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**Donald Trump's Rhetoric Concerning Black Lives Matter:
Constructing a Security Threat.**

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Abstract

In the Summer of 2020, mass protests occurred throughout the United States in response to the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis at the hands of law enforcement. This incident sparked a lot of contradicting discourse when speaking about the BLM movement and what was happening around the nation. At the height of it all, the President of the United States warned those who were participating in the protests that he would deploy the U.S. Military.

This thesis aims to review the utterances made by President Donald Trump during the summer of 2020 when speaking about the Black Lives Matter movement in order to determine if both the language and framing of the movement could be categorized as a speech act. Throughout this process, it was critical to determine whether these utterances, particularly ones laid out in Trump's tweets, were instrumental in influencing the public's perception of and reactions to the movement. It was also critical to resolve whether Trump's words fabricated a message that had the potential of securitizing the BLM movement. To draw a conclusion concerning this topic, the use of tweets, speeches, and a variety of news articles were analyzed from key events that happened between the months of May and August of 2020.

One of the thesis' key findings is that Trump's statements about the BLM movement led to abnormal, if not excessive, response not only by local law enforcement, but also federal agents. The use of federal agents, specifically agents from the Department of Homeland Security, is especially abnormal, which suggests that the BLM movement was viewed as a security threat.

Key Words: securitization, Donald Trump, Copenhagen School, Black Lives Matter, security threat, speech act, polarization, security

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1 Chapter 1 Introduction

This thesis investigates the Black Lives Matter movement (from here onwards referred to as BLM) after the George Floyd killing in the summer of 2020. More specifically, this thesis examines if the republican party securitized this movement after the George Floyd killing. The focus of the investigation is on whether Donald Trump securitized BLM in the summer 2020 in the wake of the George Floyd killing. One possible hypothesis is that he indeed securitized BLM in order to maintain power and control, further legitimizing the current government in power by framing BLM as a threat to national security. An alternative hypothesis is that the measures and discourse taken by Donald Trump were in fact in line due to the circumstances of what was happening across the country at the time. To investigate these hypotheses, different republican politicians' discourses and portrayals of the BLM movement are analyzed.

Gaining a deeper understanding of the relationship and positioning of Donald Trump towards populations and movements who do not share similar political ideologies and values is the main objective of this thesis. The goal is to assess the degree of polarization within the United States and analyze measures taken to keep the interest and identity of the controlling party at the time—Republican party. This is motivated by the need to understand how identity politics built on securitization discourses may be a main tool of drawing a political division among Americans. For this, I will look into the way securitization theory has evolved from strictly a military state-centric approach to a more encompassing theory that can also be applied to societal issues.

1.1 Research Question

The research is guided by three main research questions (RQs):

RQ1 – How did Donald Trump securitize the BLM movement after the George Floyd killing in the summer of 2020?

RQ2 – How did the language used by Donald Trump in his tweets and speeches, related to these events, meet the threshold to be considered a speech act based on securitization theory?

RQ3 – What measures were taken based on the discourse being used, and what were the concrete actions taken by Donald Trump towards BLM?

1.2 Motivation

One of the main motivating factors that piqued my interest in this research topic is connected to my time living in the city of Minneapolis. This resulted in me viewing Minneapolis as the city I would call my home. Furthermore, Cup Foods, the convenient store where George Floyd was killed, was no more than a five-minute drive from where I had lived in Minneapolis. This connection to the city of Minneapolis, and knowing the area and community where this happened, impacted me on a personal, academic, and political level. It pushed me to try and get more involved with my community and try to better understand the different societal dynamics within the United States. On an academic level, I found myself trying to look at literature that allowed me to gain more academic knowledge about the issues at hand. Lastly, on a political level, I watched speeches, interviews, and news coverage from media on both sides of the political spectrum in hopes of having a holistic understanding of how both sides view those from opposing ideologies.

Though I am aware that this thesis is not looking at the George Floyd killing specifically, the national and global reaction to those scenes, and how it impacted the nation, is at the core of my motivation. Furthermore, the aftermath of what happened has put on full display the degree of polarization within the United States.

1.3 Relevance and Importance

While studying the Master Program in Peace and Conflict Transformation at UiT, I observed a tendency in the program of only looking at regions and countries located in the so-called global south, especially countries that did not, or do not, have democratic institutions in place. Most of the regions and examples we studied and explored were in places like Afghanistan, Myanmar, and regarding the Russia/Ukrainian war—to name a few. Although all examples listed above are beneficial case studies to examine, there seems to be a lack of, and or unwillingness, to use a similar lens in looking at countries that are part of the global north. One example of that is the United States, a country that has had a long-lasting democracy in place. However, looking deeper beyond what political systems are in place, some would say there has been an increase in human rights violations across different sectors of society. It is important for the field of peace and conflict studies to have a more global and inclusive approach when studying this kind of phenomena, hence the interest in this thesis to focus on the United States.

1.4 Structure of Thesis

After this introduction, **Chapter 2 - Background**, presents the overall context that led to the research topic, not just focusing on the event that sparked mass protest across the United States in 2020 (the killing of George Floyd), but an overview of the BLM movement. The chapter presents main events that influenced the creation of the movement, as well as the movement's overall goals. Moreover, it includes a discussion of why the killing of George Floyd in 2020 sparked such mobilization compared to other killings we have seen in the United States.

In **Chapter 3 - Theoretical Framework**, previous research using a similar lens of securitization theory will be utilized to examine issues of identity politics in the United States. This literature is then connected to the conceptualization of different terms used throughout this thesis. The conceptualization of these terms will be the main measuring instrument used

throughout the analysis process to determine if the BLM movement was securitized. The key terms that will be used throughout this thesis are *security, threat, and speech act*. Furthermore, in this chapter I will explain and discuss the different theories used as the main lenses and explain the reason they were picked for this specific study. The theories that will be used in this research are securitization theory, focusing on the work of Buzan and the Copenhagen School (CS). Thierry Balzacq and social constructivist theory, mainly focusing on the works of scholars like Ayukawa 2020, Schneider, Ingram, and Huysmans.

Chapter 4 - Methodological Framework discusses the qualitative research approach and the reasoning for why it was used for this thesis. This chapter also outlines why I decided to use discourse analysis of speeches and the criteria that was used for selecting different speeches. Furthermore, it also describes the process of analysis that was used, why it was being used, and for what purpose. Lastly, I will explain both the limitations that were encountered throughout the process, as well my position as a researcher. On top of that, I will address both the validity and reliability of the data.

Chapter 5 - Analysis will look at the different speeches that were selected to be compared to one another. The goal of this section is to break down the different speeches and look more closely at the words being used by the Republican politicians. More specifically, looking at how those words are defined and understood in connection to the process of securitization, especially in relation to the concept of a speech act. The goal is to dissect if there were similar words and sentiments expressed across the different tweets and speeches being examined to determine if BLM movement was securitized or not by Trump.

Lastly, in **Chapter 6 - Conclusion**, I will summarize the different findings within the analysis to determine the outcome of the research, as we as answer the research question introduced at the thesis' being. Furthermore, I will suggest other areas related to this topic that could be studied and researched to bring deeper insight to this topic.

2 Chapter 2 Background and Literature Review

2.1 Context of conflict

It is always important when doing research to understand the context behind the events that lead to a conflict. On May 25th of 2020, George Floyd was killed by Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin. There were videos recorded of Derek Chauvin, who had his knee on George Floyd's neck for over nine minutes, and eventually caused his death. In the video of

George Floyd's death, one can hear him saying multiple times to the police officers who had him pinned down that he was not able to breathe. This video sparked mass protest in Minneapolis the following day on May 26, 2020. After that, there was an increase of protest that spread across the United States, as well as the globe, during the summer of 2020. During that time, there were many different opinions about the BLM movement and the protests happening worldwide. The Guardian reported that hundreds of protesters clashed with police officers because of the killing of George Floyd (The Guardian, 2020).

2.2 Black Lives Matter as a movement

The BLM movement was established in 2013 by Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi in response to the verdict of George Zimmerman. The movement began by using the #BlacklivesMatter hashtag (BlackLivesMatter, n.d.). BLM defines themselves as an “ideological and political intervention in a world where Black lives are systematically and intentionally targeted for demise. It is an affirmation of Blacks folks’ humanity, our contributions to this society, and our resilience in the face of deadly oppression” (BlackLivesMatter, N.D.). One of the main things that BLM has done since its inception is make it known when a Black person has been killed by law enforcement. One of the tactics that they have used to do this has been hosting protests in the cities where the killing happened, as well as in other cities as a sign of solidarity. Throughout the years participation in BLM protests have always had a good turnout. However, the participation in the protest responding to the George Floyd killing in 2020 was far more intense compared to other police killings of Black people. Not only did we see mass protests across the United States, there were also many protests around the world. One of the reasons for this was because a “Black activist saw Floyd’s death as a symbol of the intolerance and injustice they face at home” (Silverstein, 2020, para.2). Outside of the United States, England was the country with the most protests in solidarity and support of George Floyd and the BLM movement. Below we can see protests in support of the BLM movement across the globe.

**Global Demonstrations Associated with Black Lives Matter (BLM)
by Demonstration Type
(24 May - 22 August 2020)**

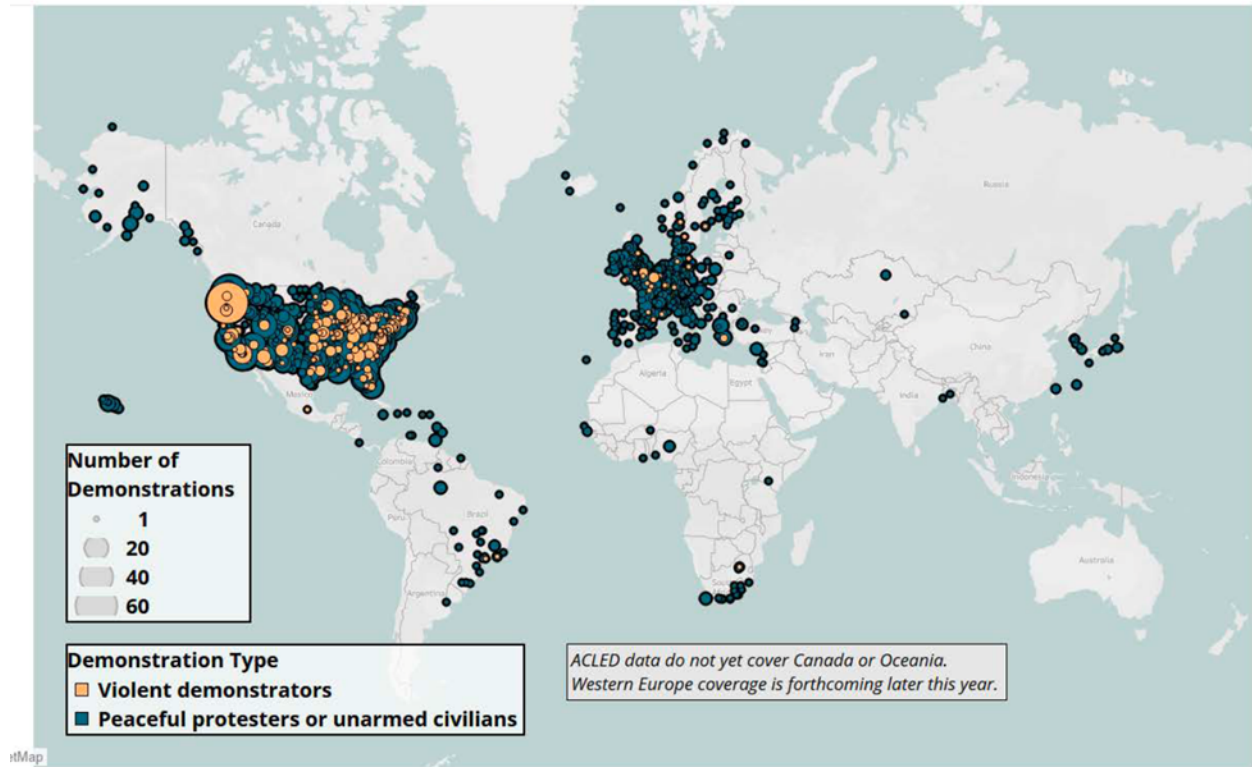


Figure 1: Hate Crimes Statistics (source: justice.gov, 2013)

According to The United States Department of Justice, and the FBI hate crimes statistics, there was an increase of hate crimes from 2019 to 2020. Based on their reporting, “62% of victims were targeted because of the offenders’ bias toward race/ethnicity/ancestry, which continues to be the largest bias motivation category. Participating agencies reported 5,227 race/ethnicity/ancestry-based incidents in 2020, a 32% increase from 2019” (The United States Department of Justice, 2022).

