Beyond Emergency Measures: Normative Politics after a Successful Securitization

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Perhaps no other concept has been as powerful or formative as security in relation to politics, both national and international. With roots tracing back to the earliest human communities, its pursuit has a rich and storied history. Indeed, it could be argued that political bodies would not exist were it not for the existence of security questions and the resolution of fear through community. The idea of security has brought individuals together, promoted commodious living and industrial pursuits, fostered intellectual, technological and cultural advancements, and contributed to the expansion of political and social communities. At the same time, it has legitimated wars both foreign and domestic, inculcated and perpetuated authoritarian, totalitarian and dictatorial regimes, elevated certain collective goals and virtues above others, and created out-groups whose insecurity has been seen as necessary for the security of the in-group.

Despite the central focus on security in international relations scholarship over the course of centuries of political thought, questions regarding its precise definition and operationalization remain. What *is* security? How can we define the achievement of security? Who establishes the benchmarks of 'secure' versus 'insecure'? How does the invocation of security impact politics?

Securitization theory, first introduced by the Copenhagen School,[1] begins to answer these questions in a manner that goes beyond the restrictive framework of traditional security studies. This theory gives us a better understanding of how security functions, and why its invocation is so powerful. That said, its present iteration fails to account for the long-lasting political implications that the invocation of security has. In other words, the Copenhagen School begins a new conversation on security which avoids the ontological pitfalls of prior theory, but it does not offer a definitive conclusion on the subject. Present theory provides answers to the process of the invocation of security but it fails to explore the long-term implications of a securitization. To further understand why security has been so dominant in discussions of both national and international politics as well as how it orients political behavior, we must expand the present theory of securitization. Ultimately, we will see that securitizations not only have ramifications in terms of immediate policy responses to threats, but that they also fundamentally alter the baseline from which politics are conducted.

The paper proceeds as follows: First, I briefly recapitulate critical scholarship on the Realist tradition of security before recounting the development of constructivist theories on security. I then examine the theory of securitization, remarking on both the work of the Copenhagen School and its critics. Next, I argue for an expanded version of securitization theory that acknowledges both the role of the perlocutionary effect as well as the various non-linguistic components of a securitizing speech act. With this unified theory of securitization, I then expand the field by developing a theory of post-emergency act implications, suggesting that a successful securitization fundamentally alters normative politics. To do so, I first present a theoretical framework that goes beyond emergency measures before exploring two case studies. Finally, I conclude with a brief

[1] The Copenhagen School is a school of thought led primarily by Ole Wæver and Barry Buzan. Their theorizing on securitization has pushed the envelope on critical security studies. In many ways, the Copenhagen School opened up the first connections between constructivism and security studies, paving the way for all future critical analyses in security studies.

discussion of desecuritization and how it interplays with securitization's impact on the politics of the everyday.

I. SECURITY, DEFINED

Security has been understood for centuries as the sole province of two interrelated units: the state and the military.[2] In this conception, security corresponds with the ability to govern fear, with fear primarily understood existentially and derived from some form of physical, bodily threat. In other words, the traditional construct of security views it from a Hobbesian perspective, where everything outside of the 'we' is inherently and fundamentally threatening.[3] In this world, where the life of man is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short," it is the role of the state to impose law and order domestically and the role of the military to assure the same externally.[4]

Operating with the above definition, security studies has long been dominated by Realist theoreticians. Four assumptions form the basis of Realist security studies: first, that the state is an intellectually coherent, unified unit in international relations capable of feeling fear and insecurity; second, that the international system is structured by anarchy, with the baseline condition of interstate relations being one of existential competition; third, that the world beyond the boundary of the state is inherently threatening and; fourth, that the purpose of security studies is to minimize threat. Together, these four precepts have underlain all Realist approaches to the study of security.

Critical scholarship has recently demonstrated fatal flaws in this Realist ontology. First, the international state system must be understood as dually constituted, as opposed to structurally given as the Realists assume. That is to say, states construct each other and therefore the state system.[5] States cannot conceive of themselves as one sovereign actor in a field of other equally sovereign actors without a conception of the 'Other.' In conceiving this 'Other,' each state legitimates the existence of the other and thus creates a system of interstate relations. At the same time, the state system creates normative boundaries within which states can legitimately operate. In the words of Ruggie, international systems have "generative grammars," which are the "underlying principles of order and meaning that shape the manner of their formation and transformation."[6] States that operate outside the boundary of this grammar are excluded from the international system, seen as either rogue states or not acknowledged at all.

One particularly powerful generative grammar has been that of sovereignty. The concept of the Leviathan has been foundational in Realist security studies, suggesting that the state is both temporally consistent and unified in its conduct within the interstate system. As Walker has succinctly demonstrated, however, the sovereign state has not existed since time immemorial, but rather has been built up over time, with its modern incarnation only coming forth in the last several centuries.[7] Furthermore, the state does not speak with one unified voice in terms of foreign policy; many groups, actors, and interests comprise a state's foreign policy, oftentimes with competing messages.

Second, critical scholars have problematized the structure of anarchy as the ontological precondition of the interstate system. They do not deny that anarchy has ordered international relations over the course of centuries – to do so would be theoretical suicide. Rather, they look to history and chart the development of anarchic thinking in international relations, making the claim that

[2]Buzan et. al, Security: *A New Framework for Analysis*, p. 1.
[3]Huysmans, "Migrants as a security problem," p. 58.
[4]Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 76; Huysmans, "Revisiting Copenhagen," p. 486.
[5]Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, Ch. 5.
[6]Ruggie, "International Regimes, Transactions and Change," p. 380.
[7]For a robust genealogy of sovereignty, see Walker, "Security, Sovereignty, and the Challenge of World Politics"; Walker, "Realism, Change, and International Political Theory."

anarchy is not endogenous to the interstate system but instead is a constructed component. In other words, "anarchy is what states make it," not what makes the state system.[8]

With these critical reflections, we must reject the first Realist assumptions.[9] Without a unified and temporally static sovereign state, there can be no single entity that embodies the fear of the political community. Without anarchy as the constitutive principle of interstate relations, the conception of 'Others' as inherently and automatically threatening must be rejected. And without these two principles, we cannot assume the Realist definition of security to be true; instead, we must reconstruct the idea itself before moving forward.

