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**Securitizing Culture: Normative Behavior
and the US Central Intelligence Agency in
the Global War on Terror**

Diplomová práce

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Abstrakt

Tato monografie se soustředí na průzkum zpravodajských služeb ve Spojených státech z konstruktivistického hlediska s cílem porozumět domácí bezpečnostní politice aplikované na mezinárodní hrozby. Výzkumné otázky se zabývají schopností Ústřední zpravodajské služby Spojených států efektivně použít kontroverzní taktiky, jako je zadržení bez soudního řízení a zastrasování během výslechu, ve společnosti zastávající zásady liberální demokracie – tedy takové, která by měla lidská práva spíše upřednostňovat, než je porušovat. Vystávají zde dva hlavní pojmy: bezpečnostní opatření jako zásadní článek společnosti (jako produkt) a bezpečnostní opatření jako subjektivní počín (jako proces). Tato práce tedy zpracuje pojmy Národní bezpečnostní kultury a zabezpečení jako produkt a proces, s použitím výslechů osob podezřelých z terorismu jako příklad. Bazální výsledky dokládají, že normy, pravidla a kultura národní bezpečnosti zpracovány pomocí identity a jazyka pomáhají stanovit intersubjektivní kontext nezbytný pro úspěšné zajištění bezpečnosti. Empirické závěry ukazují, že techniky zdokonaleného výslechu, tajně praktikované během Globální války proti teroru, byly představeny jako nové standardy díky úspěšnému zajištění bezpečnosti. Avšak tyto standardy též zápasily se splynutím mezi pravidla právě kvůli kulturnímu produktu užitému během posilování bezpečnosti – ve skutečnosti samotné metody výslechu byly nazývány jako „mírné mučení“ s cílem vyvážit převládající výklad normativního chování ve Spojených státech.

Klíčová slova

národní bezpečnostní kultura; normy; pravidla; kultura; identita; jazyk; sekuritizace; intersubjektivita; Ústřední zpravodajská služba

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Abstract

This monograph attempts to explore the system the intelligence community in the US from a constructivist perspective to understand domestic security policy as applied to international threats. The research questions examine how the US Central Intelligence Agency is able to functionally employ controversial tactics such as coercive interrogations and extrajudicial detention within a society that represents liberal normative democracy – one that in theory should prefer to uphold norms of human rights rather than infringe upon them. There appear to be two main concepts at play: security as an underlying culture (as a product) and security as a subjective act (as a process). Thus, this work will apply concepts of National Security Culture and securitization as product and process, respectively, using interrogations of suspected terrorists as a case example. The underlying results show that norms, rules, and culture of national security, utilized through identity and language, help determine the intersubjective context necessary for successful securitization. Empirical results show that techniques of enhanced interrogation, practiced furtively during the Global War of Terror, were introduced as new norms due to successful securitization. However, these same norms struggled to coalesce as rules due to the very cultural product used during securitization – in fact, even the interrogation techniques themselves were applied as a distinct “torture lite” to compensate for dominant interpretations of US normative behavior.

Keywords

National Security Culture; norms; rules; culture; identity; language; securitization; intersubjectivity; Central Intelligence Agency

Length of the work: 171,934 characters, including spaces

Prohlášení

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3. Souhlasím s tím, aby práce byla zpřístupněna pro studijní a výzkumné účely.

V Praze dne 13. května 2016

Filip Svítek

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Introduction

“The ultimate dilemma of the statesman is to strike a balance between values and interests and, occasionally, between peace and justice. The dichotomy postulated by many between morality and interest, between idealism and realism, is one of the standard clichés of the ongoing debate over international affairs. No such stark choice is, in fact, available. Excessive ‘realism’ produces stagnation; excessive ‘idealism’ leads to crusades and eventual disillusionment.”

(Kissinger 2002: 286)

The basis of this work involves a reaction to the apparent lack of historically consistent theoretical foundation in international relations. Where the two main theories, those of (neo)realism and (neo)liberalism, tend to ebb and flow, constructivism emerges as a useful perspective to explain why there might be uncertainty in the world. Anarchy, in essence, dictates neither a prescription for action, nor does anarchy necessarily allow for unrestrained behavior (Wendt 1992). Because humans are social creatures, their sociological interactions – not just between themselves, but with their environments – are an important foundation in the building of historical philosophies and the accumulated perspectives of mankind. This is the essence of the following work, and it relies heavily on scholars such as Peter J. Katzenstein, Alexander Wendt, Friedrich Kratochwil, Alastair Iain Johnston, Samuel P. Huntington, David Campbell, Thierry Balzacq, Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde and to a lesser, but still influential extent, on scholars such as Jonathan Mercer, Michael Desch, Nicolas Onuf, Colin Gray, Elizabeth Kier, Roland Paris, and Martha Finnemore with Kathryn Sikkink.

This work will attempt to bridge two conceptual ideas – National Security Culture (NSC) and securitization – into a coherent representation of how threats are processed in the intelligence community of the US. For international security, the *actual* dispersion of power matters less than the *perceived* interpretations by states. A state will act on what it thinks, transposing ideational concepts into reality. It can think “realist” or it can think “liberalist”, it can function as a neutral entity or a rogue state, or through any other self-constructed channels. Limits of a state are its own.

Constructing these perspectives is done through the ongoing process of norms, rules, culture, and identity – NSC. Conceptions of NSC, in a polished “product” form, then allow for the subjective interpretation of threats to these ideas, and thus to calls for their defense – securitization. This analysis proceeds as follows. First, NSC is deconstructed by definition with a focus on US interests, and then again reconstructed through its three main pillars: norms, rules, and culture. This process results in the product of identity. Identity is then explored as the functional element bridging NSC – through language – with the process of securitization. The goals and threats in securitization are then explored, especially through concepts of intersubjectivity and speech acts. Finally, the importance of societal and political sectors of security are connected with the case study, an empirical investigation of the interrogation methods of the US Central Intelligence Agency.

Much of the following work is constructivist-based – following a theory of malleable, socially constructed agency. The theory in general counters both (neo)realism and (neo)liberalism, and provides a middle ground for discussion; it emphasizes ideas, language, social interaction, change, collective identity, shared context, different meanings, beliefs, subjectivity, and exclusivity. The main tenets abstain from a structure-orientated analysis, and provide foundation for focus at the group-unit level – especially through identity and interest exploration. States privilege not just survival, but the survival of their way of life. These identities and interests are not given by nature, but instead formed from human thought and conceptualization. They are alterable, and go beyond stone-cast ideas of materialism and self-interested, even rational, power. Instead, nation-states nurture identities and adapt interests. This process of socialization in fact socially constructs a new rationality, one that uses subjective objectives. Ideas, along with perceptions and interpretations, play a major role. Communication spreads these ideas imperfectly, and they can be manipulated through social interaction. To simplify: ideational terms dictate the social condition of the state, while materialistic motives are of social conditioning (Wendt 1992; Mercer 1995; Katzenstein 1996; Desch 1998; Campbell 1998).

1.1 Methodology

The methodology employed in this paper is exploratory and interpretive. Focus rests on the social aspects of ideational orientation, from a collective (i.e. non-individualist) constructivist perspective. Ultimately, analysis relies on choice and changes, constrained by self-imposed ideals of culture. In short, the orienting framework is based on what ideas states have, and the agency of actors in using these ideas. The framework provides much substance, but less in the way of causal determinism. The concepts used supplement – but do not supplant – traditional theories such as realism and liberalism. While analysis also borrows from poststructuralist (or rather critical, radical constructivist) ideas, especially on discourse, the framework attempts to help bridge the divide between positivist approaches, with reflectivist-as-positivist empirics. In other words, the highly subjective nature of international relations is so entrenched, it becomes objective reality. The proceeding analysis attempts to clarify this claim, and by doing so, identify the characteristics of what comprises these objective realities. This approach blends rational and irrational ontology, as a sort of “nonrational” meaning (Suchman and Eyre 1992: 157). The level of analysis is state-based and state-group-based (e.g. the CIA) – while individuals and the international system have an impact on state preferences, ultimately it is the state that is making the decisions. Because “anarchy is what *states* make of it” (Wendt 1992: 395; emphasis altered), state perceptions play the largest role.

The approach rests on a teleological view of identity – that there is intrinsic value in the process of identity formation and maintenance. Analysis rests on a social ontology – the creation of social facts via national security – and on a social epistemology – answering for “whom particular forms of knowledge are for, and what function they serve in supporting the interests of those people or groups” (Mutimer 2010: 64) during securitization. Analytically seated in-between the individual and structural levels of analysis from a societal perspective, the ontology, at times critical, confirms the importance of ideas as foundational to global security;

the epistemological approach in this analysis relies on interpreting from a reflectivist viewpoint, and limits empirics to a subjective understanding – though this subjectivity is engrained within actors as an objective understanding. Discursive politics play a role in analysis of the formation of both national security culture and, more importantly, in securitization. This method, while allowing for various meanings, can ultimately be traced to determine – though has limits causally linking – policy choices. Concepts such as context and preferences, based on identity, are key. Ultimately, this analysis attempts to bridge national security culture and securitization in a two-step process, integrating interconceptionalization of culture (such as through intertextuality) and intersubjectivity of securitization in a reductionist approach to international security. The mechanism that is used as a bridge between national security culture and securitization is identity (and the corresponding language). These two concepts, plus the bridging process, are applied to a single exploratory case study – the interrogation practices of the US Central Intelligence Agency.

This case study provides insight from the perspective of a unique American institution integral to US security. It fulfills the who, what, when, where, why, and how questions of research analysis – respectively, that the CIA uses identity during the GWOT in the US (and its interests abroad) to combat insecurity through securitization. The case is typical, as opposed to critical or revelatory, and is used “to shed light upon the logic of a given phenomenon [e.g. culture]. The conclusions drawn from typical cases are informative about the processes [i.e. securitization] analyzed” (Balzacq 2011b: 34). The case study was chosen due to its depth, importance, and relevance to current obsessions with national security and terror since 2001. The overriding characteristics are interpretation and perspective, and not tautological: “from the point of view of absolute truth a cube or a circle are invariable geometrical figures, rigorously defined by certain formulas. From the point of view of the impression they make on our eye these geometrical figures may assume very varied shapes. By perspective the cube may be transformed into a pyramid or a square, the circle into an ellipse or a straight line” (Le Bon 2001: 5).

Though, naturally, many documents remain classified and prevent an all-encompassing analysis, blocking a full view of the cube or the circle, other reports, reviews, statements, laws, and other sources, provide sufficient empirics to assemble a largely complete picture of the internal machinations of the CIA with regard to national security.

One notable shortcoming of this methodology lies in over-expansive definitions of security culture. This analysis amalgamates numerous independent variables and tends to bury any potential dependent variable. Needless to say, this process obfuscates falsification. Testing a research thesis is thus impractical, and therefore only research questions are raised, more to explore the concepts than to theorize. Another issue is the fundamental fact that, by definition, cultures are unique. Thus by trying to assign some sort of explanatory value to a particular national security culture, results are not applicable to other cases. The “independent explanatory power” of culture is difficult to prove (Desch 1998: 170). Finally, the double hermeneutic creates true problems in objectively categorizing subjective values; the Archimedean point lies in mapping the intersubjective understandings of reality as objective. This, however, only supports the underlying concept that international actors often risk conflict over misperception and misunderstanding. Considering both consistency and change, national security culture and securitization, product and process: “‘History’ is now able to enter the picture and it matters because, different from the old ontology, change can now be conceived as ‘path-dependent’ development, even as an evolution, or in the form of radical historicity and not only as contingency or decay impairing true knowledge” (Kratochwil 2007: 13). Rather than spatial questions of material interest, analysis can focus temporally on where a state and its corresponding identity lies on its path in time.

1.2 Operationalization

Two main tenets of social epistemology are key in measuring variables of security: that of semantics, and of social structures – together as socialization. The opinion

holds that, while natural sciences may confirm or deny the existence of a material object, social sciences measure through interaction and adaptation, constantly taking stock of shifts and changing shapes. This does not negate the conclusion, however, that at any one point in time perceptions exist, and these perceptions are real and can be documented. Using a constructivist (and, to a limited extent, critical or poststructuralist) lens, this analysis establishes the social dimension that is distinctive from positivist materialism. Interpretative ontology and representative epistemological are important assumptions. The logic of statistical measurement is forgone, while instead, analysis offers reflectivist insight into states' policy behavior throughout time. As a “cultural theory,” the characteristics of national security culture and the process of securitization are qualitative. The discursive analysis focuses on official public documents, mostly from government and media sources, which use language that comes from cultural values as expressed in projections of identity – these projections are evident in the language used. Discursive philosophy in norm, rule, and culture formation lays the foundation for the creation of a non-discursive, sociological identity. This identity is then used as a socializing philosophy. Both *what is being said* and *how it is being said* affect policy.

There are three main qualitative methods used in this paper: discourse analysis, process-tracing, and content analysis. The former is used during analysis of the concept of National Security Culture – the inductive process that “map[s] the emergence of patterns of representation” (Balzacq 2011b: 39). This process produces a product of culture. Process-tracing involves taking this product in its (tentatively) finalized form – identity – and locates how language prepares and transforms meanings for a certain purpose. The philosophical “what is said” transforms into the sociological “how it is said” through methods other than discourse, such as procedure (e.g. policy-making). The process-tracing involved does not identify a causal link per se, but reinforces the notion that National Security Culture is a necessary but not sufficient independent variable. The content analysis portion takes the independence of National Security Culture, and superimposes the process of securitization. In other words, it is a deductive procedure that analyzes

how agents can manipulate meaning using the “truth” of National Security Culture. A major research question explored is how norms (that is, US structure) connect with agents (that is, CIA agency) (Checkel 1998). Or, in other words, how does shared meaning allow for action?

Empirical data draws from primary sources such as US national security strategies, the USA Patriot Act, the USA Freedom Act, US Congressional reports such as “The 9/11 Commission Report,” “The Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction,” and the “Committee Study of the Central Intelligence Agency’s Detention and Interrogation Program”, the charter of the US Central Intelligence Agency and other founding documents, as well as the official agency website, in addition to secondary sources such as media reports, among other discursive sources documenting US President George W. Bush’s Global War on Terror since 2001, and the UN Convention against Torture and similar other declarations. The research strategy attempts to document social structures apparent in these sources, highlight correlations between the social reality and state interests, and explore the discourse of new normative tendencies (Checkel 1998). Overall, the causal linkage is tenuous but the employed operationalization allows for measurement of “degrees of congruity” within a “network of causality” (Balzacq 2005: 192). Future research can strengthen the following study both by utilizing additional cases, as well as by considering alternative theoretical explanations.