The following chart is a visual representation of how hate crimes in the United States increased from 2019 to 2020, with a substantial increase in race/ethnicity/ancestry categories. This is not to say that there is a direct correlation between increased polarization among the American population and hate crimes, however, it can be looked at as an indicator and warning sign of the changes we are seeing within the American population.

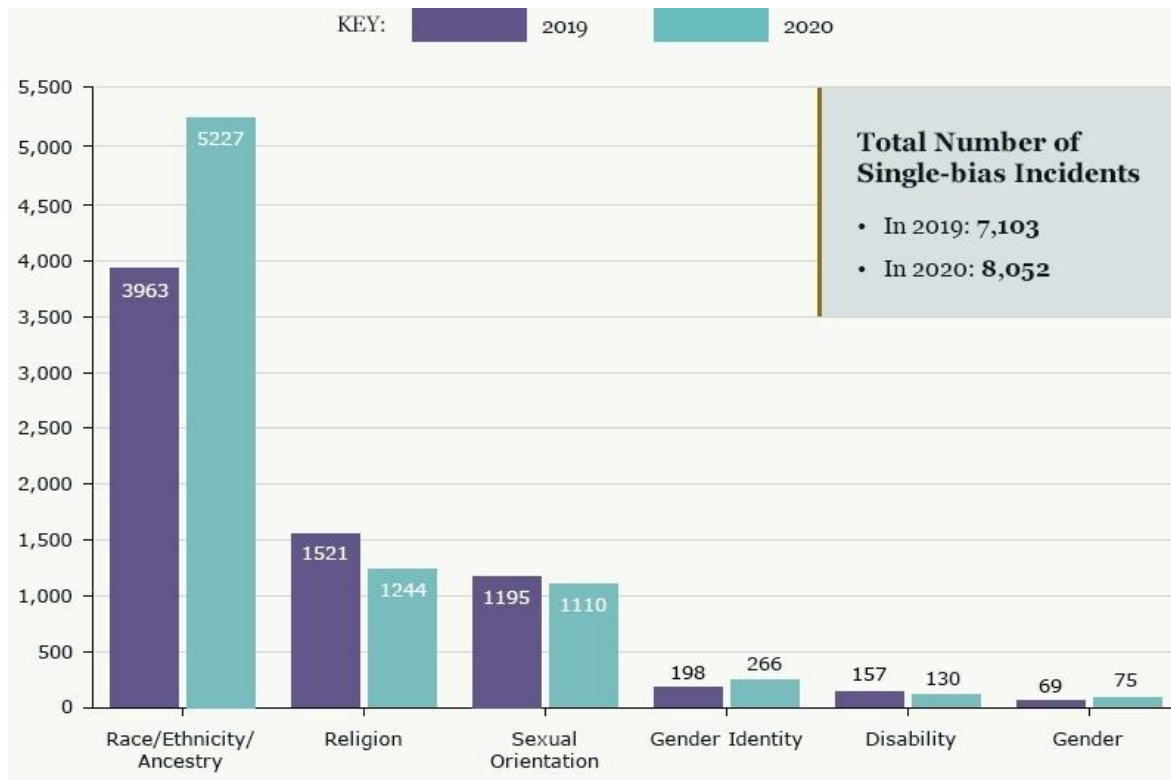


Figure 2: Hate Crimes Statistics (source: justice.gov, 2023)

2.3 Current Literature

When looking for literature that focused on the BLM movement, and the question of them being securitized by the entities within the United States government, there were not a lot of results that appeared that had that same focus. The closest article uncovered was a thesis that focused on the securitization of the protests that occurred during the summer of 2020. This thesis analyzed what governors and mayors were saying about what was happening in their states. However, the speeches and statements that were looked at came from both Republicans and Democrats alike. Beyond this thesis there wasn't much more that investigated these questions.

3 Chapter 3 Theoretical Framework

Before presenting the data and starting the analysis, it is crucial to go through the different concepts and theories being utilized. It is important to conceptualize these theories and concepts being used throughout the project as the main guiding tool for the research topic (Leander, 2008). That is why, in this chapter, there will be a more in-depth conversation as to why different understandings of theories and concepts were applied and others weren't. The theories and concepts that will be further explained and used as a guide for this research project are securitization, Speech Act, Security, and threat. Second, I'll use the securitization theory to

support my claims about the BLM movement being securitized or not being securitized. In this part, it might also be interesting to include some specific examples that clearly show the securitization of the BLM movement by Donald Trump, as well as some examples that might show the opposite. On top of that, it may also be helpful in order to strengthen my claim about the ways in which those same Politicians spoke about the January 6th insurrection. This thesis will then be concluded by connecting the securitization theory with the analysis of the data.

In the United States, we have seen an increase in the polarization between people from different social groups. A lot of the polarization that we have seen has been linked to people being on opposite ends of the political spectrum, mainly those between those who identify as conservative or liberal (Abramowitz & Saunders, 2008). This increase of polarization can be seen as a warning sign for the potential of increased violence between opposing social groups based on political identities (Washington Post, 2020). One way of investigating what is happening is through the lens of Miall's (2007) theory of *emergent conflict*. In one of the sections in his book, *Emergent Conflict and Peaceful Change*, he talks about the role and influence that polarization can have on a society, especially when that polarization leads to strains between different actors within a given society. As the conflict becomes more intense between opposing social groups, there is an increased chance of members of the same social group sharing, and having the same narrative and understanding, of the conflict. As this starts to happen, the division between social groups starts to increase and become more reactive to one another (Miall, 2007). When looking at the situation in the United States, one can see this happening across multiple sectors of society, as well as across the country as a whole, regardless of geographical location. Most of the conflict that has occurred has been caused by political ideology—Conservative versus Liberal—resulting in political violence. According to a survey done by Pew Research in January of 2020, “about nine-in-ten Americans (91%) say that conflicts between the party coalitions are either strong or very strong. About seven-in-ten (71%) say these conflicts are very strong” (Schaeffer, 2020, para.3). Based on the survey done by Pew Research, many individuals who participated in the survey believed that there are fractures within society which have resulted in polarization. However, even using Miall Theory or Emergent Conflict Theory could be useful to highlight different characteristics of polarization and how it is affecting American society, though it is not going to be used for the purposes of this project like the lenses outlined previously. Nevertheless, it was important to highlight the ways in which polarization can play a role in creating a hostile environment

and—potentially—play a role in initiating securitization. All this to say, this will be the primary lens used throughout the project to help make sense of what happened in the summer of 2020.

3.1 Securitization

Securitization theory is a very well-known theory that focuses on concluding whether someone, or something, is, or has become, a threat to state security. If this threat is viewed as crucial, it allows for extraordinary solutions to address it (Buzan et al., 1998). Even though the description that was just mentioned about securitization was very brief, it provided a starting point to a theory that has continuously evolved. Before diving into the different literatures that discuss and analyze this theory, as well as presenting which understanding and lens is being utilized within the research project, it is always significant to start by looking at what was said by those who are the most prominent when it comes to securitization. Both Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver are viewed as some of the main scholars of securitization that are connected to the Copenhagen School (CS). Within the CS of thinking, the primary focus is identifying whether security issues can be seen as an existential threat in relationship to the referent object. This provides the foundation to decide whether something is a security concern or not (Buzan, et al., 1998). Within this context, a “*referent object*” can be understood as a group, and/or value, that is at risk, and needs intervention. Examples of this could include an entire state and/or people group. An “*existential threat*” is deemed to be seen and understood to be a threat to the existence and survival of the state (Buzan, et al., 1998). A lot of the focus of securitization is on the term security, which is something that will be looked at more closely later.

One aspect of securitization is its understanding of how politics can influence if something becomes securitized or not. According to Buzan, matters that deal with and look at security are political in nature (Buzan, et al., 1998). With this understanding of the close relationship between security and politics in mind, it is clear why securitization theory was deemed to be an appropriate lens to examine the research question. Buzan describes a political threat as, “giving or denying recognition, support, or legitimacy (Buzan, et al., pp. 142, 1998).” For example, if Trump or the Republican party viewed BLM as a security threat because they did not support, recognize, and/or legitimize the actions of the police and how the government has addressed these dynamics, this could have been taken as a political security threat to the government in power.

Another important dynamic that is presented in “*A New Framework to Analysis*” is that of security threats within the societal sector. This is very relevant because, in this conversation,

a lot of what was happening in the United States regarding BLM was happening within the societal sector. The main element when looking at the societal sector is identity. Furthermore, “societal security is about large, self-sustaining identity groups; what these are empirically varies in both time and place. These groups are mainly national, but in other regions religious or racial groups have more relevance. The concept could also be understood as ‘identity security’” (Buzan, Et all., pp. 119-120, 1998). Mentioned earlier was the concept of the “referent object” needing to be threatened for the process of securitization to happen. In the societal sector what is deemed to be the “referent object” is the larger “we” group that has both the support and backing that can provide a strong enough debate that the “we” is threatened. Which, within this certain lens, would be the identity (Buzan, et al., 1998). In the context of the United States, when analyzing the societal sector, it differs from the other regions that Buzan looked at when trying to understand the dynamics of the societal sector regarding securitization being applied within this context. Within the United States, there is a complex situation due to the diversity of different ethnic groups within the country. There has been an increase within these different ethnic groups. Both first nation and immigrant groups who have sought to fight for freedom based on their cultural background, necessities, and social dynamics have posed an “opposition” to the dominant Euro-centric norms and identity seen in the United States (Taylor, 1992).

Even though these issues can fall within the realm of both political and ethnic narrative, it can still be approached within the framework of a security threat because it is seen and understood in connection to their existence (Buzan, et al., 1998). Buzan further explains how these issues that focus on race and ethnicity can evolve from a political issue to a security issue (Buzan, et al., 1998). To highlight this evolution, he uses the Oklahoma bombing of 1995 as an example. A more recent example of this happening is the mass shooting that happened on May 14, 2022, in Buffalo New York, where the shooter killed ten African American individuals due to their race. The shooter “plead guilty to one count of domestic act of terrorism motivated by hate, 10 counts of first-degree murder (Morales, et al., 2023, para. 4).” This is only one of many examples of these kinds of incidents happening in the United States because of racial differences. However, it is important to note that some may argue that the Buffalo shooting would not count as an example because the Oklahoma bombing happened to a government building. That being said, it is still important to be aware of acts of violence that are racially motivated, because this is something that has allowed for the increase in polarization and hate

crimes, which was presented and highlighted earlier in the graph from the Department of Justice.

Even though the CS has been an influential approach to both securitization theory and the speech act, different criticisms have been presented about and an alternative way to look at both concepts. One of the main criticisms it has received is based on how much weight it puts on the role and influence of the speech act (Balzacq, 2005). In the Balzacq article, “*A Theory of securitization, Origins, core assumptions, and variants,*” his goal is to provide another avenue to securitization theory that is a lot more realistic and applicable to observe how specific security problems transform (Balzacq, 2011). Below is a chart that provides a different approach to understand securitization.

Table 2.1 The vocabulary of securitization (revised from Balzacq 2009a: 64)

		<i>Constituent analytics (UNITS)</i>
Levels	Agent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Securitizing actor, audience, functional actor • Power positions/relations • Personal and social identities • Referent object and referent subject
	Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action-type • Heuristic artefacts • Dispositif • Policy
	Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distal • Proximate

Figure 3: The Vocabulary of Securitization, (Source: adapted from Thierry Balzacq (Balzacq, T. (Ed.). (2010). *Securitization theory: How security problems emerge and dissolve.* Taylor & Francis Group.)