Although we must now reject the Realist definition of security on ontological grounds, it still provides an important base from which to rebuild the concept. Hobbes and those who followed in his tradition were correct in gauging that security is fundamentally and essentially connected to the conception of fear. "Fear," as Jef Huysmans writes, "is…something humans desire to be freed from."[10] Fear takes many forms, although it is always a manifestation of a perceived threat to values. Which values are viewed as existential depend on the entity feeling fear, although roughly speaking we can understand securitized values as those seen as 'core.'[11]

Before proceeding, it is important to note that not every fear becomes a security concern. Indeed, as Buzan et. al write in *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, "there are intellectual and political dangers in simply tacking the word security onto an ever wider range of issues."[12] Instead, security concerns should be understood as corresponding to those fears that "alter the premises for all other questions."[13] Security concerns thus correspond to threats which promise to change the fundamental mode of existence for a community; if the threat is carried through, there will be no more recourse to 'normal.'

Fundamental or core values are those "that are pursued notwithstanding the costs incurred," or alternatively are those seen as "prerequisite[s] for the enjoyment of other values…"[14] Without the presence and continuity of core values, all other values or goals become unachievable, making the protection of these core values supremely important for the political, social and cultural stability of a community. Core values for the individual are easy to identify, making it straightforward to note potential threats to those values. Identifying the core values of states and political bodies is more difficult, though, as the values that underpin society's longevity are often more nebulous than those that underpin the individual's.[15] Due to the rather abstract nature of fear in international relations, actors reify some 'Other' to rationalize and understand their own insecurity.[16] In this way, statesmen or other powerful actors construct and confirm the core values of a community negatively by identifying specific threats to those very values. Put differently, communal security becomes self-referential, in that it first delineates which values are core for the community before suggesting that these values are under immediate threat. In pointing to an 'Other,' the securitizing actor invokes a Manicheism that describes the Self as fundamentally good and worthy of continuity

[8] Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of It."

[9] For a broader discussion of the ontological shortcomings and inconsistencies within Realist theory, see Ashley, "The Poverty of Neorealism"; Ashley, "The Geopolitics of Geopolitical Space"; Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of It"; Ashley, "Untying the Sovereign State"; Walker, "Realism, Change, and International Political Theory"; Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*.

[10] Huysmans, "Migrants as a security problem," p. 58.

[11] Baldwin, "The Concept of Security," p. 16.

[12] Buzan et. al, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, p. 1.

[13] Jahn et. al in Huysmans, "Revisiting Copenhagen," p. 491; see also Wæver, "Securitization and Desecuritization," p. 52.

[14] Ibid., pp. 16, 18.

[15] The exception to this is war, which threatens the physical continuity and reproducibility of the community. Nevertheless, there is oftentimes a long period of angst and perceived insecurity leading up to the outbreak of kinetic violence that is ordered not by physical fear but by imagined insecurity.

[16] Huysmans, "Migrants as a security problem," p. 58.

while inculcating fear around an 'Other' who is anathema to the 'good' and 'worthy' constitutive values of the referent object.[17] Security then becomes about the management or mitigation of this abstract-cum-representational fear.[18]

From the above discussion, we can now define security concerns as projections of existentially-threatening fear onto a reified 'Other.' Insecurity results from the presence of these 'Others' and is mitigated when the fear assigned to them no longer becomes premise-altering or existential. In opposition to the Realist definition, our constructivist understanding of security does not necessitate that any 'Other' be a security concern by nature; it is only with the addition of an existential threat that an 'Other' becomes securitized. Coincident with this is the acknowledgment that no actor is automatically or fundamentally threatening. Rather, the condition of existential threat is negotiated between the 'Other,' some referent object and the securitizing actor(s). This negotiation, understood as securitization, is where we will next turn.

II. SECURITY, THE ACT

Before embarking on a discussion of how security is invoked and structured, it is important to draw a distinction between 'everyday security' and the term 'security' as understood within the field of international relations. There is, of course, a sense of security intimately tied to the individual that is directly related to a real threat. Lack of security at the individual level is quantifiable and identifiable. At the communitarian level, however, 'security' becomes less identifiable and more about the field of practice itself. As Wæver notes:

> the term 'security' has acquired a number of connotations, assumptions, and images derived from the 'international' discussion of national security, security policy, and the like... in these discussions, the conceptualization of security has little to do with application of the everyday meaning to an object... rather, the label 'security' has become the indicator of a specific problematique, a specific *field of practice*.[19]

It is this second, Wæverian definition of security that is of interest in this paper. How prominent actors engage with this field of practice determines the boundaries of communal security, which is the focus of the following section.

Security, understood as a specific problematique, is fundamentally a discursive process. That is to say, 'security' is not something that *is* because of some real, physical phenomenon with tactile boundaries – it is not an object that can be given or taken away. Rather, it exists through its designation as such. As the Copenhagen School suggests, "by saying the words, something is done... the *word* 'security' is the *act*; the utterance is the primary reality."[20] This process, dubbed 'securitization,' draws heavily on the work of J.L. Austin and speech act theory.

In his initial elucidation of speech act theory, Austin outlines three components to any speech process. The first, known as the locutionary act, is the physical process of 'saying something,' where the noises uttered have a certain mutually-understood definition and meaning.[21] This is rather inconsequential for the theory of securitization – in any discursively-based approach to understanding and explaining phenomena in the world, the physical process of saying something intelligible is a precondition to the performance of some act.