2. NATIONAL SECURITY CULTURE

“The democratic faith that lies at the base of everything we cherish is the overriding law of American policy both at home and abroad. We cannot surrender our belief in the equal dignity of little nations without, in the end, abandoning our belief in the equal dignity of men. We will, if we have to, resist to the death the effort to subvert the world to a totalitarian despotism, but we will not bargain with it at the expense of other people and to the destruction of that sense of human integrity and national morality which is part of the substance of our very being.”

(Tannenbaum 1952: 197)

National Security Culture (NSC), in short, determines preferences of action. Variations on the concept have been established from Thucydides, Sun Tzu, Carl von Clausewitz, to Jack Snyder who coined the similar term of “strategic culture” by propounding a Soviet nuclear culture in the 1970s. Four types of cultural analysis currently exist: organizational, political, strategic, and global (Desch 1998: 142). Space constraints do not allow the exploration of each individually here – instead, this analysis amalgamates the bunch as the organization of political strategy from a global perspective. These cultures, as a group, can be considered as NSC by including the integration of specific elements into society in response to a threat, especially by using identity (e.g. the “goodness” of Self) and language (e.g. the “badness” of the Other) as a response to international threats. NSC is constructed of “codes, rules, recipes, and assumptions which impose a rough order on conceptions” (Johnston 1995: 45). What Thierry Balzacq (2005; 2011a; 2011b) often labels as context, habitus, or dispositif – or the ideas that give meaning to and control action – are important loci that determine the functioning mechanism within NSC. NSC helps determine order, ideas of causality, and issues of trust, limiting action as a sort of “mind set” used “instrumentally to eliminate alternative institutions, ideologies or behaviors from the body politic” (Johnston 1995: 45). NSC, as a politico-sociological perspective, is a main tenet of international relations. While simultaneously accepting certain premises of both structural neorealism (such as the rational egoism of states) and neoliberal institutionalism (such as the power of institutions to dictate state policy), NSC also relaxes the realist focus on material power and liberalist focus on institutional constraints. Blending the two creates an environment of states that operate beyond physical capability and integrate the impact of institutions on states’ interests and identities (Katzenstein 1996: 8-9).

NSC constructs, through social process, an assortment of invaluable norms, rules, and culture – in other words, identity – for a state. These ideals are protected values, supported by the state and its domestic constituents. Fundamentally, they are protected domestically, but states seek domestic protection by applying them internationally. Without a strong national security projected throughout the

international realm, states face threats impinging on their own identity. If the US, for example, did not push its own NSC outward, it would risk facing competing NSC elements from foreign powers in the homeland, constructing threats such as a modern day Soviet apparatus determined to infiltrate society (X [Kennan] 1947). The front line, to be effective, is thus drawn as far as possible from vital interests. The stronger the power, the more capably a state can remove itself from the constructed threat. In the US example, NSC is most active at approximately halfway across the globe – through action in the Middle East, on the European-Russian border, in Asia, and the like. NSC determines internal priorities and “either presents decision-makers with [a] limited range of options or it acts as a lens that alters the appearance and efficacy of different choices” (Johnston 1995: 42), binding actors into choosing between a limited number of options. These options, once activated, are implemented by the state bureaucracy and enforced by security services such as, in the US Central Intelligence Agency and many others.

2.1 Norms

Norms answer the questions: “Who are we; what do we do?” A state will use norms to explain itself both to internal audiences and provides a glimpse of internal mechanisms for other external audiences to understand. Constructing norms is a political process; two states attempting to establish dominance of their own norms over the other’s can produce conflict. Norms within an established identity (elaborated on later) can show *who we are* (as “constitutive effects”) and *how we should act* (as “regulative effects”) (Katzenstein 1996), as well as acting as “prescriptive” indicators (Finnemore 1998: 891) – this analysis conflates the three, as norms in general constitute identity, regulate behavior through rules, and evaluate the legitimacy of potential future action from a cultural standpoint. For example, the US maintains, with indisputable superiority, a fleet of ten active aircraft carrier groups, five times the size of next largest fleet. This fleet is not a pragmatic answer to security concerns. The fleet works normatively as a construction of an important identity-based social norm: in this example, superpower status.

Constructed norms show the projection of a carefully calculated effectual capital, what a state represents, what it expects, and how it might act – in the aircraft carrier case, readiness for forward deployment and global military dominance to maintain international political and economic security in the interest of the US. This projection represents the ideals of the projecting state, and the normative effect of a superpower state is especially influential. Because of the power of perception, ideational concepts such as “prestige, rather than power, is the everyday currency in international relations” (Gilpin 1981: 30-31). The building of prestige, the result of a carefully calibrated (and often materially expensive) social construction sets the stage for what might be allowed or forbidden in international affairs, in the same way that other countries might choose to invest in nuclear weapons not because of what they can *do* but because of what they *mean*. Likewise, even on the other hand, norm conformance to nuclear non-proliferation norms can be of self-interested motivation, if a state calculates higher benefits from complying to norms rather than disrupting the system (Finnemore 1998: 912). Norms can also be obeyed for intrinsic, and not instrumental reasons – for reasons of desirability or appropriateness based on what is evaluated (subjectively) as “good” through a “logic of appropriateness” (March and Olsen 1998). Ideas, especially those behind the identifying choices a state makes in the international system, dominant.

Norms thus translate with vigor across international boundaries, and have the ability to project the certain countenance of identity simply by existing. Norms create context. Where and how they are applied depends on a state’s NSC. While the Kosovars (of Europe) challenged the status quo in the late 1990s, they were labeled as “freedom fighters” by the West; when Chechens attempted a similar push for independence, the label became “rebels” or “militants” (Kissinger 2002: 257). In similar circumstances norms will operate in defense of real (i.e. perceived) national interests. The same norms can be vigorously applied – such as human rights – or they can be ignored, depending on how a state views the situation. Norms can be created, and also rejected, with relative ease. Even so-called universal principles cannot be applied without constructing consensus. Groups, such as within the US

intelligence community, act as active “norm entrepreneurs” (Finnemore 1998: 896), encouraging new norms within contextual environments to create consensus and promote objectives in support of national security. New norms compete with old norms in a political process involving domestic, or international, coalitions (Katzenstein 1996). But norms are only the perceptible waves of a deep ocean of social structure (Le Bon 2001: 6). To help legitimize a set of subjective norms, a league deeper under the waves, actors tend to create a system of rules to solidify impact.

2.2 Rules

Rules answer the question: “Why does it matter who we are?” International rules, often reinforced by both customary and traditional law, shape expectations in a more coercive way. Nicholas Onuf (2014: 1-2) calls rules “norms...by another name.” A distinction involves applicability: whereas norms constitute characteristics of an actor, rules regulate conduct and constitute the environment, not the actor. In society, “men are ruled by ideas, sentiments, and customs – matters which are of the essence of ourselves. Institutions and laws are the outward manifestation of our character, the expression of its needs” (Le Bon 2001). A state can and does create norms that it then translates, through rules, how a state *might* act into how it *must* act to achieve certain results (or avoid punishments). Rules help institutionalize norms, where identity takes precedence over interests; the consequence is not as important as the motivation (March and Olsen 1998). In their legal form, states make rules into laws, but countries also use or follow rules to reinforce legitimacy. The more important a normative tendency, the more indoctrination and rule-based procedure such as policy-making and -implementation exists. The assumption follows that states operate less in an environment of anarchy than in a system of self-imposed limitations; the US is bound not only by its own domestic rules but also by a tacit, international set that moderates (whether effectively or not will later be explored) its actions. This system is reinforced by communication that either asserts, requests, or promises certain action (Onuf 2014: 4). Agents act in

accordance with rules based on who they are (“status”), how powerful they are (“rank”), or how influential they can be (“role”) (Onuf 2014) – the same way that, in a functioning judicial system, a police officer, a judge, and a president, respectively, are organized. As information moves up, directives move down. For example, with an individual or organization breaking the rules, a police man would assert the power to detain, a judge would request (or demand) a sentence, all based on a president’s promise to support certain legislation. Agency gives each assigned agent the right to act on the agreed rules, and functions least controversially in a democratic society because the majority has a voice. Legal rules support the adherence to norms under state penalty.

Morality also plays a large role in the construction of rules. A rule-setting state often believes it has the moral imperative to share its norms with other, “lesser” states – major ideologies such as imperialism, communism, and capitalism are useful examples. Ideas of what is right or wrong (or better or worse), result in states acting on their beliefs. NSC in particular relies on audiences accepting the idea that their own states have the right idea and are worth protecting – that people value the identity they are party to, such that: “...every country, including [the US], remains a special place to its own citizens. In a world that is still heavily armed, highly volatile and increasingly complex, our instinctive obligations of national self-preservation and self-esteem require us to secure before all else the survival of our own nation's independence, institutions and inhabitants” (Sorenson 1990: 3). Democratic states have relatively effective mechanisms for integrating public feedback in rule formation, but even authoritarian states are careful to build a circle with enough consenting members to sustain power, or else face a coup d’état, revolution, or other dispersion of state. These “standards of appropriateness” (Katzenstein 1996: 14) can change, and historically the world has seen major shifts. Conceptions of morality, and the corresponding rules employed, often can change within one generation. Interpretations of normative values make rules, but interpretations change.

2.3 Culture

Culture answers the question: “Who have we been in the past?” Peter J. Katzenstein (1996: 4) defines culture as “collective models of nation-state authority or identity, carried by custom or law.” Alastair Iain Johnston (1995: 45) defines strategic culture – a subset of NSC – as symbolic language and argument that create an “aura of factuality.” Culture is emotional and collective; culture is ideational, domestic, and emphasizes “uniqueness” (Desch 1998: 149). Culture is the fully institutionalized identity of an actor represented by tradition, and often rule of law or morality, and gives life to the search for meaning. Culture is the epistemological approach to reality of a nation (Geertz 1973). Culture, broadly, is comprised of “collectively shared systems of meanings” (Risse 2000: 5). Answers to the cultural question are impacted by concepts of philosophy and politics that were formed over time. Culture is often made up of semi-conscious or unconscious assumptions, defining the environment, “enabling individuals to make much out of little” (Wildavsky 1985: 95). Culture is a “system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life” (Geertz 1973: 89). And societal groups utilize culture implicitly, as “every organization has a culture; that is, a persistent, patterned way of thinking about the central tasks of and human relationships within an organization” (Wilson 1991: 91). Culture, built over time, is largely unacknowledged and internalized in the domestic realm, manifesting itself sporadically as a small, even, and international output through grandiose statements or actions of self-affirmation. The properties of culture are transitive and dynamic, though at any one point they can be considered objective variables. Culture is historical, as well as a method to reinforce a state’s subjective historicity. Variations in culture also complicate the practice of norms. For example, though both the US and Europe strongly endorse human rights as normative culture, the US reserves the right to employ capital punishment as a normative distinction from its European allies.

As with every mindset, subdivisions are possible. According to Johnston (1995: 44, 45): “Dominant subcultures can impose cultural forms on other groups, manipulate them, or convince other subcultures that these dominant cultural forms are in fact their own forms...in so far as culture affects behavior, it does so by limiting options and by affecting how members of these cultures learn from interaction with the environment. Multiple cultures can exist within one social entity (community, organization, state, etcetera), but there is a generally dominant culture whose holders are interested in preserving the status quo.” These subcultures can be useful to justify broader ideas, or mask unsavory preferences. For example, religion can be a dominant cultural system but breaks down into separate compartments; Christianity is a subcultural attribute for the majority (approximately 70%) of the population in the US. Subcultures help institutionalize and protect the dominant culture, focusing on “domestic security before external security – without the former there is no need to worry about the latter” (Kier 1996: 93). The special privilege given to subcultures such as intelligence communities, especially in the US, is that they exist to protect internal security *through* external security – an expansive subculture created solely to preserve the entire NSC system. As a unique subculture, the US Central Intelligence Agency, for example, is thus given greater leeway and more open avenues for pursuing objectives. Political cultures further socialize subcultures through shared experiences and language (Lantis 2002). While these subcultures can be deemed strategic in nature, they are still held accountable to overall NSC. The subcultures are means to an end; culture is an end in itself. Because the intelligence community in the US is manifestation of a cultural subculture, it helps develop new norms. It also works to instigate a new set of rules to protect the updated norms. If these norms and rules hold, the (sub)culture has shifted – often in response to a perceived external shock. Meanwhile: “the culture of an organization shapes its members’ perceptions and affects what they notice and how they interpret it: it screens out some parts of reality while magnifying others” (Kier 1995: 69). While an individual actor (e.g. a government) does not “own” culture, it participates in it as a process with collective society. This process – starting with subcultures introducing norms – ultimately gives an institution (e.g.

that same government) the cultural basis and corresponding power to securitize issues of national interest.

The idea of culture borrows from institutional context as a social determinant (Katzenstein 1996). In other words, the political context limits behavior, blinding societies to a universal reality and focusing on specific, subjective problems, as well as what might be appropriate solutions (Johnston 1995). Institutions and organizations, in this context, do not just produce regimes of norms and rules, but act as active cultural units in their own right. Governments can create an agency, while the same agency can reappropriate perspective and pressure the same governments – or domestic populations – into considering a shift in values. This process morphs into political action facilitated through communication. Of course a nation does not need to abide by the rules it instigated. Again as an example, the US supports human rights and has institutionalized the concept, meanwhile the nation itself is consistently battling its own soft-power creation, such as citing human rights abuses to others but strategically ignoring violations. The US has also adapted a unique view on human rights in regard to its detainees in Guantánamo Bay detention center. Discourse allows “statesmen and societies [to] actively shape the lessons of the past in ways they find convenient” (Snyder 1991: 30).

2.4 Using norms, rules, and culture to define the national interest

National (or sovereign) interests involve protecting the territory, continuity, and belonging of a society from threatening elements of a social world. National interest, and by extension foreign policy, produces boundaries (Campbell 1998). These interests manifest themselves with labels such as citizenship and ethnicity: “very much a response to the need for identity” (Roe 2010: 168). These modern values – in particular – have themselves been constructed out of “universal” values, as part of a state’s identity (Kier 1995); sovereignty itself is not a permanent fact in international affairs and can be remodeled throughout time (Katzenstein 1996). Since the Treaty of Westphalia, however, the sovereign state as supreme actor has

taken precedence and continues to dominate – though it is increasingly contested by non-state groups. The triumph in international relations of Western states – especially the US – has propagated Western beliefs and the world has seen a largely successful push for universal acceptance of liberal, democratic, market-based structures. Ideational factors represent the underlying motor of this emergence. As the world’s only superpower state, the US is free to cite national security and both act in the name of Westphalia and paradoxically, delegitimize it by applying its own perceptions of the “ideal” abroad, and vigorously interfere in the affairs of other states. An ideational security dilemma forms that pits US national interest against other foreign ideas of the same. This creates a “limited rationality” (Johnston 1995: 34) that promulgates what is perceived as the “one true path.” At any one moment, a state can apply what it determines to be national interest in the name of national security. The boundaries, however, are neither static nor objective. Changing national strategies is possible, and indeed does occur with all states. And while these adaptations take place, “a state’s strategic behavior is not fully responsive to others’ choices” (Johnston 1995: 34); the processing of preferences is largely internal. Nonetheless, in an increasingly globalized world, there is greater chance of external input – billiard balls that bump up against one other, but also have the power to exchange information. These values of national importance come from “the early or formative experiences of the state, and are influenced to some degree by the philosophical, political, cultural, and cognitive characteristics of the state and its elite” (Johnston 1995: 34). States, and groups within them, create what they determine to be important, situated in a world with other states that have other, self-defined interests. It is the ranking of these preferences that delineate difference – for example, one state may prefer maintaining a strong military at all cost while others may consider military objectives of only secondary importance. This creates a “common sense” of domestic state interest, establishing a naturalistic perspective by screening and limiting a channeled reality (Kier 1995: 78).

