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The News Media within the Securitization Concept:

Contributions of the mediatization concept and of the manufacturing consent paradigm in exploring the role of news media within the securitization process

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Abstract: *The securitization concept is an important contribution to the security studies but does not take into consideration the impact that the news media can have on the securitization process. In a world that is more connected than ever and where the news media represent the principal information's giver for many, there is the need to better consider their role within the securitization process. This thesis aims to investigate the possible role of the news media within the securitization process by integrating two contributions from the communication studies. The mediatization concept, with the focus on the institutional approach and its assumption of the agency of media, and the manufacturing consent paradigm, with its propaganda model and its assumption of the subservient character of the media. In specific, the aim is to test which one best captures the media's role within securitization using the case study of the build-up in the US for the 2003 invasion of Iraq.*

Abstrakt: *Konceptet sikkerhedsliggørelse er et vigtigt bidrag til sikkerhedsstudierne, men det tager ikke hensyn til den påvirkning, som nyhedsmedier kan have på sikkerhedsliggørelsen. I en verden der er tættere forbundet end nogensinde før og hvor nyhedsmedier agerer den primære informationskilde for mange, der er det vigtigt, at nyhedsmediers rolle i sikkerhedsliggørelsen tages mere i betragtning. Dette speciales formål er at undersøge nyhedsmediernes mulige rolle i sikkerhedsliggørelsen ved at inddrage to bidrag fra kommunikationsstudierne. Her inddrages mediatiseringskonceptet ved at fokusere på institutionstilgangen og dens antagelser om mediers handlekraft, samt samtykkefabrikationsparadigmet med dets propagandamodel og antagelser om mediers føjelige karakter. Mere specifikt er målet at teste hvilken en af de to tilgange, der bedst kan beskrive mediernes rolle i sikkerhedsliggørelsen ved at anvende optrapningen i USA forud for invasionen af Irak i 2003 som case.*

Keywords: securitization concept, news media, mediatization concept, manufacturing consent paradigm, US invasion of Iraq.

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Introduction

With media more present than ever in our everyday life is not a surprise that the media are influencing also the political and security establishment. With the increased presence of the news media since the invention of the TV and the creation of the news media networks, the news media has become the principal source of information for almost everyone in the society. Especially during events of major resonance, the news media are the principal actors that provide information on what is going on and is the only way for many to receipt what are the government plans and actions. The news media are therefore completely embedded in the framework of society.

The news media can be seen also covering the debate regarding security and how the government intends to eliminate the presence of threats that can be threating the nation. It is thus to consider important and necessary to take into account the role of the news media within the theories and concepts of political and security studies. However, the role of the news media is usually put aside by the different scholars of security. In particular, within the concept of securitization, the role of the news media is relegated to just a handle of mentions with no clarification or better analysis. The aim of this thesis is, therefore, to try to fill the lack within the securitization concept by integrating it with two concepts from the communication studies: the mediatization concept, with its institutional approach, and the manufacturing consent paradigm, with its propaganda model. In particular, regarding the choice of using the mediatization theory for this thesis is the fact that it is useful to position the securitization theory on the new and complex "global, media age" (Cottle, 2013).

Using a citation for explaining the importance of this contribution it can be that

"*given the part that media plays in presenting government policy, its image as an unbiased representative of truth and its subsequent effect on public opinion, it is essential to examine its role in the [securitization] process*". (O'Reilly, 2008: 68)

The aim is to analyse the contributions of mediatization and the manufacturing consent paradigm and see if they are possible to be integrated into the securitization concept and how these contributions can affect how the role of news media is conceptualized within securitization. In doing so the concept of securitization and the two communication integration will be analysed in detail, in order to expose the principal elements of each concept and to build the final argument on the possible role of the news media within securitization.

However, to examine which of the communication integration best captures the role of news media within securitization a test case study on the build-up of the 2003 US invasion of Iraq is presented. The test case study serves to examine how the news media are covering an issue that is presented as a security threat and what will be the effect of the news media coverage on the audience. The case study consists of a content analysis of the two principal newspapers available on the database Nexis Uni, The New York Times and The Washington Post, and an analysis of the previous studies on news media coverage that will help in examining the effect of the news media on the audience. This is to lay the first base from which argues and reply to the research questions during the analysis. Here I am illustrating the argument about the possible influence of media in the securitizing process and which are the contributions that best capture their role.

Ultimately, in the last chapter related to the conclusion, the results of the thesis are described in conjunction with the possible improvement and implementation that can be developed in further studies.

Choice of Concepts

To begin with, the principal theoretical frameworks chosen for this thesis are the securitization, based on the CS approach, the mediatization concept, based on the institutional approach, and the manufacturing consent paradigm, with its propaganda model. Even if these concepts are from two different areas of social science, security studies from one side and media studies from the other, both of them are recent concepts that aim to describe and make clear the complex dynamics of the society.

In the case of securitization, the concept was developed in the wake of the end of the Cold War when the field of security studies was witnessing a new development in the international system. With the disappearance of the Soviet Union as a major player and the subsequent fading of the nuclear war threat, security scholars felt the urge to establish a new development in security studies to embrace the new international system, and the related new threats. Within these security studies, there was already an ongoing debate about the continued narrowing of the field of security. From one side were the wideners, the scholars that wanted to extend security studies to other sectors rather than focus and restrict the field only in the military and political sector. From the other were the traditionalists, that opposed this new enlargement and considered security studies to be relevant only regarding the state as the major element, both in a political and military sense. To face the new changes in the international system and by embracing the widening of the security studies that Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde constitute the Copenhagen Peace and Research Institute (COPRI). This institute was established in 1985 with the aim to enhance multidisciplinary research on peace and security. It is within this institution that the new concept of securitization is being established in the security studies.

It is a matter of fact that the securitization concept first introduced by the Copenhagen School in 1998 by Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde is nowadays generally accepted in the field of security studies. The securitization concept challenged the traditional security approaches that were defended by the traditionalist such as Chipman (1992), Gray (1992; 1994) and Walt (1991), that were supporting the idea of the primacy of military security and the limitation of the focus of analysis for security studies only within the military and political sector (Buzan et al., 1998: 3–4). The challenge of the securitization concept is that the core importance of the security of the state is set aside to let space to a new approach that focuses on the security as a concept driven by interests. The concept is elaborate to consider security as a political act and not as a neutral act finalize at the mere contrast of a physical threat. The issue is moved beyond the sphere of politics and label as an existential threat. This action of labelling an issue is effectuated by the politicians or the decision-makers that act as securitizing actors and constitute the most important and central part of the Copenhagen School approach. Through this labelling the securitizing actor attempt to convince an audience to accept to securitize the issue by moving it beyond the political arena.

The Copenhagen School with its approach manages to establish a new development with which it is possible to have a new angle for analysing security issues. Obviously, the concept is not perfect and there are some undertheorized parts, such as the role of the audience or the role of the functional actor and constitute a particularly interesting point in order to consider the role of the news media within the securitization process. Other scholars have already focused on integrate and reconceptualize some aspects of the securitization concept. Balzacq (2005) represents the most important scholar under this point of view, especially with his assumption on the centrality of the audience and the co-dependency of context and agency are of significant importance in the elaboration of this thesis.

The framework presented in his work allows to expand the discussion on securitization and to present a grip for the institutional approach based on the agency of the news media. Furthermore, through his framework is possible to build a bridge to the mediatization concept, in particular, the fact that the securitizing actor has to convince the audience by utilising the right language and by making use also of the external context. Which it can be linked to how in the political process, the political actors have to follow the rules of the news media and use its language to have the maximum chance of persuading the audience and thus gain the necessary support from them. On the same line is the research of Léonard and Kaunert (in Balzacq, 2011) that tries to reconceptualize the audience using the '*three streams model*' of Kingdon (1984) where they argue that in the process of securitization there is a multitude of different audiences and that each of them have its own logic. For these reasons, the securitizing actor must adapt itself to the target audience and change its language and behaviour in order to successfully persuade it. This research is important as it allows to understand how the media had gained more influence. And on the same importance is also the argument of O'Reilly (2008) of the news media as a functional actor that is facilitating the persuasion of part of the audience, what he considered to be the critical mass, in order to achieve a successful securitization. With the introduction of the general concept with its Copenhagen School approach and the new developments, it is possible to have a solid theoretical framework from which it is then possible to integrate the concepts and assumptions of mediatization.

Mediatization is the second concept that I will utilize in this thesis. Such as for the securitization concept, the mediatization concept arose in the late 1990s and it can be referred to as a concept that seeks to unfold the new complexity of the increased emergence of the media and the increased influence of the news media in today's society. Within the mediatization concept, I will utilize and examine the institutional approach, focusing particularly on Hjarvard (2003; 2008; 2013),

with its assumption that media is an independent institution and where the society becomes dependent to the media and their logic. Besides, it considers that the other institutions (society, family and so on) become interlinked with the media and dependent on the use of the media resources and that this change affects both culture and society. In particular, regarding the news media, the most important consequences of this change can be found within the political arena. It is in this arena that the mediatization literature focuses on the mediatization of politics, by analysing the consequences of the changes caused by the transformation of media and their new independent character. On this topic, the scholars on mediatization of politics, such as Mazzoleni and Schulz (1999) and Strömbäck and Esser (2009; 2014), provide a relevant argument on the dynamics that the news media can create interferences within the political process due to its characteristic of being a semi-independent institution that has its own logic. One hypothesis is that this argument can then be integrated within the securitization process by considering the news media as an active actor that can create interferences.

However, alongside the mediatization concept, another approach to the news media studies that need to be considered and goes in the opposite direction of the argument presented in the institutional approach, is the manufacturing consent paradigm with its propaganda model. This paradigm is ideated by Herman and Chomsky (1988) and bases its argument on the power of inequality between the dominant elite, considered as comprising the state and the government, and the other stakeholders within society. The most important arguments are that the news media are considered as being economically driven and so to be subservient to the corporate interest when deciding which events and topics to provide coverage. With the incorporation and focus of the propaganda model, the news media found themselves prone to follow and defend the state interest and policies, doing, therefore, the interest of the dominant elites by covering the news that follows the interest of the domestic powers. For the fact that the propaganda

model is conceptualized as a model of media behaviour and performance and therefore, does not focus on the effect and influence of the news media to the audience, I will integrate it with the concept of mediatized conflicts following the work of Cottle (2006). This because, in order to examine how it can be integrated within the securitization concept, the integration is relevant by adding the important insight of the impact that can have the news media and thus supporting the arguments provided by the propaganda model. The mediatized conflicts literature provides to explain the dynamics that mediatization has on the different conflicts, so to consider the news media not only as a simple medium, and the impact with which the news media can affect the audience. Therefore, considering the securitization process as a situation of conflict, where there is the need to persuade an audience in accepting the narrative and policies of the securitizing actor, there is the possibility to integrate the propaganda model arguments. This integration can contribute to understanding the dynamics and the impact that the news media have on the persuasion of the audience within the securitization process. So forth, the manufacturing consent paradigm even if it has been conceptualized before the mediatization concept and is part of the news media studies, will be integrated within the literature of mediatized conflicts as to have a theoretical continuum and to have the possibility to focus and analyse the effect and influence that the news media can have on the audience.