[17] Walker, "Culture, Discourse, Insecurity," p. 496.
[18] Wæver et. al, *Identity, Migration and the New Security Agenda in Europe*, p. 23.
[19] Wæver, "Securitization and Desecuritization," pp. 49-50.
[20] Buzan et. al, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, p. 26; Wæver, "Securitization and Desecuritization," p. 55.
[21] Austin, *How to Do Things With Words*, pp. 94, 108.

This performance of an act, understood as illocution, is Austin's second speech act component. Here he distinguishes the physical process of saying something (locution) with the act of saying some *thing* (illocution): "[the] performance of an act *in* saying something as opposed to performance of an act *of* saying something [*sic*]."[22] For example, when one says the words, "My cat ran away from home," they perform a locutionary act in which they produce a string of noises that have independent and mutually understood meanings. That is to say, each word in the sequence has a defined meaning that others will understand, and the order in which they are spoken will make sense to a listener. At the same time, they perform an illocutionary act by offering a reality to the listener. In saying that their cat ran away from home, they construct a narrative in which they have both a cat and a home. Regardless of whether this narrative is factual or not, the actor has negotiated a reality between themselves and the audience in which they have a missing cat.

Translated to securitization theory, it is not the physical presence or non-presence of security that matters, but rather the creation of a sense of insecurity that determines if, when and how security is invoked. It is in this manner that security becomes self-referential. In naming something a security threat, the illocutionary act first establishes what 'security' itself is before removing it from some community.

For the Copenhagen School, this is the full extent of securitization. Once an issue has been labeled as existential by a securitizing actor, it is elevated "beyond the established rules of the game," which then "justifies the use of extraordinary measures to handle [threats]."[23] At this point, the securitizing move has been made and, according to the initial enumeration of the theory, the process is complete.

There is a third step, however, that is necessary for the securitizing move to be elevated to a successful securitization. This can be understood through Austin's third component of a speech act: the perlocutionary act. According to him, the perlocutionary effect is the "achieving of certain effects by saying something. . . [it is] what we bring about or achieve *by* saying something."[24] In other words, the perlocutionary aspect of a speech act is the effect which a statement has on its audience.

The role of the audience is of the utmost importance in the securitization framework, and one that deserves more emphasis.[25] The illocutionary component of the security speech act is not so much the process by which security is created, but rather the facilitating condition that allows the "intersubjective *construction* of security."[26] It is then up to the audience to accept the premises of the illocution; without this acceptance, the speech act (or securitizing move) is unsuccessful, failing to move the issue at hand beyond the boundaries of normative politics.

Before moving on from this point, it is important to understand exactly what the perlocutionary effect is, and what it distinctly is not. Too often, the perlocutionary effect is understood by security studies scholars as the acceptance of proposed emergency policies by the audience. This is not the case, although it would certainly be a logical second-order effect. Rather, the perlocutionary effect of a successful securitization is purely the acceptance of a securitarian grammar or logic superimposed onto whatever issue is at stake.[27] In other words, the perlocutionary effect is ideational acceptance

[22]Ibid., p. 99.
[23]Buzan et. al, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, pp. 26, 21.
[24]Austin, *How to Do Things With Words*, pp. 120, 108.
[25]This is a controversial statement in securitization theory, and one that has been argued many times over. In saying that the perlocutionary act matters, I do not attempt to diminish the role of the illocution within security speech. Indeed, it is impossible to have a perlocutionary effect with no illocutionary act preceding it. Rather, I aim simply to move the framework of the theory forward, avoiding the assumption that "entire packages, complete with epistemologies, ontologies and standard answers to empirical questions" must be accepted without criticism or reflection in critical security studies. Knudsen, "Post-Copenhagen Security Studies," p. 356.
[26]McDonald, "Securitization and the Construction of Security," p. 566.
[27]Buzan et. al, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, p. 25.

by the audience. As such, a successful securitization need only change the grammar or discursive framework through which a certain topic is discussed, converting it into a securitarian dialogue.

Acknowledging the importance of the perlocutionary effect in the securitization framework allows us to further look critically upon the original theory put forward by the Copenhagen School, ultimately illuminating two additional components for which a unified theory of securitization must account. First, security is always invoked contextually, which is to say that securitizing moves are always made in the context of both a specific history and culture. Huysmans describes this as security rationality, which defines "the logic of security practice, of how security practice modulates objects of government, integrates fragmented events and developments, and introduces specific technologies for governing freedom."[28] This security rationality is constituted from the historical representation and arbitration of security concerns within a community. Understood in a Foucauldian sense, there are certain preexisting patterns and heuristics built up around the concept of 'security,' which its invocation necessarily and inexorably engages.

Security speech acts are also historical in the sense that there is almost always prior context to the issue being securitized. Thierry Balzacq confers this message with his concept of the semantic repertoire of security, which is a "combination of textual meaning. . . and cultural meaning – knowledge historically gained through previous interactions and situations."[29] The specific historical context (whether understood socially, politically, or both) determines whether an audience will be more or less inclined to accept the securitarian framework being posed in the speech act.[30]

Second, critics of the Copenhagen School have rightly illuminated the fact that speech acts are not purely or solely linguistic, as the original theory would suggest.[31] Images play an important role in creating the social and historical context in which speech acts take place.[32] This is particularly true when it comes to foreign policy, which members of the public assume is too complicated for them to fully understand. Instead, they rely on "general, abstract beliefs and orientations" built up via image-based heuristics.[33] The role of images is particularly salient today, given the power of the Internet, the ability to communicate using images on a mass scale, and the proliferation of sensationalized and eye-catching newsbytes.[34]