According to Peter Katzenstein (1996: 1): “security interests are defined by actors who respond to cultural factors.” Defining national interest to a domestic audience

is as important as defending it – without a self-referencing definition there would be nothing to defend. This definition is not simply a quantitative measure of national targets or resources; qualitative, interpretative principles create motivation to defend what a state values. Nation-states still seek power and wealth, but essentially to protect the individual sovereignty that secures cultural interests; constructed identity (that is, politics) and cultural-institutional context (in other words, environment) and affect policy. Social processes, political action, and power differentials contribute to how a nation creates its norms, identity, and culture (Katzenstein 1996: 3). Governing authorities in one state have a different plate of cultural choices in front of them than others. This national interest and foreign policy “emphasizes the exclusionary practices, the discourses of danger, the representations of fear, and the enumeration of threats...” (Campbell 1998: 70) that define the state. Historically, the US NSC in particular “tended to exhibit a tendency towards a sporadic, messianic and crusading use of force that was deeply rooted in the moralism of the early republic and in a fundamental belief that warfare was an aberration in human relations” (Johnston 1995: 32). Subjective beliefs in the US created an objective list of possible options, affecting its menu of action. During the Cold War, for example, the US believed: “our [US] ideas of foreign policy are part and parcel of our belief in human freedom, in the equality of men, and in the dignity and independence of nations” (Tannenbaum 1952: 194). Of course, beliefs can, and do, change, but many hold strong over long periods of time. And at any singular point in time, beliefs are real for the believer. Though perspectives might be skewed, or interpretations misinterpreted, the point stands that constructing perceptions has real results. Socially, power and agency lie in ideas.

To typologically categorize the foundation of US NSC, Donald Snow (1995: 42-64; cited in Turner 2004: 44) has identified three core influences that affect culture for the US, including a lack of developed history, geographical advantages, and Anglo-Saxon heritage. Colin Gray (1981: 24) includes the corresponding isolated nature, lack of proximate threats, consistent success in wars and frontier expansion, religious fundamentalism, and immigration as core influences on culture. Optimism

plays a large role for the US, based on decades of (mostly) overwhelming victory. These influences have a large impact on the US military, government, bureaucracy, institutions, media, and other domestic groups. Johnston (1995: 37; emphasis added) refines these characteristics into three groups: “*a macro-environmental level* consisting of geography, ethno-cultural characteristics, and history; *a societal level* consisting of social, economic, and political structures of society; and *a micro level* consisting of military institutions and characteristics of civil-military relations.” In this way, even use of force, for example, is only means to an end of a secure society – from macro- to micro-levels. Beyond physical security, force functions to protect the underlying values and sense of national security that are self-determined and ideational. A state’s leaders might risk substantial blowback in pursuing what they believe to be national interest, such as the US administration did during its Vietnam war (see 1968 Democratic National Convention riots and Citizens Commission of Inquiry on US War Crimes in Vietnam). Or leaders, even when pursuing similar tactics, might face a different reaction, such as during the US wars in Afghanistan and Iraq (as later elaborated upon). When the cost to preserve national interest, as calculated by a domestic audience, is too high, extreme measures will not be sanctioned. The projection of NSC involves the internal calculation of costs and benefits and is heavily influenced by the framing of the issue.

National interests corresponds with time, as “the phrase ‘national interest’ is itself an abstraction which contains meaning only as applied in specific instances. An assessment of what is ‘national interest’ must be made on an ad hoc basis” (Dubin 1956: 113). Contemporary idealized US interests include: free trade and competition (open sea and land trade lanes, reduction of tariffs, taxes, quotas, and subsidies, and reduction of regulation, restrictions, and monopolies); political democracy (free, fair, and open elections); rule of law (system of judicial prudence and application of justice); and good governance (corruption-free, with equal distribution of power) – all tinged with a hint of Christian moral relativism. In theory this means a liberal society based on a capitalist market economy with a conviction of moral superiority, a reflection of the historical and philosophical US

framework. Applying these formative experiences abroad is a foundational aspect of US foreign policy. When the US encounters resistance, for example, it has the power to employ coercive methods to alter rebellious behavior – strategies such as containment or intervention. But at the core, these strategies have meaning due to the domestic context given to them – compare for example, the foreign policy ramifications of action by the US versus the Islamic Republic of Iran. There are socially associated meanings attached to every national interest, in the same way there are social meanings and social objectives attached to weapons (Suchman and Eyre 1992). In terms of ideational preservation, a state will use its ideas of security to maintain the status quo both at home and abroad. Major (perceived) external threats, or attacks, provide windows to change ideational values.

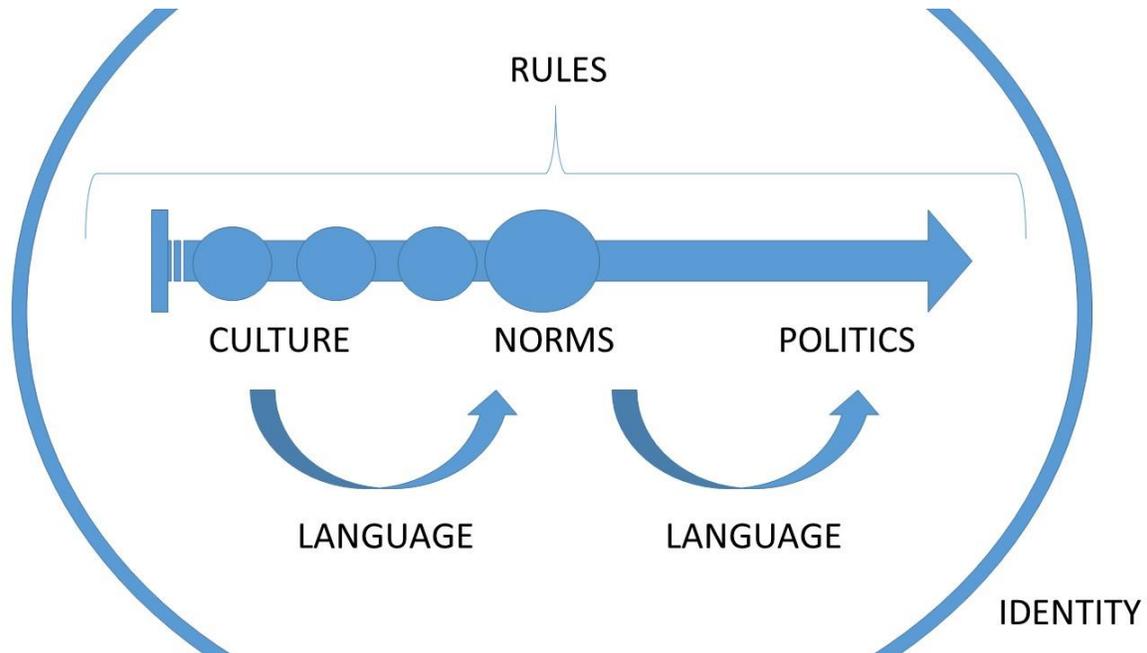
Cultural concepts of national interest can vary widely on a state-by-state basis. Confucian societies in Asia, for example, stress authority, hierarchy, consensus, “saving face,” and state privilege above society and society above the individual (Huntington 1998: 225). Internationally, there are various cultures and each one has unique history and philosophies. Each state builds its own norms, rules, and thus culture. The four core cultural concepts in the US are liberty, equality, democracy, and individualism. These values have been debated, fought over, revised, resisted – only over time have they been ingrained in their present form. Over time, these traits have built systemic assumptions, and in turn influence the understanding of current environments (e.g. assumptions about war, threats, security, etcetera). The norms that have survived by ingraining themselves in culture are able to later reappear as a cultural response to deal with a new environment, that is, “business as usual.” In understanding an international actor, whether friend or foe, the distinctiveness of cultural difference factors largely into calculations of how the actor might act or think. On a domestic level, audiences tend to focus less on external cultures, and more on the development of their own – these developments tend to be implicit. However, national shocks – often from abroad – have the power to catalyze the major shifts in norms that can then be institutionalized and change culture. Cultural shocks can be large (e.g. 1962 Cuban

missile crisis) or relatively small (e.g. 1979 Iranian revolution), but they have lasting effects on state behavior. The attacks on Pearl Harbor in 1941 shocked the US out of isolation and, arguably, shifted the country into decades of interventionism – from West Germany, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, areas throughout Latin America and Africa, Yugoslavia, and beyond. The 11 September attacks produced another major cultural shock and a new threat. To respond, organizations within the US perceived the need for new normative tools.

Actors and institutions eventually solidify the collective ideas of state – made up of norms, rules, and culture – into an identity, a bottom-up formation, through national historical experience and experimentation. And universally recognized identity is essential to a state’s existence. Even small countries like Singapore – that have successfully created their collective identity, institutionally recognized– can flourish as sovereign states. According to Katzenstein (1996: 13): “The domestic and international environments of states have effects; they are the arenas in which actors contest norms and through political and social processes construct and reconstruct identities.” Temporary norms, made into rules, evolve into culture. A social environment then continually forces actors to adjust their norms, redefining interests or affecting strategic behavior not just from their own perspectives, but because of external factors. Not only are choices influenced, but a major reinterpretation and readjustment of norms (and rules and culture) is possible. But the ideational starting point – NSC as a product – is the basis of each state’s milieu, a packaged culture that a nation-state can represent symbolically to the world. This representation is visualized in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1

Ideational National Security Culture (NSC) as a product



source: Author's conception

3. Identity

“...the crucial question is not to establish whether interests prevail over identities and norms or whether identities and norms prevail over interests. What matters is how identities and norms influence the ways in which actors define their interests in the first place.”

(Katzenstein 1996: 15)

Identity answers the dual essentialist questions: “Who are we; who are we not?” These questions are an amalgamation of the previous questions of norms, rules, and culture – a holistic answer to what a state does, why it matters what it does, and what it has done in the past. The norms of a nation-state identify its particular characteristics through repetition. This repetition institutionalizes through rules and solidifies through culture over time – a “historic personality” (Tannenbaum 1952: 177). This entire process can be considered as identity formation. Identity, of

a nation-state for example, is thus formed and not given or dictated. Defined internally, a nation-state focuses on its “nationhood” (i.e. nationalism); defined externally, a nation-state focuses on its “statehood” (Katzenstein 1996). But internal definitions lack contrast. An individual (or group) is unique because there are others not like it. Sociological history has shown us a series of dichotomies in the search of the self-reference. Without alter, there is no ego; without the Other, there is no Self. Politically, this means utilizing norms and counter-norms to establish a “normal” state, as well as “normal” priorities. Collective groups form, based on a trusting relationship, and tend to expel the subjective. Organizations simplify concepts by eliminating subjective, grey areas, and provide a gathering point for individual subgroups unified towards a common purpose – subduing, dominating, or eradicating opposing views in Manichean fashion. For example, since the US believes that “‘good’ causes tend to triumph – and Americans only wage war in ‘good’ causes” (Gray 1981: 26), the evil enemy can be labeled “bad” and be (righteously) destroyed. Defining national security in this way can lead to an identity crisis in national security – not from threats but from the *lack* of a threatening other. US national security interests after the Cold War faced ambiguity during realignment (Katzenstein 1996). In this way, identity has a tendency to cast others as dark and evil, while presuming internal members as morally right and good through zero-sum narrative relationships. A simple way for leaders to do this is to invoke historical antecedents, which can be misleading since “there is a strong tendency in all historiography to glorify the national past, and in popular presentations that tendency takes on the aspects of the jingoist whitewash” (Morgenthau 1952: 970). Invoking past triumphs within a group is an efficient way of bonding an inclusive identity. Concepts such as terrorism, just like any nation-state, can threaten this bond. In fact, the limited resources of a terrorist organization make threatening the glory and identity of a state its most effective weapon. It cannot succeed in military, economic, or political dominance, so a terrorist attacks identity. Depending on how the victim reacts in the long term, united or disparate, will affect its success in defeating the organization. Many terrorist groups can act like this for decades – if

the resisting group can survive without giving in to demands is a question of identity cohesion. Audiences play a large factor.

Identifying labels are inescapable and inherent in a social world. But the bipolarity of identities are also dynamic and can change in a meaningful way. When Thomas Hobbes privileged good, sane, sober, modest, and civilized people, he simultaneously excluded the bad, insane, drunk, arrogant, savage other; the claim that life is “solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short” (Hobbes 1968: 186) implies the existence of a possible life that is social, rich, kind, pacific, and long(er). A series of dichotomies illustrates the spectrum: subject/object, inside/outside, self/other, rational/irrational, true/false, and others. While the former are internalized and idealized, the latter represent threats to identity: “the outcome of this is that boundaries are constructed, spaces demarcated, standards of legitimacy incorporated, interpretations of history privileged, and alternatives marginalized” (Campbell 1998: 65; 68). The protection of an established identity requires the co-establishment of boundaries that outline where concepts of identity lie, and where they may change. This representation is subjective, and can lead to overlapping claims to action over what two or more states may determine to be their own separate sphere of influence. Like geographical borders, borders of identity can cause conflict; this also creates ambiguity. Unlike geographical borders, there are no roadmaps for identity. And these borders are constantly in a state of transition as an “unnatural” boundary, i.e. a socially constructed concept. By fostering a certain identity, a state also creates the inherent threat of loss of identity. An extreme example, a nationalist identity, shows how a government works to persuade its citizens that they are in a constant state of existential crisis – losing identity leads to loss of purpose, in this case more important than life. Identity tends to persecute outsiders, even during contemporary idealization of democracy or human rights: “historically, the dictatorship of the virtuous has often led to inquisitions and even witch hunts” (Kissinger 2002: 273) when, in G. K. Chesterton’s phrasing, “virtue runs amok” (Kissinger 2002: 264). The state will use identity to push congealment or eradication – whether idealizations of fiat justitia, pereat mundus or Third Reich.

