

The Fragility of Fear:  
the Contentious Politics of Emotion and Security in Canada

by

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## **Abstract**

International Relations (IR) theory commonly holds security arguments as powerful instruments of political mobilization because they work to instill, circulate, and intensify popular fears over a threat to a community. Missing from this view is how security arguments often provoke a much wider range of emotional reactions, many of which frustrate and constrain state officials' attempts to frame issues as security problems.

This dissertation offers a corrective by outlining a theory of the contentious politics of emotion and security. Drawing inspiration from a variety of different social theorists of emotion, including Goffman's interactionist sociology, this approach treats emotions as emerging from distinctive repertoires of social interaction. These emotions play a key role in enabling audiences to sort through the sound and noise of security discourse by indexing the significance of different events to our bodies. Yet popular emotions are rarely harmonious; they're socialized and circulated through a myriad of different pathways. Different repertoires of interaction in popular culture, public rituals, and memorialization leave audiences with different ways of feeling about putative threats. The result is mixed and contentious emotions which shape both opportunities *and* constraints for new security policies.

The empirical purchase of this theory is illustrated with two cases drawn from the Canadian context: indigenous protest and the F-35 procurement. Both represent cases where attempts by state officials to frame an issue as a security problem were frustrated and constrained by a contentious politics of emotion. In the conclusion, I argue these findings should push IR theorists to adopt a more circumspect view of the mobilization of

fear, and a greater awareness of how emotions can play a key role in constituting the limits of the politics of security.

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## 1.0 Introduction

This is a study of the politics of emotion and security. In the field of International Relations (IR), as well as more popular accounts, collective fears are often treated as a powerful mobilizing force in the politics of security, and a key source of legitimacy for security practices. From this view, emotions *facilitate* the politics of security. But what about instances where emotions function as *constraints*? What happens when security practices provoke an angry backlash from public audiences, or become an acute source of embarrassment for public officials, or are simply regarded as shameful to a community? What happens when popular emotions become something security actors come to struggle against?

In exploring these questions this study develops a more ‘contentious’ image of the politics of emotion and security. It’s aimed as a critical counterpoint to what I call the fear-as-mobilization thesis, an argument shared by a variety of different perspectives in IR scholarship.<sup>1</sup> At its most generic, this view treats security claims as powerful instruments of political mobilization because they work to instill, circulate, and intensify popular fears over a threat to a community. In this view fear cannot be reduced to a biological or psychological property. Fear is a social phenomenon embedded in popular discourse. It’s a way of bodies relating to the world as if it portends danger. Fear’s political significance comes from its potent capacity for the mobilization of support from otherwise disparate and indifferent groups, whether popular or elite.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I make the case in Chapter 2 that it also appears in a number of popular commentaries as well.

<sup>2</sup> Elite-led mobilization efforts don’t exclusively target popular audiences. They can also target other elites. Thus, a key feature of the Bush Administration’s push to the 2003 Iraq War was the mobilization of the support of both Congressional Republicans and Democrats, and not simply the broader public.

This support is crucial because security actors don't live in a political vacuum. Whether a thickening of the border, a pre-emptive military strike, or a new regime of surveillance, security practices need to be justified.<sup>3</sup> This is especially the case in the domestic context where audiences need to be sold on why something constitutes a 'security' issue, and thus why it warrants the resources, expansive powers, and priority of action which could be afforded to other projects. In IR this is commonly referred to as the practice of 'securitization' (Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde, 1998). It's about security actors creating public legitimacy for their actions.<sup>4</sup> In the fear-as-mobilization thesis security claims are not simply communicating information. They have the potential to circulate and intensify popular fears over a specific vulnerability, fears which come to serve a key source of legitimacy for existing and future security practices. Taken collectively, the fear-as-mobilization thesis is a powerful, pervasive, and often persuasive argument about the role of emotion in the politics of security, and it is an argument which animates both scholarship and more popular writing as well.

But if our understanding of the relationship between emotion and security stops here then we have made a serious mistake. Missing from this view is how security claims can provoke a much wider range of emotional reactions, many of which frustrate and constrain officials' attempts to frame issues as matters of security. By treating popular emotions as fluid and practice-driven, rather than fixed responses, we can draw attention to the often fierce political struggles over how audiences should feel about

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<sup>3</sup> This is even the case of 'secret' security practices. In these situations the need for justification is simply limited to a smaller audience (e.g. an intelligence community). Or, if the practice is revealed, the justification must be produced post hoc.

<sup>4</sup> On legitimacy as the "cement" of security practices see Balzacq (2015b). On legitimacy as "public justification" see Goddard and Krebs (2015a).

putative threats and the actors who frame them. Placing this struggle front and centre serves as an important reminder that emotional life in politics is not harmonious, and that there is a risk in exaggerating the ease, permissiveness, and reliability through which collective fears can mobilize influence.

The goal of this project then isn't a refutation of the fear-as-mobilization thesis, but a reframing of it as one contingent possibility open to struggle and failure. The problem with this argument is not that it is wrong, but that it lacks deeper nuance and an appreciation of its limitations. In exploring these limits, the more contentious image developed here aims to change how the relationship between emotion and security is conceived of in two ways: by 'moving beyond monochrome' and by shifting 'from grease to glue'.

### **1.1 Moving Beyond Monochrome**

There is an emotional monochrome to how the discipline of IR thinks and theorizes about security. From Wolfer's famous depiction of subjective security as "the absence of fear" for "acquired values" (1952:485), to Jervis's memorable take on the fear of defection under the security dilemma (Jervis, 1978:171-174), to Wæver's view of security as a "sphere of existential fear" (1995:55), discussions of security seem to be unable to travel far without referencing this specific range of embodied experience. IR sees security discourse as shaped by a variety of different shades of fear: fear of interstate war, fear of migration, fear of terrorism, and even fear of fear itself (Williams, 2011). When variation is considered, it often becomes a question of how different fears stack up against each other in a hierarchy of threats. Will fears of global climate change, for example, eventually come to eclipse fears of a global nuclear war (Buzan & Wæver, 2009)? Like

the black and white televisions of years gone by, IR can still produce compelling pictures of security politics, but they are images that are overwhelmingly limited to different shades of grey.

In arguing that the study of security suffers from an emotional monochrome, I'm not making the claim that a broader range of emotions has never been considered. Realists have long pointed to the desire for prestige as an important concern for state actors (Jervis, 1978). Theorists of ethnic conflict have argued that elites use not only fear but hatred and resentment to stoke ethnic violence (Kaufman, 2006). IR's nascent 'emotions turn' is a key contributor here with studies on humiliation (Callahan, 2004; Fattah & Fierke, 2009; Saurette, 2006), anger (Eznack, 2013; T. Hall, 2011), empathy (Crawford, 2014; Head, 2015), anxiety (Gentry, 2015), shame (Steele, 2007c), nostalgia (Sucharov, 2013), and beyond.

The problem is that that this wider emotional lens is often treated as immaterial to the study of security. Despite its provocative empirical and theoretical contributions, work in IR's emotion turn is largely invisible or simply ignored by mainstream scholarship.<sup>5</sup> No one explicitly rejects the idea that security politics is a site of diverse emotional experiences, yet these are largely seen as epiphenomenal and incidental to its study. To use the Waltzian (1979) language of 'distribution', we might say that scholarly interest in the emotional dynamics of security is unevenly distributed towards fear. A wider lens may point to intriguing empirical dynamics, but its not seen as necessary to any deeper theorizing of what the politics of security is, or what it does. The result is a

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<sup>5</sup> Indeed, this a problem explicitly noted by proponents of the emotion turn. See Bleiker and Hutchison (2008). An important contrast here is the success of IR's 'practice turn'. Despite both developments emerging in the early 2000s, the practice turn has enjoyed a far more reaching impact in the field (e.g. McCourt, 2016).

heavily skewed focus towards fear, and an emotional monochrome in how IR thinks about security.

By contrast, a core argument of this dissertation is that security discourse can be sites of vibrant, messy, admixtures of emotion. Popular fears can mingle and intermix with anger, shame, humour, and host of different affects to create highly diverse emotional contexts. This is a direct consequence of human pluralism. Mixed emotions are an effect of different creative practices in spaces like public rituals, memory and memorialization, and popular culture — all of which signal different groups, interests, identities, and visions of political order. This diversity isn't exceptional, it's the 'default' setting of security politics (cf. Ross, 2014:21).

## **1.2 From Grease to Glue**

Widening the ambit of emotional experience in security politics is about more than simply adding empirical fidelity to our research. It also points us to a key source of constraints for security actors. One illustrative example can be drawn from the final debate of the 2012 US presidential election. During the exchange Governor Romney lamented the decreasing size of the US Navy, noting that the number of surface combatants was lower than at any time since 1916. Romney argued that this left the United States vulnerable and justified an urgent re-investment in the Navy. President Obama offered a memorably sarcastic response:

“But I think Governor Romney maybe hasn't spent enough time looking at how our military works. You – you mentioned the Navy, for example, and that we have fewer ships than we did in 1916. Well, Governor, we also have fewer horses and bayonets – (laughter) – because the nature of our military's changed. We have these

things called aircraft carriers where planes land on them. We have these ships that go underwater, nuclear submarines.” (National Public Radio, 2012)

No political figure wants their security claims to become the object of laughter. Humour can have deeply enervating effects, including weakening one’s position as an authoritative figure on security issues, and risks portraying speakers as though they are ‘unserious’ or ‘out of touch’ with their audience. Had Obama simply disagreed with the assessment, Romney’s image as an authoritative voice on security may have remained intact. Instead Obama emerged as the decisive winner of the final debate, with pollsters attributing a key role to his so-called “zingers” (Steinhauser, 2012).<sup>6</sup>

Humour isn’t the only way security claims can become derailed. For several years Canadian governments have pursued ‘lawful access’ powers for police and security agencies. Centered on electronic surveillance, these powers typically involve warrantless access to basic subscriber information and greater capacity for electronic surveillance (Geist, 2012). In 2012 the Conservative government revitalized the push for lawful access through the *Protecting Children from Internet Predators Act*, a move which framed lawful access as a much-needed measure to combat the threat of child pornography. In a tense exchange in House of Commons the Minister of Public Safety rebuffed one Opposition MP’s privacy concerns by suggesting that “[the member opposite] can either stand with us or with the child pornographers” (House of Commons,

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<sup>6</sup> A reader might ask whether Romney’s criticism over the lack of surface combatants is sound or not. This entirely depends on how the United States defines threats to its security. If it adopts an expansive view of security where it must be able to fight two conflicts simultaneously, as Romney suggested, as well as exercising unparalleled capability in surface combatants, then there surely is a case to be made for more surface vessels. But if a narrower view of threats is adopted where fewer ships and fewer missions are required, then Romney’s critique appears less viable. All of this serves to underscore how security needs are not self-evident, but the product of political choices. As this example suggests however, those choices may be greeted with skepticism.

2012c:5196). While the comment neatly replicated the friend/enemy distinction that is ubiquitous to security politics, it was also seen as an outrageous conflation of legitimate concerns about privacy with support for child pornographers. The Minister's comments galvanized opposition and proved to be a "fatal" inflection point for the bill's debate (Ibbitson, 2012). The bill was shelved and later withdrawn. Far from mobilizing fears over the vulnerability of children, the government's efforts provoked anger and outrage over its tactics.

These constraining dynamics matter because they point to a very different role for emotion than that suggested by the fear-as-mobilization thesis. This constraining role is similar to the tradition inspired by Durkheim of viewing emotions as the "glue" that binds society together and holds social order in place (Collins, 2004:102-103).<sup>7</sup> But despite the promise of this view, attempts to explore the constraining effects of emotion in IR are rare. One example can be found in Simon Koschut's (2014) discussion of the "feeling rules" of NATO which force conformity and compliance among its members. Likewise, Hall and Ross have recently pointed to how "Affective dispositions... can constitute resources for emotional mobilization as well as barriers and sources of political constraint" (2015:861).<sup>8</sup> What's missing from these arguments however, is a more explicit discussion how emotions can constrain actors who look to frame an issue as a 'security issue' and thus in need of urgent action.

The closest effort to this is in Williams's (2011b) discussion of the 'liberalism of fear' and its potential to constrain securitizing moves. Centered on a liberalism defined

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<sup>7</sup> Although the phrasing of emotions as social "glue" is commonly attributed to Durkheim, it doesn't appear in his work. I believe Randall Collins is the first to use this characterization.

<sup>8</sup> On emotions as constraining unjust behaviour see Jeffery (2011:166). On emotion's capacity to "disable" political action see E. Hutchison and Bleiker (2014:508).

by a memory of the danger of “concentrations of power” and a fear of “institutionalized cruelty” (2011b:455), Williams argues a fear of fearful societies can serve as a powerful source of opposition to securitizing moves. Williams’s argument is valuable in reminding us that there are multiple types or ‘shades’ to fear in the politics of security, some of which can become a source of resistance to securitizing moves. But at the same time, it also works to reinstate an emotional monochrome which narrows the ways in which collective emotions come to constrain the politics of security. The distinctiveness of my approach then is in how it combines a push to move beyond monochrome with a pivot to viewing emotions as constraints.

### **1.3 Plan of the Dissertation**

Chapter 2 opens the discussion with a review and critique of how the concept of fear is used in security studies and IR. The discussion focuses on a popular set of arguments concerning what I call the fear-as-mobilization thesis: a set of claims over how actors look to induce, circulate, and intensify collective fears in ways that reorder the boundaries and dynamics of security politics. Focusing on four major clusters of IR theory — theories of realism, the marketplace of ideas, international political sociology, and securitization theory — I outline how a belief in fear as a reliable pathway to collective mobilization carries across the discipline. This pervasiveness is what qualifies the fear-as-mobilization thesis as doxa; a tacit common ground on which both orthodox and heterodox approaches in IR agree. This doxa can be traced to a 19th Century strand of social theorizing concerned with mass movements or crowds, which were envisioned as emotionally volatile and open to political manipulation.

Skeptical of how the assumptions of the fear-as-mobilization thesis are uncritically accepted, I make the case that it can lead to a form of dystopian idealism. This idealism is characterized by an inattentiveness to the limits of power in stimulating popular emotions, an inability to consider empirical evidence of the fragility of fear, and a fundamental mistake in understanding emotions as stable substances rather than relational processes. A corrective, I claim, would render the politics of fear far more indeterminate and open to struggle and contestation than currently believed.

Chapter 3 outlines of a theory of the contentious politics of emotion and security. The goal of this theory is to account for both greater emotional variation in security discourse ('moving beyond monochrome'), as well as understanding how emotions can frustrate and constrain security practices ('going from grease to glue'). The starting point is a revitalization of the uncertainty problem in constructivist IR theory. While constructivism offers compelling accounts of social action by stressing the learned nature of the social world, this reasoning breaks down when accounting for which social facts matter. Emotions, I argue, provide a compelling explanation as to how actors manage the uncertainty of the world by indexing the significance of different events to their bodies.

Building on this entry point I develop the argument around two key concepts: embodied judgment and entrainment. Embodied judgments are how I conceptualize emotions. In this view emotions are a human response to uncertainty by indexing the significance of events to bodies in ways that help actors sort the social world. In short, emotions represent our bodies judging the world. I use the concept of entrainment to describe how emotions are formed and shared in social contexts. While I share with others a view of entrainment as a collective aligning of embodied experience, my

argument places special emphasis on entrainment as a contentious process which is struggled over in the fields popular culture, social memory and trauma, and public rituals.

Finally, I bring these ideas together in a reformulation of securitization theory. Uncertain over which security claims to reject, and which to accept, audiences must rely on embodied judgments to sort through the sound and noise of security discourse. While some embodied judgments facilitate an audience's acceptance of security claims, other emotions can result in dismissiveness and even hostility towards the speaker. The opportunities and constraints for securitizing moves are based in the emotional context of the situation — what I describe as the distribution of embodied judgment.

Chapter 4 takes up the question of methodology. Conscious of the skepticism in IR towards the study of emotion, this chapter outlines a methodology calibrated to studying the contentious politics of emotion and security. To organize the discussion, I articulate a view of methodology as a hierarchical ordering of research wagers situated at the levels of metatheory, explanatory strategy, and methods.

At the level of metatheory, I make the case for an encompassing scientific ontology. Instead of starting from either the nebulous experience of affect, or more coherent and discrete emotional categories (i.e. fear, joy, or anger), the investigation focuses on how affect is disciplined and governed by political actors (elite and otherwise) into the emotion categories which support specific political projects. This ontology is paired with a posture where the researcher's relationship with the world is understood as a process of recovery and reconstruction. In this view, the researcher's role is to recover first-order political practices and to reconstruct them in a way that's intelligible to a broader community.

At the level of explanatory strategy, I make the case for a strategy of embodied interactionism. Distilled to its most basic, the argument is that we should study popular emotions by tracing their emergence from the historical culmination of social interactions. I elaborate on this strategy by outlining its distinctive claims over where to look (interactions and repertoires), as well as what to do (induction, contextualization, and historicization). This methodological discussion is rounded out with brief overview of what to do at the more practical level of discrete methods, including questions of case selection and what counts as ‘data’.

Chapters 5 and 6 pivot to my empirical cases, both of which are rooted in the Canadian context. Chapter 5 examines the securitization of indigenous protest. After the collapse of the Kelowna Accord in 2006 Canada saw a revitalized period of indigenous protest over a range of issues including sovereignty, justice, the environment, and beyond. Security officials interpreted these moves as signs of a threatening militancy and initiated a series of national surveillance and intelligence initiatives. Indigenous protest became securitized. What’s puzzling about this case is how officials almost never appear to make the connection between security and indigenous protest in public. Unlike terrorism, cyber security, or the threat of a revanchist Russia — all of which form a highly visible part of official security discourse — indigenous protest represented a security issue which officials routinely avoided discussing in public.

To explain this puzzling divide between public and private talk I turn to a shifting emotional context. Historically, a series of deeply racialized fears over threat of indigenous resurgence has been a powerful force in shaping the security imaginary of Canadian settler society. Embedded in historical memories like the conflict at Oka, as

well as more everyday practices of racism, settler fears have long disposed public audiences to see indigenous protest as a source of danger. Yet in a period of truth and reconciliation these fears are slowly being displaced by an acute discomfort over the state's historically traumatic treatment of indigenous communities. Repertoires of interaction surrounding the legacy of residential schools, missing and murdered indigenous women, and the acute poverty of the reserve system, have worked to entrain powerful feelings that the state's past treatment of indigenous communities has been shameful. Keenly aware of how framing indigenous protest as a security issue is emotionally contentious and might be construed as shameful, government officials have carefully avoided speaking this way in public.

Chapter 6 turns to the securitization of the F-35. In the Summer of 2010, the Canadian government announced it would purchase 65 F-35 fighter jets. The principal justification was security: without the F-35 Canadian sovereignty, territory, and a host of other referent objects would be intolerably vulnerable. For two years government officials aggressively and confidently promoted the F-35 as the only possible option. What's puzzling about this case is that despite resembling a conventional set of securitizing moves the procurement faced intense opposition, culminating in a major 'reset' of the program and a move to consider 'all available options'.

To account for this dramatic reversal I argue the securitization of the F-35 was derailed by a politics of embarrassment. Embarrassment, as envisioned by Irving Goffman, is a tense emotional situation where an actor presents incompatible self-images. Instead of mobilizing fears over the vulnerability of the Canadian polity, the government's security claims precipitated a series of embarrassing public encounters

resulting in anger, frustration, and comic derision. The genesis of these embarrassing moments can be traced to a series of repertoires of interaction which compromised the government's public image as sober managers of security and sound fiscal stewards. From alarmist rhetoric over Russia, to treating the F-35 as a status symbol, to a series of financial missteps in the procurement process, the behavior of the government failed to accord with the 'brand' it had long cultivated for itself.

Chapter 7 brings the argument to a conclusion by looking at the implications of the contentious politics of emotion and security for future research. Here the discussion centers on the significance of the argument for existing research programs — including securitization theory and IR's emotion turn — as well as future directions for research. In the final section I suggest scholars can leverage this image of contentious politics into a normative argument for urging greater caution and restraint in the politics of security.

#### **1.4 Why This Matters**

There's a growing sense that the politics of security has expanded and intensified in recent years. As Huysmans aptly describes, "Language and images of insecurity are everywhere... Our lives and times seem to be defined by multiplications of dangers, threats, risks, and anxieties" (2014:7). I discuss this in Chapters 2 and 7 more directly, but it will suffice to say that among academics, politicians, and publics alike, there is a growing sense that an ever-broader area of social and political life has become 'securitized'.<sup>9</sup> Post-9/11 politics is filled with examples where governments have

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<sup>9</sup> Unlike Walt (1991:213) I don't attribute the expansion of the concept security to academics who have called for widened analytical agenda in security studies. Securitization is a political act carried out by political actors, although academics can and do contribute this process (Huysmans, 2002). But studying a practice is not the same as endorsing it, and several scholars — including Ole Wæver — have argued that while securitization may be necessary in some cases, it shouldn't be universally desired. To say something

garnered ever greater powers and resources under the auspices of ‘security’, and few examples where these powers have been rolled back or constrained. The recent resurgence in populism and white nationalism, and their reliance on extreme visions of (in)security, appear to confirm this broader trend. For many scholars, these developments support a longstanding cynical view: that the politics of security is never just about ‘security’. Actors routinely abuse security discourse to empower themselves and to pursue a range of parochial projects. Thus, the word ‘security’ becomes not about protecting the public or national interest, but the pursuit of narrow bureaucratic agendas, achieving partisan dominance, and even revitalizing racial hierarchies.

These dangers have prompted researchers to contemplate a range of strategies to offset the creeping expansion of security politics. The result has been a burgeoning literature on strategies of resistance, desecuritization, emancipation, resilience and beyond (Aradau, 2004; Balzacq, 2015b; Floyd, 2010; Hansen, 2012). Largely missing from this conversation however, is the potential for emotions to serve as a powerful check on the politics of security. The reasons for this absence are not difficult to discern: emotions are commonly seen as part of the problem, not the solution. As I discuss in the next chapter, postwar realism saw this in terms of an emotionally volatile public whose vulnerability to the moralizing rhetoric of statesmen created a recipe for reckless and disastrous foreign policies. The answer to this was not more emotion, but a more rational and tempered reflection on the national interest. Today, this dichotomy between reason and emotion is difficult to sustain, especially given how modern arguments from

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has been securitized is not to endorse or resist it; it is simply to make an empirical observation. I discuss these issues in detail in Chapter 7.

philosophy and neuroscience highlight how emotions are integral to reason.<sup>10</sup> But the perception that emotions are a source of disorder is alive and well, and one that persists, albeit tacitly, through a variety of different approaches in IR theory.

When set against this context a more contentious image of emotion offers two things. First it gives grounds for greater skepticism over the supposed creeping expansion of security politics. Securitizing moves are never a sure thing; they entail a delicate balancing act caught between the need to mobilize fears which resonate with an audience in a specific context, while at the same avoiding an angry backlash, episodes of embarrassment, or accusations of engaging in shameful conduct. Second, it rehabilitates the role of emotions as a source of stability and maintenance of political order. Far from being irrational irruptions, emotions can play a positive and constructive role in political life.

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<sup>10</sup> From philosophy see R. C. Solomon (2003), Nussbaum (2001), Prinz (2004). From neuroscience see Damasio (1994) and Bechara and Damasio (2005). For discussion of this issue in IR see Mercer (2005, 2010) and Jeffery (2016).

## **2.0 The Fear-as-Mobilization Thesis in International Relations Theory**

In the previous chapter I argued that thinking about security in IR continues to be shaped by an emotional monochrome focused on fear. In this chapter I explore what this focus on fear entails.

One puzzle highlighted by proponents of IR's emotion turn is that while 'fear' is a concept widely used within the discipline, it often lacks systemic reflection and analysis. As Crawford argues, "ironically the emotions that security scholars do accept as relevant – fear and hate – seem self-evidently important and are unproblematized. This taken-for-granted status, especially of fear, has particularly pernicious effects", including the proliferation of unarticulated and unchecked assumptions (2000:118, 116). "Fear," Bleiker and Hutchison contend, "is pivotal to realist theorising of security dilemmas, but few authors explicitly identify this emotion, let alone examine it systematically" (2008:116). Likewise, Ross suggests "realism often regards security dilemmas as products of fear. But what exactly do realists mean by 'fear' in this context?... the realist approach tells us little about its peculiar qualities as an emotion" (2014:18). Indeed, for a discipline that supposedly prizes work where "the assumptions and key concepts are carefully defined, and clear and rigorous statements stipulate how those concepts relate to each other" (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2013:432), remarkably little work has been done on the role of fear in IR theory.

The goal of this chapter then, is to take up the emotion turn's call for a more systematic examination of how the concept of fear is used within the discipline. The result is two distinct lines of argument: one set of claims focused on how fear is

commonly viewed as a force for political mobilization, and another set of claims how this view lends itself to a dystopian idealism.

While there are several different ways of conceptualizing fear in IR, one of the most pervasive and noticeable is a focus on fear's *mobilizing* potential in the politics of security. In what I describe as the fear-as-mobilization thesis, political actors look to induce, circulate, and intensify collective fears in ways that reorder the boundaries and dynamics of security politics. Following Goddard and Nexon, I view mobilization as "the processes and mechanisms that link the efforts of actors to organize collective action with the distribution of influence" (2016:4). From this perspective, the mobilizing potential of fear represents a form of power politics—empowering and legitimizing some actors (most often elites) to speak and act in the name of security while enervating the position of others. Huysmans describes this as the "energetic" and "integrative" qualities of fear (2014:9), qualities which draw together disparate constituencies and catalyzes them into action. According to this logic, fear of nuclear war mobilizes non-proliferation campaigns and legitimizes policies of deterrence. Fear of migrants mobilizes and sustains nationalist chauvinism and a thickening of borders. Fear of disease and infection mobilizes biopolitical techniques of governance focused on securing human bodies. And yet the fear-as-mobilization thesis does not need to be overtly stated. It "goes without saying because it comes without saying" because it is *doxa* (Bourdieu, 1977:167). *Doxa*, as Bourdieu describes it, denotes what is "taken for granted" and remains unquestioned (1977:166). As *doxa*, the fear-as-mobilization thesis serves as the common ground upon which both mainstream orthodox and more critical heterodox IR theories meet.

This pervasive quality—the fact that this view carries across disparate perspectives in IR—means that the costs of leaving the fear-as-mobilization thesis unexamined are high. All concepts and theories have a structuring function which produce specific visions of politics. These visions come with substantial baggage, including a sense of what is and is not possible in political life. Concepts instill limitations. It is in this context that I argue that the fear-as-mobilization thesis is prone to a form of *dystopian idealism*. Drawing inspiration from E.H. Carr’s (2001[1981]) classic polemic against liberal idealism and how its unchastened optimism exaggerated the prospects of peace and cooperation, I invert Carr’s utopian analytic to critique how scholars in IR have exaggerated the ease, permissiveness, and reliability through which collective fears mobilize influence in the politics of security. Contrary to utopia’s unflinching progressivism, ‘dystopia’ here captures an unyielding and regressive vision of politics, one where rule-based order (typically liberal and democratic order) is in constant retreat. As a latent social resource, collective fears always appear to be waiting patiently in the margins of discourse until they are easily, unproblematically, and effectively deployed in a security argument. The politics of fear is understood in absolutist terms, unlimited in power and scope and leading, potentially, to everything becoming securitized (e.g. Barnett, 2015:257; Walters & D’Aoust, 2015). This trajectory is neatly captured in the view that security is quickly becoming the “dominant logic of our time” (Schou Tjalve & Williams, 2015:46) or that security has become “unbound” (Huysmans, 2014). The intense period of the politics of fear we’ve witnessed in western countries post-9/11 is reified and stretched ad infinitum, and with it the boundaries of what can be recognizably called ‘security’.

Taken together, these arguments constitute a *review* and *critique* of the fear-as-mobilization thesis and its role in IR theory. The argument proceeds in two sections.

The first section traces the contours of the fear-as-mobilization thesis across four major literatures in IR: realist approaches, the liberal marketplace of ideas, international political sociology, and securitization theory. The relationship between these approaches is complex and they differ and overlap in complicated ways. And while they all offer a different gloss on the concept of fear in IR, I argue there is sufficient evidence to believe they converge around a surprisingly similar view on the relationship between collective fears and political mobilization.

Further contextualizing this argument, I trace it to a major strand of 19th Century European social theorizing concerned with mass movements or *crowds*. Because of their capacity for violence, emotional contagion, and irrationality, crowds were viewed as a distinct threat to the rational, autonomous individual of modernity. When IR scholars seize on the capacity of social fears to mobilize transformations in political order, they are echoing this much older argument. The problem is that successive social theorists saw the emotional volatility of the crowd as a conservative ideological assumption to be interrogated rather than unreflectively accepted. While social theorists have spent years thinking through the complexity and variegated dynamics of the politics of emotion, IR all too often reduces these dynamics to an instrumental relationship between fear and mass-mobilization.

The second half of the chapter makes the argument that the fear-as-mobilization thesis is prone to a dystopian vision of politics. This begins by clarifying the meaning of dystopia by placing it in conversation with the work of Carr and others concerned with

the role utopia and politics. I then elaborate the dystopian critique by focusing on three lines of criticism directed at the fear-as-mobilization thesis. First, such views are marked by an inattentiveness to the *limits of power* in circulating broadly-based collective emotions. Second, there is a conspicuous inability to consider *empirical evidence* pointing to the fragility of fear. Finally, there is a fundamental mistake in the fear-as-mobilization thesis in understanding collective emotions as stable substances rather than *relational processes*.

In the conclusion, I discuss how the prevalence of the fear-as-mobilization thesis is connected to how it offers a readymade explanation for why so many of IR's political projects fail. Had the crowd not been so easily 'spooked', so goes the reasoning, IR's transformatory agenda would stand a much greater chance of being realized. As appealing as this argument is, it obscures the need for any deeper probing of why IR's political projects fail. The drive for politically relevant knowledge would be better served, I argue, by reframing the politics of fear as one contingent possibility emerging from what is understood as a much broader, and contentious politics, of emotion.

Before proceeding its important establish some boundary conditions. This is not a comprehensive taxonomy of the different ways the concept of fear is used in the discipline. Instead, the focus is on the fear-as-mobilization thesis because it points to a particularly pervasive way of thinking about fear, and it has significant political effects. Nor am I concerned with contrasting this view with accounts of fear from other fields such as psychology or neuroscience. While a broader engagement takes place in the following chapter, this discussion hews as closely possible to the disciplinary boundaries

of IR.<sup>11</sup> The reason is strategic. By focusing strictly on how the concept of fear is employed in IR, I show how a critique can be developed with resources that are already internal to the discipline. This move evades the criticism that a turn to psychology and biology is, *prima facie*, reductionist (Epstein, 2010). My goal is to show the problems with the fear-as-mobilization thesis on IR's own terms, a critique which cannot be defended against by simply corralling the wagons tighter.

Finally, there's often a harrying assumption that literature reviews typically regress into intellectual navel gazing with little relevance for broader disciplinary issues, or for real-world political practices. While occasionally true, such a criticism falls short in this discussion. Interrogating the fear-as-mobilization thesis is important, in part, because its closely paralleled by a popular or 'folk' understanding of the mobilizing potential of fear which is carried by a variety of different political actors. Accusations of 'fear mongering', 'scare mongering' and the playing to the 'politics of fear' are ubiquitous in contemporary global politics. Opponents of President Obama's nuclear deal with Iran have labeled his vigorous defence of the deal as an exercise in the "Politics of Fear" (Lake, 2015), while its proponents have accused critics of "scaremongering" (Associated Press, 2015). Elsewhere in the 2015 Canadian federal election, Prime Minister Harper was accused by Liberal Leader Trudeau of "fear mongering" over the threat of terrorism (Clark, 2015). Similarly, in the often tense debate over state surveillance in the United States, journalists have accused state officials of manipulating the "powerful emotional punch" of the word "terrorism", while the same officials have argued that critics have engaged in "scare tactics" (Munk Debates, 2014:9, 25). Various

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<sup>11</sup> Although as I make clear below, this is difficult given the degree to which IR depends on imported ideas from disciplines such as sociology.

NGOs, journalists, and even the Pope have raised alarm over “fear mongering about asylum-seekers and migrants” (Roth, 2015; The Economist, 2015; Pope Francis, 2015).

There is perhaps no greater example of the way in which the mobilization of fear animates popular images of politics than in the presidency of Donald Trump. Various framed in popular media as a “master of fear” (Ball, 2016), a president that has “weaponized fear” (Altman, 2017), and a figure who’s “rallying cry” is “Fear itself” (Tumulty & Nakamura, 2017), the Trump presidency is often seen as the quintessential example of the mobilizing potential of fear. Yet even as world leaders, diplomats, civil society, media, and religious leaders become preoccupied with engaging and contesting the politics of fear (and its mobilizing potential), those who study world politics and security keep the subject at a curious arm’s length. Inquiring into the relationship between emotions, fear, and political mobilization then is about placing the everyday political interactions, practices, and experiences of real human beings at the center of political inquiry.

## **2.1 Tracing the Fear-as-Mobilization Thesis**

Drawing out a singular image of fear within the discipline is challenging given that the concept is used in a wide variety of different ways IR.<sup>12</sup> Fear has been understood as a fact of human nature and the basis of group formation (Ripsman, Lobell, & Taliaferro, 2009), as a function of the structural relationship between groups in anarchy (Tang, 2008; Waltz, 1979), as a deep effect of existential uncertainty (Booth & Wheeler, 2008), as a motivational assumption (Freyberg-Inan, 2006), as a human emotion (Lebow, 2008), as a

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<sup>12</sup> This would make ‘fear’ a candidate for the status of an “essentially contested concept” (Gallie, 1955).

cultural artifact employed in pragmatic speech (Balzacq, 2005), as a source of failure in the marketplace of ideas (Thrall & Cramer, 2009), as an unease to be bureaucratically managed (Bigo, 2002), as a biopolitical technique of governance (Debrix & Barder, 2009), and beyond. Drawing a common thread through these accounts is difficult because each of them overlap and are distinguished in often subtle ways, all which contribute to arguably different visions of the ‘politics of fear’.

Avoiding a taxonomical approach, my concern is with where different discussions of fear converge. Here the lens of collective mobilization affords a common ground for a discussion of fear between otherwise “orthodox” and “heterodox” approaches (Goddard and Nexon 2016:6). That scholars of various persuasions gravitate towards the ‘mobilizing’ capacity of fear suggests the language of mobilization offers a common conceptual vocabulary for talking about the power of emotion, while at the same time signalling how that power is tied to political responsibility (Guzzini, 2016:4). In this section, my focus is in how the relationship between fear and emotion spans four major clusters of IR theory: realism, the marketplace of ideas, securitization theory, and international political sociology.

The focus on these literatures is justified, in part, because their size represents a large (and diverse) cross-section of thought in IR theory. They also represent bodies of scholarship where fear is a recurrent, even common theme.<sup>13</sup> If a highly eclectic range of views sees political mobilization as an important question, and some vision of collective

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<sup>13</sup> This does not exhaust the literatures in which fear and mobilization play a prominent role. Other candidates include the literature on the politics of exception (e.g. Neal, 2010), as well as work on the symbolic politics of ethnic conflict (e.g. Kaufman, 2006). The former overlaps significantly with work on securitization, latter with neoclassical realism, as well as discussions of threat inflation in the market place of ideas (cf. Thrall, 2009).

fear as key to answering that question, then we've identified a broad research area which unites an otherwise fragmented discipline. This makes the fear-as-mobilization thesis intrinsically puzzling because it has the highly extraordinary rare status of reaching across portions of IR—from realist theories of the state to Foucauldian biopolitics—which rarely, if ever, engage with one another. This is what makes interrogating the doxa of the fear-as-mobilization thesis all the more important.

### *2.1.1 Theories of Realism*

Fear is often viewed as the *sine qua non* of realist thought in IR. Yet a closer look reveals a more complicated picture. Limited by space constraints, this discussion focuses on only two claims. First, while Kenneth Waltz's structural theory has been deeply influential, it has also resulted in a great deal of confusion over the role of fear in realism. Second, if we want a clearer image of fear then we need to turn to more recent iterations of realism, including neoclassical and reflexive approaches. When we examine these approaches however, a distinctive focus on fear's mobilizing effects becomes apparent.

There is perhaps no greater source of confusion over fear's status in realist thought than Waltz's structural approach. The source of this confusion has been two-fold. On one hand, it comes from Waltz's attempt to sever realism from explanations rooted in human nature. In his seminal *Man, State, and War* he offered a highly influential rebuke of human nature theorizing which he treated as indeterminate and ultimately unproductive (Waltz, 1959:27-28; Schuett, 2010:6). If human nature is unchanging, how can it be both the source of conflict and cooperation? Because emotions were conceptually packaged as a part of human nature theorizing, the jettisoning of the latter meant getting rid of the former. Emotions were dismissed

because they were seen to part of first image arguments about human nature (Mercer, 2006). By contrast, a structural account of realism promised a far more parsimonious and scientific approach.<sup>14</sup>

The problem with this explanation is that it has left a series of doubts as to whether Waltzian realism genuinely breaks from human nature theorizing, or if it continues to presuppose a tacit psychology. As Freyberg-Inan notes, “the overall idea of realist psychology that emerges from the literature is fragmented, incomplete, and may even contain contradictions” (Freyberg-Inan, 2004:4). A growing emphasis on structuralism and the “cognitive assumption” of rationality has led to realism being less reflective of its basic “motivational assumptions”, like fear, which drive human behaviour (Freyberg-Inan, 2004:109-119). Nexon has pushed back against these claims by arguing that contemporary structural “realists have eschewed psychological reductionism”, and “rely on claims about social and political dynamics that are, from the perspective of conceptualizations of human nature, multiply realizable” (Nexon 2004:894). Realists could hold multiple views of human nature, and yet the structural features of anarchy and the distribution of power would still be the key determinants of the state system.<sup>15</sup>

But for critics it is simply no coincidence that the motives structural realists ascribe to states are perfect analogues to those described in earlier realist accounts of human nature (Crawford, 2009:273-274; Freyberg-Inan, 2006:258-259). Robert Schuett’s (2010) critique is even more basic. If structural theorizing has rendered such

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<sup>14</sup> Although ‘scientific’ in this context does not necessarily mean a ‘positivist’ view of science (Jackson, 2011).

<sup>15</sup> On the issue of multiple realizability see Wendt (1999:152).

arguments obsolete, then why do human nature assumptions consistently creep back into structuralist arguments? Why, for, example does it become important for Waltz to speak of how “Pride knows no nationality” or that “he is deeply aware of ‘man’s passion and irrationality’” (quoted in Schuett, 2010:68-69; Waltz, 1959:36; 1993:66).<sup>16</sup> These arguments suggest that Waltz’s purported break from human nature explanations has been far from definitive. The result is that the topic of emotion sits awkwardly at the doorway of Waltz’s structural project; it is neither entirely outside its purview, nor is it central to its core concerns.

This awkward split from human nature theorizing sits next to another source of confusion: Walt’s *Theory of International Politics* says surprisingly little about fear. There is no significant theoretical discussion or even index entry, and the most the text provides is a few casual references, but in entirely disparate contexts. Thus, Waltz notes that “[t]he use of force, or the constant fear of its use, are not sufficient grounds for distinguishing international from domestic affairs”, “the prospect of large absolute gains for both parties does not elicit their cooperation so long as each fears how the other will use its increased capabilities”, and “Fear of such unwanted consequences stimulates states to behave in ways that tend toward the creation of balances” (Waltz, 1979:103, 105, 118). Here the concept is understood in various ways: as an inadequate demarcation principle for international politics, as a concern over relative gains, and as an anxiety over the unpredictability of the future.

From these excerpts it’s possible to argue that Waltz views fear as “a function of one’s uncertainty about others’ intentions and power” (Tang, 2008:452) which combine

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<sup>16</sup> See also Schuett’s discussion of Mearsheimer and nationalism (cf. Wendt, 1995:78).

to make the security dilemma. Yet this reading is problematic. Waltz (1979:187) mentions the security dilemma only briefly. But more significantly, there is nothing in his theory which gives cause for states to fear either the intentions or power of other states under anarchy. As Schweller notes, the overarching problem with the self-balancing system Waltz describes is that is a “a world of all cops and no robbers, that is, all security-seeking states and no aggressors” (1996:91).<sup>17</sup> In a world where predation is made futile or even counter productive by balance of power politics, there’s nothing inherent in the structure of the international system that causes states to fear violent conflict, or even to fear anything at all. Waltz’s world is simply too benign to engender the fear which scholars see as so central to the political aesthetic of realism.

Successors to Waltz’s structural project fare little better. Stephen Walt’s (1987) influential balance of threat theory is similarly absent any focused analysis of fear. Instead, the concept only emerges in discussions of things states are concerned with: the defection of allies, bandwagoning, encirclement, and the formation of a separate peace (Walt, 1987:27, 45, 61, 131). By contrast, Mearsheimer’s discussion of fear in his theory of offensive realism is far more explicit:

“Three features of the international system combine to cause states to fear one another: 1) the absence of a central authority that sits above states and can protect them from each other, 2) the fact that states always have some offensive military capability, and 3) the fact that states can never be certain about other states’ intentions. Given this fear—which can never be wholly eliminated—states recognize

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<sup>17</sup> Indeed, consider Waltz’s characterization of great powers: “Great powers are never ‘masters with free hands’. They are always ‘Gullivers’, more or less tightly tied” (Waltz, 1979:187).

that the more powerful they are relative to their rivals, the better their chances of survival.” (2001:3)

In this view fear is evident in “general patterns of behaviour” (2001:32). It’s presented as natural, as it is human nature accounts, but this spontaneity is rooted in the structure of the system—anarchy, the distribution of power, and uncertainty—and not any universal human condition (2001:22).

The problem with Mearsheimer’s account is that it appears remarkably similar, in fact too similar, to those offered by both Waltz and Walt. The latter both hold a view of the structure of the international system as defined by anarchy, the distribution of power, and uncertainty, yet they both envision states as far less fearful of anarchy, more defensive, and more capable of moderating their behaviour. We’re left in a situation where similar premises lead to starkly different conclusions. Tang accounts for this difference by arguing Mearsheimer covertly inserts an additional “magic” assumption whereby states always assume the “worst-case assumption over others’ intentions” (2008:461). It is therefore not uncertainty per se, that separates Mearsheimer from Waltz and Walt, but his assumption that states will respond to uncertainty by assuming the worst of others. But as Tang rightly notes, “this is simply an assertion... There is no inherent link between anarchy and adopting or rejecting the worst assumption over others’ intentions” (2008:467). And because it is an assertion lacking evidence or supporting reasoning, its difficult to fathom how it can form a reliable basis for thinking about fear in realism.

All of this is further complicated by how structural theorists like Walt and Mearsheimer have increasingly moved away from discussing fear at the level of the

international system and towards the role of fear in domestic politics. Here the focus is on the role of “fearmongering” by elites and its capacity to “mobilize the broader public” in the support of reckless wars (Mearsheimer, 2011:71; Walt, 2009). Indeed, while concerns over domestic threat inflation and fearmongering have formed a key plank in Walt and Mearsheimer’s public advocacy (Van Rythoven, 2016), these positions have far more in common with neoclassical realism and the liberal marketplace of ideas than anything relating to existing structural approaches.

The point of this treatment is not to make the case for a return to human nature theorizing, nor is to indict the structural projects of Waltz or his successors. It is simply to make the case that if we’re looking for a clear understanding of fear in realism, then we need to look beyond its structural variants.