At this point, we have established a unified, coherent theory of securitization with three main components. First, there is a referent object whose security is perceived as under threat.[35] It does not matter who or what this referent object is so long as they are in agreement that they, together, constitute a formal community of some sort. Once mutually constituted, they identify certain core values whose absence would preclude the continuity of the collective body. Second, security is always relational, in that some 'Other' is identified as threatening to those very core values that delineate and constitute the referent object. Without an 'Other' to threaten these values, there would be no condition of security-insecurity at all. Finally, security issues must precipitate the discussion of emergency measures beyond the boundaries of normality. Wæver puts it best: "[security issues] have to be staged as existential threats to a referent object by a securitizing actor who thereby generates endorsement of emergency measures beyond rules that would otherwise bind."[36] By identifying something as threatening to the foundational values of a community, the actor who proclaims security attempts to eclipse normal channels of recourse. Once the securitarian framework is accepted by the audience, transgressive policies and responses aimed at mitigating the

[28]Huysmans, *The Politics of Insecurity: Fear, Migration and Asylum in the EU*, p. 147.
[29]Balzacq, "The Three Faces of Securitization," p. 182.
[30]McDonald, "Securitization and the Construction of Security," p. 573.
[31]Williams, "Words, Images, Enemies," p. 524.
[32]Ibid., p. 525-526.
[33]Hurwitz and Peffley, "Public Images of the Soviet Union," pp. 21-22.
[34]Hansen, "The Little Mermaid's Silent Security Dilemma," pp. 300-301.
[35]Baldwin, "The Concept of Security," p. 13.
[36]Buzan et. al, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, p. 5.

threat (i.e. those that would, under normal circumstances, be abhorrent and unactionable) become not only allowed but accepted and championed.

The moment when emergency measures are accepted is the final resting point for the current theory of securitization. Stopping at this point only obscures the longer-term implications of a successful securitizing speech act, however, for what is implied at this point is that politics will *return to normal* once action (even transgressive action) is taken to mitigate the enumerated threat. In fact, this process, where securitization and the resultant emergency measures are a blip in an otherwise static normative framework, does not conform with social and political realities. Rather, the securitization affects the essential character of politics as understood within and among the referent object. I will now turn to this effect, explicating the relationship between a securitizing speech act and normative politics after emergency measures are taken.

III. BEYOND EMERGENCY MEASURES: POLITICS OF THE NEW NORMAL

The impact of a successful securitization extends far beyond the specific measures taken to mitigate the identified threat. Securitarian frameworks have a longstanding grammar, built up over centuries of employment across various sectors and issues, which impact the discursive framework used to describe the specific issue or threat-subject in the securitizing speech act. This general securitarian framework is the one discussed above, which invokes a Manicheism between 'us' and 'them,' pitting 'them' as existentially threatening to 'us.' This grammar is by now a well-accepted and understood intellectual framework, so much so that its employment and mutual-intelligibility is effectively unreflexive. Put differently, 'securitarianism' is an embedded "ism," one that coopts specific securitizations under its broad umbrella.

The concept of an embedded ism is principally important to understand how a successful securitization changes normative politics.[37] Isms, broadly speaking, are practices, systems or philosophies that order and direct behavior. In other words, isms constitute normative grammars. Some isms are overt, such as obeying the commands of traffic lights. This is a societal system that manifests itself in the physical; we stop at red lights and go on green because we are told to, and we follow the pattern because we are given real, physical cues. Other isms, however, are implicit or embedded.

An embedded ism coordinates and directs an actor's behavior without them consciously realizing that they are following the normative guidelines prescribed by a set of beliefs. Embedded isms create frameworks that establish 'normal' or 'acceptable' and 'dissident' or 'wrong' behavior in any specific issue-area. More specifically, embedded isms create bounded lexicons of discourse that establish the linguistic and actionable limits of ideas. As a product of this, specific ideational regimes or isms correspond with distinct discursive frameworks. Once an issue is framed or understood through the lens of an embedded ism, only those descriptors held within the lexicon of that ism will be available to describe the issue. As a result, only a subset of all possible actionable responses will be seen as viable, since the discursive framework orients the way in which issues are first approached and then resolved.

Furthermore, embedded isms are habitual, pre-selecting the frame and response assigned to issues. This pre-selection, understood through the logic of habit, builds off of Bourdieu's idea of *habitus*, which produces and reproduces certain schemas that reinforce the disposition to think and behave in some particular way.[38] In the words of Guzzini, "*habitus* [is] a product of history which

[37] The idea of embedded isms is derived from Ruggie's discussion of embedded liberalism. See Ruggie, "International Regimes, Transaction, and Change."

[38] In Guzzini, "A Reconstruction of Constructivism in International Relations," p. 166.

in itself (through effecting certain practices) produces history."[39] Habits, also understood as doxic interactions,[40] provide us with automated responses to familiar stimuli. In an effort to reduce cognitive stress and to discern between an 'infinitude of behaviors,' habits selectively delete certain actions from possibility while elevating others.[41]

The logic of habit and the embeddedness of 'securitarianism' have major ramifications for specific securitizations. As discussed above, specific securitizing speech acts use the preexisting discursive framework of security to frame an issue as existentially threatening. In so doing, the speech act attempts to place a specific issue within the broader context of the concept of security. If the speech act achieves this goal and the discursive framework of something-as-an-existential-threat is accepted by the audience, then the attempted placement can be understood as successful. When a specific securitization is coopted into the broader securitarian framework, its grammar becomes habitual. Once habitual, the specific 'emergency measures' morph into schemas or doxa, meaning that the inherently transgressive policies taken to mitigate an immediate threat become the automatic responses to anything that falls under the scope of the securitization. As a result, the logic and grammar of the specific securitization will continue to inform political decisions long after direct measures are taken to mitigate the initially enumerated threat.

To explore this further, we can look to two case studies which exemplify the long-term implications of a successful securitization. We will first look at the Global War on Terror before moving on to a discussion of the War on Drugs.

The Global War on Terror

One notable example of the long-term effect of a successful securitization is 9/11 and the consequent Global War on Terror (GWoT). It has been widely remarked upon, even immediately following the attack, that the Bush administration successfully securitized terror following 9/11.[42] With the benefit of temporal distance, scholarship has demonstrated that the discursive framework of the GWoT has persisted long after specific measures were taken to mitigate the threat from 9/11.[43] Indeed, we can now understand just how deeply the discursive framing of the post-9/11 era as a 'global war on terror' affected everyday politics.