Thus the function of identity is the beginning of performative action. It creates dichotomies and drives adherents to enforce their values. It influences actors automatically, whether desired or not. As such, identity has positivist characteristics. The subjective interpretations of Self, when internalized, become perceived as objective. This gives identity a sort of predictive power. If one can determine the core normative, rules-based, cultural traits that make up an identity, and the corresponding “objective” values, it is easier to hold assumptions regarding future behavior. For example, when at one certain time, because of “the basic American belief in international good will, in the doctrine of friendship among nations, in the right of the little nation to abide in security without fear, in the possibility of finding a way to peace among nations, in the sanctity of international treaties, in the authority of international law, and in [the] democratic way” (Tannenbaum 1952: 174), identity reveals what actions might be realistically available for US policymakers. Establishing a descriptive “body politic” shows not only the internally held values, but also what the system might consider as disease to be purged – acts such as ethnic cleansing are justified *in the eyes of the cleansers*. Ideals of social hygiene historically play a reoccurring role, from infanticide in Grecian Sparta, to the state-as-human metaphor of John of Salisbury, to Joseph Goebbels’ surgical analogies, to undesirables in India, to George Kennan’s “malignant parasite” of communism, etcetera. A “healthy” identity will always work to exclude sickness. When confronted with an unknown or debased Other, “the motivational need for a positive social identity leads to comparisons that favor the in-group” (Mercer 1995: 242).

The consolidation of power through a claim to universality risks enflaming situations when the Other does not agree, inciting a vicious cycle of unilateral justice and perceived exploitation. Because identities tend to espouse ideals, the “Self” can be a tinderbox of aggression. In the US, for example, “fairly violent action can be deduced from an argument that defends the ‘true America...’ [and] dramatic actions are taken not in the name of the state and its sovereignty but in the name of a people

and a lifestyle – the real Americans and their idea of freedom – which are projected as a kind of national identity...” (Buzan et al. 1998: 130). In essence, proponents can find themselves faced with “false” representations on an international scale. Identity, through its subjectivity, can be chaotic and dangerous – a major consequence being fear. Group identity gathers values on a statewide scale, and individual fears coalesce and drive foreign policy: “the construction of social space that emerges from practices associated with the paradigm of sovereignty thus exceeds a simple geographical partitioning: it results in a conception of divergent moral spaces” (Campbell 1998: 73). Alternatively, a lack of identity – or two conflicting notions – is unstable and can create chaos such as civil war or regional unrest. Arguably, the lack of a leading, unifying Arabic or Islamic identity – along with a youth bulge and militant doctrine – has inflamed the Middle East (Huntington 1998). Identity formation necessitates the inclusion and exclusion of in-groups and out-groups, whereas the in-group is by and large more often favored – self-help between constructed groups based on relational identity (Mercer 1995). Identity is especially useful for states when, through language, it outlines the possible perceptions and constructions of reality in new, unprecedented situations (Wendt 1992).

4. Language

Language represents and determines the way identity and “reality” are communicated. Language fulfills goals of establishing identity to transmit norms, rules, and culture to observers. Language creates the bilateral dialogue and the explanations within discourse. At its core, language involves two actors: one speaker and one listener. But holistically, language output can reach wider audiences with exponential effect (LeBon 2001). Because NSC is a type of cultural discourse distributed to a particular audience, made up of writing, debates, thoughts, words, and ideas transmitted by language, it functions as a symbolic effect in society. Symbolic language can be “autocommunicative,” that is, self-affirmative and a means to justify ideas internally by creating an ideal (Johnston 1995: 56). This process

helps increase legitimacy, as an agent can be labeled as a “true believer” by using the right language. Symbols can be part of an “official” language directed within a group to justify authority (Cohn 1987: 708) – a claim to legitimacy through objectivity, limiting certain types of communication and by extension behavior, where “language does not allow certain questions to be asked or certain values to be expressed” (Cohn 1987: 717). This method also reinforces legitimacy, by creating a homogeneous dialogue and excluding dissident opinions. Language is also projected outwards against an adversary to rationalize one’s actions and legitimize power (Johnston 1995: 56-59). Symbolic language need not even be spoken to convey meaning – for example, uniforms transmit ideas more efficiently than words. Images, as a type of language, similarly are able to communicate these ideas. By introducing logos, language functions as a heuristic that simplifies complex environments; because environments are subjective, language socializes. Even when symbols inherent in language remain static, interpretation over time can change their meaning (e.g. the swastika). Adjusted symbols give rise to narratives that guide discourse.

Language is thus part subjective abstraction and part rational reality, using both logics of “appropriateness” and “consequentialism” (March and Olsen 1998). Groups can activate abstractions by “using language that names, interprets, and dramatizes” issues or otherwise “framing” them to push for certain goals (Finnemore 1998: 897). In this way language can simulate environments. Language can also use discourse to stimulate action. It has the power to make a claim about the future, and, depending on the audience, to instigate an immediate response. Authorities utilize this institutionalization when communicating threats. Alternative discourse, especially using other symbolic language, can be dismissed as “inexpert, unprofessional, irrelevant to the business at hand...The discourse among the experts remains hermetically sealed” (Cohn 1987: 712). The communities empowered to speak ideas of security are the ones that guarantee protection – the safeguarding of norms, rules, and culture. Identity enters the equation by reinforcing the in/out dichotomy, and unspoken assumptions drive ideational concepts and molds the

group in a “transformative, rather than an additive, process” (Cohn 1987: 716). Language also has the power, when used in argumentation and if successful, persuasion, to move discourse from abstract to real realms, and vice versa – a “logic of arguing” (Risse 2000). Using neologisms, speakers can introduce new normative behavior by claiming that contemporary ideas of what is right might not be the best rational response to external threats. Hereby: “arguing and truth-seeking behavior presuppose that actors no longer hold fixed interests during their communicative interaction but are open to persuasion, challenges, and counterchallenges geared toward reaching a reasoned consensus” (Risse 2000: 33). This type of language is especially useful when discussing goals and threats within a context of uncertainty or nonexistent “common knowledge” – the ideal context for securitization.

5. SECURITIZATION

“...securitization [is] an articulated assemblage of practices whereby heuristic artefacts (metaphors, policy tools, image repertoires, analogies, stereotypes, emotions, etc.) are contextually mobilized by a securitizing actor, who works to prompt an audience to build a coherent network of implications (feelings, sensations, thoughts, and intuitions), about the critical vulnerability of a reference object, that concurs with the securitizing actor’s reasons for choices and actions, by investing the referent subject with such an aura of unprecedented threatening complexion that a customized policy must be undertaken immediately to block its development.”

(Balzacq 2011a: 3; italics in original)

Security, like identity, is relational. By constructively answering questions of norms, rules, culture, and identity, it is possible to determine more practical issues of security politics. Security analysis asks who can “do” security, in the name of what. Securitization aims to understand: “who securitizes, on what issues (threats), for whom (referent objects), why, with what results, and, not least, under what conditions (i.e., what explains when securitization is successful)” (Buzan et al.: 1998: 32). The main questions emerge: who, what, for whom, securitizes? The establishment of the interpretations and preferences of a state’s NSC allows for easier understanding of how states react to threats with securitization. While NSC builds the preferences from where states may start, securitization is the process

that utilizes these preferences. Discourse mobilizes societies as a means to protect the underlying values of NSC. Securitization is a process of historical and philosophical socialization. Constructivism helps us understand who can securitize what, and under what conditions.

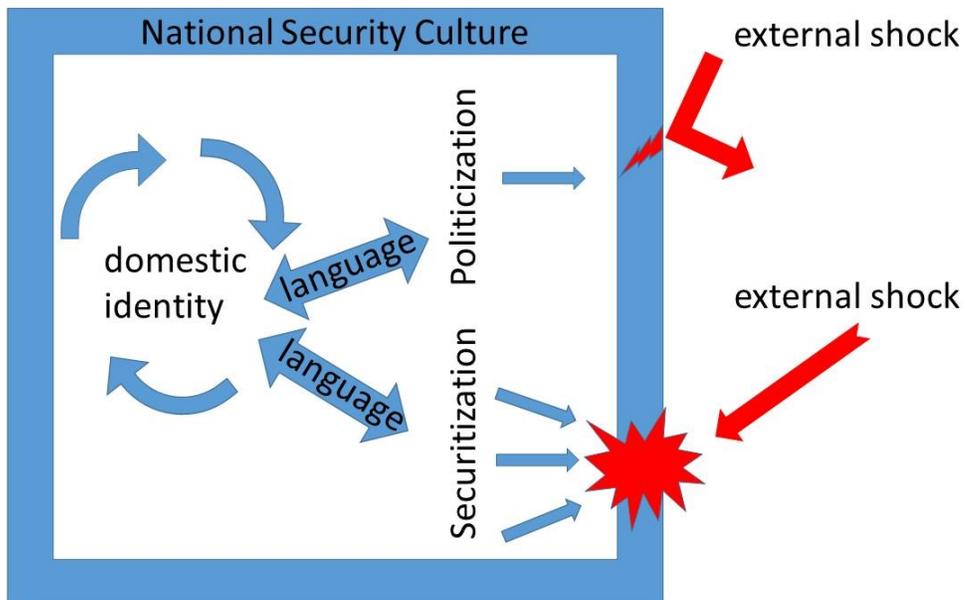
Securitization finds its roots in politicization. To politicize a matter is to take the topic at hand and move it beyond its latent status (Buzan et al.: 1998). There must be a will to show its importance, and an argument that either supports the status quo or makes claims of a need to refine, or adapt solutions to the issue. The process is open, and often entails debate. To proceed from politicization to securitization, an existential threat is added. This threat then has the power to legitimize the breaking of rules, acting outside of what is normally considered to be accepted. The process of securitization, however, is more closed than politicized issues, and dialectic communication is absent. Though the premise of a securitized issue can be rejected, it is a binary yes-no decision, rather than the involvement of discussion inherent during politicization. Items can (and do) indeed move along the scale of non-politicized, politicized, and securitized issues; a recurrent example shows how the environment and climate change were once non-politicized, have recently moved into politicized status, and have the potential to be securitized in the near future. And the same example shows how actors that make a “securitizing move” (Buzan et al.: 1998: 25) are not limited to the state, but can include non-governmental organizations, religious groups, lobbyists, and more.

A glaring contrast between politicization and securitization is the audience factor. While politicization is thrust upon the public and open to debate, to securitize an issue means to attempt to unilaterally convince a wide audience of its legitimacy. This process involves using language to highlight the risk of losing identifying, cultural ideals. If agents do not properly “activate” intersubjective concepts (as further elaborated below) – especially NSC – a securitizing move can simply be rejected by an audience. This point of rejection lies in the existential aspect – if a politician for example, cannot persuade citizens of an existential threat, the move

flounders. For example, automobiles, while far deadlier than terrorists, are not securitized. Securitization can function to link new, emerging norms, employed to combat a newly communicated existential threat to NSC, with norms that already exist as legitimate. Through language, securitization evokes concepts of trust to an audience in that what is being securitized is objectively social reality. Beyond the audience, security analysis according to the Copenhagen School contains three units including “referent objects,” “securitizing actors,” and “functional actors” (Buzan et al.: 1998: 36). The units represent, respectively, an existential threat, actors declaring the threat, and actors who influence the issue. A *securitizing actor* will securitize the existential threat through language in relation to a *referent object*, either in opposition to or cooperation with a *functional actor*. For example, an American politician can securitize terrorism in relation to the state, cooperating with the Central Intelligence Agency. The existential threat is illustrated, a point of no return proclaimed, and a way out is offered – the solution to an external shock that penetrates NSC and threatens identity, as visualized in **Figure 2**.

Figure 2

Ideational securitization as a process



source: Author's conception

5.1 Goals, Threats, and Habits

Risk assessment during securitization is a subjective endeavor. While armaments, for example, objectively have the power to destroy, threat analysis relies on determining who has the power to authorize a strike and what their motives might be. Even non-violent concepts can be assessed as threatening: “for some, feminism, homosexuality, and support for social ownership of the relations of production are as threatening as a foreign enemy” (Campbell 1998: 63). The construction of threats is universal yet individual. Perceived threats grow in significance when aligning with group interests, culminating in issues of national security. When a nation points to threats, it also implicitly (and often explicitly) sets goals of eliminating these threats. In the name of security (that is, threats to security), states are able to mobilize domestic populations. The degree of success for mobilizing depends on how strongly agents can claim interests and the goal of maintaining them are at risk; language is used with varying amounts of urgency to symbolize and communicate how threats threaten group ideals and communal identity. NSC is activated; habitus – that is, dispositional attitudes and behaviors such as imagination and judgment (Balzacq 2005; 2011a) – is evoked. Discourse gives agency and language mobilizes.

This process is dynamic. Communicating a unique historicity allows actors to philosophically support securitization as a logic of explanation and *action*; by pointing to an existential risk, there is a rational implication that the threat will be stopped. Securitizing principled beliefs, such as NSC, sets gears in motion and has concrete ramifications. Since over time: “in a discursive economy, investments have been made in certain interpretations; dividends can be drawn by those parties that have made the investments; representations are taxed when they confront new and ambiguous circumstances; and participation in the discursive economy is through social relations...” (Campbell 1998: 7), the actors that have “made investments” to a state’s cultural achievements (through normative behavior) can draw political capital in a securitized environment. Returns can involve the increased power claimed to be necessary to counter a threat. New responsibilities act as a powerful

motivator (Finnemore 1998). In “the way American statesmen have spoken about American foreign policy...and foremost, an emotional urge to justify American foreign policy” (Morgenthau 1952: 965), policy-makers use securitization from a subjective position to justify domestic desires, goals, and security. No matter the “truth,” agency lies in analytical perspective.

5.2 Sectors of Security

According to Buzan et al. (1998), there are a total of five security sectors that help categorize “securitizing moves,” including military, political, economic, environmental, and societal – though in this analysis only two maintain relevance – political and societal. These sectors move beyond the typical military sector that is classically associated with security studies; however, they also both tie into military threats to security. Fundamentally, as this analysis argues, threats such as al Qaeda fluctuate between sectors, but are always an attempt to penetrate NSC. Original targets for Osama bin Laden, the former leader of al Qaeda, were on military (e.g. the USS *Cole*), political (e.g. Nairobi and Dar es Salaam embassies), and political and economic targets (e.g. 11 September 2001 attacks). But all attacks by terrorists – following the standard definition of terrorism as a violent act to determine political change – are ultimately about politics. Deductively, terrorists target ideology in a bid to change normative action; in the al Qaeda case, to force the US to end the presence of troops in Saudi Arabia, withdraw support for Israel, and reconsider the (former) embargo of Iraq (bin Laden 2002). How then, was the Bush administration able to conflate these military, political, and economic issues as one concerning society at large? In essence, President Bush exploited the ambiguity and uncertainty in the escalatory dynamics of societal security dilemmas (Roe 2010: 174) to move the threat from political to societal sectors.

