. When other securitizing actors are being analysed their position of formal authority will be justified in the analysis.

Informal authority attempts to measure the position of the securitizing actor in the eyes of the audience apart from his or her formal authority. Two presidents that formally have the same degree of authority can have a different legitimacy in the eyes of the public. Informal authority will be measured by looking at presidential approval ratings. Gallup (2009) does quarterly polls asking: “Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W.

Bush is handling his job as President?” Presidential approval ratings give a good indication of how citizens think the president is doing his or her job. Generally speaking, a higher percentage of approval means more acceptance of the president and by consequence his or her policies. This is a way to differentiate between the presidents’ position of authority between different years. A job-approval rating of lower than 50% will be considered as a negative impact on the presidents’ authoritative position. The informal authority of other securitizing actors in this paper will be measured with approval ratings or similar measures on the basis of availability.

#### Facilitating Objective Features of the Alleged Threat

Despite the intersubjective ontology not everything can be security. An object that contains traits that are generally held to be threatening is more likely to be securitized (Buzan et al., 1998, pp. 32-33). This paper presupposes a certain objective basis to security, an issue has to contain some traits that can objectively considered threatening. To assess if a threat has a certain objective basis the indicators measuring Al Qaeda’s and Hurricanes’ victims will be used. If a phenomenon can plausibly demand lives it can be regarded as having a certain objective basis or facilitating objective features. This variable is continuous; the higher the risk of casualties in a specific year the higher the facilitating objective features.

#### Scale Level of the Referent Object

ST regards some scale levels as better suited for securitization than others. Securitization on the middle scale-level is most likely to be successful. By looking at the referent object of a securitizing move the scale level can be determined. Three scale levels will be distinguished here: the micro scale (individuals, small groups), middle scale (nation states, small regions) to the system level (societies, human kind) (Buzan et al., 1998, pp. 36-38). The scale level of the referent object will be justified based on rhetorical analysis of the securitizing move.

## **Chapter 4**

### **The Threat of Terrorism Around 9/11**

Before 2001 terrorism was not considered one of the major threats to US national security. In the months leading up to 9/11 the Bush administration saw long-range missiles in the hands of hostile regimes, not terrorism as a threat to national security (Wright, 2004). After the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 took nearly 3000 lives things changed drastically. The US government quickly reacted by making the terrorist threat a priority. Bush articulated the need for a global War on Terror to defeat the dangers that terrorism – especially in the form of Al Qaeda – posed. This war got underway with the invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001 and is still going on to date.

This chapter applies both theories to the period around 9/11 – 1998 to 2004 – to analyse and explain why terrorism was perceived a threat. The first part will feature an analysis using Threat Perception Theory (TPT); the second part features Securitization Theory (ST). After each analysis the consequences of the findings for the respective hypotheses will be explained.

#### **Walt's Threat Perception Theory**

Will the adapted form of TPT be able to explain threat perception of a non-state actor? Below the variables terrorist aggregate power, offensive capabilities, geographic proximity, offensive intentions and threat perception will be analysed.

##### Al Qaeda's Aggregate Power

TPT expects actors with more aggregate power to be more likely to be perceived as threatening. To what extent did Al Qaeda possess aggregate power and how did this develop over time? This variable has three dimensions: financial, fatalities and size. Each is measured separately below.

##### Financial power

Al Qaeda's financial power is measured using the total amount of Al Qaeda funds blocked in the 1998-2004 period. No comparable data are available for 2000 or any of the preceding years regarding Al Qaeda's funds because OFAC's capabilities in blocking funds of international terrorist organizations were only drastically enhanced as a response to the 9/11 attacks. Notably by the USA PATRIOT Act (OFAC, 2001, p.1).



**Table 4.1 "OFAC Seized Al Qaeda Assets"**

2001	\$ 1,125,025
2002	\$ 698, 343
2003	\$ 771,956
2004	\$ 3,889,655

Compiled by author based on  
2001-2004 OFAC reports.

As follows from Table 4.1 there was a large sum of blocked funds over 2001; OFAC seized \$ 1,125,025 in Al Qaeda Assets (OFAC, 2001, p.1). This number almost halved in 2002 (OFAC, 2002, p.7) and there is a small increase in 2003. In 2004 the seized assets grew more than fivefold vis-à-vis 2003. This appears to be due to a different operationalization of the variable by the OFAC: over 2004 frozen assets of organizations and individuals other than Al Qaeda – but linked to the organization – were included in measurement (OFAC, 2004). All in all, no clear trend shows in the seized assets over the period of analysis, this might also be due to the lack of comparable data.

**Table 4.2 "Al Qaeda Victims"**

1998	301
1999	0
2000	17
2001	2997
2002	518
2003	621
2004	727

Compiled by author based  
on the Economist, 2011  
and START, 2011a.

### Military Strength

The number of Al Qaeda victims measures Al Qaeda's military strength in a specific year. The numbers from 1998 to 2001 are all based on single attacks. As can be seen in Table 4.2 below before 9/11, 301 died in the bombing of two US Embassies in Tanzania and Kenya (The Economist, 2011). In 2000, 17 died with the bombing of the 'USS Cole' (Ibid.). The dramatic increase in 2001 is due to the 9/11 attacks that killed 2997 people (START, 2011a, p.1). In 2002 there is a decrease. Also this number is based on several smaller attacks outside the US (United States Security Council, 2003, pp. 39-40). In 2003 the number of fatalities starts increasing to 621 (Ibid.). The growth continues over 2004 in which the number of

casualties rises to 727 (START, 2011b). The growth is explained by more attacks in Afghanistan after its invasion in 2002 and in Iraq after March 2003 and also Pakistan.

Exact data with regards to the origin of the victims and the location of the attacks is not available, but there has been a shift in geographical location of the attacks that has invariably lead to a lower proportion of Westerners being killed. For example in 2004, 489 of the 727 were killed in Iraq.

All in all, the fatalities show a relatively clear trend that can be divided into two periods. Up to 9/11 data are based on larger single attacks and appear more sporadic; Al Qaeda's military power is considered relatively low here. 2001 is a breaking point: the enormous number of casualties warrants a rise in Al Qaeda's military power. Victims in 2002 decline and are the consequence of several smaller attacks. These attacks increase in the following years as a result of the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. Resulting in a steady increase of military power after the dip of 2002, albeit with predominantly non-Western victims.

#### Size

Although Al Qaeda's size is difficult to determine, core membership has arguably never exceeded more than a few hundred (United Nations Security Council, 2004, p. 6). Core membership grew between 1998-2001 and peaked right before the 9/11 attacks due to an intense recruitment drive for the training camps in this period (The Wall Street Journal, 2011). After 9/11 the international community undertook large-scale efforts to combat terrorism and track down members of terrorist organisations, especially Al Qaeda which was responsible for the attacks. Most experts agree that as a result of these efforts core membership has declined significantly since 9/11 (Ibid.). Hundreds of Al Qaeda operatives were detained and the Taliban regime in Afghanistan was ousted as a result of operation Enduring Freedom, leading to a decline in infrastructural support for Al Qaeda (United Nations Security Council, 2002, p.3). Over 2002 and the first half of 2003 core membership is estimated to have kept declining. There were several successful actions against the organization such as the breaking up of a large number of cells and the arrest of members of Osama bin Laden's original 'Command Team' which provided intelligence on a lot of other operatives and the broader network (United Nations Security Council, 2003, p. 3). The core group members grew in the second half of 2003. As a result of the extra support for Al Qaeda generated by the invasion of Iraq (United Nations Security Council, 2004, p.5). Over 2004 membership is estimated to have gone down again.

During the analysis another trend that stood out was the changing nature of the organization: Al Qaeda has gradually moved from the model of a structured organization led by Osama bin Laden, to a global network with a much looser structure (Ibid., p.6). Here too

the turning point seems to be 2001 when the Taliban regime was ousted. Before 2001 associated groups usually sought central approval before conducting attacks whereas after 2001 the leadership dispersed and those who wanted to attack were told to “do what they could” (United Nations Security Council, 2004, p.6). Al Qaeda’s increasingly decentralized nature is a sign of weakness, a consequence of the pressure the organization came under after 9/11. At the same time it created an organization less dependent on core leadership: Al Qaeda as a ‘global network’ takes root wherever possible and attacks – whether conducted through central planning or not – help fulfil its objectives (ibid., p.8).

Overall it can be said that the organization has been growing up to 9/11 and declining steadily afterwards – with the notable exception of the increase in the second half of 2003 due to the invasion of Iraq. This trend is compounded by an overall decentralizing of the organizational structure and less dependence on the core leadership since the invasion of Afghanistan.

#### Aggregate Power

Combining measurements on all three dimensions it can be said that there was a clear growth in aggregate power in the years leading up to the 9/11 attacks. 2001 can be considered the peak of Al Qaeda’s aggregate power. After 2001 aggregate power goes down markedly in 2002 with a lower value for all dimensions – but still it remains higher than before the attacks. In the ensuing years aggregate power increases again due to a growth of military and financial power. The level of aggregate power remains well under what was measured in 2001.

#### Geographic Proximity

Nearby threats will be perceived as more threatening than those far away according to TPT. But what exactly is Al Qaeda’s location?

First the location of Al Qaeda’s headquarters, when the Taliban ruled the country, Al Qaeda’s Headquarters were in Kabul, Afghanistan (Bajoria & Bruno, 2011). This remained the case until 2001. The Kabul-Washington distance is 11153 KM. After the invasion of Afghanistan, Al Qaeda moved into the borderlands of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Especially into North Waziristan and its capital Miranshah where they remained until at least 2004 (The Washington Post, 2010). The Miranshah-Washington distance is 11303 KM, a negligible difference.

The second indicator is US presence, where Al Qaeda operatives in the US? Al Qaeda has had autonomous underground cells in 70-100 countries (Bajoria & Bruno, 2011). Although data are never certain no active cells were found in the US in 1998 and 1999. Active cells were found 2000, 2001 and 2002. The perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks were in the US since 2000. And the Buffalo Six – a group of six Yemeni-Americans who were

convicted of providing material support to Al Qaeda – were arrested in 2002 (CNN, 2003). No active cells were found in 2003 and 2004.

There is no relevant difference in distance over the period of analysis. Geographic proximity is considered highest between 2000 and 2002 due to the presence of active cells in the US but it did not vary much overall.

#### Al Qaeda's Offensive Capabilities

This variable – based on the military strength in the aggregate power variable – showed a clear trend that can be divided into two periods: low offensive capabilities before 9/11 and a peak after the attacks followed by a steady rise from a substantively lower level in 2002.

#### Al Qaeda's Aggressive Intentions

Actors that have aggressive intentions are more likely to be seen as threatening. To what extent did Al Qaeda have offensive intentions and towards whom or what were these directed? Before 9/11, Bin Laden made a few direct threats against the US. He called for a defensive Jihad by all Muslims towards US citizens and military personnel in 1998 (Blanchard, 2005, p. 3). Similar messages – although somewhat less specific – were repeated in 1999. In 2000 Bin Laden became more vocal approving the bombing of the USS Cole as a reprisal for US foreign policy (Blanchard, 2007, p. 4). After 9/11 the rhetoric became much more intense. Al Qaeda started claiming responsibility for attacks that occurred and threatening future attacks (Ibid.). In 2002 and 2003 the focus of Al Qaeda threats towards the US was on the US invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. Bin Laden as well as several other high ranking Al Qaeda operatives characterized these as new “crusades” justifying new attacks on US armed services and civilians (Ibid., p. 8). Threats became somewhat more grandiose but less specific over 2004. On the eve of the US presidential election, Bin Laden threatened to attack and bankrupt the United States. Also Al Zawahiri declared the intention to continue the jihad against the United States indefinitely (Blanchard, 2005, p. 9).

In short, offensive intentions have changed since 9/11. Before 9/11 several direct threats were made but these became much more concrete after 9/11 when Osama started claiming responsibility and promising more attacks. Although rhetoric did continue to change somewhat in form offensive intentions are considered to have remained stable over the post-9/11 period.