One alternative is neoclassical realism. As described by Rathbun, neoclassical approaches represent the “logical extension and necessary part of advancing neorealism” by incorporating “domestic politics and ideas” to explain “maladaptive behavior” such as “over- or under-balancing” (B. Rathbun, 2008:294). Central to this approach is putting the issue of political mobilization front and center. Neoclassical realism does “not see the state – that is, the central politico-military institutions and top officials of the polity – as completely autonomous from society” (Lobell, Rispman, & Taliaferro, 2009:27). As a consequence, leaders may be constrained by “the extractive and mobilization capacity of politico-military institutions” (2009:3). Crucially, “ideational factors such as ideology and nationalism can play an instrumental role in helping the leadership extract, mobilize, and direct societal resources and cultivate support among its power base” (2009:38). What’s at stake here is the latent power of the state (cf. Mearsheimer, 2001:60-67), the

resources and capabilities it possesses on paper, but requires negotiation and transaction with constituent groups to mobilize.

While state institutions are important in this argument, so too are specific ideologies and nationalisms. Taliaferro suggests nationalism can function “as a means to achieve social cohesion against external adversaries” (2009:219) including, presumably, the recognition of, and mobilization against, foreign enemies. These arguments are couched within broader political claims about the importance of fear to group formation and cohesion. As Lobell *et al* argue:

“Fear plays a crucial role in group formation, if only because physical security is a prerequisite for the pursuit of any other individual or collective goal. *Metus hostilis* or fear of enemies – whether manifested in the form of xenophobia directed at minorities or a fear of external groups – is indispensable for the creation and maintenance of political groups, because it offers a way of a way of overcoming collective action barriers.” (2009:24)

The most provocative expression of the link between fear and mobilization emerges in Schweller’s discussion of fascist Germany. As he describes:

“Fascism provided the ideational rationale and mobilizing passions required for bold state action...For leaders to achieve this domestic unity and national will in pursuit of power, they had to latch on to powerful expansionist ideas – ones capable of, at a maximum, whipping the masses into a mood of hysteria and, at a minimum, rallying the nation to arms when it is not under attack... Through the use of modern techniques and mass mobilization that played on the fears, emotions and passions of

the citizens, fascists produced the ultimate mobilizing state motivated by the single-minded purpose (obsession) of expansion.” (Schweller, 2009:230, 234, 237)

Some key points deserve note here. First, Schweller is not simply concerned with ideas but emotions. Several states possess distinct ideologies but few are accompanied by the emotional intensity of Nazi fascism.<sup>18</sup> Second, the intense fears linked to fascism are not a natural reaction to anarchy, as structural theories presume, but are actively produced by the “modern techniques of mass mobilization”. Fear is a historically contingent political project, an outcome of specific political practices. Finally, “fears, emotions and the passions” represent the “ultimate” form of political mobilization. This is not just one strategy of mobilization among many, it is the *most potent* strategy against which more anemic ideologies, nationalisms, and state institutions pale in comparison.

While this narrative captures most of mainstream approaches, realism is a rich and varied tradition. Another less-recognized alternative can be found in ‘reflexive realism’. Proponents like Brent Steele describe reflexive realism as an “attempt to restore classical realist principles of agency, prudence, and the recognition of limitations as part of an attempt to provide a practical–ethical view of international politics” (2007a:273). Marked by a return to classical realist theorists—including Morgenthau, Herz, and Niebuhr—this vein of realist thought is notable for its remarkably explicit concern for the relationship between fear and political mobilization.

One area where this connection emerges is in reflexive realism’s attempt to (re)humanize international politics in a way that closely parallels earlier attempts in classical realism. As Rösch details, Morgenthau saw “politics [as] created through

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<sup>18</sup> On the problem of conflating ideas and emotions see Ross (2006).

human interaction” and was concerned with a series of “dehumanising” processes in contemporary liberal democracies (2013:3-7). For reflexive realism this means taking the role of the passions seriously in shaping political order. Nowhere does this become more apparent than appreciating classical realist prudence as form of stoicism, a recognition of the need to rationalize the national interest and temper the passions that often animate excessive and dangerous national policies.<sup>19</sup> This is reflected in classical realists’ anxiety over the volatility of public discourse:

“Morgenthau (along with Niebuhr and George Kennan) realized that morality is always part of politics. They argued that statesmen continually abuse that moral discourse and, in so doing, create situations of irreconcilable differences. When such differences are coupled with the destructive power of the nation-state, the classical realists were well justified in trying to place international politics on a less emotional and more rational, self-interested plateau.” (Lang quoted in Steele, 2007a:279-280)

It is this anxious skepticism over the dangers of an intensely passionate democracy that bridges classical realism with contemporary reflexivists, a danger that becomes most acute in times of crisis. Drawing directly on Niebuhr:

“it is just in the moments when the nation is engaged in aggression or defense (and it [the nation] is always able to interpret the former in terms of the latter) that the reality of the nation’s existence becomes so sharply outlined as to arouse the citizen to the most passionate and uncritical devotion toward it that it is in these moments

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<sup>19</sup> Underlying the need to ‘rationalize’ the national interest and subdue its emotional dimensions is a powerful and widespread assumption that emotion and rationality are odds. See Mercer (2006:92-99) offers a powerful rejoinder.

when the nation's existence can be resolved only by deception.” (quoted in Steele, 2007a:285)

Like their neoclassical cousins, the relationship between mass politics, emotions, and mobilization is a critical concern for reflexive realists. What's different is how this relationship is understood. For neoclassical theorists like Schweller it is a social scientific question of what political techniques allow states to maximize their mobilization potential. For reflexive realists the issue is a practical-ethical question: what can be done to constrain a fearful public's more destructive potentials? How, for example, can restraint be fostered in contentious and emotionally volatile public sphere (Tjalve, 2011)?

While Steele places the work of Ned Lebow in the reflexive vision, Lebow's recent work warrants more specific attention. Lebow's *A Cultural Theory of International Politics* is animated by a deep concern over “the limited representation of human motives by existing [IR] paradigms and the theories nested in them” (Lebow, 2008:35). He argues philosophic concepts like fear, appetite, spirit, and reason “capture universal attributes of human nature that find expression in all cultures at all times, with the very important caveat that they are manifested and described in a wide variety of different ways” (2008:41). Human nature is returned to the center of analysis but in a way that is deeply historical and contextual, non-deterministic, and takes the challenge of interpretation seriously (2008:38-42).

Employing a classical Greek psychology based on appetite, spirit, and reason, Lebow describes fear as an emotion best described in Aristotelian terms as “a pain or disturbance due to imagining some destructive or painful evil in the future” (Lebow,

2008:88). What's distinctive about this account is that fear emerges from "a breakdown in *nomos* caused by lack of constraint by elite actors" (2008:89). What begins as a faint suspicion that that others are not constrained by basic rules of the community precipitates a broader collective retreat from political order. The mobilization of power in the form of resources and relationships is still important to this account as "[f]earful actors are likely to consider a range of precautions which can run the gamut from bolting their doors at night to acquiring allies and more and better arms" (2008:89). The mobilizing potential of fear leads to a legitimization of rule-breaking and the suspension of political order altogether. Anarchy is not the source of this fear, fear is a source of the anarchy that drives us to more and better arms.

While limited in scope this brief survey shows realism's relationship to fear is diverse, multilayered, and even contradictory. But even at the centre of this diversity we can see a common thread: an understanding of collective fears as a powerful force of political mobilization.

### *2.1.2 Threat Inflation and the Market Place of Ideas*

It is no exaggeration to say that a number of "[p]rominent American scholars have conceptualised national security policymaking in terms of a 'marketplace of ideas'" (Oren & Solomon, 2015:316). The metaphor of the market is a rich and enduring resource in shaping thinking about public discourse and debate, particularly in the United States. Public deliberation is envisioned in terms of an economic competition with different ideas holding intrinsic value. A diverse range of public institutions such as the media, political parties, voters, and other civil society organizations work "to weed out unfounded, mendacious, or self-serving foreign policy arguments" as open debate ensures

that “reasoning and evidence are subject to public scrutiny” (Kaufmann, 2004:5). Thus, certain ideas in the market “are assertions that would lose credibility if their claim to a basis in fact or logic were exposed to rigorous, disinterested public evaluation” (Snyder & Ballentine, 1996:10). Questionable ideas like nationalist myths can be exposed by how they are not “falsifiable... because they are normative claims which exist independently of any objective standards of argumentation” (Snyder & Ballentine, 1996:10).

Other views of the market are less sanguine. As Durham Peters argues, this metaphor is less about scientific objectivity and more about a teleological vision of progress:

“[the marketplace of ideas] packs hefty semantic freight, suggesting communications and economics are not only analogous but flourish when unregulated, and that exchange occurs in a “place” where people congregate and circulate, enter and exit at will. The term often wears the halo of what one might call the libertarian theodicy—the faith that ideas, if they are left to themselves, will be diverse and truth will conquer error in the long run”. (2004:66)

This skepticism should extend into the origins of the concept. IR scholars consistently attribute this metaphor to John Stuart Mill’s liberal views on free exchange.<sup>20</sup> Yet Mill never actually used the phrase ‘the marketplace of ideas’ and in some ways it is a grave distortion of his thinking. Gordon (1997:239) argues that “the market is not a metaphor that Mill would endorse” as Mill believed that minority and dissident beliefs—views which would fare poorly under the populism of the market—should be heard and

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<sup>20</sup> See Snyder and Ballentine (1996:12 n23), Thrall (2009:176), Dunne (2009:112), Rosato and Schuessler (2009:804 n11).

protected. It may be more historically accurate to locate the metaphor of the market as a creative response to a series of political developments in postwar America, including how to parse (and possibly discipline?) the intense ideological debates over capitalism and communism (Durham Peters, 2004:73-74).

The complexity of these origins is often invisible to most IR scholarship on the market. Instead, it is more likely the concept found an audience in IR because it dovetailed with the popularity of micro-economic assumptions which dominated IR at the end of the century. Hall outlines a typical list of these assumptions:

“human beings (and aggregations of them in IR theory) are: (1) rational, (2) self-interested, (3) interact in a competitive manner within a competitive system of other actors that, (4) reaches an efficient ‘equilibrium’ through the unintended consequences of rational action, (5) that people value economic efficiency over all other goals, and (6) that the individual is economically empowered by commanding the productivity of their labour in the marketplace” (R. B. Hall, 2006:271)

In fairness, some scholars may hold these assumptions not as ontological claims, as Hall implies, but as instrumentally “useful fictions” for sense making out of a complex world (MacDonald, 2003). But the broader point here is that appreciating the remarkable extent breadth of the appeal of the marketplace model means recognizing how it is a de facto fit with extant assumptions. To a field that largely, though certainly not exclusively, envisions politics as a form of economic exchange, a marketplace of ideas is an eminently sensible proposition.

Where IR scholars leave their distinctive imprint on this model is with the idea of ‘threat inflation’. While sensitive to its variations, Cramer and Thrall define threat

inflation as “the attempt by elites to create a concern for a threat goes beyond the scope and urgency that a disinterested analysis would justify” (2009:1).<sup>21</sup> Anchored in the model of the marketplace, the public (and presumably other elites) are viewed as “investors and exaggerated threats are akin to an overvalued share price that would plummet if investors just had the right information” (Van Rythoven, 2016:5). Inflated threats represent a distortion of value in the market place of ideas. Until only recently, specific instances of threat inflation were seen to be historically rare, at least in the democratic context. Writing in the 1990s, Snyder and Ballentine argued such market distortions are rare in advanced democracies because they benefit from a range of entrenched institutions which preserve the integrity of the marketplace (1996:34-37).<sup>22</sup>

The 2003 Iraq War and a succession of conflicts led by liberal democracies have put these claims under immense strain. Dunne laments that “in contradistinction to the Kantian hope that republican states would be judicious and risk-averse, we have witnessed modern liberal states – the USA, the UK, Australia and at times also Spain, Denmark and Poland – rushing to war” (Dunne, 2009:113). Writing in the late 2000s, Van Evera suggests “[t]hreat inflation is a pervasive feature of international politics”, that it “is far more common than threat underestimation”, and that it represents the “prime danger to the safety of modern great powers” (2009:xi, xv). To Mueller it “appear[s] that every foreign policy threat [in the US] in the last several decades that has come to be

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<sup>21</sup> Kaufman, drawing on Snyder, offers a much more expansive definition:

“Threat inflation, as opposed to ordinary conservatism, can be defined as (1) claims that go beyond the range of ambiguity that disinterested experts would credit as plausible; (2) a consistent pattern of worst-case assertions over a range of factual issues that are logically unrelated or only weakly related-an unlikely output of disinterested analysis; (3) use of double standards in evaluating intelligence in a way that favors worst-case threat assessments; or (4) claims based on circular logic” (Kaufmann, 2004:8-9).

<sup>22</sup> These arguments often dovetail into broader discussions of the democratic peace thesis. See Rosato (2003:598-599) for a critical overview.

accepted as significant has then eventually been greatly exaggerated” (2009:192). More recently, Walt has suggested that there is a “paranoid” pattern of “threat-inflation” which “has informed so much of U.S. foreign and defense policy” (2013).

The broad appeal of the marketplace of ideas model on the one hand, and the increasing sense that threat inflation is endemic feature of world politics on the other, have combined to make explaining market failure a pressing question. It is precisely at this point that the literature turns to familiar themes surrounding public fears and collective mobilization. Despite threat inflation’s explicitly rationalist framing, discussions of fear return in two distinct forms: as a psychological bias and an effect of elite manipulation.

In the first instance market failure is understood as a consequence of a series of psychological biases which constrain people’s capacity to process information effectively. Echoing the economism of the market model, individuals are understood as “cognitive misers” (Fiske and Taylor quoted in Jervis, 2009:25) who are prone to employ “a fast and frugal decision tree heuristic” (Rousseau & Garcia-Retamero, 2009:70). While there is an array of different cognitive biases for explaining threat inflation, some of the most common are “motivated biases [which] reflect people’s attempts to protect their egos, rationalize prior decisions, or prevent cognitive dissonance, *and involve affect and emotion*, not just cognition (emphasis mine, Cramer & Thrall, 2009:5). This reflects a more general understanding of emotion as a form misperception (Mercer, 2005).<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Yet as Gross Stein notes “[a]rguments of ‘misperception’ and ‘miscalculation’ are built on the assumption that accurate perception and calculation are possible, that there is some standard, some boundary, which separates inaccuracy from accuracy. Yet this boundary is extraordinary difficult to establish, even after the fact” (2013:364).

Emotions, including fear, are read as a distortion of an otherwise properly functioning marketplace.

Other explanations rooted in domestic politics offer a more overt account of public fears. Paralleling the reflexive and classical realist approaches above, many of these theories focus on elite manipulation of emotion. Kaufmann (2009) argues elites use a range of techniques, from strategic framing to suppressing information, to manipulate a passionate public. Drawing on the account of one intelligence official as to why the emphases on WMDs leading to the Iraq War was so important:

“You certainly could have made a strong case that regime change was part of the war on terrorism, given Baghdad’s historic terror ties, but that didn’t have enough resonance. You needed something that inspired fear”. (quoted in Kaufmann, 2009:100)

Thrall (2009) similarly highlights the importance of emotional connections, a move made by shifting the locus of the marketplace from one of ideas to one of values. When looking at values “differences [in threat assessment] are not merely the result of inadequate deliberation or information but rather the result of conflicting values, worldviews, and emotional connections to various ideas, groups, symbols, and (at times) myths” (2009:177). While Thrall contends elite consensus is rare, when it does happen it allows elites to “stoke fears by appealing to widely shared cultural myths and mobilizing public emotions. In such cases elites have an easy time getting the public riled up about threats to the extent that they share the myths, symbols, and pre-existing frameworks for thinking about the world” (2009:188).

Mueller (2009) offers a compelling twist on elite manipulation by framing it less as a matter of political leadership mobilizing the public for specific policy objectives, such as the 2003 Iraq War, and more the product of an increasingly entrenched “terrorism industry”. This industry “consists of politicians, bureaucrats, journalists, and risk entrepreneurs who benefit in one way or another from exacerbating anxieties about terrorism” (Mueller, 2009:198). Paradoxically, the industry “can never make enough progress toward ‘protecting America’ to reassure Americans against the fears it is helping to stoke” (Lustick quoted in Mueller, 2009:198-199). In an ironic perversion of the logic of the marketplace, “experts have an ‘incentive to exaggerate risks and pander to public fears” (Rosen quoted in Mueller, 2009:199).

The literature on threat inflation and the market is diverse and some may object to how I have foregrounded its discussion of fear and political mobilization. Fear is certainly important, but the literature cites multiple pathways for threat inflation—domestic politics, institutions, values, etc.—and this diversity calls for a more holistic picture. Yet my purpose is not to downplay these lines of argument, but rather point to a recognizable tension. Fear has no explicit conceptual or theoretical role within the literature, yet as the above discussion demonstrates references to fear are ubiquitous. Indeed, Thrall and Cramer’s (2009) edited collection, from which most of the above discussion derives, is entitled ‘*American Foreign Policy and the Politics of Fear*’. Yet there is no index entry for fear, nor do any of the chapters explicitly theorize the concept. By putatively assuming a marketplace model these scholars assert a baseline of economic rationality, a move which effectively stacks the deck to view emotions as anomalous exceptions. The problem is that if one views threat inflation as an endemic feature of

international politics, then these anomalies are not the exception: they are the rule. This is, ironically, very close to the view in International Political Sociology where, far from viewing emotion and rationality in opposition, fear is seen as rationalized into a modern technique of governance.

### *2.1.3 International Political Sociology*

International Political Sociology (IPS) is a label ascribed to many different genres of research. I use it here to capture two basic commitments. First, much of IPS is critical of mainstream IR scholarship, not least for its naturalizing assumptions, ethnocentrism, and (neo)positivist model of inquiry. Second, it employs a range of resources from sociology and social theory which are not typically found in American mainstream IR (Bigo & Walker, 2007). This work also overlaps significantly with securitization theory—though the discussion below reveals critical divisions. IPS is far more influenced by continental social and political theory, a heritage most evident in its engagement with Foucault’s analytics of biopolitics and governmentality. In this section, I review three major contributions to IPS which offer a distinctive take on the relationship between fear, mobilization, and the politics of security.

One of the clearest examples of this approach is in the work of Bigo (2002). In an often-cited article he asks the question of why, despite robust political opposition and compelling counter evidence, does the framing of migrants as a security problem in Europe persist. In arguing “security is what the professionals of unease management make of it” (2002:85), Bigo dispenses with any pretense of security issues being self-apparent and objective reflections of danger. But in contrast to securitization theory, he argues a narrow focus on dramatic speech acts by political elites alone cannot account for

the persistence of this framing. Instead, the social production of danger which underpins security issues is rooted in the “sense of the routines, the day-to-day practices, of the bureaucracies” who produces both insecurity over policy fields like migration, and the techniques of governance to respond (Bigo, 2002:73). Broadly-based fears over migration are not the result of elites manipulating a hysterical public, they are generated through specific “technologies of control and surveillance... [such as] computerization, risk profiling, visa policy, the remote control of borders, the creation of international or nonterritorial zones in airports, and so on” (Bigo, 2002:73). Endowed with a unique authority that is derived from a privileged (secret) knowledge, security professionals have ensured “that the word immigration becomes a term for catalyzing fears or misgivings about the economic, social, and political development of Western countries. It becomes a fixer of frights and confusions about national cultural identities as well as of weaknesses of solidarity mechanisms” (Bigo, 2002:79). The conduct of security professionals reflects a specific “governmentality” or “art of governing” (Bigo, 2002:83) which relies on the mobilizing potential of ‘unease’ and anxieties over migration to sustain and legitimize its securitization.

Taking a similar point of departure Huysmans (2006) argues security knowledge is never neutral. “It is a political technique of framing policy questions in logics of survival with a capacity to mobilize politics of fear in which social relations are structured on the basis of distrust” (2006:xii). Standing out here are two distinctive conceptual moves. First, rather than focus on different articulations of threats, Huysmans turns to what he calls “domains of insecurity”. Issues like refugee-seeking are often not directly labelled as security issues, instead they become “institutionally and discursively

integrated in policy frameworks that emphasizes policing and defence” (Huysmans, 2006:2-4). Security issues are not created out of whole cloth, instead they become slowly integrated in pre-existing domains of insecurity which are graduated “modulated” to encompass new issues. This modulation however, is not simply a product of discourse (elite talk) but a shift in techniques of government. This is a technocratic view which points to how the “modulation of insecurity... crucially depends on technological and technocratic processes”, including “diagrams, computer networks, and even the specific forms that need filling in” (Huysmans, 2006:8). This is the management of fear by technocratic rule.

Though not referenced by Huysmans the United States’ now defunct color-coded terror advisor system illustrates this logic. As a technical instrument, the color-coded system—which was never reduced below yellow or ‘elevated threat’—was used to modulate the level homeland (in)security. The effect of these techniques is to distribute fear and trust in a society. For Huysmans “Fear is not first of all an emotion”, but an “organizational principle” which divides the world into trustworthy insiders and dangerous outsiders, and as a “currency” which legitimizes, one might say mobilizes, the power and position of security professionals (2006:52). This distribution of fear is important because beneath the conventional Hobbesian fear of death is a deeper existential anxiety, an “epistemological fear: the fear of not knowing who is dangerous” (Huysmans, 2006:53). Techniques of government which distribute fear in society are effective precisely because they abate the deeper anxiety of not knowing whom to fear and whom to trust.

Debrix and Barder (2009, 2012) have produced what is arguably the most sophisticated account of the biopolitics of fear in IPS. Their contribution is squarely situated in a biopolitical analysis which is less concerned with traditional views of sovereign power and more concerned with “a series of strategies and interventions of power, authority, and control at the level of life” (Debrix & Barder, 2012:8). This is a dispersed and relational conception of power, “marked by an insistence on ‘fostering life’” (Debrix & Barder, 2012:8-9), even if that means eliminating some groups which may threaten life.

For Debrix and Barder a biopolitics of fear represents distinct break with how fear was envisioned by Hobbes and Schmitt. Hobbes famously “appropriates the mutual fears among individuals and concentrates them to produce order and security” in one solitary Leviathan (Debrix & Barder, 2012:53). Schmitt was influenced by Hobbes, but was concerned about the periodic need to revitalize the power of the state. His concept of sovereignty “as the capacity to determine when an exceptional situation arises”, along with his concept of the political as “the ability of the sovereign to make a decision as to who the public friend and public enemy are”, are employed together routinely to declare a constant ‘state of exception’ where the community is threatened by an enemy. The only way the state can maintain the capacity to “marshal [the] authority, resources, and legitimacy” to survive in such a context is a “constant production of fear of physical harm or death” (Debrix & Barder, 2012:54).

By contrast, in a Foucauldian account of biopolitics “the point of reference is no longer the forceful, centralized, or awe-inspiring rule of the sovereign”. Instead it is about a “succession of governmental procedures, techniques, and strategies that can

actively regulate a population” and where fear is employed to “preserve or enhance the life-efficiency of the population” (Debrix & Barder, 2012:57-58). The key difference here is directionality: the production of fear is not the top-down responsibility of the sovereign, political elites, or even security professionals. Dispersed individual subjects become responsible for their own production of fear as it becomes framed as “the population’s own problem” (emphasis removed Debrix & Barder, 2012:62). Biopolitical techniques operate on the level of individual bodies and responsibility. Using the example of infectious diseases like SARS and H5N1, Debrix and Barder argue biopolitical techniques emerge as a series of self-regulatory measures: “do I have a fever? Is my cough a sign that I have been infected? Did I remember to wash my hands after riding the bus or the subway?” (Debrix & Barder, 2012:64). The production of fear in biopolitics, and the mobilizations that ensue (e.g. self-surveillance, quarantine, immunization, sanitation protocols) then becomes the responsibility of individual subjects.<sup>24</sup>

Behind a wall of highly technical prose, IPS offers major contributions in theorizing the relationship between fear and mobilization in the politics of security. Chief among these is in tracing the production of fear to an empirical and concrete set of governmental practices, rather than nebulous accounts of elites manipulating the public, and explicitly framing these practices as normalized occurrences rather than sporadic exceptions.

Yet one cannot help but be struck by the totalizing and absolutist character of the argument. The effectiveness of these practices, and their capacity to produce a

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<sup>24</sup> For the sake of brevity, I do not focus on Debrix and Barder’s efforts to push “beyond biopolitics” with their discussion of “agonal sovereignty” and “horror”, though these are also notable contributions.

mobilizing fear in a population, is never called into question, and with that there can be no appreciation of failure or resistance. The issue here is not crass reinsertion of the structure/agency debate into governmentality studies (Rose, O'Malley, & Valverde, 2006:97-100). But for work which prizes a rich empirical focus there is a looming question as to why the failures of 'managers of unease'—or even if these professionals ever become 'managed' by their own unease—remain outside the frame of analysis.

#### *2.1.4 Theories of Securitization*<sup>25</sup>

Securitization theory's widespread growth and global appeal has made it one of the largest security research programs in the post-Cold War period.<sup>26</sup> Originally associated with the Copenhagen's School's analysis of security as speech acts subject to certain facilitating conditions (Buzan et al., 1998; Wæver, 1995), the approach has considerably broadened, though not displaced, its linguistic origins. This includes the more sociologically rich theories of the so-called 'second generation' securitization theorists (Balzacq, 2005; Salter, 2008; Stritzel, 2007). Most work in the field now focuses on language (speech acts, pragmatic language, framing, and poststructural approaches to texts), social relations and context (positionality, authority, social capital, fields), or some composite of both. While its emphasis on the social construction of security overlaps significantly with works in IPS, the difference between the two emerges in where that construction takes place. For the latter, it largely takes place in the everyday governmental practices as well as the routines of security professionals. For

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<sup>25</sup> This section reproduces arguments from Van Rythoven (2015).

<sup>26</sup> For a discussion of the influence of securitization theory on IR globally see the forum organized by Van Rythoven and Hayes (2015).

securitization theorists, it takes place in prominent, public speech acts made by political elites.

What's intriguing about this literature is that despite this linguistic and sociological focus it continually if sporadically, employs a host of related concepts involving fear (Abrahamsen, 2005; Aradau, 2004:400; Barthwal-Datta, 2009:293-294; Buzan & Wæver, 2009:264-271; Hansen, 2000:305; Karyotis, 2007:281; Williams, 2011b), emotion (Balzacq, 2005:179; Sjöstedt, 2013:151; Vuori, 2010:260), drama (Åtland & Ven Bruusgaard, 2009:340-341; Salter, 2008), and even horror (Huysmans, 1998a). While these concepts certainly have linguistic and social dimensions, they also invoke a subtly different interpretation of securitization as a visceral and emotional process. Rather than focus on specific accounts in the literature, I narrow the analysis to three areas where a tacit 'emotional' interpretation of the theory is evident.

First, the concept of emotion is conspicuous in empirical descriptions of world politics where fear and securitization are presented as tacitly causal or at least coterminous. For example, Buzan and Wæver claim that American "Unipolarity has therefore been securitised as a threat by both other great powers and by smaller powers fearing to become the object of this project" (2009:264). Likewise Aradau contends that the "securitization of migration creates and subsequently legitimizes itself on the basis of everyday fears, such as the fear of crime" (2004:400). References to fear, particularly within public debates, come to be taken as empirical indications of securitizing moves and their resistance (e.g. Barthwal-Datta, 2009; Karyotis, 2007).

Second, references to emotion are prevalent in the critique of the Copenhagen School's failure to consider 'intensification' (Abrahamsen, 2005; Williams, 2003). The

slow and gradual building of relations of enmity and danger is not well captured by speech act theory where meaning is generated through instantaneous utterances. Abrahamsen has thus argued the process of securitization is better envisioned as a “continuum” where issues are “increasingly placed within a logic of fear”, some of which represent manageable risks while others achieve the saliency of existential threats (Abrahamsen, 2005:65). Similarly, in tracing the influence of political realism on securitization theory Williams has argued that the theory “echoes” Carl Schmitt’s concept of ‘the political’. This is to say the Copenhagen School’s view of security is constitutively marked by the “particularly *intense* relationship that actors feel toward it” (emphasis original 2003:515-516). The emphasis on ‘felt intensity’ here, rather than simply language, adds an interesting level of nuance to the discussion, but it raises the question of if we are talking about something more than simply language.

Third, references to emotion in the securitization literature are becoming increasingly evident in its visual turn (Hansen, 2011; Möller, 2007; Vuori, 2010). For Hansen images of security have the capacity to evoke “‘immediacy’ in the form of emotion” which becomes most acute in portrayals of death and violence (2011:56-57). Relatedly, Vuori draws a comparison to advertising where “images can evoke emotions that thereby facilitate the ‘purchase’ of a securitization argument” (2010:260). The turn to examining visual imagery certainly makes sense given the pervasiveness of images in security discourse, but it has left the literature in an awkward position. Images may matter for their capacity to convey emotion, yet analysts are generally vague as to what emotion means for securitization.

While the role of emotion in these accounts is ambiguous it can be clarified by returning to the central purpose of securitizing moves: political mobilization. As the research program has expanded—

better elaboration of process, extending the empirical application, exploring of normative implications, etc.—this original focus has largely been displaced. Yet in an early formulation Wæver places the theme of mobilization front and centre. He suggests:

“As Buzan points out, the concept of national security ‘has an enormous power as an instrument of social and political mobilization’ and, therefore, ‘the obvious reason for putting environmental issues into the security agenda is the possible magnitude of the threats posed, and the need to mobilize urgent and unprecedented responses to them’...” (Buzan quoted in Wæver, 1995:50)<sup>27</sup>

Later contributions to this genre would make the connection between fear and mobilization even more explicit. Williams (2011b) argues fear could be used to mobilize both support and opposition to securitizing moves and, in a particularly incisive history, Tjalve (2011) reads the securitization discourse as a successor to European concerns over the capacity of fear to mobilize publics to violence, a process which is presumed to have reached its peak in the Holocaust. Thus, while the connection between these two threads is rarely acknowledged, there remains a persistent association between emotion, fear, and security discourse, and on the other hand, an enduring belief that these factors have a unique and powerful mobilizing potential.

This mobilizing potential fascinates scholars because its seen as what legitimates a “breaking free of the rules” (Buzan *et al*, 1998:26) which allows securitizing actors to

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<sup>27</sup> On mobilization and securitization see also Guzzini (2015).

pursue emergency and exceptional measures that would otherwise be forbidden in ‘normal politics’. But at this point it is worthwhile reflecting on securitization theory’s peculiar relationship to limits. Limits are discarded early in the analysis precisely because it’s the passage of limits which is taken as an empirical indicator that a successful securitizing move has occurred. Yet limits are understood here in an arguably narrow way: liberal and democratic rules on open and transparent policy deliberation, and legal restraints on executive authority. Like other manifestations of the fear-as-mobilization thesis, there are no limits to when and how collective fears are induced, circulated, and intensified.

#### *2.1.5 On the Origins of the Fear-as-Mobilization Thesis*

Each of these iterations of the fear-as-mobilization thesis offers a set of ready-made arguments to explain the what’s meant by the ‘politics of fear’. Here the ‘politics of fear’ can refer to a strategy of mass mobilization and resource extraction (neoclassical realism), the danger of an emotionally volatile public in need of rational deliberation (reflexive and classical realism), the inflation of threats by elites (marketplace of ideas), a declaration of exceptional danger (securitization theory), or the instrumentalization of fear as a technique of modern governance (biopolitics). While each of these arguments has important nuances in content and form, they all revolve around a common link between popular fears and collective mobilization.

And yet the fear-as-mobilization thesis does not need to be overtly stated. It “goes without saying because it comes without saying” because it is *doxa* (Bourdieu, 1977:167). The thesis qualifies as *doxa* not simply because it is common, but because it represents a way of thinking which does not even appear as open to question. It’s a line

of thought which encompasses both mainstream orthodox views (realism and the marketplace of ideas), as well as more critical heterodox views (securitization and IPS). It belongs to what Bourdieu calls the “universe of the undiscussed” (1977:168). Thus, when scholars in IR’s emotions turn lament how fear is central to the discipline but lacks systemic analysis or reflection, this is precisely because such analysis and reflection is understood as superfluous. We already know what fear does because it has already accrued a “taken for grants status” (Bourdieu, 1977:168).

The result is that the origins of this link between popular fears and collective mobilization has received little scrutiny. Tjalve’s (2013:785) discussion of how American intellectuals in the early 20th Century grappled with mass politics as an ambiguous site for both democratic pluralism and violent populism is important here. But the intellectual history of this link arguably extends back even further to an early strand of sociological thinking about crowds in late 19th Century Europe. As Borch argues:

“At [the early twentieth century] crowds and masses formed a central concern for a number of sociologists, and this had been the case since the inception of crowd psychology in the 1890s. Indeed, countless working hours were poured into the attempt to understand the phenomena of crowds and to arrive at still more refined conceptualizations of these collective eruptions” (Borch, 2012:1)

There were clear reasons for this interest: “From its very inception, the notion of crowds has referred to the dark side of modern society” (Borch, 2012:15). The idea of the crowd was—and arguably still is—a source of “continuous anxiety... associated with

irrationality, violence, and de-individualization”, all of which represent a pointed challenge to modernity’s “ideal of the autonomous liberal subject” (Borch, 2012:16-17).

No other figure was as important in the initial framing of crowds as a social problem than Gustav Le Bon. In his book *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (1896) Le Bon took “existing, if only embryonic, crowd theorizing” and shaped it into an inordinately popular and accessible text (Borch, 2012:38). Steeped in the revolutionary experiences of 19th Century France—but from a decidedly conservative perspective—Le Bon viewed crowds as defining feature of the modern age. What fascinated him however was not simply that crowds were omnipresent, but that they were a distinctive form of social organization with unique characteristics, namely their unique sense of invincibility, their capacity for contagion, and their openness to suggestion (Borch, 2012:40). Invincibility, because those who join the crowd no longer feel themselves to be subject to the same constraints as individuals—in fact they no longer feel like individuals at all. Individuality was quickly eroded in the passions of the crowd, which Le Bon believed to be contagious. This de-individualization went hand-in-hand with the loss of rational reflection leaving crowds open to suggestions from charismatic individuals, a view which mapped easily onto the widespread belief in hypnotism at the time (McClelland, 1996:642). This last possibility reflected Le Bon’s ultimate fear: a scenario according to which “the masses were readily seized by a charismatic leader” who sought the destruction of the existing social and political order (Borch, 2012:36).

Le Bon was a conservative reactionary. His book “was intended to be read as a very generalised attack on democracy and socialism” (McClelland, 1996:654). His scientific peers were highly critical of his work, with one biographer later describing him

as “the supreme scientific vulgarizer of his generation” (Nye quoted in Borch, 2012:34). But at the same time his work found an enormously popular audience, leading the same biographer to remark that *Crowds* may have “been one of the best-selling scientific books in history” (Nye quoted in Borch, 2012:34). To a conservative political imagination shaped by the evolutionary arguments of European imperialism, Le Bon’s work compellingly framed crowds as regressively backwards, “irrational, primitive and animal-like” (McClelland, 1996:640). More than anything, his writing worked to legitimize pre-existing anxieties over the masses as a source emotional volatility, a volatility that could easily be mobilized into a threat to public order.

While Le Bon’s work was influential, it was the American journalist and public intellectual Walter Lippmann who played a key role in carrying his ideas into the twentieth century. Originally a progressive liberal and contributor to Woodrow Wilson’s 14 Points, Lippmann never shared Le Bon’s sharp antipathy towards democracy. However, his experiences in working for the *Committee on Public Information* (the United States government’s propaganda arm during the First World War) convinced him that publics were vulnerable to the emotional resonance of propaganda. “Crowd concepts first helped Lippmann interpret the irrationalities of the war years” and then convinced him of the power of deploying “emotion-focusing symbols” to shape popular sentiment (Leach, 1992:24). Writing in his 1922 book *Public Opinion*, Lippmann echoes Le Bon’s thoughts on emotional contagion and irrationality:

“emotion is a stream of molten lava which catches and imbeds whatever it touches. When you excavate in it you find... all sorts of objects ludicrously entangled in each other... Nor has a mind in such a state any way of knowing how preposterous it is.

Ancient fears, reinforced by more recent fears, coagulate into a snarl of fears where anything that is dreaded is the cause of anything else that is dreaded” (Lippmann, 2009[1922]:117).

For Lippman a combination of mass media, propaganda, and emotionally-laden stereotypes posed a concerted challenge to the twentieth century American democratic ideal. While crowd theorizing experienced a semantic shift to ‘masses’ and ‘publics’ in Lippman’s work, it retained the idea that they were emotionally volatile and prone to manipulation. As Schou Tjalve and Williams discuss,<sup>28</sup> Lippmann’s framing is important precisely because it would become the basis for how early post-war International Relations theorists engaged with the problem of mass politics.

But for every sympathetic reading of Le Bon’s view of mass politics, there was also succession of critics who saw a series of questionable political assumptions. Gabriel Tarde, a contemporary of Le Bon, offered a strikingly more positive view:

“Crowds on the whole are far from deserving the evil reputation which has been attributed to them. If one balances the daily and universal work of crowds of love... with the intermittent and localized work of crowds of hate, in all fairness one has to recognize that the former have done far more to weave or tighten social bonds than the latter have ripped this fabric apart” (quoted in Borch, 2012:57)

Years later in the early twentieth century, this positive view of crowds would be found in the optimism of American social theorists like Robert E. Park. Park argued that the same “common consciousness” and “impulses” at work in crowds could also be found in the

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<sup>28</sup> On the intersection between Lippman and IR theory see Tjalve (2013), Schou Tjalve and Williams (2015), and Williams (2011a). This doesn’t mean IR theorists necessarily agreed with Lippmann’s framing of the masses. See Williams’ (2011a:53-55) discussion of Waltz’s criticism of Lippmann.

more amiable and progressive “publics”, and serve as a point-of-departure in allowing individuals to “generate new social relations” (Borch, 2012:134-144). The repudiation of Le Bon’s view would carry through to the turn of the century when emotions once again became an explicit object of social inquiry. For sociologists working in this area the historical “portrayal of emotions at the core of academic treatments was flawed in many ways... what Gustave Le Bon thought he saw in crowds in 1895... was more a portrayal of [his] own fears and anxieties than a psychological portrait of protestors” (Goodwin, Jasper, & Polletta, 2001:4)

Skepticism of Le Bon’s reading extends even beyond sociology. Wary of viewing crowds as something that uniformly “has feelings”, cultural theorist Sara Ahmed argues for a more careful tracing the social effects of emotion by how they circulate in and through political/textual practices (2004:10-11). In a very different context, postcolonial theorist Ranjit Guha has questioned how colonial texts have framed indigenous peoples as emotionally volatile masses by treating peasant rebellions as “mindless ‘rabble’ devoid of a will of their own and easily manipulated...” (1988:79). From this perspective, many of the modern concerns revolving around crowds signal a deeper suspicion of collective agency from outside the aegis of western leadership.

The broader point of this intellectual archaeology is that the putative links between popular fears and mass mobilization which sit just beneath the surface of claims like ‘everything is being securitized’ deserve to be questioned. There’s no reason to assume masses will necessarily be emotionally volatile, nor that collective emotions will track with the fears analysts so often read into the politics of security. When these

assumptions are advanced *prima facie*, the contingency and openness of the world is suppressed, and only a particularly idealized vision of the politics of security remains.

## **2.2 The Dystopian Idealism in International Relations Theory**

Bourdieu argued that in *doxa* we discover something more than unspoken common ground: *doxa* embody a collective “sense of limits” over what can and cannot be thought (1977:164). These limitations have powerful structuring effects for how social agents, and even scholars, envision limits and possibility in reordering social relations. In turning to how the fear-as-mobilization thesis comes with its own sense of limits we can examine how its vision of the future is prone to a *dystopian idealism*.

Dystopia is not a word we often hear in IR, and when we hear of idealism it is typically as an “epithet for naiveté and utopianism” (Wendt, 1999:33). Yet critiques of idealism need not be polemical, nor do they need to be dismissive of the value of “utopian imagination” in producing creative alternatives of political order (Brincat, 2009:584). Instead, my concern is with how certain visions of the future can “entrap actors” (Berenskoetter, 2011:663), including the scholars who propagate them. Carr’s (2001[1981]) well known critique, for example, focused on how interwar liberals became entrapped in an utopian vision of the future which grossly exaggerated the ease and possibility of international peace and cooperation. Utopian visions have a blinkering effect, highlighting some possibilities, while rendering others invisible.

Yet while utopia and reality are often presented as opposing mirror images, this elides how political idealism comes in different flavours. As Berenskoetter reminds us, “visions of the future do not have to be positive, or optimistic, but can also have a pessimistic character and take the form of a dystopia (the ‘bad place’)” (2011:656).

Dystopianism is a form of political idealism, but instead of exaggerating the prospect of liberal progressiveness it exaggerates illiberal regression.

While Carr's utopians envisioned few substantive limits to the expansion of liberal order, today's dystopians see few limits on the expansion of the politics of security. What the following critique of dystopianism highlights then is in how the fear-as-mobilization thesis risks a totalizing vision of the future which freezes out the openness and indeterminacy of human interaction. In organizing this critique, I focus on three features of the thesis: a failure to consider the limits of power, a narrow empirical purview, and an assumption that emotions are stable states rather than relational processes.

### *2.2.1 Fear and the Limits of Power*

One conspicuous feature of the fear-as-mobilization thesis is the absence of any consideration of limitations on the power to induce, circulate, or intensify collective fears. Fear does not know failure. Whereas Carr's critique of interwar idealism emphasized the need to consider how power constrains the prospects for future peace and cooperation, this critique stresses the imperative of thinking about the limits of the power of fear as pathway for collective mobilization.

This absence is striking given how limitations on power are usually afforded a pre-eminent place in both critical and realist IR theory. Reflexive realism is premised, at least in part, on impressing upon actors a recognition of "the limits of their capacity to change the boundaries around them" (Steele, 2007a:281). This argument comes in its strongest form in Ned Lebow's discussion of tragedy. Tragedy for Lebow shows us how actions taken by political figures "to limit suffering through the accumulation of

knowledge or power might invite more suffering. Tragedy confronts us with our frailties and limits, and the disastrous consequences of trying to exceed them” (Lebow, 2003:20). To assume the mastery of political power is not just the pinnacle of idealism, it is an exercise in hubris (Lebow, 2003:48-49).

Williams’s discussion of emotion and Hobbes is particularly insightful here. He argues “[t]he extraordinarily powerful, evocative, and metaphorical language of the *Leviathan* reflects Hobbes’s recognition that the construction of his rational political order required an *affective* element if it was to be effective” (2005:37). While Hobbes undertook “the tricky task of mobilising the most basic, powerful and yet unstable element of his vision of human motivation: fear”, he did “not seek constantly to invoke fear as a means of limitation”. This would make the crucial mistake of ignoring how fear is the “most basic and potentially destabilising of the passions” (2005:37-38). Instead, the mobilization of fear in Hobbes’ thought creates a brief window of opportunity through which a form of subjectivity that is deeply materialistic, rational, and self-interested can be created. As Williams contends “[t]he Hobbesian self is a self of *limits*” (2005:38, emphasis original), limits which are cast with a deep appreciation of what a politics of fear can, and cannot, achieve.