Political sector: The political sector involves the organizational tendencies of a state. Threats to this stability can range from demanding modifications of policy to complete ideological revolution. Functioning politics give authority to officials to

propose future normative action. In the US – a cultural democracy – this power is found in elected officials such as presidents. This cultural aspect makes necessary the societal sector to maintain cohesion, forming a politico-societal hybrid of security, where “social and political life comprise a set of practices in which things are constituted in the process of dealing with them” (Campbell 1998: 5). In this process, “governments may have survival interests of their own (usually wanting to keep themselves in power) that can be distinguished from the national interest (generally defined in terms of threats to the sovereignty or survival of the state)...Intelligence services may also come to think of themselves as the true guardians of national security, as possessing the full picture...” (Buzan et al. 1998: 56). Because “all security is political” (Buzan et al. 1998: 142), functional governmental actors, with the right language, can securitize the same issue for the two different reasons – to protect both the political and societal sectors. Or, conversely, if the political sector is threatened, a government can choose to securitize societal issues, artificially constructing a false dyad; while an external threat might threaten political representation, it does not necessarily present an existential threat to society. But because NSC tends to institutionalize methods of political governance, an audience (whether subconsciously or not), is liable to be receptive to the conflated issues. In 2001 and the following war on terror, the political and economic threats of al Qaeda to NSC were presented as a societal issue in the process securitization.

Societal sector: The key concept inherent in societal security is group identity. Groups may take national, religious, ethnic, or other foundations: “the key to society is those ideas and practices that identify individuals as members of a social group” (Buzan et al. 1998:119). Societal security refers to “the sustainable development of traditional patterns of language, culture, religious and national identities, and customs of states” as a fluid process (Roe 2010: 165). This concept relies on the aforementioned Self – or “Us” in group terms – paradigm. Consequentially, the oppositional Other can be securitized as a threat. The Other threatens “Us” existentially and identity must be protected from dilution or extermination.

Common threats to societal security include migration, integration (as with the European Union) or secession, and “horizontal competition” from other states, when neighboring cultures threaten the homeland (Buzan 1998). Terrorism is a horizontal competitor to state, and ideological, security; globalization magnifies these fears and NSC is a way to protect societal security against perceived external threats. Because society is a universal social construction, these ideas are foundational to every state, and even to smaller groups. Ideational – as opposed to ideological – values in this way are often the same: being free to preserve a way of living that is perceived as superior. While one society may prefer liberal tendencies, another society will feel secure if it is autocratic. From this concept, similar to the traditional security dilemma: “a societal security dilemma occurs when the actions taken by one society to strengthen its identity causes a reaction in a second, which, in the end, weakens the identity of the first” (Roe 2010: 177). Ideologies help run each system, but at their core they are ideational.

This securitized duality results in two conclusions. Primarily, in the context of the using NSC to protect identity in the contemporary Global War on Terror, two main sectors are involved – political and societal. The military sector is not threatened à la conventional war, nor do securitizing actors attempt to make it appear so. If it were, terrorists as a military threat would “threaten everything in society, and [would] do so in a context in which most of the rules of civilized behavior either cease to function or move sharply into the background” (Buzan et al. 1998: 58). Instead of issues such as extraordinary rendition or enhanced interrogations, such as are prevalent when discussing terrorism, dialogue would involve prospective fears of genocide or famine – actual existential threats. “Civilized behavior” is still very much part of securitized discourse in the war on terror. The second important conclusion traces the move of political terrorism to the societal sector. Securitizing actors are especially able to overlay political fears onto society. Interestingly – and the core finding of this analysis – is that this crossover was a political strategy of the Bush administration to securitize societal interests. In other words, the US NSC was

projected as threatened and a solution offered was to involve the US intelligence community.

5.3 Intersubjectivity

Understanding the intersubjectivity of international relations relies on a subjective understanding of another subjective view (Kratochwil 2007). This process relies on signaling, interpreting, and responding to create meaning and a “pool of knowledge” (Wendt 1992: 405). Tacitly understood intersubjective concepts will lead to collective memory, an important foundation of securitization (Balzacq 2005). By mutually agreeing with each other, groups socialize through the “emulation (of heroes), praise (for behavior that conforms to group norms), and ridicule (for deviation)” (Finnemore 1998: 902). This socialization reinforces internal behavior; intersubjectivity can help bind communities together, or label outsiders as excluded. Conforming reinforces legitimacy. “Common knowledge” is a useful way of expressing intersubjective understanding in a mutual way (Finnemore 1998). Because identity is made, and not given, states’ features are endogenous. Identity does not form until interaction with the intersubjective – a self-affirming dyadic structure of alter and ego (Wendt 1992). This gives states agency to build what they understand to be the structure of the international system. The realist structure of self-help is as equally plausible as the “other-help” structure (Mercer 1995: 233). The process of socially constructing reality allows for alternative conclusions. Securitization in particular is the process that determines which route is taken in issues of national security. And each states set of cultural characteristics that they have built over time help determine intersubjective behavior – in essence a self-constructed reality that determines possible perspectives and potential reactions. These ideas at any particular moment can be self-help or other-help, or any combination, depending on both how one state views its role and how the others states perceive it. Russian identity, for example, can have major intersubjective consequences, since: “if Russia is defined by Slavophiles or Euro-Asianists, several

issues will constitute security problems that would not be considered such if Russia defined itself in a Western way” (Buzan et al. 1998: 120).

A state can choose how it presents itself, but these historical choices and accepted philosophies will further affect the responses of other actors. A state can choose its path, but every choice excludes other paths, creating opportunity costs and establishing an inventory of state decisions. Any universal truth is momentary, can and does change, all the while depending on how individual members of the global audience understands the contemporary, intersubjective context. The dialectic process of securitization is best elaborated by Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, and Jaap de Wilde (1998: 31; italics in original): “*securitization is intersubjective and socially constructed...This quality is not held in subjective and isolated minds; it is a social quality, a part of a discursive, socially constituted, intersubjective realm.*” The legitimacy of protecting the perceived value of a referent object is a forefront issue during securitization. If a threat will destroy something perceived as low value, the process fails. The introduction of new normative behavior during securitization is thus done under the cover of bombastic, high-stakes language such as the speech act.

5.4 Speech acts

The main functional aspect of securitization is the speech act. Buzan et al. (1998) cite the most successful speech acts as claiming a middle-level referent object, such as a state. This unit – including both its sovereignty and domestic culture – takes precedence, especially over system-level and micro-/group-level referent objects. Otherwise, it is extremely difficult to maintain cohesion (e.g. during the international communist movement) or relevance (e.g. for a small tribe of American Indians). Even the state, however, can fail at securitization, as did the US during its war in Vietnam (Buzan et al. 1998: 42). On the other hand, for example, the National Rifle Association in the US has successfully accomplished its securitizing goals as a non-state actor, based on claiming via speech acts an existential threat to

constitutional culture, by utilizing its position as a functional actor. When speech acts successfully convince an audience of legitimacy, securitization can solidify the status of an issue and ensure it receives precedence over others. An inherent risk in securitization, however, lies in creating an unending emergency status. If at any time the subject of securitization drops from “utmost priority,” it risks losing public support and being dismantled to make room for other issues of perceived importance. Securitizing an issue gives it the most attention; contradictorily, once the audience has accepted the speech acts, a securitized issue also receives the least critique.

Because of the audience factor, speech acts are a pragmatic tool. Much of populist discourse is made up of crude conceptualizations of the high value of NSC and identity. But even more sophisticated topics, such as nuclear deterrence, involve convincing speech acts: “language that is abstract, sanitized, full of euphemisms; language that is sexy and fun to use; paradigms whose referent is weapons; imagery that domesticates and deflates the forces of mass destruction; imagery that reverses sentient and nonsentient matter, that conflates birth and death, destruction and creation – all of these are part of what makes it possible to be radically removed from reality of what one is talking about and from the realities one is creating through the discourse” (Cohn 1987: 175). Thierry Balzacq (2011a) further develops the efficacy of the speech act into three categories: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary. Each subset specifies a particular function. Locutionary acts are the standard “speech” aspect of the speech act – when discourse occurs, it conveys an idea with meaning and potential importance. Illocutionary acts add an agency and connote the importance of actually *doing* the speech act – the discourse is important enough to warrant the expression of ideas on the topic. Here discourse takes a functional approach as a positivist action; ideas are shared not directly but through a medium such as a political apparatus. Perlocutionary acts conclude the speech act process, by achieving a result through discourse. The ideas have been created, transmitted, and now affect change. With perlocutionary acts, observers can observe the relative success of the speech act as whole. If this phase is successful,

the audience will have accepted the locutionary idea, the illocutionary method, and the perlocutionary aftereffects.

Context, especially NSC, structures – and limits – both how a speech act is constructed and how an audience is able to receive it. An important assumption lies in an agent’s construction of context: “the semantic repertoire of security is a combination of textual meaning – knowledge of the concept acquired through language (written and spoken) – and cultural meaning – knowledge gained through previous interactions and current situations” (Balzacq 2011a: 11). This context draws life-force from contemporary incarnations of national identity, the national zeitgeist of security, and agents can use it both to communicate and persuade in a “pragmatic” fashion, using power through social identity (Balzacq 2005). Speech acts themselves are not self-referential, and are not done in a vacuum of perception, but in a discursive space filled with prior experience. The speech act can adjust, blur, or repurpose the identity that makes up this experience, and will, most often by pointing to an external threat or stimulus to justify action. The “receptiveness” of the audience can be molded to fit the context (Balzacq 2011a: 11). New interests of national security can trump previous ideas of cultural reality, sidelining them, through securitization. If the new securitized ideas hold – if new norms persist – depends largely on how effective the speech act was, especially if there was argumentative resistance, or only fluid persuasion. The power to persuade lies in the mutual, shared knowledge of culture and trust that the threat is real. An external shock will add urgency, compounded by concurrent emotional intensity (as a point of critical mass) and logical rigor that points to impending consequences (Balzacq 2005).

5.4.1 Methodological Collectivism

An important question is *who* has the power to securitize – who has “linguistic competence” to speak security (Balzacq 2005: 191). Securitizing actors are not typically individuals. Though an individual can be credited with a certain speech act, or claiming a threat to a referent object, the structure is holistic. Knowledge (as

cultural capital), and power (as political capital) give agency to securitizing actors (Balzacq 2005). Groups reinforce these traits by giving power (e.g. by voting, in a democratic state) to representatives that best represent the idea of national knowledge – a direct acknowledgment of identity. A collectivity has nurtured every leader in a position of power, by definition. Without the collective, power would not exist. When US President Barack Obama acts in the international sphere with foreign dignitaries, he does so in a representative capacity – never as an individual. Even a private request would implicitly carry connotations of his status, reinforced by the collective. Securitizing actors would lack relevance if they represented only themselves, or cohesion if they claimed to represent all. According to this organizational logic, individual cognition is affected by a collective belief system that determines agency (Thorton and Ocasio 2008). Obama’s legitimized status as a democratic statesman carries with it the power of the state. A tyrant, legitimized by less democratic means, will nonetheless still carry the weight of his control over the state, still reinforced by his inner circle of aides, generals, administrators, and so forth. Because “collectivities are seen as more than the sum of their ‘members’ and are treated as social realities” (Buzan et al. 1998: 40), the speech act is a complex, representational method of projecting domestic values into the international sphere. When a collective group, such as the Bush administration during the Global War on Terror, works to securitize an issue in its political capacity, it can – and has – utilized functional groups, such as the US Central Intelligence Agency, to alter normative behavior in society.

6. CASE STUDY

“The underlying problem for the West is not Islamic fundamentalism. It is Islam, a different civilization whose people are convinced of the superiority of their culture and are obsessed with the inferiority of their power. The problem for Islam is not the CIA or the U.S. Department of Defense. It is the West, a different civilization whose people are convinced of the universality of their culture and believe that their superior, if declining, power imposes on them the obligation to extend that culture throughout the world. These are the basic ingredients that fuel conflict between Islam and the West.”
(Huntington 1998: 217-218)

This case study was selected to shed light on an important question: how can a score of terrorist hijackers strike terror into the hearts of hundreds of millions of relatively secure Americans? Materialistically, terrorist groups tend to have negligible capability. Even al Qaeda's pièce de résistance on 11 September, cobbled together from Afghanistan or Pakistan, used just small knives and four makeshift missiles. Only two targets were destroyed, one slightly damaged, and one left completely unharmed. Approximately 3,000 noncombatants were tragically killed; the event was doubtlessly a national tragedy. But statistically, in terms of war, the damage was minimal. The response, meanwhile, initiated a declaration of a state of war, two major armed invasions, other interventions, and costs upwards of trillions of dollars (Thompson 2011). The US war in Vietnam, in comparison, cost under \$1 trillion adjusted for inflation (McCarthy 2015). This phenomenon is not a unique occurrence. US President Lyndon Johnson introduced a War on Poverty and a War on Crime in the 1960s, followed later by President Richard Nixon's 1971 War on Drugs, with President Ronald Reagan declaring war on state-sponsored terrorism in the 1980s and followed only most recently by President George W. Bush's ongoing Global War on Terror (GWOT) from 2001. The framework for this newest war on ideas, elaborated upon theoretically above, has involved defining national security interests and has entailed military, political, and social dimensions. But unlike the defined territories, leadership, and populations of foreign nation-states in traditional wars, fighting insecurity via an abstract concept such as terror becomes a question of identity-formation and protecting that identity. Securitization – especially in conjunction with groups such as the US Central Intelligence Agency – has been applied as a powerful tool to safeguard the ideational values inherent in identity.

6.1 President Bush and his Global War on Terror

“The United States and their allies are killing us in Palestine, Chechnya, Kashmir, Palestine and Iraq. That's why Muslims have the right to carry out revenge attacks on the U.S.... The American people should remember that they pay taxes to their

government and that they voted for their president. Their government makes weapons and provides them to Israel, which they use to kill Palestinian Muslims. Given that the American Congress is a committee that represents the people, the fact that it agrees with the actions of the American government proves that America in its entirety is responsible for the atrocities that it is committing against Muslims. I demand the American people to take note of their government's policy against Muslims. They described their government's policy against Vietnam as wrong. They should now take the same stand that they did previously. The onus is on Americans to prevent Muslims from being killed at the hands of their government.”

