Identity, Securitization, and New Norm Creation: The evolution of US normative behavior during the Global War on Terror

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Abstract

This article explores domestic security policy and international threats through a constructivist lens, examining how the US Central Intelligence Agency functionally employs 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 cultural identity (i.e. a product) and security as a subjective act (i.e. a process). In particular, National Security Culture (the product) and securitization (the process) can together allow for the evolution of normative behavior. Empirical results show that techniques of enhanced interrogation, practiced furtively during the Global War on Terror, were introduced as new internal norms due to successful securitization. These norms, however, did not coalesce as rules, and through the President Bush administration remained a distinct "torture lite."

Keywords

Central Intelligence Agency; culture; discourse; enhanced interrogation; identity; intersubjectivity; language; National Security Culture; norms; rules; securitization; torture

Introduction

This work aims to use constructivist theory – as a bridge between (neo)realism and (neo)liberalism – to propose the constitutional reality of what is relational. The two theories of realism and liberalism predicate the importance of international anarchy in determining world order, or in other words, the absence of a governing superstructure with the power to reward or punish. But constructivism suggests even international anarchy does not necessarily allow for unrestrained behavior (Wendt 1992). Therefore, and in light of the ongoing Global War on Terror, this paper attempts to analyze the security cultures that states build under the influence of constructivist mindsets, and apply these so-called National Security Cultures to contemporary processes of securitization. In general, the first conceptional part of this paper will focus on US National Security Culture by exploring the construction of perceptions as facilitated by norms, rules, culture, and identity; the second section explores how language transmits these concepts and in particular, how it applies to the securitized threat of terrorism within the Global War on Terror. The case study will apply National Security Culture and securitization specifically to techniques of coercive interrogation, practices that both disrupt but also reflect the normative behavior of the US Central Intelligence Agency. Overall, this work asks: how can a group such as al Qaeda provoke a radical response from the Western world; effectively, was "torture" socialized as acceptable behavior? This study finds that, vis-à-vis international security, external threats (especially combined with extreme events), exacerbated by ideas of identity, have the power to alter normative behavior – *but only to a limited extent*.

Methodology and operationalization

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. Constructivist theory emphasizes ideas, language, social interaction, change, collective identity, shared context, different meanings, beliefs, subjectivity, and exclusivity. 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. To simplify: ideational terms dictate the social condition of the state. Social conditioning, thereafter, determines materialistic interpretations (Wendt 1992; Mercer 1995; Katzenstein 1996; Desch 1998; Campbell 1998).

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, such as 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. 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 (CIA) within the Global War on Terror (GWOT).

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 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. The conclusions drawn from typical cases are informative about the processes analyzed" (Balzacq 2011b: 34). The case study was chosen due to its depth, importance, and relevance to current obsessions with national security and terror, especially since 2001. Interpretation and perspective dominate. Tautology plays a lesser role, as: "from the point of view of absolute truth a cube or a circle are invariable geometrical figures, rigorously defined by certain formulas…*By perspective* [emphasis added] 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 – some leaked or declassified work, other reports, reviews, statements, laws, and additional sources, together provide sufficient empirics to assemble a largely complete picture of the internal machinations of the CIA with regard to national security.[i] *(see endnote)*

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 cultural identity. 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 the National Security Culture product, 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 normative behavior (that is, the US structure of National Security Culture) connect with agents (that is, CIA agency) (see Checkel 1998).

Empirical data draws from primary sources such 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 (e.g. drone warfare and so-called "targeted killings"), as well as by considering alternative theoretical explanations.

Defining National Security Culture

National Security Culture (NSC), in short, is a type of domestic social organization, and determines preferences of action – the organization of political strategy from a global perspective. NSC is constructed of "codes, rules, recipes, and assumptions which impose a rough order on conceptions" (Johnston 1995: 45). NSC helps determine order, ideas of causality, and issues of trust, limiting action as a sort of mentality used "instrumentally to eliminate alternative institutions, ideologies or behaviors from the body politic" (Ibid.). 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. The functioning of NSC can be deconstructed into three main tenents: 1) norms (perscribing current action); 2) rules (proscribing alternatives); 3) culture (preserving previous behavior patterns and predicting future allowed/forbidden actions).