A different but equally compelling set of ideas on the importance of limits can be found in IR’s practice turn. In Adler and Pouliot’s view many of the everyday occurrences of world politics can be better understood as practices, rather than merely behaviour or action. Behaviour can be aimless (‘they’re wandering’) and action can be endowed with meaning but exist apart from any social context (‘they’re putting on their coat because they are cold’). By contrast, practices “are patterned actions that are

embedded in particular organized contexts and, as such, are articulated into specific types of action and are socially developed through learning and training” (Adler & Pouliot, 2011:5). A key element of this definition is that a practice may be performed poorly. A state may be so incompetent in the practice of deterrence—i.e. no clear show of force, ambiguous red lines, muddled signals—that the state’s actions may fail to deter an aggressor. “Social recognition is thus a fundamental aspect of practice; its (in)competence is never inherent but attributed in and through social relations. The notion of performance implies that of a public, of an audience able to appraise the practice” (Adler & Pouliot, 2011:6-7). While practice theory is arguably skewed towards looking at competent practices, it usefully reminds us that many actors in world politics quickly run into the limits of their own competence as they confront judicious audiences with high expectations and little patience.

Yet in most accounts of the fear-as-mobilization these audiences are viewed as passive vessels into which emotions are spoken into with little to no regard for the underlying competency of the actor. Schweller’s take on the mobilizing potential of Nazi fascism conveniently elides how contemporary fascists are largely seen as incompetent, politically impotent fringe actors.<sup>29</sup> Kaufman’s view that governments are able to circulate a threat-inflating fear by restricting the flow of information is severely strained in an age of high-profile whistleblowing and entrenched cynicism over government secrecy. While Huysmans rightly draws our attention to the techniques of security governance which are embedded in the social production of fear, it is far from clear that these techniques always function as intended. Recall, for example, how the United States’ color-coded terrorism

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<sup>29</sup> However, this view has admittedly been challenged by the recent resurgence of white nationalism.

threat scale became a source for derision, comedy, and critique which eventually led to its dismissal. Or consider the effect of the Canadian government's ill-fated proposal for a tip line for public reporting of 'barbaric cultural practices' (Powers, 2015). Far from circulating fears over threats to Canadian values, the policy became a focal point for political sarcasm with social media users juxtaposing the phrase 'barbaric cultural practices' with a variety of mundane experiences and everyday icons—socks with sandals, the fictional character Conan the Barbarian, poor weather, even the Prime Minister in a cowboy costume (Elliot, 2015).

A failure to reflect on the limits of human competence is equally evident in talk of 'fear mongering', particularly as its used by realist scholars such as Walt and Mearsheimer.<sup>30</sup> Historically, the word monger has two meanings: it can refer to a "merchant, trader, dealer, or trafficker", and it can refer to "a person engaged in a petty or disreputable trade" (OED, 2016). Both meanings come together when describing someone who, self-conscious of the low status of their product, relies on feats of rhetorical embellishment to convince an audience. In the way Walt and Mearsheimer use the word 'fearmonger' they certainly capture the dimension of being "petty or disreputable", but they have altogether ignored how a 'monger' is acting from a position of weakness. A monger does not reflect a competent, savvy, and successful interlocutor; it is fundamentally a position of desperation. At its core fearmongering is an admission of the limits of one's competence and rhetorical power.

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<sup>30</sup> See Van Rythoven (2016) and Mearsheimer (2011).

### 2.2.2 *Fear and the Empirics of Fragility*

One of the most striking features of the fear-as-mobilization thesis is its limited empirical purview. What we don't often see is any consideration of *failures* to mobilize fear in a way which sustains a broader vision of the politics of security, or even a more limited range of security practices. In Carr's polemic, liberal idealism hinged on a very selective reading of the cases of international cooperation, a reading which actively marginalized instances of conflict. Widening the empirical ambit here, I argue, gives a far less awe-inspiring and potent image of fear. Rather than being a potent and effective resource which can be reliably deployed in a security argument, collective fears often appears as fickle and fragile phenomena.

One area where this pattern emerges in vivid detail is the contemporary Arab Spring. Contra Hobbes and Schmitt's awe and fear inspiring sovereign, what we have witnessed is the collective impotence of a number of authoritarian regimes which look to the centralized use of fear to maintain political order. Here Pearlman's (2013) rich ethnographic account of events in Tunisia and Egypt offer a wealth of evidence. In tracing the revolution in Tunisia, Pearlman outlines how "[t]he growing emotional climate was one of righteous anger beyond fear". Indeed, Tunisians themselves frequently referred to how they moved beyond fear: a sign at a protest read "After today, no more fear"; elsewhere "[y]ouths threw stones at the police, while chanting, 'We are not afraid, we are not afraid'"; an activist remarked "Facebook allowed us to overcome our fear of the regime"; and a Tunisian diplomat commented on the transition noting the sense of "oppressive fear . . . was palpably absent" (quoted in Pearlman, 2013:394-396). A similar process is related in Egypt: a filmmaker noted "Egyptians were liberated from

addiction to fear”; a military official remarked “Honestly, there was no fear” in the confrontation between protestors and the military; and an Egyptian photographer noted that “the fearsome and hated bullies of the Interior Ministry had become pathetic and irrelevant” (quoted in Pearlman, 2013:396-397).

To be clear, the Arab Spring doesn’t reflect a total collapse of authoritarian fear in the Middle East. Pearlman attributes the absence of a similar revolution in Algeria to the persistence of fear, and Egypt quickly reverted to a military dictatorship in 2013. Still, the popular expression of “*inkasar hajez al-khawf*”, or “The barrier of fear has broken” (Pearlman, 2013:388), grasps this fragile quality which more conventional accounts ignore.

In other instances where a broadly-based collective fear does emerge, it may lack the durability to sustain any lasting vision of security politics. One telling case is in the response of western countries to the spread of Ebola in West Africa in 2014. When asked in October, 65% of Americans said they were concerned about the possibility of a nationwide epidemic reaching the United States (Washington Post-ABC News Poll, 2014). Citing Ebola as “a potential threat to global security” the Obama administration deployed 3,000 military personnel to West Africa (Mason & Harding Giahyue, 2014). In many ways the response to the outbreak represents all the elements of a classic securitizing move: the framing of “Biosecurity” as a “Vital National Interest” (Gostin, Waxman, & Foege, 2014), urgent claims about the need to act, threats articulated from the authoritative position of political elites, the invocation of specialized knowledge (epidemiology) and associated symbolic capital, and calls to mobilize an urgent military response lest the situation get out of control.

Yet by November declining media coverage, eroding public interest, and empty congressional meetings suggest popular fears over the disease had largely evaporated (Ferris, 2014; Koren, 2014). By December the Obama administration was left struggling to revitalize anxieties over Ebola to sustain a security response. In a plea for a further mobilization of \$6 billion in emergency funding, Obama urged that the crisis “can’t get caught up in normal politics” (Hughes, 2014). In other words, he struggled to maintain Ebola as a ‘security’ issue, and thus something warranting emergency funding and troop deployments.

Empirical instances of actors struggling to preserve the underlying sense of anxiety and crisis surrounding security issues highlights the precarious set of power relations in which emotions are embedded. Far from specific actors authoritatively capturing what Arlie Hoschild’s has called “the “levers of feeling production” (1983:33), the capacity to circulate emotions exists in a much more dispersed set of practices which are always bound to cultural context. Consider, for example, Stephen Hawking’s recent claim that the emergence of artificial intelligence could threaten humanity. This claim likely resonated well in societies such as the United States where films and texts in popular culture have long envisioned autonomous robots as violent and militant (think ‘Terminator’). Contrast this with how “Japan’s tendency to imbue machines with sentient qualities reflects certain native religious precepts” (Brasor, 2014). Machines which may be culturally identified as objects of fear in one society may be objects of comfort, sentimentality, and even amity in another. In certain instances, pre-existing cultural practices may sharply circumscribe the power of authoritative speech to generate collective fears.

Where the fear-as-mobilization thesis faces its most significant challenge is in its limited ability to explain what should be ‘easy’ cases. In many respects, the 2015 Canadian federal election pivoted around a series of national security issues—the military mission against ISIS, domestic terrorist attacks, anxieties over Muslim integration—all of which should be easily explainable by some iteration of the fear-as-mobilization thesis. In a move that could be interpreted as threat inflation, ideological mobilization, or an act of securitization, Canada’s Foreign Minister characterized efforts to combat Islamic extremism the “greatest struggle of our generation”, while the Defence Minister declared ISIS “a real and growing threat to civilization itself” (quoted in Berthiaume, 2014). In response to domestic terror attacks which killed two Canadian soldiers and saw a gunman try and enter Parliament, the governing Conservatives introduced omnibus security reform legislation in the form of Bill C-51. The legislation granted a series of extraordinary powers to security agencies, including the ability to obtain judicial authorization to violate otherwise inviolable constitutional rights (Forcese & Roach, 2015). Such a move neatly mirrors the claim that securitizing actors look “to break free of the procedures or rules he or she would otherwise be bound by” (Buzan et al., 1998:25). So conspicuous was the nexus between security and fear that the challenging Liberal Party began to frame major policy speeches in opposition to what they called the “Politics of Fear” (Trudeau, 2015).

Yet when the October election came the supposed mobilizing potential of fear failed to materialize; the governing Conservatives faced a significant electoral defeat. The victory was so stark it led one commentator to remark “The politics of fear failed” (Mitrovica, 2015). And while we should be cautious in reducing electoral outcomes to

any single factor, these emotional dynamics loomed large in political elites' own interpretation of the outcome. In his victory speech Trudeau claimed "We beat fear with hope" (Canadian Press, 2015). The third-party New Democratic leader echoed this view, claiming Canadians had "rejected the politics of fear and division" (Smith, 2015). Reflecting on the loss one senior government Minister remarked: "I think our obvious weakness has been in tone, in the way we've often communicated our messages. I think we need a conservatism that is sunnier and more optimistic than we have sometimes conveyed" (Chase, 2015). Far from being an awe-inspiring and potent force, the mobilization of fear appeared as fragile.

### *2.2.3 Fear: Substance Versus Relation*

Utopian and dystopian visions have a distinguished quality of locking in patterns of sociopolitical interaction. Orwell's *1984* is terrifying precisely because it presents totalitarianism as an inescapable condition. In this sense, the fear-as-mobilization thesis is dystopian precisely because it renders emotions as enclosed, stable 'things' rather than dynamic and open processes. This reproduces IR's long history of 'freezing' emotions in place, something evident in the talk of immutably 'ancient hatreds' in the Balkans during the 1990s, as well as readings of the security dilemma which rely on a view of fear that is biologically primordial (Sylvest, 2008:448). Indeed, the very conceptual move of linking emotions to a 'human nature' invites one to think of them in a fixed cast.

The irony of this development is that IR now contains a wealth of critiques which stress the risks of studying social phenomena as if they stand still. In making the case for a "processual relationalism", Jackson and Nexon focus on IR's embarrassing failure to explain social change, a problem they trace to "substantialist" theorizing and its tendency

to treat entities as defined by invariant properties (Jackson & Nexon, 1999:296-297). As an alternative they call for studying how entities are generated in and through recurrent patterns of social interaction (Jackson & Nexon, 1999:291-292). Practice theorists like Adler and Pouliot would agree, contending “a practice is a performance... a process of doing something. Contrary to entities or substances that can be grasped in a reified way, practices have no existence other than in their unfolding or process” (2011:6). Sensitive to the inherent instability of multiple identities and motives in politics, Lebow similarly argues the concept of “Tragedy encourages us to emphasize the complexity and dynamism of social life... We must accordingly privilege process over structure as our principal category of metaphysical understanding” (2008:54).

While offering a markedly different perspective, theorists of reification point to a similar problem. Reification, Levine describes, is best understood “as a highly particular kind of forgetting” (2012:15). This process is visible in how the “[s]ocial sciences describe human-constructed realities through analogies, whose artificiality is progressively naturalized—lost to intellectual understanding and theoretical consideration—until they finally appear as ‘facts of nature, results of cosmic laws, or manifestations of divine will’” (quoted in Levine, 2012:14). Levine’s concern with how agentic processes become hidden under a veil of naturalized ‘things’ points to the same general concern as above: a frozen social world interpreted by the analyst as natural.

Yet ideas about stability permeate discussions of the fear-as-mobilization thesis. Fears come to be encoded in discrete value systems (Thrall, 2009) and static ideologies and propaganda (Schweller, 2009). Even those normally attuned to the significance of relational analysis come to view emotions through the lens of stability. Symbolic

interactionists treat emotions as readymade “heuristic artifacts” used by agents of securitization to help “facilitate the mobilization of the audience” (Balzacq, 2005:179). For biopolitical theorists these everyday fears come to be regularized into techniques of biopolitical governance which produce “everyday social reality” (Debrix & Barder, 2009:408-409). Each of these accounts presumes a stable emotional topography which may be in flux, or at least complicates the instrumental rationality that these authors suggest.

Moving beyond this static view of emotions may require returning to figures in the discipline long thought to have reductionist views of human nature. Far from offering one dimensional accounts of human behaviour, classical realists held a view deeply influenced by Freud and saw human behaviour as a dynamic relationship between different internal drives. While Morgenthau is typically associated with the one-dimensional striving for power in *animus domandi*, Solomon has convincingly shown how this striving “is inevitably inflected with traces of the desire for love, a most often unattainable relation which frustrates the subject” (2012a:211). Recovering the Freudian influence on classical realism, Schuett argues several classical realists held views of human nature far more complex than the one-dimensional views attributed to them (2010:52). As Herz suggested:

“The individual human soul is itself the theatre of divergent and often antagonistic trends and traits which fight each other, frequently without result, until death intervenes to settle the issue or leave it forever unsettled” (quoted in Schuett, 2010:58).

For these realists, the competitive model of world politics parallels the internal psychological turbulence between different drives, instincts, and emotions. In contrast, the fear-as-mobilization thesis presents a reductionist caricature of human beings who are incapable of a broader emotional and affective register. This create a one-dimensional view of human nature (fearful) for a one-dimensional vision of politics (dystopia).

### **2.3 Conclusion: Towards a Contentious Politics of Emotion**

In parsing the relationship between contemporary security practices and the politics of emotion, scholars will inevitably be drawn to the low hanging fruit represented by the fear-as-mobilization thesis. Unaware of its historical antecedents, scholars unknowingly reproduce its assumptions, namely that the masses are emotionally volatile, and that this volatility precipitates the fears which fuel an ever-expanding ‘politics of security’. The effect of this doxa is a dystopic vision of the world that freezes out the openness and indeterminacy of the politics of emotion, and the multiple possibilities it entails.

But if, as this account suggests, the thesis is marked by a series of unreflective assumptions, why then does it persist? The historical inertia of doxa is one explanation. But a more compelling answer may reside in a subtle rephrasing of the question: who is the fear-as-mobilization thesis for? In this context, we might see the thesis as a kind of ‘conciliatory project’ which helps scholars grapple with the limits of producing politically relevant knowledge. In a world where the import of IR’s knowledge practices has always been uneven, unexpected, fragmentary—and at times seemingly fruitless—the fear-as-mobilization thesis serves as a ready-made answer for what went wrong. Had it not been for the spooking of the crowd, the institutions of the marketplace of ideas would have held fast, emancipatory projects would not have been stalled, publics would exercise

greater prudence and restraint, cosmopolitan sensibilities would prevail over national prejudices, securitizing moves would have been resisted, and any number of other political projects in IR's voluminous repertoire may have been realized. As a Lakatosian protective belt on steroids, the fear-as-mobilization thesis shields us from the sting that our transformatory ideas about politics may be radically incomplete, and that we may have dramatically misread the emotional topography of political life.

Alluring as blaming the emotional volatility of the crowd may be, our commitment to producing politically meaningful knowledge might be better served by a chastening of our collective thinking about the politics of fear. "To chasten reason", Levine argues, "means to confront the limitations inherent in all conceptual thought...[and] to see knowledge as emerging from historically contingent convergences of interest, identity, and understanding" (Levine, 2012:33). In this context, the critique of dystopian idealism levelled here is an attempt to chasten our thinking about the fear-as-mobilization thesis by elucidating its limitations, blind spots, and boundaries. The result of this critique doesn't dismiss the politics of fear so much as it calls for reframing it as one contingent possibility which exists among a broader and more contentious politics of emotion. What this contentious image looks like is the focus of the next chapter.

### **3.0 Theorizing a Contentious Politics of Emotion and Security**

In the previous chapter I made the case that the fear-as-mobilization thesis is a pervasive feature of IR theory. While this kind of argument is common, it also suffers from a series of problems including an inattentiveness to the limits of power, narrow empirics, and a tendency to freeze emotions in place. How then, can we design a theory sensitive to fear's mobilizing potential in the political of security, while at the same time capable of capturing how collective fears can buckle under the stress and strain of political opposition, counter-mobilizations, and even more mundane cases of actor incompetence?

This chapter answers these questions by theorizing a contentious politics of emotion and security. Such a move would recast the mobilizing effects of fear as a contingent project—one open to failure—and less an inevitable fact. In doing so it would afford the conceptual and theoretical resources to more critically evaluate the cases in chapters 5 and 6. But before outlining this chapter's central arguments it's instructive to reflect on the specific words I use to describe this theory: contention, politics, emotion, and security.

While we don't hear of the word 'contention' frequently in IR, it enjoys a healthy usage in comparative studies on social movements and state formation (Tilly & Tarrow, 2015). Critical of the ways in which mainstream constructivism has treated communication as largely peaceful and persuasive, a number of scholars have turned to Charles Tilly's image of "contentious conversation" (1998) to argue political discourse is often the site of tense rhetorical struggles (Goddard & Krebs, 2015a, 2015b; Krebs & Jackson, 2007). Similarly, securitization theorists have recently called for examining how the meaning of security is contested through various strategies like desecuritization

and resilience (Balzacq, 2015b). Both approaches are certainly useful in highlighting how the meaning of security is an object of struggle, by both political elites as well as actors outside of formal political institutions. But by marginalizing emotion they leave only a pallid and lackluster image of contestation. In other words, to appreciate why debates around security so often appear as “fierce rhetorical battles” (Goddard & Krebs, 2015b), we need to look at how emotions represent a potent force in the dynamics of contention.

Likewise, threading ‘contention’ and ‘politics of emotion’ together is a departure from how IR thinks of emotions simply as a *source for conflict*, as sometimes suggested in realist readings of human nature, to viewing emotions as a *site of conflict*. Viewing emotions as contested means viewing them as open to change, which in turn means rejecting the view of emotions as biologically hardwired. The result is that this chapter advances a self-consciously *constructivist* account of emotions; an account where emotions are open to contestation and struggle precisely because their form, range, and intensity can be configured in a variety of different ways, and by a wide range of different actors. This diversity is the prerequisite for the different emotional dynamics which can work to frustrate and constrain security practices, rather than simply enabling them.

Finally, ‘security’ represents the empirical-political domain that is the focus of this theory. In the previous chapter I discussed a range of different approaches to studying security because it was important to demonstrate how the fear-as-mobilization thesis is a recurring feature in IR theory. This chapter departs from broad surveys and narrows the engagement to securitization theory. This is a pragmatic wager which, while

believing the forgoing arguments have broad appeal, recognizes that trying to speak to everyone easily muddies the waters of the discussion. Narrowing the engagement to securitization theory helps demonstrate the incisiveness of my argument by using it to challenge one of the most successful and vibrant areas of research in security studies since in the end of the Cold War. Properly understood then, this chapter elaborates a theory of the contentious politics of emotion *and* securitization.

The argument is elaborated in four parts. The first section is a ground clearing exercise. To better understand the role of emotion in social life I begin by revitalizing the problem of uncertainty in constructivist theory. Constructivists typically dismiss the problem of uncertainty, arguing that socialized agents view the world through a constellation of social facts (e.g. norms and identities) which guide decision-making. Yet this argument has never have provided a compelling answer to *which* social facts matter, and thus how agents navigate situations where multiple interpretations of events are possible. Marshalling arguments connecting emotions to the navigation of complex social environments, I suggest that constructivism's vision of confident actorhood can only be preserved if we think about emotions as a source of certainty in social action. By treating emotions as a means to manage the interpretive uncertainty over which social facts matter, we're afforded an entry point into where emotion 'fits' into the topography of constructivist theory.

The second and third sections build on this entry point to theorize a contentious politics of emotion anchored around two concepts: *embodied judgement* and *entrainment*. Embodied judgments are how I conceptualize emotions. As embodied judgements, emotions are human response to uncertainty by indexing significant events and objects to

bodily experience. These judgements are processes which focus our attention on certain events, dispose us to act and interpret the world in specific ways, and exist in social relations between actors and the world.

To account for how emotions are formed and shared in social settings I turn to the concept of entrainment, or the alignment of embodied experience. Like others working in IR's emotion turn, I view entrainment as a deeper form of socialization. The twist added here is by recasting entrainment as a contentious process. Entrainment is not harmonious, and the different emotions surrounding diverse issues from migrants, to torture, to globalization signal different identities, interests, values, and visions of political order. To flesh out the argument further I outline three empirical areas where I believe processes of entrainment are especially evident: popular culture, memory and trauma, and public rituals.

In the final section, I return to securitization theory and reformulate it through the lens of a contentious politics of emotion. I argue that audiences to securitizing moves are presented with a challenge over which security claims matter. To cut through the confusion of security debates, audiences are forced to interpret claims through the lens of embodied judgments. While some embodied judgments facilitate the audience's acceptance of security claims, others can precipitate rejection and even hostility towards the speaker. The effect of these dynamics is to produce a bounded domain—a security imaginary—representing a limited space of plausible and legitimate security interpretations. Constrained by the emotional boundaries of this imaginary, agents, whether they be political elites, security professionals, or some other political actor, are limited in what they can, and cannot, securitize.

### **3.1 The Blooming, Buzzing Confusion of the Social World**

What do emotions do? This section lays the groundwork for theorizing a contentious politics of emotion by exploring how emotions help actors navigate the social world. At its core is a simple proposition: emotions help actors manage uncertainty. By indexing the significance of different events and situations to our bodies, emotions can bring a striking clarity to what we desire, what we should avoid, and what we deem simply unimportant.

This is not the only entry point into theorizing emotion in IR. Others have built theories around emotion and communication (T. Hall, 2016), community (Koschut, 2014), social practice (Bially Mattern, 2011), and beyond. I stake this attempt to uncertainty because I believe it offers an elegant and practical path to understanding how emotions shape political life. It also primes the discussion for the critique of securitization I make below concerning how audiences face uncertainty over which security claims should be accepted and which should be rejected. Uncertainty however, is a stranger to constructivist IR theory. In this section, I show how uncertainty is a distinctive problem for constructivism, how contemporary responses to this problem are come up short, and how this leads us to consider emotion's role in navigating uncertainty.

#### *3.1.1 The Constructivist Problem of Uncertainty*

One does not often see discussions of uncertainty in constructivist IR. Instead, constructivist-talk orbits around now familiar claims over the social construction of world politics and typically involves viewing the principal structures and processes of

international relations as ideational or discursive (Wendt, 1995, 1999). At a deeper level of sophistication, this entails some form of commitment to reflexivity; the human capacity for self-reflection which enables actors to contemplate how their ideas work to produce social realities, and how these realities might be different (Guzzini, 2000; Hamati-Ataya, 2012).

Contrary to rationalist models of actorhood where desire + belief = action (Fearon & Wendt, 2002; Pouliot, 2008), constructivists stress the *learned* nature of the social world. Actors are continuously socialized into constellations of ‘social facts’ representing distinct social structures, which form particular moments in history.<sup>31</sup> Here the cumulative weight of historical interactions furnishes actors with the necessary identities, norms, and practices to meaningfully act upon an indeterminate world (Berenskoetter, 2011:649-652). As Wendt notes, “When a student gives me his paper to grade I know it is time to be a Professor and the fact that I am a US citizen does not figure in our interaction” (1999:230).

Wendt’s confident Professor is a fitting parable for the constructivist view of actorhood: sure of who they are, what the situation is, what the relevant norms are, as well as how others will likely act, there is little to be uncertain about in this scenario. This confidence is striking precisely because of how sharply it contrasts with competing realist theories where actors are wracked by uncertainty in an anarchic world. Pointing to the difficulty in ascertaining the intentions and capabilities of others, realists like

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<sup>31</sup> Hence Pouliot’s claim that the “essence” of constructivism is questioning “how are social facts socially constructed, and how do they affect global politics?” (Pouliot, 2004:320).

Copeland (2000)<sup>32</sup> argue that constructivism theorizes away the challenge of uncertainty from social action.

The problem in parsing Copeland's claim however, is that it's not clear that uncertainty means the same thing for both constructivists and realists. Consider the case of intentions. The prevailing realist view holds that while knowing the truth of other actors' intentions is difficult—because of misperception, poor signaling, deception, etc.—intentions are, in principle, objectively knowable. A state is either benign and security-seeking, or it is not, and while distinguishing between the two is practically challenging, it is possible (e.g. Glaser, 2010).<sup>33</sup>

Intentions are also important for constructivists, but they appear differently through a lens focused on shared or intersubjective knowledge. In this view the benign intention of security seeking is not an “intrinsic” property of a state that we can uncover if we just peel back so many layers of obfuscation; it depends on the “social recognition” of other states. A state that views itself as peaceful but is consistently aggressive cannot be sensibly understood as being benign because “[s]tates do not have the final say in whether they are security-seekers” (Mitzen, 2006:355-359; see also Sucharov, 2005).<sup>34</sup> As a result the realist concern with uncertainty loses significance as intentions are seen as something less to be objectively discovered and more as something to be interpreted and recognized in a particular historical context.<sup>35</sup> To the constructivist sensibility, the realist

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<sup>32</sup> See also Jervis (1978).

<sup>33</sup> Drawing on the work of Frank Knight, some IR Scholars call this the ‘risk’ model of uncertainty (Best, 2008:358-359; Mitzen & Schweller, 2011:23). For a very different view on uncertainty see discussions of offensive realism (e.g. Mearsheimer, 2001).

<sup>34</sup> Classical realists would agree, adding that states often construe parochial interests through the prism of a benign and universal morality (Carr, 2001[1981]).

<sup>35</sup> For the context of this discussion the realist view of uncertainty is limited to the problem of other minds (Booth & Wheeler, 2008). But this is not the only source of uncertainty in realism, there is also the

view of uncertainty appears radically incomplete: one could have all the data in the world, but without interpretation it would be meaningless. It is therefore no surprise constructivists rarely engage with the realist problem of uncertainty; it's only a 'problem' if one smuggles in certain epistemological assumptions about the possibility of purely objective knowledge, assumptions which constructivists have never found compelling.

Yet just because the realist understanding of uncertainty has little purchase for constructivism doesn't mean the issue of uncertainty recedes from social action. Importantly, Copeland hints at an alternative form of uncertainty when he suggests that the social interactions described by Wendt "must be interpreted, and 'many interpretations are possible'" (Copeland, 2000:201). Brian Rathbun (2007) calls this type of uncertainty "indeterminacy". Rather than focusing on the scarcity of objective knowledge, indeterminacy points to the inherent instability of meaning surrounding language and practice, and how this leaves events open to multiple interpretations. The problem here is not a lack of information which leaves actors unable to form an interpretation of an event; the problem is that the same information can be read multiple ways.

From this perspective the crucial 'interpretive moment' typically foregrounded by constructivists (Pouliot, 2007; Price & Reus-Smit, 1998) becomes something of an interpretive problem. History, that important source of meaning turned to in guiding social action, "does not issue clear guidelines as experiences are ambiguous and indeterminate and so what we take from them—those ominous lessons—is a creative act of interpretation" (Berenskoetter, 2011:661). As Schindler and Wille argue, "There is

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problem of the future (e.g Jervis, 1978). For a good discussion on how constructivism has ignored the problem of the future see Berenskoetter (2011).

uncertainty about the time practitioners live in, about how the past continues into the present. And there is, crucially, no evidence that one interpretation of the past, or one consequence that is drawn from it for present practice, clearly dominates” (2015:350). Absent a clear interpretive manual from history, actors are left with an “ambiguity issue that leaves decision-makers indecisive and consequently renders international relations less deterministic and more variegated” (B. C. Rathbun, 2007:545).

Likewise, while communication is commonly lauded as a promising pathway to a “common lifeworld” of mutual intelligibility (Risse, 2000), it also contains the potential to obfuscate. All discourses are marked by an “openness to multiple and even subversive interpretations”, many of which “can pose a significant problem for government” (Best, 2008:356). This is because rather than being “univocal”, communicative practices are characterized by “polysemy” meaning events are open to “inherent ambiguities and instabilities” (Duvall & Chowdhury, 2011:337, 349). Much like the uncertainty of neorealism, this indeterminacy emerges from a Hobbesian anarchy, but this is first and foremost an *epistemic* anarchy which is absent any unifying authority of interpretation (Williams, 1996:219-220).

Indeterminacy is more than an abstract problem. Consider the example of Nikita Khrushchev’s now (in)famous incident of banging his shoe on the table during a UN session in 1960. While Western members dismissed this as part of Soviet theatrics, others, including Khrushchev himself, saw this act as form of protest over a failure to adequately address the U2 spy plane incident (Duvall & Chowdhury, 2011:342). In similar vein, Schindler and Wille point to how diplomats in the NATO-Russia Council fundamentally disagreed over the status of the Cold War. From whether the war was

truly over, to who really won, as well as what lessons could be drawn into the present, it was “evident that multiple versions of history are present without any one clearly dominating” (Schindler & Wille, 2015:351).

Collectively, these tensions pose a serious challenge to the constructivist account of social action. We may live in a world of our making (Onuf, 1989), but this is undoubtedly a very complex and multifaceted world. We don’t just have *a* norm or *a* practice or *a* single identity to guide us, we have several.<sup>36</sup> Politics actors don’t encounter these social structures as neatly delineated and organized bundles of social facts awaiting consideration. They encounter them altogether at once, in an experience akin to what Williams James once described “as one great blooming, buzzing confusion” (1890:488). The key question then becomes how do actors sort through the blooming, buzzing confusion of the social world? If the world is made up social facts, which social facts matter?

Here it is worth recalling that constructivists scholars are keen and careful students of social behavior. Immediately following Wendt’s sketch of the confident Professor, he notes “many situations call up several identities that may point in different directions, leaving us unsure how to act” (1999:230). While consistently downplayed, the challenge of sorting the social world is hardly absent from this literature. Scholars have formulated a variety of responses and we can group these under three broad headings: *hierarchy*, *socialization*, and *anchoring*. While each of these responses

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<sup>36</sup> The way some scholars use “subjectivity” as a term for an “encompassing sense of the Self” (Bially Mattern, 2005a:96) means actors have multiple and overlapping identities and any of these offer an equally compelling or ‘appropriate’ course of action in a given situation.

elaborates on the constructivist account of social action in different and interesting ways, none provides a wholly compelling response to the problem of uncertainty.

### *3.1.2 Hierarchies, Socialization, and Anchoring*

One of the most common responses to uncertainty is to view the social world as organized in some form of hierarchy. Thus, for Wendt “the solution to identity conflicts within an actor will reflect the relative ‘salience’ or hierarchy of identity commitments in the Self,” (1999:230). I may have multiple identities, but some are clearly subordinate to others. Arguing along parallel lines, those inspired by the English School often make a similar distinction between “primary” and “secondary” institutions (Buzan, 2004), or between enduring “fundamental” institutions and more tentative “issue specific regimes” (Reus-Smit, 1997). In reflecting on which institutions matter, actors will rely on those that are most “durable” (Buzan, 2004:167) or persistent (Reus-Smit, 1997:556). The same hierarchic ordering is at play whenever constructivists talk about the so-called ‘depth’ of social structures. Wherever there is talk of “deeply ingrained cultural beliefs and practices” (Acharya, 2004:248), or that identities “can grow deep roots” (Legro, 2009:47), or that “social structures become deeply embedded” (Steele, 2007b:36), what we are really hearing is an argument about how actors are guided by a hierarchy of social facts.

The hierarchical organization of social life appears deeply intuitive. National identity, for example, is commonly seen as simply ‘outranking’ more cosmopolitan allegiances. But if hierarchies are organized by some differentiating principle,<sup>37</sup> what

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<sup>37</sup> For a broader discussion of hierarchy in IR see Bially Mattern and Zarakol (*forthcoming*)

then organizes this kind of hierarchy? What makes one identity more salient than another and why do some norms become deeply embedded and not others? The hierarchy between small and great powers in international politics, for example, is held in place by the fact that latter control inordinately more military force than the former. What force is elevating some social facts into a position of dominance, while subordinating others?

Socialization processes offer one potential answer. As the “process of inducting actors into the norms and rules of a given community” (Checkel, 2005:804), socialization works to “induce norm breakers to become norm followers” (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998:902). Socialization cuts through the uncertainty of the world by carving it into communities an actor is, and is not, part of. This effectively limits the baseline set of interpretations an actor can bring to bear in a situation; the only norms, identities, and practices that matter are those of the communities an actor belongs to.

But what happens when we belong to multiple communities which offer conflicting interpretations? What happens when the United States acts in a manner that puts a strain on its NATO allies’ commitment to international law? In the socialization literature, conflicts are typically narrowly framed as something that happens *between* the socialized community and the non-socialized outsider (i.e. liberal democratic states versus the uncivilized ‘other’). Only rarely do we hear of identity conflicts *within* a community.<sup>38</sup> But this absence of internal identity conflicts is particularly odd given how domestic studies in comparative politics routinely see political identity as contentious (McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilley, 2009). What the socialization literature in IR leaves us with then is a distorted picture of the ‘harmony of socialization’: a view in which the

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<sup>38</sup> Though exceptions exist. See especially Sucharov (2005) and (Lupovici, 2012).

multiple social structures we are situated in, and the various modes of interpretation they afford us, exist in some underlying harmony which points to one unambiguous and self-apparent choice forward.<sup>39</sup>

In fact, rather than reducing or eliminating uncertainty, we may even see socialization as obscuring the indeterminate nature of the world. Consider the thin set of criteria for socialization: as soon as an actor voluntarily complies with a norm they're considered 'socialized' (Checkel, 2001:557; Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998:898). At this point the norm is considered internalized and it's taken for granted that the actor shares a common set of intersubjective beliefs and values with the community. But saying a norm has become 'internalized' or 'learned' tell us precious little about whether that norm is related to as an object of disgust, pride, anger, shame, joy, or simply apathy. You and I may be socialized to the same norm, but I may relate to that norm as a source of pride, for you it may be a source of stigma (cf. Zarakol, 2014), and while we may both have 'learned' that norm—in this thin sense of the term—it makes us *feel* differently and therefore we may be disposed to act differently.<sup>40</sup> In short, we cannot be certain from simple appearance of compliance that we have internalized the same norm in the same way.

Finally, constructivists have engaged with the question how social actors manage uncertainty through series of what can be best described as 'anchoring' arguments. These explanations begin by widening the ontology of constructivism beyond the usual focus on norms, identity, or culture to include habits (Hopf, 2010), routines (Mitzen, 2006), and

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<sup>39</sup> This is a twist on Carr's critique of liberals 'harmony of interests' (2001[1981]:42-45) where the diverse preferences actors are invariably seen to align, at some level, into a broader and more universal interest.

<sup>40</sup> This may include covert efforts to undermine the norm.

the embodied knowledge of ‘habitus’ (Pouliot, 2008). Each of these concepts is taken to be representative of some second order form of social structure; something that fastens in place—anchors—the intersubjective beliefs and values that are the foci in more typical studies. This anchoring is made possible by how each of these concepts refer to processes which suppress reflexivity. In Hopf’s view the “unexamined and predisposing structure of habits strongly anchors actors’ perceptions, attitudes, and practices” (2010:545). Habitus—as distinct from habits—represents a practical and unreflexive knowledge over the “socially constituted ‘sense of the game’” (Pouliot, 2008:275). Likewise, “routines are not chosen in any meaningful sense, but taken-for-granted; reflection is suppressed” (Mitzen, 2006:347).

Anchoring gives a sophisticated response to the uncertainty problem by stressing the social facts which matter most are those which are held in place habit, routine, and habitus. This combines arguments from hierarchies—because routinized norms weigh rank higher in priority of action than eccentric norms—as well as socialization—because things like habitus still need to be learned, even if through “tacit experience and an embodied history of social relations” (Pouliot, 2008:279). And while anchoring-type arguments are surely an advancement in constructivist theory, they are not without weaknesses.

First, while habits and routines represent powerful orienting mechanisms towards the world they suffer from the same weakness of socialization-type arguments. What happens when they conflict? Here we can offer a minor amendment to the NATO example above. What happens when the United States acts in a manner that forces its NATO allies to choose between their routine support of the US, and their routine support

of international law?<sup>41</sup> Routines and habits only suppress uncertainty when they run in the same direction. As soon as habits and routines begin to conflict uncertainty re-emerges.

The problem with habitus is trickier. Habitus stands apart from either routine or habit by being more encompassing. Instead of attaching itself to a single norm or identity, habitus represents a more general “system of durable, transposable dispositions, which integrates past experiences and functions at every moment as a matrix of perception, appreciation, and action” (quoted in Pouliot, 2008:272).<sup>42</sup> This ‘sense of game’, as it is so often summarized, “functions like the materialization of collective memory”, equipping actors with the knowledge of how to act in complex interactions (Guzzini, 2000:166; Schindler & Wille, 2015:332). Yet as Schindler and Wille (2015) have argued, studies of memory and trauma have shown that practices of memory can be intensely politicized and contested. Conflicts over how traumatic events should be memorialized (Edkins, 2003; Resende & Budryte, 2014) severely complicate the image of habitus as being informed by one single and homogenous vision of the past. Rather than being informed by a single coherent reservoir of memory, the habitus of actors typically incorporates diverse and conflicting memories. The result is the production of a habitus which “contains conflicting dispositions, dispositions that contradict each other” (Schindler & Wille, 2015:347). Once confronted with conflicting dispositions, uncertainty re-emerges.

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<sup>41</sup> Structural realists would respond that states pursue their material interest in this situation. The constructivist reply is that the material self-interest of states is not self-apparent but a product of interpretation. Some states may interpret unqualified support for the United States as in their self-interest, others would not (e.g. Germany and Canada during the invasion of Iraq). My argument is that states can be uncertain about which interpretation best fits the situation.

<sup>42</sup> Another way of putting this is that habitus attaches itself to social ‘fields’, rather than discrete practices.

### 3.1.3 *Emotions and the Uncertainty Problem*

Collectively, the limits of hierarchy, socialization, and anchoring-type arguments point to a central tension in constructivist theory. On the hand, constructivist scholarship has become deeply wedded to a vision of confident actors who remain unfettered by the uncertain nature of the world. Early iterations of this argument looked to demonstrate how realism's view of uncertainty as a contaminant afflicting all social life is a poor fit with practical experience. It is simply incredulous to suggest that beneath the amity and trust between the United States and Canada, there are officials who are constantly fearing military betrayal and defection (Wendt, 1999:106). And yet more recent works have pressed the argument even further by claiming that not only can uncertainty be minimized, but that it can be "eliminated" altogether (Hopf, 2010:554).

But on the other hand, even the most sophisticated accounts of where this confidence comes from buckle under pressure. In pushing uncertainty to the margins of social interactions, but without giving a sustainable account of why, constructivists risk neglecting how "uncertainty is a core feature of the human condition" (Berenskoetter, 2011:648). How do we reconcile these two positions?

One clue lies in the anchoring-type arguments discussed above. What's intriguing about the discussions of habit, routine, and habitus is that they all intersect with *emotion*.

As Hopf suggests:

"Habits and emotions are close associates; they are both automatic, not reflective.

As Rose McDermott summarizes, 'The brain's structural makeup requires that emotional information exert an influence before, and sometimes instead of, higher-

level cognitive functioning’ (McDermott, 2004: 692; see also Mercer, 2005: 92–99).” (2010:541)

For Mitzen routines are significant precisely because they serve an “important emotional function of ‘inoculating’ individuals against the paralytic, deep fear of chaos” (2006:347). To be clear, emotion is hardly a central focus of these discussions.<sup>43</sup> A connection between uncertainty and emotion is posited, but never fully explored.

This connection is intriguing because it mirrors one of the most significant arguments about emotions and decision making in neuroscience: the *somatic marker hypothesis*. Developed by Antonio Damasio and his colleagues (Bechara, Damasio, & Damasio, 2000; Damasio, 1994), the hypothesis focuses on how humans make choices by anticipating future scenarios. In typical models of rational choice the range of possible scenarios is sorted and assigned an expected utility based on their desirability. This process will be complex and time consuming: the universe of outcomes can be very large, defining the utility of each outcome is challenging, and the weighted utility of an outcome can be unevenly distributed over time (i.e. some scenarios may include upfront costs followed by a slower stream of benefits). Invariably, the limits of concentration and attention are reached and the decision making process becomes muddled (Damasio, 1994:172).

The somatic marker hypothesis makes a subtle but significant alteration to the rational choice model.<sup>44</sup> Like the rational choice model, it begins with the anticipation of future scenarios. Yet not all scenarios receive equal consideration as some become

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<sup>43</sup> Though in more recent work it has moved to the foreground (Mitzen & Schweller, 2011).

<sup>44</sup> Damasio’s argument is not that the somatic marker model replaces rational choice, but rather the preferences presupposed by rational choice theory are impossible without somatic markers. Rational choice behavior presumes desires, and desires presume emotion.

indexed ('marked') by the body (the 'soma') in the form of emotions. In some cases, a future scenario becomes marked with positive feelings making it actively desirable, whereas in other cases scenarios become marked with negative feelings making them something to actively avoid. Somatic markers—emotions— drastically reduce uncertainty by drawing attention towards those scenarios we have feelings for, while dispensing with those which, while still objectively possible, we feel nothing for. Emotions radically narrow range of possible options while at the same presenting the remaining alternatives in high-fidelity (e.g. 'we *must* avoid this, at all costs'). In their research Damasio and his colleagues found that subjects with damage to the emotional centers of the brain—meaning subjects who were incapable integrating somatic markers into their decision making—consistently made sub-optimal decisions compared to the control group. This is taken as evidence in support of the somatic marker hypothesis, and the more general claim that emotions can facilitate optimal decision making.

The somatic marker hypothesis' link between uncertainty and emotion has yet to influence sociological theories in IR like constructivism.<sup>45</sup> It was originally aimed at critiquing models of rational choice from economics (Bechara & Damasio, 2005), and its use in IR has largely echoed this path (e.g. McDermott, 2004; Mercer, 2005). This rationalist gloss has likely led many sociologically-minded scholars to pass over the hypothesis and its putative link between uncertainty and emotion. This is a mistake. The clinical patients who populate Damasio's research narrative (those with trauma to the emotional centers of the brain) are not simply poor decision makers. They become

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<sup>45</sup> Ross (2006) has drawn on Damasio's work to critique the Cartesian mind/body separation that is integral constructivist ontology, but emotion's relationship with uncertainty is not part of this discussion. See also the brief reference by Holland and Solomon (2014:265).

hampered in their ability to function as social human beings. They lose their jobs, their marriages, become estranged from their communities, they make “a succession of mistakes, a perpetual violation of what would be considered *socially appropriate* and personally advantageous” (my emphasis, Damasio, 1994:xi). Social movement theorists have seized on this kind of interpretation to suggest emotions shape protesters’ commitments “by altering the salience hierarchy of personal identities and preferences” (Kim, 2002:159, 161). Likewise, Randall Collins has argued that interactions saturated with a high level of emotional energy will see actors with a high level of certainty (2004:180). Emotions suffuse certainty.

Constructivists should not cede the problem of uncertainty to realism. But neither should they entirely abandon their image of confident actors certain in their knowledge of the social world. An alternative would be to theorize emotions as a means through which actors manage uncertainty by reducing the range of available interpretations of the world. One doesn’t have to agree with the specificities of the somatic marker hypothesis to see this way of viewing emotion as a fruitful line of inquiry moving forward. Indeed, my reading of Damasio’s work sees little in terms of resources for the sociological kind of inquiry called for by constructivists.<sup>46</sup> Yet it’s still possible to see the emotion-uncertainty nexus this work represents as carving out a space on the conceptual topography of constructivism for thinking about what emotions ‘do’ in social life. What can fill this space, I argue, is a theoretical framework centered around the concept of ‘embodied judgements’.