(Osama bin Laden quoted in Goodwin 2006: 2043)

Creating an obvious antithesis to domestic values and interests creates two camps. The choice is laid out: you are with us or against us. The decision by former President Bush to claim, in a 2002 State of the Union address, that there was in fact an “axis of evil” bent on the destruction of the US played on many ideational concepts, especially culture and identity. His claim was that as a culture, the US is facing a similar threat of aggression and genocide as the fascist, imperial axis powers had in World War II. Hitlerite policies had returned. Instead of appeasement, Bush tried to conjure the superior, liberal democratic and moral Christian collective identity of the allies. In reality, he split domestic attitude and international perception. Irrespective of the substance (and validity of his criticisms of the Axis powers), European institutions questioned his motives as the results of “the imminent congressional election [this from the British Foreign Secretary]; American imperialism [the European Commission foreign policy head]; simplistic thinking [the French Foreign Minister]; the trend toward American isolationism and hegemonism [leading German newspapers]” (Kissinger 2002: 294). But the main audience for the Bush doctrine was not international, it was domestic. The process of securitization was not a secular calling abroad, framed in speeches instead as a “divine calling” and a “crusade” (Bush 2001c; Bush cited in Kurtulus 2012: 40); instead of the traditional “God Bless America,” Bush utilized an updated “May God continue to bless America” (Bush 2014) to highlight the abnormality of the situation and the urgent desire for relative moral superiority in this particular time of need. The role of the president was to convince, discursively, the need for the US to “pay

any price or bear any burden” (Murphy 2003). The “wars of words” (Mayer 2006) had begun.

One aspect of Bush’s strategy was his backing of the GWOT in an emotional state of post-11 September 2001 decree. He neglected to identify the duality of what should have been his “*official duty*” and “*personal wish*” (Morgenthau 1952: 982). Instead, President Bush claimed: “I’m the commander – see, I don’t need to explain – I do not need to explain why I say things. That’s the interesting thing about being president. Maybe somebody needs to explain to me why they say something, but I don’t feel like I owe anybody an explanation” (Bush cited in Woodward 2002: 145-146). The official duty *was* the personal wish, a social and political campaign to rid the world of evil as interpreted through a domestic (i.e. NSC) lens and facilitated by an “elite project” (Kurtulus 2012: 40). Discursive techniques were used to present the culture of a US exceptionalism and transpose this concept on the new threat. Similar phraseology has been active throughout US history, from visualizations of the city upon the hill and the light from Plymouth Rock, to manifest destiny and “Remember the Alamo” – packaged bundles of syntax designed to be easy to remember and evocative of the “true” “good” meaning of US values. Contemporary incarnations such as “Never Forget” and support our troops, using language to appeal to an American identity, implied that in the GWOT, normative feelings should involve resenting the enemy and going to war. The discourse has spread deep into “some evangelical Protestant religious circles – even inside the U.S. military (scandalously so, it seems, at the Air Force Academy) – there has been implicit or explicit identification of the war in Iraq and against ‘terror’ with the conflict between God and the Devil, this in the context of currently popular American fictional interpretations of the supposedly impending biblical Last Days and the apocalyptic End of Time” (Pfaff 2005: 55). Without the external shock of the 11 September attacks, however, campaigns in both Afghanistan and Iraq would have been a much harder position to sell to the public (Western 2005). Without the erroneous connection of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction to Iraq, for example, President Bush unlikely would have claimed: “While there are many dangers in the

world, the threats from Iraq stands alone” (White House 2002). According to Roger Z. George (2011: 169): “the question of invading Iraq had appeared inevitable almost as soon as the dust had settled on the twin towers attacks.” The president morphed the reality of a threatening environment by defining the world around him in cultural terms (Murphy 2003).

The framing and “interpretive dominance” (Paris 2002: 425) securitizing actors such as President Bush are able to promote – focusing on an eschatological outlook – create the exceptional situation that allows for exceptional solutions, especially by controlling the flow of information and meaning. The perceived existential threat to domestic culture opens the same cultural actors to reconsider what might be appropriate normative action. Coercive interrogations, in the context of US liberal democracy, as well as biblical concepts of justice, are one such manifestation. Following 11 September 2001, the fear of culturecide – communicated – induced a “cultural nationalism” (Roe 2010: 172) where the preservation of Self dominated all else. “Collateral damage” became a part of everyday vocabulary (Kurtulus 2012: 48) as a price to pay for complete victory. Historical experience, such as the US Vietnam war, and the accompanying claims of torture and war crimes of the time, were remodeled to fit the contemporary securitized environment. Discourse in the GWOT has activated conscious, subconscious, and emotional feelings, based on an underlying national culture, to “limit what we notice, highlight what we see, and provide part of the inferential structure that we reason with ” (Paris 2002: 428). Possible alternatives are discarded when US representatives claim – with democratic justification – that they are most qualified to interpret the situation and prescribe a response.

This is not to critique Bush alone – the same process takes place in groups such as al Qaeda. The holy war requires two participants, and when it involves two actors with fundamental leanings, it will more likely lead to conflict, epitomized in the Israel-Palestine “sons of light” versus “sons of darkness” (Adler 2009). The same discourse of “good” and “evil” is readily apparent in the US-terrorist conflict, from both camps.

Osama bin Laden, as the former leader of al Qaeda, declared that: “every American is our enemy, whether he fights directly or whether he pays taxes...This is...a vile people who have never understood the meaning of values.” (Lawrence 2005: 70 cited in Goodwin 2006: 2044 footnote). Because the “meaning of values” is highly subjective, bin Laden can claim – truthfully, *from his perspective* – that the US perverts the true “truth.” Meanwhile, of course, the US is inclined to disagree with this interpretation. Al Qaeda, however, is an organization trying to inductively introduce norms of violence to preserve a culture perceived as threatened. The size of the organization (or lack thereof), its few adherents, meager resources, undefined territory, and the like, limits the effectiveness of its securitization. The audience is minimal though, arguably, growing. But the process is still the same – only instead of protecting an intersubjectively recognized community from disintegration it is attempting to create a community to protect. Donald Black (2004:18 cited in Goodwin 2006: 2036) explains that “terrorists typically demand a restoration of the past, such as political independence, lost territory, or a customary way of life” or its own perception of culture. In the al Qaeda case, its views are just subjective (as opposed to inter-), and thus – prior to 11 September 2001 – easily sidelined. It took an external shock provocation to fully transmit meaning. The clash of “civilized” society is also a clash *about* civilized society. The language of the GWOT, from both sides, uses discourse to create the context and perceived realities of all those involved.

6.2 The United States as an imagined community

The US is in this way a prime example of an “imagined community” from its inception, invented by Christopher Columbus as an Asian peninsula – not discovered as such (Campbell 1998: 92). Contemporary beliefs of theology and geography shaped contemporaneous ideas and for years affected reality; Columbus continued to search until his death for the waterway past the supposed peninsula. The misinterpretation was eventually corrected, but only later through the newly constructed beliefs of Amerigo Vespucci. Further building on similar interpretations

throughout the past: “the Puritans invoked biblical scripture and its covenants; the American revolutionaries summoned their Pilgrim forebears and made them into demigods; and an endless array of modern political leaders have conjured up the Puritans and the ‘Founding Fathers’ to be protagonists of particular positions in contemporary controversies” (Campbell 1998: 131). Similar ideas of domestic “truth” in the US was even used by Benjamin Franklin (cited in Campbell 1998: 119), himself a Founding Father of the US: ““Why should Pennsylvania, founded by the English, become a colony of *Aliens*, who will shortly be so numerous as to Germanize us instead of our Anglifying them?”” Throughout time, it has been common to build on domestic notions of what reality is and means, in the process establishing a domesticated culture deemed as exclusively superior. Pointing to symbolic representations of idealized ideology communicates what an actor – especially a securitizing one – means when claiming the inherent value of one’s own culture, and national security, over another’s.

President Bush continued the discursive construction of identity and bipolarization of domestic culture and external threat, most infamously in his 20 September 2001 speech: “This is the fight of all who believe in progress and pluralism, tolerance and freedom...We’re in a fight for our principles...The advance of human freedom, the great achievement of our time and the great hope of every time, now depends on us...We will not tire, we will not falter and we will not fail...Freedom and fear, justice and cruelty, have always been at war, and we know that God is not neutral between them” (Bush 2001a). By invoking a great eternal battle between good and evil, us and them, President Bush outlined what it meant to be an American, highlighting to his audience (of Americans) the cultural traits of identifying Christian and democratic norms. What Columbus had believed as destiny affected his actions, just as the context President Bush created opened the door for further action. In the contemporary GWOT, President Bush has continued this tradition by making a “new world, an imagined creation that would justify his authority to act in the material world...But once unveiled, this new world demanded of the people new behavior” (Murphy 2003: 613, 614). The battle for identity, along with the desire to improve

one's own cultural preeminence at the expense of the other is thus a reoccurring theme in American history.

But the process is subjective and depends on convincing others of the same "truth." The history that is foundational for the American identity today – discovery, colonization, and revolution – is a historicity that involves invention, exclusion, and an ante bellum status quo mindset (Campbell 1998: 130). The US president and administration is an especially useful position in this regard, having in the past and continuing in the present to perpetuate these national myths. The discourses of danger over time have reinforced the imagined, constructed self and meticulously excluded the other. Invented (and real) segregation attempts continue to clarify the borders that separate when President Bush declared "You are with us, or you are with the terrorists...You're either with us or you're against us" (Bush 2001b). The recurring result has been ostracization, fear, conflict, and post-World War II, institutionalization of a systematic, organized approach of protecting society beyond military means. A prominent functional actor in this reorganization has been the US Central Intelligence Agency.

6.3 Defining the US Central Intelligence Agency

US President Franklin D. Roosevelt coordinated the first recognizable US intelligence community in the midst of World War II as the Office of Strategic Services. The perceived failures of national security in preventing Pearl Harbor prompted the US political culture authorities to develop an agency to protect domestic values – in 1947, President Harry S. Truman consolidated intelligence efforts within the US with the National Security Act and established the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). It was not, however, until the late 1960s and 1970s that the US witnessed "contemporary-style" acts of widespread political terrorism, such as the kidnapping of US Ambassador Charles Elbrick in Brazil (1969), the Munich Olympics massacre (1972), and the Lod Airport massacre (1972), other provocations committed by international organizations such as the Palestinian

Black September, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and the Japanese Red Army. According to the RAND Corporation: “By the mid-1970s, airline hijacking and airline bombings worldwide were occurring at the rate of one a month.” (Jenkins 2015). Additional various domestic threats such as the US Black Panther Party, Irish Republican Army, West German Red Army Faction, Basque Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA), Colombian Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC), and others prompted nation-states to develop modern counterterrorism forces and doctrine. The US responded with its 1972 Cabinet Committee to Combat Terrorism, to “include such activities as the collection of intelligence worldwide and the physical protection of U.S. personnel and installations abroad and foreign diplomats, and diplomatic installations in the United States” (Nixon 1972). President Nixon planted the seeds of the GWOT. President Reagan declared war on state-sponsored terror. The greatest reforms, however, came to the intelligence community in 2004 when President Bush restructured the system with the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act. The CIA has thus been both professionalized and solidified through legitimacy and trust, especially since the GWOT has consolidated the intelligence community.

According to the CIA website, “the Intelligence Community is guided by the definition of terrorism contained in Title 22 of the US Code, Section 2656f(d): The term ‘terrorism’ means premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents. The term ‘international terrorism’ means terrorism involving the territory or the citizens of more than one country. The term ‘terrorist group’ means any group that practices, or has significant subgroups that practice, international terrorism.” These terms are at the core of current CIA activities against terror networks. This mandate, to prosecute terror, is imposed on an independent and non-departmental CIA that works “primarily for the president...[E]ach White House and NSC [National Security Council] has pressed CIA and now the DNI to adapt its intelligence support and priorities to match the president’s style and interest,” whether explicitly willing or not (George 2011: 164). Historically, even “CIA directors have found themselves

becoming policy advocated” (George 2011: 172). Operatives from the National Clandestine Service (NCS) of the CIA often have military or business backgrounds, an amalgamated “coercive efficiency” useful for protecting cultural traits of NSC. And “the NCS cultivates the image of a can-do culture, not unlike the Marine Corps” and “a sense of independence” that encourage it to execute presidential directives in its own unique fashion (George 2011: 160). On the one hand, the CIA receives orders from and reports to the US president; simultaneously, its independence gives it latitude to introduce what it might perceive to be the best solution to a threat. While instances of violent terrorism has dramatically decreased in the past decades (Jenkins 2015), the critical figure – approximately 3,000 casualties on 11 September 2001 – galvanized the nation by invoking – largely because of President Bush’s discursive GWOT – a perceived threat to the cultural identity of Americans. The 2001 terrorist attacks, even as a lesser threat to US civilians, refocused, through securitization, the functional agency of the CIA on a newly defined societal threat. Threats to *political* security was translated into an insecure *society*. The threat of terror is discursively an external, existential issue and allows for the introduction of radical solutions.

The CIA is a form of soft power that is able to enact new norms – especially via its own subcultural attributes, such as secrecy – in the societal sector of security under the auspices of the political sector for the policy-makers that control them. This power affects culture and ideology through its institutionalization. Whereas “military organizations such as navies and air forces, the structures of which are strongly affected by the nature of their tasks by, for example, technological requirements, will also be less affected by the general norms and social structures” (Rosen 1995: 29), the paramilitary nature of the CIA also give it a window of opportunity to inject its own norms as adapted to its goal of protecting domestic culture by countering external threats. Its unique tasks lie outside the normal bounds US normative culture while its objectives strive to protect the very same – as an institutionalization of the domestic values, it is the epitome of US NSC. The CIA will work both within its bounds, and beyond them in a securitized environment, to

allow the existence and self-perpetuation of US culture. In groups like this, “professions often serve as powerful and pervasive agents working to internalize norms among their members. Professional training does more than simply transfer technical knowledge; it actively socializes people to value certain things above others. Doctors are trained to value life above all else. Soldiers are trained to sacrifice life for certain strategic goals. Economists, ecologists, and lawyers all carry different normative biases systematically instilled by their professional training” (Finnemore 1998: 905). The CIA ingrains what is determined to be a security issue for society – often with the assistance of the political sector. In this way, the organization is an effective subculture within the intelligence community, pointing to national security as religion points to a god. Because the CIA is technically prohibited by the US government from releasing detainees to a country where they will likely be tortured or killed, it works together with the US intelligence community to organize ways to both fulfill organizational goals of intelligence and uphold the values they were created to protect.