When comparing the chart above to the approach presented by the CS, this approach presented by Balzacq takes a more in-depth look at the factors playing a vital role in the process of securitization. In the case of the topic at hand, this approach of analyzing securitization proved to be more fitting because of its focus on the role context. This means examining the effects that discourse can have on a situation and context in which it is happening cannot be overlooked (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). To encapsulate what is being communicated in the discourse, there needs to be an understanding of both the historical and social context (Balzacq, 2010). In the case of the BLM movement, this focus on both the historical and social context is something that cannot be ignored, because of how central those two features are to the conflict at hand. On the other hand, when looking at the securitizing actor in respect to the audience,

the context is important because the discourse being used to describe an incident as threatening needs to be able to generate a reaction from the audience.

In this process, Balzacq presents the work of Austin and Searle in relation to the speech act. Balzacq starts this conversation by focusing on the 1962 work of Austin, who presents an understanding that each sentence has the capacity to send forth three different types of functions. (Balzacq, 2011). These three acts that Austin presents are locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary. Locutionary is the utterance of a phrasing that has certain perception and reference. Illocutionary is the act put on which underscores the locution. Lastly, perlocutionary is getting somebody, or someone, to do, and/or feel, something (Austin, 1962). Balzacq further explains that it is important to note that perlocution is dependent on the situation in which the discourse is being said. Therefore, the effect that is being analyzed does not just happen by making certain utterances (Balzacq, 2011). The main argument and criticisms that are being made here, in both the approach and understanding presented by the CS, is if there is no direct connection from perlocution to the fulfillment of an illocutionary act, then the definition presented by the CS of security and securitization makes it so that this understanding of security as a speech act is a limited theoretical position (Balzacq, 2011). Another important criticism that needs to be discussed, is the CS approach, in relation to both the speech and securitization, is the importance of, and role, that the audience plays in this process in securitizing something.

3.2 Speech Act

One key feature within the securitization process is the need for a speech act. However, this process is more complex than having someone say that a specific entity is a security threat. According to Buzan, one of the important factors of the speech act is the audience that is receptive to the message that is being presented. Meaning, what is being described and talked about as the security threat is accepted by the target audience (Buzan, Et Al., 1998). Furthermore, the way the discourse about the potential threat is being discussed needs to be framed in a way that makes it seem like an existential threat. This is to ensure that a measure that normally would not be tolerated as a response to these kinds of threats become acceptable to the target audience (Buzan, Et al., 1998). Once this happens the “securitization moves turn into securitizations.” In this regard, speech acts shift from being “productive of security” to being “one component of the inter-subjective construction of security” (McDonalds, p. 566, 2008). However, it is important to note that other scholars have taken issues and criticized this assessment of how the speech act should be looked at and understood in connection to the role

of the audience. As mentioned before, Balzacq argues that this representation of the speech act can cause uncertainty based on the “assumption that the speech act encompasses both the illocutionary act and the perlocutionary effect” (Balzacq, p. 20, 2010).

Furthermore, this understanding that the CS has presented lacks a way to demonstrate how influential both the audience and environmental circumstances are to securitization theory (Balzacq, 2010). Due to this, Balzacq offers a different approach to analyzing securitization, a method that goes deeper compared to what is presented by the CS, which focuses on the referent objects, securitizing actors, and functional actors. In the table below, we can see a different approach to securitization analysis that takes a more in-depth analytical process. This method focuses on various different characteristics that play a role in the securitization process. In the chart, we see 3 primary levels, Agent, Act, and Context. Within each level there are different units. These units are used for analysis of the dissection and examination processes. Moreover, it can help uncover and/or highlight aspects of what is happening to provide a more detailed understanding, which is dissimilar to the approach used by the CS. Below is a chart presented by Balzacq that takes a different approach to look at the speech act that takes a deeper look at a speech act.

Table 1.1 A conceptual map of the speech act (Balzacq 2005: 189)³⁷

		<i>Problem</i>	<i>Communicative purpose</i>	<i>Domain of relevance</i>
Action-type	Assertive	What is the case?	That H shall come to believe that <i>p</i>	Extra-linguistic reality
	Commissive	What does the speaker S want to do?	That H shall be oriented as to a certain future behavior of S	Future behavior of the speaker
	Directive	What shall the hearer do?	That H Shall do <i>r</i>	Future behavior of the hearer
	Declarative	What shall be the case institutionally?	That the institutional reality W shall be maintained or changed into W'	Institutional reality
	Expressive	What has to be done in view of a new social or personal reality?	That the (un)tranquillization connected with a certain personal or social fact shall be dissolved	Social and personal reality

Figure 4: A conceptual Map of the Speech Act, (Source: adapted from Thierry Balzacq (Balzacq, T. (Ed.). (2010). Securization theory: How security problems emerge and dissolve. Taylor & Francis Group.)

When looking at figure 4 this conceptual map of the speech act, which takes a much more in depth look at how a speech act could be understood and broken down. By looking at a speech through these different action-types, it provides an approach that helps better understand what to look for and the motive or purpose behind that communication type. However, it is important to keep in mind that even though these are all factors that are important, there is a crucial dynamic that should be considered, and always looked at. This dynamic is exhibited by Balzacq and reads as follows, “the power of words, in the sense relevant here, depends on: (i) the context and the power position of the agent that utters them; (ii) the relative validity of the statement; (iii) the discursive strategy displayed” (Balzacq, p. 25, 2010). This is very important to consider, especially in this study, because of the significance of the historical context of the different events that pushed the BLM movement to organize and the treatment of Black individuals at the hands of law enforcement officers. Furthermore, it is also important to be aware of the longer historical context of the treatment, portrayal, and experiences of the Black

community. Lastly, because Trump was the President of the United States at the time, there is a power dynamic that must be factored in.

3.2.1 Threat & Security

When looking at the concept and various aspects of security, there are many different opinions and factors that determine how security is understood or viewed. When looking up the definition of security in the Merriam-webster dictionary, it defines security as, "...the quality or state of being secure: such as A: Freedom from danger, B: freedom from fear or anxiety (Merriam-Webster, n.d.)." The definition provided suggests that security, or the idea, of security is closely tied to the interpretation and/or understanding of what the "state of being secure" is. This one example highlights that security for someone, or in relation to something, might not be the case for everyone. With this in mind, it is important to look at different ways in which security has been discussed and is understood from different lenses. The purpose of doing this is to present a holistic understanding of the ways in which security is being conceptualized. Emma Rothschild, in *What Is Security?* looks at how the concept of security has been extended from one form to another. She continues on saying how it has taken on four main forms. The first is the security of nations to groups and individuals. Second, from nations to the international system, with a focus on whose security is at the focal point. Third, it encompasses the different societal units—individuals, nations, political, human security—with the understanding that the ways in which each unit relates to security can differ from one another. Lastly, it underlines the relationship of the political sphere to provide security for the different institutions and bodies of government (Rothschild, 1995).

All of these different interactions, institutions, and groups of people that are being considered in security matters have made questions regarding security nuanced. Furthermore, determining who or what becomes the main focus in connection to security is all dependent on the lens being used to make sense of the world. For example, if a realist perspective were being used, then the security of the state would be the main focus. According to Buzan, as discussed earlier, security concerns are based on what is considered to be a threat to the "referent object," which could be many different things, depending on who the securitizing actor is. Moreover, security can be understood through the principles of security. First, it helps assist governments in the process of policy making. Second, it can be used as a tool to steer the public to think about or view policy in a different light. Third, it can also be used as a tool to challenge existing policies. Lastly, principles of security can also be used to control the way money and power are

allocated (Rothschild, 1995). All of these different examples further demonstrate how understanding security is primarily connected to the person, system, interest, and institution that is trying to construct and/or frame something as a security threat. The nuanced nature of security should be something that is always taken into consideration when looking at questions involving multiple actors.

3.3 Constructivism & Social Constructivism

Both constructivist theory and social constructivist theory look at different aspects of how humans react to human interaction and language. In the examination of securitization and the speech act, based on what was discussed earlier regarding the material presented by Balzacq, I would argue that a social constructivist approach is a lot more relevant to the focus of this research project. This is because of the use of language and how that use of language will generate a response by those listening to it is at the core of the project. It is still important to look at the constructivist approach because the use of language only has the impact that is intended if the context is right for it. When thinking about the relationship between Trump and/or the republican party, as well as the audience they were targeting, it is significant to ask this question: Was the language used to describe BLM used in relation to the context of what was happening at the time? Questions like this one will be looked at in further detail in the discussion section. However, it is important to briefly bring them up in this discussion to help guide the analysis of this section, in addition to highlighting the issues being examined within this framework. Both of these theories will help add another layer in the analysis process of the research topic. To get the conversation started, a quick definition for each theory will be presented. One way to understand constructivism is by examining human connections to determine the notion of social culture (Ayukawa, 2020). In relation to this project, this approach is beneficial, because the analysis focuses on the way social culture feels and connects with what was being said by Trump and/or the Republican Party, as well as those around them who might have different opinions and sentiments. On the other hand, social constructivism looks at the way in which language is used when describing different settings (Ayukawa, 2020).

To begin, in constructivism the focus, as prior mentioned, is how social interactions and behaviors are fabricated by human interaction, thus resulting in people taking these social constructs for granted and perceiving them as non-partisan facts (Ayukawa, 2020). This very superficial definition of the core focus of constructivism has rendered it beneficial in assisting in the analysis process of the research question. In the United States there is a common

occurrence where people tend to stay within their own social circles and there is a common narrative, understanding, and outlook of the social dynamics transpiring around them. Furthermore, within the field of constructivism, it can be applied when examining the study of social problems. which primarily focuses on how labels like, “‘deviant’, ‘criminal’, or ‘delinquent’ are given to someone whose behavior is recognized as offensive to the established order. Thus, deviance is socially constructed and controlled by laws that are established and enforced by social control agencies” (Ayukawa, p.4, 2020). One way to audit and connect constructivism to the research question and to the social problem lens is by using language and discourse that would construct BLM as a social problem. This can be used as a tool to help deviate people’s attention from the more serious issue of police brutality. However, it is important to note that even within constructivism there are two different approaches in the analysis of social problems.

First, there is contextual constructivism which acknowledges the fact that some things cannot be assumed beforehand. Second, there is contextual constructivism, which acknowledges that some claims regarding a social problem can be looked at by the context. In this instance, the context is what shapes, or causes, the social problem. Both approaches focus on how the operation of certain issues are said to be social problems and how the process of understanding is shared and recognized (Ayukawa, 2020). Furthermore, this kind of lens can also be used to look at how policies can affect and create different societal constructions that can leave certain groups marginalized. For example, “policies that promote democracy can construct rationales or narratives for punishing certain persons that do not necessarily involve assigning a negative group identity or stigma (Schneider and Ingram, pp. 288-289, 2008).” It’s important to be aware of the ways in which policy and political discourse can play a role in creating different societal environments. These components may lead people to believe, interact, and view others in ways that establish assumptions that lead to certain interactions with one another.

To continue, in social constructivism, one key feature is that it distances itself from the belief that utterances are a demonstration of the actuality beyond the bounds of discourse (Huysmans, 2002). The point that is being made is based on the context, language, and what is being said, which will influence the audience’s behavior (Ayukawa, 2020). Additionally, language should be measured not by its hidden, or suggested, meaning, but examined by its ubiquitous understanding (Huysmans, 2002). More simply, language should be taken at face value, regardless of its covert meaning. Whoever it was intended for will take those words, or

utterances, at face value. Furthermore, in social constructivism, the way the object has been introduced cannot be reframed from the discourse used when it was first presented (Huysmans, 2002). The key point to take from the social constructivist perspective is that the type of language being used within a specific context will ultimately play an influential role in something being securitized. Lastly, “enunciating security is never innocent or neutral” (Huysmans, p. 59, 2002). This is why it is important to scrutinize the words, language, and discourse being used, because they can be very influential in situations where there are differing opinions. This is especially pertinent in a context that has demonstrated the existence of polarization. When analyzing social problems, social constructivism does not look at the conditions to understand the problem. This approach examines a problem by looking at human activities like media coverage, utterances, political influence, and the ways in which the intended audience can be influenced (Ayukawa, 2020). Understanding the interactions between these various avenues within a community can influence and create certain viewpoints among the population, which can be helpful when analyzing whether an entity is being securitized or not.