Before continuing this discussion, it is important to understand the distinction between emergency and non-emergency measures. It is possible that a critic could suggest that the following analysis is not the result of a fundamental change to normative politics but rather an extended period of emergency with myriad measures employed to mitigate a nebulous and ever-changing threat that emerged after 9/11. In response, I would argue that "an extended period of emergency" is, in fact, not an emergency condition. By definition, emergencies must demand urgent or immediate resolution.[44] Anything beyond the temporal boundary of the emergency-event itself is inherently a non-emergency, but rather a new state of normality. Furthermore, 'emergency measures,' i.e. those meant to resolve the emergency, must, by nature, be bounded to the specific emergency situation. Any action taken in the name of an emergency but not directly related to it cannot properly be understood as an 'emergency measure.' Instead, it is a normal action taken under a condition of new-normality. In the specific context of 9/11, then, anything that falls outside of the bound-

[39] Ibid., p. 166.

[40] Doxa is another concept of Bourdieu's, denoting a "response to the world characterized as 'automatic, unthinking, and unreflective.'" In Hopf, "The logic of habit in International Relations," p. 545.

[41] Ibid., p. 541.

[42] See, for example, Buzan, "Will the Global War on Terror Be the New Cold War?"

[43] Vultee, "Securitization: A New Approach to the Framing of the 'war on terror.'"

[44] According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, 'emergency' is defined as: 1. An unforeseen combination of circumstances or the resulting state that call for immediate action; 2. An urgent need for assistance or relief. *Merriam-Webster Dictionary, s.v.* "emergency," accessed February 15, 2018, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/emergency.

ary of clean-up and immediate damage control from the event itself cannot be understood as an 'emergency measure,' but rather a normal measure taken under a changed framework of normality.

The long-term effect of the GWoT on normative politics can be seen from three interrelated perspectives, namely governmental rhetoric, counter-terrorism legislation and regulations, and the renegotiation of boundaries for acceptable societal behavior. First, and perhaps most apparent, is an overt shift in governmental rhetoric to a securitarian framework. In 2002, the Bush administration dissolved the Immigration and Naturalization Service, replacing it with the newly ordained Department of Homeland Security (DHS). One would be hard-pressed to find a more overt shift in frame; with this transition to ensure the security of the homeland, foreigners lost their status of immigrant (which is a term inherently unthreatening to the Self) and became regulated 'Others.' Furthermore, the management of immigration lost its status as a *service* and instead became about the mitigation and management of unease. No longer were outsiders seen as potentially fruitful partners for the development of society; rather, they were viewed as "a danger to the 'homogeneity of the people'" and were dealt with accordingly.[45] More fundamentally, the Bush administration began institutionalizing the rhetoric of a 'war on terror,' initially communicated both in his September 20, 2001 address in front of Congress as well as in the 2002 National Security Strategy.[46] This discursive framework was later adopted by the Obama administration, despite President Obama's assurances to do the opposite during his first campaign. As Murray suggests, "the Obama administration has built on many of the excesses of the Bush administration and, in the process, created a 'new normal.'"[47] Indeed, an examination of President Obama's rhetorical treatment of terrorism reveals a discursive structure analogous to that used by President Bush. Over the course of his presidency, President Obama consistently referenced a 'war' on terror to legitimize both his foreign and domestic actions.[48] It is clear, then, that the rhetorical framework of a 'war on terror' became engrained in American political culture, emanating from the top. This framework, which created a perceived sense of insecurity that overshadowed the entirety of the United States, significantly impacted the subsequent policies of both the Bush and the Obama administrations.

Counter-terrorism legislation and executive action in the years following 9/11 proliferated so rapidly that it would be next to impossible to incorporate a discussion of every particular action in this paper. Instead, certain key policy developments will suffice to demonstrate the lasting political and societal impact that the GWoT framework has imparted on American society. Perhaps the most looming policy development is the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (USA PATRIOT) Act, with its lasting securitarian and juridical implications. Ratified in late October, 2001, the USA PATRIOT Act gave the Department of Justice (DOJ) *inter alia* broad latitude to investigate all offenses relating to terrorism, including the authority to conduct so-called "sneak and peek" searches, which gave "federal law enforcement the authority to secretly enter a premise without notifying the occupant until some 'reasonable' time after the search."[49] Furthermore, it gave the attorney general the mandate to detain any alien on the suspicion of unlawful terrorist activities given "reasonable grounds to believe" foul play, a marker designated by none other than the government itself.[50]

The impact of the USA PATRIOT Act was twofold. First, and most immediately, it established the legal framework for the federal government to exceed prior normative boundaries of freedom and liberty. Warrantless searches and detainment without due process were, prior to 9/11 and

[45] Bigo, "Security and Immigration: Toward a Critique of the Governmentality of Unease," p. 67. For a more robust account of the governmentality of unease, see *ibid.*

[46] Bush, "Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People"; United States and Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States.*

[47] Murray, "Obama and the Global War on Terror," p. 85.

[48] McCrisken, "Ten Years On: Obama's War on Terrorism in Rhetoric and Practice."

[49] D'Appollonia, *Frontiers of Fear*, pp. 78-79.

[50] Ibid., p. 79.

the imposition of a securitarian framework, unthinkable in the context of American constitutional liberty. Once an existential threat was introduced, however, it became possible for the government to exceed the proper boundaries of the rule of law and legitimate illiberal practices domestically.