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<sup>46</sup> And given how it is tooled towards a rejoinder to rational choice theory one should not expect a deeper sociological examination.

### 3.2 Emotions as Embodied Judgements

With a space for thinking about emotion in social theory carved out, this section populates that space with a specific concept: *embodied judgements*. In a nutshell, the argument is that embodied judgements are human responses to the uncertainty over which social structures matter for social life by imprinting them on our most important matter: our bodies. Our bodies suppress uncertainty by fostering a series of emotional attachments towards our environment, effectively sharpening our view of the social world.<sup>47</sup> We go from seeing a flattened and undifferentiated mass of ideas and relations, to seeing the world rendered in a high fidelity of peaks and valleys.

In making this argument I begin by discussing how it reflects a compromise between the NeoJamesian and Appraisal traditions of emotions theorizing. From the former I take the idea of emotions as *embodied*, and from the latter I take the idea of emotions as *judgments*. I then develop this view by situating it in a series of debates in the literature involving emotions' status as *processes*, *dispositions*, and *social relations*.

Before proceeding one important objection needs to be considered. To say that emotions reduce uncertainty may be intuitive up until the point where we encounter emotions which appear to affirm uncertainty. Fear, for example, might be understood as uncertainty over whether one might feel pain in the future. Indeed, this is exactly what Rathbun (2007) suggests when arguing that realism views uncertainty as fear. In an anarchic world where predation is always possible, fear and uncertainty appear two sides of the same coin. Does this pose a problem for my argument?

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<sup>47</sup> Psychoanalysts operating in the tradition of Lacan would call these "affective investments" (T. Solomon, 2012b)

I argue no. A closer look reveals that the fearful states described by realism in fact enjoy a wealth of certitude. They are certain other states are self-interested actors and cannot be trusted. They are certain diplomatic overtures like signaling are often a waste of time (B. C. Rathbun, 2007:536). They are certain that the appropriate strategy is maximizing security (for defensive realists) or maximizing power (for offensive realists). And they are certain intentions are subject to change. It turns out fear of predation has made these states certain of a great deal, leaving little room for reflection or interpretation. Huysmans (1998b) outlines the underlying logic. In Huysman's view what's notable about political realism is that it offers a "concrete" fear: a fear of enemies. Tangible fears like these are desirable insofar as they displace a much deeper "epistemological fear", a fear of not knowing (Huysmans, 1998b:237, 245). A fear of a specific enemy affords certainty over who is threatening, how we might be harmed, and what countermeasures might be taken to alleviate the danger. A fear of not knowing leaves us powerless and unable to act because we don't even know who is friend and who is foe.<sup>48</sup>

### *3.2.1 Where NeoJamesian and Appraisal Theories of Emotion Meet*

The world has no shortage of theories of emotion. This isn't just the case for psychology; it holds true for philosophy, sociology, and beyond. I view embodied judgments as a compromise between two major traditions of emotion theorizing: NeoJamesian and Appraisal approaches. This move emulates, in form if not in substance, Jesse Prinz's

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<sup>48</sup> I am grateful for Jennifer Mitzen for pointing this out to me.

(2004) call for a reconciliation between these two traditions. My account however, is far less sophisticated and intended for an IR audience.

NeoJamesian theories stem from work of William James who in the nineteenth century criticized a growing propensity to reduce emotions to discrete cognitive states. The argument revolves around two claims. First, by reducing emotions to cognitive or mental states—what constructivists in IR might call ideas or representations—we gloss over the single most defining feature of emotion: *embodied experience*. James’s classic argument was to ask his readers to give an account of experiencing an emotion, and then to progressively subtract its features until it became unrecognizable. If you remove the sensation of bodily change, then only “a cold and neutral state of intellectual perception is all that remains” (quoted in Prinz, 2004:56). Second, if we accept that emotion is embodied, then we need to acknowledge that the body is capable of an extraordinary range of experience. From this perspective, cognitive psychology’s obsession with an endless taxonomy of discrete emotions—fear, anger, joy, etc. —misses the incomprehensively rich range of emotional experience which humans are capable of. In the strongest form of this argument what we call ‘emotions’ are just labels we retroactively paste on much richer embodied experiences. In this sense, there is a “radical” quality to richness of human experience which exceeds the language we use to describe emotions (Ross, forthcoming).

As the prefix of ‘neo’ suggests, James’s views are enjoying a renaissance. This is in no small part due to the work of neuroscientists, like Damasio discussed above, who see their experiments as offering evidence for James’s insights. In the discipline of IR Ross’s (2006, 2014) work is a clear exemplar of a NeoJamesian theory, but the influence

is also evident in Mercer's work (2006, 2010, 2014) as well. When I use the term *embodied* to describe emotion, I use it as shorthand for the NeoJamesian approach.

Embodied approaches are typically viewed in contrast to Appraisal theories. These theories portray emotions as evaluations or judgements of the significance of the world around us and emphasize the role of cognition in mediating emotional experience. By making cognition central to appraisal, this approach foregrounds the role of knowledge, meaning, and interpretation in emotion episodes (Lazarus, 1991a:353-354). This also explains emotional variance: I fear and avoid the neighborhood dog but you do not because we've construed (appraised) the significance of the dog differently. In this sense emotion is a detection system that highlights significant events for our lives. Yet it is also a detection system that's uniquely calibrated to our distinct identities, interests, and past experiences.

Absent a rallying figure like James, influences in Appraisal theories are more eclectic. Philosophers of emotion like Robert Solomon has argued that understanding emotions as judgements can help to challenge modernity's image of them as irrational errors. Far from occupying the "lower" realms of involuntary, unintelligent response", emotional judgements help us navigate through what would otherwise be an unbearable morass of everyday decisions (Solomon, 2003:94). Similarly, Martha Nussbaum views emotions as "suffused with intelligence" and "an awareness of value or importance" (2001:1). Their importance comes from how they "are appraisals or value judgements, which ascribe to things and persons outside the person's own control great importance for that person's own flourishing" (Nussbaum, 2001:4).

Research by psychologists Magda Arnold (1960) and Richard Lazarus (1966) made the term appraisal a “household word in emotions research” (Moors, Ellsworth, Scherer, & Frijda, 2013:119). Parsed in a more clinical vocabulary, “Appraisal is a process that detects and processes the significance of the environment for well-being” (Moors et al., 2013:120). I read the appraisal literature as being about *variance*. Contra behavioral psychology’s view of emotions as undifferentiated arousal, appraisal theorists stressed that emotional reactions differed significantly across individuals and places because people appraise the significance of situation differently (Roseman & Smith, 2001:3-4). This variation is explained by the different ways individuals relate to events—in terms of things like ‘goal congruency’, ‘coping potential’, and ‘agency’—as well as by the way the appraisal process threaded together different emotion components including physiological changes, subjective feelings, action tendencies. The way these ingredients combined would account for the variance in different “emotional episodes” (Ellsworth, 2013).

Social psychologists and sociologists take this focus on variance one step further by situating appraisals in a social context. Departing from psychology’s ‘in-the-head-ness’, they argue emotions research needs to confront the fact “the large majority of our emotions occur in the contexts of social interactions and relationships” (Mesquita & Boiger, 2014:298). Here the term “social appraisal” captures the “social embeddedness of the appraisal process” which “contributes to the alignment or ‘calibration’ of emotions within collectivities” (von Scheve & Ismer, 2013:409). The fact different members of a community share similar ways of soliciting, experiencing, and expressing emotions is taken as evidence of a shared appraisal process which contributes to the underlying social

structure of a community. In the same way a community shares norms, identities, and practices, it can also share in similar structures of emotional appraisal.

While appraisal-type arguments are increasingly popular in IR (e.g. Crawford, 2000; Fierke, 2013; Graham, 2014; Jeffery, 2011; Sasley, 2011), we often only see fragmented and partial accounts of their origins. I depart from the clinical sounding jargon of appraisal, but when I use the term *judgement* I use it as a shorthand for the Appraisal approach.

The term *embodied judgment* represents a reconciliation of these two traditions. This will be viewed as odd by some, especially given how these traditions are often seen as conflicting. Mercer (2010) and Ross (2006), for example, critique Appraisal theories for placing too much emphasis on cognition at the expense of downplaying the embodied and non-conscious dimensions of emotion. Some of this criticism, I believe, is overblown and leads to a caricature of Appraisal approaches (Van Rythoven, 2015:464-465). But instead of descending into interpretive disputes I look to make a more positive argument: *emotions are both embodied and judgements and that one depends on the other*. Emotions are surely embodied and this entails some diffuse bodily sensation. Damasio (1994:155-156) makes this argument easier to accept by suggesting that repeated emotional experiences develop an “as-if loop” where the mind comes to interpret a situation “as if” the body were experiencing a physiological change.

Yet reducing emotions to bodily sensations would be a grave mistake. These embodied experiences signal what’s important to us in the world. They help us detect insufferable loss and triumphant gain. They guide us through a morass of social complexity and uncertainty. They help us judge the world. Without this wider lens then,

these physiological sensations are nothing more than bodily impulse. And without embodiment, these judgements are nothing more than cold and neutral perceptions. In Prinz's pithy phrasing, "emotions are gut reactions; they use our bodies to tell us how we are faring in the world" (2004:69).

Emotions then are *embodied judgements*. When these judgements become consciously recognized I refer to them as *feelings* but, like Mercer (2010:3), I often view emotions and feelings as synonymous.<sup>49</sup> At some points embodied judgements will take the form of relatively discrete and socially recognizable *categories* of experience, what we call in everyday usage fear, anger, joy, and so on (T. Hall & Ross, 2015:849). In other cases, these judgements will take the form of much more diffuse and nebulous *affects*. One way of thinking about the difference between affect and emotion categories is as a difference in the level of perceptual resolution in the body's embodied detection system. An affect is an embodied experience that signals the situation is significant but the experience is vague and ambiguous, often offering little more than a sense that a situation is negative or positive (Sasley, 2010:689). Affects are embodied experiences in grainy black and white. An emotion is an embodied experience which is rich in nuance, signaling to us that a situation is not simply good or bad, but joyful or shameful, hopeful or hindering. Emotion categories are embodied experiences in vivid 4K ultra high definition. I return to the distinction between emotion categories and affects in the next chapter as it entails important implications for research methodology. For now, it's important flesh out this idea by situating it in some of the key debates in the emotion

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<sup>49</sup> One might ask whether this is the conventional view of these terms in psychology. Yet this presume a consensus in psychology that is a fiction. Emotion and feeling have historically been contested concepts in psychology and continue to be so (Gendron & Feldman Barrett, 2009).

literature (both within IR and beyond). I do this by clarifying three key characteristics of embodied judgements: processes, dispositions, and social relations.

### *3.2.2 Embodied Judgements as Processes*

In the previous chapter I stressed a critique of IR's tendency to view emotions as stable and fixed substances (e.g. 'ancient hatreds'). My view of embodied judgement departs from this by stressing the role of *process* in emotions. For Collins this distinction resembles the difference between developmental Freudian views on emotion, which easily become a "model of a wind-up doll, programmed early in life, which ever after walks through the pattern once laid down", versus a model where emotions are understood as "changing intensities heated up or cooled down by the pressure-cooker" of interaction (2004:44-45, 6). For psychologists this dynamic character is rooted in the "almost incessant predictive activity of the brain" (Frijda, 2013:169). This means we should appreciate "emotional experience as an ever-changing process, like a river, rather than a collection of separate pools" (Ellsworth, 2013:125). These shifts don't have to be rapid. Drawing on Norbert Elias's notion of "civilizing process", Linklater (2014) has examined how shifting European attitudes towards the role of anger in public life emerged over a period of centuries.

Stressing the importance of process here seems banal; our everyday experience confirms that emotions fluctuate. Nowhere is this more evident than world politics: feelings of amity between the United States and Canada wax and wane, fear and hatred for migrants' ebbs and flows with the global economy, and international disasters see compassion spike and sometimes disappear soon after. And yet IR's historical fusing of emotion and human nature all too easily inflects our thinking about emotions with a

rigidity that is neither empirically nor theoretically justified. This doesn't mean we need to ignore the stability or recurrence of certain emotions. Instead we can recognize that the "phenomenon of inertia we call order is itself produced through social processes" (Mitzen, 2006:364). In other words, both continuity and change cannot be seen apart from one another (Wight, 2001).

When we do talk about process and emotion however, two key dimensions of fluctuation need to be highlighted: intensity and consciousness. In discussing "high-intensity affective reactions", Hall and Ross point to emotion episodes which can "flood our consciousness with feeling" and "temporarily hijack our thoughts, desires, attention, and energies" (2015:849). Yet low intensity emotions are still important because they may "nudge our choices and steer attention as biases we do not consciously register" (T. Hall & Ross, 2015:853). These arguments build on longstanding claims that emotions exert powerful influences over our attention, sometimes overtly capturing it, and at others subtly impinging upon it (Prinz, 2004:8).

Ultimately, a sensitivity to process is essential for understanding emotions because it's what makes them *historical* as opposed to invariant, biological impulses. Without this sensitivity to historical process we would be unable to appreciate how emotions come to be managed (Hochschild, 1983), vary in intensity (Collins, 2004), become institutionalized (Crawford, 2014), are circulated (Ross, 2014), transformed (Linklater, 2014), or—in the idiom of this project—how emotions come to be politically contentious.

### 3.2.3 *Embodied Judgements as Dispositions*

Emotions in IR have traditionally been understood as superfluous or epiphenomenal to political behavior (Mercer, 2006). As irrational residues, emotions are viewed as shaping or influencing little. Yet this fits poorly with our practical experience of emotions as powerful engines for social and political action. For proponents of IR's emotion turn, the very reason we should take emotions in world politics seriously is because they appear to have powerful and wide-ranging effects on social and political order. Here Hutchison and Bleiker are worth quoting at length:

“[Emotions] frame what is and is not possible in politics. They reveal and conceal, enable and disable. They do so in ways that are inaudible and seemingly apolitical, which is precisely how they become political in the most profound and enduring manner: links between emotions and power shape the contours and content of world politics all while erasing the traces of doing so.” (2014:508)

In the same discussion however, they note that emotions research is only beginning to engage with questions of power.

In my view one of the most productive ways of grasping the power of emotions is their capacity to form *dispositions*—unreflective affinities towards viewing the world and acting towards it in certain ways.<sup>50</sup> Dispositions are direct consequence of how emotions function as a source certainty and suppress reflexivity. In moments of heightened certainty, we don't even stop think, we merely act.<sup>51</sup> Thus, American officials who were intensely distrustful of Iranian leadership were more disposed to accept the existence of

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<sup>50</sup> Disposition are unrelated to 'Operational Codes'. Operation codes are typically treated as the "philosophical" and "instrumental" beliefs which together constitute a framework for political decision making (Renshon, 2009:650-651). By contrast, dispositions often lack clear cognitive content, are unreflexive and even unconscious (Pouliot, 2008:274).

<sup>51</sup> There is a clear overlap here with Pouliot's theory of practice and unreflexive action. See Pouliot (2008, 2010).

Iranian nuclear program, despite the existence of ambiguous evidence (Mercer, 2010:7). In this view the ‘judgement’ of embodied judgements is always forward looking, readying us to act from one interaction to the next.<sup>52</sup>

Multiple arguments converge on this idea. For appraisal theorists in psychology these take the form “action tendencies”: behaviors and inclinations that are coupled to emotional evaluations of situations (Moors, 2014). In IR, emotional dispositions are typically interpreted through the prism of state-actorhood. Employing a slightly different vocabulary, Eznack (2013) discusses “affective dispositions” shaping states’ reactions to international crises. Long term in nature, these dispositions represent the positive or negative feelings and sentiments an actor holds towards others (2013:556). For example, the positive affective disposition held by the United States towards Britain explain why the United States had a far more muted and restrained reaction to the Suez Canal Crisis in 1956, especially when compared to the United States’ hostile reaction to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1981. For Hall and Ross affective dispositions reflect “latent propensities for certain stimuli to trigger particular affective responses... For example, one can have the disposition to feel extreme dislike, even hatred toward something, as Churchill reportedly did toward communism” (2015:8). In the context of 9/11, affective dispositions in the form of fear and anger after the attack are what accounts for the outpouring of public and elite support for the Global War on Terror (T. Hall & Ross, 2015:20-21).

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<sup>52</sup> This reading also accounts for why emotions are so often treated as a source of failure in decision-making. The certainty provided by emotions can be misplaced and lead figures to engage in reckless action. On the relationship between this line of thinking and the security dilemma see Mitzen and Schweller (2011).

Dispositions are not normally part of IR's repertoire of ways of thinking about power. They are a poor fit for the material resources we associate with hard power, such as tanks. But neither do dispositions fit with so-called 'soft power'. It would seem strangely patronizing to suggest a group fearing terrorism in the wake of a traumatic attack is experiencing a 'soft' form of power.<sup>53</sup> Instead of stretching these conventional categories beyond recognition, we may better served to follow Guzzini's (2016) lead and think about dispositional power as a form of *social-causal mechanism*.

Drawing on work by Peter Morris, Guzzini "defines power neither as a resource or vehicle, nor as an event or its exercise (as behaviouralists would do), but as a capacity/ability to effect an action" (2016:11). Dispositions in this sense maintain "the possibility of effecting outputs", but this is distinctly different from the unidirectional relationship of 'if A, then B' assumed by efficient causality. The difference resides in the fact that "Dispositions can stay latent when not mobilized", much like how "The ability to read can exist even if one is not actively doing it" (Guzzini, 2016:11).

When we uncouple dispositional power from efficient causality we open new opportunities for analyzing power relations. A disposition could be latent but not activated. A disposition thought to be dormant (or extinct) could be revitalized through some new mobilizing practice. Two (or more) dispositions could come into contention, or a creative bricolage of behavior. A disposition, once potent and active, could fade away and be discarded. Alternatively, the same political outcome could be the produced by different causal pathways, each generated through different dispositional powers.

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<sup>53</sup> On the questionable 'softness' of soft power see Bially Mattern (2005b). On understanding soft power as a form of "affective investment" see T. Solomon (2014).

In sum, dispositions can be thought of as causal mechanisms in that they effect outcomes. Yet we need to view these causal mechanisms through a lens sensitive to the “openness” and “indeterminacy” through which dispositions operate (Guzzini, 2016:14).<sup>54</sup> Doing this, in Guzzini’s view, requires the close appreciation of the social relations and context which is typical of constructivist work.

To be clear, Guzzini is not talking about emotions. But it takes little effort to see how his framework for power analysis applies. A savvy diplomat may look to avoid activating latent anger over historical grievances by treading carefully—diplomatically—around a sensitive subject. Nationalist sentiments long thought pacified by EU integration may be reignited by a global economic downturn. A tense political impasse over whether a military intervention should proceed may follow from two countervailing dispositions: a humanitarian desire to prevent atrocities, and an anxiety over being drawn into an intractable conflict.<sup>55</sup> In sum, by coupling embodied judgements to a form of dispositional power analysis we can offer a clearer picture of how emotions are powerful forces in shaping world politics.

### *3.2.4 Embodied Judgements as Social Relations*

It has become banal to say emotions are socially constructed. Even those in political science who stress the primacy of the physical experience agree emotion has “historical

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<sup>54</sup> Following John Elster, Guzzini “defines social mechanisms as ‘frequently occurring and easily recognisable causal patterns that are triggered under generally unknown conditions or with indeterminate consequences’”(Guzzini, 2016:12-13).

<sup>55</sup> It’s worth noting that none of these examples requires ceding the idea of ‘cause’ or ‘causal mechanism’ to behaviouralist forms of power analysis. Indeed, Guzzini’s work is only one piece of a growing chorus of voices suggesting that constructivists’ dismissal of causal theorizing in favour of constitutive arguments may have obscured more than it clarified (Jackson, 2011; Kurki, 2008). Exploring these debates, including the role of constitutive theorizing in IR’s emotion turn, is beyond the scope of the discussion here.

and cultural influences” (McDermott, 2014:558).<sup>56</sup> But what exactly does the word ‘social’ mean in this context? If we append a silent prefix of ‘social’ to ‘embodied judgment’, then what does this achieve?

Crawford (2000:129) points to a number of important effects.<sup>57</sup> One effect is to emphasize high levels of cross-cultural and historical variation in emotion a way that points to a social critique over claims of biological determinism. In this context the word is a rejoinder, which, while appearing anachronistic to other fields, is still necessary in IR because the discipline remains encumbered by deterministic ideas about ‘human nature’ (Bell, 2015). Another effect is to point to the cultural origins of emotions, a move which emphasizes their social learning through interactions with one’s community. This usage is evident in most constructivist work, and is concerned with elaborating different pathways for diffusing and sharing of emotion, including collective identity (Mercer, 2014; Sasley, 2011), institutions (Crawford, 2014), popular culture (Ross, 2014), public representations (Bleiker & Hutchison, 2008; E. Hutchison, 2016), and collective memory (Fattah & Fierke, 2009). A third effect is to point the social functions of emotions, such as in the functional role empathy plays in promoting trust, or in how shame can be a form of social sanction (Steele, 2007a). We can also see this in Durkheim-inspired accounts of “feeling rules” in security communities (Koschut, 2014) and functional-type arguments over the role of rituals in transnational trauma (T. Hall & Ross, 2015:19). My earlier claim that emotions reduce uncertainty is a functional argument. The concept of embodied judgements is ‘social’ in all three senses: as a *critique* of biological

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<sup>56</sup> Some scholars even look to reject reductionists arguments of any kind (social, biological, or cognitive), instead opting for ‘emergent’ conceptions of emotion which view it as a phenomenon irreducible to its constituent parts (Bially Mattern, 2011; Mercer, 2014).

<sup>57</sup> Crawford is drawing these arguments from the work of Claire Armon-Jones.

determinism, as a pathway for *learning*, and as having a *functional* purpose in social encounters.

But there is a fourth sense in which Crawford identifies emotions as social: as “context-sensitive shared expectations prescribed by social groups for specific social situations” (2000:129). Fierke points to similar dynamic in noting that emotions “do not stand alone but are attached to further entailments by which various objects and acts have meaning” (2013:92). The common thread here is that emotions are embedded in social context in ways that structure our *relations* to different events and actors. This argument isn’t about a critique, or learning, or functionalism; it’s about signaling a distinctive ontology, the type of ‘stuff’ we think comprises emotion. Understanding what a social-relational ontology means, and how it differs from an individualist ontology, is important because they each offer fundamentally different forms of analysis.

This matter because most scholars in IR adopt an individualist ontology, and this carries over into work on emotions (cf. Fierke, 2013:55). As Mercer notes, “Because emotion happens in biological bodies, not in the space between them, it is hard to imagine emotion existing at anything other than the individual level of analysis” (Mercer, 2014:516). To be fair to Mercer he’s framing this a conceptual challenge that needs to be overcome by theorizing the links between identity and emotion. But his framing captures a popular view: there is an interiority to our emotions, they exist inside our bodies. Wong’s (2015) discussion of emotional diplomacy offers a case in point. While acknowledging that emotions are subject to culturally influenced “display rules”, Wong argues that the “underlying appraisal ‘themes’ [of emotions] are innate and universal”

(2015:147). Bracketing problems with Wong's claims of emotional universality,<sup>58</sup> his position captures a common 'minimalist' commitment to the social construction of emotion. There may be a cultural influence in expressive display rules, but emotion is ultimately made up of the genetic heritage we carry inside our individual bodies.

By contrast a social-relational view doesn't see emotions as inside our bodies, but as existing *between our bodies and the world*. As psychologist Magda Arnold notes, "We are afraid of something, we rejoice over something, we love someone, we are angry at something or someone. Emotion seems to have an object just as sense perception does" (quoted in Reisenzein, 2006:928). Likewise, Lazarus argues "emotions are always about person-environment relationships" (1991b:819). Sociologists since Durkheim have stressed this point the most, often arguing religious rituals are high on emotional energy precisely because they occur in the context of a close encounter to "sacred" objects and individuals (Collins, 2004:60-61). If viewed from the perspective of isolated bodies, religious emotions like reverence or devotion would suddenly become inexplicable.

To sharpen the argument further it's helpful to draw a parable to another form of relational analysis in IR. In the 1990s one of the most significant developments in studying power was a call for a relational analysis (Baldwin, 2012; Guzzini, 1993, 2016). The central argument was that power "cannot be assessed by sole reference to the power holder" (Guzzini, 1993:452). We may think of an actor with a nuclear weapon as powerful, but this kind of resource offers little purchase when negotiating a free trade agreement, deliberating the mandate of UNESCO, or breaking up domestic protests.

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<sup>58</sup> It's highly questionable whether the consensus Wong posits in psychology over basic emotions really exists. See Lindquist (2013) as well as Gendron and Feldman Barrett (2009) for an alternate view.

Abstracting power from its contextual relations seemed to skew its analysis. It led to thinking the same form of power (e.g. coercive force) carried across contexts, while at the same time ignoring contexts where power manifested differently.

When scholars try and explain emotions without a sensitivity to local context we see the same error. Anger over the foreign policy of an ally is not the same thing as anger over the foreign policy of an enemy (Eznack, 2013). The former is the anger of betrayal and the latter an anger of righteous indignation. Context matters. And it matters because social relations are social structures; shared dispositions give rise to “common expectations” (Ross, 2014:22) over how to act in specific emotional contexts. These expectations can become social conventions over how to feel and how to express those feelings—what Hochschild (1983) calls “feeling rules”. Just as we don’t expect the parishioner to swear in the sacred space of the church, we don’t expect the defection of a longstanding and amicable ally (Koschut, 2014). As social structure, emotions enable and constrain the possibility of political action thereby setting the boundaries for effective (and acceptable) forms of political mobilization.

To say then that embodied judgements represent a ‘social’ theory of emotion has several effects. It signals a still important critique of biological determinism. It’s a reminder that communities represent crucial sites for learning emotional meanings and expression. It’s an acknowledgement that emotions have political effects by performing certain functions. And above all, its recognition that emotions are embedded in the relations between our bodies and the world.

### **3.3 Entrainment: The Social Origins of Emotions**

While embodied judgment offers a productive way to conceptualize emotion, it stops short of explaining its origins. The questions of where emotions come from, how they are formed, and how this process is politically contentious need to be addressed in their own right. Some sociologists look to achieve this through a more encompassing model of socialization, one which includes social exposure to emotion-inducing stimulus (e.g. Von Scheve, 2012; Von Scheve & Von Luede, 2005). In IR however, the term socialization has accrued a much narrower meaning focused on cognitively cold norms and identities.<sup>59</sup> To signal a different take on socialization, I use the term *entrainment* to refer to the processes where embodied judgments are formed and shared. In particular, I build on the model of entrainment developed by Ross (2014) and Collins (2004).

For Collins entrainment occurs when bodies meet, attention is shared, boundaries to outsiders are established, and common moods and emotional experiences are brought into focus. When these ritual ingredients are embedded in shared actions—cheering at a hockey game, singing the national anthem, a moment of silence for the departed—collective effervescence is achieved, and the ritual produces group solidarity, emotional energy, valued symbols, and a sense of morality (Collins, 2004:47-49). Collins describes this as “heightened intersubjectivity” (Collins, 2004:35). We go from simply sharing similar ideas to aligning how we feel about those ideas. Entrainment aligns our collective bodies so that our bodies begin to detect situations in similar ways. For Collins this process is especially important in generating a shared sense of morality.

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<sup>59</sup> Socialization has also accrued a specific meaning under Waltzian realism (1979:74-77).

Ross (2014) represents the first attempt to bring Collins's ideas on entrainment into IR. Offering a more streamlined view, Ross frames the process of "rhythmic entrainment" as an aligning of the emotional orientations among a group:

"As coparticipants become focused on a common object, they develop common expectations, conscious or unconscious, of which emotions others are likely express. In an attempt—again, conscious or not—to 'coordinate' with those expectations individuals enact similar responses within themselves." (2014:22)

Thus, "Diplomatic meetings, legal trials, religious rituals, commemorative events, protests, rallies, and political speeches—all are social interactions with the potential to expose participants to emotion-inducing stories, symbols and practices" (2014:21).

While these accounts overlap there are also significant differences. First, Collins places a premium on bodily co-presence. Emotionally intense rituals like weddings and funerals, he argues, would not be the same without physical intimacy of co-presence (Collins, 2004:54-55). Ross relaxes this requirement, arguing "communications technologies distribute social interactions to spatially dispersed audiences" (2014:16). Global audiences to recurring clips of the 9/11 attacks may not have been at Ground Zero, but may still have interacted with the footage emotionally.<sup>60</sup>

Second, because Collins sees interaction rituals as having so many requirements—co-presence, barriers to outsiders, focused attention—they often are prone to failure. In some cases failed rituals, such as a political speech which falls flat, may even drain emotional energy (Collins, 2004:52-53). Ross backs away from this competency-centric model. Because "actors emulate a socially circulating emotion

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<sup>60</sup> See especially Mutlu's (2013) discussion of the now infamous images of the 'Falling Man' from 9/11.

without consciously deciding to do so” (Ross, 2014:24), we may be circulating and receiving emotions far before any intentional action. We may offend without trying, console without thinking, or foment fear without knowing. Taking the potential for emotions to be rapidly transmitted seriously means we need to think about how affect can be socially “contagious” (Ross, 2014:27-29).

I agree with Ross on relaxing the requirements for bodily co-presence. Firsthand witnesses of violent conflict will often take extraordinary risks to capture events on social media because they know venues like YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter are potent conduits for circulating emotions. But on the issue of ritual competency and emotional contagion, I depart from both Collins and Ross. What’s missing from these accounts is how entrainment can be politically contentious.

For Collins the locus of failure in interaction rituals is internal: it’s a product of ritual complexity and incompetence. Rituals may be sites of conflict, but these are largely about internal power jostling over leadership (Collins, 2004:121-124). While these internal dynamics are important, I view these kinds of interactions as operating in a broader social field where outside challengers can work to disrupt and subvert rituals, as well as proffering counter rituals. The wearing of the red poppies, for example, is part of a thick repertoire of rituals surrounding Remembrance Day ceremonies in Commonwealth countries. The poppy symbolizes remembrance of a country’s war dead and works to inculcate feelings of pride in national military institutions. Yet this ritual is contested by those who wear white poppies, a symbol rooted in a history of pacifism. Whether by circulating anxieties over military nationalism or by working to build confidence in a peaceful dispute resolution, this ritual looks to induce a different range of

affects. In other words, these are two different processes of entrainment which are in *contention* over how groups should feel when remembering a country's war dead.

Likewise, there is much agree with in Ross' model of emotional contagion. I agree there can be periods of rapid and intense emotional sharing—what he would later call “affective waves” (T. Hall & Ross, 2015:13)—which have the potential to produce major transformations in political order. But there are important limits to this argument. In certain cases, the ‘affective waves’ Ross describes may be incapable in overturning emotions entrained by years, or even decades, of social interaction. Consider the of image of Aylan Kurdi's dead body in 2015, the Syrian toddler who drowned while his family was attempting to escape to Europe. The image became a powerful focal point for anger over international intransigence in aiding Syrian refugees. In some countries, like Canada, it had a major impact and led to refugee policy becoming a surprise feature of a federal election. But for other countries migration controls tightened even further, including a temporarily closure of the borders of Croatia, Macedonia, and Slovenia in 2016. Whether the status quo can resist an affective wave is an empirical question.

Equally problematic is that Ross' model largely focuses on a single pattern of contagion at a time. But what about when multiple patterns of contagion come into conflict? The aftermath of Brexit, for example, saw international surging of jubilation and confidence for nationalist movements, while at the same time witnessing anger and despair across communities of integrationists. Emotional contagion is certainly a crucial feature of international politics, but it may not be harmonious.

Entrainment then, is a contentious process. Like Ross and other NeoJamesians, I understand popular discourses as saturated with diverse admixtures of emotional

experience. But unlike these thinkers I do not believe this diversity can be traced solely to the body's capacity for a wide range of affective experience. It's a function of politics. Mixed emotions signal competing processes of entrainment, which in turn signal different groups, interests, and identities, all of which are embedded in different political projects and visions of order. To help bring this argument into sharper focus it's useful to outline some of the empirical domains where entrainment takes place. I point to three mutually reinforcing arenas: popular culture, memory and trauma, and public rituals. This list is by no means exhaustive. Instead, its purpose is to show how processes of entrainment are dispersed and thus resistant to being captured by any one single group in society.

### *3.3.1 Popular Culture*

Connecting popular culture to emotional entrainment extends a thread in IR research which has long seen television, film, the internet and other mass mediums as exercising a potent influence on political behavior. As Nexon and Neuman argue, representations and practices of popular culture “are not merely passive mirrors; they also play a crucial role in constituting the social and political world” (Nexon & Neuman, 2006:6). While valuable as ‘data’ representing prevailing ideas and attitudes, popular culture also helps constitute the world because it furnishes political actors with a ready-made reservoir of metaphors and analogies for making sense of events (Holland, 2009). Narrowing one's analysis of politics to formal bodies such as parliaments and government departments is bound to gloss over the power relations implicated in popular culture (Grayson, Davies, & Philpott, 2009).

While connections drawn between popular culture and emotion are rare in IR, they are by no means absent. Ross (2014) has traced how radio broadcasts were integral

to inciting the Rwandan genocide, while Zalewski (2015) has used the fictional drama *Homeland* to explore the relationship between gendered emotions and security. Like these authors, my reading stresses the *saturating* effects of popular culture. By virtue of its sheer volume popular culture exposes large communities to emotion inducing symbols, tropes, stereotypes, characters, metaphors, and narratives which circulate among both elites and broader publics. These emotional intensities, and the fictional objects they become attached to, come to weigh upon public discourse in the form of emotional dispositions. This is akin to what cultural theorist Raymond Williams has referred to as literature's capacity to reflect the "structure of feeling" in a society at a given time (Bourne Taylor, 1996). The term refers to how generational conventions, sensibilities, and feelings become crystallized in the form of certain character tropes and stories. Standard plot devices and clichés become exemplars of prevailing emotions of a specific group and historical period.

Where my approach differs from previous work is in emphasizing popular culture is as an arena for contentious politics of emotion. Consider the case of torture. In the wake of the horrific images of from Abu Ghraib in Iraq, the American occupation faced waves of international anger and disgust. Despite this opposition some actors looked to rehabilitate torture by using cultural artefacts to induce a different set of emotional attachments. United States Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia mounted a vigorous defense of torture by invoking the fictional character of Jack Bauer from the television drama *24*. Challenging hardening attitudes towards torture, Scalia stressed that in the television show "Jack Bauer saved Los Angeles... He saved hundreds of thousands of lives... Are you going to convict Jack Bauer?" (quoted in Freeze, 2007). The fact that

the show is fictional is neither here nor there. What matters is that the show is appropriated as a resource in a broader struggle over how audiences should ‘feel’ over the use of torture in national security policy.

### *3.3.2 Social Memory and Trauma*

There is an intimate connection between emotion, memory, and trauma. As Daniel Bar-Tal argues, memories “are never carbon copies of the information provided by learning” (2001:603); they are the effects of social practice (e.g. witnessing, memorializing, celebrating, commemorating, etc.). Far from being a neutral record of history then, memory becomes “what keeps the past—or at least a highly selective image of it—in the present” (Bell, 2006:2). This selectivity is overtly political. How traumatic events like war are memorialized or forgotten determines whether these events are remembered as moments of “national glory”, “genocide”, or any other range of alternatives (Edkins, 2003:16-17).

From this perspective, social memory and trauma appear as deep reservoirs of emotion. Daniel Bar-Tal points to how the Jewish memory of centuries of persecution, culminating in the Holocaust, makes Arab threats feel acutely existential (2001:611-612). In a similar argument, Fattah and Fierke (2009) explore how Islamic terror groups mobilize collective memories of Arab humiliation at the hands of the West which is envisioned as stretching back centuries.

Far from offering unambiguous emotional attachments however, memory and trauma are consistently objects of contention. Mälksoo’s (2009) discussion of the politics of memory in Europe is a poignant example. While Western European countries remember the end of the Second World War as a triumph over Nazism and the beginning

of the European project, for Eastern countries like Poland and the Baltics it denotes the beginning of a period of suffering under communist regimes. Because memory and trauma are potent sources of emotional entrainment their control can be hotly contested, leaving actors to conclude that “memory must be defended” (Mälksoo, 2015).

This kind of contention is not always overt. It may occur behind the closed doors of political institutions. Thus, when Canadian military officials were charged with commemorating the country’s mission in Afghanistan they expressed serious concerns over holding the ceremony near July 1<sup>st</sup>, the day traditionally reserved for celebrating Canadian confederation. In their eyes the merging of the events would have led to an unacceptable “militarization” of Canada day (Blanchfield, 2014). In other cases, contention takes the form of dispersed practices outside of formal institutions. This can include the vandalism of popular monuments. In this case Auchter (2013) points to how monuments intended to memorialize migrants who died crossing the U.S.-Mexico border are recurrently vandalized by anti-migrant vigilantes. Because how we remember invariably conditions how we feel, the politics of memory becomes hotly contested.

### *3.3.3 Public Rituals*

For many in the West, a “ritual is an archaic practice that is at odds with modernity, having more to do with other times and places” (Fierke, 2013:40).<sup>61</sup> This dismissal is a mistake. Highly formalized, invariant, and traditional forms of practice—what I term rituals—are a conspicuous feature of everyday life and shape how we communicate, interact, and feel about the world. While Collins’ discussion of rituals is confined to

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<sup>61</sup> For notable exceptions in IR see Guzzini (1993) and Reus-Smit (1999).

domestic contexts these practices extend to international arenas. From the rituals of statecraft such as summits and state dinners, to expressions of condolences for victims of terrorist attacks, to the playing of national anthems in international sports, rituals abound in world politics.

Like Fierke (2013:39-44) I see rituals as deeply traditional—as history sets the precedent for the ritual form—as well as being focused on material, bodily performances.<sup>62</sup> Rituals are often more than just words; they can incorporate a range of material artefacts from the laying of wreaths, to the pinning of medals, to the lowering (or raising) of flags, and beyond. Following Oren and Solomon (2015), I see rituals as distinguished from other social practices by their repetition, because iteration is a powerful force in shaping meaning and feeling. In their work Oren and Solomon point to the role ritual repetition in the securitization of Iraq. Far from referring to an objective assessment of Iraq’s arsenal, the Bush administration’s claims over WMDs became real—or at least felt this way—through the repetitive, ritualistic chanting of ‘WMDs’, a ritual in which audiences and even critics were enjoined to participate.<sup>63</sup>

Through a combination of repetition and a range of expressive forms (facial expressions, prosody of voice, bodily movements, music, images, sacred artefacts, etc.)<sup>64</sup> rituals constitute a reliable pathway for emotional entrainment. When analysts bemoan political speeches that endlessly repeat buzzwords and slogans, while bypassing policy details, they end up missing the forest for the trees. These speeches are rituals and their

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<sup>62</sup> Following Irving Goffman, Fierke sees the body as conducting a “theatrical performance” (2013:44). This means rituals can be performed poorly, as when a diplomat fumbles greeting a dignitary by forgetting their name or their country.

<sup>63</sup> Oren and Solomon explicitly note that emotion is a key feature of rituals but bracket this issue on account of space constraints (2015:14 fn 79)

<sup>64</sup> On the relationship between the prosody of speech and emotion see Ross (2014:110-112)

effect is emotional entrainment. But even when analysts do recognize the significance of rituals as conduits of emotion, such as the candle light vigils that spontaneously emerge after terror attacks (T. Hall & Ross, 2015:19), they are often examined in isolation. The presence of different rituals, counter-rituals, and contested rituals is obscured. The ritual of standing for the Star Spangled Banner in American sports culture may be a potent pathway for creating national solidarity, but it's a ritual that's open to being contested by those who refuse to stand, take a knee, or raise their fist in defiance (Brennan, 2016).

These alternative forms of ritual practice are significant precisely because they represent different sources of meaning and feeling for situations. Consider one journalist's reporting of the aftermath of the Bastille Day terror attacks in France. Not only was the scene marked by memorials for the victims, it also included an anti-memorial for the site where the terrorist attacker was killed:

“They cast stones. They spit. They called him unprintable names. They tossed garbage — plastic bottles, debris from McDonald's meals, cigarette butts. Some broke down crying. One well-dressed Middle-aged woman struggled to light a paper towel on fire, then tossed it on the slowly growing pile of debris, igniting an acrid pyre just 10 yards from where flowers and teddy bears piled in tribute to the victims.”

(Birnbaum, 2016)

These rituals may be more complementary than conflictual. In other cases, such as the clashing remembrance poppies discussed above, the conflict will be overt. The broader point here is that public rituals, much like popular culture and memory and trauma, are both highly fertile domains for emotional entrainment and acute sites of political

contestation. They shape the emotional topography of a community and the political opportunities and constraints that follow.

### **3.4 Emotion and the Limits of Securitization**

In stressing the contentious character of entrainment and embodied judgments this argument places front and center the volatile relationship between emotion and political action. Always vulnerable to flux, there is nothing to ensure the prevailing feelings of one period carry to the next, nor is there reason to believe political opponents won't conscript equally potent forms of emotion to mobilize alternative projects. Both observations cut against the fear-as-mobilization thesis and its reading of fear as a ready and reliable resource—an unproblematic strategy called into force by elites without contest.

This section completes the final arc of the chapter by steering the discussion of the contentious politics of emotion into a critique and reformulation of securitization theory. This begins with a revised account of the audience in securitizing moves. Drawing on the discussion of uncertainty above, I focus on how audiences are bombarded by a number of different security claims leading to a fundamental challenge over which interpretations to accept and which to reject. To overcome this challenge audiences are must rely on embodied judgments—emotions—to sort through the sound and noise of security discourse. By swiftly serving to legitimize some threats and security practices, while denying the legitimacy of others, the cumulative effects of emotions are to fasten in place the boundaries of the audience's security imaginary. Constrained by what audiences feel is, and is not, threatening, securitizing actors are limited by the boundaries of the local security imaginary.

### *3.4.1 The Uncertainty of Audiences*

Securitization theory was designed to explain how issues become ‘security’ issues and what effects this produces. While depoliticized issues garner little public attention, and politicized issues constitute the bulk of day-to-day public deliberation, securitized issues represent a special intensification of politics. This intensification comes from framing a referent object as existentially threatened by some actor (or object) in a way that demands priority of action and mobilizes a response (Buzan et al., 1998:25). By presenting something as a security issue, actors reshape the political agenda because if we don’t act now it will be “too late” in the future (Buzan et al., 1998:26). This urgency is created through speech acts, practices which deploy the constitutive power of language to create new social realities in the same way “naming a ship” or placing a bet transforms social relations (Buzan et al., 1998:32, 26). At the center of these speech acts are referent objects, those “things that are seen to be existentially threatened and that have a legitimate claim to survival” in the eyes of a given community (Buzan et al., 1998:36). The emphasis on community here signals an intersubjective quality—security is something that neither exists objectively in nature nor subjectively in independent minds, but is negotiated and agreed upon in a social collective. Thus, for security claims to be successful they need to be accepted by an audience.<sup>65</sup>

And yet a failure to specify the role of the audience is now a recurring criticism of the approach. Balzacq remarks that “although the [Copenhagen School] appeals to an

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<sup>65</sup> Although in practice there may be multiple audiences. See Salter (2008).

audience, its framework ignores that audience” (2005:177). Stritzel argues that “[securitization theorists] have not yet conceptualized the exact relationship between the actor and the audience very clearly” (Stritzel, 2007:362). McDonald laments that “the ‘audience’ are so undertheorized as to ultimately remain outside the framework itself” (2008:564). And while the theory’s so-called facilitating conditions are supposed to point analysts towards those features which make a securitizing move successful, none of these conditions directly relates to the audience.<sup>66</sup> This has left securitization theory frustratingly oblique. It positions the audience as the ultimate “judge of the act” (Buzan et al., 1998:41), but with no clear sense over what this judgement looks like.