#### Threat Perception

Using several polls over the 1998-2004 period it will be studied if the American people saw Al Qaeda and terrorism as threats to their security.

Figure 4.1 below shows the percentage of people that is worried that they themselves or someone in their family will become a victim of terrorism (Gallup, 2011). The first poll

was conducted just two weeks after the '98 embassy bombings and measured 32% of Americans as worried. The next measurement in April 2000 shows about a quarter of Americans as worried. In the period shortly after 9/11, numbers registered highs of 59% and 58%, dropping again in October to around 40%. Numbers remained roughly the same the following years – around the 40% average. The graph shows the trend, the exact polling data can be found in Table 1, Appendix I.

**Figure 4.1 “%Worried about Becoming Terrorism Victim”**

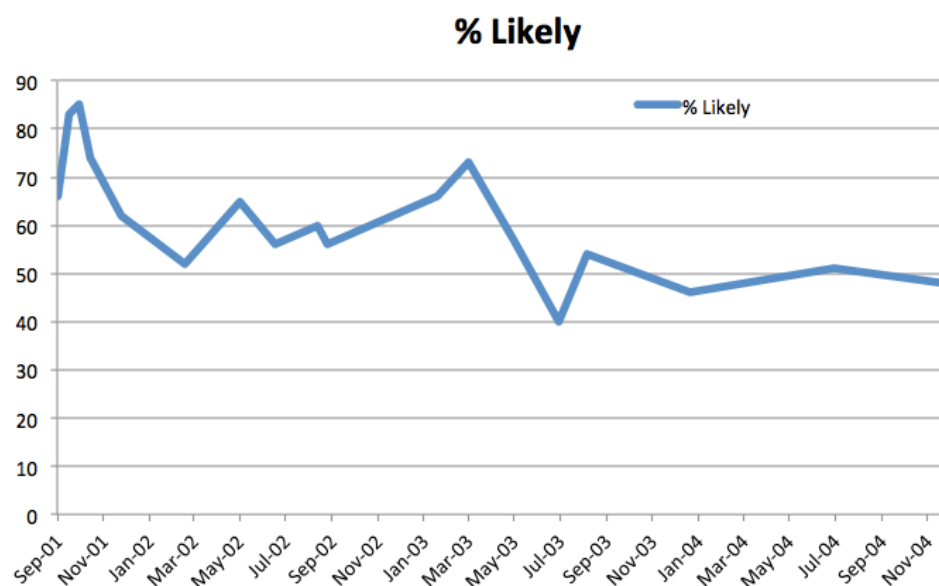


Compiled by author based on Gallup, 2011.

Figure 4.2 below shows the percentage of people that consider acts of terrorism in the US over the next couple of weeks likely. They start out on 66% just after the attacks peaking in the weeks thereafter at 85%. Numbers go down in the months after the attacks, stabilizing between 50-60% over 2002. Numbers climb a bit thereafter peaking in March 2003 due to rising tensions over Iraq and its eventual invasion in March. Numbers drop in the summer of 2003 as major battle operations ended in Iraq – remember Bush’s famous “mission accomplished” speech. In the months after it became clear that the problems in Iraq were persistent, numbers rise again. Again, the exact polling data can be found in Appendix I, Table 2.

Lastly, the same trend was clear in the percentage of Americans regarding terrorism as the top US problem just before 9/11 only 1% of respondents saw terrorism as the top problem, in October 2001 this number was 46%. Numbers then gradually dropped towards 2004 (Newport, 2010).

Figure 4.2 "% Considering Terrorist Attacks Likely"



Compiled by Author based on: Gallup, 2011.

To sum up, threat perception was heavily affected by the 9/11 attacks. The percentage of people worried about attacks, the percentage of people considering them likely and the percentage of people considering terrorism a top priority all peaked in the months after 9/11. As time progresses the effects of the attack seem to wear off somewhat; the percentage of people that is worried of falling victim to terrorist attacks stabilizes at just under 40 – still significantly higher than it was before 9/11. The likelihood of another attack shows roughly the same picture although values are a bit higher overall and react more clearly to the Iraq War.

### Analysis

Can TPT explain threat perception with regards to Al Qaeda? When would TPT expect an actor to be perceived as threatening? First of all the actor would have to possess a certain measure of aggregate power, also at least one of the following three factors need to be present: geographic proximity, offensive capabilities and aggressive intentions. The more of them present and the higher their value, the more likely that aggregate power will lead to threat perception. Below the implications of the results of the analysis for the hypotheses will be presented. An overview of all the variables, dimensions and indicators over the period of analysis can be found in Appendix II.

The background condition is aggregate power. TPT considers aggregate power a necessary factor for an actor to be perceived a threat.

Aggregate power was relatively low from 1998 to 2000 but clearly present since 9/11. Aggregate power peaked after 9/11 and then stabilized at a somewhat lower level.

TPTH1 states: If an actor with aggregate power is geographically proximate, it will *ceteris paribus* be perceived to be a threat.

Overall, this variable has varied little; geographical proximity remained relatively low during the period of analysis. The distance between the two headquarters is negligible on such a large scale and although US presence of Al Qaeda's cells was only in years with a high level of threat perception, cells could well have been present in other years. Based on these results it is impossible to either retain or reject TPTH1.

TPTH2 states: If an actor with aggregate power has offensive capabilities, it will *ceteris paribus* be perceived to be a threat.

The offensive capabilities variable – measured in the number of fatalities – peaked in 2001 due to the high death toll of the 9/11 attacks. In 2002 offensive capabilities dipped, it then kept growing steadily from 2002 to 2004. Because Al Qaeda's offensive capabilities grew after 2002 an increase in threat perception is expected but threat perception goes down from 2002 onwards. TPTH2 can thus be rejected.

TPTH3 states: If an actor with aggregate power has aggressive intentions, it will *ceteris paribus* be perceived to be a threat.

Al Qaeda's aggressive intentions increased sharply after 9/11 when threats became more aggressive, specific and grandiose. In the post-9/11 period offensive intentions remained largely constant despite slight changes in form. Overall, the post-9/11 peak in offensive intentions is clear. Threat perception was also high after 9/11. TPTH3 can therefore be retained.

TPTH4 stated that: Geographic proximity, offensive capabilities and aggressive intentions have a reinforcing effect, the more of them present in an actor with aggregate power and the higher their value, the more likely threat perception will be.

Because only one of the mediating variables could be retained in this case it is not possible to test whether they have a reinforcing effect on each other. Therefore it is impossible to either retain or reject TPTH4.

## Conclusion

Do the factors that TPT specifies accurately explain the development of threat perception after 9/11? Partially. Aggregate power seems an adequate background condition. Aggressive intentions also have a positive effect on threat perception. But the influence of geographic proximity could not be tested and the hypothesis concerning offensive capabilities was rejected. The reinforcing effect of the mediating variables on each other could not be tested either. Threat perception in the case of terrorism seems to have been due to Al Qaeda's aggregate power and aggressive intentions. Chapter six will feature a deeper reflection on the meaning of these findings.

## Securitization Theory

It is clear by now that terrorism was perceived as a threat in the period after 9/11. Instead of focussing on material variables this analysis using Securitization Theory (ST) will focus on the rhetorical process of securitization. Was terrorism presented as a threat by an authoritative actor, how did this process work, who or what was the referent object and why was it or was it not successful? In short, will ST be able to explain threat perception with regards to terrorism after 9/11?

### Securitizing Move & Rules of the act

In order for something to become perceived as threatening someone influential needs to present it as such. How is something presented as a security issue, how does the rhetoric of security work? To find out, this paragraph studies securitizing moves and the following of the 'rules of the act' throughout several State of the Union (SotU) addresses and other relevant speeches in the 1998-2004 period. To thoroughly analyse the speeches a quantitative speech analysis and an in-depth qualitative study of the speeches will be done. The quantitative speech analysis is done in the form of a word count on words that can be linked to terrorism. Furthermore the section in which the references to terrorism are located is mentioned. Data can be found in table 4.3 below.

From 1998 to 2000 president Clinton did not mention terrorism as an immediate or existential threat to US national security. Therefore these years are considered not to feature any securitizing moves with regards to Al Qaeda or terrorism. Terrorism is mentioned several times during this period but mostly as a challenge for the future (Clinton 1998a). According to Clinton (2000) the US faced the fewest external threats in its history. Even when Al Qaeda bombed two US Embassies in 1998, killing 301 people Clinton did not make a securitizing move (Clinton 1998b). The same goes for his reaction to the 2000 Al Qaeda attack on the USS Cole, killing 17 people. Clinton's reaction was widely considered muted (York, 2001).



While he spoke of holding those accountable responsible the administration seemed more worried about the destabilizing effect the attacks could have on the Middle East Peace Process than about any existential threat to us national security. The relative lack of attention for terrorism also shows in table 4.3 above; terrorism or related words are hardly mentioned before 2001.

**Table 4.3 “Speech-analysis of Securitized Moves in the State of the Union”**

<u>Year</u>	<b>Al Qaeda</b>	<b>Terrorism</b>	<b>Threat: terror</b>	<b>Threat: WMDs</b>	<b>Threat: Both</b>	<b>Threat other</b>	<b>WMDs</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>1998</b>	x	2	1	1	x	2	7 (3 irrelevant: NTBT)	Last section
<b>1999</b>	x	3	2	x	x	3	5 (2 irrelevant: Russia)	Last section
<b>2000</b>	x	2	1	3	x	2	6 (2 irrelevant: Russia)	¾ section
<b>2001</b>	x	1	1	1	x	1	1	Last section
<b>2001</b> [Joint sess.]	8	24	6	x	x	x	x	Spread
<b>2002</b>	6	22	3	2	2	1	6	Spread
<b>2003</b>	8	17	4	3	7	2	27	Spread
<b>2004</b>	3	16	2	2	3	x	8	Spread

Compiled by author based on 1998-2004 State of the Union Speeches

The Bush presidency started out the same way. Bush did not make any securitizing moves regarding terrorism until 9/11. Though he mentioned terrorism as a new threat to the US it was one amongst many others. He characterized the US as “A nation at peace (...)” (Bush, 2001). Looking at Table 4.3 it can be seen that the SotU does not show any significant numeric changes compared to the ones before either.

Then the 9/11 attacks fundamentally changed the rhetoric of the young Bush-administration. On the evening of 9/11 Bush made a securitizing move in his address to the nation: “Today, our fellow citizens, our way of life, our very freedom came under attack in a

series of deliberate and deadly terrorist acts.” (Bush, 2001a). Bush also gave a speech for a joint session of Congress. This speech had a strong historical load to many Americans: the last president that spoke before a joint session of Congress was Franklin Roosevelt just after the Pearl Harbour attacks. In this speech Bush highlights the unique nature of an attack on American soil and asserts that freedom itself is under attack. Also he names Al Qaeda specifically as the actor that causes this threat (Bush, 2001b). The enormous numerical increase in use of the terms Al Qaeda, terrorism and threat can be clearly seen in Table 4.3. For 2001 it can then be clearly established that there were several securitizing moves. The 9/11 attacks were attributed to Al Qaeda and seen as an attack on freedom worldwide and on the US specifically.

Because 2001 features the first securitizing move, this is the first time the following of the rules of the act can be studied. The following of the rules of the act consists of three elements: the presentation of an existential threat to a specific referent object, a point of no return and a possible way out in the form of emergency measures. Bush clearly presented an existential threat to U.S citizens, an end to their way of life and freedom: “The terrorists' directive commands them to kill Christians and Jews, to kill all Americans and make no distinctions among military and civilians, including women and children.” (CNN, 2001b). A comparison to *Nazism* was also used to emphasize the severity of the threat and to make clear the aggressive aims of the enemy. The logic of a point of no return was created: because the enemy will not stop short of destroying the US, action has to be taken. To confront this threat several emergency measures are presented. Bush states that full resources will be directed to find and bring to justice those responsible (CNN,2001a). Also, Bush declares a war on terrorism, which is a prototypical example of an emergency measure: “America and our friends and allies join with all those who want peace and security in the world and we stand together to win the war against terrorism” (Ibid.). Additionally Bush announced the creation of a Department of Homeland Security to: “(...) oversee and coordinate a comprehensive national strategy to safeguard our country against terrorism and respond to any attacks that may come” (CNN, 2001b). Concluding, an existential threat to a specific referent object, a point of no return and the way out by means of extraordinary measures were all uttered in 2001: the rules of the act were followed.