Norms

Norms answer the questions: "Who are we; what do we do?" In essence, norms can be defined as methods of behavior that reflect apparent societal values. 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 at a certain point in time. Norms can also be employed 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 dominant behavior.

Norms can be created, and also rejected, with relative ease. 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). In the process of legitimizing a set of subjective norms – through consensus – states develop rules.

Rules

Rules answer the question: "Why does it matter who we are?" Rules help define models of appropriate behavior, encouraging norms and discouraging deviation. Nicholas Onuf (2014: 1-2) describes rules as "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. 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. International rules, often reinforced by both customary and traditional law, shape expectations in a more coercive way. In their legal form, states make rules into laws, and countries use or follow rules to reinforce legitimacy. The assumption follows, that states operate less in an environment of anarchy than in a system of self-imposed limitations; the US, for example, 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). 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 (with major ideologies such as imperialism, communism, and capitalism as useful examples). 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. 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 can make rules, but interpretations change.

Culture

Culture answers the question: "Who have we been in the past?" Essentially, culture is the normative, rules-based behavior of an entity in the past. Culture thus also suggests asking: "Who might we be in the future?" Peter J. Katzenstein (1996: 4) defines culture as "collective models of nation-state authority or identity, carried by custom or law." 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 the 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 non-universal concepts of philosophy and politics that were formed over time – in other words, the normative behavior of a

state, as constrained by its own domestic rules, compounded throughout its history. 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). The properties of culture are transitive and dynamic, though at any one point they can be considered objective variables.

The idea of culture borrows from institutional context as a social determinant (Katzenstein 1996). In other words, 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. Discourse in this way allows "statesmen and societies [to] actively shape the lessons of the past in ways they find convenient" (Snyder 1991: 30).

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

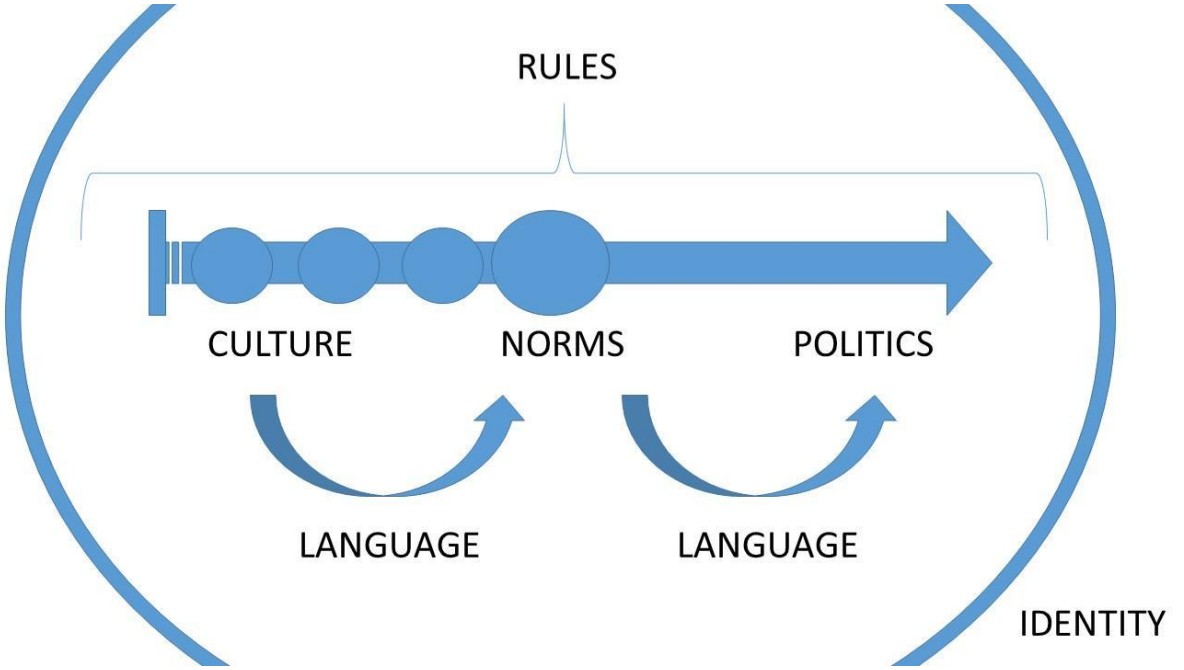
Culture (as past behavior), norms (as current behavior), and rules (as prescribed behavior), compound over time into a domestic identity. This identity – with its corresponding values and interests – produces inherent meaning, but also risk, for constituents. National (or sovereign) interests involve defending against this risk to inherent value and protecting the territory, continuity, and belonging of a society from threatening elements of a social world. This 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). Ideational factors represent the underlying motor of this emergence. In an increasingly globalized world, however, there is greater chance of external input from other actors or events – billiard balls that bump up against one other, but also have the power to exchange information or alter perspective. Socially, power and agency lie in ideas. Major external events, threats, or attacks (actual or perceived), provide windows to change ideational values.