6.3.1 CIA cultural functionalism

The CIA itself emphasizes individuality: “employees are valued for their individual contributions toward our mission. Personal goals, interests, and strengths play largely...[and] continue to serve us well...” (Central Intelligence Agency 2016). Beyond the individual, bureaucratic survival, the first and most important of normative behavior for a governmental organization as a whole, is especially relevant for the CIA as a civilian organization (Turner 2004). To be successful, the CIA must survive, with the consent of both the president and the public, indirectly through the president. The CIA is able to amalgamate its special interests into a functional base to help in this task, akin to the United Nations relying on support from sovereign states or the federal US government relying on the support from domestic state-level corroboration (Mitrany 1948). This structural functionalism undoubtedly plays an important role in assuring that the unique voice of the CIA, through a support base in the intelligence community, is heard while being supported. The CIA uses these “policy networks’ ...to build consensus among the

relevant elite groups in support of their policies” (Risse-Kappen 1991: 485). Its unique network utilizes additional internal norms of secrecy and concurrent exceptionalism to promote new normative behavior, a type of “pork barreling and logrolling” (Suchman and Eyre 1992: 143) that reflects its unique internal motivations. These traits and methods give it a powerful bargaining position to suggest alternatives to threats; unelected members of the CIA are better established to withstand popular criticism or mistakes than the temporary tenure of a US president. So while the organization is still under the authority of the chief executive, with the support of the intelligence community as a whole, it has more room to gamble on what may be perceived as risky behavior. The CIA can utilize its independence (both as an organization and through its composition of independent analysts/operatives) to forge its own path, accessing its “policy network” in the intelligence community and capitalizing on the fungible currency of political power. If the US public were to extort the president to turn on the CIA, operations and analysis might be threatened. But through its independent, bureaucratic norms, and the “intersubjectively shared, value-based expectations of appropriate behavior” (Boekle et al. 1999: 4), the CIA can introduce unprecedented behavior as a specialized response – especially in a securitized environment. When the incumbent administration identifies and communicates threats to national security, the CIA, with the backing of its constructed community, can respond.

6.3.2 All-but-innocent terrorists

One of the major steps to mobilize the NSC of the US and combat terror was the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF), authorized by the US Congress three days after the 11 September attacks and signed by President Bush on 18 September 2001 – supplemented by the 2002 Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq – providing the legal justification for “prosecuting” international terror. As of early May 2016, the 2001 AUMF is still in effect, allowing for military and coercive action, according to the authorization, against “acts of treacherous violence” committed by international terrorist organizations. Though explicitly intended to destroy the perpetrators of the 11 September attacks – cutting

off the head of the snake, that is, of al Qaeda and its affiliates – the legislation has proved to be a useful instrument in capturing enemy combatants in general and attempting to twist them enough into revealing information. It was the critical event of the 11 September attacks that started the search for new normative action. Before 11 September 2001: “the idea of holding terrorists outside the U.S. legal system was not under consideration...not even for Osama bin Laden” (Priest 2005: 3). The external shock was deemed threatening enough by US leadership, and conveyed convincingly enough to a US audience, that an exceptional solution was necessary. Between 2002 and 2003, US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld sanctioned 24 of 35 “enhanced” interrogation methods (Bellamy 2006: 122) as a corollary to the AUMF. A preeminent organization tasked with applying this alternative normative action, and the subject of this case study, was the CIA.

6.4 Coercive Interrogation as Enhanced Torture

Traditional torture is internationally banned according to numerous declarations, conventions, charters, and more, such as Article 5 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights; Article 3 of the 1949 Geneva Conventions; the 1984 United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment¹; as well as in motley regional or other edicts – and domestically by the US Constitution and other legislation. The US Joint Chiefs of Staff, in the midst of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, prohibited inhumane treatment of detainees (Joint Chiefs of Staff 2005). The US Uniform Code of Military Justice prohibits US forces from “cruelty,” “maltreatment,” or “oppression” of detainees (Mayer 2005). President Bush declared in 2002: “I call on all governments to join with the United States and the community of law-abiding nations in prohibiting, investigating, and prosecuting all acts of torture...and we are leading this fight by example ” (Bush cited in Bowden 2003: 56). Torture is thusly labeled, legally and

¹ Interestingly, the UN Convention against Torture distinguishes between torture and *other* “cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment which do not amount to torture.” Both are prohibited, but only torture in absolute terms (see Slater 2006: 195).

morally, as a “crime against humanity” and protected as a negative human right (i.e. the right to not be tortured). The core debate has been definitional (that is, discursive): “the key legal question in relation to torture is therefore not so much whether it is legal, but whether specific acts that stop short of causing life-threatening pain, such as sensory deprivation and placing people in so-called ‘stress positions’, are properly defined as torture” (Bellamy 2006: 127). By selectively defining “torture,” the US can avoid adverse implications (Bowden 2003). In addition, in a single discursive maneuver, the Bush administration was able to use the term “unlawful combatants” to exclude detainees from what might have been due process.

The power of language allows for the sidestepping of the entire international legal system; language allows the certain activities in the interest of US cultural norms to continue, and prevents obstacles from intruding on the implementation of its national security interests and the securing of its cultural priorities. Historically, other state authorities have attempted similar maneuvers, with different results – French commissions on acts in Algeria (see the Wullaume Report) and the UK authorities on Northern Ireland (see the Compton Committee) concluded that the simulated drownings and sleep deprivation used in the respective conflicts (among other similar techniques also used by the CIA), ultimately, were abusive and illegitimate. The European community confirmed this conclusion in 1976, claiming that the systematic institutionalization of torturous techniques were a violation of human rights (Bellamy 2006: 128-129). Regardless, certain European Union countries have hosted CIA blacksites where coercive interrogation took place, and countries such as the UK have refused “to rule out information extracted from torture in court proceedings” (Kenneth Roth of Human Rights Watch cited in Slater 2006: 213). Meanwhile, in Israel, torture under emergency circumstances is circumstantially condoned (see Landau Commission). Each state has taken a slightly different approach, while the US and Israel lead international society in liberalizing “torture” regimes.

These precedents stem from a long history of “barbaric” versus “civilized” discourse, enhanced by Judeo-Christian moral imperative (Slater 2006), culminating perhaps in Enlightenment ideals and being progressively institutionalized via Weberian rationalist-legal structures. Curiously, in general, killing is justified often as a necessary evil, while purposeful harm is mostly prohibited. Western identity, especially, has incorporated concepts of just war theory – jus ad bellum and jus in bello – that legitimize violent action only if it abides by certain restraints, that is, the rules and standards of the contemporary age. Not playing by these rules results in labels of “coward,” “traitor,” “outsider,” or other pejorative designations that places enemies as the Other. The current label is terrorist. These “extraordinary” circumstances allow authorities to securitize the situation and employ countermeasures. But even these countermeasures are limited, by the same ideational concepts that determine identity. Internal discourse, the “language of us,” prescribes action. When the US chooses to sanction “enhanced interrogation” to torture detainees, it does so in its own particular way to safeguard conscious and subconscious notions of liberty and human rights. The way the US tortures is different than that of other nation-states. By abstaining from full-fledged torture, the US can protect its image, not only as reflected upon the international community, but, more importantly, to uphold domestic values and claim necessity of a “lesser evil” doctrine (Bellamy 2006). According to public documents (notwithstanding classified sources), the US has not committed severe “barbarism” but only a “civilized” adaptation of torture in line with its cultural values – the so-called enhanced interrogation that is designed to frighten instead of to terrify. Otherwise full-grade torture, as the grotesque infringement of the liberty of non-combatants, would correlate with terror itself.

Coercive interrogation begins with extraordinary rendition, again delineating between domestic values in sovereign space and the external Other. Rendition and prolonged detention during emergency is not an unprecedented norm – US President Abraham Lincoln suspended due process for Confederate detainees during the US Civil War, and President Franklin D. Roosevelt did the same to more

than 100,000 Japanese-Americans in the initial stages of World War II. As opposed to these previous forms of rendition that sought to bring offenders into the sovereign to face justice (or just prevent risk), however, the GWOT renders suspects to facilities abroad. In this process it, paradoxically, applies its internalized conceptions of justice to what it considers fighters of foreign values. Because the risk is not domestic – as the case of the Confederates and Japanese-Americans – it can clearly be considered an issue of external penetration of domestic ideals. In other words, the political representatives of the US feel pressure to preserve domestic norms, rules, culture, and identity – and do so discursively. And “given the large number of democracies involved in the extraordinary rendition of terrorism suspects, including several ostensibly liberal states such as Sweden, it is possible to conclude that this type of extra-legal procedures has become a normalized aspect of post-11 September counterterrorism operations of democracies” (Kurtulus 2012: 43). The US is not the only Western case.

Locations to which suspects are rendered are widespread, and include Saudi Arabia, Egypt Sudan, Syria, Jordan, Morocco, Yemen, Singapore, the Philippines, Thailand, and Iraq in general, as well Bagram airbase in Afghanistan, the island of Diego Garcia, and Guantánamo Bay in Cuba in particular, and even mobile sites on US Navy warships and other undisclosed locations (Bowden 2003: 54; Kurtulus 2012: 43). As a modern Operation Condor – involving Islamists instead of communists – the US can oversee the punishment of suspected offenders while simultaneously trying to avoid direct implication of dirty hands. Of course, when procedures take place directly by US authorities, such as at Guantánamo, plausible deniability becomes harder to defend. This ongoing tension is a result of the securitization efforts of President Bush to highlight US identity in contrast to foreign threat – limited all the while by the identity itself. This identity, as deconstructed earlier, is represented by ideals of “liberty, equality, individualism, representative government, and private property” (Huntington 2004: 41), with much of these tenets coming from US religious culture, including cultural influence of Christianity and subcultural influence of first Puritanism and then Protestantism. The state – representing the

antithesis of Islamist political values – uses the CIA to defend these ideas of “right” against infidels while concurrently applying the same morals, such as of human rights, abstaining from full-fledged torture. A majority of Americans (55%) agreed with this approach as it occurred, and supported keeping Guantánamo Bay open as late as 2010 (Condon 2010). Similarly, US polls confirmed widespread domestic support of the “torture” of terrorist suspects (Kurtulus 2012: 46). In places such as Guantánamo, coercive interrogation can make its impermanent mark while essentially occurring without a trace – as part protection of domestic ideals and part serious response to domestic threat. Globalization disseminates cultures of national security to contrast the Other, and NSC utilizes securitization as part of the fight.

This limited coercion, in isolated places, involves methods such as positions of physical stress, sensory and sleep deprivation, forced nudity, solitary confinement, verbal beratement, loud music, exposure to excessive temperatures, drugging (such as with “methamphetamines tempered with barbiturates and cannabis” [Bowden 2003: 57]), general degradation, and other methods originating from the 1963 CIA Kubark Manual on interrogation techniques. In the abstract, disrupting routine and unmooring the “anchors of sanity” (Bowden 2003: 52) are considered effective and preferable forms of interrogation. This creates fear, not necessarily of further pain, but of the collapse of the interogatees constructed reality and beliefs – the annihilation of a fully functioning Self and erasure of identity. Interrogation is the art of breaching identity by using shared language to deconstruct a detainees social structure, as “an interrogator who penetrates that [constructed Other] secret society, unraveling its shared language, culture, history, customs, plans, and pecking order, can diminish its hold on even the staunchest believer...the most important skill for an interrogator is to know the prisoner’s language” (Bowden 2003: 64). Speaking the same language, and using it to create a new context, can convince even heavily indoctrinated individuals, such as Islamic fundamentalists, of the inferiority of one identity over another. While language communicates similarities within a culture, it also can effectively communicate dissimilarities between cultures, and

used with precision (and certain restraint) can be an efficacious tool at processing external violators *and* maintaining the internal codes of domestic values.

As such, even these coercive techniques, though definitely abusive, are a far cry from traditional methods involving burning, cutting, shocking, pulling, screwing, branding, impaling, and other painful mutilations still used, even today, by certain other states. Instances of “full” torture, to highlight the contrast, deserve to be quoted at length:

“Saddam Hussein’s police force burned various marks into the foreheads of thieves and deserters, and routinely sliced tongues out of those whose words offended the state. In Sri Lanka prisoners are hung upside down and burned with hot irons. In China they are beaten with clubs and shocked with cattle prods. In India the police stick pins through the fingernails and fingers of prisoners. Maiming and physical abuse are legal in Somalia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, Sudan, and other countries that practice sharia; the hands of thieves are lopped off, and women convicted of adultery may be stoned to death. Governments around the world continue to employ rape and mutilation, and to harm family members, including children, in order to extort confessions or information from those in captivity.”

(Bowden 2003: 53)

When compared to the above, the isolating, shouting at, pushing of, degrading, and other “lite” abuse of detainees held by the US can be considered relatively innocent. If the CIA employed similar methods as common in more authoritarian regimes, it could not point with sincerity to a desire to uphold liberal norms; it would have no excuse to mistreat its prisoners. But because of US ideas of culture and normative identity – as this analysis argues – even in a successfully securitized environment, the US and its citizens sanction only “torture lite” that might batter suspected terrorists a bit, while causing no long-lasting physical or serious mental harm. In fact, according to interview research by Mark Bowden (2003: 56): “everybody in the world knows that if you are arrested by the United States, nothing bad will happen to you. ” In logs of interrogation released by *TIME Magazine* in 2002, the “20th hijacker” detainee, Mohammed al Qahtani, receives occasional homemade meals and electrocardiographic, computerized axial tomographic (CAT), and ultrasound scans by a medical specialist flown-in from abroad to perform the costly

medical examinations – as well as the typical, coercive abuse in a consistent fashion – treatment resulting overall in not much more than moderate mental strain and gratuitous tears.² According to *The New Yorker* (Mayer 2005), some statistics show “Guantánamo detainees got more frequent medical treatment than most Americans.” Other suspected terrorists received “honey-glazed chicken” or “lemon-baked fish” (Mayer 2005) as rations.

Even the Kubark Manual, in an attempt to manipulate the ego, recommends in all seriousness interrogating subjects on the (obscure/non-existent) identities of “Spinoza and Mortimer Snerd” – a veiled jest at the relative simplicity (and relative innocence) of certain techniques. This type of language is not expected from professional “torturers” that will attempt any means to reach their goals. In addition, al Qaeda’s own “Manchester Manual” suggests Islamists “complain of mistreatment while in prison” and insist “torture was inflicted on them” (Cited in Mayer 2005). The techniques used in coercive interrogation are mild enough to be applied by the US to its own personnel – with willing, sane participants – in Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape (SERE) programs nationwide. On the other hand, numerous suspects have perished in US custody after coercive interrogations, perhaps most notoriously when Gul Rahman died from hypothermia at the CIA “Salt Pit” in northern Kabul, Afghanistan (Senate report on torture) and when a “ghost” detainee, unregistered (and thus unchecked by medical personnel) at Abu Ghraib, perished after wounds sustained during arrest (Johnston 2004). Others have attempted (or succeeded in committing) suicide, including at Guantánamo Bay (Mayer 2006).