Second, and from a longer-term perspective, the USA PATRIOT Act gave birth to subsequent illiberal legislation, all couched in the discursive framework of the GWoT. Less than a month after the passage of the USA PATRIOT Act, President Bush signed an executive order aimed at furthering the fight against terror. The order, entitled "Detention, Treatment, and Trial of Certain Non-Citizens in the War Against Terror," went far in perpetuating what are fundamentally transgressive principles in the American legal context. As one commentator put it, the order authorized:

> The creation of military tribunals to try noncitizens on charges of terrorism. The trials could be held in secret; classified information could be used against a defendant; conventional rules of evidence would not apply; there would be no jury nor appeal to civil courts; and the penalty could include execution.[51]

The federal government continued to implement transgressive policies long after the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. In 2007, Congress passed the Protect America Act (S. 197), which authorized:

> The collection of international communications on a massive scale, without court order, including not only calls between two foreign countries but also when one party was in the United States. It gave the administration the power to choose how to collect, store, and use the private communications of Americans.[52]

Furthermore, morally, ethically and judicially questionable policies were not employed solely by the Bush administration. The Obama administration pursued many essentially illiberal policies under the aegis of the GWoT. Perhaps most controversial was its use of targeted drone killings. Regardless of the program's efficacy, the expansion of the drone program under President Obama prompted intense debates about the "legitimacy, morality, proportionality and accountability" of drones and other unmanned weapons.[53] What is important to note here is that under 'normal' or prior conditions, drone strikes would have been considered inherently immoral, unconstitutional and unethical. There would not have been any consideration regarding the program's potential morality, legitimacy, proportionality or accountability at all. The securitarian framework of the GWoT made the use of drone strikes possible, as it opened the moral and juridical framework to include a discussion of whether or not such a policy should be allowed given outstanding security concerns.

It is clear that the above outlined policies, as well many others of the same general theme, emerged from a fundamentally altered political landscape in the wake of 9/11. Prior to the proclamation of a 'war on terror', the legality and necessity of Bush and Obama administration security-oriented policies would have been intensely scrutinized. Following the entrenchment of the GWoT as a discursive framework, however, transgressive policies that restricted liberties for the pursuit of 'security' not only became acceptable but became the new normal.[54]

[51] Ibid., pp. 79-80.
[52] Ibid., p. 81.
[53] McCrisken, "Ten Years On," p. 794.
[54] This is evident even in budgetary prioritization. Between 2001 and 2007, Congress authorized a 145% increase in funding for border security, a 118% increase for immigration enforcement and a 61% increase for DOD operations, including $426.8 billion specifically earmarked for operations pertaining to the 'Global War on Terror.' See D'Appollonia, *Frontiers of Fear*, p. 88.

In addition to its impact on the 'governmentality of unease,'[55] the GWoT framework profoundly affected basic societal interactions. The scope of what was seen as threatening to national security was not only expanded to include new 'Others,' but the designation of those who could properly perform security acts was broadened to include the very referent object whose security was said to be threatened. The DHS called for citizens to actively engage in protecting the homeland, encouraging the report of any "suspicious activity."[56] Furthermore, various civilian groups emerged that coopted the role of law enforcement through vigilante justice, imagining themselves as citizen parallels to the government agencies working to secure the American homeland.[57]

American society more generally has accepted this framework, as evidenced through the general perception of Arabs and Muslims as threats to American values in the post-9/11 era. This development mirrors the expansion of the homeland security apparatus in that it directly contradicts core notions of what 'America' is supposed to be, in the sense that marginalizing and rejecting *a priori* an entire category of people goes against the principles of liberty, freedom and equality as they are enumerated in America's constitutive documents.[58] Nevertheless, this marginalization has occurred throughout all levels of society, pointing to the power of securitization to change the normative framework of politics of the every day.

Successful securitizations also have the potential to impact foreign policy decisions, as some have argued was the case with the GWoT and the Iraq War. As history was quick to reveal, the stated motivations underlying the invasion of Iraq were manifestly untrue, namely that the Weapons of Mass Destruction used by the U.S. as motivation to invade were non-existent.[59] Nevertheless, the Bush administration succeeded in inserting Iraq into the GWoT framework through an ongoing securitization begun in 2002.[60] Regardless of "the material evidence [showing] basically no grounds for the sudden changes in security claims," President Bush and his administration successfully changed the political landscape in which they operated, making any terror-related threat to national security so existentially important as to legitimate the initiation of a war based on shaky intelligence.[61] Whether or not it is proper scholarship to engage in counterfactuals,[62] a question emerges as to whether the invasion of Iraq would have gone forward in the absence of a preexisting securitizing discourse on terror.

The War On Drugs

The Global War on Terror is a prominent example of securitization, not least because its subject inherently involves violence and threat, but it is by no means the only form of securitization that exists. Indeed, successful securitizations can occur around any subject, with the same long-term effects on the politics of the every day. To exemplify this, we can look to drug use in the U.S. and the War on Drugs that emerged in the 1970s.

Drugs first became securitized in the 1970s, beginning a 'war' that would last well into the 21st century. President Nixon declared a 'War on Drugs' in 1971, labelling their use and abuse as "America's public enemy number one."[63] He went further with this war analogy, saying that "in

[55]See Bigo, "Security and Immigration: Toward a Critique of the Governmentality of Unease."
[56]Rodriguez, "(Dis)unity and Diversity in Post-9/11 America," p. 382.
[57]Ibid., p. 382.
[58]Notably, that "all men are created equal" with "unalienable rights." *The Declaration of Independence*, U.S. 1776. See also the guarantee of liberty in the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution, as well as Amendments I, IV, IX, XIV.
[59]See, for example: Breslow, "Colin Powell: U.N. Speech 'Was A Great Intelligence Failure'"; Weisman, "Powell Calls his U.N. Speech a Lasting Blot on His Record."
[60]Hughes, "Securitizing Iraq," pp. 90-93.
[61]Ibid,, p. 101. See also *ibid*, pp. 92-95.
[62]This is an ongoing debate within political science and the social sciences more generally. For an entry point into the scholarly discussion, see Fearon, "Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing in Political Science."
[63]In Hudak, *Marijuana: A Short History*, p. 56.

order to fight and defeat this enemy, it is necessary to wage a new, all-out offensive. . . "[64] Subsequent presidents maintained this securitarian dialogue, waging a 'war' against an ephemeral 'enemy' with no inherent ties to security.[65] This discursive treatment of drugs as an 'enemy' that must be fought with an 'all-out offensive' constructed drugs as a threat to the American political body, and one that needed to be destroyed at all costs.