My hunch is that the root this incoherence can be traced to how securitization theory has never recognized the central challenge faced by audiences: uncertainty. Like so much of constructivist IR, securitization theory has eschewed the question of how groups grapple with the problem of uncertainty. Audiences to security claims—whether they are domestic constituencies, transnational movements, allied states, ethnics groups, or otherwise—are bombarded by a range of different security discourses on an almost daily basis. From the threat of climate change, to a revanchist Russia, to cyber-attacks and beyond, security discourse is suffused with claims of threats demanding immediate action. It is the very urgency of these claims which frustrate calls for a program of communicative action centered around sustained and deliberative reflection

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<sup>66</sup> The facilitating conditions refer to the use of a clear grammar of security, having an authoritative speaker, and the intrinsic features of a threat which facilitate its securitization. The first refers to whether speakers outline clear “plot that includes existential threat, point of no return, and a possible way out” (Buzan et al., 1998:33). The second refers to the social position of the speaker in relation to the audience (i.e. are they a trusted source of information). The third refers to intrinsic features of threat the properties of threat which facilitate its recognition as a threat (i.e. is the threat diffuse and ambiguous like global warming, or is it centralized and more self-apparent like tanks crossing a border?).

(e.g. Williams, 2003). The result places a double onus on audiences: not only do they need to sort through a wide range of security claims, but they must do so quickly. How then, can audiences sort through the blooming, buzzing confusion of security discourse?<sup>67</sup>

Overcoming this challenge means relying on emotions. Here embodied judgments serve to narrow the field of plausible interpretations in three crucial ways. First, at a general level, emotions drastically reduce uncertainty by focusing attention on only those events and objects which we hold to be significant. Embodied judgements don't become attached to the marginal and mundane. They become embedded in values, identities, and interests that we take as central to our existence. An event may still be objectively possible, but we may ignore or dismiss it because it fails to hold emotional significance for us.<sup>68</sup> This dynamic is most visible in securitizing moves which look to elevate what are regarded as mundane or parochial issues to the status of urgent threats. One example of this dynamic is Senator's Marco Rubio's claim that maintaining the United States' sugar subsidy is a matter of national security (Mider, 2016). Beyond a small corporate constituency, the protection of the domestic sugar firms from international competition lacks any emotional resonance with the broader American public. Not only do these types of security claims often fall of deaf ears, they can even weaken a speaker's position by making them appear 'out of touch' or 'unserious' in the eyes of the audience.

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<sup>67</sup> Buzan and Wæver's answer is that political actors organize this confusion with macro-securitizing moves which

"incorporate, align and rank the more parochial securitisations beneath it" (2009:253). Here Buzan and Wæver replicate Wendt's hierarchical arguments about identity (see section 1.0). In doing so they are confronted with the same problem: what hold this hierarchy of security threats together?

<sup>68</sup> On object and event relevance see appraisal theory (Lazarus, 1991b; Moors et al., 2013)

In other instances, embodied judgements may expedite the acceptance of a securitizing move. A population exposed to years of entraining processes working to induce fears over migrants will already be disposed to accept claims that migrants are threatening. This scenario is the closest to the fear-as-mobilization thesis because it posits embodied judgments facilitate uncritical, even unconscious, acceptance of security claims. But there is a crucial difference. By linking anxieties over migrants to processes of entrainment this example stresses how these anxieties pre-date the securitizing move. These judgements may be activated, reinforced, and even further cultivated by security talk, but such talk does not create a fear of migrants out of whole cloth. In these cases, the actor making security claims has simply encountered a felicitous emotional context—a distribution of embodied judgment which leads to a more agreeable audience. In some cases, enthusiasm for security claims will be so high that security speech becomes akin to ‘preaching to the choir’.<sup>69</sup>

Finally, the reverse can also be true. In some cases, the emotional context can frustrate and constrain a securitizing move. In 2009 the United States’ Department of Homeland Security released a report on the threat of right wing terrorism. It suggested that, through a combination of economic downturn and the election of America’s first black president, right wing groups would become more active and work to recruit disaffected veterans who had the skills to carry out attacks (Department of Homeland Security, 2009). The report provoked an immediate backlash. Then House Minority Leader John Boehner argued that “characterize[ing] men and women returning home after defending our country as potential terrorists is offensive and unacceptable” (CBS

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<sup>69</sup> On the emphatic acceptance of security claims see Van Rythoven (2015:470)

News, 2009). The Department quickly withdrew the report and Secretary Napolitano issued a public apology to veterans (CNN, 2009). The team of analysts responsible for the report was disbanded, and their database on non-Islamic extremism was closed (Ackerman, 2012). As a securitizing move, the report certainly elicited an emotional reaction from the audience, but one that was vehemently hostile to its to its characterization.

The uncertainty-reducing function of emotions cuts both ways. Everyday fears of migrants make audiences confident that migration is a national security issue. But different affects—admixture of pride, respect, affection—make audiences confident in rejecting the claim that veterans were a threat to national security. Audiences interpret security claims through the prism of embodied judgements. Competent “[s]ecuritizing moves then do not succeed by invoking vague affective attachments, but by eliciting culturally specific fears whose activation hinges on deploying recognizable memories, identities, images, metaphors, and other tropes to construct a plausible, yet anxiety inducing, future” (Van Rythoven, 2015:466). Far from facilitating securitization, emotion is just as likely to frustrate it.

Cumulatively, these examples point to a boundary producing function of emotions. By offering certainty in determining what is and is not a threat, embodied judgements produce a bounded domain, a limited space of plausible security interpretations for a community. Building on earlier constructivist work, we can refer to this space as constituting the audience’s *security imaginary*.

#### *3.4.2 The Emotional Boundaries of the Security Imaginary*

Traditionally, the term security imaginary refers to “structure of well-established meanings and social relations out of which representations of the world or international relations are created” (Weldes, 1999:10). This reservoir of well-established interpretations is “shared by large groups of people, if not society as a whole” and “creates a shared sense of legitimacy” for some security discourses, while denying the legitimacy of others (Pretorius, 2008:106).<sup>70</sup> While sympathetic to this argument, I offer one crucial amendment. I view the boundaries of the security imaginary as held in place by embodied judgements. Collective fears, anxieties, and suspicions work to fasten objects and events *within* the security imaginary. Different emotional relationships—such as collective joy, pride, or even empathy—signal a different relationship to an object which places it outside the imaginary. Here embodied judgments serve as beacons of social navigation; some guiding us to accept a security interpretation, others sounding the alarm when we are way off course.

As a corollary of emotion’s capacity to manage uncertainty, this boundary drawing work can leave security imaginaries with a rigidity making them relatively stable over time. As tropes in popular culture become clichés, ways of remembering trauma become institutionalized, and public rituals congeal, the emotions holding a security imaginary in place are stabilized.

This stability is significant because it cuts against the grain of poststructuralist readings of securitization. By emphasizing the performative power of language, these approaches downplay the structural constraints of context and assume “‘there is nothing outside the text’ and that meaning can never be fixed” (Stritzel, 2007:361). This

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<sup>70</sup> For further discussion of security imaginaries see Guzzini (2016), Muppidi (1999), and Nossal (2011).

narrowly reduces securitizing moves to the power of language, a move which treats “audiences as passive vessels waiting for emotions to be authoritatively spoken into them... [And yet there is always the] potential for audiences to come to the interaction with embodied feelings that may pre-emptively frustrate an emergent threat image” (Van Rythoven, 2015:463). Audiences are never passive bystanders. Emotions prepare us to react, and even potentially contest, a security claim.

In one final example, we can illustrate these boundary effects by turning to the 2016 American presidential election. While the securitization of religious minorities is a historical feature of presidential contests,<sup>71</sup> Republican candidate Donald Trump’s comments on Muslims offer a particularly vivid example. Repeatedly characterizing Muslims as dangerous, Trump called for radical security measures including a total ban on Muslim migration and a national tracking database. And while Trump’s comments may have activated, reinforced, and even further cultivated currents of Islamophobia they did not create these feelings out of thin air. This form of embodied judgment is the result of entrainment processes, broadly dispersed across society and rooted in popular culture, memory and trauma, and public rituals. For audiences with bodies already aligned to this mode of judgment there was no doubt over the genuineness of this threat.

But this represents only one potential form of emotional relationship towards Muslims in America. Other entraining processes have worked to inculcate pride, respect, and even veneration for Muslim Americans and their contributions to society. Nowhere was this dynamic on greater display than in the speech by the Khan family at the Democratic National Convention. In telling the story of the death of their son US Army

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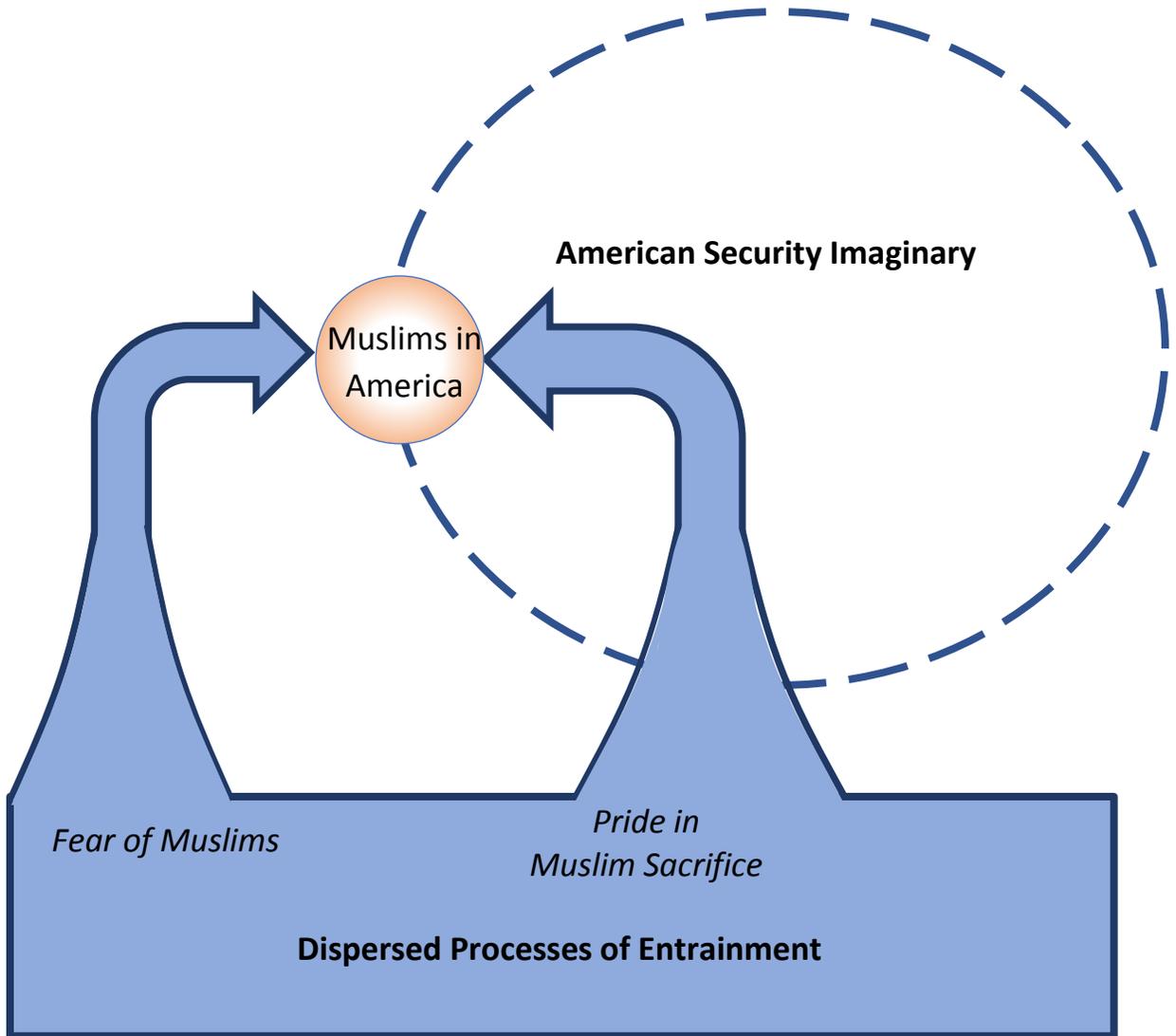
<sup>71</sup> Consider the perceived threat of JFK’s Catholicism.

Captain Humayan Khan, the Khan family stressed that Muslims have a history of undertaking the ultimate sacrifice to protect America.<sup>72</sup> The structure of this story is instantly recognizable as it taps into a well-established set of “rhetorical conventions” of seeing military service, and the sacrifices it often entails, as the epitome of American civic virtue (Krebs, 2009). From reciting the pledge of allegiance, to patriotic parades, to early flight boarding for service members, to magnets and bumper stickers calling to ‘Support Our Troops’, the United States is suffused with public rituals, tropes in popular culture, and practices of memorialization which collectively instill veneration for citizen-soldiers. Indeed, despite a broad-based decline in trust for American public institutions, the military continues to receive the highest level of trust in national polls (Gallup, 2016). By positioning Muslims, and other minorities, in the citizen-soldier tradition the effect of the Khan’s speech was to marshal powerful emotions which vigorously contested a blanket securitization of Muslims. This contestation is represented visually in Figure 1.

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<sup>72</sup> The speech also stressed that different religions, genders, and ethnicities have made similar sacrifices.

**Figure 1: Emotions and the Boundaries of the American Security Imaginary**



This diagram helps in illustrating the contentious politics of emotion surrounding the securitization of Muslims in America. The boundaries of the American security imaginary are not, as some poststructural readings suggest, spoken into existence. They are a site of struggle. While continuous attempts to demonize Muslim communities as existentially threatening push this group into the center of the security imaginary, countervailing affirmations of the sacrifice, service, and civic virtue of this group work to

resist these claims. Those who are like Captain Humayan Kahn cannot be a threat to the republic because they embody its highest virtues, and to suggest otherwise is a betrayal of these values. Both forms of embodied judgment afford certainty over the status of Muslims in America, they just produce that certainty in different ways.

The reason for qualifying ‘Processes of Entrainment’ as ‘Dispersed’ is because these patterns of embodied judgment fail to map discretely onto any one group. While it’s certainly true that these embodied judgments will be more acute amongst specific constituencies—fear of Muslims among Trump supporters for example—analytically segregating audiences in this way would be a mistake. Affects and emotions don’t often map 1:1 on a specific group identity. Instead, they tend to diffuse and circulate. We see this when constituencies who nominally support Trump express anger over his treatment of the Khan family, as well as among democrats whom, while committed to a more inclusive vision of citizenship, are still disposed to accepting security measures that disproportionately target Muslim communities. What matters here is less which groups make up an audience and more the *distribution* of embodied judgments across audiences. Ultimately, it’s the distribution of embodied judgment which creates the emotional context that enables and constrains securitizing moves. This is how it becomes possible to talk about how emotions can constrain the politics of security.

### **3.5 Conclusion: What This Theory Should Achieve**

This chapter laid out a theory of the contentious politics of emotion and security over the course of four moves. First, I made the case that when we think about emotions in social theories like constructivism, we should think about how they help actors manage the uncertainty of their social environment. Second, viewing emotions as embodied

judgements offers a conceptual language to understand what emotions are, as well as how they help us navigate the world. Third, we can understand the social origins of emotions by tracing to them to processes of entrainment, particularly those rooted in popular culture, memory and memorialization, as well as public rituals.

The final section pulls these threads together to challenge how we think about securitization. Starting from the uncertainty of public audiences over which security claims to accept, and which to reject, I argued audiences rely on emotions to navigate security discourse. While some embodied judgments create confidence that a threat is genuine, others make security claims appear inappropriate, offensive, or even preposterous. Together, the effect of emotions is to limit the boundaries of local security imaginary, that range of security claims and practices which the audience feels is legitimate.

Ultimately, what a theory of the contentious politics of emotion security affords us is a means to think through how the relationship between politics, emotion, and security is more complex and less deterministic than the fear-as-mobilization thesis leads us to believe. Because the theory is based in dispositional power analysis, and emotional dispositions can be activated and mobilized through a myriad of different pathways, the theory contains no nomothetic predictions. There are no 'laws' of emotion in the politics of security. The only predictions this theory makes is 1) that security debates will be marked by greater diversity of emotional experiences than simply fear, and 2) that these emotional dynamics will often constrain rather than simply enable securitizing moves. What specific outcomes emerge, and especially whether a security claim gains widely accepted legitimacy, depends on contextually specific distribution of emotion. In

chapters 5 and 6, I illustrate how this plays out over the course of two different empirical studies. But first, we need to address what is arguably the most challenging subject in IR's emotion turn: methodology.

## 4.0 Feeling Methodological? Researching the Contentious Politics of Emotion and Security

‘What’s your methodology?’. This question continues to harry emotions research in IR. Difficult to define, observe, measure, and operationalize into scientific variables, the challenge of emotions inquiry is often understood as, in the words of Robert Jervis, “simply too great” (Balzacq & Jervis, 2004:565). While this ghettoization of emotions inquiry has several sources, none is perhaps as significant as the methodological proscriptions mandated by IR’s behavioral turn (Salter & Mutlu, 2012a:180).<sup>73</sup> It has thus become received wisdom that from “traditional social scientific perspective” emotions are far “too ephemeral to be evaluated analytically” (E. Hutchison, 2016:31). For many scholars this leaves emotions research in the odious category of being mere metaphysical speculation (Gammon, 2008:262; Wight, 2007:380), an otherwise diplomatic way of saying ‘worthless knowledge’. Surprisingly, emotions scholars have offered little to challenge this image, often choosing to “[leave] for future work the task of detailing more specific methodologies” (T. Solomon, 2014:721; see also Ross, 2006:212). This has left the nascent emotion turn in a fundamental state of tension: it may be one of the next “great frontiers” in IR research (Reus-Smit, 2014:568), but it is a frontier for which we appear woefully unprepared to tread.

This chapter offers a rejoinder. It is rejoinder, in one sense, to mainstream IR scholars, such as Jervis, who suggest emotions research faces prohibitive methodological barriers. It beggars belief to suggest that in period of vibrant IR research on emotions that methodologically reflective research remains impossible. This belief appears all the

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<sup>73</sup> Though Salter and Mutlu note Waltz’ relegation of emotion to ‘first image’ studies is also significant. On the broader influence of behavioralism in IR see Schmidt (2002).

more dubious when we recognize that IR is entering an acute period of methodological diversification, one which increasingly broadens the field beyond the disciplinary horizons of King, Keohane, and Verba (1994).<sup>74</sup> Accordingly, this chapter maps out some of the key methodological issues when conducting research in the emotions turn.

This chapter is also a rejoinder in a second sense, one directed to researchers situated in this new frontier of scholarship. Put tersely, there is more at stake in discussions of methodology than simply appeasing old disciplinary diktats. The explanatory strategies we pursue, and the more particular methods which follow, are never neutral means for producing knowledge; they are acts and devices which enact certain worlds while excluding others (Aradau and Huysmans, 2014). Crucially, methods can have distinct “hygienizing” function which wipes away certain features and details of the world which do not fit neatly into predefined conceptual categories (Aradau and Huysmans quoting Law 2014:597). Drawing on strong forms of affect theory (e.g. Massumi 2002) for example, may lead to the exclusion of interviews as a way to do research as affect exists below the register of the conscious self-reports by actors. At a very basic level, methodologies shape who and what we talk to, how we listen, and the substantive visions of politics that follow.

Meeting this demand for methodological reflection however, is hampered by the fact that there is no consensus on what ‘methodology’ means. To help organize this chapter I begin with adopting a view of methodology *as a hierarchal ordering of research wagers*. This view captures how IR scholars tends to situate methodology,

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<sup>74</sup> For a brief survey of recent developments in methodology and IR see Jackson (2011), Ackerly, Stern, and True (2006), Pouliot (2007), Hansen (2006), Salter and Mutlu (2012b), Sil and Katzenstein (2010), Löwenheim (2010), Hansen (2011), Bleiker (2015), as well as Aradau, Huysmans, Neal, and Voelkner (2015b).

along with its cognate concepts of methods and metatheory, at different levels of abstraction. Methodology is often seen in the middle of this hierarchy: its something more complex than methods—those practical techniques of inquiry—but arguably less abstract than discussions of metatheory and the philosophy of science. This kind of ordering, from the abstract to the concrete, is evident in how scholars often distinguish between methodology and methods. For Ackerly, Stern, & True, methodology refers to “self-conscious reflections on the epistemological assumptions, ontological perspective, ethical responsibilities, and method choices”, whereas methods are “the kind[s] of tool of research or analysis a researcher adopts” (2006:6). Similarly, Jackson views methodology as a “concern with the logical structure and procedure of scientific inquiry” and holds that “methods are techniques for gathering and analyzing bits of data” (quoted in Jackson, 2011:25). Parsed only slightly differently, Pouliot suggests methodology entails “those basic assumptions about the world we study, which are before the specific techniques adopted by the scholar undertaking research”, whereas methods “consist of concrete tools of inquiry” (Pouliot, 2007:370). In each case the logic runs from the abstract and generalizable to the specific and particular. We can use the philosophy of science to reflect on methodology, and we can use methodology to reflect on methods.<sup>75</sup> If we were to organize this relationship diagrammatically it would look something like Figure 2.

### **Figure 2: Methodology as a Hierarchy of Research Wagers**

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<sup>75</sup> John Gunnell would understand the separation of these levels as reflecting distinct “orders of discourse” (1998)

**Metatheory and Philosophy of Science**



**Explanatory Strategy (Methodology)**



**Methods**

I make one significant amendment to this image. At a practical level, placing ‘methodology’ is the center of the diagram is confusing precisely because—depending on who you are talking to—the term ‘methodology’ overlaps with either questions of metatheory, or the technical minutiae of methods (Jackson, 2008:131). To help avoid this semantic confusion I use the alternative label ‘explanatory strategy’ (Humphreys, 2013) to more clearly delineate a mid-range level of reflection. Taken together, a more precise definition of methodology is *a hierarchy of wagers at the level of metatheory, explanatory strategy, and particular methods or techniques* (Humphreys, 2013:299).<sup>76</sup>

Like every definition of methodology, there are drawbacks to this image. The arrangement can lead one to assume that metatheory and the philosophy of science is somehow in a privileged position to dictate the conduct and character of everything below (Gunnell, 2011). Placing methods at the bottom of this hierarchy can lead us to

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<sup>76</sup> Humphrey’s would disagree with the use of ‘hierarchy’ here because he is not convinced wagers at the level of metatheory directly entails a particular explanatory strategy. This is a valid point, but space constraints limit its discussion.

treat them as an afterthought, and thus neglect the creative and experimental potential of mixing different methods (Aradau, Huysmans, Neal, & Voelkner, 2015a).<sup>77</sup>

My intention with this image however, is not to vindicate it as the one and only way of understanding what is meant by ‘methodology’—it isn’t. Instead, the value of this image is heuristic. It’s an organizing device designed to make this chapter’s discussion of methodology intelligible for an IR audience. The goal of the image is to help the discussion proceed ‘methodically’; moving in a narrowing motion from the abstract and generalizable issues at the level of metatheory, to more concrete issues at the level explanatory strategy and, finally, to the finer technical details of methods.<sup>78</sup> The purpose of this movement is to bring order and transparency to the set of ‘wagers’<sup>79</sup> which, when taken together, constitute my distinct methodology for studying the contentious politics of emotion and security.

#### **4.1 Meta-Theory, Methodology, and Emotions Research**

In the last decade IR has witnessed a substantial shift in how we discuss methodology. What was once a word signifying the technical details of conducting research has veered towards a deeper interrogation of metatheoretical issues. As Jackson argues, there is:

“a basic conceptual confusion engendered by the long-standing dominance of classical objectivity as the goal of social science: a confusion between *method* and *methodology*...[B]ecause of the dominance of classically objective methodology,

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<sup>77</sup> Alternatively, invoking a different image of methodology would simply introduce a different set of problems.

<sup>78</sup> One might view this as akin to the distinction made between grand strategy, strategy, and tactics.

<sup>79</sup> On the language of ‘wagers’ see Jackson (2011) and (Jackson & Nexon, 2013), and especially the response by Wight (2013). While there is great value in viewing methodological assumptions as ‘wagers’, I follow Wight (2013:333-334) in viewing such wagers less as leaps of faith and more as informed bets.

our putative 'methodological' discussions in IR have largely been *method* discussions: how best to achieve 'progress' in accurately representing the world in our accounts, how to select cases so as to most efficiently test hypotheses, and so forth. There has been comparatively little fundamental interrogation of what we should be doing when we construct IR knowledge: very little methodological discussion.” (2008:131)

As long as there was some tacit consensus that an objectivist methodology (rooted in some form of neopositivism) was the only game in town, there was never any real need to talk about methodology in any deep and meaningful way. The post-positivist challenge of the late 1980s unsettled this dominance, and in doing so prepared the terrain for discussions of methodology which extended to deeper philosophical questions, such as the difference between explaining and understanding (Hollis & Smith, 1990), causation and constitution (Wendt, 1998), the significance of scientific ontology (Wight, 2006), and beyond.

Jackson’s argument, as well as his exchanges with his interlocutors, invite us to think of methodology as something more than the collective minutiae of technical detail. The argument is not that technical detail (e.g. case selection) is unimportant, but that in the course of research design we invariably make a series of metatheoretical choices whether we acknowledge it or not. These “background assumptions” (Reus-Smit, 2013:592) have a pesky habit of shaping much of what follows. Methodology, in this broadened sense, calls for transparency on these larger issues. This section answers this call by unpacking two issues which I see as cutting across the methodological design of emotions research at a fundamental level. The first is the distinction between emotion

categories and affects, and the second is the character of the relationship between the researcher and the world being studied.

#### *4.1.2 Scientific Ontologies: Between Affect and Emotion Categories*

One of the principal methodological divides in emotions inquiry in IR is whether research should be organized around discrete *emotion categories* or shifting *affects*. Should we study embodied experience as it coheres and stabilizes into recognizable categories of emotion (e.g. the experience of ‘shame’), or should we privilege embodied experience’s capacity migrate, mingle, and mutate in the form of nebulous affects which defy our stock of conventional labels? At the heart of this divide is a question of *scientific ontology*: what are the principal objects, processes, and mechanisms under study (Jackson & Nexon, 2013)?

In this section, I argue that rather being viewed as opposing methodological approaches we should view these positions as complementary. Many emotions begin as dispersed affects, an array of bodily sensations lacking any coherent form, only to become moulded, disciplined, and configured into discrete categories through an array of transformative, and most significantly, *political* processes. A more encompassing scientific ontology treats both positions as viable avenues for research, and in fact sees them embedded in common political processes. But to clarify what this means we need a clearer view of what’s at stake in the difference between affect and categories.

Emotion categories such as fear, joy, anger, etc. reflect discrete ranges of socially recognizable embodied experience (T. Hall & Ross, 2015:849) and are often linked to distinct forms of behaviour. Such categories are central to studies like Hall’s (2011) discussion of the “diplomacy of anger” in Sino-America relations, Penttinen’s (2013)

account of “joy” in post-conflict situations, as well as Fattah and Fierke’s (2009) analysis of “humiliation” in Muslim communities. Each of these studies employ emotion categories to organize an impressive diversity of empirical phenomena into manageable ‘cases’ where emotion’s political dynamics may be studied. Categories can be employed as *explanans* or the *explanandum*, and can be used across a range of different levels of analysis (individual interactions, sub-state, transnational groups, states, regions, and systems). Up until very recently categories had been the central organizing principle from which case studies of emotion were possible.

Affect-inspired approaches challenge this view. Drawing on the NeoJamesian critique discussed last chapter, Ross argues “some emotions are too inchoate, unexpected, or inarticulate to be imbued with [the] meaning” associated with such categories (2006:198). The result is a focus on a different kind of embodied experience—*affect*—which is too ambiguous, too composite, too fugitive, to be organized into singular and neatly delineated emotion labels. As Ross contends, “Focusing on single emotions misses the complex and multifaceted circulations of affect associated with political protest, national mobilization, transnational advocacy, and other activities... This diversity is not an exceptional characteristic which can be set aside in the interests of parsimonious theory; *it is the default setting in a complex world of affective politics*” (my emphasis 2014:17, 21; see also T. Solomon, 2013:131). In this sense, treating a specific event as an instance of ‘joy’ or ‘anger’ is a misnomer because it retroactively pastes a narrower emotion label on to a much richer band of affective experience. Taken in the most literal sense affect exists “beyond, below, and past” language, a position that

becomes, at minimum, a serious problem for studies focused on discourse analysis (Wetherell, 2013:350).

The divide between these two approaches leaves us at an impasse. If we focus on categories we risk our analysis pasting over what in fact may have been a much more nuanced affective experience. But downplaying categories comes with its own risks. When political actors say, ‘the way we acted was shameful’, or that ‘we’re proud of that achievement’, they’re representing their emotional experience through the very same kind of categories affect-theorists find lacking. As Barnett (2011) argues, dismissing these kinds of self-reports leads to “cultural analysis from the armchair (or cinema seat), in so far as it rests on a systematic refusal to countenance that people’s own viewpoints on their own actions and practices can count for much”. The risk here is not simply that we ignore insider viewpoints—something ethically problematic on its own—but that we impose a “scholastic and alien logic” that more fundamentally misconstrues the situation (Pouliot, 2007:365). I return to this point below, but it suffices to say that downplaying categories can quickly lead us to dismissing how actors choose to organize and represent their own emotional experience.

To resolve this impasse I propose viewing the relationship between affect and emotion categories less as a matter of distinct ontologies, and more as different politico-historical possibilities that emerge from negotiation, contest, and struggle. The focus should be on how the messy and mixed embodied experience of affects come to be governed or “cultivated” (T. Hall & Ross, 2015:861) into narrower, more coherent categories of emotion.

A key resource for this argument comes from Arlie Hochschild's (1983) discussion of 'emotional management'. Her central argument is that modern labour is inextricably tied to personal interactions which look to orchestrate and commodify specific emotional experiences. Nowhere is this more evident than in airline travel where, for both financial and safety reasons, firms have a vested interest in ensuring passengers enjoy a pacified and pleasurable experience. At the center of this experience are interactions with bright and cheerful flight attendants who, when combined with the "music", "décor", and the "daytime drinks" of the plane, work "together to orchestrate the mood of the passengers" (Hochschild, 1983:8). The smiling demeanor of flight attendant however, is not simply a superficial façade. Its the result of "deep acting, which... involves deceiving oneself as much as deceiving others" by "taking over the levers of feeling production" (Hochschild, 1983:33). Airline companies develop sophisticated and recurring training programs to teach staff the "value of the techniques of emotion management", including a "broad array of techniques for averting anger" (Hochschild, 1983, 29). Through a repertoire of interactions with management, trainers, and co-workers, the diffuse affects of the flight attendant become disciplined and narrowed into a cheerful emotional disposition.

Occasionally however, this training fails. The carefully orchestrated and cheerful disposition of the attendant can dissolve into admixtures of anger, frustration, and resentment when staff confront obstinate and drunk passengers, and even periodic episodes of sexual harassment (Hochschild, 1983:28). This is an interactive process of labour, struggle, and competition, both by the actor and the surrounding institutions, to take diffuse affects and sustain them in more disciplined forms.

Hochschild's work offers a methodological stratagem which privileges neither affects nor discrete categories, but looks at how social interactions can encompass both possibilities. This is what emotions research in IR should emulate. This means asking how messy affects come to be transformed and disciplined into narrower, more coherent forms and, conversely, how these categories come to be disrupted back into nebulous affects. What's at stake in these processes is in understanding how embodied experience comes to be corralled into the service of distinct political projects. Popular support for foreign wars, for example, is not sustained through vague and dispersed affects, but through acutely aggressive and xenophobic strains of nationalism. The methodological focus then, should be on how different configurations of embodied judgment emerge, and how these dynamics serve different visions of politics.

#### *4.2.2 The Limits of Mind-World Dualism and Monism*

No issue better exemplifies the deepening of methodological inquiry in IR than the debate between mind-world dualism and monism. At the core of this debate is “the relationship between scholarly observers and their observed objects” (Jackson, 2008:129). For Scientific Realists<sup>80</sup>—the clearest and most vocal proponents of dualism in IR—this relationship “implies that objects have a mind independent existence” from the researcher (Wight, 2006:26). In this sense, “Science is possible...because the world consists of ‘intransitive’ objects which form the focus of scientific discourses” (Wight, 2006:29). Contrary to some readings (Pouliot, 2007:364) intransitive objects need not

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<sup>80</sup> My goal here is not a comprehensive overview of different forms of mind-world dualism and monism in IR. Instead, I focus on the divide between Scientific Realism and Analyticism, and in particular the ongoing debate between Colin Wight (2006, 2007, 2013) and Patrick Thaddeus Jackson (2008, 2011, 2013), because it offers the clearest and most sophisticated discussion of these issues.

imply only natural objects. Societies, norms, practices, and a host of other social phenomena can persist across time and space, exhibit stable structural properties and causal powers, and thus become objects of scientific inquiry.

For self-described Analyticists—the clearest and most vocal proponents of monism—this relationship is fundamentally different. Monism is not a form of “dualist ‘mind-dependence’”, but a philosophical view where “mind and (objects in the) world are always and already interpenetrated and thickly co-constituted, to the point where it makes little sense to distinguish between the two” (Jackson, 2013:372 n14). Another way of parsing this is that there exists no such as thing as a “presuppositionless social science”; our engagements with the world are always, and inextricably, mediated through concepts and ideas we bring to bear on it (the “theory-dependence of observation”), and these are irrevocably embedded in particular “perspectives” which express specific sets of “values” (Jackson, 2008:130, 146-149). We never just describe ‘the world’, our practices of knowledge help to actively construct it.

Though largely unrecognized, this debate is crucial for emotions researchers for two reasons. First, the runaway success of Jackson’s *Conduct of Inquiry* (2011) has cemented the dualism/monism divide at the center of IR’s methodological discourse for years to come. If emotions scholars want to engage IR on questions of methodology, then these will be the terms which work to frame the exchange. Second, the dualism/monism divide raises an epistemological question that emotion scholars have never really asked: *what kind of knowledge are we trying to produce?* When we talk about passionate politics, are we producing a reflection of the world, or are we producing a useful ordering of experience?

My concern here however, is that when we reduce this discussion to two binary positions—are you team monism or are you team dualism?—we evacuate any space for a more nuanced discussion. After all, as Jackson readily admits, his ideal-typical framing of this discussion creates “deliberate caricatures” (2011:145). This is the crux of Humphrey’s (2013) critique; while Jackson’s typology may help *clarify* key debates, it cannot be used to definitively *classify* research because the methodologies employed by particular scholars rarely, and unambiguously, fit within these distinctions.<sup>81</sup> We’re never going to achieve a ‘purely’ monist or dualist position, because the very framing of these positions is an idealization itself.

A more nuanced alternative may look something like the following. Despite being deeply sympathetic to Wight’s Scientific Realism, I accept the argument that there is no such thing as a presuppositionless social science. Our observation of social practices, including of emotional interactions, are inextricably theory-laden and this is what meant by saying the “‘world’ is endogenous to social practices of knowledge production” (Jackson, 2011:36). Our “knowledge practices”—a phrase Jackson (2008, 2011, 2013) uses with a striking frequency—make the world.

Nothing more powerfully illustrates this than the so-called phenomena of ‘bridging the gap’. When scholars travel into public policy positions—such as Stephen Krasner at the United States’ State Department, John Ruggie at the United Nations, or Roland Paris as advisor to the Prime Minister of Canada—they bring specific ideas about the world—such as the role of sovereignty in international politics, the dynamics of international norms, or the value of multilateral peace operations—with them. Even

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<sup>81</sup> Humphrey’s offers a compelling example of this in his discussion of how Kenneth Waltz’s work has been alternatively interpreted as neopositivist, scientific realist, and analyticist.

President Obama employed analytical categories like “realism” and “liberal interventionism”, drawn from IR, to explain his position on foreign policy issues (Goldberg, 2016). This reflects what Ian Hacking calls “looping effects” where reality and knowledge become mutually co-constitutive (Pouliot, 2007:363, 366).

But if monism stops here we have a serious problem because many of the ‘knowledge practices’ comprising the field of IR have an effect on the world approaching close to zero. Examples like Krasner, Ruggie, and Paris are exceptions rather than the rule. The impact of knowledge produced in IR has always been uneven, fragmentary, and unexpected, and this creates a challenge for monists who envision a clear path to the “dialectical process between knowledge and reality” (e.g. Pouliot, 2007:366). Critical security studies, for example, has produced knowledge critical of the securitization of migration for more than two decades, and yet this practice continues unabated.<sup>82</sup>

Neorealists, while widely understood as occupying a privileged and even hegemonic position within IR, have met with dismal success in advocating for a more restrained security policy (Van Rythoven, 2016). Jackson explains these outcomes by arguing that:

“there is nothing in a monist position that demands that scholars alone are responsible for ‘singing our world into existence’... Indeed, it becomes an empirical question precisely *whose* knowledge-practices, and in what configuration, are responsible for the practical cultural vocabulary through which we world” (2013:374).<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Although part of this may stem from how more critical scholars often avoid engagement with mainstream media, and operate outside of traditional public policy circles. Although, as I suggest in Chapter 7, this may stem from how the securitization of migration remains attractive because of how it empowers certain political actors.

<sup>83</sup> Jackson is purposefully using ‘world’ as verb here to capture the sense that knowledge is productive of our environment.

This is what insulates the monist position from being seen as ‘idealist’. It is not the ‘knowledge practices’ of scholars alone which work to construct the world, but a collaboration of scholars with other social and political actors.

But what happens when the knowledge practices of scholars, as well as other social and political actors, are more competitive than collaborative? What happens when our knowledge practices, as scholars, are contested, opposed, and rejected? Here we can turn to an intriguing tension between Jackson’s proposed monism and his own political practices. In the years following the 2003 Iraq War Jackson worked to form *Security Scholars for a Sensible Foreign Policy*. This advocacy group’s central goal was to make public “the academic consensus on the relevant facts pertaining to the war in Iraq”, including its “negative effects” (Jackson & Kaufmann, 2007:95). Yet by their own admission, the “effort was a miserable failure” which had no appreciable impact on public debate (Jackson & Kaufmann, 2007:96). The group received little to no media coverage, and their message was interpreted as “partisan attack”, something “thinly disguised as an educational effort” (Jackson & Kaufmann, 2007:99).

Jackson’s engagement here is a powerful illustration of how the world *resists* us. As scholars, the world resists our concepts, our theories, our categories, our causal models—in short, our knowledge—in ways that are not adequately accounted for by contemporary monist arguments.<sup>84</sup> The source of this resistance is not some natural world pushing itself into our perception and revealing some universal big ‘T’ truth, but a world already preconfigured by the ‘knowledge practices’ of existing social and political actors. Or, as Gunnell notes, “social phenomena are conceptually and behaviourally

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<sup>84</sup> At least not the monist arguments present in IR.

prefigured *prior to the reconstructions of social science* and thus have a reality status or ‘nature’ quite independent of the claims of social science. What is real as an object of social inquiry is in fact what is conventional” (my emphasis, 2011:1467).

This conclusion throws a wrench into unqualified claims of looping effects between knowledge and reality. Because social reality is already constituted by the knowledge practices of actors other than scholars, there is no *necessary* reason to assume that the knowledge we produce will displace, support, annul, or do anything else to existing social conventions. In this view saying that “the object of inquiry [exists] apart from the ‘mind’ of the scientist actually makes sense” (Gunnell, 2011:1467). Such a posture helps shields us from the danger of thinking that the ideas and practices of the people who inhabit the social worlds we study do not matter, and that our own knowledge practices exist in isolation. Whether one wants to call this position an attenuated monism or a qualified dualism, the broader point is that we need to recognize that the monism/dualism divide itself has limits in explaining what we actually do in relation to the world that we study.

These arguments hold two important implications for emotions researchers. First, current iterations of both monism and dualism are inadequate to conceptualize the researcher’s relationship with the world. Dualism fails to account for how every time we speak about emotions, our conceptual language inflects our encounter with the subject matter. Monism treats our accounts of emotions as a useful ordering of experience, but without the qualification that what we are interested in is the experience of first order political actors and their pre-existing practices.<sup>85</sup> A better alternative may be to

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<sup>85</sup> Unless, of course, one is engaged in the practice of autoethnography (e.g. Löwenheim, 2010).

summarize the researcher's relationship with the world as one of *recovery* and *reconstruction*.

By recovery I mean that the researcher is trying to give an account of “what it is that *social agents*, as opposed to analysts, take to be real” about emotional interactions (Pouliot, 2007:364). The point here is not to pass judgements on social conventions, as when security analysts often argue popular fears over terrorism are unrealistic given their statistically minimal danger (e.g. Mueller, 2009). This misses the point: insofar as social and political actors agree fear of terrorism exists, this fear is represented in a variety of discursive practices (speeches, media commentary, popular culture, etc.), and it comes to be embedded in specific political logics (closure of borders, extreme vetting, racial profiling), then it becomes a constitutive feature of the social reality we aim to recover.

By reconstruction I mean the researcher is reordering and reinterpreting the social reality of actors into something intelligible to an external community. Pouliot captures this in his distinction between experience-near and experience-distant knowledge. While the former reflects the insider perspective of localized actors, the latter “is constructed by the scientist in order to break with commonsensical experience and provide an outsider viewpoint” (Pouliot, 2007:368). When I parse an emotional interaction by using the vocabulary of embodied judgments and processes of entrainment, this language both abstracts from how insiders understand the situation, and translates it into something intelligible for a broader audience.

Second, this posture of recovery and reconstruction has clear epistemological consequences. A correspondence theory of truth, and in particular one situated in Popperian falsification, cannot be used to determine valid knowledge. Saying we want

knowledge that simply ‘reflects the world’ elides how the world is open to multiple interpretations. This openness however does not create an epistemology of ‘anything goes’. Drawing on Bourdieu, Pouliot argues:

“The fact that scientific producers have for only clients their most rigorous and vigorous competitors—and hence the most inclined and apt to lend to their critique its full strength—is the one Archimedes’ point upon which to scientifically see reason in scientific reason...”(Pouliot, 2007:378)

Vain, self-serving, or careless interpretations are kept in check by a competitive scholarly community. What Pouliot glosses over here however, is how one of the principle complaints raised by the scholarly community is often that a work comes up short in recovering the local perspective of social actors. As Gunnell argues, “it would always be reasonable to ask, from a third-order perspective, if the reconstructions of social science adequately convey the phenomena that are their object of inquiry” (2011:1467-1468).

Epistemologically then, this leaves truth claims in a pinch. On one side, they are constrained by a research community with a *prima facie* critical posture. On the other side truth claims can always be questioned (again by the research community) on whether or not they adequately convey the experience of first-order political actors.<sup>86</sup> This latter situation is precisely what Sylvester (2012) suggests when questioning studies which examine people’s emotional experience of war. Cautioning against reductive explanations, she argues “People in war zones are likely to have body-based emotions

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<sup>86</sup> This is exactly the charge Pouliot levels at Bially Mattern’s work on the Suez Canal Crisis. By arguing that she “pays insufficient attention, in empirical terms, to subjective meanings” of local actors, Pouliot (2007:375 n16) makes what sounds suspiciously like a dualist critique of scholar not adequately reflecting the world.

that do not validate the sophisticated arguments western theorists construct about the social conditioning of the emotional” (Sylvester, 2012:109-110).