Both constructivism and social constructivism were selected for this project because of the nature of both concepts. These concepts look at how society interacts with one another, as well as how discourse and language can generate a response within any given society. Furthermore, having tools that make sense of the different ways human interactions can be influenced is useful to have, especially when looking at conflicts regarding the history of interactions between different social groups, or more specifically, groups from differing ethnic and political identities. Since the overarching lens that is the focal point of this project is securitization theory, it is imperative to implement concepts and theories that would allow for a deeper analysis, instead of a superficial understanding of what was occurring in the summer of 2020. This is why—for the purpose of this project—securitization is so significant because it fixates on both the speech act and the way that kind of discourse can generate a response from the audience. Ultimately, what was needed to help support this process was trying to make sense of how social divisions are categorized and understood, and the ways language—or at least the understanding of language—can influence how people will respond. That is why these two concepts were utilized for this project.

4 Chapter 4 Methodological Framework

Qualitative research, according to Bryman, is “a research strategy that usually emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data” (Bryman, p. 380, 2015). In order to analyze if Donald Trump securitized the BLM movement, I implemented the use of discourse analysis of documents, specifically tweets and his June first speech made in the summer of 2020 between those months of May to August. Looking at specific events during that time in which he tweeted. A qualitative methodology was appropriate for this research topic, because it is examining the use of words and language allowing me to highlight key aspects of securitization theory within the conflict we saw in the United States after the summer of 2020.

The methodological framework that I will use is based on qualitative research, namely reading, and listening to tweets and speeches made by Donald Trump about the BLM movement. The goal for using qualitative research is to examine if there are recurring words, statements, and phrases used by President Trump that portray the BLM movement as a security threat. Furthermore, this approach has the purpose of highlighting and proving if a speech act occurred. The speech act is, “the act of publicly saying that something is a threat that requires emergency action to be taken” (Buzan, 1998). This will be important to the thesis’ outcome, because it will help deduce whether the BLM movement was securitized or not.

4.1 Method of Data Collection

The data collected for this research topic was influenced by several factors. First, it was influenced by terminology gained and understood through the lens of securitization theory. These terms include—but are not necessarily limited to—security, securitization, threat, and speech act. Second, the data used first had to go through an inclusion criteria process to be suitable for the research. This will be looked at in more detail later in the thesis. Lastly, the data's primary purpose within this case study is to see if there were similarities within the choice of words, language, and sentiment among Republicans.

The data that was collected came from primary sources, tweets and speeches made by Donald Trump on the topic of BLM during and after the protest that occurred after the George Floyd killing. A fundamental goal is examining whether there is a connection between the way he was speaking and portraying BLM to the process of securitization. Additionally, the purpose for this approach was to find if Trumps tweets and speeches met and followed the criteria to be

categorized as a speech act. The data being used in this research focused on language, and more specifically the way in which the language was used. Discourse analysis was best suited for this project, which will be discussed further later, giving explanation as to why this approach was picked and how it was most suited for this research project.

The speeches and tweets used provided a foundation, narrative, and context to the topic. Consequently, the different speeches and tweets used made it possible to look at what was happening during and after the events during the summer of 2020 and get firsthand responses and reactions to what was happening as they were developing in the United States at that time. By using this approach, it was possible to detect recurring words and statements, which provided insight to predominant sentiment that could be projected to those listening and/or reading them.

Although the use of speeches and tweets is a reliable source for this specific research topic, I took steps to ensure that the ways in which they were used to be analyzed, and selected, were relevant to address them in relation to the subject matter. It was also important to achieve this while avoiding explicit and implicit biases. This part was especially important to include due to how polarization this topic has caused within the United States. An inclusion criterion was implemented to eliminate and subdue any biases that could have been present in the data collection process. I will discuss this at length in the components of the inclusion criteria later in this chapter. However, it is important to give an overview of the central characteristics within the speeches that were being examined during the data collection process. First, I made sure the material being used was applicable to this project's conceptual framework. Second, I ensured that speeches and tweets being analyzed were made by Donald Trump who were both reliable and influential. This was done to avoid including any outlying extreme opinions. Lastly, the speeches and tweet had to be communicated within the selected timeframe that is relevant to the research question.

4.2 Discourse Analysis

It was mentioned earlier that the goal of this thesis is to look at the use of language in speeches made by republicans. Because language is the focal point of this research project, there were several reasons as to why discourse analysis was picked as the chosen method. One of the goals of discourse analysis is to look at how the language is being used and represented to portray something—in this case BLM—will play a role in shaping and influencing how people will look at and/or understand that entity (Bryman, 2016). First,

discourse analysis was administered because of the way the process of securitization aims to shift an audience's perspective to view something, or someone, as a security threat (Buzan, Et Al., 1998). One way of doing that is by speaking about them in a way that will help shape the notion that they are a threat. Second, discourse analysis aids the researcher in, "examining the way that specific forms of text and speech produce their versions of a social issue, problem, event, or context" (Tonkiss, p.481, 2018). This is important because it facilitates the analysis of texts and speeches that will help uncover if there are any similar and reoccurring sentiments between the varied materials analyzed. Third, the main goal is not to prescribe a solution to the given conflict being researched, but rather using this approach to understand how the different narratives about the conflict and potential resolution are being created (Tonkiss, 2018). This can also be looked at from the perspective of addressing the conflict and how this can give insight to the degree they view something as a problem. For example, when applying it to the research question, it can be used to assess to what degree—if any—BLM was viewed as a threat by Donald Trump.

One approach within the discourse analysis method that is relevant to this thesis is that of Foucauldian discourse analysis. One of the main points within Foucauldian discourse analysis is that "it focuses on construction of meaning of social action, practices, and a text using a lens of power relations" (Khan & MacEachen, p. 3, 2021). Using a power relation lens is important when looking at dynamics between those in power—perhaps in political office—and groups that have been historically marginalized. Furthermore, within a Foucauldian discourse analysis framework, the goal is not primarily centered on how meaning is formed, but how "games of truth" engage and interact with one another in both a societal and political context (Arribas-Allyon & Walkerdine, 2008). By looking at how truth can be developed vis-à-vis the use of discourse, like speeches, tweets, or utterances, and a certain cognizance can be understood as truth, while also highlighting the different ways that power relations are ingrained in this process (Waite, 2005). A document analysis was performed on various tweets and speeches communicated by Donald Trump between the months of May 2020 and August 2020 around specific events. In this process, there was an analysis of specific use of language and discourse used to describe BLM during that period. The goal of this was to identify if there was a discourse used by Trump to identify any possibility of reoccurring words, statements, phrases, and sentiments when talking about BLM. The goal of this was to determine if what was being said could be categorized as a speech act.

4.2.1 Inclusion Criteria

In this section, we will look at the different features of the inclusion criteria and the reasoning behind each criterion. Due to the polarizing nature of the research topic, it was crucial to develop an inclusion criterion implemented to ciphony through the different tweets and speeches. The reason for this was to ensure that the data being collected and analyzed was not “cherry picked” in order to create a narrative and discourse that benefited the claims presented in the research question.

First, it was important to establish a time frame in which tweets and speeches had been articulated. The period that was selected was the first four months after the killing of George Floyd, June 2020 to August 2020. This timeframe was set to make certain that the material being presented was not picked from other periods of high tension. Second, the tweets and speeches selected had to follow a chronological approach to the set time limit. Third, to present a big enough data set, two speeches would be selected from each month. Fourth, the speech being analyzed needs to have been brought up by a conservative news outlet (Fox News) and leaning liberal news outlet (MSNBC, CNN, New York Times). The reasoning behind this decision was to make sure that the materials being used were influential enough and reached a larger portion of the population. Also, if one leaning liberal news outlet was already used in a previous month. It could not be used again as a source. Lastly, the speeches and tweets being analyzed need to have been delivered by Donald Trump.

4.2.2 Validity & Reliability

When utilizing a qualitative approach to research, there are always going to be concerns about the quality of what is being presented. Many times, focusing on the reliability and validity of how the data was analyzed and presented is crucial. One way to achieve this is by using verification strategies throughout the process. Verification in qualitative research focuses on the procedures being used in the research phase, with the goal of guaranteeing both the validity and reliability of the study. The chosen procedures are then implemented into every step of the process to ensure a well-founded project (Creswell, 1998). More specifically, the data is being continuously and thoroughly examined to safeguard the focus of the study. The interpretations of the data are also both checked and approved repeatedly (Morse et al., 2002). The purpose of having a verification process throughout the project is to, “help the researcher identify when to continue, stop or modify the research process in order to achieve reliability and validity” (Morse

et al., p. 17, 2002). That is why an inclusion criterion was created to help in the process of verification for this project.

Another important aspect in presenting work that is both valid and reliable is to discuss and present potential biases that might come up throughout the process. One of the areas where this can occur, due to the nature of this project, is in the discourse analysis process. Flicker provides an example that addresses the concern just mentioned, which is by abstaining from “selective plausibility” in the section of the project, thus Acknowledging how the data is selected and thereafter presented (Flicker, 2009). To further expand on this, the researcher must look critically at the data being collected. In regard to this project, this aspect was very important due to the nature of the research which can, and has been, very divisive between people.

4.2.3 Reflexivity and Ethical Considerations

As a researcher it is always important to be aware of one’s position and reflexivity on how those can influence both the data collection and data analysis process. Additionally, it is important to present these factors to the reader with the goal of transparency. This is especially important when working with qualitative data. Kathy Charmaz talks about developing a methodological self-consciousness when one is dealing with qualitative data in relation to the constructivist approach in her article *The Power of Constructivist Grounded Theory for Critical Inquiry*. What she means by that is, “detecting and dissecting our worldviews, language, and meanings and revealing how they enter our research in ways we previously not realized.” (Charmaz, pp.36, 2017) When using both constructivism and social constructivism, it is important to be aware of the ways in which we personally view and understand language and human interactions so that we analyze data without any biases. In the case of this research project, it is even more crucial for this to be one of the main building blocks of the whole project. It is important to disclose that I identify as an independent that leans more left within the political spectrum. However, that is why it was very important to set checks and balances within the data collection and data analysis process. This system of checks and balances was used as a way of making sure personal opinions and/or interpretations of materials would be continuously checked.

When researching topics that are, or can be, highly contested and divisive, it is important to reflect and present the ethical implications that could arise. With the current political climate in the United States, it is pertinent to consider the possibility of Donald's Trumps role in securitizing a social movement. This has the potential to cause greater division between political lines, to be viewed as another use of "identity politics", or to further the political goals of one party over the other. Consequently, this could lead to further division between those who do not have the same political affiliation.

4.2.4 Researcher's Position

Growing up in a home that was, and still is, very Republican and conservative, played a significant role in my interest in BLM and the Republican party. Many of my family members who were, are still, Republican hold conservative ideals politically and when viewing societal and racial issues, thus increasing my interest in this topic. Growing up in this environment, I shared many of the views that my parents and community around me had. However, after leaving that community and venturing out on my own, there was a shift that moved me politically, instigating my choice to become Independent. Having to navigate and balance people on opposite ends of the political spectrum pushed me to look at this topic.

4.2.5 Limitations and Challenges

Within the current climate in the United States, things have become extremely polarized, especially relating to topics that discuss actions taken by political parties. This has different challenges that must be considered throughout the process of data collection and analysis. Consequently, this kind of polarization has resulted in an environment that has caused both politicians and constituents to become entrenched in their own beliefs. This has resulted in an environment that can lead to extreme positions that are not easily receptive to other interpretations of events. This made it challenging to collect data. First, because it was crucial to both the validity and reliability of the research project that the material being used was not coming from sources that could be deemed as extreme, and not align with the mainstream view. Second, trying to produce the best possible approach to help in the filtering process of the material used was challenging. This is why it took multiple variations to produce an inclusion criterion that would work best for the aim of this project. While trying to find speeches to analyze, it became challenging, because there is not a database or resource that had speeches accessible.