The 2002 SotU is in stark contrast with the one in 2001 in which Bush spoke of a nation at peace: “ As we gather tonight, our nation is at war, our economy is in recession, and the civilized world faces unprecedented danger” (Bush, 2002a). Apart from this clear excerpt a look at the speech-analysis shows an increased use of the keywords Al Qaeda, terrorism and threat vis-à-vis the 2001 SotU. Another clear instance of a securitizing move comes from a presidential speech at West Point Military Academy: “ This government and the American

people are on watch, we are ready, because we know the terrorists have more money and more men and more plans” (Bush, 2002b). The rhetoric in these speeches is less specifically focussed on Al Qaeda alone but several securitizing moves with regards to Al Qaeda were made in 2002.

Just as in 2001 the rules of the act were also followed. Although a lot had successfully been done since 9/11 to combat terrorism, Bush emphasized that there was an on-going risk of attack: “Yet, tens of thousands of trained terrorists are still at large” (Bush, 2002a). An existential threat was thus again presented and because the terrorists would stop at nothing to attack America there could be no backing down. Emergency measures were needed to protect the nation as well such as increasing the defence-budget and Bush’s promise to “(...) pursue them wherever they are.” (Ibid). So again the security rules of the act were followed.

In the analysis another interesting dynamic stood out, terrorism was linked to certain regimes in the Middle East providing them with support and – possibly – advanced weaponry:

States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world. By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger. They could provide these arms to terrorists, giving them the means to match their hatred (Bush, 2002a).

So the threat of terrorism is linked with certain states – in this case Iran, Iraq and North Korea – that help terrorist organizations seeking to obtain Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs). Now the events of 9/11 are linked to a broader securitization of an “Axis of Evil”<sup>1</sup>. This can be seen in Table 4.3 as well. There is less mention of Al Qaeda and terrorism than in the 2001 Joint session speech at the same time there is a clear increase in the mention of WMDs in the speech analysis.

The 2003 SotU shows several examples of securitizing moves with respect to the dangers of terrorism. Budget increases, acts of war etc. are all mentioned as means to protect the American people (Bush, 2002a). The rules of the act were also followed; the existential threat is again clearly presented and broadened, there is also an obvious call for emergency measures. However, the point of no return featured much less strongly this year, the emphasis was on terrorism as a continued threat.

The most interesting feat of this address – held weeks before the invasion of Iraq – lies in the dynamics that were found in the security grammar whilst studying the following of the

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<sup>1</sup> The Axis of Evil is in itself also a link to the past, referring implicitly to the Nazi alliance in World War II.

rules of the act. In this speech, the language about the dangers of terrorism is somewhat milder and features later on in the speech than it did compared to preceding years. Why? It seems that the threat of terrorism has been established, or in the words of Buzan et al. the threat has become institutionalized (1998, pp.27-28). There is no need to keep explaining the dangers of terrorism, the audience understands them. Instead of leaving it at that, this understanding seems to be used as a bridge to securitize other issues. The linkage between terrorism and WMDs that was forged in 2002 is replicated and built upon here. Table 4.3 above shows a dramatic increase in the use of the term WMDs. The word 'threat' is also increasingly used in relation to WMDs. Excerpts from the speech show this linkage:

Today, the gravest danger in the war on terror, the gravest danger facing America and the world, is outlaw regimes that seek and possess nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. These regimes could use such weapons for blackmail, terror, and mass murder. They could also give or sell those weapons to terrorist allies, who would use them without the least hesitation (Bush, 2003a).

After the invasion of Iraq, the country is asserted as one of the new fronts in the War on Terror: "The triumph of democracy and tolerance in Iraq, in Afghanistan and beyond would be a grave setback for international terrorism" (Bush, 2003b).

So, the existential threat to the safety of the US – and that of the civilized world – is broadened to include WMDs in the hands of terrorists. This is an even bigger threat to US national security than before. It seems, paradoxically, that the world has become more dangerous despite all the American success in the war against terrorism.

Despite further successes, Bush keeps emphasizing terrorism as an existential threat against the US in 2004: "And it is tempting to believe that the danger is behind us. That hope is understandable, comforting -- and false" (Bush, 2004a). Terrorism features strongly and dominantly in the beginning of the address, this time less as a stand-alone threat but as part of a broader problem. The threat is featured somewhat less immediate than in the preceding years. In the end of 2004, after being re-elected for a second term, Bush reasserts the threat of terrorism: "We are fighting a continuing war on terror and every American has a stake in the outcome of this war -- Republicans, Democrats, Independents, all of our country. And together we'll protect the American people" (Bush, 2004b). Bush goes on to state that the War on Terror will be one of the major policy concerns in the coming term. Although a securitizing move was not made as clearly as in the preceding years the War on Terror is still argued to be instrumental to keep America safe (Bush, 2004a).

With regards to the following of the rules of the act the trend from 2003 is continued. The rules of the act with regards to terrorism itself are less perfectly followed. It seems instead it is relied upon the success of earlier securitizing moves – institutionalized securitization. In table 3 this broadening shows over the years. The mention of Al Qaeda and terrorism decreases gradually over the years since 9/11 with 2004 as the low point. Still the *war* on terror is still emphasized as necessary. Again one of the most interesting feats of this speech is the linking of terrorism to certain regimes:

As part of the offensive against terror, we are also confronting the regimes that harbor and support terrorists, and could supply them with nuclear, chemical or biological weapons. The United States and our allies are determined: We refuse to live in the shadow of this ultimate danger (Ibid.).

The linkage between terrorism and certain regimes and WMDs appears complete here, without further explanation these two issues are mentioned as integral parts of the same problem. Here again the existential threat and legitimation of emergency measures were clearly present. As in 2003 the immediate nature or point of no return were less noticeable, terrorism was more and more argued as a continuing threat.

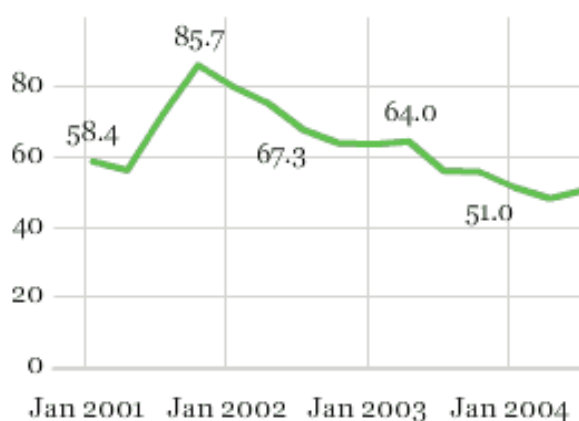
Summarizing, before 9/11 there were no securitizing moves regarding terrorism by the US President. After 9/11 the rhetoric changed immediately and drastically. Al Qaeda was elevated to the single most important threat to the US population and a war of necessity was declared to keep the country safe. Over time there was an interesting shift in rhetoric using the seemingly accepted establishment of terrorism as a threat to securitize broader issues such as rogue states, ultimately justifying the invasion of Iraq. This institutionalization of one threat and a shift to the other is also seen quantitatively: after 9/11 the use of words such as terrorism in speeches increased dramatically, this was gradually replaced by the mention of WMDs. These changes also reflected in the following of the rules of the act. These were less accurately followed in 2003 and 2004 when terrorism gradually moved from an urgent threat demanding immediate action to more of a continuing threat.

#### Authoritative Position

The position of the securitizing actor is important, when the securitizing actor has a position of authority the audience is more likely to accept the securitizing move. Here the securitizing actor is the President of the United States for the entire period of analysis. Consequently formal authority – measuring if the securitizing actor can legitimately speak security on behalf of the state – will be considered constant and high. In order to differentiate between

different years informal authority can be used. Informal authority measures the position of the securitizing actor in the eyes of the audience apart from his or her formal authority. This will be determined by looking at presidential job approval. In Figure 4.3 it can clearly be seen that approval ratings went up dramatically after 9/11 and went down again in the ensuing years. The drop from 2002 to 2003 is especially steep. Approval below 50% is considered harmful for the informal authority. Approval ratings have largely remained above this mark – despite a short dip in the beginning of 2004 (Gallup, 2008).

**Figure 4.3 “Quarterly Job Approval Averages”**



Source: Gallup, 2008.

Overall, the president’s authoritative position declined slightly. Formal authority remained equal and although informal authority did not dip below the 50% mark for long, it did decline steadily since 9/11.

#### Facilitating Objective Features of the Alleged Threat

When the phenomenon subject to securitization has certain objective features that are widely considered threatening, it becomes easier to securitize. The objective features will be measured here by the risk of casualties. Al Qaeda has made many victims since the 9/11 attacks: the attacks killed almost 3000 and each year after saw more than 500 casualties as well (START, 2011b). Because of the unpredictable nature of terrorist attacks there is always a plausible risk of deadly violence. Therefore facilitating conditions were present constantly since 9/11.

#### Scale Level of the Referent Object

A securitizing move will have a larger chance of success if the referent object is on the middle scale level. To determine the scale level of the referent object the different securitizing moves will be analysed below. The referent object is on either of three scales: the micro scale

(individuals, small groups), middle scale (nation states, small regions) or the system scale-level (societies, human kind).

The 2001 speech before a joint session of Congress was mainly a traditional ‘call to arms’. The most important referent object was on the middle scale level – i.e. the US and its citizens. This was combined or reinforced with entities superseding the nation state – i.e. the macro scale-level:

This is not, however, just America's fight. And what is at stake is not just America's freedom. This is the world's fight. This is civilization's fight. This is the fight of all who believe in progress and pluralism, tolerance and freedom” (Bush, 2001b).

The same goes for securitizing moves in 2002, 2003 and 2004. Each time the primacy was on the middle scale level, for example: “This government is taking unprecedented measures to protect our people and defend our homeland” (Bush, 2003a). With a subsequent broadening or reinforcement on the macro scale-level:

All free nations have a stake in preventing sudden and catastrophic attacks. And we're asking them to join us, and many are doing so. Yet the course of this nation does not depend on the decisions of others (Bush, 2003a).

All in all, this variable remains constant over the period of analysis. In each year that featured a securitizing move the referent object was first and foremost US national security – i.e. the middle scale-level. This was then augmented by a securitization on the macro scale-level by invoking a broader sense of security linking America’s safety to something higher and broader such as the Western World, freedom or even civilisation: America is accorded responsibility for a greater whole.

#### Successful Securitization

It will now be analysed if the securitizing moves from 2001 to 2004 were successful. This is measured in two stages, the stage of identification and the state of mobilization.

The stage of identification measures the acceptance of the audience of Al Qaeda as a threat. This stage is measured the same way as threat perception in TPT before, by looking at the polls on threat perception with regards to terrorism over the 1998-2004 period. Summarizing: The stage of identification was reached for every year since 2001, this was highest just after the 9/11 attacks after this the stage of identification gradually went down in the rest of the period of analysis to just under 40% of the population in 2004 – still considerably higher than before 9/11.

**Table 4.4 “Curbing Civil Liberties”**

<i>Necessary to give up civil liberties in order to curb terrorism?</i>	Sept-Oct 2001	Aug 2002	Aug 2006
Yes	55	49	43
No	35	45	50
Don't Know	10	6	7

Source: Pew Research Centre, 2011c.

The stage of mobilization measures to what extent emergency measures are accepted by the public and formal institutions. An issue will be considered successfully securitized only when this stage is fulfilled as well. The stage of mobilization will be analysed using two dimensions: public permission and formal permission.