Problem Statement

The aim of this thesis is particularly to shed light on the possible theoretical contributions that the mediatization concept and the manufacturing consent paradigm can add to the securitization concept to examine the role of the news media within the securitizing process. Regarding the analysis of the role of the news media within the securitization process, other scholars have researched it

before. For example, the argument of O'Reilly (2008) where he focuses on the role of the news media as a functional actor to facilitate the task of persuading the audience in accepting the securitization of the Iraq issue by the Bush Administration. However, these scholars, by taking into consideration the role of the news media within the concept of securitization expressed by the CS failed to not integrate theories from the field of communication studies. In particular, the problem consists in considering the news media as a passive actor that is just transmitting the messages from the securitizing actor to the audience and do not specify what is the characteristic of the news media and the dynamics of playing the role of a functional actor. The securitization literature, therefore, does not focus purely on the news media, nor is taking in consideration theories and concept that could improve the conceptualization of the role of news media within the same literature.

For this reason, I decided to integrate the literature on the mediatization concept to investigate the possible role and dynamics of the news media within the securitization process. In particular, the mediatization concept has been chosen as it has a specific focus on how, why and with what impact the media act within the framework of society. The focus of mediatization is to understand how the media are changing society and the dynamics that are leading to this change. Concerning the securitization concept, the integration of mediatization is to investigate how and with what extend the news media can play a role within the securitization process. If it can be considered as playing solely the role of a functional actor or if it can be considered as an active actor that can change the securitizing actor's approach to security issues.

In this regard, within the mediatization concept, it will be taken into consideration the institutional approach, as it considers the news media as a semi-independent institution. Therefore, it is taking into consideration the agency of the news media with the institutional approach. In the same field of media studies, the

manufacturing consent paradigm with its propaganda model will be taken into consideration as it considers the news media as serving the ends of a dominant elite (Herman and Chomsky, 1988: 1). Therefore, in contrast to the institutional approach the manufacturing consent paradigm considers the subservient character of the news media towards state interest and policies.

These two different approaches are being taken in order to investigate which one of them best captured the role of the news media within the securitization process, which can, in fact, best describe how the news media can be considered within the securitization process, active or passive actor. In this way, it is possible to fill the shortcoming that is present within the securitization literature and clarify the role of the news media by taking into consideration these two concepts from the field of media studies.

Research Questions

The principal research questions that represent the core of this thesis are related to the contributions of mediatization and the manufacturing consent paradigm that can be integrated into the securitization concept and how this can affect the role of news media is conceptualize within securitization. In order to reply to this research question is necessary to investigate which media study understating best captures the news media role within securitization and if the institutional approach with the agency of the media or the manufacturing consent with the dependence of the news media to the state interest.

The research questions are, therefore, the following:

- What are the contributions that the mediatization concept and the manufacturing consent paradigm can provide to the securitization concept?

- Which media study understanding best captures the news media role within securitization? The institutional approach or the propaganda model?
- Can the news media influence the securitizing process? What is their role?

Securitization Concept

To analyse the contributions that mediatization can add to the securitization concept when focus on the role of the news media is necessary to examine the theory related to each concept. In the case of securitization, it is necessary to examine the Copenhagen School approach to understand the fundamental of the concept and which actors are represented. After this basic recapitulation, I will take into consideration the new development introduced by the scholars of the Paris School, Balzacq and Léonard and Kaunert for the reconceptualization needed to understand the role of the audience. Lastly, the inclusion of O'Reilly it is necessary to understand where the news media can be positioned within the securitization process. Therefore, to know the role of the news media is important to first explain the securitization concept and the major critics of it.

The Copenhagen School Approach

The 1998 book, "*Security: A New Framework for Analysis*" is the cornerstone and starting point of the Copenhagen School (*from now on CS*). The CS approach differs from the traditional security studies (TSS) perspective because it introduces a multisectoral approach. If the TSS assumes a state-centric view where the security is and should be only about the state, the CS assumes that security can go beyond this monosectoral view. State-centric positions are still

possible under this assumption but are not the only ones. The state is considered by the CS as one of the possible security actors, even if it is considered as the ideal one (Buzan et al., 1998: 37). The focus on the multisectoral approach is important as it keeps a link with the TSS. In this regard, by focusing on other sectors expect the state, the CS approach can enlarge to the security analysis to other sectors and create the opportunity for a more specific analysis about each new sector. Indeed, it is possible to examine the different referent objects and agents that characterize each sector. So, the CS approach focus on the question that security can be expanded to other sectors other than the one of the state-military. About the opportunity for a more specific analysis to each sector, the CS argues that the forms and nature change according to the sector in analysis. The concept of security is not restricted to the military sector but is extended to the other four non-military sectors (Buzan et al., 1998: 4). This multi-sectoral approach that the CS adopts serves to expand the notion of the referent object beyond the typical sector of the traditional security studies as well as to include non-state actors (Buzan et al., 1998: 8). By doing this analytical set-up, or as Wæver call it "analytical net" (Wæver, 1999: 335), the aim is to understand and register the level of securitization that a sector present. It is necessary therefore to widen the security studies to other sectors to understand the actual situation of the political actors during the process of securitization (Wæver, 1999: 336). The five different sectors that the CS identify are: the military, the political, the economic, the societal and the environmental sector. Thus, the CS enlarge the security study to all the sector of society, adding the possibility to analyse the threats and the different actors that are specific to every sector. The existential threats can range from the possibility of war against another state, in the case of the military sector, to the survival of the humankind or 'just' the destruction of some habitat or biosphere, in the case of the environmental sector (Buzan et al., 1998: 22–23).

However, to develop this new concept is necessary to define, other than the multisectoral approach of the CS, also the process that leads to consider an issue enough important to 'deserve' to be considered as a security issue. On the line of the widening agenda, the core framework of the CS approach is to define the securitizing actor that will declare if the referent object, the subject that is under threat, is under an existential threat (Buzan et al., 1998: 36). The principal centre of analysis of the CS approach is the practice of securitization in its essence. Is to understand precisely that securitization is the practice to know "who securitize, on what issue, for whom, why, with what results and under what conditions" (Buzan et al., 1998: 32). So, it is possible to analyse the dynamics of securitization and also have the possibility to manoeuvre the interaction between the actors of the securitization process. Essentially the approach of the CS can be synthesized as "security is about survival" (Buzan et al., 1998: 21).

To understand how an issue can become so important to be considered as an existential threat that needs to be resolve in order to survive, the CS introduces the 'speech act'. Using the language theory, the CS formulate that the speech act is necessary for explaining the securitization process. The salience part of the securitization process following the approach of the CS is the definition that "something is designated as an international security issue because it can be argued that this issue is more important than other issues and should take absolute priority" (Buzan et al., 1998: 24). The concept is important as explaining that a security issue is not an existential threat by its own nature, but is treated like that by the securitizing actor that "has claimed a right to handle the issue through extraordinary means" (Buzan et al., 1998: 24). A security issue is therefore presented as an existential threat that necessitates extraordinary measures and has the priority over other issues. The claim and correlate elevation of a security issue to the realm of the existential threat is defined by the CS as a securitizing move. This way an issue is considered as an existential threat to a referent object. The

fact that the threat is considered so important for the existence of the referent object, leads the securitizing actor to have the possibility to declare an emergency condition for having the resources to confront this threat. The actor can, therefore, mobilize or take special measures.

With the speech act, the CS explains how the securitization process can be started by the securitizing actor. However, to elaborate deeper the concept enunciated by the CS is important to analyse the different actors that are presented and the interactions that are at stake during a securitization process. First of all, it is necessary to explain what the CS identify as referent objects, securitizing actor and the other actors that constitute the securitization process (Buzan et al., 1998: 36). For referent object, they indicate a 'thing' that has a legitimate claim to its own survival and that is seen to be existentially threatened by a security issue. The securitizing actor is the actor that declare 'something' to be existentially threatened (the referent object) and claim resources to securitize it and resolve the security issue. The CS adds two more actors, the audience and the functional actor. The former is the actor that has to accept or refuse to give up the resources to the securitizing actor to resolve the security issue, the latter is the actor that can influence security and can be the impulse for the securitizing actor to act. These last two actors, even if they are mentioned in the approach and are considered important by the CS which are not completely defined and considerably undertheorized.

However, the audience as it is conceptualized in the CS approach and plays a significant role within the securitization process. To present it the CS provides a spectrum from which is possible to visualize the different stage from a non-politicized issue to a securitized one (Buzan et al., 1998: 23–24). To sum, a non-politicized issue is an issue that is not considered in the public debate and is not a matter for state action. When the issue is regarded as needed some form of governmental action is becoming a politicized issue. In this sense, the government

allocates resources to confront and resolve the issue in the political arena. When an issue is being regarded as a security issue, meaning that it is necessary to go beyond the normal political procedures of the issue, it enters in the last stage and became a securitized issue. However, the passage from the non-politicized spectrum to the securitize one does not necessarily go through the state. Also, other social entities can raise an issue to the different phases of the spectrum. Figure 1 helps us to visualise the process of securitization by also focusing on the differences between a successful securitization of a security issue.

To create a successful securitization is necessary that the audience accept the security issue as such. Securitization cannot, therefore, be imposed, but there is the necessity that 'enough resonance' is present to consider the emergency measures as necessary and legitimate. Moreover, a threat can be institutionalised, and it is a characteristic more common in the military sector. As an example, in the case of a military invasion, the securitizing actor does not need to present it as an existential threat to the audience, because it is already taken for granted. This taken for granted mechanism is the consequence of the previous usage of the security process. The shared understanding is implicit. The immediacy and urgency of the threat are accepted in advance by both the securitizing actor and the audience. The CS stresses especially on the importance that the securitizing acceptance signifies for the securitizing actor as well as for the audience, namely the "self-based violation of rules" (Buzan et al., 1998: 26). The securitizing move leads the securitizing actor to overstep the rules that will normally bind it. These rules are overstepped because the threat is presented as not possible to confront otherwise. But for the securitization to be successful the creation and establishment of a shared understanding of the importance and immediacy of this process between the securitizing actor and the audience are essential.
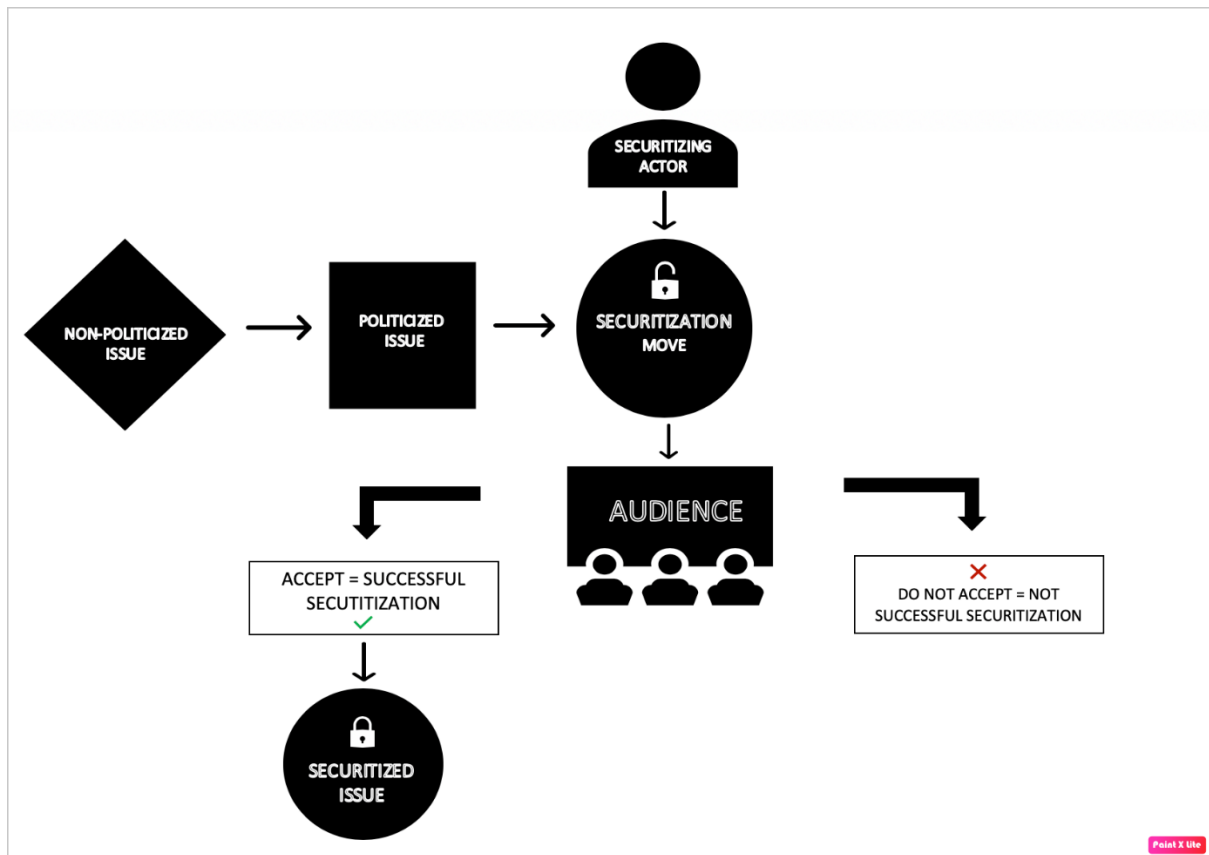
Figure 1 – Simplify version of the securitization process. Theory and data from Buzan et al. (1998)