5 Chapter 5 Results

event	Tweets or speeches by former President Donald Trump	Main points made about the event by conservative news outlets	Main points made about the event by liberal news outlets
<p>May 29th, 2020: Trump Tweets reaction to BLM protests.</p>	<p>“These Thugs are dishonoring the Memory of George Floyd, and I won’t let that happen. Just spoke to Governor Tim Walz and told him that the Military is with him all the way. Any difficulty and we will assume control but, when the looting starts, the shooting starts. Thank You.”</p>	<p>Mentioned Trump tweet about,” when the looting starts, the shooting starts.” Also, mentioned the way in which Trump called protesters “thugs.” It continues on saying that protests have become dangerous. However, it did say that Trump’s tone has changed in regard to white-ob-black violence. The article focused less on what was happening in Minneapolis and BLM. It was more focused on Trump as well as the election coming up and Black voters.</p>	<p>Highlighted briefly on Trump tweets he made about, “when the looting starts, the shooting starts.” However, most of the focus of the article was on how the tweet made by Trump violated their Policy about posts that glorify violence.</p>

event	Tweets or speeches by former President Donald Trump	Main points made about the event by conservative news outlets	Main points made about the event by liberal news outlets
<p>May 29th, 2020: Trump Tweets reaction to BLM protests.</p>	<p>“Crossing State lines to incite violence is a FEDERAL CRIME! Liberal Governors and Mayors must get MUCH tougher or the Federal Government will step in and do what has to be done, and that includes using the unlimited power of our Military and many arrests.”</p>		
<p>June 1st, 2020: Rose Garden Speech.</p>	<p>“Acts of domestic terror.”</p>	<p>"Stop riots and looting across the country. Threatened to deploy the military if the national guard isn't sent in by states. Weapons were found close to Lafayette Park." Had a quote that described those protesters as becoming more combative. In the</p>	<p>“Referred to protesters as peaceful. Who were cleared out so that Trump could make a speech. And continue his narrative of being the president of law and order. Something he said during his presidential campaign in 2016. Pointing out that the president was thinking about</p>

event	Tweets or speeches by former President Donald Trump	Main points made about the event by conservative news outlets	Main points made about the event by liberal news outlets
		<p>article the focus was also on addressing the allegations that the police did not use tear gas on protesters. The article also talks about tweets from Elizabeth Warren and Hilary Clinton which described Trump's actions crossing the line. And excess use of presidential power. Mentioned that he also threatened to send the military if states don't send in the National Guard.</p>	<p>invoking an 1807 Federal Law that would allow him to send out active military. There are also references to how Trump's audience likes the way he is approaching and addressing the developing situation.”</p>
<p>June 1st, 2020: Rose Garden Speech.</p>	<p>“I am taking immediate presidential action to stop the violence and restore security and safety in America. I am immobilizing all federal resources,</p>		

event	Tweets or speeches by former President Donald Trump	Main points made about the event by conservative news outlets	Main points made about the event by liberal news outlets
	civilian and military, to stop the rioting and looting, to end the destruction and arson, and to protect the rights of law-abiding Americans, including your second amendment rights.		
June 1st, 2020: Rose Garden Speech.	“I will deploy the United States Military and quickly solve the problem for them.”		
July 1st, 2020: Black Lives Matter Mural in front of Trump Tower.	“...Horrible BLM Chant, “Pigs in A Blanket, Fry ‘Em Like Bacon”. Maybe our GREAT Police, who have been neutralized and scorned by a mayor who hates & disrespects them, won’t let this symbol of hate be affixed to	The article mainly focused on the budget cuts that New York made on policing. And the reasoning why De Blasio justified making those decisions. Brief mentions of Trump comments about the BLM chants.	In this article what they focused on from Trump's tweets, was him calling Black Lives Matter a “symbol of hate.” It also talked about how those comments got criticized from police reform groups. It also talked about how this decision would cause

event	Tweets or speeches by former President Donald Trump	Main points made about the event by conservative news outlets	Main points made about the event by liberal news outlets
	New York’s greatest street. Send this money to fight crime instead!”		issues with the police. The article further goes on how activists are criticizing De Blasio for only using performative actions and is still ignoring the problems with police brutality. The tweet that Trump said said about a chant about “Pigs in a Blanket, Fry’Em like Bacon.” Was something said in 2015 not in recent protests. It ended with Giuliani about BLM being a Marxist organization.
August 25th, 2020: Kyle Rittenhouse Shooting.	“We will not STAND for looting, arson, violence, and lawlessness on American streets. My team just got off the phone with Governor Evers who	“In this article the main focus was on the events of what happened. It talked about how two protesters were killed and a third was injured. It	bullets and fired tear gas at protesters who did not follow the 8pm curfew. There was also a presence of armed white militia groups. That was there to protect

event	Tweets or speeches by former President Donald Trump	Main points made about the event by conservative news outlets	Main points made about the event by liberal news outlets
	agreed to accept federal assistance (Portland should do the same!) ...”	mentioned that criminal charges were Brought against Kyle Rittenhouse. If found guilty he could receive a sentence of life in prison. The article ended with a comment by Rittenhouse's lawyer that it was clear that he was acting in self-defense.”	businesses. It talked about Rittenhouse and him killing two people. Trump tweeting that he was going to send in Federal law enforcement and more National Guard troops. It highlighted how the Justice Department sent 200 plus personnel, from FBI, ATF, and US marshals. Lastly, it talked about the unrest in both Portland, Oregon, and Louisville, Kentucky.”
August 25th, 2020: Kyle Rittenhouse Shooting.	“... TODAY, I will be sending law enforcement and the National Guard to Kenosha, WI to restore LAW and ORDER!”		

Table 1: Documents selected for discourse analysis.

6 Chapter 6 Analysis

In the analysis process, there were several factors examined to determine if a process of securitization was happening. The first factor that was examined was Trump's tweets seeing the number of likes, replies, and retweets. The reason for this was to help demonstrate that he indeed had an audience that was actively engaging with and was receptive to what he was saying. Another point of analysis was looking at those same words, phrases, and framing to see if they had the potential to have a perlocutionary effect, which was described by Balzacq in relation to securitization theory as getting the target audience to react and/or act towards the intended group (Balzacq, 2010). Third, was looking at the news articles and comparing the ways in which they presented the information about the same events that were being analyzed. This was done to gain insight on whether the framing of events were different due to their audience preferences. The last factor was the words, phrases, and framing of language used in the tweets due to what was discussed earlier from a social constructivist approach, which says that words should be taken and understood in their literal sense (Huysmans, 2002). Additionally, the goal of this part is to highlight the types of words and phrases that were being consistently repeated to the public.

Part 1

Trump Tweets	Likes	Retweets	Replies
“These Thugs are dishonoring the Memory of George Floyd, and I won’t let that happen. Just spoke to Governor Tim Walz and told him that the Military is with him all the way. Any difficulty and we will assume	215.9 thousand	65.6 thousand	74.2k

<p>control but, when the looting starts, the shooting starts. Thank You.”</p>			
<p>“Crossing State lines to incite violence is a FEDERAL CRIME! Liberal Governors and Mayors must get MUCH tougher or the Federal Government will step in and do what has to be done, and that includes using the unlimited power of our Military and many arrests.”</p>	<p>172.4 thousand</p>	<p>35.5 thousand</p>	<p>No info for replies.</p>
<p>“...Horrible BLM Chant, “Pigs in A Blanket, Fry ‘Em Like Bacon”. Maybe our GREAT Police, who have been neutralized and scorned by a mayor who hates & disrespects them, won’t let this symbol of hate be affixed to New York’s greatest street. Send this</p>	<p>58.2 thousand</p>	<p>11.1 thousand</p>	<p>28.1 thousand</p>

money fighting crime instead!”			
“We will not STAND for looting, arson, violence, and lawlessness on American streets. My team just got off the phone with Governor Evers who agreed to accept federal assistance (Portland should do the same!) ...”	204.2 thousand	33.5 thousand	31 thousand
“... TODAY, I will be sending law enforcement and the National Guard to Kenosha, WI to restore LAW and ORDER!”	121.5 thousand	19.3 thousand	17.5 thousand

Table 2: Interactions with Trumps tweets.

Part 2

Trump Tweets/ Speech	Perlocutionary Effect	Yes	No
May 29th, 2020	“These Thugs”	X	

May 29th, 2020:	“When the looting starts, the shooting starts”	X	
May 29th, 2020:	“Any difficulty and we will assume control”		X
June 1st, 2020: Rose Garden Speech.	“But we cannot allow the righteous prize and peaceful protesters to be drowned out by an angry mob”	x	
June 1st, 2020: Rose Garden Speech.	“I am your President of law and order and an ally of peaceful protesters”		x
June 1st, 2020: Rose Garden Speech.	“Our nation has been gripped by professional anarchist, violent mobs, or, arsonists, looters, criminals, rider rioters, antifa, and others”	x	
June 1st, 2020: Rose Garden Speech.	“Innocent people have been savagely beaten like the young man in Dallas, Texas, who	x	

	was left dying on the street”		
June 1st, 2020: Rose Garden Speech.	“The women in upstate New York, viciously attacked by dangerous thugs”		
June 1st, 2020: Rose Garden Speech.	“New York’s finest have been hit in the face with bricks”		
June 1st, 2020: Rose Garden Speech.	“A police precinct has been overrun here in the nation’s capital, the Lincoln Memorial and the World War II memorial have been vandalized”	x	
June 1st, 2020: Rose Garden Speech.	“One of our most historic churches was set ablaze”		x
June 1st, 2020: Rose Garden Speech.	“A federal officer in California, an African American enforcement hero was shot and killed”		x
June 1st, 2020: Rose Garden Speech.	“These are not acts of peaceful protest. These are acts of domestic terror”	x	

June 1st, 2020: Rose Garden Speech.	“America needs creation, not destruction”		x
June 1st, 2020: Rose Garden Speech.	“That is why I’m taking immediate presidential action to stop the violence and restore security and safety in America”		x
June 1st, 2020: Rose Garden Speech.	“I am immobilizing all federal resources, civilian and military to stop the rioting and looting, to end the destruction, and arson, and to protect the rights of law-abiding Americans, including your secondhand amendments rights”	x	
June 1st, 2020: Rose Garden Speech.	“I will deploy the United States military and quickly solve the problem for them”	x	
June 1st, 2020: Rose Garden Speech.	“I am dispatching thousands and thousands of heavily armed soldiers, military personal,	x	

	and law enforcement officers to stop the rioting, looting, vandalism, assaults, and wanton destruction of property”		
June 1st, 2020: Rose Garden Speech.	“Those who threaten life and property will be arrested, detained, and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law”		x
June 1st, 2020: Rose Garden Speech.	“If malice or violence rains, then none of us is free”		x
July 1st, 2020: Black Lives Matter Mural in front of Trump Tower.	Horrible BLM Chant, “Pigs in A Blanket, Fry ‘Em Like Bacon”.	x	
July 1st, 2020: Black Lives Matter Mural in front of Trump Tower.	“Maybe our GREAT Police, who have been neutralized and scorned by a mayor who hates & disrespects them”		x
July 1st, 2020: Black Lives Matter Mural in front of Trump Tower.	“won’t let this symbol of hate be affixed to New	x	

	York’s greatest street”		
July 1st, 2020: Black Lives Matter Mural in front of Trump Tower.	“Send this money fighting crime instead”		x
August 25th, 2020: Kyle Rittenhouse Shooting.	“We will not STAND for looting, arson, violence, and lawlessness on American streets”	x	
August 25th, 2020: Kyle Rittenhouse Shooting.	My team just got off the phone with Governor Evers who agreed to accept federal assistance (Portland should do the same!) ...”		x
August 25th, 2020: Kyle Rittenhouse Shooting.	“... TODAY, I will be sending law enforcement and the National Guard to Kenosha, WI to restore LAW and ORDER!”	x	

Table 3: Analysis of Trumps tweets and speech (Perlocutionary Effect)

Part 3

May 29th, 2020

In Trump's tweet from May 29th, 2020, which said, “These Thugs are dishonoring the Memory of George Floyd, and I won’t let that happen. Just spoke to Governor Tim Walz and told him that the Military is with him all the way. Any difficulty and we will assume control but, when the looting starts, the shooting starts. Thank You” (Trump, 2020). In the CNN article, a lot of the focus was on twitter's tweet regulations that glorify violence. It continues on to explain the conflict that has been ongoing between social media platforms and the government. Moreover, it talked about how twitter put a label warning on the tweet instead of completely removing it due to the potential of public interests. In turn, the tweet remained posted (CNN,2020). There were only a few parts of the article that addressed what Trump had said in his tweet about what was happening in Minneapolis after the killing of George Floyd. One portion in particular commented on the part of the tweet that said, “When the looting starts, the shootings starts” (Trump, 2020). Historically, this phrase has been used in relation to other riots. For example, in the 1960s, a Miami police chief used this phrase to talk about riots that were going on at the time (CNN,2020). On the other hand, the Fox News article that discussed the same tweets provided a very different narrative when commenting on what Trump had posted. The main focus was on how Trump's approach to speaking about law enforcement changed from his normal discourse. In the Fox News article, it highlighted that, “Trump, who has often been silent in the face of white-on-black violence and has a long history of defending police” (Fox,2020,para.3). To them, this was shocking to hear him make a comment about these kinds of incidents, especially due to his change in tone when speaking about law enforcement. The article also brought up how several prominent figures in the Black community questioned how genuine Trump was, due to his silence and past defense of law enforcement. Lastly, it talked about how it was a presidential election year and Trump, along with his allies, were trying to make ground among the Black population.