Firstly public permission, a good measure is the acceptance of giving up civil liberties – see Table 4.4. Giving up civil liberties is an example of an emergency measure because it constitutes a break away from normal politics namely forfeiting some of the rights that one is given under the law. The percentage of people who thought it necessary to curb civil liberties was polled right after 9/11 in August 2002 and August 2006<sup>2</sup>. Right after the attacks more than half of the respondents deemed this necessary. One year later the percentage had dropped to 49% – still almost half of the respondents and clearly more than the respondents not seeing the necessity of giving up civil liberties (Pew Research Centre, 2011c, p. 2). In 2006 there was a slight majority in opposition to giving up civil liberties but by then a lot of them had already been taken away.

**Table 4.5 “Civil Liberties and Anti-terrorism”**

	Sept 2001	Aug 2002	Dec 2006	Aug 2011
Percent who favour each as a measure to curb terrorism				
Requiring that all citizens carry a national ID card at all times	70	59	57	57
Extra airport checks on passengers who appear to be of Middle-Eastern descent	--	59	57	53
Government monitoring credit card purchases	--	43	42	42
Government monitoring personal phone calls and emails	--	33	34	29

Source: Pew Research Centre, 2011c.

<sup>2</sup> In this analysis some dates outside of the period of analysis will be used. This is useful because it gives an indication of how the variable developed over time.



The data in Table 4.5 above show a willingness of a majority of the public over the years to require the carrying of national ID cards and racial profiling at airport checks. Especially the latter is a good example of an emergency measure as it is in tension with basic civil rights. It is also an extra sensitive topic due to America's history of segregation. The data suggest that a majority was in favour of racial profiling and mandatory ID cards until 2004. When looking at 2006 and 2011 there is still a majority indicating a very slow decline over time. The monitoring of credit cards and personal communication has lower approval ratings but these are still above a third of respondents. They show the same gradual decline as the other data.

Secondly, formal permission is measured by analysing extraordinary policy measures during the period of analysis. President Bush changed the face of US counterterrorism policy in the period after 9/11 and examples of extraordinary measures abound. The most dramatic example is the War on Terror that the administration declared in the aftermath of 9/11 resulting in the invasions of Afghanistan in October 2001 and Iraq in March 2003. Other important examples are the enhanced jurisdiction and executive powers granted to the federal government by the USA PATRIOT act in 2002 (CNN, 2011). Enhanced interrogation techniques such as waterboarding could be used on high-value detainees, also those who might have terrorist connections could be wiretapped without warrant; the use of extraordinary rendition, factually abducting suspects to other countries where they do not enjoy US legal protection; the infinite detention of terrorism suspects at Guantanamo Bay; the creation of military tribunals to try terrorist suspects without criminal-court protections; the targeted assassination of Al Qaeda leaders with Predator drones in Pakistan and Yemen etc. (Ibid.). Some of these measures were later limited by congressional and supreme court action. Still, key aspects of this approach have found bipartisan approval and were used up to 2004. Lastly, the immense budget increases allocated to the War on Terror in Table 4.6 are a form of emergency measures as well (Congressional Budget Office, 2007, pp.4-5).

**Table 4.6 "Estimated Appropriations Provided for Iraq and the War on Terrorism"**

	2001	2002	2003	2004
Total Expenditures*	14	18	88	111
<i>* In billions of Dollars per Fiscal Year.</i>				

Compiled by author based on Congressional Budget Office, 2007.

The stage of mobilization was reached every year since 2001. From 2001 to 2004 it declined slightly due to the decline in public permission over time. Although its indicators varied, formal permission as a whole remained relatively stable – the number of new policy measures declined over the years but Iraq was invaded in 2003 and the budget kept increasing.

So, with both the stage of identification and mobilization combined, can we say terrorism was successfully securitized? Yes. Both stages were reached for each year since the 9/11 attacks. The variable has decreased very slightly over time because both stages decreased somewhat.

### Analysis

Does ST provide us with a good understanding of the way in which terrorism was turned into a security issue? When will securitization be successful according to ST? First and foremost a securitizing move has to be made. This is a background condition without which securitization cannot occur. Then the facilitating conditions increase the chances of success of a securitizing move. Firstly, the rules of the act have to be followed. Secondly the securitizing actor has to have an authoritative position. Thirdly, the threat must have some objective facilitating features. Lastly, the referent object has to be on the middle scale-level. The more of these conditions present, the larger the chances of successful securitization will be. An overview of all the variables, dimensions and indicators over the period of analysis can be found in Appendix III.

First lets have a look at the background condition. Were any securitizing moves made during the period of analysis?

Yes, the analysis shows clear securitizing moves with regards to terrorism in every year since 9/11. Moreover, the necessary nature of the securitizing move is underlined by 1998 and 2000. Both these years featured a number of Al Qaeda victims but without a securitizing move Al Qaeda and terrorism were not seen as threats.

STH1 stipulates the following: If a securitizing move is made and the 'rules of the act' are followed, the securitizing move will *ceteris paribus* be successful.

Since 2001 the Rules of the Act were followed with every securitizing move. Directly after the attack they were followed perfectly, meaning that all the steps specified by Buzan et al. were followed – i.e. an existential threat to a specific referent object, a point of no return and the way out by means of extraordinary measures. In 2003 and 2004 the emphasis was more on the continued nature of the terrorist threat, the point of no return was less present. Instead the threats were already established with the audience. These institutionalized threats were then used to securitize new issues such as WMDs the Axis of Evil and failed states. Despite slight shift in the last two years STH1 can be retained: the rules of the act were followed every year from 2001 onwards and there was also successful securitization for each of these years.

STH2 states: If a securitizing move is made and the securitizing actor has an authoritative position, the securitizing move will *ceteris paribus* be successful.

The authoritative position has proven a relatively constant factor. It is constant at a high value because the president is the securitizing actor. Informal authority fluctuates more, approval ratings peak after 9/11 and steadily go down afterwards. Yet, as they only momentarily fall below 50% the authoritative position is not considered significantly lowered. Based on these results STH2 can be retained: the president – with a high level of authority – did all the securitizing moves and all of them were successful.

STH3 states: If a securitizing move is made and the issue designated as an existential threat has traits that are generally held to be threatening, the securitizing move will *ceteris paribus* be successful.

Objective traits too, were a constant and present factor. Because Al Qaeda has made many victims since 9/11 and the location and nature of attacks is relatively unpredictable the threat of violence is plausible and constant. The hypothesis can thus be retained: in all years that successful securitization took place Al Qaeda shows objectively threatening characteristics and made a number of victims.

STH4 states: If a securitizing move is made and the referent object is located on the middle scale-level, the securitizing move will *ceteris paribus* be successful.

The referent object did not change in the period of analysis. The focus of the securitizing moves was clearly on the US and its citizens. This was backed up by a securitization on the macro scale-level; there were yearly mentions of the Western World and civilisation in general. Because the referent object was on the middle scale level in every year that securitization occurred so STH4 can be retained.

Lastly, STH5 states: The variables following the rules of the act, an authoritative securitizing actor, a referent object on the middle scale and traits that are generally held to be threatening have a reinforcing effect on each other; the more of them present and the higher their value, the greater the chance a particular securitizing move has of being successful.

Because all the mediating variables are present after 9/11 and terrorism is successfully securitized each year after 9/11 the reinforcing effect of the mediating variables seems present. STH5 can therefore be retained.

## **Conclusion**

Does the rhetorical process of securitization give an adequate understanding of – the construction of – threat perception. And do the factors that ST specifies influence the chances of success of a securitizing move in the aftermath of 9/11? Perhaps. The necessity of a securitizing move, the following of the rules of the act, the position of the securitizing actor, the objective characteristics of the phenomenon and the scale level of the referent object all seem important in determining the level of securitization. Indeed, all hypotheses could be retained. But are these factors the only relevant factors in explaining successful securitization or are a few of them enough? There is a risk of overdetermination that will be explained further in chapter six. This problem is compounded by the relatively little variation most variables show, the authoritative position of the speaker, objective facilitating features and scale level all remained constant for each year in which there was a securitizing move. The necessary nature of the securitizing move shortens the period of analysis to 2001-2004. This makes it harder to control for certain variables and study their separate influence on the success of securitization. Despite its problems, this analysis has already shown that the theory does allow a good in-depth look at the politics of security by studying the rhetorical process of securitization in speeches. Chapter six will feature a further reflection on the meaning of these findings.

## **Chapter 5**

### **The Threat of Climate Change Around Katrina**

Long before Katrina struck there were several reports on the possibly devastating effects a strong hurricane could have in the region (Mooney, 2005). The link between hurricanes and climate change was also established beforehand: as oceans get warmer – by global warming or climate change – the number of hurricanes and their intensity increases (Busby, 2008, p. 484). So after one of the largest natural disasters in US history one would expect issues concerning global warming and climate change to be perceived as threatening or at least a ‘policy priority’. This was not the case. When hurricane Katrina made landfall in August 2005 it took more than 1900 lives and severely affected the whole region. At \$ 81 billion of damage it was also the most costly natural disaster in the history of the country (Brown, 2006, pp. 10-13). Even after this destructive show of force the government did not seem to regard climate change or the environment a priority. On the contrary, the Bush administration unsubscribed from the Kyoto Protocol and repeatedly questioned the science behind global warming.

This chapter applies both Threat Perception Theory (TPT) and Securitization Theory (ST) to the period around hurricane Katrina – 2002 to 2008 – in order to analyse and explain the seemingly lacking threat perception with regards to climate change and global warming. The setup will be the same as in the preceding chapter; the first part will feature an analysis using TPT, the second part features ST. After each analysis the consequences of the findings for the respective hypotheses will be explained.

### **Walt’s Threat Perception Theory**

Will the adapted version of TPT be able to analyse threat perception with regards to a broad security issue far outside its original scope, such as hurricanes? Below the variables aggregate power, offensive capabilities and geographic risk will be analysed for the 2002-2008 period.

#### Hurricane Aggregate Power

TPT sees aggregate power as a necessary condition for a phenomenon to be perceived as threatening. A hurricane’s aggregate power will here be measured by measuring the intensity and duration of the storms with the Accumulated Cyclone Energy (ACE) index.

Table 5.1 shows the ACE index in combination with the season’s classification from 2002 to 2008 (NOAA, 2011a). The index starts off low in 2002, classified as a below-normal season then increases sharply from 2003 to 2005. 2005 is the most active season measured

with an ACE-index of 248. Lower values are recorded in 2006 and 2007, 2008 shows another hyperactive season.

**Table 5.1 "ACE-Index and Season Classification"**

Year	ACE Index	Classification
2002	66	Below-normal Season
2003	175	Hyperactive Season
2004	224	Hyperactive Season
2005	248	Hyperactive Season
2006	78	Near-normal Season
2007	72	Below-normal Season
2008	144	Hyperactive Season

Compiled by author based on NOAA, 2011a.

It can be concluded that aggregate power fluctuated heavily in the period of analysis. It was high between 2003-2005 and 2008 was a hyperactive season. But aggregate power was low in the relatively calm seasons that preceded and followed the hyperactive ones in 2002, 2006 and 2007.

#### Hurricanes Geographical Risk

TPT argues that nearby threats are more likely to be perceived as threatening than those far away. For hurricanes, distance is replaced with risk; the higher the risk of hurricanes occurring the higher threat perception is expected to be.

The data from the various hurricane season outlooks are summarized in Table 5.2 below (NOAA, 2012b). The 2002 hurricane season was expected to be in the near-normal range, 11 hurricanes were predicted of which two were expected to make landfall, the lowest expected rate in the period of analysis. The predictions then rise from 2003 to 2007 – with the exception of 2003. 2006 is the highest-ranked year in the analysis with 16 predicted hurricanes of which 2-4 were predicted to make landfall, there was an 80% chance of an above-normal hurricane season. The 2007 and 2008 predictions remained around the same level. The number of hurricanes expected to make landfall shows the same trend as the number of hurricanes predicted: a gradual rise since 2002 (Ibid.).

**Table 5.2 "Seasonal Hurricane Predictions"**

Year	# Hurricanes Predicted	# Landfalling Predicted
2002	11	2
2003	13	2-3
2004	12	2-3
2005	14	2-3
2006	16	2-4
2007	15	2-4
2008	14	N/A

Compiled by author based on NOAA, 2012b

Summarizing, the geographical risk was lowest in 2002 after which it gradually increased to peaks in 2006 and 2007.