As it is possible to notice, the securitizing actor effectuates the securitization move thus, as explained above, aim to move a particular issue from the political arena to the security one by using the speech act. The securitization move, however, cannot proceed without passing through the audience. It is at this point that the audience, following the argument of Buzan et al., has to accept the securitization move conducted by the securitizing actor to have a successful securitization and the movement of the issue to the end of the security spectrum. In this case, the audience accepts the exceptional measures that are considered necessary by the securitizing actor in order to contrast the threat. The audience is therefore persuaded that the threat needs to be resolved using special measures that are not available within the political arena. Otherwise, if the audience is not persuaded by the securitizing actor on the importance and immediacy of the threat

the securitization moves failed, and the issue returns within the political arena moving towards the centre of the securitization spectrum.

A shortcoming of the CS approach is that in this particular case the role of the audience is relegated to a passive role where it has to accept or refuse the securitization move from the securitizing actor. It is not completely clear also how the securitizing actor is effectively persuading the audience, or if some other actors or dynamics can interfere or facilitate the acceptance from the audience. Additionally, the figure of the functional actor is not conceptualized, and it has not been put clearly inside the securitization process. However, it is useful to remind that the securitization concept mentions the importance of the role of news media relating it as a functional actor. The CS, as mentioned above, does not completely specify the figure of the functional actor and, importantly, the role and the influence that it has on the process of securitize an issue but related to the news media it is possible to find some mentions where they are understood as covering the role of functional actors. In particular Buzan et al. Mention that the "media is an important actor that contributes significantly to the definition of situations [of conflicts]" (Buzan et al., 1998: 124) when examining the societal sector, adding that the news media then relate to use terms of the dichotomy of 'us' vs 'them', on the same line as argued by Cottle about the mediatized conflict. Furthermore, the CS also mentions that the news media "play an obvious role" in the process of operating to the systemic referent object when analysing the political sector (Buzan et al., 1998: 149). These mentions show that the CS point to the role of news media within the securitization concept, but only in the form of brief mentions without specifying or reflect on dynamics that they can generate. Nonetheless, in a world where the information became a central factor inside the political arena and within the politics process, it seems not accurate to not consider the role of the mass media, in the form of the news media, as the provider of information between the securitizing actor and the audience. In order

to develop the argumentation for the implementation of the news media within the securitization process is it necessary to first analyse and examine the integrations that other scholars made to resolve the principal shortcomings presented in the CS approach.

New Developments in the Securitization Theory

Even if the CS approach is considered, generally, as a foundation of the new development in the security studies, several aspects of the theory have been criticised and challenged by different scholars. The critics have contributed and made possible further development in the theory of securitization, and to clarify some aspects that were undertheorized in the original CS presentation of the theory. The work of Balzacq (2005) is the most interesting between the scholar of the securitization theory. In his works, he argues that the CS approach does not clarify some aspects of the securitization process. Hence, there is a need to reconceptualize and deeper examine some of the concepts and dynamics of securitization. Balzacq claims that by using a pragmatic approach it is possible to integrate more efficiently the audience, the context, and the agency.

In particular, the view of Balzacq challenges that the speech act alone cannot actually explain the process of the 'persuasion' of the audience and its acceptance of the securitizing move. Balzacq, argues that in the securitization process the role of the audience is more central than in what is presented in the CS approach and that the presence and analysis of the external context are necessary for a securitization process to be successful. In this way, the securitizing actor has to examine the context in which the audience found themselves and with the use of a combination of textual meaning (knowledge gained through language) and cultural meaning (knowledge historically gained through previous interactions

and events), it is possible to "form a frame of reference through which security utterances can be understood" (Balzacq, 2005: 183). Only at this point, the audience can be successfully persuaded. There is, therefore, the need for external reality in order to win the audience's support (Balzacq, 2005: 177).

In this regard, Balzacq argues that the CS approach is not "properly incorporate [the] audience and [the] context" which then creates some problems and difficulties in examining the importance of the audience within the securitization process (Balzacq, 2005: 178). In particular, the audience indeed plays an important role also in the CS approach, as other authors argue is it the audience that can reject the securitizing move but the result is not binary and is constituted by several steps (Salter, 2011). It is not explained how the securitizing actor acts to win its support. For Balzacq, to win the support of the audience it is necessary to use the appropriate language. The support of the audience can be formal, which is the institutional support for an action, and moral, which can be described as the national support (Balzacq, 2005: 184–185). This differentiation is relevant as it can be explained how the securitizing actor can act to persuade appropriately the institutions, such as its legislative branch when assessing the importance of resolving a security issue. But most importantly, it can be used to explain how the securitizing actor need also to win the moral support of the public, that even if it does not hold the same power of the different institutions, it is needed to have a successful securitization. The importance of the audience is also explained in the next paragraph, where the work of Léonard and Kaunert (2011) is examined.

The contributions of Balzacq are therefore that, for understanding the dynamics of the securitization process there is the need to consider how securitizing is using the context and the appropriate language to persuade the audience, both formal and moral. Connected to the use of appropriate language there is the need to consider the power that the securitizing actor holds in confront to the audience. The fact that the securitizing actor has a vast amount of information about the

issue to securitize and that the audience "is not fully informed, for instance, on the temporal proximity of threats", means that the audience depends on the information provided by the securitizing actor (Balzacq, 2005: 190). In this instance, the news media can play an important role in filling the void and connect with the audience and the securitizing actor by providing the information that the audience needs to be persuaded that an issue is indeed a security threat. In this way, the securitizing actor can use the news media to release only the information that is considered to match the appropriate language that is needed to persuade the audience. Nonetheless, there is to mention that often the securitizing actor, mostly in the form of the government, has privileged access to news media (see paragraph '*The manufacturing consent paradigm*'). In this way, the securitizing actor can win the moral support of the public. However, to conceptualize the role of the news media it is necessary to have a better vision of the role of the audience within the securitization process.

Audience Reconceptualization

On the same line of Balzacq, the work of Léonard and Kaunert offers a particularly interesting insight into the reconceptualization of the audience. They argue that the role of the audience in the CS approach has been not completely clarified. If from one side the audience is theorized as to have an important role in the process, as cited from the same Buzan et al., as the audience decides if accept or not the securitization. On the other is not clear who comprises the audience and the specific role that the audience plays within the securitization process (Léonard and Kaunert, 2011: 58–59). On the same line with the other critics of the CS approach, Léonard and Kaunert assume that the audience is formed by a multitude of different audiences, with different characteristic and that each of these audiences is inter-linked as they are part of the same

securitization process. There has been already, therefore, the reflection by which the audience can be reconceptualized by assuming that there is not a single audience, but different types that need to be addressed specifically by the security actor in order to have a successful securitization. The work of Léonard and Kaunert focuses on "the relationships between these different audiences and the overall impact that those various audiences have on policy-making" (Léonard and Kaunert, 2011: 63).

The main point is that the audience can be theorized as "comprising different audiences, characterized by different logics of persuasion" (Léonard and Kaunert, 2011: 63) and that there is the need to create a framework that can explain the relation between these different audiences and their impact on the securitization process. In doing so, Léonard and Kaunert integrate the 'three streams model' of Kingdon (1984) for theorizing an audience framework. With the integration of the 'three streams model' of Kingdon, they argue it would allow an important facilitation in terms of the operationalisation between the securitizing actor and the audience, other than the reconceptualization of the audience as presented above. In this case, the integration presents an improvement of the securitization framework. About the different types of audience, in the model of Kingdon, the three different streams are differentiated in problem, policy, and politics. In the first, the audience includes other decision-makers, other than the securitizing actor as explained by Léonard and Kaunert, and they need "to be convinced that a problem is indeed a 'problem' " (Léonard and Kaunert, 2011: 66). In the second the audience instead comprises the specialist that needs to be convinced by rational arguments for supporting the policy formation (Léonard and Kaunert, 2011: 67). In the third and last stream, the audience can be divided into decision-makers involved in the process and the general public. This division depends, for the authors reporting from Kingdon, "because of either the shifts of important participants (e.g. administrations or legislators in parliament) or shifts in the

political mood" (Léonard and Kaunert, 2011: 68), where the political mood is presented of comprising the climate and changes in public opinion.

The most important points in the work of Léonard and Kaunert and Balzacq are that for each audience there is a different logic of persuasion. The securitizing actor must, therefore, adapt to the audience that needs to be persuaded. Another point of consideration is the role of the news media that is presented in the explanatory case that they present in their discussion. The case exposes the UK proposal for transit processing centres outside the EU regarding the emergency of the asylum seeker migrants in 2003. It is reported that the news media played a role in reinforcing the opposition that other Member States had on the UK proposal. The UK government was unable to convince the two audiences that comprised the decision-makers, some of the other Member States, and the general public, that in this case is presented by Léonard and Kaunert as comprise the news media (Léonard and Kaunert, 2011: 74). The two authors conclude that the securitizing actor needs to persuade the audience to have a successful securitization. Besides, the audience plays a more important role than what was theorized by the CS as it could have a major impact on the overall process. As for the case of the UK, the news media impact added to the opposition of some other decision-makers that had the result to not only strongly oppose the proposition of securitization but also to make the UK withdraw it. This makes it possible to have some major reflection on the role that the news media can play if analysed singularly and with the assumption that the news media have their own audience to persuade, i.e. the general public.