As a result of the securitization of drugs beginning in the 1970s, administrations could justify their aggressive and punitive policy measures as steps to combat an enemy they created. As a first step, President Nixon established the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), with the explicit goal of fighting "an all-out global war on the drug menace."[66] To prosecute this war, the DEA used "military-level force" in ways not dissimilar to organizations housed under the Department of Defense (DOD).[67] President Reagan expanded the military-like apparatus designed to combat drug use, increasing the "use of military equipment, weapons, and personnel used in the drug war effort to stem the supply side" as well as expanding the War on Drugs bureaucracy to "include 11 cabinet departments, 32 federal agencies, and 5 independent agencies involved in drug control."[68]

Perhaps even more instructive as to the impact of a successful securitization on normative politics is President Clinton's approach to drugs during his presidency. While on the campaign trail President Clinton "advocated for treatment instead of jail," suggesting a shift away from the 'War on Drugs' framework.[69] In practice, however, the securitarian logic on drugs and drug use was so firmly embedded that the various policies taken by his administration looked remarkably similar to those taken by his predecessors. Without going into great detail, it is sufficient to note that President Clinton "expanded mandatory sentencing" as well as "rejected a US Sentencing Commission recommendation to eliminate the disparity between crack and powder cocaine sentences."[70] Highly punitive and aggressive in character, both policies, reflective of the Clinton administration's broader policy approach to drug use and abuse, clearly fit the 'war' framework envisaged and established by Presidents Nixon and Reagan.

Both cases discussed above outline the impact that a successful securitization can have on the normative framework of politics after its acceptance by the intended audience. By making some 'Other' into a security concern (regardless of whether that 'Other' is inherently threatening or not), securitization fundamentally alters the basis of politics, in that certain 'emergency measures' morph into regular policies. The repetition and reproduction of policies of exclusion over successive administrations, couched in arguments against an existentially threatening 'Other,' establishes a new baseline from which political questions are discussed.

IV. DESECURITIZATION AND A NEW 'NEW NORMAL'?

The 'new normal' created by a successful securitization need not be permanent. Although it can be quite dominant and persistent, nothing suggests that securitization is an irreversible process. Indeed, the Copenhagen School has created a framework accounting for the possible reversal of a securitization, conveniently labelled desecuritization. To understand this concept, we must first

[64] Ibid., p. 56.

[65] Drugs are, in themselves, not inherently threatening. The frequent consumption of caffeine or ibuprofen, for example, are not seen as security concerns. It is only the branding of certain drugs as 'threatening' that makes them so. For a detailed account of how the Ford, Carter, Reagan, Bush and Clinton administrations pursued a 'war' on drugs, see *ibid*, Chs. 5 and 6.

[66] In Boeri, "The War on Drugs and Mass Incarceration," p. 84.

[67] Ibid., p. 84.

[68] Ibid., p. 84-85.

[69] Ibid., p. 85.

[70] Ibid., p. 85.

recall:

> *Security* and *insecurity* do not constitute a binary opposition. 'Security' signifies a situation marked by the presence of a security problem *and* some measure taken in response. Insecurity is a situation with a security problem and *no* response.[71]

Security-insecurity, as Wæver instructs, is a spectrum; the presence of one does not eliminate the possibility of the other. The optimal 'security arrangement,' or 'true security' in the sense of a complete lack of threat-possibility, does not exist at a point along the security-insecurity spectrum, but rather "off the security agenda altogether."[72] If an issue is off of the security agenda, it means that it has no possibility whatsoever of being existentially threatening. At this stage, the issue can be understood as 'desecuritized,' since the discursive framework used to discuss the topic no longer invokes securitarianism but rather couches its language and theory in something inherently unthreatening.

The process by which a desecuritization takes place is exactly the same as its counterpart, just with the reverse implication. Instead of invoking security through the rhetorical framing of an issue, a desecuritizing actor would use a completely new set of descriptors to frame a topic, calling upon the embedded ism of a different logic.

One such example is the logic of public health, which has been invoked recently as part of a desecuritizing effort centered on drugs. Public officials have begun negotiating the desecuritization of drugs in recent years, seen through the lenses of responses to the opioid crisis currently wracking the U.S. as well as increasingly liberal recreational and medicinal marijuana laws. In 2016, when President Obama first declared the opioid and heroin epidemic, he specifically referred to drug addiction as a "disease," calling for responses from both "public safety and public health professionals."[73] Noticeably, his proclamation avoided the usage of explicitly securitarian language, and his policy prescriptions centered on treatment and prevention as opposed to jail and enforcement. President Trump has echoed this sentiment in his rhetorical treatment of the opioid crisis, labeling it a "public health emergency" in his proclamation from October of 2017.[74] Furthermore, he has promised to "overcome addiction," which is a significant discursive departure from the rhetoric of the 20th century focused on 'defeating' drug addiction and abuse.[75] And despite this desecuritizing move being incomplete,[76] it has already had far-reaching policy implications.[77]

We can also see the negotiation of a desecuritization in relation to marijuana use in the U.S. State-level decriminalization began in the early 1970s, with California becoming the first state to change the penalty for low-level possession from a criminal charge to a minor fine.[78] Shortly after, grassroots campaigns to legalize medicinal marijuana appeared in California, pushing for statewide legislative reform. These groups were ultimately successful, passing Proposition 215, which legalized medicinal marijuana use, although it did not account for tensions between state and federal law. This resulted in a stark dichotomy where marijuana-centered businesses could follow state law while simultaneously being subjected to intense raids from DEA agents.[79] Ultimately, reformers won out, successfully desecuritizing medicinal marijuana to the point where 29 states