### Hurricanes Offensive Capabilities

Hurricanes' offensive capabilities are measured in material damage and the number of fatalities. The higher the destructive force was the preceding year, the higher threat perception is expected to be in the following year.

Table 5.3 shows a summary of the data gathered from Infoplease, Pearson (2012). 2002 starts off average with 42 fatalities and \$5 billion in damage all caused by the flooding that followed hurricane Allison in 2001. Numbers rise from 2004 to 2006. The extremely high numbers in 2006 are caused by hurricane Katrina in 2005. After 2006 numbers go down again.

**Table 5.3 "Hurricanes Offensive Capabilities"**

Year	# Fatalities	Damage (in Billion U.S. Dollars)
2002	42	5
2003	0	0
2004	50+	3.7
2005	167	35+
2006	1954+	118
2007	11	0.5
2008	0	0

Compiled by author based on Pearson, 2012

On the basis of these data it can be concluded that offensive capabilities fluctuated heavily in the period of analysis. Offensive capabilities were relatively low before 2004, from 2004-2006 they increased fast to peak in 2006. After 2006 offensive capabilities declined sharply again.

### Threat Perception

To what extent did the various hurricanes or predictions thereof in the 2002-2008 period lead to threat perception with regards to global warming and/or climate change? Various polling data will be analysed below to answer this question.

Table 5.4 below shows how people assessed the seriousness of global warming reports in the media. 2004 was the lowest year with 38% of respondents saying media coverage was overrated whilst 2006 was a peak year with the same percentage saying coverage was underestimating the threats of global warming (Newport, 2010a). Overall, differences were small and no real variation can be discovered in this indicator.

**Table 5.4 "Seriousness Global Warming in the News"**

Year	% Gen. Exaggerated	% Gen. Correct	% Gen. Underestimated	% No opinion
2002	31	32	32	5
2003	33	29	33	5
2004	38	25	33	4
2005	31	29	35	5
2006	30	28	38	4
2007	33	29	35	4
2008	31	32	32	5

Source: Newport, 2010a.

The data in Table 5.5 below (Pew Research Center, 2011a) show the percentage of people considering protecting the environment a top priority for the President and Congress. These data show a relatively stable and growing line – with 2003 as an exception. Numbers go up especially quick between 2005 and 2006 and remain at this higher level the following years.

**Table 5.5 "Priorities for Government"**

% Considering issue as a top priority	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Protecting environment	44	39	49	49	57	57	56
Dealing with Global Warming	x	x	x	x	x	38	35

Pew Research Center, 2011a

Although both of the indicators above have regular measurements of data they do not measure threat perception with regards to climate change and global warming directly. The priority accorded to dealing with global warming specifically can also be seen in Table 5.5 for 2007 and 2008. These numbers are about 20% lower than the priority accorded to protecting the environment.

The most accurate measure can be found in Table 5.6 below. In 2002, 2006 and 2008 respondents were asked if they considered global warming a serious threat to themselves or their way of life (Newport, 2010a). Data show a very slight growth over the period of analysis but remain well under half of the population the entire time.



**Table 5.6 " Global Warming a Threat to Way of Life?**

Year	Yes (%)	No	No opinion
2002	33	65	2
2006	35	62	2
2008	40	58	2

Source: Newport, 2010a.

All in all, a slight growth in threat perception with regards to climate change and global warming can be discerned from 2002 to 2008. This conclusion was reached primarily on the basis of the data in tables 5.5 and 5.6 as the interpretation of the news did not change significantly. Despite the gradual growth in threat perception, neither climate change nor global warming was truly perceived as a threat by the American people in the period of analysis. At its peak in 2008 global warming was seen as a threat by 40% of the population and only a third of the population saw it as a priority for government.

### Analysis

Can TPT provide an explanation as to why global warming and climate change were not perceived as threats? TPT specifies that an actor has to possess a certain measure of aggregate power. In addition to that at least one of following three factors need to be present: geographic proximity, offensive capabilities or aggressive intentions. The more of them present and the higher their value the more likely a phenomenon is to be seen as threatening. The implications of the findings and the level of threat perception for TPT's hypotheses will be explained. An overview of all the variables, dimensions and indicators over the period of analysis can be found in Appendix IV.

Again, aggregate power is a background condition. TPT considers this a necessary factor, without which an actor cannot be perceived a threat.

In the case of hurricanes aggregate power has fluctuated heavily. Between 2002 and 2008 there were several predictions of hyperactive seasons and some below-normal seasons as well. The 2002, 2006 and 2007 seasons were predicted to be below normal, aggregate power is considered low in these years. Because the seasons 2002 2006 and 2007 were predicted to be below normal, aggregate power is considered to be low in these years. Aggregate power was considered high from 2003-2005 and in 2008 where hyperactive seasons were predicted.

TPTH1 states that: If an actor with aggregate power is geographically proximate, it will *ceteris paribus* be perceived to be a threat.

Although geographical risk did not vary much over the period of analysis the trend coincides with that of threat perception: both show a gradual increase over the years towards 2008. Therefore the hypothesis can be retained.

TPTH2 stated that: If an actor with aggregate power has offensive capabilities, it will *ceteris paribus* be perceived to be a threat.

Offensive capabilities were relatively low before 2004, then increased sharply from 2004 to 2006 after which they declined sharply again. The heavy fluctuation of hurricanes' offensive capabilities during the period of analysis is not in accordance with the gradual growth of threat perception. The years in which threat perception was highest – 2007 and 2008 – saw some of the lowest levels of offensive capabilities. Therefore the hypothesis has to be rejected.

TPTH4 Geographic proximity, offensive capabilities and aggressive intentions have a reinforcing effect, the more of them present in an actor with aggregate power and the higher their value, the more likely threat perception will be.

As only geographic proximity could be retained as an influential mediating variable, with the effect of offensive capabilities rejected and the impossibility to test aggressive intentions, TPTH4 can neither be retained nor rejected.

### **Conclusion**

Does TPT accurately explain the lack of threat perception in case of climate change? Hardly. The factors that TPT saw as determinants of threat perception lacked explanatory power in this case. Threat perception with regards to climate change and global warming remained low despite occasional high values for aggregate power, offensive capabilities and geographical risk. Also, threat perception kept gradually growing despite the absence of aggregate power in 2006 and 2007. Also, the material basis to threat that TPT presupposes was undercut strongly by the lack of any visible reaction to hurricane Katrina. The only variable that did seem to follow the same trend is geographical risk, but this alone is not sufficient to meaningfully analyse threat perception. Chapter six will feature a reflection on the meaning of these findings for the theory.

### **Securitization Theory**

Will the focus on the rhetorical process of securitization that ST provides enable us to analyse threat perception – or better, the lack thereof – with regards to threat perception and global

warming? To find out the making of securitizing moves, following the rules of the act, position of the securitizing actor, facilitating objective features of the threat and scale level of the referent object will all be analysed below.

### Securitizing Move & Following the Rules of the Act

ST states that a securitizing move is necessary for an issue to be securitized. Were securitizing moves undertaken with regards the climate and global warming, if so by whom and how did this work? The first section analyses the State of the Union (SotU) addresses for the 2002-2008 period. The second section looks at various securitizing moves made by other government actors. If a securitizing move is made, the rules of the act will be analysed as well.

### State of the Union

Between 2002 and 2008 president Bush did not make any securitizing moves with regards to either climate change or global warming in his SotU addresses. From 2002 to 2005 the environment was only mentioned as part of other issues – besides terrorism – that needed to be addressed: “Members, you and I will work together in the months ahead on other issues: productive farm policy -- applause -- a cleaner environment (...) (Bush, 2002a).” When mentioned at all the environment was approached as an economic issue with regards to energy supplies for instance. Instead of framing the environment as a possible security issue the tone was generally upbeat; still unknown technological advances would fix the environment in the near future (Bush, 2004a).

The 2006 SotU was the first one after Hurricane Katrina. But even after all the destruction caused by the storm there was no securitizing move. In fact, the general lack of attention for the issue is striking: hurricanes or the phenomena that could have caused them are not mentioned in the speech at all, let alone as important threats. The only reference to Katrina at all is a short mention of relieve efforts for the victims at the end of the address (Bush, 2006).

The first mention of global climate change by the president is in the 2007 SotU: “And these technologies will help us be better stewards of the environment, and they will help us to confront the serious challenge of global climate change” (Bush, 2007). Despite this passage climate change is not framed as something threatening or immediate requiring emergency action.

This trend continues in 2008. There are several passages in the SotU mentioning clean energy, slowing the growth of greenhouse gases and confronting global climate change. The most explicit of which is the following:

The United States is committed to strengthening our energy security and confronting global climate change, and the best way to meet these goals is for America to continue leading the way toward the development of cleaner and more energy-efficient technology (Bush, 2008).

Bush commits the US to confronting global climate change thereby acknowledging its existence. Still, this is not a securitizing move as it is not presented as a threat requiring emergency measures.

#### Securitizing Moves by Other Actors

Even though the President did not make any securitizing move in the period of analysis there were some securitizing actors that did. These will be reviewed below.

In 2004, a study done for the Pentagon in 2003 leaked. The study assessed the implications of abrupt climate change for US national security; climate change could impede access to fresh water, food and energy supplies. In doing so it could: “potentially de-stabilize the geo-political environment, leading to skirmishes, battles, and even war (...) (Schwarz & Randall, 2003, p.2).” The report argues to regard abrupt climate change as a U.S. national security concern instead of purely a scientific debate. The report is thus considered to feature a securitizing move.

The rules of the act were not followed in a way described Buzan et al. Firstly, the threat was not framed as existential; climate change needs to be put on the security agenda to be further researched, the actual effects are not certain yet. Secondly, the point of no return has arguably not been reached either; the chances that abrupt climate change will occur are considered “quite possibly small” (Ibid., p.3). Lastly, there is still time to deal with the issue the study proposes further research and the creation of response models – hardly emergency measures breaking the rules of normal politics. The rules of the act were thus not followed in this securitizing move.

In 2007 the Center of Naval Analysis (CNA) issued a report stating that climate change has: “(...) the potential to disrupt our way of life and to force changes in the way we keep ourselves safe and secure (CNA, 2007, p.6).” This report does then feature a securitizing move. It describes the same destructive effects of climate change just as the 2004 report by Schwarz and Randal and it does so in more detail. Climate change may threaten the US directly by bringing about more events such as hurricane Katrina. It might also threaten the US indirectly by acting as a “threat multiplier” for several volatile and instable regions (Ibid., p.7).

With regards to the rules of the act; climate change is framed as an existential threat to US security with a potentially devastating impact on its people. Still, the real urgency of the matter is difficult to argue with most of the effects beginning to take place in the coming

decade the earliest. Although this could be argued to be relatively 'immediate' considering the nature and scale of the phenomenon, the point of no return is not yet reached. Still, the authors propagate some extraordinary measures. They argue for the full integration of the consequences of climate change in national defence and security strategies. Which could be regarded as an emergency measure because placing climate change within the military realm is a clear upgrade in priority (Ibid., p.7).

Lastly, in 2008 the National Intelligence Council (NIC) issued a report titled: "The world by 2025". This was the first ever NIC report to mention climate change as a security threat. The report mentions various dangers such as increased risk of extreme weather events – e.g. floods and hurricanes – shortages of food fresh water and other resources, migrations and increased global instability (NIC, 2008, pp. 52-57). It also describes an imaginary page from the presidential diary in 2020 just after Manhattan is hit by a storm and flood (Ibid., pp. 58-59). The scenario exemplifies the concrete threats climate change could post to the U.S. and is considered a securitizing move.

Again the rules of the act were not completely followed. Although climate change is framed as a potential existential threat to U.S. national security, so are a broad host of other threats in the report. This takes away from the primacy of the issue. Also, the report does not propose any concrete emergency measures to counter the threat posed by climate change (Ibid.). The imaginary presidential diary is considered a clear securitizing move. All in all, the rules of the act are considered to be partially followed here.