The Role of News Media and Critical Mass

When analysing the role of the news media within the securitization process, one scholar that take especially in consideration the possible contributions of the news media can have is O'Reilly (2008). He examines securitization by taking in exam the news media as a functional actor, following, therefore, the theorization of the CS. In particular, he takes into consideration the role that the news media have played in shaping and persuading the American public in supporting the Bush Administration, even if the international community was in clear opposition to it.

However, before taking into consideration how O'Reilly examines the role of the news media is necessary to have an overview of the concept of successful securitization with the concept of 'critical mass'. O'Reilly termed the concept of critical mass, namely that securitization is successful "when the securitizing actor has convinced *enough of the right people*" that there is an issue that constitutes a threat (O'Reilly, 2008: 67 original emphasis). Two pillars are important to be considered. The volume and the caliber. The volume is the number of people that is necessary to be persuaded to succeed. The caliber is, instead, the relevance of the particular audience that needs to be persuaded. Hereby taking into consideration the reconceptualization of Léonard and Kaunert, the audience to be convinced is represented by the US Senator, the other decision-makers within the process, and the American public.

About the critical mass, the most important focus of O'Reilly is the close examination of the role of the functional actor presented in the CS approach. He argues that the American public as an audience is not passive and subjected to the power of the securitizing actor, in this case, the US government. Hence, it does not simply accept the securitization that is being proposed. So, there is the necessity to take into consideration that another actor is between the securitizing actor and the audience. In this case, it is possible to retake in hand what the CS

conceptualize and refer with functional actor, namely the functional actor that can influence and can be the impulse for the securitizing actor to act (Buzan et al., 1998: 36). For O'Reilly, this place can be taken by the news media, as news media can play an important role in presenting the government policy and in doing so they are considered "an unbiased representative of truth" (O'Reilly, 2008: 68).

The importance of news media as the functional actor is that the reception and the consequent response of the audience depend on how a particular issue is presented in the journalistic presentation. Thus, it depends on the frame that it is used by the news media while portraying the issue. O'Reilly argues that the "speech-act remains in force in the sense of how such a threat is presented to an audience" through the news media (O'Reilly, 2008: 68). The presentation through the news media can be explained as the government has privileged access to the news media. The government represents the most important, and sometimes, the only source of information regarding security and within the military or foreign policy sectors. Thus, is not surprising that the government has better access to the news media channels and resources. Nonetheless, in the case of the invasion of Iraq, the presence of a high patriotic sentiment permeated also the news media. Hence, the news media was more inclined to promote government narratives and frames. On the same line, O'Reilly examines the presence of a facilitating condition in the context of the influence that the news media can have on the audience regarding the invasion of Iraq. The hyper-patriotism that characterizes the post-9/11 US society plays along the line with the news media in increasing the support for military action. In relation to the context of the post-9/11 patriotism that pervaded the US society, the news media played a role in fostering this phenomenon in the weeks after the terror attack (Eisman, 2003).

In the specific case of the planning of the invasion of Iraq, the narrative and frames that the news media were portraying comprise a series of misperception that had the aim to link the Iraq of Saddam Hussein to the 9/11 terroristic attack.

The research *Misperceptions, The Media and the Iraq War* (2003), cited also by O'Reilly, examine and unfold all the misperceptions that played a role in influencing the American public in supporting the war. The audience, i.e. the American public, can be influenced and its opinion shaped by the narratives and frames portrayed by the news media even if they use misperceptions presented as truthful information. The important factor to keep in consideration is that the misperceptions originated from the government's flow of information. As the government was the principal source of information for the news media, and since the government had the better access to the news media it is not a surprise the result of the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) research on the misinformation actuated by the government and the news media (Kull et al., 2003). Their work sustains the argument presented by O'Reilly that the news media play a role within the securitization process by providing information and by increasing the power of the securitizing actor by shaping the opinion of the audience.

Mediatization Concept

After introducing the securitization concept following the work of the 'fathers' and founders of the CS approach and its development by the other scholars. And after focusing on the role of the audiences and how the news media can play a role in the securitization process. It is necessary to introduce and examine the mediatization concept, with its institutional approach, that serves to understand the characteristic and the nature of the news media, and how they can be theorized as an independent and active institution that has an active role in the political debate and that can have an active role in the securitization process.

The Concept of Mediatization

The mediatization concept is recent as it emerged in the 1990s as scholars developed it to analyse the changes in everyday life, society, and culture caused by the media transformation. Nowadays, it is possible to notice that media are more integrated than ever inside our everyday life, as an example one only has to think about how social media are embedded in our social relations with others. Or how even the political debate is set and framed through the news media, with the politicians aware that they have to follow the rules of the news media rather than the opposite, to have a positive grip on the public opinion. Mediatization has been described as an 'ongoing process' whereby the media is changing society and culture by changing the human relations, and also by changing the meaning of media (Hjarvard, 2008: 109). Following this historical perspective, mediatization is a concept that has been developed consistently in recent times and it can be defined as a long-term process based on the historical context that is under analysis (Krotz, 2017).

Instead, the concept of mediatization from the modern perspective is referred to as a process that took place in modern societies in the second half of the XX century in concomitance with the other processes of modernity such as globalization and individualization. The intertwining of these processes is important when considering the historical perspective of the mediatization process, as the process of globalization cannot happen without a society where media and communication are integrated within it. As such the developments of media did not cause but can be understood as that they could have happened only with the process of globalization (Hjarvard, 2003). Nonetheless, the process of mediatization started when the media shifted from being a tool in the hand of other institutions to become an independent institution on its own by gaining prominence and by changing the relationship between and within the other

institutions (Hjarvard, 2017: 1229–1230). Therefore, is in the last two decades that the effect of mediatization on society has been consistently important and it has been under the lenses of many scholars.

Nonetheless, it is generally accepted that the mediatization concept is the study of the "interrelation between changes in media and communication" on one side and "changes in culture and society" in the other (Couldry and Hepp, 2013: 197). The focus of mediatization allows to distinguish it from mediation. Mediation, regarding the term used in communication studies, is the process to communicate via a medium with no effects on the social institution but only of the message and the relationship between the receiver and the sender, thus is not taking in consideration the effect that the media and its developments have on society and culture (Hjarvard, 2008: 114; Mazzoleni and Schulz, 1999: 249–250; Strömbäck and Esser, 2009: 207–208, 2014: 94). In particular scholars in mediatization have stressed the importance of the difference between the two concepts to point the importance that the process of mediatization has on society. Mediation is considered by the same scholars has just the neutral act of transmitting a message, such as a politician that uses the news media to pass a message to the audience (Esser, 2013: 157). The difference is particularly relevant, as the mediation concept does not take in analysis the dynamics that took place between a politician and the news media, and between the news media and the audience. Overlooking the effects that the news media can have in framing or reporting the same message, or how a politician has to adjust to the news media rules to pass the message to the audience, are an important lack for understanding the impact that the news media can exercise.

The Institutional Approach

First of all, mediatization can be differentiated into two approaches. The social constructivist approach, that analyse the role of media in the construction of reality, so how people construct the world and its reality differently by using new types of media and through the news media (Krotz, 2017). And the institutional approach, that considers the media as an institution, semi-independent from the other social institutions and at the same time completely integrated within them with its own logic. Logic that the other institutions have to accommodate for using the media resources (Hjarvard, 2013).

As the institutional approach is focusing on the media as a semi-independent institution that has its own logic, it is relevant to the aim of this thesis. In particular, the assumption that the other institutions have to comply and follow the media logic to use the media resources and the character of semi-independency of the media from other institutions can shed light on the role that the media can have within the securitization process. For this reason, it is important to analyse the mediatization process and its effect using the institutional approach (Hjarvard, 2013). In this regard, the institutional approach refers to mediatization as "*a condition or phase* in the overall development of society and culture, in which the media exert a *particularly dominant influence* on other social institutions" (Hjarvard, 2013: 13, original emphasis). As mentioned above, Hjarvard affirms that the institutional approach considers the media as a semi-independent institution on its own and with its logic. In specific, it is possible to consider the media as "organization with their own aims and rules" (Mazzoleni and Schulz, 1999: 249). But for the media to being identified as a semi-independent institution, it needs to be considered as integrated within the other institutions, so the media can exert influence over them. On the same line are Strömbäck and Esser (2009), that argue that the important factor of the

mediatization concept is the character of independence but at the same time also interdependency of media on the other institutions (Strömbäck and Esser, 2009: 209). It is possible therefore to assume that with the institutional approach is possible to specify a framework that defines the interplay between the social institutions and the media and where it is possible to better analyse elements of the media's logic that is applied to the other institutions. An important reflection of the institutional approach is that the other institutions become dependent on the media resources and to obtain them the other institutions have to submit to the media logic.

Media Logic and Political Logic

Media logic refers to the application of formal and informal rules for the allocation of material and symbolic resources that describes the modus operandi of the media (Hjarvard, 2008, 2013). In this sense, to make use of the media resources one has to first follow the rules that determine the way of operating within the media. These rules are "rationality cultivated in and by the media institutions that penetrates every public domain and dominates its organizing structure" (Altheide and Snow, 1979: 11). Specifically, in regard of the news media, the media logic represent

"the institutional, technological, and sociological characteristics of the news media, including their format characteristics, production and dissemination routines, norms and needs, standards of newsworthiness, and to the formal and informal rules that govern news media" (Strömbäck, 2011: 373)

In this regard, media logic represents the rules that decide how to structure a news story and if a "news story" can be considered as such. It defines, in sum, the processes by which the news media, create the news. Media logic is relevant as

news media will frame and report certain topics using the required formats and thus, changing the way the audience receives and interpret these topics (Altheide and Snow, 1979).

A more in-depth definition is provided by Esser (2013) and Strömbäck and Esser (2014). They consider the news media logic as too vague and therefore differentiate it into three sub-elements: professionalization, commercialization and technological change (Esser, 2013; Strömbäck and Esser, 2014). Professionalization regards to the norms and values within the journalists, so the shared understanding that these produces are the importance of independence, newsworthiness and to serve the public interest. Therefore, the news media will follow this shared understanding when producing news stories. For commercialization, it is necessary to take into consideration that the news media are first of all commercial organizations. Thus, the aim and incentives in creating commercially efficient-driven content affect the production of news. Lastly, news media have to adapt and take advantage of the media technology at their disposal, which is reflected in how the content is created and presented by the different types of news media. This differentiation makes it possible to analyse how the news media can influence other institutions and society in general. Besides the news media logic can be analysed according to the countries in analysis, as it varies across different countries (Esser, 2013). For the case of the US where it has been shown that the news media tend to be stronger within the public sphere, especially during political elections (Esser, 2013; Strömbäck and Esser, 2014).

However, scholars have pointed to the importance of taking into account how the commercial logic interfere with the news media logic. With the world being more connected than ever and with a surplus of information, there is an increase in competitiveness that changes how the media decide which event to cover or not. As Strömbäck and Esser (2009) explain, with a more competitive environment the news media have to "shapes what the media cover and how they cover it" to

capture the audience attention (Strömbäck and Esser, 2009: 212–213). In this way, the news media logic, regarding, in particular, the professionalization logic, is adapted and operate accordingly to the commercial logic.