Autonomously, 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. 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." Internationally competing identites (and their inherent values) conflict. Not only are choices thereby 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



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Creating Identity

Identity amalgamates previous questions of norms, rules, and culture – a holistic answer to what a state does, how it does it, and its behavioral history. As an all-encompassing concept, identity is the cultural past, normative present, and rules-based future for an entity. Identity, of a nation-state for example, is thus formed and not given or dictated. 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. 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). Otherwise, the "healthy" state will use identity to push congealment or eradication, whether idealizations of fiat justitia, pereat mundus or Third Reich. Establishing a descriptive "body politic" shows not only the internally held values, but also what the system might consider as disease to be purged, as a type of

ethnic cleansing justified *in the eyes of the cleansers*, from infanticide in Grecian Sparta, to Joseph Goebbels' surgical analogies, to George Kennan's "malignant parasite" of communism. A series of dichotomies illustrates the spectrum: subject/object, inside/outside, self/other, rational/irrational, healthy/sick, 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. Losing identity leads to loss of purpose (especially evident, for example, in extreme nationalist ideologies, where identity is significantly more important than life). Identity, through its subjectivity, can foster fear and drive foreign policy. Identity is especially useful for states when it, through language, outlines the possible perceptions and constructions of reality in new, unprecedented situations (Wendt 1992).

Using 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 typically involves two actors: one speaker and one listener. But holistically, language output can reach wider audiences with exponential effect (LeBon 2001). The same discourse (i.e. language) can have a different effect based on the audience. 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" (Ibid.: 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 – uniforms, for example, 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 subjectively constructed, language socializes. Language is thus especially useful when discussing goals and threats within a context of uncertainty or change: the ideal context for securitization.

The securitization of identity

Securitization is the process that mobilizes immediate support for a decision made in response to an apparently existential threat, as communicated through cultural and societal methods such as language. As best articulated by Thierry Balzacq:

> *"…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)

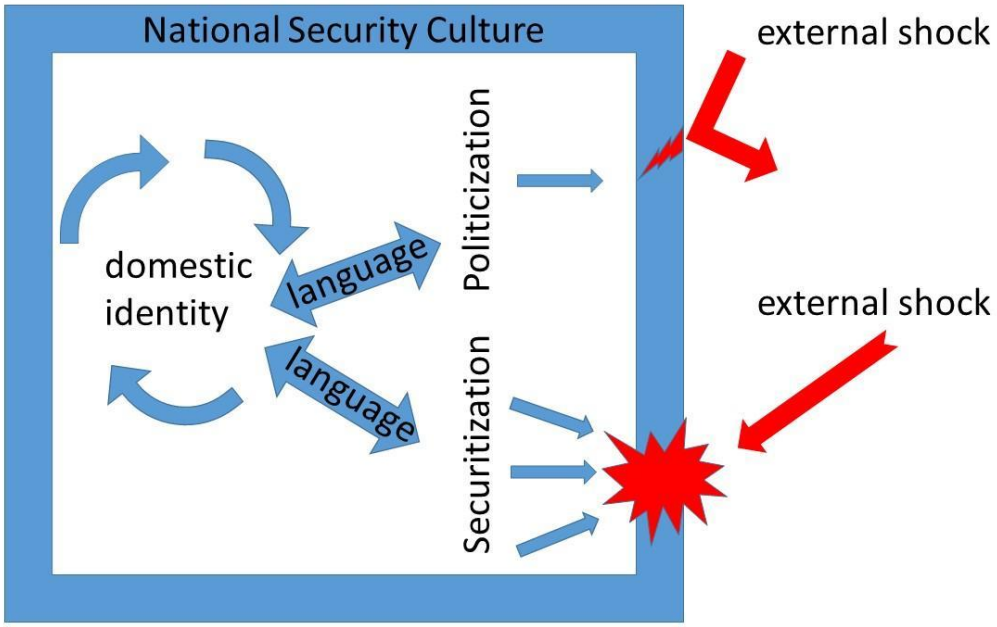
Securitization finds its roots in politicization. To politicize a matter is to take the topic at hand and move it beyond its latent status (Buzan et al.: 1998); in other words, finding and arguing importance, followed by offering a resolution. The process is open, and often entails debate. To proceed 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 was previously normative behavior. Issues can (and do) move along the spectrum of non-politicized, politicized, and securitized. A glaring contrast between politicization and securitization is the audience factor. Securitization involves using language to highlight risk to an audience – especially risk of losing identifying, cultural ideals. Securitization aims to convince an audience of the necessity of an offered solution to an external shock, as visualized in Figure 2.

Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, and Jaap de Wilde elaborate the dialectic process of securitization (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.*" Identity does not form until interaction with the intersubjective – a self-affirming dyadic structure of alter and ego (Wendt 1992). A liberal, democratic, market-based society cannot be defined as identifying without an illiberal, anti-democratic, non-market-based antithesis. And tacitly understood intersubjective concepts will lead to collective memory, an important foundation of securitization (Balzacq 2005). The legitimacy of protecting the perceived value of a referent object is a forefront issue during securitization. The introduction of new

normative behavior during securitization is thus done under the cover of bombastic, high-stakes language such as the speech act.

Figure 2

Ideational *securitization* as a process



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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. When speech acts successfully convince an audience of legitimacy, securitization can solidify the status of an issue and ensure it receives precedence over others. 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. By pointing to an existential risk, there is a rational implication that the threat will be stopped.

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 meaning 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). 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 calculations that points to impending consequences (Balzacq 2005). Discourse gives agency and language mobilizes identity. The 11 September 2001 attacks in the US produced a major shock to American identity; in response, organizations within the US perceived the need for alternative normative behavior. When a collective group, such as the Bush administration during the Global War on Terror, worked to securitize this issue in its political capacity, it can – and has – utilized functional groups, such as the US Central Intelligence Agency, to offer new normative tools as a solution.

Fear and (in)security

This case study was selected to shed light on an important research 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; realist theories would dismiss them out of hand. Even al Qaeda's largest attack on 11 September 2001, 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 intact. Approximately 3,000 noncombatants were tragically killed; the event was doubtlessly a national tragedy. But statistically, in terms of major conflict, the damage was minimal. The response, meanwhile, initiated a declaration of a state of war, two major armed invasions, hundreds of thousands of casualties, 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 GWOT since 2001. The framework for this newest ideational war 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: "who are we" and "what threatens us" as the dominanting sociological framework.

The Bush Administration and the Global War on Terror

The framing and "interpretive dominance" (Paris 2002: 425) securitizing actors such as President Bush are able to promote during the GWOT – focusing on an eschatological outlook – create the exceptional situation that allows for exceptional solutions, especially by controlling the flow of information and meaning. Framing the threat as an existential threat to domestic culture (as later elaborated) 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 and induced a "cultural nationalism" (Roe 2010: 172), where the preservation of Self dominated all else. "Collateral damage" – an important indicator of self-aggrandizement – became a part of everyday vocabulary (Kurtulus 2012: 48) as a price to pay for complete victory. Discourse in the GWOT 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. The president and his administration was thus able to morph the reality of a threatening environment (whether via terrorist tribes or scheming despots) by defining the world around him in culturally identifying terms (Murphy 2003).

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…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. President Bush made a (brave) "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). When "'You're either with us or you're against us'" (Bush 2001b), the recurring result is ostracization, fear, conflict, and post-World War II, the institutionalization of a systematic, organized approach of protecting society beyond traditional militaries. A prominent functional actor in this reorganization has been the CIA.

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 US responded to increasing terrorist incidents 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). Important reforms came to the intelligence community in 2004 when President Bush restructured the system with the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act.