Concluding. There were no securitizing moves by the president. Instead the few mentions that were made of the environment or related issues were not problematizing the issue. The 2007 and 2008 SotU's did feature mentions of climate change but these were not yet securitizations. Documents in 2004, 2007 and 2008 by government or semi-government sources do contain several securitizing moves. The 2004 report shows a somewhat careful securitization of climate change and its possible consequences the 2007 and 2008 securitizations are more outspoken and detailed. The rules of the act were followed partially in all the securitizing moves.

#### Authoritative Position

As various actors securitized climate change it is important to assess their authoritative position. Based on the theory it is expected that securitizing actors with an authoritative position have a larger chance of successful securitization. Do (semi)-government securitizing actors have sufficient authority to speak security?

The 2004 Pentagon-study was not done by government officials but by an outside consulting firm 'the Global Business Network'. The authoritative position of this actor is

considered to be relatively low for four reasons. Firstly, the two actors held high positions in a consulting firm but they were not security experts. Secondly, the consulting firm is an outside actor that does not have the authority to make decisions in the security realm. Thirdly, the firm did not have to assume government responsibility. Lastly, the study did not make it into the higher echelons of either the Pentagon or the White House (The Huffington Post, 2005).

The 2007 study came from the Center for Naval Analyses, a federally funded research and development centre making this securitizing actor 'semi-government'. The advice in the report came from the Military Advisory Board, a group of retired generals and admirals. The authoritative position of this report is relatively high; the CNA was founded specifically to give military advice on strategic matters and as such carries legitimacy. This legitimacy is further enhanced by the opinion of several high-ranked members of the US-Army with field experience.

The securitizing actor in 2008 was the National Intelligence Council, a government centre for long-term strategic thinking. The NIC reports to the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) which is the head of the intelligence community and the principal advisor to the President, National Security Council and the Department of Homeland Security. As a government actor reporting directly to the highest authority on security issues the DNI can 'speak security' legitimately and with great consequence.

In short, the authoritative position of the various securitizing actors has grown over the years. Whereas the Pentagon-study by Schwarz and Randall still had a relatively low authoritative position the securitizing actors in 2007 and 2008 were legitimate securitizing actors.

#### Facilitating Objective Features

When the phenomenon subject to securitization has certain objective features that are widely considered threatening it becomes easier to securitize. These objective features are measured here in the number of casualties that hurricanes made in a specific year. As became clear in the preceding chapter – see Table 5.3 on page 63 – the number of hurricane casualties fluctuated heavily over the period of analysis, there were years in which there were no victims but also years where a few dozens of people died. Finally, in 2006 Katrina showed the deadly force of hurricanes with its 1954 victims. Because the number of victims fluctuates heavily over the period of analysis the threat of hurricanes is considered to be constantly present; there is always a chance of a highly deadly season. Therefore, facilitating objective features are regarded as constant and present.

### Scale Level of the Referent object

What did climate change threaten? Was it just the US, a specific region or the whole world? The answer to this question is important as ST sees a higher chance of success when securitization takes place on the middle scale – i.e. the nation-state – level.

The three securitizing moves in this analysis were all issued or commissioned by the US government. Consequently, all reports focus on the effects climate change and global warming could have on the US but more than with terrorism, the regional, global and national scales have become intertwined here. The threat posed to the US is mostly indirect: the world will become more insecure due to conflicts over decline resources, immigrants etc. and with it the US faces several threats. All reports make clear that climate change and its possible adverse effects do not stop at borders. Therefore all three securitizing moves are considered to have taken place primarily on the macro scale level with a secondary reference to the middle scale-level as well.

### Successful Securitization

It will now be analysed if the securitizing moves made in 2004, 2007 and 2008 were successful. This is measured in two stages, the stage of identification and the state of mobilization.

The stage of identification measures the acceptance of the audience of climate change and global warming as threats. This is done by looking at the polls on threat perception over the 2002-2008 period, just as the threat perception variable in TPT. Summarizing: the American public did not perceive climate change or global warming as a threat between 2002 and 2008. During this period threat perception did grow gradually but global warming was never identified as a threat by more than 40% of the population.

The stage of mobilization measures to what extent emergency measures are accepted by the public and formal institutions. An issue will be considered successfully securitized only when this stage is fulfilled as well. Could there be support for emergency measures despite the relatively low level of identification? The stage of mobilization will be analysed using two dimensions: public permission and formal permission.

Public permission will be measured with polls. Data remain spotty, as only few relevant polls are available. A study by Curry, Ansolabehere, & Herzog (2007, pp.16-17) shows an increase in public support for emergency action. The percentage of people agreeing with the statement: “global warming has been established as a serious problem and immediate action is necessary” rose from 17% in 2003 to 28% in 2006 but remained low. A poll done by the Pew Research Center (2010) in 2006 and 2007 shows a decline in the number of people thinking global warming required immediate government action: from 61% in 2006 to 55% in 2007. Although these percentages may seem high they are distorted because they were asked

as a follow-up only to those who had indicated they regarded global warming as a serious issue. So they are not evidence of public permission.

Formal support is assessed by looking at policy measures. Again, little material is available. In 2007 Senators Durbin (Democrat-Illinois) and Hagel (Republican-Nebraska) introduced the “Global Climate Change Security Oversight Act., requesting a national intelligence estimate to assess whether and how climate change could pose a national security threat (Brauch, 2007, p. 23). Markey (Democrat-Massachusetts) did a similar proposal in the House of Representatives. None of these proposals were however adopted by Congress (Ibid.). Moreover, the US is known for its lack of policies dealing with climate change. Bush rejected the Kyoto Protocol capping carbon emissions to stop global warming in 2001 and did not sign it during the rest of his term. In fact, Bush repeatedly criticized the protocol and disputed the scientific basis of reports on global warming. Similar measures such as a 2005 G8 proposal were also rejected by Bush (BBC, 2011). Summarizing, the stage of mobilization was reached for none of the years in which there was a securitizing move – in none of the other years either.

All in all there was no successful securitization in the period of analysis. Neither the stage of identification nor the stage of mobilization was reached for any of the years. Not more than 40% of the population ever saw climate change as a threat, there was no broad support for emergency measures amongst the audience and formal institutions such as Congress and the President did not show a change in attitude either, they did not take any policy measures in order to address climate change or global warming.

### **Analysis**

Does ST theory provide us with a good understanding of the reasons why climate change did not become a security issue, despite the large measure of material damage and casualties caused by hurricanes? When does ST expect securitization to be successful? First and foremost a securitizing move has to be made. This is a background condition without which securitization cannot occur. Then, several facilitating conditions increase the chances of success of a securitizing move. Firstly, the rules of the act have to be followed. Secondly the securitizing actor has to have an authoritative position. Thirdly, the threat must have some objective facilitating features. Lastly, the referent object has to be on the middle scale-level. An overview of all the variables, dimensions and indicators over the period of analysis can be found in Appendix V.

First lets have a look at the background condition. Were any securitizing moves made during the period of analysis?



Yes, though not by the president as was the case for the securitization of terrorism. To be able to analyse the process of securitization, securitizing moves by other government actors were analysed as well. Three were found for 2004, 2007 and 2008.

The first hypothesis, STH1 stipulates the following: If a securitizing move is made and the 'rules of the act' are followed, the securitizing move will *ceteris paribus* be successful.

None of the three securitizing moves completely followed the rules of the act – i.e. none of them followed all three elements Buzan et al. specified. Because the rules of the act were not followed and securitization did not occur, STH1 will be retained.

STH2 states that: If a securitizing move is made and the securitizing actor has an authoritative position, the securitizing move will *ceteris paribus* be successful.

Each securitizing move was made by a different securitizing actor. The level of authority of these actors in speaking security grew from 2004 to 2008. Where the authority of the actor can still be disputed in 2004 this becomes impossible in 2008 where the securitizing actor is a government agency reporting directly to the President's security adviser. Because securitization did not occur despite securitizing moves by actors with an authoritative position, STH2 can be rejected.

STH3 states: If a securitizing move is made and the issue designated as an existential threat has traits that are generally held to be threatening, the securitizing move will *ceteris paribus* be successful.

This variable is considered to be present and constant over the whole period of analysis. Firstly, hurricanes can certainly be plausibly regarded as threats. Secondly, the objective measure of the number of casualties and material damage caused by hurricanes fluctuated in seemingly random fashion throughout the period of analysis, meaning that the predictions with regards to the intensity of a season's hurricanes were inherently inaccurate and that the threat was always present. STH3 can be rejected because securitization did not occur despite securitizing moves and the presence of traits that are generally held to be threatening.

STH4 states: If a securitizing move is made and the referent object is located on the middle scale-level, the securitizing move will *ceteris paribus* be successful.

All three securitizing moves were primarily on the macro scale-level; climate change and the security risks associated with it, take place on a world wide scale and do not stop at borders. Moreover, most of the initial threats to US national security were of indirect nature

in the foreseeable future. STH4 can thus be retained, none of the securitizing moves was primarily on the middle scale-level, and securitization did not occur.

Lastly, STH5 states: The variables following the rules of the act, an authoritative securitizing actor, a referent object on the middle scale and traits that are generally held to be threatening have a reinforcing effect on each other; the more of them present and the higher their value, the greater the chance a particular securitizing move has of being successful.

With the hypotheses concerning the following of the rules of the act and the scale level of the referent object retained, two of the mediating variables seem present. Yet, there was no successful securitization during the period of analysis despite this. This speaks against an increase of the changes of successful securitization by presence of more variables and leads to a rejection of STH5.

### **Conclusion**

Does the rhetorical process of securitization give an adequate understanding of the lack of threat perception and securitization in the case of climate change and global warming around the occurrence of Katrina? Partially. Although there was a modest growth in threat perception and there were a few policy measures, climate change was not successfully securitized during the period of analysis. Looking at the hypotheses, two could be retained; the rules of the act were not followed – perfectly – and securitization took place primarily on the macro scale-level. It is however unlikely that these two conditions alone fully explain the lack of successful securitization. Remember the facilitating conditions were not all necessary factors, the more of them present the more likely successful securitization would be. In this case the background condition – a securitizing move – and two of the facilitating conditions – i.e. the objective threat of hurricanes and the authoritative position of the securitizing actors – were present for several years and yet securitization did not occur. One could even argue that the rules of the act were followed for 2007 and 2008 if a somewhat less strict interpretation of this criterion would be used. So while the macro scale-level of the referent object and the not following of the rules of the act may partly explain the lack of securitization, it does not seem to be the whole story. Chapter six will feature a further reflection on the meaning of these findings.

## Chapter 6

### Conclusion

This paper started out with two cases: threat perception in the aftermath of 9/11 and threat perception in the aftermath of hurricane Katrina. Both phenomena took many lives, yet the reaction to them was almost opposite: a Global War on Terror started after 9/11 whereas not much happened with regards to climate change – one of the possible causes of hurricane Katrina – at all. The vastly different reaction to such similarly threatening phenomena inspired the following research question:

*Why is terrorism regarded by the US as an existential threat while climate change and other related issues are not?*

In answering this research question a traditional Rationalist and a modern Critical-Constructivist theory were used. The Rationalist theory was Walt's Threat Perception Theory (TPT). The above puzzle was impossible to analyse for TPT in its rather narrow traditional form. Therefore adaptations to the theory were made and a favourable approach was adopted to see if its objectivist framework could then give a satisfactory answer to the research question. The modern theory used to answer the research question was Securitization Theory (ST) by the Copenhagen School. This theory attempts to explain the variance in threat perception by looking at the discursive intersubjective process of securitization instead of focussing solely on objective traits. As such it was considered a suitable alternative to correct the shortcomings of TPT and answer the research question.

The scientific relevance of this paper was twofold; apart from attempting to answer the research question it also aimed to test the theories' respective ability to contribute to the broader academic debate within Security Studies between Traditionalists, Wideners and Critical researchers. The challenge for TPT lay primarily in its ability to analyse phenomena outside the statist-military spectrum for ST the challenge was retaining analytical rigour to provide focus in analysis despite the theories' broad framework.