To summarize then, the relation of the researcher to the world advocated for here is one of *recovery* and *reconstruction*. The conventional distinction between mind/world dualism and monism cannot adequately capture this posture. Recovery seeks to discover the social world as actors experience it, reconstruction renders this knowledge in a way that is appreciable to outside communities. Truth claims are kept in check by a conventional theory truth, moderated by a critical research community.

And yet, this discussion has been focused on methodology only at the level of metatheory. Although the assumptions addressed here are significant, by themselves they do not entail any specific explanatory strategy (Humphreys, 2013). To chart a path forward we need to step down from the level of meta-theory and look at a more clearly specified strategy.

#### **4.2 An Explanatory Strategy of Embodied Interactionism**

This project adopts an explanatory strategy of *embodied interactionism*. In a nutshell, the claim is that we should study emotions qua embodied judgements by tracing their emergence from the historical culmination of social interactions.

For some this will sound like descriptive or constitutive reasoning, rather than an explanatory account based around some form of causal analysis (Wendt, 1998). Indeed, in IR’s emotion turn conventional models of causality are often found lacking (Ross, 2006:209; Sasley, 2011:472). Emotional phenomena rarely fit into clear-cut cases of ‘if A, then B’ found in efficient causality. Instead, researchers working in this space overwhelmingly prefer constitutive accounts (Bleiker & Hutchison, 2008:122-123;

Fierke, 2013:22-23; Graham, 2014:523-524; T. Hall, 2011:531; Koschut, 2014:546; Sucharov, 2013:20). Set against this backdrop, talk of explanation and causes appears out of place.

The problem here comes from what Jackson (2011:106-107) rightly identifies as an ambiguity in how the word ‘constitute’ is understood. In some uses constitute simply means ‘to define’, such as in how a democratic identity defines some political practices as acceptable (e.g. competitive elections) and others as illegitimate (e.g. nepotism). But when used in a more active sense the word ‘constitute’ can also mean ‘to generate’ or ‘to produce’ (Jackson, 2011:106). When used this way, a democratic identity *actively* constitutes the conditions of possibility for competitive elections to be held (which, in turn, produces a democratic identity). What Jackson is saying here is that constitutive relations are also causal relations in that they produce, generate, or otherwise create outcomes—they don’t simply define objects. This may not be a form of causal analysis recognizable to (neo)positivism, but it is a form of causal analysis nonetheless.<sup>87</sup>

From this perspective, we can say a strategy of embodied interactionism looks to *explain* a political outcome by attributing it to a distinctive emotional context emerging from specific repertoires of socio-political interaction. Similarly, we can also say emotions *caused* a particular outcome by manifesting as concrete and unreflexive dispositions in political actors, brought about by contextually specific patterns of interaction. Put simply, emotional dispositions cause outcomes, and these emotions are caused by repertoires of interaction.<sup>88</sup> Like mainstream process tracers (e.g. Bennett &

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<sup>87</sup> See the discussion of dispositional causal analysis in the previous chapter.

<sup>88</sup> Nothing in this explanation dismisses the prospect of mutual constitution between embodied judgements and interactions. As interactions give rise to emotions, these emotions weigh upon and

Checkel, 2015) and more critical discourse analysts (e.g. Stritzel, 2012), this strategy works backwards from a puzzling situation in the hopes of discovering its genesis in a distinct configuration of historical processes.

In this section, I unpack what this strategy entails by looking at its distinctive claims over ‘where to look’ and ‘what to do’. In terms of where to look, the focus is on interactions as the central unit of analysis and how these basic units aggregate into larger wholes—what I call *repertoires*. In terms of what to do, I draw on the Pouliot’s (2007) tripartite strategy of induction, contextualization, and historicization. These moves work to reconstruct interactions in ways that can be understood by a broader community.

Before proceeding however, it’s helpful to recall that every strategy is a means to an end and that every explanation presupposes a puzzle. As the previous chapter made clear, the politics of security is the empirical-political domain for this explanation, and the specific puzzle being addressed is why do securitizing moves become frustrated, constrained, or even fail (i.e. why they become rejected by an audience). This focus on securitizing moves however is indexed to a broader puzzle over the failure to mobilize fear among audiences including how emotions can work to constrain securitizing moves, rather than simply enabling them. In sum, my strategy of embodied interactionism explains why securitizing moves fail by examining the contentious politics of emotion.

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structure future interactions. My point is that this constitutive relationship does more than ‘define’ each element—it also causes outcomes.

#### 4.2.1 *Where to Look: Interactions and Repertoires*

Instead of reinventing the wheel, the ‘interactionist’ strategy proposed here builds on well-established practices in constructivist research. Indeed, ‘symbolic interactionism’ has always been at the heart of constructivist studies—such as in how Wendt (1992:394) relied on symbolic interactionist arguments to substantiate his claim that anarchy is what states make of it. Yet beyond brief references, any explicit acknowledgement of this influence is few and far in between.<sup>89</sup> This leads Balzacq to remark that “most proponents of constructivism have brushed aside its symbolic interactionist inspiration and deemed it not worthy of thorough attention” (2002:469).<sup>90</sup> As a result, we need to be precise about what an ‘interactionist’ approach entails.

While the ‘interactionist’ label is a big tent,<sup>91</sup> my shifting of the conventional prefix from ‘symbolic’ to ‘embodied’ signals an engagement narrowed to a few specific thinkers. Sometimes identified as ‘dramaturgical’, the work of Irving Goffman (1959, 2005) and his students Arlie Hochschild (1983) and Randall Collins (2004) shares in the conventional interactionist focus on symbols, identities, and roles, but it supplements this with a keen interest in social interactions as a site dramatic theatre (hence the term ‘dramaturgical’). Viewing the social world as dramatic necessarily accentuates the role of bodies, audiences, physical expression, communicative exchange, tone, social tension, and—above all—emotion. In this sense Goffman and his students implore us to investigate how different kinds of interactions saturate social encounters with emotion.

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<sup>89</sup> It does however, emerge in discussions of role theory (e.g. McCourt, 2012; Sucharov, 2005).

<sup>90</sup> This reading parallels symbolic interactionism’s experience in sociology: the “triumph” of the approach is that it became so widely accepted but, ironically, this led to a loss distinctiveness which resulted in its “disappearance” and “demise” (Fine, 1993:80).

<sup>91</sup> For a good overview see Fine (1993).

There is an additional reason for turning to these sources, one which intersects with this project's broader focus on contention. The manner in which Goffman and his students view dramatic interactions is overtly power-political. Interactions are never simply benign encounters of symbolic exchange; they can be forceful expressions of 'the self' which sharply demarcate 'insiders' from 'outsiders', and where attempts to define the meaning of the situation are subject to power, deception, strategy, and struggle. This is what gives Goffman "a reputation for having a Machiavellian view of life" (Collins, 2004:21). And yet this emphasis on conflict is nuanced by a deep sensitivity to contingency. For Goffman (1959:52) social agents are never the competent actors we aspire to be; we're consistently stumbling around and foiling our own strategic designs. Agents will always try and orchestrate particular kinds of emotions in social encounters, but they may not succeed.

In studying drama, power, and contingency in everyday life Goffman and his students take *interactions* as their central unit of analysis. Goffman's goal is to create "A sociology of occasions" which takes its focus as "Not then, men and their moments. Rather, moments and their men" (Goffman, 2005:2-3; see also Collins, 2004:5-6). As a unit of analysis interactions can be defined minimally as social encounters within or between a collectivity in which agents exercise "reciprocal influence" (Goffman, 1959:15). Crucially, 'reciprocal' here does not mean 'equal'. An elite political actor and an everyday voter are by no means equal, but this does not mean the latter is entirely bereft of influence (they can protest a speech, vote for an opposing candidate, etc.). The baseline here is the possibility to react, not the efficacy of reaction. Equally important in this definition is that, as in the previous chapter, I relax the requirements for bodily co-

presence (cf. Collins, 2004:24). This opens the door to looking at technologically mediated interactions, such as social media, as ‘data’ for tracing how embodied judgements form and circulate.

One of the most distinctive features of the interactionist approach is in how it makes individuals and groups secondary to the analysis. The argument is not that we need to exclude individuals or groups from our explanation. In fact, Goffman (1959:77-105) was keen to demonstrate that most of the everyday situations we see are typically orchestrated by “teams” of “performers” working in concert. Hall (2016:23) takes up this idea of performative teams in his study of emotional diplomacy to conceptualize how state officials work together to create official displays of emotion. But, in line with his emphasis on the contingency of social life, Goffman saw these groups as consistently vulnerable to team members who engaged in disruptive activities (1959:82). For Hochschild these “moments of emotional deviance” are intriguing precisely because whenever actors fail to share in group emotions it “signals a prior institutional failure to shape feeling” (1983:57, 49). This leaves Goffman and his students with a view of groups which is far more open and dynamic than the static groups based around a shared and singular homogenizing identity. The ‘groupness’ of interactants is then purposely left open to account for those ruptures in the presentation of the everyday (collective) self.

While the focus on interaction here is echoed in other studies in IR,<sup>92</sup> it notable that it cuts against the grain of certain trends in emotion research. In their programmatic statement for a widely cited forum in *International Theory*, Hutchison and Bleiker argue

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<sup>92</sup> See especially research drawing on Goffman (Fierke, 2013), Hochschild (Koschut, 2014), and Collins (Ross, 2014).

that “the key challenge [for emotions researchers] consists of theorizing the processes through which individual emotions become collective and political” (2014:492). Gross Stein makes a similar claim: “How emotions move from the individual to the collective is still inadequately articulated” (2013:387; cf. Mercer, 2014:517-518). This is a theoretical issue, but its framing smuggles in a clear methodological prescription: if we want to understand collective emotions, then we need to look at how these phenomena ‘scale up’ from individuals. In other words, claims about collective emotions require an account of *individual* origins.

There are complicated philosophic issues here about the origins of emotions and the meaning of the ‘individual’ which go beyond the scope of this project. I want to make it clear however, why taking individuals as the starting point leads to serious problems. The most immediate and obvious issue is what I call the ‘patient zero’ problem.

This problem stems from the implicit ‘life cycle’ in Hutchison and Bleiker’s statement: emotions begin as properties of individuals and then migrate into broader social collectives. If giving a plausible account of collective emotion requires accounting for its individual origins, then explaining these origins introduces a vexing question: who’s patient zero? To whom, for example, can we trace the fear of terrorism in post-9/11 America, or the joy of the international community after the fall of the Berlin Wall?<sup>93</sup> The answer to these questions is likely to prove very difficult, if not impossible.

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<sup>93</sup> This doesn’t rule out the possibility of visible ‘emotion entrepreneurs’ who look to circulate novel forms of embodied experience. But to be successful these entrepreneurs would need to interact with a receptive audience.

Moreover, the move to insert a series of individualistic foundations for studying collective emotions is a sure path to define such phenomena out of existence. Consider the diffuse, international anger over unequal economic gains wrought by globalization. Does the absence of clear individual origins for anger over globalization among pro-Brexit groups mean it cannot be studied as an instance of collective emotion? By forcing researchers to presuppose individualistic foundations this strategy risks making a great deal of the world's most intriguing emotional phenomena inexplicable. A better alternative is to investigate the constitutive origins of collective emotions in and through social interactions.

Importantly, the emphasis here is on *interactions*, plural. There is a propensity among academics and popular discourses to view single events as 'fulcrums of history' which rapidly shift emotional dynamics. The quintessential example of this is 9/11, an event commonly interpreted as the moment where an American "affective tsunami [was] unleashed" upon the world (Ó Tuathail, 2003:859).

But historical evidence drawn from interviews with Americans in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 tells us something different. The early reaction of Americans was not an "affect-fueled desire for revenge" as per Ó Tuathail (2003:860). Instead, a "[c]onfusion, numbness and a void in meaning dominated the immediate experience of 9-11 for many watching Americans" (Holland, 2009:279).<sup>94</sup> The point here is not that emotions played no role in the immediate aftermath of the attack— even numbness is a form of feeling. But rather, the emotional significance of 9/11 was not immediately clear

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<sup>94</sup> Indeed, a very typical initial response to the attacks was "I felt nothing because I couldn't understand" (quoted in Holland, 2009:279; see also T. Solomon, 2012b).

and apparent. The immediate response began as a series of dispersed and nebulous affects which became narrowed into a more coherent emotion categories through a specific repertoire of interactions, repertoires like the Bush Administration's narrative of the Global War on Terror (Holland, 2009:276). Thus, Holland and Solomon (2014) are certainly correct in remarking that "affect is what states make of it", but it can take a number of interactions before the diffuse affective response to 9/11 became narrowed into a more recognizable fear of terrorism.

What our analytical focus should be then, is how like interactions aggregate into empirically identifiable *repertoires*. A repertoire, as defined by the Oxford English Dictionary, is "A stock of plays, dances, or items that a company or a performer knows or is prepared to perform" (OED, 2016). My usage of the term is closer to that of social movement theorists who see repertoires as a "clustering of claim making in a limited number of a recognizable performances" (Tilly & Tarrow, 2015:21). In discussing the American civil rights movements, Tilly and Tarrow (2015:50-53) point to a stock set of interactions like large rallies, city marches, speeches, as well as sit-ins in segregated public spaces.

In my view repertoires represents similar sets of emotionally evocative interactions which can be analytically delineated by common themes, symbols, practices, and forms of drama. The Remembrance Day ceremonies discussed in the previous chapter, for example, are marked by a distinctive repertoire of interactions: the wearing of red poppies, the minute of silence, the visiting of war memorials, giving thanks to veterans, honoring fallen soldiers, as well as political speeches about the virtue of sacrifice. Repertoires are simultaneously sites of agency where emotions are circulated

and entrained, as well as sites where the structuring effects of emotions are most visible in terms of representations and dispositional behaviours.

While repertoires certainly entail repetition, they also involve iterative development and innovation. The now infamous tweet circulated by the Trump presidential campaign which likened refugees to a poisonous bowl of skittles is but one iteration in a much larger historical repertoire of dramatizing migrants as vectors for illness and disease (King, 2002). In a very different context Tilly and Tarrow (2015:52-53) describes how sit-ins at segregated businesses represented a major innovation in the repertoires of the American civil rights activists. Innovation need not serve the existing repertoire order and the emotions it circulates; it can lead to the emergence of counter-repertoires. The wearing of the white poppy on Remembrance Day for example, is part of a counter-repertoire of rituals which challenges the event's perceived glorification of the military.

This dynamism of repetition, iteration, and innovation may create fascinating empirics, but it can also make it difficult to isolate where one repertoire ends and another begins. Even internally among communities there is often disagreement over the breadth of repertoires, and which particular interactions should be included or excluded.<sup>95</sup> Thus, the researcher will always be left imposing artificial boundaries in order to simplify and bring order to complex empirical patterns. These are ideal-types, analytical constructs to bring order and meaning to a messy world by caricaturing it (Jackson, 2011:142-143).

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<sup>95</sup> Consider the contemporary dispute in Pride Parades in Canada over whether uniformed police should be allowed to march in uniform. This is fundamentally a dispute over what (and who) can be part of the repertoire of Pride.

But even as caricatures repertoires are a valuable form of evidence that helps us attenuate anxieties over the “ephemeral” character of collective emotions (E. Hutchison, 2016:31). Beyond simplifying situations, repertoires point to a socio-political domain of activity which skeptics need to explain if they are to find an emotion-based explanation lacking. Scientific realists like Wendt (1999:62-62) call this abduction or inference to the best explanation. In this logic it’s reasonable to infer the existence of embodied judgements from repertoires if it offers the best explanation for a domain of activity. Thus, when intoxicated college students mistakenly urinate on a national war memorial provoking an episode of public outrage (CBC News, 2006), we can make a reasonable inference that repertoires of interaction have made that memorial a venerated and sacred object. To challenge this explanation an alternative interpretation of the situation must be proffered. But how to read this evidence is an important question in its own right.

#### *4.2.2 What to Do: Induction, Contextualization, and Historicization*

How do we make sense out of repertoires? As complex milieus of actors, audiences, and practices, how do we reconstruct these interactions in a way that illuminates the structure of embodied judgements? To answer this I draw on Pouliot’s (2007) constructivist methodology and its unique commitment to combining experience-near and experience-distant knowledge through a combination of induction, contextualization, and historicization.<sup>96</sup> The effect is to devise an image of the social structure of emotional encounters from the inside out: starting with the insider perspective and then moving to the intersubjective and historical context.

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<sup>96</sup> Pouliot calls this a ‘Subjectivist’ approach combining subjective and objective knowledge, but I feel the term is an unwieldy neologism.

As a “research strategy that moves from the local to the general”, induction “begin[s] with what it is that social agents, as opposed to analysts, believe to be real” (Pouliot, 2007:364). At this stage the goal of the researcher is to, as “faith[fully] and accurate[ly] as possible”, recover the perspective of social actors while resisting the urge to impose “a scholastic and alien logic” (Pouliot, 2007:365).<sup>97</sup> Attending to the perspectives of social agents is not about ‘getting inside peoples heads’. Instead, subjective accounts are important precisely because they contain images of broader social structures. These images are what Alder calls “subjective representations of intersubjectivity” (Adler, 2008:202; Pouliot, 2007:369). Like the classic parable of blind men feeling different parts of an elephant, we draw insider perspectives together to say something more comprehensive about the whole.

Grasping the ‘bigger picture’ by way of insider perspective can be illustrated with a brief example drawn from Canadian politics. During the 2015 federal election the circulation of an image of Aylan Kurdi—a drowned two year-old Syrian refugee—became an acutely emotional moment in the campaign.<sup>98</sup> As a visibly shaken Prime Minister Stephen Harper described:

“Yesterday Loreen and I saw on the internet the picture of this young boy, Aylan, dead on the beach. Look, I think our reaction to that—you know the first thing that crossed our minds was remembering our own son Ben at that age, running around like that... I think that brings tears to your eyes—I think that’s the reaction of anyone who has a two year old...It’s a heartbreaking situation...” (CBC News, 2015c)

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<sup>97</sup> A careful reader will recognize the tension between this statement and Pouliot’s purported monism.

<sup>98</sup> It arguably also captured the imagination of other parts of the world as well.

Later, in a response to a question, Harper stressed that these subjective feelings were shared by a broader community:

“We had the same reaction—Loreen and I—we had the same reaction as everyone else to the photo, it’s heart wrenching...” (CBC News, 2015c)

The Prime Minister’s recollection of the encounter contains an image of emotion as a broader social structure—something that goes beyond their immediate subjective experience. The structure of this emotional experience is important because it helps explain important shifts in the election campaign. Immediately following the publication of the image, the Defence Minister and Prime Minister cancelled campaign announcements about immigration security and infrastructure spending (Kestler-D’Amours, Edwards, MacCharles, & Gallant, 2015). The Immigration Minister suspended his campaign to investigate reports that the Kurdi family was seeking refugee status in Canada. Two weeks later, amid a shifting focus in the election towards refugee issues, the Conservative government revised its Syrian refugee plan to accelerate the resettlement 10,000 refugees by September of 2016, a full 15 months ahead of its original timeline (CBC News, 2015b). By recovering subjective accounts, we can discern a broader structural shift in the emotional context, a shift which can be used explain significant political outcomes.

While this example largely dovetails with Pouliot’s approach there is a significant difference. My focus is not simply on insider meaning, but insider embodied experience. In practice, social agents are not typically this articulate, and they will often not assign concise meaning to their emotional experience of a situation.<sup>99</sup> Thus, analysts must pay

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<sup>99</sup> This is because emotions often suppress reflexivity. See chapter 2.

special attention to the emotional language and communication that agents use. In addition, this example makes clear that my focus is on political elites. By consistently participating in the public discourse on migration, political elites (like the Prime Minister) often develop a sensitivity to how popular embodied judgments structure these interactions. Practice theorists would refer to this as an aligning between the habitus (sense-of-game) of actors and the field in which they operate (Pouliot, 2010).<sup>100</sup> This doesn't mean however, that elites will never be out of touch with the emotional dynamics of a situation,<sup>101</sup> or engage in practices of dissembling. Instead, Pouliot (2007:370) argues that in order check against these problems we rely on a variety of inductive sources and situate these sources against a broader context.

Contextualizing embodied interactions means taking them out of the insider perspective and situating them in a larger intersubjective context. At its core this is an interpretive moment as the researcher translates the significance of embodied experience for a larger audience (Pouliot, 2007:365-366). This is achieved by demonstrating how the insider perspective is linked to a broader web of discourse, what poststructuralists and critical discourse analysts typically call intertextuality (Pouliot, 2007:370; cf. Hansen, 2006; Stritzel, 2012). Pouliot's example here is a proverb which needs to have its cultural context explained in order to be understood by a foreign audience. In the context of emotions research a joke may be a better example: to appreciate a joke one needs a "familiarity with certain contexts, characters, clichés, and other tropes which are recognizable to an audience" (Van Rythoven, 2015:470). In the process of translating the

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<sup>100</sup> Although a focus on 'everyday' citizens may also yield useful insights. For a good example see Vaughan-Williams and Stevens (2016).

<sup>101</sup> For an example of this in the context of American presidential debates see Van Rythoven (2015:469).

joke however one alienates it from the local time and setting, the very elements which help make it humorous. Once an object of scholarly interpretation, the joke no longer succeeds in being funny.

The challenge in contextualizing emotional interactions lies in the fact that there can be multiple layers of context, and the web of intertextuality can be extensive.

Skipping ahead to an example in the next chapter, the ‘Highway of Tears’ is commonly cited by indigenous activists as an acute source of shame for Canada. Taken in isolation, the Highway of Tears simply denotes a 724km stretch of road in British Columbia where a large number of indigenous women have been reported murdered and missing. The larger context is that this vulnerability is often attributed to a general pattern of police indifference to crimes against indigenous women, as well as inadequate social services which force women to hitchhike to distant towns. But the label ‘Highway of Tears’ also has a more historically distant context. It’s a play on the historical ‘Trail of Tears’, an episode of forced migration of indigenous communities from the south-eastern United States in the 19<sup>th</sup> century where thousands perished (Thornton, 1984). Balzacq (2011) refers to this as the difference between “proximal” and “distal” contexts.

This intimate link between context and history hints at Pouliot’s final step: historicization. This “aims at setting meanings in motion, that is, at further objectifying meanings by introducing time and history” (Pouliot, 2007:372). By historicizing embodied interactions we avoid what emotions historians call the problem of “presentism” (Rosenwein, 2010) or the reading of contemporary emotional dynamics into the past. Historicization also enacts “constructivism’s denaturalizing disposition” (Pouliot, 2007:367). We show how contemporary embodied judgments are only possible

because of previous repertoires of interaction. Ross' work on 9/11 offers a clear case in point. As he argues:

“the emotions triggered by the 9/11 attacks were more than generic expressions of fear, hatred, or anger. Such reactions—especially fear—were involved, but were both connected to sentiments to the past and adaptive social practices in the present”. (Ross, 2014:76)

In this sense Americans' post-9/11 fears built on earlier cultural stereotypes of “Muslims and Arabs as potential terrorists” which “thrived on images circulated by the entertainment industry in the 1980s and '90s” (2014:78). Absent this longer history of racialized emotions, among other historical factors, the response to 9/11 may have been very different.

By ordering these interactions into historical sequence the researcher creates what Pouliot calls a “narrative”—a “story of a variety of historical processes as they unfold over time” (2007:367). As the culminating product of induction, contextualization, and historicization, the research narrative serves as a story of interactions and repertoires which explain the research puzzle. In the context of my chosen puzzle—failed securitizing moves—the narrative is about how social interactions entrained an array of embodied judgments which ultimately constrained agents' capacity to securitize. These are analytical stories are about how emotions rooted in the past come to ‘weigh’ upon contemporary security interactions.

Organized then around distinctive claims over where-to-look and what-to-do, embodied interactionism provides a distinctive explanatory strategy aimed at studying the contentious politics of emotion. This discussion however still works at a high level of

generalization, leaving out key technical details over how to operationalize this strategy in practice. To fill this gap there needs to be a discussion about methods.

### **4.3 Methods**

Concrete practices of research always contain a series of practical choices which are never directly enumerated by either metatheoretical arguments or general explanatory strategies. These are choices about method. This section outlines the procedures and techniques which inform the empirical studies in Chapters 5 and 6 with a focus on how to select cases and how to gather data.

#### *4.3.1 Selecting Cases*

In mainstream social science one of the major concerns in using case studies is selection bias. Here bias is understood as the selection of an unrepresentative sample where the dependent variable represents an extreme value (George & Bennett, 2005:23). Yet selecting for outlier or “deviant” cases is a logical choice when probing the limits of existing theoretical explanations. As George and Bennett argue, “studies of deviant cases can uncover new or omitted variables, hypotheses, causal paths, causal mechanisms, types, or interaction effects” (2005:109). When we look for cases which test the limits of conventional explanations, we identify puzzles which force us to consider alternative theoretical accounts.

In this project, I look at two such deviant cases securitization drawn from the Canadian context. The first is the securitization of indigenous protest. From roughly the collapse of the Kelowna Accords in 2006 to the end of the Harper Government in 2015, Canada saw a growing intensity and tempo of regional and national indigenous protest.

Previous research by journalists and academics have uncovered documents showing government figures perceived these groups as threatening to national security, and consequently worked to establish a national system of surveillance. What's puzzling about this process however, is that government figures have shown a striking refrain from associating indigenous protest with national security in public. What then, differentiates the securitization of indigenous protest that prevents it from being reproduced in the public sphere?

The second case is the securitization of the F-35 procurement. This case covers an episode of procurement politics ranging from the Harper Government's first announcement of its decision to purchase the fighter jet in 2010, to when it ordered an official "reset" of the procurement process in late 2012. What's puzzling about this case is that despite having many of the traditional hallmarks of securitizing moves—speech acts declaring the F-35 a national security issue, claims about how Canada would otherwise be harmed, etc.—the government faced intense opposition with the program being widely derided as a national embarrassment. What then, accounts for the mismatch between these conventional securitizing moves and such surprisingly atypical results?

While outwardly appearing disparate these cases share a common criterion. First, they contain evidence of securitizing moves. While the literature here is extensive I rely on some fairly common indicators: elite-security speech acts as per the classic Copenhagen School formulation (Buzan et al., 1998); evidence that security professionals or agencies understood the issue as a matter of security (Bigo, 2002); as well as evidence that bureaucratic practices and technologies of government have framed these matters as

security issues (Huysmans, 2006).<sup>102</sup> Second, they also reflect evidence of failure. A securitizing move is successful insofar as “the securitizing actor has managed to break free of the procedures and rules he or she would otherwise be bound by” (Buzan et al., 1998:25). Failure then means actors were constrained by existing social conventions. For the F-35 case establishing failure is straight forward: the government was publicly rebuked when it attempted to circumvent established procurement rules, including holding an open competition and being transparent to Parliament in its estimate of costs.<sup>103</sup> For indigenous protest establishing failure is more difficult. The securitization of indigenous protest did sustain, at least for a time, a national system of surveillance which broke free of conventional privacy norms. Contra existing scholarship however, this process never intensified to security practices beyond surveillance. Evidence from internal documents also shows that security officials expressed deep reservations and uncertainties about the legitimacy of this surveillance. Most significantly, government officials never publicly defended the characterization of indigenous protest as threatening, an outcome which points to a deeper lack of legitimacy.

In choosing both cases from the Canadian context however, there is admittedly a “methodological nationalist bias” (Adamson, 2015).<sup>104</sup> Canada however, is conventionally seen as a rich source for case studies of securitization (e.g. Salter, 2008;

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<sup>102</sup> For example, practices of surveillance work to render certain communities as dangerous.

<sup>103</sup> For the Department of National Defence the failure was even more stark. It was stripped of its leadership of the procurement process as it was shifted to the National Fighter Procurement Secretariat in the Public Works Department.

<sup>104</sup> Its important to note here that Adamson’s excellent critique of nationalist bias goes far beyond scholars simply studying the countries they are most familiar with, to the more general problem of privileging states as the spaces where security politics unfold.

Salter & Piché, 2011; Watson, 2013). Moreover, this selection responds to recent calls for Canadian (critical) scholars of security to take issues of indigeneity and post-colonialism more seriously (de Larrinaga & Salter, 2014). This comes from recognizing the inherent tension between a field largely defined by a focus on sovereignty and territory, but largely oblivious to how contention over these same issues often forms the crux indigenous and postcolonial politics. As for the F-35, such a case study is timely given Barkawi's (2011) recent (and poignant criticism) that constructivist approaches like securitization theory have largely abandoned the study of the military and war in their efforts to study the wider agenda on security. The advantage of this selection is that it shows the value of studying the contentious politics of emotion in both traditional (military) security issues, as well as non-traditional cases such as indigenous security issues.

#### *4.3.2 What Counts as Data?*

In building a corpus of data for these cases I rely on an eclectic array of materials ranging from parliamentary exchanges, to journalistic accounts, to interviews, to artifacts from popular culture, and beyond. This eclecticism is at odds with the conventional practice of constructivist (and poststructural) researchers of stating a specific range of genres and a finite number of materials to be examined (e.g. official texts, media coverage, popular culture, etc.).<sup>105</sup> While originally emulating this practice, I am no longer convinced of its value. One problem with this technique is that by specifying in advance a genre of materials where we expect to find evidence of a phenomena, we commit ourselves to how

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<sup>105</sup> For studies following this technique see Pouliot (2010) and (Hansen, 2006).

something may be known in *advance* of any actual investigation. As Wight (2006:245-246) argues, this constitutes an “epistemological fallacy” where our way of knowing predetermines what can be known. The corollary here is that while evidence of emotional interactions may be absent from one genre (i.e. parliamentary committees) in may be present in another genre (i.e. news articles) which was ruled out at the beginning of the investigation. Moreover, I’m not convinced different genres of discourse are as neatly delineated by boundaries as Hansen’s (2006) argument suggests. Governments texts become caricatured in popular culture and excerpts from newspapers and Facebook are read in legislative assemblies. Recognizing the porous boundaries between these domains is significant because “emotions have a propensity to migrate across social fields” (Ross, 2014:2). Emotions research then, is best served by a stance of “epistemological opportunism” (Wight, 2006:242), an openness to different possible sources of data. But even with opportunism as a guiding principle however, researchers should still be transparent about where they think the best opportunities to procure data will reside.

The first and most obvious choice is official discourse (cf. Hansen, 2006:60-64). Embodied interactions among political elites can be evident in the course of Parliamentary debates, speeches, question period, press scrums, as well as evidence heard during committee hearings. One could also look at official party communications—especially the emotionally evocative appeals a party uses to mobilize its supporters. Equally relevant are official statements from government agencies and ministries. While often treated as bastions of bureaucratic rationality, government departments can become entwined in a series of emotional processes ranging from public apologies for

government wrong doing, to the institutionalized remembrance of cultural icons and events. As E. Hutchison (2016:18-20) notes these public forms of communication are important because emotions become most visible through the trace impressions they leave on practices of representation, as well as how some emotions may achieve the status official representation at the expense of others.

Another key resource is journalism. While sometimes criticized for sensationalism, studies of journalism have found that successful stories often rely on emotional language. One content analysis of 101 Pulitzer Prize-winning articles it was found that they “rely heavily on emotional story-telling” (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2012:129). This often entailed using “anecdotal leads, personalized story-telling and expressions of affect”, leading the researcher to conclude that “Journalists frequently describe the emotions of protagonists, individuals and groups” in the course of their reporting (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2012:129, 141). In a different study, interviews with broadcast journalists revealed that “presenting and interpreting ‘relevant’ individual and collective emotions were seen as a part of journalism’s aim to reveal reality, as ‘facts’, without which the whole truth is not told” (Pantti, 2010:179). For emotions researchers in IR then, journalism can serve as a rich reservoir of ethnographic material.<sup>106</sup>

Interviews with political elites and other key figures (e.g. journalists and activists) can also be a valuable source of information. In studying the securitization of indigenous protest, I conducted four semi-structured interviews. Participants were granted anonymity but included an indigenous journalist, academic-activist, human rights lawyer,

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<sup>106</sup> Some emotion researchers already engage in this practice. See Koschut’s (2014) discussion of NATO members’ anger at Germany, and how it was represented in international media.

as well as one Member of Parliament.<sup>107</sup> Subjects were chosen based on professional experience in interacting with indigenous protest, as well as a familiarity with security agencies' involvement. The interviews began with basic background questions ('can you summarize two or three of the main issues surrounding indigenous protest in Canada?') and moved to more specific inquiries ('why do you think officials publicly refrain from making a connection between national security and indigenous protest?'). While only a small sample of viewpoints, these interviews yielded almost 28,000 words in transcripts.

Moving away from formal institutions—though never wholly disconnected—is popular culture. As discussed in the previous chapter, television, radio, film, as well as other creative genres all have the potential to expose communities to emotion inducing stories. While many of these stories are fictitious, or loosely based on real events, their role as data is not in a faithful representation of events, but cultural markers of emotion. As Bleiker and Hutchison detail:

“Aesthetic sources are particularly suited to capture emotions because they seek to do more than simply represent an object or event as realistically as possible. To be of artistic value, a work of art – be it a poem, an opera, a painting or a photograph – must be able to engage and capture not only exterior realities, but also, and above all, our human and emotional relationship with them.” (2008:132)

Thus, while political cartoons are poor representations of reality they can nevertheless communicate complex political dynamics (Danjoux, 2013). As chapter six's study of the

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<sup>107</sup> Twenty potential subjects were contacted by email, nine responded, and four agreed to be interviewed. Interviews were conducted in Ottawa between 2015-2016. For a sample of interview questions see Appendix A.

F-35 notes, cartoon caricatures of officials with the F-35 became a key medium for communicating how the public understood the program as a national embarrassment.

Finally, official representations do not come into existence fully formed, but are often the culmination of internal debates, deliberations, and preparation. Rarely do we examine the ‘behind the scenes’ work contained in internal documents, what Goffman (1959) would refer to as the “back stage” of interactions. For Goffman these are areas where:

“the team can run through its performance, checking for offending expressions when no audience is present to be affronted by them; here poor members of the team who are relatively inept, can be schooled or dropped from the performance. Here the performer can relax; he can drop his front, forgo speaking his lines, and step out of character.”(1959:112)

In the context of chapters five and six, documents procured through *Access to Information and Privacy* requests can yield valuable insight into how government actors looked manage the impressions of the public.

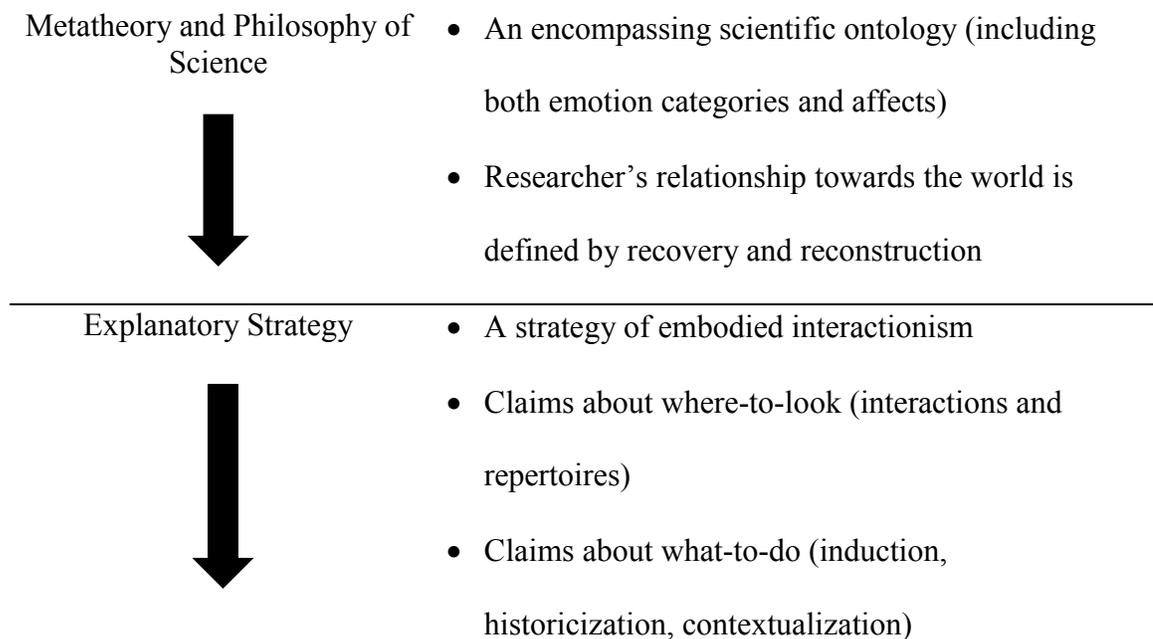
Ultimately, because this is not a study involving the creation of any statistically representative sample, it’s not apparent what number of materials need to be reviewed. Instead, a better guide to when data collection is complete is the “saturation point” (Pouliot, 2010:85). This is the moment when bringing in additional materials ceases to provide any novel information.

#### **4.4 Conclusion: Methodology as Transparency in Research Wagers**

Emotions researchers face an acute challenge in communicating and defending their methodological choices to their colleagues. The residues of IR's behavioural turn, along with a cultural bias towards viewing emotions through an individualistic lens, have made the field unduly skeptical of studying emotions as social and political phenomena. Overcoming this skepticism requires researchers to be as transparent and systemic as possible in documenting their methodological wagers.

In order to meet this standard, this chapter has treated methodology as a hierarchical ordering of wagers at the levels of metatheory, explanatory strategy, and practical methods. Figure 3 returns to the diagram presented in the introduction and summarizes the key wagers at each level.

**Figure 3: A Methodology for the Contentious Politics  
of Emotion and Security**



## Methods

- Procedures for selecting cases
- Techniques for gathering data

As wagers however, these claims are only bets over how a particular methodology will “cash out” (Jackson & Nexon, 2013). They may be, as Wight (2013:334) argues, the product of “informed judgement” developed from past experiences and careful reflection, but they are still provisional. To see how they ultimately ‘cash out’ we need to see what kind of empirical research they produce in the following chapters.

## 5.0 Trauma, Shame, and the Securitization of Indigenous Protest

*“We have been subjects of surveillance and suspicion, and seen as a threat for as long as this country has existed. Why? Because our cultures, values, and laws place a priority on protecting the lands and waters, and they place primacy on sharing and sustainability. Canada knows that our existence as peoples and nations qualifies and calls into question its claims to absolute sovereignty.”*

-Perry Bellegarde, National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations<sup>108</sup>

In testifying on the *Anti-terrorism Act, 2015*—more popularly known as Bill C-51—Assembly of First Nation National Chief Bellegarde claimed it posed special risks for Canada’s indigenous peoples.<sup>109</sup> He argued the omnibus legislation’s expansion of security powers would invariably lead to greater surveillance of indigenous communities engaged in political activism. In making the argument he was emphatic that indigenous fears of surveillance were “not an abstract argument for [his] people” (Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, 2015a:15). His testimony highlighted a series high-profile incidents: the surveillance of indigenous child welfare advocate Cindy Blackstock; news reports that government departments had shared information on protests with Canadian security agencies; and revelations that First Nations protestors

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<sup>108</sup> These comments were made during a prepared statement submitted as evidence to the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security (2015b:15).

<sup>109</sup> I use the term ‘indigenous’ to refer to the communities which existed prior to the European colonization of North America (Turtle Island). This term has come to displace both ‘Indian’ and ‘Aboriginal’ and is more in line with language used by international institutions such as the United Nations. While indigenous peoples can refer to Inuit, Metis, or First Nations, this discussion focuses primarily on the latter group. Where possible, I refer to specific communities.

who attended National Energy Board meetings were being monitored (Assembly of First Nations, 2015).

These examples were not isolated incidents. Following the 2006 collapse of the Kelowna Accord and its promise of a renewed funding and political commitment to indigenous communities, Canada saw a revitalized period of indigenous activism.<sup>110</sup> From localized blockades over land rights around Caledonia and Rexton, to country-wide vigils over murdered and missing indigenous women, the decade following Kelowna was marked by a heightened period of what social movement researchers call “contentious politics” (Tilly & Tarrow, 2015). While led by a range of different groups and focused on a variety of themes—including sovereignty, territory, justice, education, and poverty—what makes this period of activism intriguing for security studies is the Canadian government’s response. Far from seeing these protests as banal run-of-the-mill performances, officials interpreted them as signs of militancy and responded by developing a patchwork system of national surveillance and information sharing. Indigenous protest came to be viewed through the lens of national security. It became *securitized*.

By itself the surveillance of indigenous groups is unsurprising; it’s a recurrent feature of Canadian politics (Proulx, 2014:83). During the post-confederation expansion the Department of Indian Affairs relied on covert agents to report on First Nations movements (Monaghan, 2013). During the Cold War the Royal Canadian Mounted

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<sup>110</sup> The Kelowna Accord emerged out of extensive negotiations between federal, provincial, and territorial governments and five major indigenous organizations. The agreements it produced were seen as “an ambitious ten-year plan to ‘close the gap’ between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians” and included \$5.085 Billion for “socio-economic” development (Patterson, 2006:1). Four days after the Accord was agreed to the Liberal government was defeated and Parliament was dissolved (Patterson, 2006:14).

Police (RCMP) monitored indigenous groups in universities thought to be vulnerable to communist infiltration (Hewitt, 2000). The labeling of indigenous demonstrators as dangerous entities is also not novel. During the 1990 Oka standoff Canadian political leaders, including then Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, openly referred to the Mohawk Warriors as “terrorists” (Wakeham, 2012:15).

Where the distinctive puzzle of this case emerges is in how contemporary government officials no longer appear to make the connection between national security and indigenous protest in public. In fact, public discussions of indigenous-settler relations since Kelowna are increasingly not about security, but a discourse of truth and reconciliation characterized by public apologies, national inquiries, and a series of memorializing practices. When Bellegarde and other indigenous leaders raised their concerns over Bill C-51, government MPs were emphatic in their refusal that there could ever be any intersection between national security and indigenous communities. In other words, there’s an intriguing disconnect between an internal talk of securitization and a public talk of reconciliation.

For social theorists of security this silence is perplexing precisely because governments normally go to great lengths to publicly justify which threats officials see as significant in order to legitimize the powers and resources required by security policies. This refrain appears even more striking when we recognize the Conservative government of the day had no qualms in speaking publicly on a range of other security issues, such as international terrorism, a revanchist Russia, or cyber threats. If officials felt these protests represented a danger to public order, why not say so in public?

This chapter argues the answer is to be found in a shifting emotional context. Historically, the security imaginary of Canadian settler society has been shaped by a series of culturally embedded and deeply racialized fears over the threat of indigenous resurgence. Attached to historical memories like the conflict at Oka, settler fears disposed public audiences to envision indigenous activism as latent with the potential for violence and a threat to Canadian sovereignty. Yet this pattern of embodied judgment does not exist in isolation. One of the underappreciated effects of Canada's emerging politics of truth and reconciliation is in how it circulated a palpable discomfort over the state's past treatment of indigenous communities. Repertoires of interaction surrounding the legacy of residential schools, missing and murdered indigenous women, as well as the acute poverty of the reserve system, have done more than simply publicize the history of indigenous trauma—they've cultivated powerful and popular feelings that the state's past treatment of indigenous communities has been shameful.

In the language of Chapter 3 this change in context represents a shift in the distribution of embodied judgments towards the struggles of indigenous peoples. While claims about the 'terrorism' or 'militancy' of indigenous activism may have resonated effectively with the Canadian public in a historical context dominated by settler fears, the same claims are beginning to appear anachronistic—even reprehensible—in a period marked by a heightened sensitivity to both the trauma experienced by indigenous communities, as well as the Canadian state's culpability. Wary of the contentious status of such claims, government officials have carefully avoided publicly discussing the intersection between national security and indigenous protest. In sum, this chapter presents the securitization of indigenous protest in Canada as a story of the contentious

politics of emotions and security. And while indebted to existing literature on indigenous protest, security, and reconciliation, this argument looks to push the analysis forward in two key ways.