Rose Garden Speech June 2020

In the Fox News article from June 3rd of 2020, a lot of the focus was on the allegations brought by media sources, as well as tweets made by Hilary Clinton and Elizabeth Warren. Throughout the article, it talked about how the media was falsely accusing law enforcement of using tear gas on protesters. The article starts by saying, “Democratic leaders on Monday seized on reports that Park Police used tear gas against protesters in Washington D.C.’s Lafayette square” (Fox,2020,para.1). It continues on by presenting information from different Trump officials that denied the use of tear gas on protesters. They also said that the measures were necessary to secure the area and protect the surrounding area. In the article, it questions

how peaceful the protesters were and the tone is a lot more defensive of the actions taken by law enforcement. In the article, it's clear that it's trying to present what happened as something that was inline and not out of order. It also presents the actions taken by law enforcement as justified. Furthermore, those on the left—the media and democrats—were trying to present information that wasn't fully accurate, only because it was beneficial to their narrative of what was happening. This inaccurate information also portrayed President Trump in a specific light, reinforcing the left's personal opinions about him. On the other hand, the USA Today news article that looked at the events unfolding during the Rose Garden Speech had a very dissimilar approach, and presented what happened very differently compared to the Fox article. Throughout the article, it highlighted various statements made by Donald Trump concerning the protest. Focusing on him using language like law and order and calling them “radical” and “anarchist”. It also highlighted how Trump was not only receiving criticism from Democrats, but also from politicians in his own party. Criticism from Democrats reads as follows, “as Trump called himself and “ally” of peaceful protesters, military police were clearing a park of protesters who were demonstrating without incident” (USA Today,2020,para.14). It also mentioned how the individuals from his party were criticizing the actions he took. Lastly, it talked about how Trump officials had indicated that Trump “was considering invoking an 1807 federal law that would allow him to deploy active-duty troops to respond to protests in cities. Known as the Insurrection Act” (USA Today,2020,para.18). It is important to note that the last time an 1807 federal law was used was in 1992. Moreover, at that time this was considered a viable solution to address the protests that were happening all over the country, which is a differing reaction to Trump's proposal. The USA Today article takes a tone that is very critical of Trump's actions and comments. It presents a narrative that is trying to make Trump look like someone who is taking extreme measures that are out of line.

July 1st, 2020: Black Lives Matter Mural

The article by Politico, which talked about the Black Lives Matter mural that was going to be painted in front of Trump tower, had in its title that Trump called BLM a “symbol of hate” (Trump,2020). It continues on by commenting on Trump's tweets that said painting BLM on the street would ruin that luxury avenue. Not only that, but the article also focused on how Trump thought, and believed, that what de Blasio was doing by providing funds to paint the BLM mural, and cutting the police budget, was disrespectful to law enforcement. Especially due to them putting themselves on the line due to the protests. Lastly, it brought up

how Trump falsely accused protestors of using a tweet that was anti-police, which was used during a protest in 2015. This article approach is very similar to the others that we have seen from media that are more left leaning compared to their Fox counterpart. Also, we see how the article doesn't really address the significance of Trump's statement, calling BLM a symbol of hate. In the Fox News article, the focus was on how Trump criticized New York city mayor de Blasio for the budget's cuts to the police department and investing money in the BLM mural. The article continues on by talking about the budget cuts, as well as how the mayor intends to reuse that money and address other issues. Unlike the Politico article, this article completely omits mentioning, and or including, an image of the tweet Trump made that called BLM a symbol of hate. This further demonstrates a pattern of both news sources contumeliously showing and framing the tweets Trump has said in a very different manner.

August 25th, 2020

The article by Fox, in reaction to the Kyle Rittenhouse shooting, talked about how there were charges brought against him for shooting and killing two people and injuring one more in the process (Fox,2020). It also presented statements made by Rittenhouse's attorney, who said that based on the footage that was captured, it was clear that he acted in self-defense. Besides that, there was not much more to the article. Like the Fox article, the ABC article also mentioned that charges were brought against Rittenhouse. It continues on explaining what led to the Rittenhouse shooting, stating that a protest broke out due to another Black male being shot by police in Kenosha, Wisconsin. It also reported that, "the Justice Department deployed more than 200 personnel from the FBI, ATF and US marshals to the unrest, while the White House sent up to 2,000 National Guard troops would be made available" (ABC,2020,para.8). Lastly, it brought up how there were White militia group members walking around with guns who said they were there to protect businesses. Taking a closer look at both articles, it follows the same pattern as all the previous articles, which discloses the chain of events in a way that their audience receives the information that they want them to hear and know about.

Part 4

In the figure below is a visual representation of the rhetoric Trump utilized throughout both his speech and tweets in speaking about the BLM movement. This figure is also intended

to present gain a deeper understanding of the words, phrases, and sentiments that he was using to frame the movement to his audience and the rest of the nation.

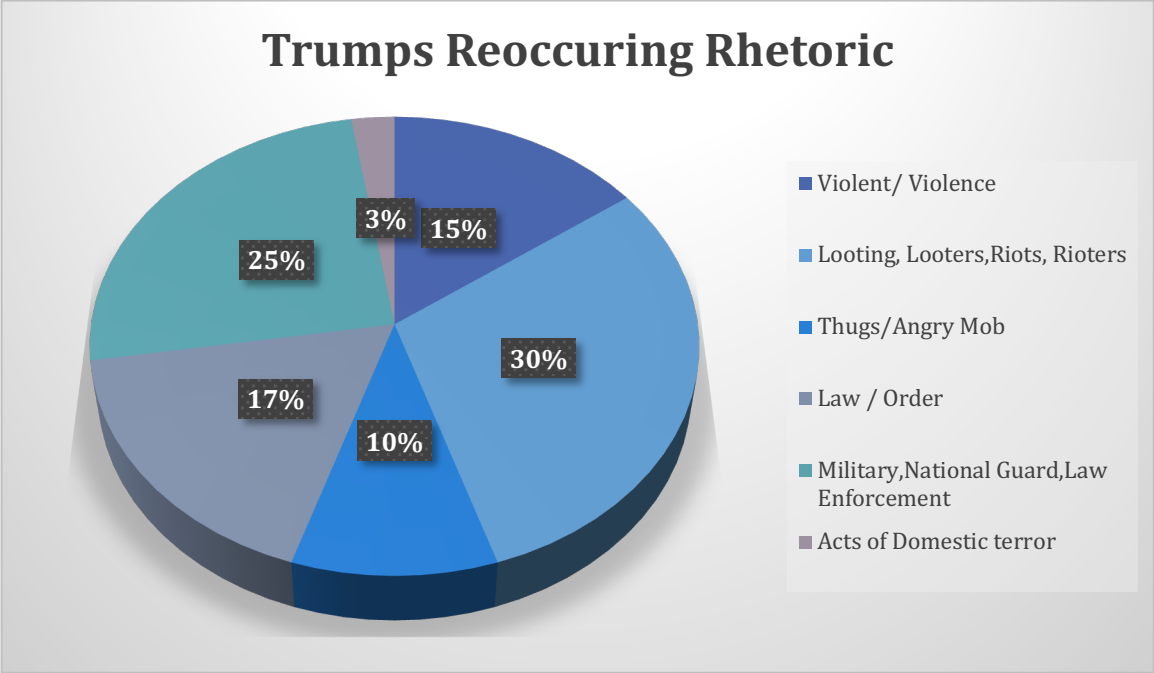


Figure 5: Trumps reoccurring word usage. Source: own representation.

7 Chapter 7 Discussion

After presenting the data that was gathered in its raw form, followed by the way in which the data was analyzed and interpreted, I will first continue on by critically discussing what was found in connection to the research questions in the next section. Secondly, the data will be looked at and discussed in connection to the different theories and concepts that were used in the study. Lastly, there will be a discussion which will attempt to demonstrate if, based on the theories, if BLM was securitized or not by Donald Trump. However, in order to answer the main research questions, and have a critical discussion about how and why the outcome was reached, it will be better to start the discussion by looking at both RQ2 and RQ3. This is because those two questions are intended to help validate if both a speech act occurred and if there was a big enough audience. Furthermore, by looking at these questions first, it will provide a natural transition to examining the findings of the study in relation to both the theories and concepts used. Before getting into the discussion section, I will give a brief overview of the study as a whole.

The goal of this study was to take a closer look at the tweets and speeches made by Donald Trump during the summer of 2020, in response to BLM and the protests that were

happening all over the United States after the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis. In addition to looking at tweets and speeches made by Donald Trump, reactions to both the tweets and speeches that were made by mainstream news outlets—conservative and liberal—were examined with the purpose of getting real time commentary of what was happening at the time. These analyses were done with the goal of gaining a deeper understanding of how Trump’s words were being represented to the public and how they were being reacted to. The key feature that was examined was the discourse being used at the time with the intention of determining whether the BLM movement was being securitized by Donald Trump or not. This was done by taking a closer look at what Trump was saying during that time and examining the discourse that he was using during that summer. The discourse that was examined was connected to certain major events that occurred during that summer spanning from May of 2020 to August of 2020. The purpose of looking at the discourse was to see what kind of words, phrases, and sentiments were being expressed to the American population at the time. All of this was done by implementing both a securitization theory and social constructivist lens to examine the data collected.

One important part of the data analysis was demonstrating how many people were looking at, interacting with, and even liking Trump's tweets. This was important to highlight because it emphasized different categories which emphasized the fact that Trump had an audience that was both listening to what he was saying and agreeing with the discursive language that he was using to portray the BLM movement. Edelman says that in order for the securitizing to be effective, it is dependent on the securitizing agent’s—in this case, Trump—capability to understand his audience's sentiments, wants, and opinions (Edelman, 1988). Furthermore, looking at the different categories set by twitter (Likes, replies, retweets) was a way to identify whether Trump had been successful in connecting with his target audience. However, it is important to note, and be aware of, that even if someone retweeted what Trump had posted it doesn’t necessarily mean that it was due to that user agreeing with what he said. Nevertheless, this provided an insight to how much of an audience Trump had. On average, Trump received over 150 thousand likes per tweet he made across the different events that were being looked at in the study. Furthermore, another core reason for looking at these figures was to help add another layer of credibility and trustworthiness to the study. However, it is important to be aware that though certain posts made by Trump may have caused people to retweet and react to it, this does not mean that those who retweeted or reacted to it agreed with the message that Trump was trying to spread to the American people. Nevertheless, it is a good point of

reference in understanding and seeing the different ways, and number of people, reacting to what he was saying during that time. Because, in the end, what is important to know is if Trump did or didn't have an audience that was supporting and believing the message he was presenting. Which, according to different scholars, is a crucial part of securitization.