With the news media logic presented, it is then necessary to understand the effects of it and the dynamics that are at play within the political sphere and, for this specific thesis, within the process to seek the support from the audience in the securitization process. Since securitization is the process of moving an issue from the politics area to the security area, it is important to have a grip on the dynamics that the news media have on politics. Thus, is important to examine the political logic and how it is affecting and is affected, by news media. The aim is to introduce the concept of the mediatization of politics.

The political logic is divided into three dimensions, each of which represents different processes within the political framework: polity, policy, and politics. Polity represents the institutional system forming the framework for the political action which represents the system of rules of the political process. On the other hand, policy represents the content dimension of politics that is the political agenda that establishes the problems and issues through which the political solutions are to be found. Instead, politics is the process through which the decision-making takes place and is the process of gaining and winning support. The latter, i.e. politics, is the focus within the concept of mediatization, as well as within the aim of this thesis because media logic affects in greater measure politics rather than the other dimensions as is the forefront of the political process. Media logic has less influence on the policy process and almost no influence in the institutional framework that is the polity dimension (Strömbäck and Esser, 2014). Therefore, it is not a surprise that the interests of scholars within mediatization focused their interest in examining the dynamics created by the media logic within the politics process.

Mediatization of Politics

The literature on mediatization of politics is wide and it has been the focus of a variety of scholars (Esser, 2013; Hjarvard, 2013; Mazzoleni and Schulz, 1999; Strömbäck, 2011; Strömbäck and Esser, 2009, 2014). The reason is that with the advent of mass media the relationship between news media and politics has changed, transforming the media as a necessity in the political domain to have the possibility to reach the public appropriately. The media have therefore gained its own power in the public sphere and political arena (Mazzoleni and Schulz, 1999: 249). In his analysis of the mediatization of politics, Hjarvard aims to focus on the process by which "political institution is gradually becoming dependent on the media and their logic" (Hjarvard, 2013: 43). By using the institutional perspective, he managed to distinguish two correlated development. The first is the integration of media into the daily practices of politics. This integration means that the political actors are using the media and their resources for internal and external communication and for using the media resources they have to accommodate the media logic. The second is the evolution into a semi-independent institution of the media and its control of the society 's collective action. This particular resource is the one that the political actors seek to achieve more influence and for their advantages on other political actors. The principal focus of Hjarvard is therefore to understand the processes and the dynamics of the accommodation of media logic by the other institutions. This is to explain how the other institutions, and regarding the mediatization of politics, how the political actors are using the media resources for their own advantages and to achieve their goals inside the political arena. In sum, the media logic is what turn news media into an active political actor within the politics process (Esser, 2013: 161). The political actors need the news media to inform the public about their

actions and plans, but for doing it the political actors need to follow the media logic.

This process explains why the news media have a prominent and influential role within the political arena. The media's influence is "a result of the media's role as negotiator of public consent" (Hjarvard, 2013: 55). This position of the media, and especially of the news media, can be presented through a dual communication system (Fig. 2). The system is characterizing by the central position of the news media that play the role of negotiator between different political actors and the audience. The political actors and the audience are exposed to the same information generated by the news media. As an effect, the political actors will adjust their own viewpoint and actions by evaluating what is the public opinion. Indeed, the evaluation of the public opinion is based on the perceptions that both the political actors and the audience draw from the news media. This dual system explains the situation when the news media can be considered as the only significant media in the production of information in the political arena and the major source for the spread of information about a specific event.
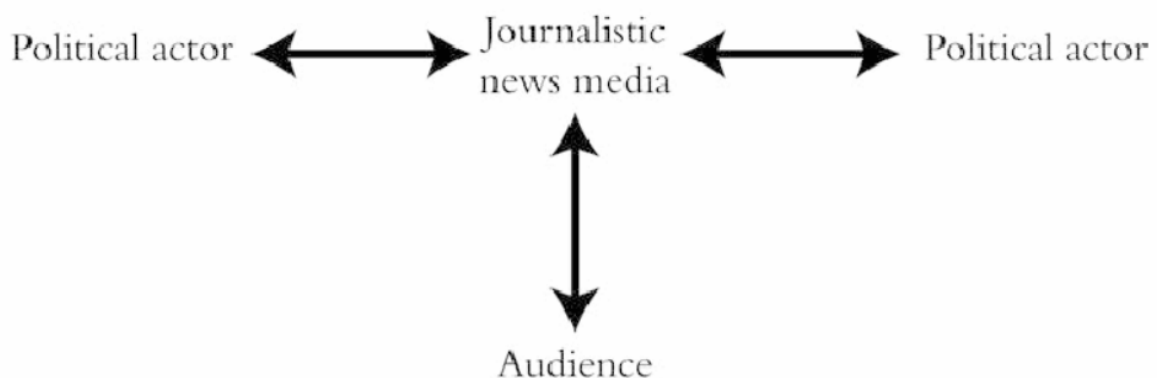

Figure 2 – The dual-circuit of political mass communication. Source Hjarvard (2013) p. 56

The relationship between the news media and politics has therefore changed. On the same line and in support of this model can be presented the *media contest*

paradigm, with its political contest model. This model argues that the media is a medium for the contestation of the dominant interests. The political contest model explains how the political actors compete for promoting their frame to the news media, to mobilize and win support for their cause. Even if the media is under the control of the dominant power, the challenges of the dominant elites can secure anyway the access to media. The media content focuses on the political dimension of mediatized conflicts without taking into consideration the 'economic' dimension that can influence the media behaviour to ensure corporate interests. In this case, as the news media is an institution of its own it can emerge as a contestant actor to the government and, especially promote or use the frame of other contestant actors to promote its own narrative of the events. Hence, some problems arise regarding the endangering of the democratic process within the mediatization literature. The problem concern that news media gain excessive power within the public sphere, becoming a "highly consequential environmental factor" with the possible consequence to interfere or even obstruct the political process (Esser, 2013: 156). For the fact that politics is becoming constantly dependent on the news media logic, politics itself may lose its autonomy. In this case, politics is transformed in mediatized politics.

Mazzoleni and Schulz (1999) explain the processes when analysing the politics dependence on news media logic. In specific, mediatized politics means that political logic is completely subjected to news media logic. As explained by Mazzoleni and Schulz, there are several characteristics that the news media will have in this situation. Firstly, the news media will select only newsworthy events that have 'news value' and decide who can access the media stage. Hence, the information is shaped and framed by the news media, and since the news media are the main source of information for the general public, this creates a challenging problem regarding the interference of the normal political process. Secondly, there is, therefore, a "spectacularization of political communication

formats and of political discourse itself" in such a manner that the commercial logic of the news media takes the upper hand of the political language (Mazzoleni and Schulz, 1999: 251). In this case, the political process is represented by using the news media language, from how to speak to how to look at the political actors and how they have to reflect and adapt to have their message transmitted to the audience. This adaptation changes how the political actors face the news media, knowing the news media logic they control it by creating or fashion an event to get the media attention. This case is important as it shed light on the relationship between politics and news media. Linking the analysis of Mazzoleni and Schulz to the model portrayed in Hjarvard, it is possible to implement that it is also the political actors that use the news media to gain a major influence on the audience.

On the line of the changes that the news media introduced within the political arena a change within the concept of the mediatization of politics is the advent of the interactive media, especially speaking about social media. This change is interesting to analyse as nowadays, with the emergence of digital and interactive media, the situation has changed again. Hjarvard argues that the emergence of these new media has modified some roles of the news media and let more actors, such as political stakeholders or the same general audience, inside the media environment by bypassing the news media. There is, therefore, a more complex and articulated media environment rather than of what is represented in the dual system model. The other actors can now, in theory, use the media for their own advantages without passing first through the news media. As an example, a politician can post on social media or a political blog for reaching his/her supporter or a person can use a personal blog or post a political campaign for seeking other's support. However, the news media are still holding a prominent position. This is because all the other actors are still dependent on the information provided by the news media. Besides, the legitimacy and authority of the news media are the factors by which the other actors seek the news media for having

public recognition. The politician that posts his/her idea is trying or speaking directly by following the news media's rules to gain the attention of journalists to have a larger audience. In this way, the other actors have to still be submitted to follow the news media logic, and especially the one regarding the news media, to have the possibility to achieve their aims. The relationship between the political actors and the audience is more articulated, but the centre is occupied nevertheless by the news media.

To understand the new system in a better way, Hjarvard refers to the news media as 'gatewatcher', rather than 'gatekeeper'. The news media as gatekeeper means that the news media have the function to mainly report information on an event. One needs only to think about the reporters that were sending the information from the Vietnam war or civil catastrophes, the only possibility for an event to be shared with the general audience was through the news media. Instead, with the new emergence of the interactive media, the news media found themselves to act more as a gatewatcher, namely that their role and is now to comment and to verify the information of an event. An example is to think that today by just having a smartphone is possible to share live information regarding the event that one is attending. Besides, for information that is originated from places where there is a particular lack of presence of reliable news media, the news media have to verify the information to accept it or refuse it as false. Nonetheless, the advent of the news media does not scratch the importance and reliability of the news media. However, the emergence of digital and social media is an argument to take into consideration in the future development of the mediatization of politics, even if the focus is on analysing the dynamics and effects of the news media.

Manufacturing Consent Paradigm

After having examined the mediatization concept and in particular its institutional approach, it is necessary to introduce the manufacturing consent paradigm. Specifically, the most important concept that I am going to utilize in contrast of the institutional approach is the propaganda model, as it can be used to explain the behaviour of the news media by taking into account the interest of the domestic powers and the inequality of wealth and power that contradistinguish the news media environment. In order then to integrate the propaganda model to the securitization concept, it is useful to comprise the model within the general topic of mediatized conflicts. In this way, it is possible to still consider the news media as an actor within the securitization model, so not as just a medium without no purposes, and analysing the impact that the economic and political preponderance of the news media have on the audience. Hence, it will be possible to confront the propaganda model assumptions with the assumptions of the agency of the institutional approach.

The Propaganda Model

The arguments presented by Herman and Chomsky propose that the mass communication media:

"*are effective and powerful ideological institutions that carry out a system-supportive propaganda function, by reliance on market forces, internalized assumptions, and self-censorship, and without coercion*". (Herman and Chomsky, 1988: 306)

The manufacturing consent paradigm analyse how the media tend to be influenced by governmental power and corporate interest. In particular, the manufacturing consent argues that there is an economic preponderance and the news media, therefore, tend to self-censorship and to follow the interest of the domestic powers, government, and corporate interest alike. The news media, therefore, does not criticize the government's action, but they support it by portraying the events through the cultural and political vision of the elites. The media is so forth subservient of the dominant powers and its role as a watchdog for politics and the elites is overshadowed.

The major point of Herman and Chomsky, in providing support of their arguments, is the creation of a five-filter system that explains why the news media propagate the values of the dominant political and economic interest. The five filters are: I) the size and concentration of ownership of the media firms; II) advertisement as a primary source of income; III) reliance of the news media on information provided by the government, business, and expert; IV) 'flak' as an enforcing action for discipline the news media; V) anti-communism.