The CIA defines terrorism as "premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents" (USC Title 22, §2656f(d)). This mandate, to prosecute terror, is imposed on an independent and non-departmental CIA that works "primarily for the president…each 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 advocates" (Ibid.: 172). Culturally, operatives in the CIA cultivate an "image of a can-do culture, not unlike the Marine Corps" and "a sense of independence," both which encourage it to execute presidential directives in its own unique fashion (Ibid.: 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 of approximately 3,000 casualties on 11 September 2001, galvanized the nation by invoking – largely through 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 were translated into an insecure *society*. According to the Bush administration, American identity composed a society of certain cultural values; this identity (and thus culture) were penetrated by the Other, through an alternate identity and conflicting values. The threat of terror was presented discursively by the Bush administration as an external, existential issue – our values or theirs – allowing for the introduction of radical solutions.

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 (later supplemented by the 2002 Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq), to provide the legal justification for "prosecuting" international terror. As of 2017, the 2001 AUMF was still in effect. According to the AUMF, this allows for military and coercive action against "acts of treacherous violence" committed by international terrorist organizations, including perhaps unintentionally (15 years later) groups in the Middle East such as Daesh. 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 been used as an effective instrument in extrajudicially capturing enemies of the state and encouraging them to reveal information. It was the critical event of the 11 September attacks that started the search for this 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. The CIA was tasked with applying these new norms.

Coercive Interrogation as Enhanced Torture

Coercive interrogation begins with extraordinary rendition. 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. 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). 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).

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 Punishment; 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 morally, as a "crime against humanity" and protected as a negative human right (i.e. the right not to 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). And in a single discursive sweep, the Bush administration used the term "unlawful combatants" to exclude detainees from what might have been due legal process with a (definitive) judicial answer to the torture question.

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, general degradation, and other methods originating from the Kubark Manual on interrogation techniques. In the abstract, disrupting routine and unmooring the "anchors of sanity" (Bowden 2003: 52) are considered effective forms of enhanced interrogation. This creates fear, not necessarily of further pain, but of the collapse of the interrogatees 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" (Ibid.: 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; in other words, asking: "Is it worth the struggle?" While language communicates similarities within a culture, it can also 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 in a broad sense, 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, degrading, and other "torture lite" (Ibid.) abuse of detainees held by the US can be considered relatively mild. 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 a lighter form of torture that might batter suspected terrorists a bit, while causing no long-lasting physical or serious mental harm. In logs of interrogation released by *TIME Magazine* in 2002, the "20th hijacker" detainee, Mohammed al Qahtani, receives both coercive abuse but also homemade meals and electrocardiographic, computerized axial tomographic (CAT), and ultrasound scans by a medical specialist flown-in from abroad – treatment resulting overall in not much more than moderate mental strain and gratuitous tears. According to *The New Yorker*, some statistics show "Guantánamo detainees got more frequent medical treatment than most Americans" and that suspected terrorists received "honey-glazed chicken" or "lemon-baked fish" as rations (Mayer 2005).

In addition, al Qaeda's own *Manchester Manual* – its de facto field manual – suggests Islamists "complain of mistreatment while in prison" and insist "torture was inflicted on them." 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, however, numerous suspected terrorists 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, 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).

The power of language lubricates 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. By being "unlawful" combatants, regulation regarding their torture need not apply. Historically, other state authorities have attempted similar maneuvers, with different results – French commissions on acts in Algeria (see the Wuillaume 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 have lead liberal international society in liberalizing "torture" regimes. A majority of Americans (55%) agreed with this approach as it occurred, and supported keeping Guantánamo Bay even a decade after the 11 September attacks (Condon 2010). Similarly, within the GWOT, 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 serious response to domestic threat and part protection of domestic ideals.

Conclusion

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 accumulated perspectives. Nation-states, in particular, nurture domestic identities and adapt corresponding interests. This process of socialization constructs a new rationality that transmogrifies uncertain subjectivity into clear objectives: a National Security Culture (NSC). Communication then spreads these ideas imperfectly, and in extreme situations involving the domestic NSC, state (and other) actors can securitize threats. So-called norm entrepreneurs can introduce new normative behavior as a solution for dealing with this securitized threat; in our case

study, the CIA established a new norm of enhanced interrogation within the context of the GWOT. Because of internal consensus (and secrecy), the new norm was able to advance quickly, with little public resistance, to the rule-making phase of identity formation. But even the schism in normative behavior – that securitization legitimized – only allowed a modified form of enhanced interrogation to enter (that is, ultimately, only "torture lite"). This demonstrates that ideas, along with perceptions and interpretations, play a major role in international security.

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