[71] Wæver, "Securitization and Desecuritization," p. 56.
[72] Wæver et. al, *Identity, Migration and the New Security Agenda in Europe*, p. 189.
[73] Obama, "Presidential Proclamation – Prescription Opioid and Heroin Epidemic Awareness Week, 2016."
[74] "President Donald J. Trump is Taking Action on Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis," whitehouse.gov.
[75] Davis, "Trump Declares Opioid Crisis a 'Health Emergency.'"
[76] See, for example, Netherland, "The War on Drugs That Wasn't."
[77] Chief among these implications is the increased carry-rate of naloxone on first responders, which is used to counteract the physiological effects of opioid overdoses. See Jones, "Opioids and Heroin: From Drug War to Public Health Crisis."
[78] Hudak, *Marijuana: A Short History*, p. 120.
[79] For a more robust discussion of this tension, see *ibid*, Ch. 11.

allow medicinal marijuana and face limited federal interjection. Furthermore, the desecuritization of medicinal marijuana began to impact conversations about recreational marijuana use. This has created momentum for a movement supporting recreational marijuana, now spreading across the United States. To date, nine states have legalized recreational use, with minimal intervention from the federal government.[80] Despite this development, however, a discursive competition still exists between the desecuritized, decriminalized marijuana schemas of many states and the criminal schema of the federal government. After roughly 40 years, this competition persists. Despite general trends towards reform across the nation, it will likely continue to exist far into the future.

We can derive two important lessons about the desecuritizing process from the examples given above. First, desecuritization is indeed possible, bringing with it a new 'new normal.' As the framework of securitarianism is rejected for an alternative ism, new policy responses become doxic, changing the entire way an issue is framed rhetorically and responded to in practice. If a desecuritizing speech act completely eclipses its securitizing alter, it will remove the issue from the security-insecurity spectrum altogether. Second, desecuritizing moves are often long negotiations, taking place over the course of multiple years or decades. The desecuritization of marijuana, for example, has taken 40 years and remains incomplete. Unlike securitizing speech acts, which are often quick and in response to an exogenous shock, desecuritizations take calculated and explicit action over a long period of time to become entrenched.

V. CONCLUSION

Securitizations not only have powerful effects on immediate policy responses to threats, but also have lasting political and social implications. Extending from present securitization theory, this paper has demonstrated that a successful securitization fundamentally alters the baseline of normative politics. By discursively constructing an 'Other' that is existentially threatening to the Self, securitizations elevate certain core values (those seen as existentially threatened) while simultaneously subducting others. In so doing, securitizations create discursive frameworks through which the distortion, perversion or abrogation of non-core values becomes acceptable, since these transgressions are taken in the name of protecting the core, constitutive values of the political body. Furthermore, this 'new normal' is quite resilient, informing the calculus of policy makers long after the securitizing speech act first took place, although the new framework is never ossified to the point of being irreversible.

This extended framework holds useful insights for policy-makers and practitioners. It suggests that policy-makers can use existing securitizations to legitimize certain actions, or, alternatively, that they can engage in a securitizing speech act to create long-term acceptance for a broad goal. Conversely, acknowledging the lasting political and social impacts of a successful securitization allows practitioners to first identify and then counteract a securitizing discourse. In effect, noting the role of securitization on the normative framework of politics allows politicians and security practitioners to engage in strategic desecuritizations, ultimately removing issues from the realm of security altogether.

The extension of securitization theory outlined above also illuminates new questions for security studies scholars to explore. First, it opens new avenues of historical research. Using the two brief case studies discussed in this paper as models, scholars can look to history to further explore the long-lasting political and social implications of a successful securitization. Perhaps more interestingly, this new addition opens up questions on how successful a securitization must be in order to influence normative politics: what segment of society must the audience be in order for the securitization framework to sway public opinion? Should a distinction be drawn between elites and the masses when analyzing the process of securitization? What happens in a scenario where two or

[80]See *ibid*, Ch. 12.

more securitizations actively compete in society?

Furthermore, this study begs the question of why some isms get embraced while others are neglected. There are many competing isms floating around in the discursive milieu of society (e.g. environmentalism, humanitarianism, communitarianism, economic liberalism, etc.). One would expect these isms to be equal in weight, yet in practice there seems to be a hierarchy, with securitiarianism firmly atop the pyramid due to its existential nature. Indeed, this hierarchical structure of isms appears so rigid that many non-securitarian isms adopt a securitarian language to lend import and urgency to their issues. Why is this? Why is the perlocutionary effect of a securitizing speech act more powerful and more readily accepted than a non-securitarian speech act? Is this structure inherent to the existential nature of securitarianism, or is it itself a heuristic, a self-beneficial cognitive pathway built up through practice?

We can ask similar questions about the desecuritization process. As suggested in section IV, desecuritizing speech acts are oftentimes slow, arduous, methodical and reflexive processes, unlike their counterparts, which tend to be fast and laced with a certain frenetic, chaotic energy. What accounts for this distinction? Why is desecuritization so difficult compared to securitization? Are there factors that make desecuritizing speech acts more likely to take effect, and how does their negotiation differ from securitization? These questions, and others that stem from them, present exciting routes for future studies in security.

Finally, we can take a step back and look with a critical eye at the entire field of international relations and security studies. Armed with the knowledge of securitarianism as an embedded ism as well as an understanding of the desecuritization process, we can now aim to desecuritize security studies altogether. We can take the constructivist charge further, breaking apart the discipline as an embedded "ism" in academia. In essence, the door is now open for scholars not only to see security studies differently, but to turn it on its head, shake it apart and then rebuild it from the ground up, with different assumptions, goals and core values.[81]

[81] My thanks to Richard Ashley, whose concept of Realism's 'orrery of errors' inspired not only this concluding sentence but sparked my inquiry into constructivist security studies altogether. Furthermore, I would like to thank Greg Marfleet and Hicham Bou Nassif, without whose guidance the execution of this paper would have been impossible.

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