As it has been said above, the manufacturing consent argues that there is an economic preponderance. This economic preponderance can be detected in the first two filters, size and concentration of the media firms and the centrality of advertisement. The presence of a few media enterprises that concentrate on several media firms and their aim for profits is an evident form of economic power that they wield on within the news media business. Related to the economic power, the centrality of advertisement as a primary income also plays a relevant role in the economic character of the news media. The advertisers wield significant power in supporting the news media and that leads to the possibility of exercising substantial editorial influence. This influence increases particularly in combination with the first filter as more media firms are merging and there is an increase in the centralization of news media, and this cause an increase of

competition that leads to subsequent increase importance of the advertisers' support for the media firms (Herman, 2000).

Another important filter that can be particularly relevant is the reliance on governmental and corporate sources for information. In this case, the news media go mainly to the government and corporate officials, or other 'experts', in order to gather information as it is easier and more practicable to use their sources for the news. One motive is that these sources are considered to be more recognizable and in possession of the right information. Another motive listed by Herman and Chomsky, based on the profit aim of the news media firms, is that is cheaper and more effective to gather information through official sources rather than gather them on-site. Also since it is the same government that gathers and provides the information to "to meet the journalist's scheduled needs" (Herman and Chomsky, 1988: 22).

The fourth filter, 'flak', "refers to negative responses to a media statement or program" (Herman and Chomsky, 1988: 26). It comprises all those actions that can be organized directly or indirectly by individuals, like single political actors, or by groups. Flak can be considered as a disciplinary action that is enforced on the news media to curb any deviations and because it can be particularly costly, it is an action that is directly related to power. For this reason, it is possible to say that the government is a major producer of flak due to its power on news media.

The last filter is directly related to the era in which the paradigm was elaborated. When Herman and Chomsky were writing their book, the Soviet Union was still standing and one year had to pass before the cracks of its fall where possible to be seen. Indeed, the anti-communism ideology was still present within Western societies and especially in the US. Henceforth, with this dominant ideology, it was possible to mobilize the population against an enemy and the relevant characteristic of this filter is that it was possible to use this ideology against anyone that was deviant from the preferred line. Nowadays, anti-communism has

no reason to be considered as an enemy due to the collapse of the Soviet Union, but after the events of 9/11, anti-terrorism can be considered as the new enemy within the news media environment (Cottle, 2006: 17).

These filters are not to be assumed as enforced upon the journalist, nor that there is a sort of conspiracy inside the news media environment. The fact is that these filters are being internalized, and this internalization explains the self-censorship of the news media. Moreover, the propaganda model is a model that takes into consideration the behaviour of the news media in structural terms; hence it does not consider specific cases. Though, because of the internalization of the institutional factors, it is possible for "a 'free' media to act like lemmings in jointly disseminating false and even silly propaganda" (Herman, 2000: 104).

To conclude and point out the major implications of the propaganda model is, firstly, that all these filters can dictate what can become 'big news' (Herman and Chomsky, 1988: 31). The news media are therefore influenced in covering only the news that is considered in line with the interest of the elite. There is thus a highly political dichotomization in news coverage that is based on serving the interest of the power elite. As for the news, the "propaganda campaigns can occur only when they are consistent with the interests of those controlling and managing the filters" and are, as well, differentiate between worthy and unworthy campaigns (Herman, 2000: 103). Secondly, the economic preponderance that contradistinguishes the news media for the propaganda model reveals an inequality of wealth and power that can be found in how the government and powerful corporate exerts power over the flow of information. One of the consequences of this inequality and control of the flow of information is that the news media do not have interest on the coverage of individuals or groups that do not stay in line with the ideology and interest of these elites.

To summarize, the propaganda model is a useful model for understanding the behaviour and performances of the news media also within the process of

securitization. However, in order to confront this model with the institutional approach, it is necessary to analyse what are the possible effect and influences of the news media within the propaganda model. So how and if the news media can influence the audience if they have to follow the domestic power interest. To have the possibility to analyse these dynamics it is possible to integrate the assumptions and dynamics that are comprised within the topic of mediatized conflicts.

Mediatized Conflicts

After having presented the propaganda model, it is necessary to integrate how the role of the news media can influence the audience if analysed within the frame of conflicts, whether they be armed or political. This integration is relevant, concerning the securitization concept, as it can explain the relationship and dynamics that exist between news media and elites in the case of extraordinary situations, such as could be the presence, or creation, of an existential threat that needs to be resolved. As well as, explaining what the influence and effect of news media on the audience can be, if it has an effect on persuading the audience and achieving a successful securitization or not. The propaganda model can be especially relevant if conceptualize into the securitization concept where the securitizing actor has more power and resources than the other actors. Especially as an example, regarding war journalism and journalism post 9/11 on the war on terror, it is possible to see that the elite and military imposes control on the media, through controlling the flow of information. In this regard, the focus is on the way the news media can frame the conflicts and to follow the narrative of the power elites.

The reason for this integration can be reduced from the fact that Herman and Chomsky do not specify whether they consider the news media as being just a medium or something more than that. In this case, it is useful to integrate the concept of mediatization for a better understanding of the media involvement in the conflict. As it is explained in the sections above, the scholars that are analysing the news media role considers the media as an institution and not as a mere medium. As Cottle also clarify, media is not "a neutral 'middle-ground' ", mediatization is thus used to describe the media involvement within conflict as "doing something" (Cottle, 2006: 9). This means, that the media is not only represented as a medium that merely describes a political demonstration by remaining objective but is represented as an active actor that 'actively' frames a political demonstration with a specific objective, i.e. to support the dominant elite and won its favour. By doing this, the media have a direct effect on the conflict and introduces a political side in their media representations.

The news media, therefore, can decide to frame a conflict, but in the case of the propaganda model, it will anyway follow the domestic interest of the power elites. In particular, taking the case of the role of news media during conflicts it is possible to notice how news media "generally fall in line behind their national governments" (Cottle, 2006: 80). The news media will therefore support and cover the interest of the domestic powers. Cottle proposes six different explanation in case of military conflicts that goes on the same direction of the propaganda model, such as the concentration of few media enterprises, the reliance on the government as a source of information, the censorship and need to have the consent from the military, the presence of patriotism and nationalism, and the professionalism of journalists in not reporting images of human carnage.

In particular, the most important explanation that can be traced back to how the media can affect the audience is the presence of patriotism and nationalism. In this case, the filters from the propaganda model are not enforced by the elite but

it is possible to notice how the news media will anyway support the elite interest. The reason can be reduced to the news media use of the 'us' versus 'them' narrative. For example, the same is happening in the journalism of the war on terror where the media is reproducing agendas that support the state narrative of 'just war'. The products of the media are therefore impregnated by a symbolism that has the objective to unify the supports of the public audience. The media are then used politically and strategically, such as the use of the word 'terrorist' during the war on terror after 9/11. The word is used as a label "to depoliticize and delegitimize insurgents" and put them "outside the sphere of political discourse , rational explanation and non-violent engagement" (Cottle, 2006: 165). This opposition can be seen also within the securitization process, in particular when a securitizing actor is pointing to the importance of the referent object when considering an issue as an existential threat.

In this case, the dynamics of amplification and framing are also at stake, as the news media are amplifying the coverage of the issue by creating more attention and they are framing it to facilitate the transmission to the audience and for supporting certain narratives. By taking the example of the war on terror, the news media are amplifying the issue by incrementing its news coverage and they are framing it to sustain the narrative of the 'us vs them', by using the terrorism as a label that can be used at the discretion of the journalists. In this case, the news media can have a strong influence on the way politics works, by playing an important role between how the political actors pone themselves towards the audience.

As in politics, the news media can play an important role and be an active participant that needs to be taken into consideration. However, the fact that the domestic powers have always better access to the news media and can, in part, control the flow of information does make it easier for them to influence the news media. In this case, the news media can effectively follow the predominant

narrative and actively use it as a base for their framing. The news media is, therefore, facilitating the elites on pursuing their agenda and also facilitating the persuasion of the audience. The question is right now how this theoretical framework can be integrated within the securitization concept and what are the integrations that it can add. In this regard, it is useful to use a test case study to investigate if these assumptions are reflected within a practical securitization process.

Case Study

In this section, it is presented the case study to test which approach best capture the role of the news media, analysed the media coverage during the build-up of the 2003 US invasion of Iraq. The reason for the selection of this particular event is because it was preceded by wide and prolonged media coverage, hence it is possible to compare and integrate the previous studies to have a wider and complete analysis of the phenomenon. In particular, the studies that will be taken into consideration range from the securitization of the Bush administration to the media coverage and impact that news media had on the US public before the actual invasion of Iraq. This is helping as it is possible to further expand the analysis and have a better foundation for the analysis process.

The case study consists of the analysis of the news media coverage in the months prior to the US invasion. Specifically, the analysis is divided between two parts: firstly, a content analysis of two newspapers, The Washington Post and The New York Times, between 4th of September 2002 and 19th March 2003 is performed to examine the sources that are being quote and for investigating if the role of the news media follow the assumptions of the propaganda model or the ones of the institutional approach, namely if the news media are covering the news

independently or if there is a uniformity between the media coverage and the vision of the government. Secondly, the results from the content analysis will be confronted with the results from other researches in news media coverage and on the use of rhetoric used by the Bush Administration, to then integrate them with the theoretical framework that has been unfolding in this thesis.

The division has been effectuated due to time-management, as a single researcher couldn't prepare a wide content analysis of both print newspapers and TV news media coverage. Furthermore, the print newspaper selection was limited to the newspaper available on the Nexis Uni database and have been chosen for their relevance within the US. In this regard, the selection of the keyword has been done for having a better focus on the security imprint of the different articles. The results obtained from the content analysis have been confronted with the results and reflection based on the other researches that were conducted on the news media coverage. In this way, it is possible to develop a better argument on the role of news media and test whether between the institutional approach and the propaganda model best captures their role.

Brief Literature on the Build-up of the 2003 Invasion of Iraq

Before presenting the research design of the content analysis it is useful to cover the literature and previous studies that have already focus on the build-up of the invasion of Iraq. In specific, some studies that focus on the securitization process will be taken into account to form the basis for understanding the role of the news media within it. In this particular case, the role that the Bush administration played on framing and influencing both the media and the audience has already been under the lenses of other scholars.

Indeed, for what regards the framing within the securitization process of the invasion of Iraq the work of Gershkoff and Kushner (2005) is important as shed light on the connection made by the Bush administration between the Iraq of Saddam Hussein and the terrorist attack of the World Trade Center. Their study analyses the rhetoric of Bush's speeches from 9/11 to the date of the invasion. It is important at it demonstrates that Bush during his speeches frame considerably, but not directly, Saddam Hussein and Al-Qaeda and portrayed Iraq as an active support of global terrorism (Gershkoff and Kushner, 2005). In this case, the Bush administration point the focus on the allegedly, but then completely false, links between Iraq and the 9/11 attack to the US, therefore, overstating the actual threat that Iraq presented. On the same line of this study, the work of Baysal (2019) takes in analysis Bush's speeches using a securitization input and the results follow the ones of Gershkoff and Kushner. The majority of the speeches contained references towards the possession and use of WMD, and linkages between Saddam Hussein and terrorism especially regarding 9/11 (Baysal, 2019).