Like mentioned above, the discussion will start by looking at both RQ2 and RQ3. RQ2 asked, how did the language used by Donald Trump in his tweets and speeches related to this event meet the threshold to be considered a speech act based on securitization theory? Before trying to dissect this question, it is important to revisit some of the literature that was used in this project that discussed speech acts. According to Buzan and CS, a speech act is when someone or something is presented as an existential threat to the security of the state, as well as the target audience. Moreover, within this process, certain types of language are utilized that describe the "referent object" as a security threat (Buzan et al., 1998). Even though this definition presented by Buzan gives a good starting point for inspecting and understanding securitization, this lens is not exhaustive enough for the purpose of this study. On the contrary, Balzacq provides an approach that is more all-encompassing and applicable to the research topic and the distinct actors involved. Yet, before discussing the data that was found, I will first give a quick overview of the modified approach that Balzacq suggested. This will—in turn—help provide a pathway to discussing the data in a way that will present all of the different factors and actors involved in securitization. With this lens, Trump's Tweets and speeches will be analyzed and compared to the aspects of the different factors presented in figure 4. In figure 4, there are different action-types, assertive, commissive, directive, declarative, expressive. All of these action types can be understood as different stages of the speech act. In sum, these action-types not only highlight the problem and its purpose in relation to the audience, but they also play a momentous role in addressing the problem at hand. Lastly, another core aspect that Balzacq presents is being aware of, and not ignoring, the significance a statement can have if it comes from someone who has power—in this case the president of the United States—versus someone who does not have the same platform and or influence. Meaning, the more power a person holds, the more strength and influence they can have due to the political capital awarded to them for holding that position (Bourdieu, 1990).

When looking at the tweets presented by Trump, it is clear that a lot of the action-types that are being utilized throughout his tweets and statements are both commissive and assertive. Here is an example from one of his tweets that highlight these action-types being used, "We will not STAND for looting, arson, violence, and lawlessness on American streets. My team

just got off the phone with Governor Evers who agreed to accept federal assistance (Portland should do the same!)...” (Trump, 2020). In this example, an assertive action-type was being utilized with the “communicative purpose,” according to Balzacq, of causing the audience to start agreeing with the problem that is being presented to them (Balzacq, 2010). This continues on with Trump suggesting dealing with the problem by using all resources available to him. This falls under the commissive action-type. By looking at these different statements for what they are, and the potential effect they can have on a receptive audience, one can clearly see how a situation in which the audience begins to view what is happening as a security threat can arise. Moreover, it is significant to see how statements and words like these, presented to a specific audience, can be engaged with subjectively depending on current and historical context.

Throughout his tweets, Trump used a lot of words like threat, violence, riot, looters, and military. This type of language presents an image that the BLM movement, and their allies, are a threat to the security of both the cities in which they are operating in, as well as the population that isn't participating in the protests. Trump's tweets assume that there are citizens who need to be protected from individuals in the BLM movement, as well as from those who are protesting. These sentiments are verbalized in his tweets and speeches. Here are some examples of him using language that highlights that feeling. In his June 1st Rose Garden Speech, Trump said that he would take, “immediate presidential action to stop the violence and restore security and safety in America” (Trump, 2020). He continues by saying he would mobilize all federal resources to stop the riots, looting, destruction, and arson ensuing across the country. Finally, he says he is doing this to, “protect the rights of law-abiding Americans, including your second amendment rights” (Trump, 2020). These statements display a sentiment and narrative that there are citizens that are in danger who need to be protected from the BLM movement, and those protesting. What is further concerning is the last part of what was just shared, “including your second amendment rights.” This is a reference to the constitution, which says, “A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed” (US Const., amend. II). Though suggesting what Trump intended by those comments is speculation, it is not extreme to hypothesize that he was trying to let his supporters know that if they decided to act upon their rights to the second amendment that they would be protected.

Based on what is said in his speech, this protection only applies to “law-abiding Americans” and not to those he considered to be breaking the law. Moreover, this can also be

looked at as a directive action-type, which is presented in figure 4. That being said, it is possible that Trump was trying to emphasize how there were those that need to be protected and those who would actually be protected by the State. Additionally, they would be protected if they acted upon their 2nd amendment rights. Another example is when Trump said, “If malice or violence rains, then none of us is free.” This statement made it seem like there was a security threat, or existential threat, as Buzan calls it (Trump, 2020). The reason this can be viewed as a declaration of an existential threat is associated with the viewpoint, and sentiments, of many Americans regarding their freedom, especially when they believe that freedom is being threatened. This statement from Trump can also be compared to the declarative action-type from figure 4, which says, “that the institutional reality of W shall be maintained or changed into W” (Balzacq, p.24, 2010). This suggests that if this continues to transpire, the “intuitional reality” of freedom could change.

Throughout the summer of 2020, Trump frequently said that he would use the United States Military, National Guard, law enforcement, and federal agents to bring an end to the protests that were taking place across the country. The recurrent implication that these different entities would be used can be explored and understood from different viewpoints. Looking at each individually can highlight how the problem escalated from something that is dealt with by traditional means, to more extreme measures that would normally not be used—let alone viewed—as a viable solution. The use of law enforcement within cities during protest is a measure that is very normal to take. Many times, the reasoning behind it is to ensure that those participating are safe and to ensure things do not get out of hand. The use of the National Guard has normally been used when helping in areas where a natural disaster has occurred. That being said, historically there have been instances in which the National Guard was called in to deal with protest. However, it is important to not overlook the amount, and the ways, in which these two were brought up. Because the constant and repetitive use of this language can shift the way those who are reading and or hearing it perceive what is happening.

Subsequently, when looking at the data gathered for this project, there were words, phrases, and sentiments that were used and repeated throughout that summer. One of the most used phrases said by Donald Trump was “Law and Order”. This phrase was used in varying contexts throughout the summer. For example, there were times that Trump described himself as, “the president of law and order.” In other instances, he used “law and order” when talking about cities that were experiencing protests. Furthermore, “law and order” was uttered with suggestions of deploying the United States military, National Guard, law enforcement, and

federal agents. It is important to note in some of his tweets Trump did not directly use the phrase “law and order”, however he did use words like “lawlessness” when talking about what was going on. Like previously stated, one core aspect of a speech act is the use of language that highlights how something, or someone, is a security threat to the state, with the intention of building up support for the message that is trying to be presented. Consequently, this allows for measures that aren’t normally accepted to be taken (Buzan, et al., 1998). During this time, the National Guard was deployed to many cities across the United States. Though sending the National Guard to cities across the country isn’t an extreme measure, there were some incidents that took place in certain cities that could be viewed as a measure going beyond what was necessary.

For example, in Minneapolis, the protests caused the implementation of a curfew. There was video footage from a Minneapolis resident circulating on social media and in the news that showed both the National Guard and law enforcement patrolling the streets. In the video, as well as the report from CBS, you can hear law enforcement agents say, “light Em up!” and then proceed by shooting paint rounds at the protesters (CBS, 2020). This caused a lot of outrage throughout the country because, though there was a set curfew, the residents that were shot at were on their porch and following the restrictions set by the curfew. Based on the timeline of events, this incident happened only a day after Trump had posted his first tweet in response to the protests that were happening in the country. The tweet said, “These Thugs are dishonoring the Memory of George Floyd, and I won’t let that happen. Just spoke to Governor Tim Walz and told him that the Military is with him all the way. Any difficulty and we will assume control but, when the looting starts, the shooting starts. Thank You” (Trump, 2020). Even though there is not a certain direct correlation between what was said by Trump and the actions taken by law enforcement, it is still something that should be brought up and attended to because of the language used by both Trump and law enforcement.

Another important avenue that was considered in this analysis was how news sources reacted to and presented what Donald Trump was saying. It was also critical to examine how news sources were framing the events that led Trump’s statements. Since the news articles were already analyzed and summarized in the data analysis section, this discussion will be focused on the big picture and what can be taken from that analysis. Based on the information gathered from the news sources that were used, there was a common theme between those deemed liberal compared to the news sources that came from a conservative source. For example, when analyzing the reporting from the different news sources that were more liberal, compared to their

counterpart, they continuously focused on the statements made by Trump. By doing this, they were trying to showcase how what he was saying, and the measures he was suggesting, were extreme and over the top. They constantly took an approach that tried to frame Trump as a president that was using excessive force against the protesters.

Within the articles, there was also a common practice of trying to get statements, or gain information, from people—primarily—from the democratic party. They sought out liberal politicians in hopes that they would comment on and criticize what Trump was doing and saying. Conversely, when looking at the conservative news articles, the approach they took was to try to ignore the comments made by Trump. This was done to ensure that suggestions, or potential image, about the measures he took and comments he made, were not seen as disproportionate to what was happening on the ground and in the bounds of law. This was evident in the July 1st reporting of the BLM mural event, where Trump had tweeted that, “BLM was a symbol of hate.” Nowhere in the Fox article was there mention of this comment, even though they had tweets within the article connected to the same thread of tweets in response to the BLM mural. These differences in reporting show that one, the country was divided in how they viewed and understood Trump and the message he was spreading. Two, based on how the reporting was being done by Fox, it is evident that Trump had an audience that was supportive and receptive to the narrative he was presenting to the American people through his tweets and speeches. Lastly, the way the reporting was fulfilled stressed what was happening in the country and how it was viewed and presented with varying attitudes.

To continue the process in determining if Trump did securitize the BLM movement during the summer of 2020, one must closely analyze RQ3. This question was intended to further examine the discourse used by Trump by connecting what was looked at in RQ2 to actions on the ground. Meaning, moving from discourse, and framing to actual measures employed to take control of the security threat that has been presented. RQ3 states, what measures were taken based on the discourse being used and based on the concrete actions taken by Donald Trump, or others, towards BLM? Ultimately, the discussion surrounds the different statements made by Donald Trump. The discussion will uncover whether Trump, or anyone else, took measures towards the BLM movement, and those protesting, due to the perceived security threat presented by Trump via his twitter account. When something, or someone, has been securitized, a determining factor is concluding whether there were actions taken against the perceived threat. However, the actions that are taken in order to preserve the security of the state, or referent object, are usually actions that are not generally accepted or approved of under

normal circumstances (Buzan et. al, 1998). In a report from ACELD, which looked at the events that happened in the United States during the summer of 2020, it was found that the government took a more aggressive response when dealing with the protesters. The data presented by ACELD specifically looked at demonstrations and politics happening during that time period (ACELD, 2020). According to the report, some of the measures taken by the authorities was the use of tear gas, rubber bullets, and pepper spray. In their study, ACELD found that, “compared to July 2019 government personnel used force in just three documented demonstrations, compared to July of 2020 when they used force against demonstrators in at least 65 events. Over 5% of all events linked to the BLM movement have been met with force by authorities” (ACELD, p.7, 2020).

This increase in force used between July of 2019 and 2020 is informative about the dynamics that were present on the ground, as well as the sentiments towards protestors. In several of Trump’s tweets, he said that he was going to use federal resources to address the protests that were happening in different states. For instance, on May 29th Trump Tweeted, “Crossing State lines to incite violence is a FEDERAL CRIME! Liberal Governors and Mayors must get MUCH tougher or the Federal Government will step in and do what has to be done, and that includes using the unlimited power of our Military and many arrests” (Trump, 2020). There are two points that must be highlighted to try to better understand if Trump did take steps that traditionally wouldn’t be used to address these kinds of issues. First, like previously mentioned, many times the federal government doesn’t interfere in state issues unless it is specifically requested by the state. Second, the use of active military force is a measure that is only used in the case of insurrection. This was also noted in one of the news articles that was part of the data collection. During the summer of 2020, both Seattle and Portland experienced a strong response by the federal government due to the events materializing in those cities. One example of the federal government involvement in Seattle was the use of the Protecting American Communities Task Force, or PACT (ACELD, 2020). It is important to note that this task force is part of the Department of Homeland security (DHS) and it was only created in the summer of 2020 (Homeland Security). It is important to note that per the DHS website, DHS was first established as a result of the 9/11 attack. Since then, their missions has been, “to prevent future attack against the United States and our allies, responding decisively to natural and man-made disasters, and advancing American prosperity and economic security long into the future” (DHS). Furthermore, DHS focus has been mainly on issues of counterterrorism and homeland security threats, securing the U.S. border, cyber security, and economic prosperity

and security. When considering the circumstances in which DHS was created, and the different areas in which they focus their work, it is apparent that the government saw what was happening across the country as a direct threat to national security. It is important to note that in different tweets, Trump did refer to what was happening around the country as “domestic terrorism,” and he has also suggested that ANTIFA had been responsible for a lot of what happened during this time period. ANTIFA is currently considered to be a terrorist group. Nevertheless, even if this involvement of DHS has any connection to Trump's tweets, or to the perception that the events could be considered a national security issue, it is still clear that extreme measures were taken.