First, existing work also frames this case as an instance of securitization, but goes even further by situating this practice in a broader project of settler colonialism (Crosby & Monaghan, 2012; Dafnos, 2013; Proulx, 2014). As a political project, settler colonialism looks to found and legitimate a political order in a way that displaces pre-existing communities to ensure the survival of settler society (Crosby & Monaghan, 2012:422; Veracini, 2010). From this perspective, the securitization of indigenous protest is read as a strategy of preserving a broader colonial project from interference. I agree with about 70% of this narrative, but it runs into a major problem with its argument over ‘intensification’. A consistent claim of this literature is not simply that officials framed these protests as dangerous, but that they saw the level of danger as *increasing*.<sup>111</sup> But if officials believed that this threat was increasing then why not make this claim in public? Equally puzzling is why wouldn’t government officials go beyond surveillance and turn to more drastic countermeasures like preventative detention, peace bonds, or active disruption? To critique this from another angle, this literature commonly points to how internal security discussions appear to conflate indigenous activism with terrorism (e.g. Proulx, 2014; Wakeham, 2012). Why then are public references to ‘indigenous terrorism’ so increasingly rare amongst mainstream political actors? To explain these

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<sup>111</sup> As Crosby and Monaghan argue “the actions of the [Algonquins of Barriere Lake] were increasingly interpreted by security agencies as potential sources of violence” (2012:432). Similarly, Dafnos argues this surveillance is part of a broader pattern of “*intensification* of securitization since September 11, 2001” (emphasis original 2013:65). Likewise, Proulx points to the “intensification of intelligence gathering and surveillance procedures and its demonization of indigenous people” (2014:93).

lingering questions, we need to go beyond how this threat was socially constructed and examine how the how this construction became *constrained*.

Second, my argument cuts against the grain of increasingly critical accounts of Canada's reconciliation project. As Wakeham argues:

“Although reconciliation initiatives could hold radically transformative potential, dominant formulations... have tended to foreclose alternative meanings and co-opt apologies as a strategy of containment, thereby seeking to manage Indigenous calls for social change by substituting rhetorical gestures of atonement for more radical processes of redistributive justice or political power sharing.” (2012:2)

To an extent Wakeham, as well as others,<sup>112</sup> are right; practices like public apologies and national inquiries often serve to obviate guilt, mollify criticism, and ultimately refurbish the state's progressive image without any deeper commitment to economic restitution, criminal justice, or decolonialization. But at the same time these critiques risk selling short the transformative effects of civil society's agency in bringing awareness to indigenous trauma. Far from being mere 'rhetorical gestures', the way indigenous trauma has come be inserted in Canadian popular culture, social memory, and public rituals, has resulted in a rich reservoir of emotions which can structure future political behavior, including the boundaries of what Canadians imagine constitutes a 'legitimate' security issue. What critics of reconciliation miss then is that when government officials endorse practices like public apologies they are sanctioning a narrative that past government behaviour was shameful, and that this works to hem in their future freedom of action in the security field. Indeed, one of the key arguments of this chapter is that openly labeling

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<sup>112</sup> See also Alfred and Cornthassel (2005), Dorrell (2009), Henderson and Wakeham (2009), and M. James (2012).

indigenous protestors as threatening has become a major risk for officials precisely because it appears to reproduce behaviour which has already apologized for. To do so would risk jeopardizing a reconciliation project in which the state has invested enormous sums of time, money, as well as social and political capital.

The rest of the chapter explores this case in three parts. The first section examines how government officials came to understand indigenous protest groups as a security issue through a series of surveillance and intelligence sharing programs. While this security framing proceeded internally, it was paired with an official public discourse where this threat was conspicuously absent and even outright denied. To explain this outcome the latter two sections turn to the emotional dynamics of this case. The second section discusses the history of settler fears in Canada including how they persist through contemporary repertoires of interaction. The third section focuses on Canada's emerging politics of truth and reconciliation entails a series of repertoires calibrated to circulating shame over indigenous trauma. This context works to explain why officials felt public audiences would be less receptive to security arguments about indigenous protest. In the conclusion, I discuss the durability of this change in emotional context, the problems of attributing political responsibility for securitizing moves, and the unintended consequences these policies may have for indigenous communities.

## **5.1 Indigenous Protest and National Security**

What evidence is there that indigenous protest and national security intersect in Canada?

The classic answer in the securitization literature is that we know we're looking at a security issue when an actor, usually a state elite, claims a threat which legitimizes a "break[ing] free of the procedures and rules he or she would otherwise be bound by"

(Buzan et al., 1998:25). Claims of a threat are not sufficient; a threat only reaches the status of a security issue when it takes on a socially accepted urgency and gravity that it mobilizes a response that goes beyond normal politics.<sup>113</sup> This makes the surveillance of indigenous protest a key indicator that it has become framed as a security issue. Like other liberal democracies, political activism in Canada normally enjoys a series of privacy protections embedded in Section 8 of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, legislation such as *The Privacy Act*, as well as institutions such as the *Office of the Privacy Commissioner*. When government officials make claims about the militancy and danger represented by indigenous movements (albeit internally), they work to justify breaking free of these normal procedures and legitimize policies of surveillance.

What's missing from this case are prominent, public declarations of threat—the security speech acts—which form the cornerstone of almost all securitization research. But as Bigo (2002) and Huysmans (2006) argue, the meaning of security is shaped by more than public speeches; researchers also have to look at the day-to-day activities of security professionals and the technologies they employ. Thus, when we see involvement from security professionals, and we see technologies of security governance (such as surveillance), it's a safe bet that what we're looking at is a security issue.

In this section I show how the empirical evidence from this case satisfies this latter criterion. By drawing on internal documents procured through the *Access to Information Act* (ATIPs) as well journalistic reports, we can see how multiple security

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<sup>113</sup> It's helpful to recall that nothing about this prevents the exceptional measures of security from being 'normalized' into everyday life. Body scans, detention without charge, accessing private passwords to electronic devices—all of these are security measures operating at the border which have increasingly become a part of everyday life. As Wæver suggests this reflects an "institutionalization" of a particular logic of security where it acquires a taken for granted status (Buzan et al., 1998:27-28).

agencies interpreted indigenous activism as a source of danger. Far from being a one-time concern, or a case of zealous overreach by any single agency, this interpretation was shared across multiple departments, was national in scope, and persisted for at least a decade. Contra existing scholarship however, I pair this internal discourse of securitization with a public discourse where the connection between national security and indigeneity is not only absent, but is actively denied.

### *5.1.1 Securitizing Protest*

#### Standing Information Sharing Forum and Hotspot Reporting System

One of the earliest pieces of evidence for the securitization of indigenous protest comes from the slides of a presentation in March 2007, delivered by the RCMP to the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service (CSIS). Summarizing then-current initiatives, the discussion emphasizes the need for consolidated government response to any “aboriginal O&P [Occupation and Protest] that may arrive... [and] to defuse any potential violence at the site or through sympathy action” (RCMP, 2007:5). Two key initiatives are detailed in the presentation are the *Standing Information Sharing Forum* and the *Hotspot Reporting System*.

Convened through weekly conference calls, the purpose of the *Standing Forum* was an “Intensive real time info sharing during incidents” (RCMP, 2007:7). While a common mechanism for information sharing, what’s notable about this initiative is which organizations were involved. The forum was chaired by the RCMP, but also includes

representatives from CSIS, the Privy Council Office Security and Intelligence Secretariat, and the Canadian Borders Services Agency (RCMP, 2007:7).<sup>114</sup>

Complementing the forum was the *Hotspot Reporting System*. Billed as a consolidated effort by Indian and North Affairs Canada (INAC) to collate “continuous environmental monitoring” (RCMP, 2007:7), the slides never actually define what hotspots are, but seem to associate them with unpredictable and high-risk cases of protest. As the journalists who originally uncovered the initiative describe:

”the ‘hot spot binder’ prepared each week by INAC officials closely monitors any and all action taking place across the country and names dozens more communities as sources of potential unrest. A particular concern of the federal government is that these ‘hotspots’ are unpredictable protests because they are led by what the federal government labels as ‘splinter groups’ of ‘Aboriginal Extremists.’” (Diabo & Pasternal, 2011)<sup>115</sup>

While the presentation goes on to discuss how INAC and RCMP work “mitigate” and “intervene” in “incidents”, there isn’t enough detail to infer what this entails. Instead, the presentation closes by listing a series of provocative quotes from indigenous leaders which are taken as signaling future conflict.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> As per the Privy Council’s Official website, the Security and Intelligence Secretariat is the “provides advice and support to the Prime Minister and Cabinet on major security issues” (<http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/index.asp?lang=eng&page=secretariats>). As per the CBSA website, the mandate of the agency is to “ensures Canada’s security and prosperity by facilitating and overseeing international travel and trade across Canada’s border” (<http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/agency-agence/menu-eng.html>).

<sup>115</sup> My reading of the presentation differs from Diabo and Pasternak. I believe the presentation was led by the RCMP and directed towards CSIS as indicated by the affiliation of the presenters on slide 16.

<sup>116</sup> For example, the presentation cites Chief Stewart Philip stating “Obviously the government of Canada is not listening. Perhaps a summer of barricades, balaclavas, and burning tires will serve to draw attention to the urgency of the desperate situation of the Aboriginal people of Canada” (RCMP, 2007:14).

### The Aboriginal Joint Intelligence Group

In the same period as the development of the *Hotspot Reporting System* the RCMP created the *Aboriginal Joint Intelligence Group*. As one heavily redacted report describes:

“The Aboriginal JIG was created in 2007 as part of the RCMP’s ongoing commitment to support Aboriginal communities. This intelligence group comprises members of the RCMP’s Criminal Intelligence and RCMP National Security Criminal Investigations. The Aboriginal JIG’s primary mandate is to collect and analyse information, and produce and disseminate intelligence concerning conflict and issues associated with Aboriginal communities.”(RCMP, 2009a:9)

Throughout the document there’s a persistent tension between framing indigenous protest as consistently having the potential for violence, while at the same time recognizing that the overwhelming majority of activism is non-violent. As the report describes:

“No matter how peaceful a protest is intended to be, past situations demonstrate that when emotions run high, violence can and has occurred during some Aboriginal protests, and individuals both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal have been injured and died... However, it must be stated overall, that occupations and protests in Canada associated to Aboriginal communities have experienced low levels of violence.”  
(RCMP, 2009a:10)

Indeed, aside from noting the death of a Quebec police officer at Oka in 1990, the report remains vague on the specific details of indigenous violence, although much of it remains

redacted. While the report envisions the potential for “extremists” who engage in overt acts of violence, most of the discussion is centered around so-called “militants” who “participate in illegal activities such as road blocks, trains [sic] stoppages and violence but stop sort of using weapons or destroying property” (RCMP, 2009a:7).

This analysis had a large audience with 450 recipients, and with some of its “clients” including key security agencies such as CSIS, the then-Integrated Threat Assessment Centre (ITAC), and the Department of National Defence (RCMP, 2009b:3,5). While the journalists originally investigating the unit found that it was dismantled in 2010, the RCMP refused to confirm whether the unit’s activities were continuing under another program (Groves & Lukacs, 2011).

#### The Government Operations Centre and the Integrated Threat Assessment Centre

The RCMP was not the only agency monitoring indigenous protests. In 2014 a leaked email revealed Canada’s Government Operations Centre sent out a government-wide request for information on all “demonstrations” across the country in order to improve its “Situational Awareness” (Pugliese, 2014). News of the email precipitated a written question by an opposition MP asking for the date, location, nature, and referring agency of every protest referred to the Operations Centre since 2006. The response produced a comprehensive listing of an estimated 817 referred events, out of which at least 237 involved indigenous groups (Public Safety Canada, 2014a).

What’s significant about the listing are which agencies are making the reports. Canada’s Integrated Threat Assessment Center (ITAC) is cited as submitting situation reports on aboriginal protests to the Operations Centre on eight different occasions

between 2007 and 2008 (Public Safety Canada, 2014a:4-5, 7-8). Representing Canada's premier intelligence "fusion centre" (Monaghan & Walby, 2012), ITAC was originally intended "to produce comprehensive threat assessments" for policy makers, and to "allow the Government to more effectively coordinate activities in response to potential threats in order to prevent or mitigate risks to public safety" (Government of Canada, 2005:25).

### The Department of National Defence and Idle No More

In 2014 journalists discovered that the Department of National Defence (DND) spent a significant portion of the previous year monitoring the First Nations movement Idle No More. According to the journalist who broke story, documents acquired through access to information requests showed that the Canadian Forces "spent virtually all of 2013 keeping eyes on the Aboriginal protesters, out of fear that they could pose a threat to military personnel or intercept weapons shipments" (Ling, 2014). What's striking about the documents is the internal ambivalence over whether the group should be surveilled. The unit discussing the matter was not "'legally mandated to collect detailed intelligence on Canadian citizens within a domestic context'... The only way they could keep an eye on those protests would be 'in support of force protection'" (quoted in Ling, 2014). As Ling notes, "It appears the department was worried that others wouldn't understand [the surveillance]. In May 2013, with reporting ongoing, media lines prepared by the department read: 'The Canadian Armed Forces are not in the business of spying on Canadians,' but notes that the Counter-Intelligence Unit runs 'routine' reporting" (2014).

### Project SITKA

One of the most recent pieces of evidence for indigenous surveillance comes from the RCMP's Project SITKA. Completed in early 2015, SITKA is similar to the Aboriginal JIG in that it attempts to gather intelligence on what the RCMP sees as the most threatening sources of indigenous protest. Where SITKA differs from the Aboriginal JIG is that instead of focusing on communities it targets individuals. This involves building "socio-psycho profiles" of "passive", "disruptive", and "volatile" protestor behaviours and then uses a variety of metrics to assign indigenous protestors a behavioural profile with "volatile" holding the highest potential for violence (RCMP, 2015:viii).<sup>117</sup> Individuals who appeared to be "Anarchist Oriented" or employed "Inflammatory Language" would score values on a "volatile" profile, while those who were seen as "Solution Oriented" or "Law Abiding" would score values towards a "passive" profile (RCMP, 2015:xv). While the project reviewed 313 individuals, 89 were found to meet the criteria of "disruptive" or "volatile", the behavioural profile identified with someone who has "committed or [may] commit criminal activities in association with Aboriginal public order events" (RCMP, 2015:7).

In addition to a greater emphasis on predictive policing there are two points where SITKA represents a marked departure from previous surveillance programs. First, the report argued that the RCMP should "move away from utilizing terrorism/extremism language to identify protest tactics that are specifically criminal in nature" in order to "ensure that peaceful and law-abiding individuals engaged in acts of legitimate dissent

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<sup>117</sup> The source for this methodology is referenced as an internal presentation delivered by Dr. Eli Sopow, a researcher working for the RCMP (2015:7 n1). Yet there's no mention of this methodology in any public, peer-reviewed work, nor is Dr. Sopow associated with any public Canadian University. There are serious issues with a social-scientific methodology which has not past the muster of peer review being used to guide a national police project, but these fall outside the scope of the current investigation.

will not be investigated” (RCMP, 2015:24). This represents a major shifting of language from the frame of national security to the frame of criminality and policing. Second, the report notes “law enforcement can improve upon the analysis of systemic issues – those issues that lead Aboriginal people to mount protests or occupations in the first place” (RCMP, 2015:25). This is one of first visible references urging the RCMP to examine the underlying grievances of indigenous communities, rather than treating them as spontaneous uprisings.

### *5.1.2 Public versus Private Security Talk*

What’s puzzling about these programs is how the threat of First Nations protest is almost never discussed in public. The only notable incident of a member of the Canadian government overtly making this connection comes from Aboriginal Affairs Minister Benard Valcourt in 2014. Responding to a draft document by the Confederacy of First Nations which threatened to “strategically and calculatedly begin the economic shutdown of Canada's economy”, the Minister declared he would only “meet with these people when they unequivocally withdraw their threat to the security of Canadian families, taxpayers and citizens” (Mas, 2014a). Aside from this one brief exchange, the extent to which government officials, whether MPs or civil servants, have refrained from drawing this connection remains striking.

Every year CSIS releases a public report summarizing its activities and its current understanding of the Canadian threat environment. Despite being involved in a number of the initiatives described above there is never any reference in its public reporting to the threat of indigenous protest (CSIS, 2012, 2014, 2015). Instead, the only mention of indigenous communities comes in the form of a single laudatory reference to the hiring of

“a Proactive Indigenous Recruiter whose main role is to reach out to Indigenous, First Nation and Inuit communities” (CSIS, 2014:50). The same absence is evident in RCMP public reporting. While the RCMP lists indigenous communities as one of its five core strategic priorities this goal entails “contribut[ing] to safer and healthier Indigenous communities” (RCMP, 2014c). The same dynamic holds for DND. In 2007 an access to information request revealed the Canadian Forces’ draft counterinsurgency manual referred to Mohawk Warrior Societies as a potential insurgency comparable to Hamas or Hezbollah. After facing public condemnation over the conflation between indigenous groups and terrorism, military officials admitted the comparison was unacceptable and said it would issue a formal apology (Morrow, 2012; Wakeham, 2012:17).<sup>118</sup> The Government’s national counter-terrorism strategy also has no reference to indigenous groups, save for a brief mention of how the department of health would support First Nation communities in an emergency (Public Safety Canada, 2013:36).

This pattern of refrain is also evident in exchanges in Parliament. In a public briefing on Canada’s counter-terrorism strategy, one Opposition MP inquired:

“...why groups who are peacefully standing up for the environment and indigenous groups who are standing up for their ancestral lands are considered threats to national security? Why are you devoting resources and staff to spy on what we consider to be inappropriate targets?”

The Director General for National Security Policy at Public Safety responded:

“...I first want to reiterate a point the minister has made a number of times, that the pursuit of lawful political activity or protest, whatever its character,

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<sup>118</sup> It appears however, that the apology was never delivered (Allison, 2012).

is a fundamental right in Canada. I don't think anything in the strategy talks against that or suggests otherwise... There's one reference to environmental activism, and I think it's prefaced by violence linked to this kind of activity. The reality is that there have been six attacks on natural gas pipelines in Canada in the last number of years, so it's a real threat.” (Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, 2012)

While the connection between national security and environmental activism could be publicly confirmed, the same could not be said for indigenous protest.

This same dynamic was visible during hearings on Bill C-51. During committee hearings, multiple indigenous activists and leaders raised concerns that the expanded surveillance and information sharing powers in the legislation would be used against First Nations. Mi'kmaq activist and lawyer Pamela Palmater's testimony relayed her past experience of being surveilled by CSIS and INAC and suggested this practice would only intensify with C-51 (Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, 2015b:2). AFN National Chief Perry Bellegarde argued “Bill C-51 sets up conditions for conflict by creating conditions where our people will be labelled as threats...” (Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, 2015a:15). Yet Bellegarde's claims were immediately contested by a Government MP:

“I can't think of a single instance in my history—I'm 49 years old—where a first nation has brought something that would blow up infrastructure, that would kill innocent lives, and I can't think of anything in history that would connect first nations to being a group that would be within the information sharing act.” (Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, 2015a:18)

Not only was the connection rejected, it was deemed highly implausible. Later, when the bill was being debated in the House of Commons, the targeting of the indigenous groups was raised again. One Opposition MP asked:

“Many experts have said that this bill threatens to lump together legitimate dissent and terrorism. The Conservatives are telling us that we do not need to worry, but can they give us even one example of an aboriginal protest in Canada that the federal government considered to be legitimate?”

Evading the question, a government MP replied:

“Mr. Speaker, this bill explicitly states that peaceful protests that are of no threat to anyone are legitimate and that they are not covered by this bill. It is also clear that Canadians' right to participate in public protests will be respected. That has nothing to do with this bill. The purpose of this bill is to target people who represent a threat to Canada's security and economy and who want to kill Canadians. That is the purpose of this bill. It in no way affects peaceful protests.” (House of Commons, 2015a:13404)

Indeed, speeches by government members defending the bill were scripted to emphatically and pre-emptively reject any links between the security powers contained in C-51 and indigenous groups:

“To fearmonger by suggesting that the legislation would somehow lead to the incarceration of aboriginals is simply irresponsible.” (House of Commons, 2015b:13449)

As well as,

“Some members of the opposition have said that the bill before us today... would stop protests, and that it would cause the incarceration of aboriginals and environmentalists. These arguments are, of course, nonsense.” (House of Commons, 2015b:13477)

Those who even raised the question of a connection between the two issues were ridiculed as having a “fevered imagination” (House of Commons, 2015a:13413, 13415; 2015b:13483).<sup>119</sup>

This raises a series of questions over why there was such a sharp disjuncture between the government’s internal and external talk of indigenous protest. Why did officials so consistently refuse to acknowledge the intersection between national security and indigenous groups? Why does this public position depart so sharply from the internal view held by multiple security agencies for almost a decade? And why was such a consistent and forceful denial of the intersection between these two issues required?

One explanation is that government officials simply didn’t think indigenous protest represented a serious threat worth discussing. Yet this explanation falls short. As the Project SITKA report describes, the “threat posed by individuals and/or groups... in association with Aboriginal public order events in Canada” was designated a “National Tactical Intelligence Priority” by the RCMP (RCMP, 2015:6). Why bother designating indigenous protest an intelligence priority, and then invest the sizable resources of the programs above, if the purported threat had only been perceived as marginal or mundane?

Another explanation is that government MPs speaking in the House of Commons were simply unaware of what security agencies were doing. This is problematic because

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<sup>119</sup> The turn-of-phrase was originally used by Dr. Salim Mansur in his testimony on C-51 before the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.

numerous instances of surveillance had already been cited in House debates and covered in news outlets. Moreover, as Marland, Lewis, and Flanagan (2016:2) argue, the Conservative government was known for practicing “obsessive control” of communications and funnelled almost all government messaging through the Privy Council and Prime Minister’s Office. It therefore stretches credulity to suggest that such acutely media-sensitive organs would simply be unaware of reports of security agencies surveilling First Nations activists, or how these reports would intersect with Bill C-51’s debate over wider security powers.

A more compelling explanation would view this outcome less as a product of failing to coordinate messaging, and more as a deliberate strategy of avoidance over an increasingly sensitive and emotionally contentious issue. Explaining this sensitivity, and thus the divide between internal security talk and public reconciliation talk, requires turning to the emotional context of the case.

Like other authors, I read the securitization of indigenous protest as deeply entwined with historically recurrent settler fears of indigenous resurgence. Yet an emerging politics of reconciliation has shifted this distribution of embodied judgment, leading to the circulation of a very different series of emotions among settler society, including a sense of shame over the past treatment of indigenous communities. Both patterns of embodied judgment work to fasten in place very different interpretations of indigenous protest; the former disposed audiences to view protests as menacing and a sign of violence to come, the latter disposed audience view protests as the latter as the behaviour of a community injured and aggrieved. While the former facilitates securitizing moves, the latter constrains them. Understanding why the securitization of

indigenous protest has become contentious then, requires examining these two distinctive patterns of embodied judgment.

## **5.2 Settler Fears of Indigeneity and the Politics of Security**

In Bellegarde's submissions on Bill C-51 he claimed "the politics of fear is being played out domestically where First Nations opposition exists, or is simply feared, respecting major development projects such as pipelines or mines" (Assembly of First Nations, 2015:2). From claims of "state fears of illegitimacy" (Proulx, 2014:95) to the "fear emanating from the 'Oka Crisis'" (Crosby & Monaghan, 2012:428), references to fear are ubiquitous in discussions of settler responses to indigenous protest.

Mindful of simply rereading the literature, I look to push the analysis of settler fears forward here in three distinctive ways. First, rather than being one generic and undifferentiated response to perceived threats, settler fears are varied, fluid, and connected to multiple patterns of interaction. The result of this reading is that settler fears cannot be reduced to any singular source encounter, but need to be understood as emerging from multiple repertoires of interaction.<sup>120</sup> Second, by drawing on the earlier discussion of emotion as embodied judgment I look to offer a clearer phenomenology of settler fears. As embodied judgments, settler fears are more than vague feelings; they are processes which vary in intensity and consciousness, dispositions which effect political action, and contextual social-relations embedded in encounters between settler and indigenous communities. Most significantly, settler fears serve as source of certainty; they make representations of indigenous threats appear as self-evident and unambiguous

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<sup>120</sup> The discussion in Proulx (2014) offers the best account of this variance so far.

rather than unconvincing and ambiguous. Finally, while these fears have a long history, they are not simply residues of a colonial past. Fear towards indigenous peoples, especially active social movements, is in a constant state of dispersed reproduction.

### *5.2.1 Violence, Deprivation, Sovereignty, and Contagion*

One of the most prominent fears of indigenous activism is the threat of violence. Canada has a history of select cases of protest actions escalating into armed standoffs and violent confrontations between First Nations, settler communities, and police forces. Oka in 1990, Gustafsen Lake in 1995, and Burnt Church in 2002 all mark prominent examples.<sup>121</sup> These concerns were revitalized during anti-fracking demonstrations largely comprised of members of Elsipogtog First Nation (pronounced Ell-see-book-took) near Rexton, New Brunswick, in 2013. On October 17<sup>th</sup>, the demonstrations turned violent and six police cars were set on fire, 40 protestors were arrested, and firearms and improvised explosives were discovered by the RCMP (Canadian Press, 2013a).<sup>122</sup> One RCMP report cited the protests as “the most violent anti-petroleum actions experienced thus far in Canada” and described those arrested as “violent extremists” (2014a:2), despite only a minority facing criminal charges (CBC News, 2013b).

The reported levels of violence however, appear to have little to do with the fear of violence. Indeed, one of the central tensions in the programs outlined above is that indigenous protest continues to be interpreted as vector for violence, yet at the same time these events remain overwhelmingly benign. As the Aboriginal Joint Intelligence Group report describes:

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<sup>121</sup> For a summary see of confrontational demonstrations see Hedican (2012).

<sup>122</sup> The details of the police raid are disputed. See Toledano (2015).

“No matter how peaceful a protest is intended to be, past situations demonstrate that when emotions run high, violence can and has occurred during some Aboriginal protests, and individuals both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal have been injured and died... However, it must be stated that overall, occupations and protests in Canada associated to aboriginal communities have experienced low levels of violence.” (RCMP, 2009a:10)

Project SITKA would reach a similar conclusion. Despite reviewing material on 313 individuals, the project found:

“Some of these individuals advocate unlawful, and at times, violent protest tactics and techniques, yet there is no known evidence that these individuals pose a direct threat to critical infrastructure.” (RCMP, 2015:5)

Fatalities associated with these events are also low. The most recent death associated with indigenous protest was in the 1995 Ipperwash Crisis when a police officer mistakenly shot and killed Dudley George, an unarmed indigenous man (Ipperwash Inquiry, 2007).<sup>123</sup> Instead, this fear comes from how indigenous protest comes to be imagined as possessing the *latent potential* for violence. Despite several hundred cases of peaceful protests, contemporary demonstrations are consistently held as having the potential to escalate into an armed standoff like Oka. Reporting on the activities of Idle No More, one RCMP officer remarked:

““There is a high probability that we could see flash mobs, round dances and blockades become much less compliant to laws in an attempt to get their point across... The escalation of violence is ever near”” (quoted in Barrera, 2015b).

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<sup>123</sup> The second was the death of Police Corporal Marcel Lemay at Oka in 1990.

Yet this imagined escalation in violence never materialized, and there have been no reports of violence associated with Idle No More protests since its inception in 2012.

Intersecting with the perceived threat of violence are economic fears over the financial costs of blockades and land reclamations. Wakeham calls this the “‘the real state of terror’ for settler societies—the pervasive fear that settler-invaders’ illegitimate claims to territorial possession and state sovereignty might be held to account in structural, economic terms” (2012:8). Part of this stems from how land claims have the potential to unsettle property relations and disrupt land title. Conflicts at Oka and Caledonia for example, represent cases where commercial and residential development plans were frustrated by land claims made by local indigenous communities. This interference is also envisioned as more direct, as when blockades interfere with economic and transit infrastructure which has become designated as ‘critical’. As the “‘processes, systems, facilities, technologies, networks, assets and services” whose disruption might “result in catastrophic loss of life, adverse economic effects, and significant harm to public confidence” (Public Safety Canada, 2009:2), the concept of critical infrastructure plays a crucial in how security agencies interpret indigenous protest as a threat to Canadians economic well being. CSIS, for example, monitored the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe protests at the North Dakota Access Pipeline because of its implications for the security of critical infrastructure, and because Canadians at the protests might use similar practices of vandalism against companies in Canada (Beaumont, 2017).<sup>124</sup> Yet despite this putative threat Canada’s official critical infrastructure strategy makes no mention of

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<sup>124</sup> Notably, this surveillance occurred during the new Trudeau government.

the danger of indigenous protest (Public Safety Canada, 2009), nor are there any public analyses on the estimated economic costs of blockades and land reclamations.

These economic concerns are accentuated by growing perception of lack of legal recourse and a perceived curtailing of settler sovereignty. As Harding describes, “While the paramount fear of settlers in 1860s... may have been the military threat posed by aboriginal people, in the modern era, the greatest fear of non-aboriginal Canadians may be aboriginal victory in the courtroom” (Harding, 2006:229). Proulx describes this as the fear of the “high standard of honourable dealing... legally requiring the Crown to consult with and accommodate indigenous peoples ‘when the Crown contemplates conduct that might adversely impact potential or established indigenous or Treaty rights’ (quoted in Proulx, 2014:86-87).

These anxieties mingle in a broader concern over the possibility of protest actions becoming contagious. As one veteran journalist covering the protests explained to me:

“I think the biggest fear is there to be some sort of cross country reaction to one of these flash points... There was a concern with widespread protest and I think that is the big boogey man—it’s unclear how to control that. I mean we saw it in Idle No More, they were blocking railways all over the country... That’s the nightmare scenario where you have prolonged cross-country reaction...”<sup>125</sup>

Allusions to the contagious spread of protest are also evident in the language of surveillance reporting. As one RCMP report describes: “This Idle No More Movement is like bacteria, it has grown a life of its own all across this nation” (quoted in Barrera, 2015b).

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<sup>125</sup> Interview with author, December 11, 2015.

### *5.2.2 From Vague Feelings to Embodied Judgments*

Despite settler fears being routinely cited as a consequence of indigenous protest, their description often remains vague and nebulous. Here a recasting of these fears as embodied judgments offers a clearer phenomenology with greater analytical leverage. As a form of embodied judgment settler fears of indigenous protest are both automatic and unreflexive. This lack of reflexivity might help explain why the programs outlined above read these events as both sources of violence and non-violence at the same time.<sup>126</sup> As embodied judgments they're also processes varying in both intensity and consciousness, shifting from almost indiscernible biases and nudges to more acute episodes which can “flood... consciousness with feeling” (T. Hall & Ross, 2015:3). This helps account for the high level of variance in monitoring events. While some events such as the National Day of Action in 2006 saw a flurry of “situational reports” to the Government Operations Centre in the span of just a few days (Public Safety Canada, 2014b:3-5), others events barely even registered.

Settler fears are dispositional in that they effect outcomes and generate change; in a world of competing policing and security priorities they help make the case for organizations like Aboriginal Joint Intelligence Group self-evident.<sup>127</sup> Yet the existence of an ‘Aboriginal’ Joint Intelligence Group—rather than an environmentalist, animal rights activist, or white supremacist intelligence group—signals how these fears are tied a distinctive social relationship embedded in settler-indigenous interactions. Indeed one of the most intriguing features of the SITKA Project report is its recommendation “that the

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<sup>126</sup> On emotion and belief discordant behaviour see Holmes (2015).

<sup>127</sup> These organizations are also a product of modern policing practices such as intelligence fusion centers (Monaghan & Walby, 2012).

RCMP move away from utilizing terrorism/extremism language” as “[t]erminology such as militant and extremist... do not accurately represent these types of protestors” (RCMP, 2015:24).<sup>128</sup> This wasn’t a move away from viewing these groups as threatening; the report still opted to use the language of “serious criminality”. Rather it’s a claim about the distinctive context of this putative threat.

While recognizably counter intuitive, settler fears also offer a source of certainty. Indigenous protests are ambiguous events with no clear and singular meaning. This leaves them open to being read as mundane democratic exercises, calls for justice over past wrongs, expressions of frustration at the status quo, affirmations of the vitality of indigenous identities, all the above, and any number of different ways. This leaves settler communities with an ambiguity problem: how to respond to these events hinges on how they are rendered meaningful. Confronted with the blooming, buzzing confusion of the social world, settler fears work to narrow interpretive horizons and focus attention on what settler communities view as important: the preservation peace and order, uncontested sovereignty, and unfettered economic development. The effect of this fear is to bring the social world into sharper focus, resolve ambiguity, and frame indigenous protest as a governable problem—a security problem. By clarifying who is threatening, how settler communities might be harmed (e.g. violence and economic repercussions), and which counter measures might be taken to alleviate the danger (e.g. surveillance, information sharing, predictive policing), these fears bring meaningful order to the messiness of the social world. In this context then, we might see settler fears as a source of “misplaced certainty” (Mitzen & Schweller, 2011). Like western officials who were

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<sup>128</sup> Instead the report preferred the language of “serious criminality”.

certain conflict with the Soviet Union was inevitable, or American policy makers who were certain Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction, settler fears offer certainty that indigenous protest will be violent and destructive despite persistently weak and sporadic evidence.

### *5.2.3 Pathways for Entrainment*

More than residues of history, settler fears are circulated through a variety of contemporary repertoires of interaction. One of the most prominent pathways is through Canadian news media and its historical practice of framing indigenous protest as disruptive and dangerous. Here Alfred and Lowe are worth quoting at length:

“Since the 1970s, the media spin regarding warrior societies has changed little, adhering to several themes that build upon the colonial mythology and serve to demonize indigenous people. The spin mainly focuses on violence and armed resistance, whether or not weapons are indeed present. Armed resistance is rarely cast as an act of self-defense; rather, it is criminalized and, if possible, linked to other non-political incidents of violence, creating a perception of violent pathology and a commitment to violence for violence sake. Indigenous warriors become ‘gun-toting Indians’ and ‘gun junkies’ with long histories of trouble with Canadian law.”  
(2007:25)

Images of violence, especially of the military confrontation at Oka, are continually circulated to frame contemporary protests, invoking the iconic image of what Knopf calls the “terrorist warrior” (2007:303-304). Reflecting on the Oka Crisis on its twentieth anniversary, former AFN Nation Chief Shawn Atleo describes how this imagery has taken hold:

“The incident is seared into the memory of almost every Canadian and first nations citizen who witnessed the events. Simply mentioning "Oka" conjures up images of tanks and barricades; of a Mohawk warrior and Canadian soldier facing off eye to eye; of Mohawk figures burned in effigy by the angry residents of a nearby community; of the tragic loss of life and lingering injury. Bonds were slashed between families, between communities and between first nations and Canadians.” (Atleo, 2010)

In shaping how Oka is remembered, media practices create a point of reference for interpreting contemporary events, including a baseline expectation that blockades and demonstrations will be violent.

Enmeshed with these memorializing practices are series of essentializing and often overtly racial stereotypes. In studying over 130 years of Canadian English language news, Andersen and Robertson show how coverage orbits around a series of cultural stereotypes linking indigenous peoples with “depravity, innate inferiority, and a stubborn resistance to progress” (2011:6). Coverage of blockades and demonstrations tracks closely with these stereotypes: Idle No More protestors are told that progress could be made, but first they “need to tone down the anger” (Murphy, 2013a); anti-shale gas demonstrators are seen as “righteousness on a rampage”, an otherwise “rude dismissal of Canada's generosity” (Murphy, 2013b); Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence’s hunger strike is likened to an act “of intimidation, if not terrorism”, which “[holds] the state hostage” (Blatchford, 2012); warrior societies are seen as “a potential insurgency with the capacity to commit violence” (National Post, 2010). This only describes a few of the mainstream media representations of indigenous protest. In more extreme outlets,

indigenous activists are described as “enemy within” and likened to Palestinian terrorists using human shields (Levant, 2013).

These media repertoires can migrate to different cultural fields including popular political books and literature. Christie Blatchford’s extensive coverage of the Six Nations protest at Douglas Creek Estates in Caledonia evolved into the book *Helpless: Caledonia's Nightmare of Fear and Anarchy, and How the Law Failed All of Us* (2010). The book characterizes the blockade as steeped in violence and criminality by Six Nations protestors. Explicitly avoiding any discussion of historical land claims—or even engaging with indigenous protestors—the text focuses on how non-indigenous residents of Caledonia were traumatized by the reluctance of police forces to enforce law and order.

Other works draw on recent protests and demographic trends to produce speculative futures. In his novel *Uprising* (2010) Douglas Bland outlines a pan-indigenous insurrection led by a fictional ‘Native Peoples Army’ which seizes key transportation and energy infrastructures. The insurgency is defeated with military assistance from the United States, but at the cost of America annexing key Canadian territories. Self-aware of the provocative nature of the work, Bland argues in a postscript interview that the book was intended as a warning that indigenous radicalization is inevitable unless the underlying problems of injustice and marginalization are addressed.

Beyond formal publications settler fears circulate through a variety of everyday exchanges on social media. For years Canada’s largest news organization, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), has maintained a system for online comments generating up to a million user posts each month. In November of 2015, after several

months of increased incidences of hate speech, the CBC made the highly irregular move of temporarily closing all comments on indigenous-related stories (McGuire, 2015). The move echoes an earlier decision by a regional Manitoban newspaper to end its online Facebook presence after being inundated with anti-indigenous comments (APTN National News, 2013). As public, albeit digital spaces, these types of encounters have the potential to circulate a range of different racialized affects—admixtures of anger, hate, disgust, and fear—towards indigenous communities.

There are compelling reasons then for arguing, as Alfred and Lowe do, that there exists an “ingrained cultural hysteria and deep fear of indigenous peoples” in Canadian society (2007:32). At best however, this represents only a partial and monochromatic view of indigenous-settler relations. If this deep fear was such an ingrained and pervasive feature of settler society then it’s difficult to imagine why a public broadcaster like the CBC would even bother with such dramatic moves to censor hate speech against indigenous peoples. Picking up this explanatory slack requires broadening the analysis to consider different repertoires of interaction and the embodied judgments they circulate.

### **5.3 Shame and the Politics of Reconciliation**

In 2008 Prime Minister Harper officially apologized to the former students of the Indian Residential Schools. Acknowledging that the purpose of the schools were to “kill the Indian in the child”, the apology publicly recognized the “tragic accounts of the emotional, physical and sexual abuse” endemic to these institutions (Harper, 2008). The message built on earlier statements from lower level officials and ministers (Dorrell, 2009), and it echoed similar apologies from other political and religious leaders, and even the RCMP (TRCC, 2015a:379-395).

Together, these apologies signal the emergence of a broader politics of truth and reconciliation in Canada. While reconciliation is a multifaceted concept covering legal, political, and cultural processes which affect all Canadians, in this discussion I focus on what Paulette Regan (2010) has termed as reconciliation's potential for "unsettling the settler within". Reconciliation is unsettling precisely because the truth-telling it entails elicits "strong emotions" which disturb the settler community as they are exposed to experiences of indigenous trauma (Regan, 2010:12). In Regan's view, such "disturbing emotions are a critical pedagogical tool that can provoke decolonizing, transformative learning". This can be leveraged to deconstruct Canada's "foundational myth of the benevolent peacemaker", what she views as "the bedrock of settler identity" (2010:13, 11).

I take up the argument that the process of reconciliation can be emotionally unsettling, but take it in a different direction. More than just official apologies, reconciliation can be read as an encompassing field of interactions across popular culture, memory and memorialization, and public rituals—all of which communicate indigenous trauma and have the potential to circulate powerful emotions. Parsed in the language of this study, practices of reconciliation function as a source of entrainment: a pathway to forming and sharing emotions in social settings.

To be clear, this emerging emotional topography is complex. As Regan argues, when non-indigenous peoples are exposed to this history, it can evoke a range of affects including "unacknowledged denial, guilt, shame, and anger" (Regan, 2010:22). I agree, and while aware of this complexity this analysis is anchored in focus around the experience of shame. References to 'shame' are ubiquitous amongst reconciliation

practices, and shame has long been viewed by social theorists as a powerful engine of social action.<sup>129</sup> Moreover, the circulation of shame in settler society offers a compelling explanation of why officials were so reluctant to publicly label indigenous protest as a threat to national security. Sensitive to how the historical trauma of indigenous communities, as well as the culpability state officials, was increasing garnering attention, it became difficult to label an already aggrieved community as threatening.

In parsing this explanation, I begin by outlining three repertoires of interaction at the centre of reconciliation practices in Canada: the legacy of Indian Residential Schools, murdered and missing indigenous women and girls, and the poverty of Canada's reserve system. By bringing this shift in emotional context into focus the discussion is primed to examine how settler shame worked to constrain the securitization of indigenous social movements.

### *5.3.1 The Legacy of Indian Residential Schools*

Spanning from the late 1870s to the 1990s the Federal Government, in cooperation with a number of churches, instituted a compulsory system of forced relocation and education for indigenous children. While ostensibly intended to "Christianise" and "Civilize" (TRCC, 2012b:5-6), in practice the schools entailed forced displacement, the erasure of cultural traditions including language, systemic hunger and harsh labour, corporal punishment, sexual abuse, and heightened disease and mortality rates for the estimated 150,000 First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples who transited the system (TRCC, 2012a:1).<sup>130</sup> Multiple civil suits brought forward by school survivors culminated in the

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<sup>129</sup> In IR see Finnemore and Sikkink (1998), Steele (2007c), Adler-Nissen (2014), Mercer (2014).

<sup>130</sup> The TRC estimates 80,000 living survivors (TRCC, 2015a:370).

2007 Indian Residential School Agreement and settled the largest class action lawsuit—\$1.9 Billion—in Canadian history. A key element of the settlement was a government funded Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) designed to “reveal the complete story of Canada’s residential school system, and lead the way to respect through reconciliation” (TRCC, 2012a:2).<sup>131</sup>

The TRC sits at a complex nexus of political, legal, and cultural processes, and yet a key part of its five-year mandate was to hold public events geared to education, commemoration, and memorialization. “Ceremonial rituals”, including smudging, drumming, and cedar brushings, were seen as integral to these events as “they create a safe space for people to interact and learn as they take part in the ceremony”, and because “they enable people to communicate non-verbally and process their emotions” (TRCC, 2015a:270). These spaces were not confined to survivors offering testimony; others were invited to participate. “Some non-Aboriginal Canadians expressed outrage at what had happened in the schools and shared their feelings of guilt and shame that they had not known this” (TRCC, 2015a:272). Memorials also play a key part in this project. As the TRC describes, “Commemorations and memorials at former school sites and cemeteries are visible reminders of Canada’s shame and church complicity. They bear witness to the suffering and loss that generations of Aboriginal peoples have endured and overcome” (TRCC, 2015a:283).

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<sup>131</sup> Even as the school system wound down in the late twentieth century, Canadian governments replicated many of its problems by removing children from indigenous families and putting them up for adoption. In a period referred to as the ‘Sixties Scoop’, an estimated 18,000 children were forcibly removed and adopted into primarily non-indigenous families between the 1960s and early 1980s (CBC, 2011). Children were often abducted without the knowledge of their families, and could be adopted into families in different countries (Sinclair, 2007:66)

The Commission's focus on individual testimony can obscure its national outlook and audience. Of its seven largest national events held across Canada, 9,000 individuals registered as survivors and as many as 155,000 attended as visitors. The Commission's activities also included 238 days of local hearings in 77 communities, and the sponsoring of localized town hall meetings across the country (TRCC, 2015a:25). National events were also streamed online and circulated on social media platforms leading to over 93,350 web views (TRCC, 2015a:31).