These studies demonstrate that the frame according to which Iraq represents an existential threat not only towards the US but also towards the entire Western countries. This frame is remarkably used to justify the securitization process, as the only way to resolve this particular existential threat, in the shape of the presence of WMD and terrorist links, is through military action against Iraq. These studies represent an important section of the literature on the Iraq War, as demonstrate how the campaign put in place by the Bush administration was towards the enhancement of the securitization process to achieve a successful securitization of the Iraq issue.

For analyse the impact of this campaign other studies have examined the wide approval of military action against Iraq. The importance of the high approval was surprising as it wasn't related to the expectations of the public on the war, therefore it was not related to optimistic previsions on the possible evolution of

the conflict. As Gershkoff and Kushner present, the public that was favourable of military action in Iraq was supportive of it even if it was expecting a long war, a high number of casualties or an increase in terrorism (Gershkoff and Kushner, 2005: 529–530). Nonetheless, the approval for a military action reached 73% for men and 63% for women, as exposed by the report of the Pew Research Center (Pew Research Center, 2003). One of the reasons for this high approval can be linked to the securitization process that was in progress. As Masters and Alexander (2008) explain, the high approval can be linked to the sense of insecurity that was pervasive in the US public, the fear of a possible further terrorist attack on the US soil was still felt in the post 9/11. In the half-end of September 2002, the threat perception reached a significant high peak arriving at comprising 72% of the total respondents. At the same time, a little bit more than half, 51%, of the respondents in a different poll replied to foresee a possible general decline of terrorism if Saddam Hussein were to be removed from power (Masters and Alexander, 2008: 443). The high approval can also, therefore, be explained within the securitization frame as they wish from the public to regain the "*securitiness*" that has been felt lost. In this case, it can be possible to say that the "lost sense of security", as Masters and Alexander argue, led the audience to be willing to accept an emergency measure in order to increase the security (Masters and Alexander, 2008: 436). If these emergency measures have been already taken by invading Afghanistan in 2001 and by the approval of the USA Patriot Act the same year, the invasion of Iraq represented another step in the context of the increase of security for the American citizens.

Regarding the role of the news media, the major studies are useful to gain insights on how and which impact can have the news media on the audience. The study of Hayes and Guardino (2010) represents important research on media coverage during the built-up of the invasion. The study takes in exam the evening news of the principal US TV network that was related to Iraq and examines whether, and

to which extent, the news media gave space to the supporting or opposing voices. A core result is the failure of the news media to give adequate coverage to the national voices that were opposing to the military action proposed by the Bush administration (Hayes and Guardino, 2010: 71–72). However, related to the oppositional voices it demonstrates that the news media were giving more space than expected to the international actors. Surprisingly, the international actor that attempted to de-securitize the Iraq issue was more quoted than the internal oppositional voices. These examples show how the news media favours the access of the government and presents the first assumption that needs to be investigated in detail.

Aim of the Content Analysis

In specific, the case study takes in analysis the news media coverage and the securitization process that led to the invasion of Iraq on 19th March 2003. To examine the role that the news media have during a process of securitization of an issue, it is necessary to investigate the development of it using a case study. In this way, it is possible to have a support of the argumentations that have been developed in this thesis about the role of news media in helping achieve a successful securitization and to assist in answering the research questions of this thesis. The emphasis of this case study is to investigate if the news media present the agency that is assumed by the institutional approach, therefore if the news media are independent and cover the events without falling behind the government and if they can also criticize it. In this case, the expectation is that the news media will cover anyway the contrasting voices of other actors that are presented in opposition to the government. Meanwhile, if the news media follow the assumptions exposed in the propaganda model, i.e. that the news media will

behave like a 'cheerleader' for the government and that it will silence or not cover at all the oppositional voices from other actors that are not the government.

Particularly, regarding the type of sources that the news media are quoting, the content analysis is particularly relevant as it could test if there is present a strong inequality of access to the news media resources based solely on power and wealth. The aim of the content analysis of the principal US newspaper articles from 4th September 2002 to 19th March 2003 is, therefore, to examine which are the sources that are most quoted in the print articles. In this way, it is possible to test if the findings are in line with the propaganda model assumptions regarding the prevalent majority of governmental sources or if the news media present the agency assumed in the institutional approach. Besides, the aim is to examine if the presence of other sources, especially in opposition to the military action and critical to the Bush administration, are present and how they are being quote by the journalist. Namely, if there is a strong presence of opposition voices, both from national sources and international sources.

To briefly summarize, the core research questions that I want to reply with this content analysis are:

- Which are the main sources that are quoted inside the articles?
- There is the presence of sources that oppose military action and the Bush administration? How are they presented?

Data and Research Design of the Content Analysis

To do so, the content analysis has been structured by first utilising the database Nexis Uni and by effectuating a first search using the keyword "Iraq" and by setting a period from 4th of September 2002, as a start point of the analysis, to 19th March 2003, the day of the invasion. The decision to start the research on this

date is because it coincides with the discussion that President Bush made during a meeting with Congressional Leaders where stress on the threat nature that is Saddam Hussein and that it is necessary that the US is dealing with it, no matter what. The remarks of Bush are clear on his willingness to resolve the Iraq threat and to start the political debate on this issue (*CNN*, 2002). As Bush mentions,

"Saddam Hussein is a serious threat. He is a significant problem. And it's something that this country must deal with. And today the process starts about how to have an open dialogue with the elected officials and, therefore, the American people about our future and how best to deal with it" (*The White House*, 2002b)

The discussion with the Congressional Leaders coincide with the beginning of the campaign by the Bush Administration to convince the UN, and the other Western allies, to join the US effort in dealing with the threat that Iraq was posing (Glass, 2018). So, the decision to start the research from the 4th of September has been made as I consider this meeting the starting point of the political debate and the securitization process then. I have decided to not consider the State of the Union speech on the "Axis of Evil" where Bush states that Iraq, North Korea, and Iran represent a "growing danger" as the starting point as during the speech there were no special remarks on the Iraq threat as there were in the discussion with the Congressional Leaders (Glass, 2002; *The White House*, 2002a). Furthermore, the data from the Pew Research Centre on the level of persuasion of Bush on the general public support more my choice by evidencing an increment of almost 20% of the respondent that found that Bush explained clearly what Iraq represent to the US from late-August to Mid-September 2002 (37% and 52% respectively) (Pew Research Center, 2002). As argued before, the addressing of Bush with the other political actors started the campaign and the debate on the Iraq issue, as well as the speech in the UN Council where Bush urged action against Iraq a few days later intensified it. On the other hand, the decision to use the date of the beginning

of the invasion is because the aim of this research is to understand the role of the media in the months previous the invasion, and to see how the news were used in the progress of securitization.

After stating the period of analysis, it is useful and relevant to expose how the selection of the articles was made. To begin with, the results were filtered by using the keyword "Iraq", to point the focus on the Iraq issue. Subsequently, the research has been limited by using further keywords, such as "national security", "threat" and "invasion". In this way, it was possible to impose a security framework and to ensure that all the articles were related to the topic of security. Using the second filtering process the number of data was restricted considerably to 129 results, from the original number of more than 10.000 articles. The use of the keywords has been done to analyse the articles that presented already a security-imprinted language. In particular, with the word threat, the focus was already on considering Iraq as a danger for the reader. The coding of the data has been effectuated by analysing manually the articles, so to exclude the articles that were not related to the scope of the research and to have a better vision and deep analysis of the content of the different articles. Some were thus discarded for not being related to the topic of the debate on the invasion of Iraq or for have a total length of more than 4000 words. The length limit was provided to not have disproportionate results concerning the total length of other articles. From the original number of 129 articles, 72 were then analysed using NVivo in order to code the content of each of them. This selection has been made to examine in more detail the different use of sources that the news media are using to portrait the invasion of Iraq.

The coding of the news articles was made focusing on the different sources that were possible to analyse, and those were then separated in the main topic related to the source of the quotation used. The main topics that were used are: Administration sources, International sources, and National sources. For this

reason, in the coding process the national sources that are not part of the government, will they be favourable or in opposition to the invasion, are taken into consideration. On the same line, the international voices are also taken into consideration, given the fact that especially the UN and other members of the Security Council (except for the UK) made a strong opposition to a possible invasion of Iraq.

The main topics were then subdivided between Direct or Indirect quotation, and Positive or Negative if the quotation was favourable with the vision of the Bush Administration. In particular, the differentiation between direct and indirect quotations has been decided because it was important to see how the journalist was quoting the different sources, by stating directly the same words or by changing and interpreting them. For example, a direct quotation is presented as:

"*The Iraqi regime is not disarming as required by last fall's unanimous vote of the Security Council,*" *Bush told the National Governors Association in Washington.* "*Saddam Hussein's refusal to comply with the demands of the civilized world is a threat to peace, and it's a threat to stability.*" (Lynch, 2003)

Meanwhile, an indirect quotation is presented as:

"*Vice President Cheney has already dismissed the alternative to war that commands the most congressional and international support, which is seeking the return to Iraq of U.N. weapons inspectors.*" (*The Washington Post*, 2002)

A quotation was coded "favourable" if it expressed a position or perspective, or communicated a piece of information, that favoured the Bush administration's vision on Iraq. A quotation was, instead, coded "oppositional" if it expressed any scepticism, criticism, or opposition towards the same administration policy.

The principal aim is to integrate this research on the print news media into the wider different studies on news media coverage that are presenting below, to have a better and solid foundation to test if media's role within a case of securitization

as it is the build-up of the invasion of Iraq is the best to capture considering the agency of the news media or with its supporting character for the government.

Content Analysis Results

The most important point that is presented in this content analysis is how the Bush administration has effectively easier and favourable access to the news media. The news media amplified, therefore, the scope of the government's reach in influencing the audience. In this case, the news media seems to follow the propaganda model assumptions of the privileged access to the news media of the government. The number of quotations from administration officials represents the great majority of all the total number of sources quoted in the articles, as it is possible to see in Figure 3.