² *Note:* Mohammed al Qahtani is suspected of being the “20th hijacker” destined for United Airlines Flight 93, the aircraft probably headed to destroy the White House but whose hijackers were overpowered as it crashed off-target in a field in Pennsylvania. Al Qahtani was rejected by a vigilant immigration officers at the US border about one month before the 11 September 2001 attacks, and Orlando International Airport footage shows the apparent vehicle of Mohamed Atta – the 11 September ringleader – waiting for his arrival. This example vividly shows how even during the interrogation of al Qahtani, US authorities demonstrated considerable restraint towards the ill-treatment of a major potential terrorist.

Conclusion

The CIA established a new norm of enhanced interrogation within the context of the GWOT, responding to an external threat to NSC and mobilized by overtures of political securitization. Because of its secrecy, it was able to advance quickly, with little public resistance, to the rule-making phase of identity formation. The underlying justification was the explicit need to defend national security – and the concurrent culture – from threats constructed in the post-11 September 2001 era. Securitization was the process that allowed for the introduction of these new norms, their spread for numerous years, and their near institutionalization. But even the schism in normative behavior that securitization opened only allowed a modified form of enhanced interrogation to enter – “torture lite” (Bowden 2003). US national security culture is still based on a strategic, national culture with strong liberal roots that is able to resist radical, rapid change. As a sort of “obligatory action” (Suchman and Eyre 1992: 148), the US invoked these roots when considering its identity and the apparent threat, prescribing action based on self-reflection and context. The symbolic nature of a US – or more broadly, Western – identity dominated questions of materialistic, rational response in an ideational fight for relevancy.

History is inefficient, where “the pressures of survival are sporadic rather than constant, crude rather than precise, and environments vary in the extent to which they dictate outcomes” (March and Olsen 1998: 955). In a bid to make sense of this unruly and chaotic nature, states form their own rules and adjust their identities accordingly. Over time, this produces a whitewashed historicity that functions to serve as a base of perspective, a symbolic identity, from which a state can choose how to react to external threats or shocks. Specifically, in the case of the CIA employing coercive interrogation, two main camps are equally set, one declaring the acts as torture and the other as not. Both views are “true” – *because adherents believe them to be*. Each reality is a constructed interpretation of the facts, and in that way each reality is correct. Claiming one is better or “more right” than the other

is a matter of relative discursive perspective. Proving one or the other is not an issue of determining black or white, but of identifying the gray area in-between.

Within the world of counterterrorism, there is status-building and envy, funding- and turf-battles that reflect a very human tendency to see what they do as valuable, and to promote programs and budgets, office building and staff hiring, that support specific agendas (Priest and Arkin 2010). The GWOT itself is “ideological-religious in its rhetorical outlook” (Kurtulus 2012: 37); securitization introduces it as a societal issue. Individuals provide their own subjective values, and as a group they establish a community to reinforce the individual leanings with greater legitimacy. A CIA analyst will want recognition that her security work is valued, and “right,” and can use a securitized environment to add a new perspective that might not normally be acceptable. This internal socialization, in turn compounded by the external shocks (such as 11 September attacks, or the 2003 Iraq invasion), will continue to push for the securing and further development of identity, as a kind of race to be the “one true Scotsman” of a certain age. By introducing the norm of indefinite detention and enhanced interrogation and (as well as norms of targeted killings), the CIA has attempted to contribute a cultural attribute and in the process help with identifying and eradicating the problem of the Other. While enhanced interrogation was eventually rejected, indefinite detention is in legal limbo. Targeted killings – a potential area for further research as a cultural value – essentially have been accepted as valid normative behavior.

A better grasp of identity allows us to not only understand ourselves, and others, but also how others understand us. In rational cost-benefit analysis, the US will choose to uphold what it determines to be most beneficial – in this case its preference for total victory over some humanitarian norms. Culturally, the former takes precedence over the latter when it involves the battleground of identity. Abstaining from torturing its constructed enemies has been shown to not bring utilitarian benefit to the US; simultaneously the US has utilized a form of “torture lite” in direct application of its values that gives it a better liberal bargaining

position. The idea is to look at rationality that ends as an objective accumulation of set interests, but that has relied on the emotional and personal build-up of subjective interests such as norms, rules, and culture as a (changing) product through the use of language and establishment of identity as a process. Symbolism plays a large role in both product and process, by simplifying reality and representing the traditional dyad of “good” versus “evil.” The 11 September attacks were a terrible tragedy from the perspective of the US; the 11 September attacks were a courageous victory from the perspective of al Qaeda. These conclusions are a result of thorough conditioning, represented by the milieu of each nurtured Self. Significance is relative and depends on perception.

According to Samuel P. Huntington, to protect the West from pushing too many of its own forms of normative behavior, it is: “most important, to recognize that Western intervention in the affairs of other civilizations is probably the single most dangerous source of instability and potential global conflict in a multicivilizational world” (Huntington 1998: 312). The value of a multi-dimensional national security culture, coupled with securitization, is that it can be applied to the perspectives of other civilizations. If the US is able to deconstruct and recognize its own inner mechanics, there is more to prevent it from acting in a manner that may be perceived as aggressive or hypocritical. Simultaneously, by virtue of its applicability, the US can analyze international actors’ subjective actions through multiple lenses. An attack on free Americans does not necessarily constitute an attack on American freedom.

In the end, the problem is not torture – as this analysis argues – it is war in the defense of idealized identities. Certain cultural characteristics, such as Christianity, as Islam, condone killing but not suffering. These principles have been institutionalized internationally, enhanced by concepts of Self and Other and symbolized by the reluctance of the FBI, tasked internally to protect the Self against the Self, and the relative willingness of the CIA (and certain elements of the US military), tasked to external threats, to engage in enhanced, coercive interrogations.

It is easier to justify abusive treatment on those that do not adhere to domestically created notions of ideology. The element of urgency inherent in securitization thusly risks the replacement of normative, even cultural action, with new remedies that might not have the most effective results. According to a US military-intelligence officer: “at the time [i.e. 2002-2003], we didn’t even understand what Al Qaeda *was*. We thought the detainees were all masterminds. It wasn’t the case. Most of them were just dirt farmers in Afghanistan” (Mayer 2005). President Bush was able to successfully convince an American audience of their existential threat, and an ideational war was launched in the name of national security. And as of 2016, the material results of an ideological war are still very real.

The most rational form of preventing more extreme forms of abuse of NSC is to encourage elected officials, and their teams of bureaucrats, to use their best observant judgement in extreme situations, “while later seeking to avoid punishment by convincing the courts or public opinion that there was no other choice” (Slater 2006: 201). Otherwise, in the context of the GWOT, the annual input and timely processing of 50,000 US intelligence reports (Priest and Arkin 2010) can hardly be useful in the due process of interrogating detainees. In other words, to “retain the norm and the laws that torture is categorically prohibited, but expect that the authorities will disregard the law – and *rightfully* disregard the law – if torture is the only means to prevent catastrophic terrorist attacks (Slater 2006: 213). A comprehensive ban on all forms of torture is impractical and institutionalizing extreme coercion on a permanent basis will lead to normalization and potential spread, both to wider and deeper dimensions. Meanwhile, the use of state-sanctioned “torture warrants” as suggested by some (Bellamy 2006: 137), even for “torture lite,” risks normalizing torture and allowing it not only to spread as normative behavior but be used as justification for additional, more severe forms of interrogation in exceptional cases – a vicious cycle of torture begetting torture. There is need to preserve the important line between the subjective nature of necessary versus expedient information.

Looking to the future, there are promising possibilities in avoiding the securitizing traps that unjustly conflate issues of society and politics. The key is to distinguish between ideas of applicable value, such as liberty, and ideologies of certain states at the certain point in time, such as rigid applications of NSC, that might limit interpretations of alternative solutions. Because “the only important changes whence the renewal of civilisations results, affect ideas, conceptions, and beliefs” (Le Bon 2001: 7), new thoughts can break the strict international regime represented most often academically as realism. Simultaneously, theories such as liberal institutionalism can benefit from incorporating the reality of a constantly changing reality. Neither the US, nor academia, will benefit endlessly from all-or-nothing strategies. Particular prospective solutions can include repealing the 2001 AUMF – an outdated excuse to legally justify much normative action that no longer helps preserve societal security, or even, arguably, political security. Modern terrorism is still a political crime, and “policing an issue – rather than fighting a war – acknowledges that the threat will continue indefinitely with the primary goal being to address it in a way that most effectively balances costs and benefits rather than achieving victory once and for all” (McIntosh 2015: 32). Operations by police officers can legally achieve similar results with less blowback, and covert operations, such as by the CIA, can offer a backdoor “lesser evil” solution used only against actual impending threats. Otherwise, when “one looks at both terrorism and counterterrorism from the same perspective, similarities and parallel developments are noticed at strategic, tactical, structural, and discursive levels” (Kurtulus 2012: 52). And the last pragmatic solution for the US is to fight terror with terror.

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Master's Thesis Proposal

Strategickou kulturu a Sekuritizace ohledně americké zahraniční bezpečnostní služby (CIA)

Strategic Culture and Securitization vis-à-vis the Central Intelligence Agency *Working paper*

Abstract:

Beyond traditional questions of the role of intelligence communities in society, I will ask how members of the intelligence community are able to construct their own reality, withdrawn from and yet remain completely relevant within the social and international system in which they operate. My work will study the politicization and securitization, according to the Copenhagen School [Wæver], of the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the concurrent effects of domestic, constructivist identity formation in the cultural-institutional and collective identity world of national security [Katzenstein]. In other words, I plan to explore in an intrinsic case study how the CIA is able to manufacture much of its own security culture and avoid shared popular norms while simultaneously enforcing them. Does the CIA represent the people and their values? Or does the CIA create its own culture, and if so, can it preserve its own values in the face of democracy? How does the CIA attempt to accomplish these goals? If the CIA is able to create and successfully maintain its own internal regime, does this regime potentially extend beyond the US, and if so, how wide and/or deep? Much of my empirical research will depend on discursive analysis and materials published within or about the United States, and by the CIA itself, as well as international reactions both official and projected in the public sphere. The timeframe of the study will take place in the post-Cold War period.

key-words: intelligence community; strategic culture; securitization; language; identity; legitimacy/credibility; rules/norms/values

Conceptualization/theory

The classic dialectic in international relations theory pits realist and liberal perspectives head-to-head. But an important, evolving paradigm explores how to help understand the debate - constructivism. Ideas and the distribution of these ideas shape the social structure we live in, developing culture through historical and social experiences that go beyond human nature. Interests between actors vary, and how these interests determine security through national policy is essential to understanding interpretative methods of behavior and learning processes [Wendt]. The shared knowledge, inherent in the rules and norms of the US intelligence community, especially the CIA, forms both the strategic culture and securitization that dictates much of foreign policy. In this metastasis, we see realpolitik and idealpolitik both clash and reinforce each other. Institutional values of both war and peace create the culture that allows for death in the pursuit of life. The Self and

Other align as polar opposites, and it appears the internal regime of the CIA has the power to communicate this dynamic to a relatively benign and accepting general public.

Methodology

The constructivist method allows for interpretation of meanings and influences of change. We will thus see more discursive analysis and conceptual precedents and less empirical validations and explanations of individual mechanisms [Zehfuss]. Rules and language (especially in dialogue and debate) are essential to exploring the context that is so crucial understanding [Onuf]. My mainly reflectivist methodology will dismantle the rules that create meaning for human social relations and provide a purpose for the US intelligence community, which perhaps not so surprisingly is able to bend public perception and influence public opinion, creating a community within a community in the process. I plan to portray how specific intranational and international context gives an “intersubjectivity” [Kratochwil] and certain meaning to action [Zehfuss], through the dialogue and identity formation of securitization and national security culture, respectively. This allows for a “universal” knowledge that can balance the public projection of a single truth (i.e. democratic, liberal, market-based societies) concurrently with subjectively determined observations that claim in secret a need for mass surveillance, torture, and assassinations.

Operationalization

I will qualitatively measure the construction of identity, and counter-identity, in the language, actions, and perceptions (mostly in the international sphere) of the CIA in the US intelligence community. Values, in both securitization and national security culture, will be identified; the language of these concepts will be deconstructed. My empirical evidence will follow Wendt’s constructivist middle-ground, including both rationalist and reflectivist approaches coupled with Kratochwil’s emphasis on language, thought, and law. Analysis will explore the expressive instances of both logic and emotion that maintain the strong position of the CIA in the US intelligence community, particularly through shared meaning and context presented by the government.

Selection of case

The single case of the CIA has been chosen - as the most impactful, well-known, and well-researched intelligence agency - to represent a sample of the effects of culture and identity in national security, as well as the securitization of foreign policy. Timeframe is limited to the post-Cold War era in general, and the global war on terror in particular, due to the fundamental shift in threat perception; the US homeland was attacked not less than a decade after the collapse of the Soviet Union and found itself facing a new existential threat in global terrorism. Further research could apply these concepts to motley intelligence agencies and communities worldwide to test suitability of application, expanding also the breadth (into past and future) for the same cases.

Definition of data

Strategic culture can be defined as a historical process of developing and defining the norms of national security through time. As these patterns of behavior compound upon themselves over time, we can attempt to take a snapshot of US strategic culture by framing the national security dialogue within the creation and administration of the CIA since the National Security Act of 1947, focusing on archived speeches (especially in the aftermath of 9/11), current public statements (both emanating from and directed towards the CIA), and official online presence (Twitter, Facebook, etc.) of the CIA. In addition, I will analyze data endorsed by the CIA, including selections from the “Studies in Intelligence” journal (unclassified edition), monographs published on the CIA website, and un/declassified documents such as National Security Estimates and the Senate Intelligence Committee report on the CIA’s Detention and Interrogation Program. The use of illegally leaked documents is under consideration.

Empirical analysis/observation

This single case of the CIA in particular, and the US intelligence community in general, is meant to be an exploratory venture into the applicability of the language and identity construction throughout status and activity. The extent of inter-intelligence relationships and liaison will also be noted, as well as the tug-and-pull between politics and security culture. While theoretical supposition (principally the combination of securitization and strategic culture) might require especially extensive investigation, empirical analysis of core language and identity projection in hardcopy (i.e. textual; recorded) form will also be utilized. Results will document both denoted and connoted meanings.

Conclusions (*anticipated*)

The internal regime of the CIA allows it to project a didactic culture through both securitization and its interpretation of US strategic culture. This environment, though seemingly contradictory to popular norms, is understood to create the necessary security in an anarchic international system. But does this regime have the potential to evolve or dissolve as internal/external context changes?

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