Another city that experienced the interference of federal agents was Portland. Similar to Seattle, PACT agents, along with other federal personnel, were dispatched in Portland (ACELD, 2020). In Portland, there were a lot of incidents that raised questions about the Federal response because of how they were engaging with protestors. For example, there was video footage of Federal agents arresting protestors in unmarked vans (USA Today, 2020). These kinds of actions are not standard for the United States, and are measures that exceed the norm of how to deal with people who are suspected of committing a crime. In Portland, the heavy-handed approach from law enforcement resulted in a restraining order being placed on them as a way of preventing continuous excessive force when dealing with protestors (ACELD, 2020). It is important to mention that in both Seattle and Portland, there were events that transpired, which called for law enforcement involvement. For example, in Seattle, a police precinct was overtaken by protestors. The protestors turned this precinct into an encampment known as the Capital Occupied Protest Zone (CHOP). However, based on reports of excessive force being utilized by law enforcement, local officials instructed law enforcement to abstain from intervening at the encampment (Seattle Pi, 2020). Nonetheless, Trump and his administration took measures that were seemingly responding to his perception of what was happening throughout the country.

Lastly, Trump and his administration took measures that—according to some—were extreme and out of line. There were also incidents of non-state actors taking matters into their own hands to deal with the BLM movement and the protests that were happening. Throughout the country, there were reports of confrontations between Militia, other organized groups, and individuals from the BLM movement (ACELD, 2020). One example of this, is the case of Kyle Rittenhouse, which was one of the events that was researched when analyzing Trump tweets. Some of the groups that were active during the summer of 2020, according to a report by

ACELD, were Antifa, the New Mexico Civil Guard, the Proud Boys, the Boogaloo Bois, and the Ku Klux Klan. It has been documented that some of these groups have been supporters of Trump. For example, there have been numerous occasions in which leaders of the Proud Boys openly stated their support of Donald Trump (Poverty Law, n.d.). This is brought up to demonstrate how their support for Trump, as well as Trump's messaging and language in tweets, could have been a factor when deciding to go to cities like Portland and have confrontations with BLM and protestors.

Lastly, now that both RQ2 and RQ3 have been discussed, the next step is to look at the overarching research question. Which was RQ1 – How did Donald Trump securitize the BLM movement after the George Floyd killing in the summer of 2020? Compared to the last two questions, this one is more complicated to discuss, and answer based on the research and data collected. Moreover, because of the complexities of this topic, the conclusion of the analysis is not straightforward. When reassessing RQ2, which looked at the language used by Trump in connection to the literature from Balzacq and Buzan regarding securitization, it is valid to conclude that the discourse Trump used when speaking about the BLM movement meets the threshold to be considered a Speech Act. There are several reasons why this was the determination. First, throughout the summer of 2020, it is clear based on the data that was gathered and analyzed, that Trump indeed had an audience who believed and supported the message he was spreading. This is explicit in the number of people who were interacting with his tweets. As aforementioned, it was taken into consideration that not everyone who commented on Trump's tweets were people in favor of the message that he was spreading. Nevertheless, it is still evident that he had an audience supporting what he was saying and doing. With reference to RQ3, there were different action-types considered when determining if measures were taken in connection to the discourse that was used by Trump. In many of Trump's tweets, and in his June 1st speech, he expressed multiple times that he would use federal resources in states to address the protests that were happening around the country. For example, "I am dispatching thousands and thousands of heavily armed soldiers, military personnel, and law enforcement officers to stop the rioting, looting, vandalism, assaults, and wanton destruction of property" (Trump, 2020). The fact that there were reports about federal agents working within different cities, as well as the creation of a new DHS task force to expel into various cities, indicates that Trump, and other federal agencies, acted on the messaging he was projecting. This is an indication that the measures were in fact based on the discourse declared by Trump. Both RQ2 and RQ3, based on the data, indicate that a securitization process

was happening, especially when compared to what scholars have said about securitization and the different elements involved in that process.

In spite of this, answering RQ1 was a lot more complex, particularly because of the varying dynamics present during the summer of 2020. Still, the gravity of the consequences produced by Donald Trump's statements did securitize the BLM movement. Consequently, this will play a significant role in answering this question. The reason for this is because making a claim like that, especially in a polarized environment like the United States, could lead to increased polarity between the different actors and could also generate space for politicians to push their agendas.

Moreover, the main factor that made it equally difficult and complex to determine if a securitization process of the BLM movement indeed happened, was because of the question of context. Even though there is an understanding when doing qualitative research, the natural context of all involved actors is looked at in order to provide and gain a deeper understanding of here and now dynamics (Korstjens & Moser, 2017). Nevertheless, the reason the question of how much weight should be placed on acknowledging the context of what was happening at the time is due to the significance of understanding the data collection, which highlighted the fact that there were not many instances in which Trump explicitly said or wrote about the BLM movement. Be that as it may, when looking at the context of what was happening at the time, it was clear that Trump was referring to the BLM movement in his tweets, because they were the primary actors protesting and speaking out against the treatment of Black bodies by law enforcement in the United States. Furthermore, these actors were most outspoken about the events that transpired not just in Minneapolis, but all over the country. However, it is important to consider that during those same incidents, and on many other occasions, Trump used vague language and mentioned other groups—like ANTIFA—as being responsible for the looting, rioting, and violence that was happening across cities all around the United States. Furthermore, many of the incidents in which Trump was tweeting about were related to events that were closely tied to protests that the BLM movement had participated in. For instance, the May 29th Tweet in which Trump uttered, “when the looting starts, the shooting starts” (Trump, 2020). Was in response to three nights of mass protests by the BLM movement and their allies in Minneapolis because of the killing of George Floyd on May 25th, 2020, by law enforcement.

Another incident that occurred, according to reporting done by Fox News, right before the June 1st Rose Garden speech, Park police dispersed protesters to allow Trump to make his speech. Similar to the May 29th tweet, this came after mass protests happening all around the

country by the BLM movement. When considering the various factors surrounding the events that transpired during the summer of 2020, and who the primary and most notable actors were during that period, there is validation of the securitization of the BLM movement by Donald Trump. This is evidenced by Trump's discourse that portrayed the BLM movement, as well as their allies, as a threat, which—in Trump's opinion—justified taking actions on the ground to quell their perceived threat. There is—seemingly—a direct connection between the discourse used by Donald Trump and the mobilizing of federal agents, as well as the actions taken by those federal agents against protesters across the country. The conclusion that D. Trump used proxies for referring to the BLM movement is grounded on educated assumptions based on the chronology of events, the timing of the tweet, and the overall socio-political context at the time.

Throughout the process of data collection, there were multiple limitations that came up unexpectedly. During the early stages of planning and deciding what direction the research project was going to go, there were several factors considered. First was my recollection of what happened during that summer. Second, was the role of how much emphasis and weight should be given to the context when analyzing the data. Lastly, was the data collection from news outlets, which turned out to be less informative to the questions at hand, which was surprising. During the planning stages of the research question, and when looking at the different ways that these events could have been examined, my recollection of what transpired during that time was very different from the discoveries in the data analysis. There is a connection to the second limitation that arose when collecting data. In my recollection of what happened during that summer, there were a lot more direct references to the BLM movement than what I found. During that summer, it was clear that BLM and their supporters were the ones going out to protest. However, during that data collection process, and looking at Trump's tweets and speeches, he rarely spoke about the BLM movement deliberately. Instead, Trump used many other words to talk about those who were protesting. This raised the question of how much emphasis should be put on the context of the situation when analyzing the data. The reason for this is closely tied to the last limitation that came up throughout the process, which was affiliated with news sources not thoroughly addressing the issues at hand, for example missing the connection between the current events and pertinent tweets.

Another limitation that was considered, and was mentioned earlier in chapter four, was the concern of bias and personal sentiment leaking into the study, especially in relation to the data collection process. That is why a rigid inclusion criterion was included into the study to prevent that from happening. However, due to such rigid criteria, it made it difficult to collect

data from news sources that solely and efficiently focused on the specific events that were analyzed. Meaning, that there were oftentimes when news sources would report on nearly everything else that was taking place. If they talked about the event and the BLM movement, it was only very limited, as well as secondary information. Second, it was clear that both the liberal and conservative news sources were writing in a way that was more focused on presenting the issues within a framework that was aligned with what their audience's preferences and/or opinions. However, the information and the reaction made by both sides of the mainstream media did not sufficiently address, or investigate, the issues in the way that was expected of them. It did provide a picture of how both Trump's tweets and stance on what was happening at the time was both viewed and framed in a way that was completely opposite from one another. Further, it is critical to highlight the degree in which the country could be seen as polarized.

When looking at the study in its entirety, especially in relation to the choice to analyze it and the impact it had in the summer of 2020, it is important to reflect on the possible implications it could have on society, as well as on policy makers. With this in mind, research that looks at contested topics has the potential to create further division between the actors involved, especially in the case of the United States. One of the reasons for this is because the United States has become so polarized. Particularly as a result of political allegiance to the two political parties and their ideologies. In turn, this has resulted in a society that has become a lot more embedded in their own political ideology. Consequently, their supporters continued drifting apart from one another and creating a more divided society. This is especially observable when the different areas of contention are not taken into consideration. That is why there are several implications that could result from a study like this. First, when considering a policy maker's standpoint, there is the potential of abuse of research in order to further push a narrative that is beneficial for one side over the other. This is something that has already happened in the United States. A great example is when reviewing the information and research done about gun violence. Moreover, another implication that could result is policy making that can be viewed as one sided, or not taking all the facts into consideration. Lastly, in reference to society, there is a possibility of seeing more division between those who do not share the same ideology, thus worsening the polarization, as well as the violent encounters that have happened. This is something that was discussed at the beginning of the thesis.

8 Chapter 8 Conclusion

It is always important to consider, and recommend, how this research could be furthered in the future or how it could be applied to similar situations in which the approach, and the question being looked at, had a similar design. Another area where this research could be expanded is in the analysis of utterances made by politicians. Future studies could discuss not only Trump's tweets and speeches, but also analyze what members of the Republican Party were saying about the events that were unfolding during the summer of 2020. This process could uncover whether there were common sentiments and viewpoints across party lines, or if it was only voiced by a fraction of the party. Furthermore, one takeaway that could further this research would be to interview constituents of the Republican Party, specifically focusing on how they reacted and felt about Trump's tweets and his June 1st speech. The intention of this would be gaining a deeper insight and first-hand accounts of their experience. This approach would be beneficial because it would provide an insight to the degree in which the BLM movement was securitized. Furthermore, this type of approach could also be applied to the discourse that the Democratic party used when talking about the events of January 6th, 2021, at the United States Capitol. Similar to what was suggested about the Republican party, and its constituents, the same approach could be applied in this context. Lastly, this research could be furthered by utilizing the polemicist approach, which would aid in examining the discourse used by the Democrats in reference to the summer 2020, while also doing the same with Republicans in connection to January 6th, 2021. Consequently, one can gain more understanding of how extreme, or not, both politicians and constituents on both ends of the spectrum are because they have become so rooted in their own party's ideologies.

This thesis analyzed if Donald Trump securitized the BLM movement in the summer of 2020. This was accomplished by looking at both his tweets and the speech he made on June 1st at the Rose Garden. In addition, this thesis looked at two different factors in order to determine if securitization indeed did happen. First, it looked at Trump's tweets and speeches to determine if the discourse being used did meet the threshold to be deemed a speech act. Second, it examined if actions were taken against the BLM movement as a result of the discourse that was used to describe the movement and their actions. This is evidenced by his use of utterances, which were seemingly pointed at the BLM movement. Trump stated things like "I will deploy the United States military," "acts of domestic terror," and referred to the movement as a

“symbol of hate.” In completing the research and analysis for this project, there are concrete indicators that Donald Trump succeeded in securitizing the Black Lives Matter movement.

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