However, another interesting result is that for what regards international and national sources, the majority of them portrayed a negative and oppositional opinion about the possibility of a US invasion of Iraq. This pattern of opposition was observed during the entire period of the analysis, even close to the date of the invasion. In this case, the behaviour of the news media seems to not follow the assumption of the propaganda model regarding the self-censorship or the silencing of the deviation voices. Especially for the national sources, it is possible to notice that the number of quotations for the ones that go against the government's vision is more than three times the number of those that support them. Confronting this result to the declarations that both the newspapers were supporting the pro-war narrative is even more surprising. In this case, the agency of the news media seems to play a factor as the self-censorship or the blind support for the government narrative seems not to have an impact on the way the news media are presenting the other sources.
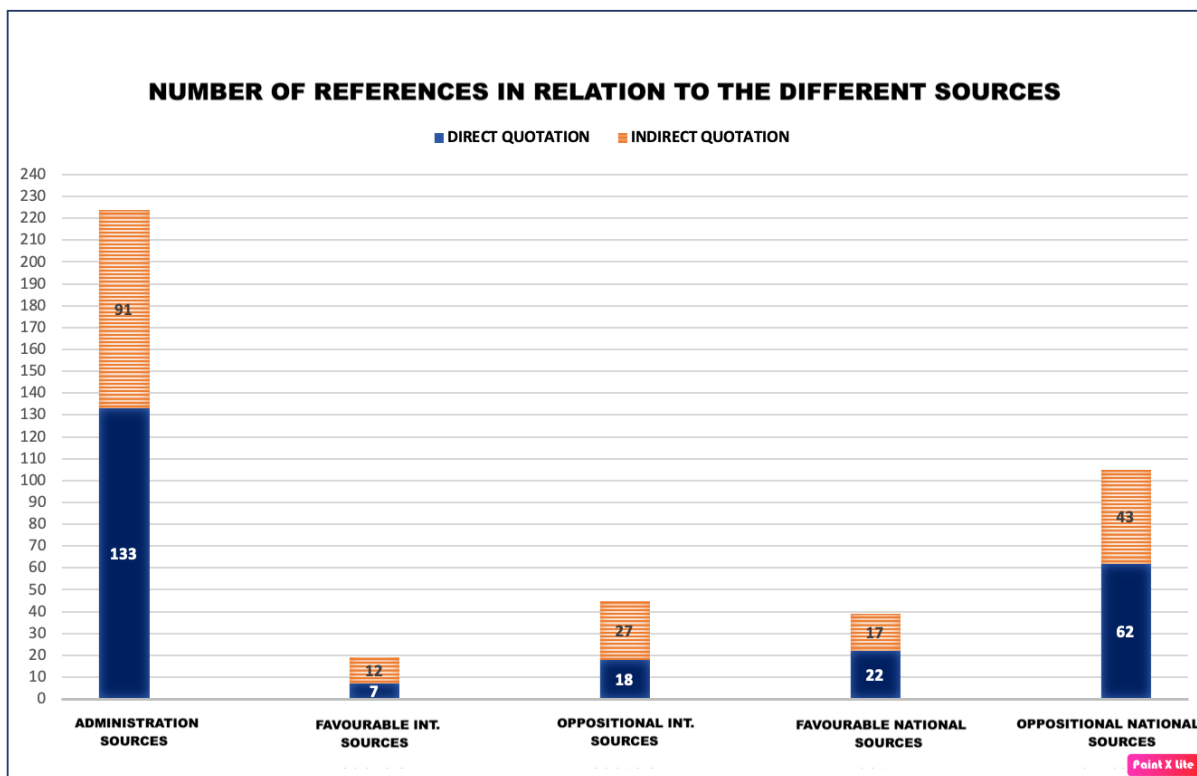
Figure 3 – Number of references in relation to the different sources of the newspaper articles

Regarding the different types of ways to quote the different sources, it is relevant to notice that the only sources that were more quoted indirectly are the international one. Meanwhile, all the other sources were mostly quoted directly. This can be explained as the administration and the national sources have a better impact and can be better presented by quoting directly the opinion and the reflection that they represented themselves. However, also, in this case, it is clear that the access to the news media resources is asymmetric and that is heavily represented more by the government's vision and interests, than the ones of all the other actors involved counting more than double the time of representation.

It is important to stress that the result of the content analysis will then be integrated with the reflections based on the other available researches on the news media coverage. However, confronting the results of the content analysis in Figure 3 and the results of the other researches on news media coverage, it is

possible to notice that for the newspaper the oppositional national sources are well represented in confront of all the other sources for the exception of the administration sources. In disagreement with the study of Hayes and Guarino, the national oppositional voices were the second more quoted sources. Nonetheless, the analysis of the studies on the impact of the news media in the months before the invasion is interesting in shedding light on the role of media within the securitization process.

Results of the Case Study

The major reflection that needs to be investigated is the consideration that the news media play a relevant role within the securitization process. However, for supporting this consideration it is necessary to test which assumptions best reflect the role of the news media within the securitization concept. In this case, it is useful to summarize briefly the main assumptions of the institutional approach and of the propaganda model and how they can be integrated within the securitization concept.

Following the assumptions of the institutional approach, the news media is considered as a semi-independent institution and for using the media resources the other institution has to adapt to its own logic. The news media have therefore agency and have the potential to disrupt the normal political process as they can also influence the same political actors. Integrating this assumption in the securitization process means that the securitizing actor has to adapt to the news media logic to influence the different audiences, but the securitizing actor can, in turn, be influenced by the news media. The news media is, therefore, be considered as an active actor that is actively participating in the process and that

can go against the securitizing actor policy. In this case, the news media can play the role of the facilitating actor or one of an audience.

Following the propaganda model instead, the inequality of wealth and power plays an important part in the access to the media resources and there is an economic preponderance in the media behaviour. In this regard, the news media are subservient to the domestic powers' interests and are influenced by them on which events or topics to cover. Besides, the news media to follow the elite narrative effectuated self-censorship and tend to exclude for their coverage the other oppositional voices. Integrating this assumption to the securitization concept means that the securitizing actor has a privileged access to the news media and therefore can influence in greater measure the different audiences, as it can control the flow of information that is available (Balzacq, 2005: 190; O'Reilly, 2008: 80). Besides, the news media will facilitate and support the securitizing actor narrative and policy by portraying and frame the government narrative to the audiences. Hence, there is a better chance for the securitizing actor to persuade the audiences.

Regarding the results from the case study, it is possible to examine how the securitizing actor, in this case, the Bush administration, has privileged access to the news media. The results from the study of Hayes and Guardino follow the results from the content analysis showing that the majority of the sources that were quoted from the news media were from administration officials, namely 28% percent of all sources were directly from the Bush administration. As the same author explains, by taking into consideration all the different sources that were quoted, the difference between the sources that were directly favourable to the invasion and the opponents one was minimal, 34% and 29% respectively (Hayes and Guardino, 2010: 72). However, in the case of the supporting sources the vast majority, 66%, of the overall sources are directly from administration officials. Moreover, the news media were found to be more favourable to the

invasion than unfavourable when analysis the directional trust of the news media, meaning the "the positivity or negativity of a news story toward a proposed invasion" (Hayes and Guardino, 2010: 75). Around 80% of all the news stories that were analysed by the two scholars posed as having a positive attitude toward a possible invasion (Hayes and Guardino, 2010: 77).

The results follow the assumption of the propaganda model by which the government has a privileged position on the access to the news media, as well as, that the news media and the journalists are more prone to quote government officials rather than other sources. Following the data represented in the Pew Research Centre report, it is possible to see that this pattern has been felt by the same American general public. The report shows that 63% of the people opposing the measures push forward by the Bush Administration believe that they didn't have enough coverage, meanwhile, even the 35% of who was supporting the possibility of an invasion believed that there was the need to hear more from the war opponent (Pew Research Center, 2003). Also, the positive character of the news towards a possible invasion, support the tendency of the news media to favouring and frame positively the government interest and policy.

On the privileged access of the government to the news media, another important characteristic that needs to be taken into consideration is the widespread misperception about the Iraq issue. The most important work about the misperception is the research organized by the PIPA and presented in the paper of Kull et al. (2003). The research demonstrates that there were present three major misperceptions on the Iraq issue: I) that there was an active link between Iraq and 9/11, II) that Iraq had WMD and III) that the international support for the war was higher than the real one. The most important finding of this study is that counting the total number of the respondents, it was found that a majority of 60% had at least one of the three misperceptions. Only 30% had no misperceptions at all (Kull et al., 2003). These percentages show that the

information was misleading the opinion of the audience from what was the reality. Using the concept exposed by Balzacq, the existence of this particular context where the threats posed by Iraq were altered, can provide an explanation of why the securitization of Iraq was considered a priority for both the Bush Administration and then for the audience. Regarding the diffusion of the misperception, the news media can be regarded as the major responsible. About the newspaper used in the content analysis, Kull et al. report that the misperception was particularly prevalent between the viewer of the major TV networks but reach also almost half between the readers of print media. In specific, 47% of the respondents that used the print media as the first and principal source of information had at least one misperception, meanwhile, the 53% had no one.

The major use of governmental sources can also be explaining by what the scholars refer to hyper-patriotism, the phenomenon for which journalists are more prone support the government and perform self-censorship in time of war or other traumatic events for the entire nation, such as 9/11 (Eisman, 2003; Wong, 2006). This 'cheerleading' effect can be seen in the news media, where many journalists and TV anchors were actively pushing the pro-war narrative (Hoskins and O'Loughlin, 2007; O'Reilly, 2008). Concerning the pushing of pro-war narratives, for the two newspapers of the content analysis (The Washington Post and The New York Times), it is possible to notice how they have been criticized for their pro-war position and how they used misperception on their advantage. In specific, the same editors of The New York Times wrote a general *mea culpa* for publishing articles that were then found contained several misperceptions and for not fact-checked the sources used in the articles (*The New York Times*, 2004). Especially relevant, is the case of the article that contained the alleged information that the Iraqi government had at disposal aluminium tubes that were supposedly being used in the manufacture of nuclear weapons was leaked by The

New York Times and then used by the Bush Administration as a justification to be used during the securitization process (Gordon and Miller, 2002; Loewenstein, 2004). Similarly, The Washington Post "ran more than 140 stories on its front page promoting the war, while contrary information got lost" (Mitchell, 2017). Also, in this case, the observations of the case study support the propaganda model assumptions. In particular, the presence of patriotism within the news media leads them to support and fall behind the government. However, not all of them were a demonstration of patriotism as the economic preponderance and the ultimate aim of profiting was also a possible explication for some of the news media. As one correspondent for The Washington Post was quoted saying, "there was an attitude among editors: Look, we're going to war, why do we even worry about all the contrary stuff?" (Mitchell, 2017).

In sum, following the propaganda model assumptions, it is possible to say that the US news media in the case of the invasion of Iraq tended to follow the interest of the securitizing actor, i.e. the Bush administration. The support towards the securitizing actor can be seen from the high positivity framing of the administration sources and the wide majority of governmental quotations, that can be reconducted to the inequality of wealth and power for the access to the media resources. Besides, the presence of a wide misperception between the audience shows that the agency of the news media and its character of 'watchdog' of the political debate is putting aside by the economic preponderance and the interest of supporting the domestic powers that characterise the propaganda model. Considering the build-up for the invasion of Iraq within the securitization concept it is clear that it can be contemplated as a successful securitization move. Thus, the role of the news media can be positioned to play the role of the functional actor as it helped the securitizing actor in persuading the audience in accepting the securitization move. Therefore, the results and observations from

the other studies demonstrate that the propaganda model best captures the role of the news media within the securitization process.

Conclusion

In conclusion, with this thesis, my principal aim is to affirm that it is relevant to include the news media within the securitization concept by integrating the concepts and the models from the media studies. In specific, in this thesis with the case study of the securitization of the Iraq issues by the Bush administration, the model that best captures the media's role is the propaganda model.

A critical viewpoint of the analysis is that it would have been more accurate to comprise a critical case to test what would have happened with a case of failed securitization. This to see if the impact and influence of the news media would have changed. In discussion with my choice of only focusing on the traditional news media, namely newspaper articles, and TV coverage, it would have been interesting to further develop the thesis by analysing the interactive and social media. In this way, it would have been possible to analyse how different the impact on the securitization process and the influence on the audiences were in confront of the traditional media. Furthermore, it would have been interesting to test if the propaganda model will affect also the interactive and social media behaviour. Meaning if they will follow and support the domestic powers or if they will be more prone to contest them.

Moreover, with the contribution of this thesis I also want to emphasize the possibility to apply the integration of the media studies to the securitization concept and the relevancy of the news media to the other security sectors, such as the securitization of the environment or the social sector.

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