#### Implications of Findings

The following paragraphs will discuss the findings in the two empirical chapters and their implications for the respective theories as a whole and the research question. To better serve this purpose results are ordered according to theory.

## Threat Perception Theory

**Table 6.1 "Hypotheses Threat Perception Theory"**

	Terrorism	Climate change
TPTH1 ( <i>geographic proximity</i> )	N/A	Retained
TPTH2 ( <i>offensive capabilities</i> )	Rejected	Rejected
TPTH3 ( <i>aggressive intentions</i> )	Retained	N/A
TPTH4 ( <i>reinforcing variables</i> )	N/A	N/A

When looking at the results across both cases Walt's theory does not seem to provide a particularly good explanation of the level of threat perception in the respective cases. With each case only one in three hypotheses could be retained suggesting that other relevant explanatory factors could still be missing. Moreover, none of the hypotheses could be retained across both cases, which increases the risk of coincidental findings. The only factor that seemed 'present' in both cases was the background condition, aggregate power. Neither of the cases shows threat perception without aggregate power being present, underlining the necessary nature of this factor.

### Reflection on Results

Despite some obvious problems TPT is not to be written off completely, a comprehensive critique with defences and problems will now be given. Firstly, the rejection of the hypothesis concerning offensive capabilities in the case of terrorism, the hypothesis was rejected because the number of victims grew from 2002-2004 whilst threat perception gradually went down. A possible explanation for this could be the large – and increasing – portion of non-western Al Qaeda casualties in these years. The American public might have viewed Al Qaeda as less of a direct threat to their own safety because attacks took place in Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan and had the nature of counter-insurgency. Unfortunately, data on casualties differentiating between nationality and place of attack were not found so this thesis could not be tested.

Secondly, the apparent lack of influence of aggregate power in the case of climate change and global warming: why did the high measure of aggregate power not lead to threat perception? This could be a matter of faulty operationalization. The concepts of Walt's theory were thoroughly adapted in this thesis; perhaps this was not done correctly. What if hurricanes are not a good objective measure for threat perception of climate change because many people did not establish a link between the two issues? Perhaps another phenomenon or a combination of phenomena – e.g. a combination of hurricanes, droughts, floods, extremes in temperatures etc. – would be better able to measure aggregate power?

This defence is limited, however, as the problem seems to lie in the way that Walt measures threat. TPT encourages measuring threat using simple numeric indicators and this is exactly what becomes problematic with broader and more complex phenomena. This is not only a problem with climate change but also with threats such as epidemics or (im)migration. Moreover, issues might be interlinked as well; with climate change leading to or enhancing migration problems which in turn lead to overpopulation, food scarcities etc. It is doubtful whether a broader operationalization of aggregate power could be helpful. The variable was already broadened significantly in order to analyse hurricanes. Instead, the fundamental problem with TPT seems that it oversimplifies threat perception.

Instead of criticizing Walt for oversimplification he could also be defended by arguing that the theory was applied well out of its comfort zone here and that it still has use in traditional cases of security – i.e. within the statist-military realm. But is this enough? Climate change and other broad issues might indeed seem like a different kind of security but they are security nonetheless. Epidemics, hurricanes and floods kill many on a yearly basis – more so than armed conflict – in the real world, security simply means much more than armed conflict alone. And this argument is not epistemological in nature; it is based on objective facts, namely the number of casualties, that TPT itself holds in such high regard. Walt's theory, because of its oversimplification, seems fundamentally unable to explain or even grasp the broader and more complex reality of threat outside the traditional military realm.

### Conclusion

Given all these problems, how would TPT answer the research question in this thesis?

*Why is terrorism regarded by the US as an existential threat while climate change and other related issues are not?* It would answer: terrorism was a security issue because terrorist actors possessed a high measure of aggregate power and had clear offensive intentions, climate change and other related issues were not because they are not security issues.

The thesis that climate change is simply not a security issue is particularly hard to maintain after Katrina killed 1954 people. Moreover, by simply excluding climate change TPT cannot explain the *why* of security. All in all then, the results are a heavy blow to Walt's theory. In this paper it was given the benefit of the doubt, it was operationalized far beyond its original scope but even with these adaptations it is still unable to effectively analyse threat perception or answer the research question. The background condition aggregate power seems to be the only remnant of the theory. The necessary nature of this factor can be confirmed here, as threat perception did not occur without the presence of an objective basis. So as a rather meagre result, TPT can only confirm aggregate power as a necessary objective basis to threat perception.

## Securitization Theory

**Table 6.2 "Hypotheses Securitization Theory"**

	Terrorism	Climate change
STH1 ( <i>rules of the act</i> )	Retained	Retained
STH2 ( <i>authoritative position</i> )	Retained	Rejected
STH3 ( <i>facilitating objective features</i> )	Retained	Rejected
STH4 ( <i>middle scale-level</i> )	Retained	Retained
STH5 ( <i>reinforcing variables</i> )	Retained	Rejected

Does ST provide us with a good explanation of threat perception in both cases? Not completely. Despite the in-depth look the theory allows into the rhetorical process of securitization, it does not seem able to single out the factors that make or break securitization. In the case of terrorism all factors seem to be important which begs the question of overdetermination – more on which below. But when we look at both cases, only the following of the rules of the act and the scale-level of the referent object can be retained. So what explains the level of threat perception? It seems unlikely that successful securitization is due to the exact following of the rules of the act and using a referent object that is on the middle scale level.

### Reflection on Results

Before drawing a conclusion with regards to ST a comprehensive critique and some important side notes will be explained below. The largest success of applying ST to both cases lies in the insight it provides into how the rhetorical component of security works. ST provided a powerful tool to analyse the various securitizing moves in the State of the Union addresses with regards to terrorism. The analysis showed how Al Qaeda and terrorism suddenly became security threats after 9/11. More than just securitization, institutionalization was also found; the initially new threat of terrorism was gradually established amongst the public and the securitizing moves broadened over time to include rogue states, Weapons of Mass Destruction and were ultimately used to justify the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Apart from this success there were several problems.

Firstly, just as in the preceding case it can be doubted whether the link between hurricanes and threat perception with regards to climate change and global warming was established among the public. Here this could have been the cause for the rejection of the objective traits variable.

Secondly, an important problem with the results of the terrorism case was the risk of overdetermination. Because all four hypotheses were confirmed it is possible that there were more causes than necessary to explain the effect – i.e. threat perception. This way it becomes difficult to point out the causes that really matter. This problem is a consequence of the case study design that was chosen for this research and could be solved in future research by different case selection – more on this in the ‘limitations’ paragraph below.

Thirdly, another more fundamental problem of ST is revealed by the ‘following the rules of the act’ hypothesis. This hypothesis was retained in the second case because not all three elements of the rules of the act were followed perfectly and there was no securitization. Actually, the rules of the act were largely followed and only the level of urgency was lower. But because Buzan et al. themselves specify that something has to be presented as an *existential* threat this was rejected (1998, p. 24). After a second look at the theory it turns out that Buzan et al. would have argued the rules of the act *were* followed here. This is due to the different sectors of threat that they distinguish in their theoretical framework. In the environmental sector that climate change would be located in, they minimize the requirements with regards to urgency because issues in this sector are not as acute and usually take effect in a remote and uncertain future (Ibid., p. 83). This slight theoretical adjustment is not a one off thing; it is how the theoretical framework works. All sectors have their own specific dynamic: the military sector accords primacy to objective features of threat (Ibid., p.57), the societal sector has different dynamics per region (Ibid., 138), in the economic sector a ‘logic of survival’ is difficult to discern altogether (Ibid., p.115) and the political sector is related to all other sectors and is best described a sort of a residual category (Ibid., 141). The sectors themselves are also interrelated and their content is fluid. For example, issues that are not acute such as droughts could manifest themselves in a more acute way in other sectors when conflicts arise over water (Ibid., 84). This causes two interrelated problems for the theory. Firstly it counters the ST claim to be able to broaden Security Studies without making the concept devoid of meaning by defining the core of Security Studies as a certain rhetorical structure – i.e. ‘the politics of existential threat’ (Ibid., 27-28). It turns out that ST needs much more of an objective material basis than a rhetorical structure to analyse security. This objective basis is present, only it is different for each sector of security. So there is a clear objective basis to security but is not explicated as such. Secondly and more importantly, because the dynamics of securitization differ strongly per sector the theory excludes very little. Yet exclusion is an essential element of any theory. Lieshout (1993, pp. 18-21) tells us a theory is a connecting principle, an explanatory link between cause and effect. Without a theory cause and effect mean nothing; any effect could follow from any cause. A theory tells us something about reality when it limits the number of possible causes from one effect. Excluding certain other plausible courses of events provides

this focus. The more a theory excludes – i.e. the larger its empirical content – the more it tells us about reality. Because here, security can effectively mean something else in every sector the empirical content is rather small, that means the theory tells us relatively little about reality.

Lastly, another weakness of the theory is the insufficient specification of securitizing actors. They could be anything, political leaders, lobbyists etc. The only demand is that they are able to make a securitizing move. This is an ecological fallacy: those that can speak security are securitizing actors. At the same time this excludes almost by definition those that are unable or less eloquent in speaking security such as minorities or representatives of poor regions (Hansen, 2000, p. 289). The key to being a successful securitizing actor seems to be power, which is more than just an authoritative position but is not mentioned at all in the theory. This omission and the resulting focus on dominant actors is all the more striking because of the place ST scholars claim within the camp of Critical Security Studies that questions the framework in which security is conceptualized.

### Conclusion

Can ST, despite its flaws, answer the research question posed in this paper? *Why is terrorism regarded by the US as an existential threat while climate change and global warming are not?* It would answer: terrorism was a security issue because several securitizing moves were made by an authoritative actor, in these securitizing moves the rules of the act were followed and the referent object was on the middle scale-level also, there were objective facilitating features with regards to the threat of terrorism. On the other hand climate change was not securitized despite the fact that authoritative actors made several securitizing moves. This is due to the fact that the referent object was primarily on the macro scale-level and because the rules of the act were not followed completely.

This answer does not satisfy. It is unlikely that the scale level and the *exact* following of the rules of the act are the explanation. The theory does not truly make us understand the answer to the research question because it does not go to the root of the problem. Even if ST could specify all the factors that determine the success of a securitizing move it does not explain the first step: the reason why some issues are securitized and others are not. *Why* does an actor securitize? This step would be the true answer to the research question and remains unclear. Why did Bush securitize terrorism and did he do nothing with regards to the climate, although both had shown objective features of threat? Just as Rationalist theories, ST seems to keep the interests of the actor exogenous to their model, but whereas Rationalists derives actors' interests from the condition of anarchy, ST does not specify these conditions at all. Buzan et al. do come with a vague *cui bono* kind of thesis in the sense that securitization allows one to break free from normal politics and the democratic hindrances to political



power that this brings with it. This does indeed seem the case when looking at the workings of securitization in the case of terrorism but it still does not explain why the same was not done with regards to climate change.

All in all these results are not mild for the theory. This explorative research has shown various important lacunae in ST. Although it is better able to analyse a broader spectrum of threats the answer to the research question remains far from satisfactory. Many problems stem from the theories' relatively vague theoretical framework and operationalization. ST staked a bald claim in having found a sort of theoretical *panacea* for the academic discussion between Traditionalist Wideners and Critical Scholars. By regarding security as a rhetorical structure everything could be included without losing focus. Instead of being a success, this marriage between Critical and Constructivist elements often proved a rather awkward theoretical midway. The theory turned out to lean on a objectivist ontology, only this was spread over several interrelated sectors of security. Also, for a Critical Theory there is too little emphasis on alternative securitizing actors. Only those that are able to make a securitizing move are taken in to account. Despite the many criticisms the theory did offer a new and exciting way of looking at security. The rhetorical analysis offers depth and opens up many interesting new doors to research.

### **Comparison**

Unfortunately, neither theory was able to provide a satisfactory answer to the research question. Which theory is then eventually 'better'? This question is hard to answer; the theories are of a fundamentally different kind, making each able to explain a different part of the story whilst overlooking the other. This fundamental difference stems from the respective theories' distinct place in the meta-theoretical landscape that was described earlier in the theoretical framework. Walt's objective ontology in combination with a positivistic epistemology provides his theory with a high measure of analytical rigor and theoretical specification but also leads to an incomplete and at times distorted view of what security is in the real world by excluding issues such as epidemics, natural disasters, and non-state conflict that take much more lives on a yearly basis than interstate conflict (Ruggie, 1998 pp. 882-883). The only remnant of this theory after analysis seems to be the importance of aggregate power as a necessary condition for threat perception. The opposite is true of its Critical-Constructivist counterpart. Although it too has a mostly positivistic epistemology it rests on a broader intersubjective ontology that allows it to see security as a rhetorical structure, this allowed an in-depth analysis of what security is, but the theories' lack of empirical content limits its use to analysis instead of adequately or predicting explaining the level of threat perception (Ibid.).

This contradiction is what keeps the academic debate between the Traditionalists, wanting to restrict the subject of security to militaristic issues, and the Wideners, wanting to extend security into a broader range of areas, going. Neither party can ever fully claim the mantle of truth: the advantage of the narrow school lying in prediction and the possibility of larger-n tests whilst ST provides a better in-depth understanding into the process. This conclusion will be my contribution to the debate. The truth seems to be somewhere in the middle. Inspired by Hemmer & Katzenstein (2002), I would like to argue for an eclectic model. In this analysis I have repeatedly found that material conditions and ideas cannot be regarded as separate. Instead they seem mutually constitutive: material conditions such as the 9/11 attacks form certain ideas *through* the process of securitization, such as the threat of terrorism. If these ideas are securitized effectively and lead to policy measures in the stage of mobilization they will in turn influence the form of material reality itself again. This eclectic form could be seen as a two-stage model with the objective reality preceding the dynamics of securitization or as one incorporated theory.

A two-stage model could explain threat perception in two stages. First, a Rationalist model can be used to explain the threat perception of government actors. This could explain the *why* of securitization. In the second stage the rhetorical analysis is used to analyse the process of external communication of the threats towards the broader public. Ideally a theory of threat perception enables us to look at more than just the military sector and understand the important intersubjective and the rhetorical components of security issues but does so without losing its focus and predictive power. I believe an eclectic approach to security has the best chance of attaining this goal. Traditional Rationalist theories such as TPT should take into account security as more than solely interstate military conflict and should take into account the role of ideas; modern Critical-Constructivist theories such as ST should strive for more analytical rigour and focus and pay more attention to the objective elements of security. It is unlikely that representatives of the different schools will ever find a common middle ground but partial adaptations are possible and will make for a better understanding for security in the real world.

## **Reflection**

### Limitations

This research was explorative in nature. ST was operationalized for the first time and TPT was operationalized in a different way than usual. The explorative model brings with it some limitations with regards to the findings in this research, the most important will be explained below.

One of the more serious problems was the apparent ‘missing link’ between hurricanes, global warming and climate change. Threat perception did not at all react to the dramatic event of Katrina, which could be an indication that the link between hurricanes and threat perception on climate change was established amongst the audience. Further research using a different objective link to climate change or a combination of several phenomena for example floods, droughts and hurricanes would be useful to strengthen or reject the findings in this study.

Because only two cases could be researched it was often not possible to test all hypotheses. Special interest goes out to the impact of ‘aggressive intentions’. This variable could not be measured in hurricanes because these are not intentional actors. I believe aggressive intentions could be important in explaining threat perception. It could even be the answer to the research question. Perhaps climate change was not regarded a threat because there was no conscious actor behind it. Aggressive intentions would then be another necessary variable without which threat perception could not occur. However devastating floods, droughts and storms may be, they cannot be said to have offensive intentions. There is no malignant actor such as Osama bin Laden to be held responsible. As such, I expect they become surrounded by a different dynamic, a certain resignation. The problems are considered more a fact of life. Making it more difficult to surround them with urgency. It would be interesting to see if this variable is indeed an important explanation by juxtaposing cases that have an intentional actor to those that do not and keeping the material component equal. HIV/AIDS would be an interesting case because it seems to be successfully securitized on a large scale and yet the epidemic has no aggressive intentions or conscious actor.

Another problem of the case study design became apparent in testing TPTH4 and STH5. The hypotheses about the reinforcing relationship between the mediating variables were included to illustrate the combined effect of the various mediating variables; the more of them present the higher the chance on either threat perception or successful securitization. Unfortunately these hypotheses could not be tested thoroughly because of their inherently probabilistic nature. To test this more cases are necessary.

It became clear from the testing of ST on terrorism that there was a risk of overdetermination. This risk is part of the case study model and can only be eliminated by doing more research into different cases to see which variables are important for securitization. The key is variation. Here we saw that a non-traditional security issue on the macro scale – climate change – was not securitized, so it becomes interesting to research a case where the opposite was true – i.e. where a non-traditional security issue on the macro scale was successfully securitized – again, the HIV/AIDS case would be interesting. Or to compare with the terrorism case, an instance of securitization without a strong objective basis to security, immigration for example. By gaining more variation in future research a better test of the variables and their relative importance can be conducted.

Finally, some limitations with regards to the conclusions are in place as well because of the limited data in some cases. It was hard to measure threat perception before 9/11 because of the small amount of polling data available before the attacks. The lack of data was especially confronting in the case of climate change and global warming. Because little data were available different polls had to be used, sometimes not measuring exactly what was needed. For instance, the development of threat perception with regards to climate change had to be measured using just two questions, neither of which measured climate change directly. The first asking respondents what they thought of global warming coverage of the news was indirect; the second question asked respondents if they considered it a top priority, which is not the same as a threat. This problem is inevitable and this paper has been as explicit as possible on which data were used and what the possible difficulties were.

#### Further research

To further expand on interesting insights and correct for the limitations of the present study further research is expedient. The most interesting and important subjects for further research will be explicated below.

The speech analysis of the State of the Unions with regards to terrorism produced interesting results and shows many possibilities for further research. Firstly they show the value of institutionalized securitization; when a threat is understood as such securitizing moves seem to become less important (Buzan et al., 1998, pp.27-28). As soon as the public understood and accepted the securitization of the threat of terrorism after 9/11 a process seems to have gotten underway to use this understanding to expand threat perception to phenomena that were not directly related to it such as Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD's) and rogue states. This clearly shows in the speech analysis done in chapter 5 with only six mentions of WMD's in 2006 and 27 in 2007. Going back to the ST conceptual model in chapter 2, it can be argued that institutionalization would function as a so-called feedback loop. When one issue is securitized and institutionalized this can serve as a basis for further securitizing moves with regards to new and related phenomena – this 'relation' does not have to exist *a priori*. It can also be created by the securitizing actor as was the case with the Axis of Evil in the speeches by Bush.

Secondly, the dynamics found in the speeches reminded strongly of the work of Jutta Weldes (1996, pp. 279-284). The link that Bush created in the speeches between terrorists, WMD's and rogue regimes could be an example of so-called *quasi causality*: a link between issues that are not necessarily connected. Also Bush deemed this alliance of rogue states the 'Axis of Evil', associating it with the Nazi 'Axis' forces that the Allies fought in World War II. Weldes would see this as an example of *articulation*, the production of meaning through linguistic resources. The word 'Axis' has a strong connotation for many in the Western

World, it is immediately understood and welds a strong associative link – e.g. these are the bad guys and they need to be dealt with. So action is based for an important part on a constructed meaning. Lastly, Bush's speeches framed the conflict with Al Qaeda as a broad struggle between the free world and the terrorists that wanted to overthrow it. America as the leader of the free world was the logical leader in this struggle. A clear example of what Weldes' calls *interpellation*, the creation a certain relationship between *alter* and *ego* that forces the ego to act a certain way. I believe that Weldes' theory could be of additional value to ST because it gives a more accurate view of the rhetorical process. Also, the factors Weldes specifies are likely to have an effect on the chances of successful securitization. By including them as part of the 'rules of the act' for example the rhetorical process would be better theoretically specified.

Lastly, the process of securitization strongly resembles the norm life cycle. Finnemore and Sikkink (1998, pp. 896-909) specify the model in which norm entrepreneurs – i.e. securitizing actors – use various persuasive strategies to have a norm reach critical mass.. I believe the insights that the literature on norm-lifecycles provides could be useful in more accurately specifying when the stage of identification of a securitization – or critical mass – is reached.

Besides the speech analysis a look should also be taken into the role of the media in the securitizing process. This thesis was based on textual analysis and thus only examines textual speech acts – or transcripts of speeches. The problem here is that these speech acts hardly ever reach the public in their original form. The media is an important actor in the securitizing process itself as it stands between the securitizing actors and the public that is to accept them. The media has its own goals – profits or ideological colour – and will select which messages it sends out and in what fashion by shortening or adapting them. Buzan et al. mention the media as an actor contributing to the definition of situations (1998, p. 124). I would like to argue that media should be regarded as an intervening variable, which is decisive in how a securitizing move reaches the public. And it is far from neutral, a study by Huertas and Adler (2012, pp. 3-4) found that 93 percent of Fox News Channel's representations of climate science were misleading. Examples include broad dismissals of human-caused climate change, rejections of climate science as a valid body of knowledge and cherry picking of data. In a broader sense climate science was denigrated by promoting distrust in scientists and scientific institutions or by placing acceptance of climate change in an ideological instead of a fact-based context (Ibid.). Besides including the media as an intervening variable a look should also be taken at other media. Williams (2003, p.514) argues that other sorts of media are becoming more important than traditional textual media. Therefore a look ought to be taken into how images, audio and new various new media work in the process of securitization.

It became clear in this chapter that despite its deep analysis of the dynamics of security, ST is unable to explain the reason why a particular securitizing move is made because it keeps the interests of the securitizing actor exogenous to its model. This was one of the main reasons for the theory's inability to answer the research question. Therefore, additional research into the reasons for making a securitizing move would be useful. Additional research could for instance focus on the political affiliation of the president; are republicans more prone to securitize some issues than democrats? What would have happened if Bill Clinton were still president in 2001, or if Al Gore had beat George W. Bush?

Another factor that could be of importance is the fact that the US is a federal country with a high degree of sovereignty for the separate states. This research focuses on the federal governments' reaction to Katrina whereas the reactions of the local governments in the affected region are likely to be more intense. Did successful securitization occur confined on a smaller local level? Or was the very local influence of Katrina the reason why securitization did not succeed? The local scale of the disaster could be an explanation for the lack of national securitization. And what about the character of the region? The affected region is one of the poorest in the US; the reaction would probably have been more intense if New York City or Los Angeles were affected.

ST basically sees threat as an extreme case of priority, an extreme of politicization. This, for all the theories' problems is an exciting new insight opening many new doors for research. Why did the Nuclear disaster at the Fukushima plant in Japan lead to an *Atomausstieg* in Germany whilst England decided to continue with the use of nuclear energy for example?

Finally, as Buzan et al. argue securitization is always a political choice, the motivations for the opposite dynamic of desecuritization become interesting. How does desecuritization work together with institutionalization? The military is a clear example of an institutionalized element of security not in need of 'dramatic occurrences' to prove its relevance. Why then have many European states drastically cut defence-spending years on end? NATO members are asked to spend at least two percent of their GDP on this core state activity, but many members fail to meet this threshold. Could (de)securitization theory tell us something about this? How is the security rhetoric in the Netherlands developing for instance, why do we not consider defence, the traditional core state-activity, to be important anymore? Have thrifty politicians actively desecuritized this institutionalized threat in favour of threats to our economic sphere?

Without an answer to the research question the results of this almost ninety-paged endeavour might seem rather meagre. But answering the research question is not the sole purpose of exploratory research. Instead, I would argue the most interesting feats of this paper lie in the fact that it has clearly shown the limits of the Rationalist way of looking at security.

Security is more than a war between two large standing armies, but Rationalists do not seem to offer much more than the basic insight that some objective basis is needed as a foundation of threat. Another exciting result is the fruitful analysis that was done using speech analysis: security does seem to be a construction as a result of the rhetorical process of securitization.

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