Awareness of the Commission's activities was amplified by a steady stream of media coverage. Questions over how many students had died at the schools, how they died, and how to identify the remains were recurring features of news media. Routine news updates kept the rising death toll in the public consciousness, reaching 3,000 in 2013 (CBC News, 2013a), 4,000 in 2014 (Kennedy, 2014), and at least 6,000 by 2015 (Tasker, 2015). Other reports focused on shocking discoveries over the schools' history. Food historian Ian Mosby's discovery that government officials used the schools to run a series of nutritional experiments, believing that the systemic malnutrition of the institutions offered "ideal scientific laboratories" (Mosby, 2013:162), was widely circulated in the media.

Parallel to the Commission, the Indian Residential School Agreement contained a \$20 million Commemoration Fund. Intended, in part, to "memorialize in a tangible and permanent way the residential school experience" (INAC, 2016), the fund supported dozens of projects across the country between 2011 and 2013. Many of these projects were community and school specific, focusing on local monuments, plaques, and revitalizing the graves of former students. Others—a film festival, a traveling

performance by the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, mobile education exhibits, and radio documentaries—reached even broader audiences.

The themes of reconciliation and trauma also carry over into a series of creative and artistic genres outside of official funding mechanisms. Rich with residential school symbolism, the award-winning rock group Digging Roots' song 'Cut My Hair' opens with the lyrics: "they cut down my hair; I say they're trying to cut down my roots" (Digging Roots, 2010). The lyrics are a reference to how children had their hair cut upon their arrival to the schools, how long hair can have special spiritual significance in indigenous cultures, and how the act of cutting hair also represents the severing the child from their indigenous community (TRCC, 2015b:vi, 32). Similar imagery is carried in popular literary works. Wab Kinew's (2015) award winning memoir *The Reason You Walk* offers unguarded detail on his father's time at St. Mary's Residential School, including his father's experience with sexual assault and the death of his childhood friend. Engagements with reconciliation and trauma have even diffused to more modern mediums like videos games. Working with educators of First Nations and non-First Nations students, Wab Kinew's "#CraftReconciliation" project invited grade school students to join in the virtual space of the videogame *Minecraft* to co-construct memorials for reconciliation (CBC News, 2016).

All of these practices—the official Commission, the media coverage, the commemorative projects, the array of creative and artistic works—point to a dense repertoire of interaction engaging with the trauma of residential schools and, for settler communities, a processing of how to come to terms with what is increasingly recognized as an acutely shameful period in Canadian history. More than a vague inarticulable

affect, political leaders saw shame as a key component of the social reality of reconciliation, something illustrated by then Liberal Leader Stéphane Dion's claim that "we must be prepared to hear the Commission recount a very shameful collective past", as well as NDP Leader Jack Layton's claim that it's time "take responsibility for one of the most shameful periods in our history" (TRCC, 2015a:373, 376).

### *5.3.2 Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*

Closely related to the trauma of residential schools is the acute vulnerability of indigenous women and girls to violence in Canada. "Aboriginal women are over-represented among Canada's murdered and missing women" (RCMP, 2014b:3) with indigenous women facing a homicide rate almost seven times higher than non-indigenous women (NWAC, 2010:5). Research by the Native Women's Association of Canada (2010) has argued that the disappearances and homicides are related to state policies, including the legacy of residential schools as well as inadequate social services for impoverished women. Despite several years of intense lobbying in the 2000s from indigenous and human rights organizations, Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper rebuffed calls for a national inquiry. He argued the murders and disappearances were a criminal problem and not a "a sociological phenomenon" (CBC News, 2014). In 2014 the RCMP reported that the number of missing and murdered victims was higher than previously believed, reaching what the Commissioner called a "surprising" almost 1,200 cases (Mas, 2014b). By the 2015 federal election all national parties—except for the governing Conservatives—included a missing and murdered national inquiry into their party platform. In August 2016 the newly-elected Liberal government launched a national inquiry, a move supported by 79% of the Canadian public (Global News, 2016).

Propelling this shift in attitudes was an accelerating period of political activism. Marches and commemorative walks across Canada became a key strategy for raising awareness. Since 1991, the Annual Women's Memorial March has been held in the Vancouver downtown east-side (AWMM, 2016a). The area, notorious for substance abuse and violence against women, was later confirmed to have been the hunting ground for one of Canada's most prolific serial killers, Robert Pickton (Fong, 2012). By 2015 the Annual March had spread to 24 different cities and locations across Canada and the United States (AWMM, 2016b). These marches were joined by similar initiatives such as Walk 4 Justice, whose first event in 2008 included a 4,000km march from Vancouver to Ottawa to help "raise awareness and seek justice for missing and murdered women" (Sterritt, 2014).<sup>132</sup> These marches have become easily recognizable within Canadian media given their iconic image of family members carrying placards displaying portraits of missing and murdered relatives.

Vigils also feature heavily in this repertoire of social activism with several of these events organized by the groups Idle No More and Sisters in Spirit. The latter is an initiative created by the Native Women's Association of Canada and dedicated to researching and raising awareness of the "alarming high rates of violence against Aboriginal women and girls in Canada" (NWAC, 2015b). Every October 4<sup>th</sup> the group organizes a series of vigils across the country, including candle light vigils, moments of silence, and rallies. What began as 11 national vigils 2006 grew to 216 in 2014 (NWAC, 2015a), often in prominent public places such as Parliament Hill.

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<sup>132</sup> The failure of the police "to employ an Aboriginal-specific investigation strategy" was later cited as one of the principal reasons it took police years to apprehend Pickton (quoted in B. Hutchison, 2012).

In other cases this activism migrated into to a series of creative projects. The Faceless Dolls Project is a traveling education workshop and art exhibit which invites participants to create faceless dolls representing “Aboriginal women who have become ‘faceless’ victims of crime” (NWAC, n.d.). As one spokesperson describes: “What we wanted to do was visually and physically create a representation of the [then] 582 known cases of missing and murdered Aboriginal Women and Girls in Canada” (quoted in Morrisseau, 2012). A similar dynamic is at work in the REDress Project. The traveling art exhibit features arrangements of empty red dresses in Canadian landscapes. As artist Jamie Black describes, “an empty garment of clothing operates as a marker of those who are no longer with us” (quoted in Coorsh, 2015).<sup>133</sup> In studying sculptures made of clothing from migrants who often perish when traversing the Mexico-U.S. border, Jessica Auchter (2013) highlights how the imagery of empty clothing can have powerful emotion effects.<sup>134</sup> Such memorials can be politically “haunting” as they raise troubling questions over which bodies are grieved by a society, who is a citizen worthy of state protection, and how some deaths are relegated to marginal spaces (Auchter, 2013:299).

These creative projects also have a contagious quality which is amplified through the circulation of social media. One of the most visible of these practices is the ‘Am I Next?’ campaign, initiated by Holly Jarret in 2014 after the murder of a family member (Walker, 2014). Participants, sometimes including non-indigenous women, circulate pictures of themselves holding hand written signs asking ‘Am I next?’ on Twitter and Facebook, publicly raising questions over their own vulnerability.

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<sup>133</sup> Though Black has also voiced skepticism that a national inquiry would help resolve the violence facing indigenous women and girls.

<sup>134</sup> The same principle was visible in Canada’s Centenary Commemoration of the Battle of Vimy Ridge where empty military boots were used to signify fallen soldiers.

Equally important in capturing this pattern of insecurity is how certain areas and places have become coded in popular culture as dangerous for indigenous women. Here the most prominent example is the “Highway of Tears”. The name refers to a stretch of Highway 16 between Prince George and Prince Albert in British Columbia which has been identified as the site of a series of unresolved murders of indigenous women and girls. While the history of Highway 16 is known to local communities, it received national attention in the 2015 documentary film *Highway of Tears* (Smiley, 2015).<sup>135</sup> Drawing together the history of systemic discrimination, mistrust of the police, and narration from victims’ families, the film creates an emotionally potent narrative calling for political action to end the killings.

While the interactions shaping this repertoire may begin in the informal spaces of civil society, they have a tendency to migrate to more formal institutions. As one MP speaking in Parliament recounts:

“I think of one of the many rallies I have attended here on Parliament Hill, where I saw a little aboriginal girl hold up a sign with a hole in it where she put her face, and the sign said, “Am I next?” These are haunting images... She knows that she is at greater risk simply because of her identity, because of the colour of her skin, and because of her gender. In a country like Canada, that is shameful.” (House of Commons, 2014:6167)

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<sup>135</sup> The film also references an earlier documentary discussing missing and murdered indigenous women called *Finding Dawn*.

### *5.3.3 The Impoverishment of Reserves*

While poverty and limited access to social services disproportionately affects many indigenous communities, these issues are most acutely visible in the country's reserve system. Historically tied to a strategy of displacing indigenous peoples from land for settler development, reserves were formed through pre-Confederation treaty making and later the Indian Act (RCAP, 1996:130-133). Constitutionally, this has left the Federal government responsible for the welfare of reserves, including education, housing, healthcare, and access to clean drinking water. Yet health and social outcomes for those living on-reserves are exceptionally poor: tuberculosis rates are 31 times the national average, the K-12 schooling completion rate is less than 50%, and approximately one-quarter of water systems pose a health risk (AFN, 2011).

These problems were brought into a more tangible focus through extensive media coverage of reserve communities facing dire conditions, including Attawapiskat First Nation, a reserve located in remote Northern Ontario. Between 2008 and 2013, the community experienced recurring floods and sewage overflow, as well as a fire which strained substandard housing and infrastructure and forced periodic evacuations and states of emergency. While by no means representative of all reserve communities, Attawapiskat became a popular icon for the systemic impoverishment of reserves, a situation which came to shock and surprise national and international audiences. As one journalist relates:

“After seeing the images of Attawapiskat First Nation beamed around the country in recent days, a viewer could hardly be blamed for not believing that they were looking at a part of Canada, or that the people enduring this travesty are their

indigenous neighbours. Plywood walls, plastic-covered windows, 20 people sharing a two-bedroom house, a one-burner hot plate to cook for a whole family, lack of insulation, plumbing or electricity – the scene is tragic and heartbreaking.”(Wagamese, 2011)

The experience at Attawapiskat intersected with a key moment in Canada’s international affairs. In October of 2013 James Anaya, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, visited the country for a periodic assessment of Canada’s treatment of indigenous peoples. While his report cited significant “positive steps”, it also highlighted a series of problems, including that the “housing situation in Inuit and First Nations communities has reached a crisis level, especially in the north” (UN, 2014:1, 8). Domestic criticism over the Canadian state’s ongoing inability to meet these basic needs is not uncommon. Hearing the same critique however, from foreign representatives may have different significance as states seek and value recognition from the international community (Mitzen, 2006). Thus, international attention to the reserve system came at an embarrassing moment when Canadian officials sought refurbish the country’s image as—in the words of Prime Minister Stephen Harper—a place with “no history of colonialism” (Ljunggren, 2009).

Other events posed similar challenges for Canada’s reconciliatory image. In 2007 child welfare advocate Dr. Cindy Blackstock, as executive director for the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada, initiated a human rights complaint against the Federal Government.<sup>136</sup> The complaint claimed that the government discriminated against children living on reserves by failing to provide the same levels of child-services

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<sup>136</sup> The Assembly of First Nations was also party to the complaint.

enjoyed by non-indigenous Canadians. After years of court proceedings the Human Rights Tribunal ruled there was sufficient evidence for a finding of discrimination (CHRT, 2016:160). Before the complaint was resolved however, an access to information request revealed government agencies had extensively surveilled the activities of Dr. Blackstock, following her to at least 75 speaking engagements, monitoring her Facebook profile, and possibly accessing her Indian Status records (Harper, 2011). Canada's Privacy Commissioner opened an investigation and found Aboriginal Affairs and the Department of Justice appeared "to violate the spirit, if not the letter, of the *Privacy Act*" by collecting private and personal information from social media feeds unrelated to the human rights complaint (OPCC, 2013:26-27). For those segments of the public becoming increasingly aware of the situation of the reserve system the Blackstock case came to symbolize the discriminatory nature of reserve funding and the Government's opposition to its critics.

#### *5.3.4 Shifting Context and the Constraining Effects of Shame*

These repertoires are significant because they point to a shifting emotional context. As the distribution of embodied judgment shifts, repertoires of reconciliation work to reshape the opportunities and constraints for securitizing moves. While settler fears have historically facilitated the framing of indigenous activism as a threat to settler society, these more recent repertoires have begun to realign public audiences' attitudes, perceptions, and dispositions towards indigenous communities. Marches, demonstrations, and blockades take on new sources of meaning as they migrate from being read as precursors to violence and threats to settler sovereignty, and become re-evaluated as the behaviour of aggrieved groups who have historically faced systemic

discrimination, dispossession, and even outright violence. We can understand these constraining effects as operating in at least three different ways.

The first is an *incredulity* problem. Embedded in the circulation of settler shame is a starkly asymmetrical image of power relations. Part of the reason the culpability of Canadian officials and institutions for indigenous trauma is so acute, is because they were inflicted from a position of dominance. When indigenous families, for example, refused to send their children to residential schools the RCMP forcibly intervened. In the Prime Minister's residential school apology he explicitly noted how indigenous families and communities were "powerless" against Federal authorities (Harper, 2008). Yet this historical image of settler dominance is starkly at odds with security claims which hold indigenous activists as empowered and destabilizing actors. Whether because of their capacity to engage in acts of violence or disrupt critical economic infrastructure, officials have stressed the significance of these movements precisely because they are perceived as having the power to threaten public order.

But if politically active indigenous communities were as empowered as this assessment holds, then it beggars belief that they would have endured the historical trauma associated with residential schools, missing and murdered indigenous women, or the impoverishment of reserves. Put more starkly, politically powerful social movements with the capability and willingness to threaten the state do not suffer what the TRC has described as a "cultural genocide" (2015a:1). Thus, to public audiences embedded in the circulation of settler shame, it appears increasingly incredulous that such groups could be both dangerous threats to public order *and* have a stark history of disempowerment at the same time.

Equally constraining here is the social threat of *shaming*. Attempts to frame indigenous activism as a security issue may not just fail to resonate with the Canadian public, they may attract opprobrium as a regressive behaviour in a period of reconciliation which prioritizes building trust and empathy. This is similar to the shaming tactics studied by IR's constructivists. By pointing an actor's "pariah" status in the international community, human rights groups and other states often look to push norm outliers into compliance (Risse & Sikink, 1999:15). The force of this strategy comes from drawing attention to when "an agent chooses a course of action that contradicts their sense of self-identity" and thus creates a mismatch between their behaviour and purported values (Steele, 2007c:907). When shame becomes socially recognized and publicly assigned a deviant status it becomes a stigma which forces an actor to engage in various stigma management strategies (Adler-Nissen, 2014:145-147).<sup>137</sup> One such strategy is avoidance. By avoiding patterns of speech and practice that are stigmatized—including labeling indigenous activists as security threats—actors avoid anger and disdain from their community.

The charge of engaging in shameful behaviour can be powerful. While interviewing an Opposition MP I asked why references to shame were so common in their speeches on indigenous issues. Part of their answer focused on the word's powerful emotional resonance:

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<sup>137</sup> Importantly, political actors don't have to feel shame for the threat of shaming to be meaningful. They can simply want to avoid the hostility and social sanctions from an audience that perceives shameful behaviour. I can't tell if government officials genuinely internalized shame for past treatment of indigenous communities—though the breath of the repertoires described above makes it likely that several did. What matters here is not the emotions of individual actors, but the emotional context which constrains and enables them.

“I also find it’s a very emotionally charged word that you’re able to lay out there in the House of Commons and sort of say ‘yes it’s unacceptable, yes we need to do something’, but here’s a feeling that you can have, a feeling of shame, that in a country as wealthy as ours... we still approach indigenous peoples in very similar ways.”<sup>138</sup>

The concern that government officials might become the target of this emotionally-inflected criticism proved to be well-founded. In December of 2016, Liberal Natural Resources Minister Jim Carr responded to business leader concerns about pipeline protest violence by remarking that “If people choose for their own reasons not to be peaceful, then the government of Canada, through its defence forces, through its police forces, will ensure that people will be kept safe” (Tunney, 2016). For indigenous communities, many of whom are active in pipeline protest movements, the comments raised the possibility of another Oka-style military confrontation and provoked outrage from several indigenous leaders (Barrera, 2016). “Kanesatake Grand Chief Serge Simon, whose Mohawk community was at the centre of the Oka Crisis” called for Carr’s resignation, arguing “I find it offensive and Minister Carr should be ashamed of himself and Prime Minister Trudeau should be ashamed of himself for letting him get away with that” (Barrera, 2016). In Question Period the Carr’s remarks were derided by Opposition Members as “reckless, irresponsible and incendiary language” (Tunney, 2016). Carr began to walk-back the comments almost immediately, arguing the statement was not intended to be a threat or warning to protestors (Tunney, 2016). Three days later Carr offered a full apology:

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<sup>138</sup> Interview with author, November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

“I didn't choose my words carefully last week and I regret that... It was not meant to conjure up images or to bring up bad memories for any community ... I am fully confident that Canadians will be peaceful in the way in which they express themselves on this and other decisions.”(Ljunggren, 2016)

Shaming practices like this represent a powerful force in constraining what kind of security claims can and cannot be made. Even when a security claim is made in an offhand manner—as I believe Carr’s case was—it can still attract public opprobrium.

Finally, perhaps the most significant constraint on securitizing language here is the threat it poses to Canada’s reconciliation project. This threat stems from how sincerity is a key feature of the apologies which undergird reconciliation. As Dorrell notes, the residential schools survivors explicitly requested that it making his apology, Prime Minister Harper should focus on making it “sincere” so as to make the statement less ambiguous than previous gestures (Dorrell, 2009:28-29).<sup>139</sup> One way of achieving this sincerity is the promise of new attitudes and values when engaging with indigenous peoples. Thus, the apology emphasized that “There is no place in Canada for the attitudes that inspired the Indian Residential Schools system to ever prevail again”, and that “a new relationship between Aboriginal peoples and other Canadians” is required (Harper, 2008).<sup>140</sup> This shift in attitudes is seen by reconciliation organizations as evidence of closure, a signal that the choices which led to indigenous trauma are a thing

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<sup>139</sup> As Dorrell also notes, past apologies also excluded the word ‘apology’ to avoid the ensuing legal ramifications. The absence of polling data makes it difficult to know whether the apology was viewed as sincere by indigenous communities and survivors. In the following years however, indigenous leaders including Truth and Reconciliation Commissioner Murry Sinclair argued Harper failed to live up to the apology (APTN National News, 2015). The sincerity of the apology was further compromised when a former speech writer for the Prime Minister familiar with the apology described it as “strategic attempt to kill the story” of the residential school system (Barrera, 2015a).

<sup>140</sup> As Henderson and Wakeham (2009:2) note, the generic reference to ‘attitudes’ here obscures the fact that what Harper was talking about were *colonial* attitudes.

of the past (Henderson & Wakeham, 2009:14). Reconciliation then, hinges on a promissory politics where an apology's sincere promise of change allows for closure for the victims.

Yet problems emerge when this change fails to materialize. Labelling indigenous activists as dangerous and engaging in practices of surveillance signals a historical continuation of the Canadian colonial state and its practices of treating indigenous communities with suspicion, and as a threat that needs to be contained and pacified (Dafnos, 2013). Because securitization is often about establishing who are the enemies of a political community (Williams, 2003), it brings the apology's promise of renewed period of trust and cooperation into doubt. Indeed, suspicions over the sincerity of contemporary apologies appear as a key concern among indigenous activists. In interviewing one activist I asked how recurring episodes of surveillance bode for future apologies:

“I think it compromises the government's whole reconciliation agenda. It's a basic human thing: if you screw up, your first job is to understand the harm that you created and to really learn about not replicating that. And part of that is apologizing. Because that really is your expression of not only that you were the source of harm, but what the harm did to that individual or group, and your commitment to not do it again. I always say reconciliation to me is not saying sorry twice. It's that simple.”<sup>141</sup>

The need to repeat an apology exposes a lack of sincerity in an earlier apology; a recognition that what appeared as a genuine expression of contrition and an admission of historical shame was, at best, partial, and, at worst, contrived. Most damaging perhaps, is

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<sup>141</sup> Interview with author, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

how the absence of change promised by an apology lends credence to critics of reconciliation who dismiss it as a rhetorical exercise geared to rehabilitating the state's image as "a beacon of progressive reflexivity", and little more (Wakeham, 2012:7).

#### **5.4. Conclusion: Securitization or Reconciliation (But Not Both)**

In exploring the securitization of indigenous protest in Canada this chapter has focused on a single puzzle: why is there a divide between the government's internal talk of securitization and public talk of reconciliation?

In explaining this puzzle, the chapter has focused on the shifting distribution of embodied judgments. While repertoires of deeply racialized and colonial fears have historically placed the threat of indigenous resurgence at the heart of the Canadian security imaginary, an emerging politics of truth and reconciliation precipitated different patterns of embodied judgment. Driven by repertoires of interaction surrounding the legacy of residential schools, missing and murdered indigenous women, and the disturbing poverty of the reserve system, the politics of reconciliation has played a key role in circulating a sense of shame over the state's past treatment of indigenous communities. The result of this shifting emotional context is a public audience not only less disposed to accepting security claims about indigenous protest movements, but also more likely to view such claims as inappropriate and offensive. The securitization of indigenous groups has become emotionally contentious issue leading to government officials to carefully avoid discussing it in public. And while this explanation offers deeper insight into this puzzle it leaves three key issues unexamined: the durability of this change, the attribution of political responsibility, and the problem of unintended consequences.

Social theorists in IR have often described change in terms of “tipping points” where a new norm achieves “critical mass” and becomes dominant (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998:901). This view is often paired with narrative of historical progress where, once normative gains on issues such as human rights are achieved, they are incredibly difficult to roll back (Wendt, 1999:312). The model of the contentious politics of emotion used here is less sanguine. While truth and reconciliation is becoming the dominant paradigm for settler-indigenous relations, it faces resistances at multiple points.<sup>142</sup> There is nothing intrinsically durable about the politics of reconciliation; it’s a project held in place by a specific configuration of emotional repertoires. As such, it remains vulnerable to being contested by different political projects, including those based on returning to a more overtly racial order.

This discussion also complicates the attribution of responsibility for securitizing moves. While all studies of securitization work “to underline the responsibility of talking security” (Buzan et al., 1998:34), previous studies of this case have treated government agencies, and indeed ‘the state’, as single unitary actors working coherently towards the “demonization of indigenous people on a spectrum from criminals to terrorists” (Proulx, 2014:93). And yet, there is evidence that the same dynamics of contention described here extend into state institutions. As Ling (2014) notes there was a serious debate in the Canadian Joint Operations Command over whether Idle No More posed any significant threat to the Canadian military. Officials at agencies like the RCMP have also shown a surprising awareness of institutional prejudices and the discrimination directed towards indigenous communities. This was evident in RCMP Commissioner Paulson’s

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<sup>142</sup> Including attempts by the Canadian government to block the Truth and Reconciliation Commission from accessing key documents for its research (TRCC, 2015a:27-29)

extraordinarily frank admission to the AFN that “there are racists in my police force, I don’t want them to be in my police force”(quoted in Hager, 2015). While this in no way obviates responsibility for framing indigenous protestors as security threats, it complicates the prior tendency of treating all state agents and agencies as working uniformly towards this goal.

Finally, this discussion’s focus on the emotional dynamics of settler society has all but obscured the effects of securitizing moves on indigenous activists and their communities. While an important topic in its own right, this study points to two key effects. The first effect was described by interviewees as a “chill effect”<sup>143</sup> where the risk of being surveilled and stigmatized as a threat to national security may lead individuals to avoid political engagement. A fear of being monitored may lead to self-censorship and a withdrawal from public life. But the same discussion also pointed to how accounts of surveillance might have the opposite effect. As journalists and researchers uncover more evidence of surveillance through leaks and access to information requests, this may mobilize would-be indigenous activists into action. As one activist described:

“I think what it does is that it politicizes people because when a lot of younger native women, for example, hear about Cindy Blackstock being surveilled because she wants to protect native kids, it politicizes them in a way where the trust and belief in Canadian society having their best interests at heart is eroded.”<sup>144</sup>

Ironically, one of the unintended consequences of surveilling indigenous activists may be that it spurs further political mobilization amongst indigenous communities.

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<sup>143</sup> Interview with author, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

<sup>144</sup> Interview with author, November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016.



## 6.0 Embarrassment and the Securitization of the F-35

*“Things got even worse than bad meat that's infected;  
Transport Canada layoffs left Santa's sleigh not inspected;  
Christmas would be scuttled like the F-35 plan;  
Three years of that BS got flushed down the can;”*

-Rodger Cuzner, MP for Cape Breton-Canso, 2012<sup>145</sup>

Known as the ‘Bard of Cape Breton’, Liberal MP Rodger Cuzner’s satirical rewrite of *Twas the Night Before Christmas* is an annual tradition in the Canadian House of Commons. Delivered before the Christmas break, Cuzner’s performance pokes fun at the missteps and embarrassing moments of political opponents in the previous year. The verses were aimed at the Conservative government’s recent ‘reset’ of the F-35 fighter jet procurement program. The culmination of months of controversy, the reset represented a dramatic reversal in the Government’s plan to purchase the F-35. The reset came as opposition parties intensified their criticism of the program over everything from the wisdom of a sole-source contract, to the exaggerated importance of the plane’s stealth capabilities, to the danger of purchasing an aircraft which had not yet completed its development. The Parliamentary Budget Officer and Auditor General added to these concerns by discovering mounting cost and procedural problems with the program. The Auditor General’s finding that the Conservative government may have misled Parliament

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<sup>145</sup> House of Commons (2012j:13206)

over the cost of the program led to media commentators slamming the F-35 as a “debacle” which nearly played Canadians for “fools” (Iverson, 2012), as a “scandal” (Galloway, 2012), and as “a fiasco from top to bottom” (Coyne, 2012). By March of 2011, 68% of Canadians agreed that “now is not a good time” to purchase the F-35 (Ibbotson, 2011). The dispute saw calls for both the Defence Minister and the Prime Minister to resign. It even contributed to a motion finding the Conservative government in contempt of Parliament, triggering the 2011 Federal election.

But the F-35 was not always a source of embarrassment. With a model replica of the plane serving as backdrop, Defence Minister Peter Mackay confidently announced that the Conservative government would sole-source purchase 65 of the next generation fighter jets in July of 2010. The announcement marked a key step forward in fulfilling the government’s 2008 *Canada First Defence Strategy* and its promise to re-equip the Canadian military. The decision appeared timely given that Canada’s existing CF-18s would reach the end of their lifecycle by 2020. The Joint Strike Fighter Program, out of which the F-35 emerged, was an international consortium led by the United States, and included other traditional Canadian allies like United Kingdom, Australia, and Norway. The Government also emphasized that the purchase would generate significant industrial and regional benefits (IRBs) by ensuring Canadian companies could bid on the plane’s global production contracts. During debates over the plane, Conservative Ministers and MPs routinely stood up and confidently declared that they were “proud” to support the procurement.<sup>146</sup> Indeed, confidence in the procurement seemed so high that when speaking to reporters Julian Fantino, the Associate Minister of Defence, remarked: “We

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<sup>146</sup> For examples see HoC (2010c:6121), HoC (2011b:2478), and Standing Committee on National Defence (2010b:17).

will purchase the F-35... We're on record. We're part of the crusade. We're not backing down" (Wherry, 2011).

The stark contrast between the Conservative government's staunch and uncompromising promotion of the F-35, and their dramatic reversal in the form a major "reset" raises serious questions about the public debate surrounding the plane. Why did the government's claims about the necessity of the F-35 fail to resonate with Canadian audiences? How did the initially narrow and limited opposition to the procurement become so intense and widespread? What kind of political strategies were at play in these interactions? Most importantly, why did the F-35 procurement fail?

While a cottage industry of research has emerged in the F-35's wake, there remains little discussion about the actual dynamics of the public debate surrounding the plane's purchase. Instead, existing research has confined itself to studies on financial costs and strategic value (Bezglasnyy & Ross, 2011; Byers & Webb, 2011; Mitchell, 2011), the role of modern airpower (Huebert, 2011), historical comparisons of procurement (Nossal, 2013; Plamondon, 2011), the government's motivation for the purchase (Massie, 2011), and how the media framed the procurement (Vucetic, 2016). With the exception of Vucetic (2016)—whose work is confined to the role of the media—this has left a lacunae in the study of the public debate itself. Existing accounts almost invariably refer to the procurement debate as 'politicized' but what this means is far from clear.<sup>147</sup> Nossal describes this politicization as a form "gamesmanship" by the government where decisions are made for "the pure purpose of partisan advantage" (2016:103; see also Plamondon, 2011). But if every game presupposes a strategy, then

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<sup>147</sup> See Bezglasnyy and Ross (2011:241), Byers and Webb (2011:220), Plamondon (2011:265), and Nossal (2016:103)

what kind of strategy was employed by the Conservative government in the F-35 debate, and why did it not succeed?

In answering these questions this chapter recasts the F-35 debate as a series of securitizing moves derailed by a politics of embarrassment. What's distinctive about the government's F-35 claims is how they presented the plane's procurement as a security problem. Proponents of the procurement argued that without this one particular aircraft everything from the integrity of Canadian territory and sovereignty, to its basic credibility with international allies, to the future viability of its aerospace industry would be put at an intolerable risk. Yet far from mobilizing fears over the vulnerability of the Canadian polity, this strategy precipitated a series of embarrassing public encounters. From the seeming parochialism of the threats identified by government officials—such as Russian bombers in the Arctic—to their inability to effectively manage the finances of the project, officials' security claims inadvertently mobilized anger, suspicion, and even comic ridicule towards the purchase.

By reconstructing the government's approach as a series of securitizing moves we gain a better understanding of the legitimation dynamics underpinning the F-35 debate. Government officials represented the fighter jet not simply as having economic benefits, but as an urgent response to threats to Canadian sovereignty, territorial integrity, and a host of other referent objects. By presenting the F-35 as an imperative to Canadian survival, officials worked to create an atmosphere of urgency which legitimized a breaking free from the regular rules of procurement. The goal was to empower the government officials to manage the purchase with "less democratic control and constraint" (Buzan et al., 1998:25, 29). This allows us to understand why the regular

rules of procurement (e.g. no sole-sourcing, guaranteed industrial benefits, and full life-cycle costing) were so persistently circumvented. The F-35 purchase was presented as a security situation where the regular rules of procurement were no longer seen to apply.

By turning to the politics of embarrassment we gain a better understanding of why these securitizing moves failed. In his seminal essay, Irving Goffman (1956) describes embarrassment as a tense situation when an actor projects incompatible self-images. More than a hypocritical mismatch between words and deeds, or the shame of failing to abide by one's moral ideals,<sup>148</sup> embarrassment is most evident when there is a failure to live up to the expectations you lead others to have of you (1956:268). In this view the cocky athlete who fumbles an amateur play, as well as the overly confident student who fails an easy exam, are paradigmatic examples of the lapses in competency which define the distinctive experience of embarrassment. For Goffman this "emotional disturbance" isn't just felt by the subject of embarrassment, but by the audience of the failure as well (1956:264-265). And while some audiences may empathize with the individual and work to conceal the situation, less charitable audiences may seize on the embarrassing moment to attack and discredit them (Goffman, 1956:268). In other words, moments of embarrassment create vulnerabilities in one's self-image which others may try to exploit for gain.

I use the 'politics of embarrassment' to refer to the struggle to regain and maintain composure over self-image. In this case embarrassment took the form of a Conservative government who cast themselves as sober managers of security and sound fiscal stewards, and then promptly suffered a series of missteps in the F-35 procurement

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<sup>148</sup> On hypocrisy see Finnemore (2009). On shame see the discussion in Chapter 5.

process which threw this image into doubt. Opponents seized on government blunders—such as the lack of financial due diligence—to make this period of embarrassment all the more pronounced. The result is a contentious episode of political struggle over how Canadians should *feel* about the F-35; proponents looked to cast the plane as essential Canadian security, opponent looked to cast it as an embarrassing debacle. The politics of embarrassment then, can be treated as a species of the contentious politics of emotion and security described in Chapter 3.

The argument is developed in three parts. The first section explores the F-35 as a series of securitizing moves. To develop evidence for this reading I look at how security arguments formed the core of the government's public justification for the F-35. While economic arguments were significant for the procurement, I see these as ultimately secondary to the government's security rationale.

The second section explores how these securitizing moves failed by producing a politics of embarrassment. Instead of mobilizing fears over the vulnerability of the Canadian polity, the government's claims provoked anger, frustration, suspicion, and even comic derision over its performance. The extent of the embarrassment became an object of struggle with government officials pursuing avoidance and strategies and opponents pursuing humiliation strategies.

The third section probes the deeper historical origins of this episode of embarrassment. This involves tracing the specific repertoires of interaction which jeopardized the Conservative government's public image and made it vulnerable to embarrassment. I start with the government's image as sober managers of security and discuss how this image was undermined by officials' alarmist rhetoric on Russian bomber

flights, as well as by arguments about the importance of the F-35 as an international status symbol. I then turn to the government's image as sound fiscal stewards. This image was brought into doubt by a series of financial and procedural irregularities surrounding the procurement process. By studying these repertoires, we gain better insight into how this episode emerged from a specific historical configuration of social interactions, rather than by accident or chance.

## **6.1 The Securitization of the F-35**

Efforts at legitimating political projects abound in the realm of international security and, as Goddard and Krebs (2015a) have argued, this is especially the case when a state needs to mobilize extensive resources for a project where the benefits are not immediately visible. As one of the most expensive defence procurements in the Canadian history, this made the government's public justification for the F-35 extremely important, and pivotal to the success of the broader procurement itself. In this section, I show how various security rationales were central the government's arguments for the F-35, as well as how this differs from conventional readings which see the F-35 in terms of a rules-based approach to procurement.

### *6.1.1 Evidence of Securitizing Moves*

From its initial inception security arguments have dominated the Conservative government's public rationale for the F-35. Announcing the procurement on July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2010, then Defence of Minister Peter Mackay emphasized that the jet "will help the Canadian Forces defend the sovereignty of Canadian airspace, remain a strong and reliable partner in the defence of North America, and provide Canada with an effective

and modern capability for international operations." (Department of National Defence, 2010b).<sup>149</sup> Elaborating on this rationale, the Department of National Defence's (DND) media packet contextualized the procurement within the *Canada First Defence Strategy* and its identification of the need for a next generation fighter. It noted that the "F35 is the only available fifth generation aircraft that meets the Canadian Forces' need for a next generation fighter" (DND, 2010a). This "exceptional capability" was deemed necessary "to defend Canada's sovereignty and contribute to the defence of North America and international security" (DND, 2010a)

These arguments would be expanded and reiterated in the first major public discussion of the procurement over the course of eleven hearings by the Standing Committee on National Defence (SCND). In his opening testimony Defence Minister Mackay argued:

"Our commitment... to procure the F-35 is part of the overall strategy to give the Canadian Forces the tools they need in order to deliver security to Canadians."  
(SCND, 2010b:1)

While acknowledging the security environment has shifted since the end of the Cold War, Mackay stressed that:

"New threats have emerged... we determined that notwithstanding the changes in the security environment, this was not a capability that we felt Canada could or should forgo. An operational gap, I stress, is not an option..." (SCND, 2010b:2)

Key to this reasoning were the implications of not purchasing the F-35:

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<sup>149</sup> This announcement was later criticized as an expensive photo-op, costing more than \$47,000 to orchestrate (Canadian Press, 2012a).

“If we don't make this purchase, there is a real danger we'll be unable to defend our airspace, unable to exercise our sovereignty, or unable to share our responsibilities through both NORAD and NATO.” (SCND, 2010b:2).

Government ministers and MPs were not the only officials focusing on security themes. Lieutenant General J.P.A. Deschamps, Chief of the Air Staff, argued that “manned fighters are essential to our ability to maintain control and sovereignty over our airspace”, and that the F-35 offered the best chance of success in these missions (SCND, 2010a:1).

These arguments would be carried into a broader range of public fora, including debates in the House of Commons (HoC) and news media. Speaking against a Liberal motion to cancel the purchase, Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Laurie Hawn argued “that only a fifth generation fighter aircraft, such as the F-35,” could meet the requirements of Canada’s “future security environment” (HoC, 2010c:6150).<sup>150</sup>

Questioned later by a Liberal MP who asked why the Conservative government wouldn't hold an open competition, Defence Minister Mackay responded: “We will not endanger the lives of Canadian pilots. We will not endanger the sovereignty of our country. We will proceed with this project.” (House of Commons, 2011c:8831).

Similar security justifications were echoed in media publications initially supportive of the purchase. The editorial board of the *Globe and Mail* heralded the announcement calling the F-35 the “price of sovereignty” for Canada (2010). The editorial board of the *National Post* was similarly supportive, arguing that despite cost increases the Government needed to “ensure that our Air Force remains competitive with any potential future threat” (2012).

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<sup>150</sup> See also comments by the Minister of Public Works Rona Ambrose (Hoc, 2010c:6121), as well as Conservative MPs Steven Blaney (HoC, 2010c:6106) and Jacques Gourde (HoC, 2010c:6124).

These same arguments persisted even as controversy over the program grew. When questioned about the Parliamentary Budget Officer's finding that the program would exceed initial estimates, the Prime Minister stated he was "not going to get into a lengthy debate on numbers," but that the F-35 was the "only option available" to meet the needs of the Canadian Forces (CBC News, 2012c). Likewise, in a press conference responding to external audit revealing the cost may reach \$45.8 billion, Defence Minister Mackay opened his statement by noting "First and foremost, Canada needs to maintain the ability defend our sovereignty, to be a partner in North American defence, and to participate in international missions"(CTV News, 2012).

Equally significant is how these security arguments were used to frame opposition to the program. By presenting the F-35 as an essential requirement for the safety and efficacy of the Canadian military, officials like the Defence Minister moved to argue that Opposition criticism amounted to a "railing against the interests of the Canadian Forces" (HoC, 2012a:5396). The Defence Minister took this line further to suggest that opposition to the F-35 was simply indicative of a deeper hostility to the Canadian military:

"All of the misinformation and the misfired questions coming from the members opposite tell the truth about how they feel about the Canadian Forces. They want them to be smaller, less equipped, and they want them to stay home... We are very proud of [the Canadian Forces]. We are going to continue to support them. I encourage the member opposite to do the same." (HoC, 2012a:5396-5397)

This caught Opposition members off-guard, forcing them to use limited Question Period time to clarify that they still "support our troops" (HoC, 2012a:5396). Criticism of the

program was dismissed as being against Canada's security interests in general, and against the Canadian Forces in particular.

### *6.1.2 The Role of Economic Arguments*

While security arguments for the F-35 remained consistent, they were almost invariably followed by claims about economic benefits. Speaking before the Standing Committee on National Defence, Tony Clement, the Minister of Industry Canada, argued the purchase would enable Canadian companies to bid on contracts for a global supply chain of an estimated 5,000 F-35 fighters jets, representing over \$12 billion in business opportunities (SCND, 2010b:3). Rona Ambrose, the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, called the acquisition "a good news story for Canada's defence industry", one that would lead to "the creation of high-tech, high-value jobs for Canadians" (SCND, 2010b:4).

Despite the frequency of these economic arguments, there's reason to believe they were less than central to the government's case. First, whenever the economic and security elements of the government's rationale came into tension, the latter clearly dominated. When challenged on how the government could sole-source the project *and* ensure maximum economic benefits, Minister Ambrose stressed that the process was shaped first and foremost by the requirements for a fifth-generation fighter:

"I repeat, the procurement process does not drive the requirements, the requirements drive the procurement process; that's my job. At the end of the day, Public Works does not hold competitions when we know full well that there's only one product available to meet the client's needs." (SCND, 2010b:12)

Because the F-35 was the only fifth generation fighter, an open competition, Ambrose argued, would be a “would be a waste of time and resources” (SCND, 2010b:12).

Economic requirements were subordinate to security requirements.

Second, as time wore on, these economic claims came to be transformed into security claims. Threats from the Liberals to cancel the program were treated by the government as recklessly endangering Canadian aerospace companies (Toronto Star, 2010a). Minister Ambrose argued that if the government’s “commitment were revoked, this enormous door of opportunity would be slammed shut in the face of Canadian industry” (SCND, 2010b:4). More dramatically, in the 2015 election Prime Minister Harper claimed that cancelling the procurement would lead to a “cratering” of the Canadian aerospace industry (Brewster, 2015). In other words, failing to purchase the F-35 would be existentially threatening for Canadian aerospace firms.<sup>151</sup>

### *6.1.3 Securitization versus a Rules-based Procurement*

By treating the F-35 debate as a series of securitizing moves, my wager is that’s possible to get a clearer image of why the procurement failed. Existing treatments see this case as a failure of a *rules-based* approach to procurement. What should have been a clear and transparent process, governed by predefined rules—including no sole-sourcing and adherence to interdepartmental procedure—suffered from political interference.<sup>152</sup> As Bezglasnyy and Ross (2011:241) argue, much of the conflict surrounding the F-35 could have been avoided if the government followed the convention of holding a transparent

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<sup>151</sup> Although as Brewster (2015) notes, there’s reason to be skeptical about this claim given that existing F-35 contracts account for only 2.29% of industry business.

<sup>152</sup> For a concise summary of the rules governing procurement see Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer (2011b:7).

and competitive process, similar to how Canada selected its existing CF-18s.<sup>153</sup> For Nossal this represents a form of “political gamesmanship” (2016:102-103). This is a situation where short-term partisanship precluded any opportunity for considering the national interest, or long-term strategy. From this perspective, the Conservative government’s departure from a rules-based approach to procurement represents a failure by *incompetence*.<sup>154</sup>

The problem with this explanation is that government behavior appears to break with the rules of procurement so systemically that it becomes difficult to maintain that the outcome was merely a matter of incompetence. In fact, much of the later commentary on the F-35 is focused on how the government’s behavior appears as *strategically* directed towards expediting the purchase. In his public commentary, Alan Williams, the former Assistant Deputy Minister of Defence in charge of the F-35 program until 2005, argued that the process had been “manipulated to achieve a predetermined outcome” (CBC News, 2012a). Journalists using access to information requests found documents suggesting DND officials had purposely rushed their analysis and bypassed internal rules to ensure the F-35, and no other alternative, was selected (Castonguay, 2012). Kevin Page, the Parliamentary Budget Officer, argued the government likely retained “two sets of books” on the F-35, one for internal estimates and another for public consumption (CBC News, 2012b). Indeed, the media narrative suggesting that the government had intentionally misled the public became so widespread that by 2012 the Defence Minister actively worked to refute it (Campion-Smith, 2012; CBC News, 2012b). This presents a challenge for viewing the F-35 as a rules-based procurement process brought down by

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<sup>153</sup> See also Byers and Webb (2011:220), Plamondon (2011:265), and Nossal (2016:103).

<sup>154</sup> See also Tago and Vucetic (2013:143).

incompetence. Unless the government officials suffered from spastic ineptitude at every decision point, it beggars to belief that their break with the rules of procurement were somehow less than intentional.

I believe a more charitable—though perhaps no less exculpatory—explanation is possible. The reason why the government’s behavior appears such a poor fit with a rules-based procurement strategy is because that’s not the strategy that was pursued. Instead, the F-35 was presented as a security problem, something that Canada *needed* to have if it was going to preserve its sovereignty, territorial integrity, alliances, and a host of other referent objects. By presenting the F-35 as a security problem the Conservative government looked to legitimize suspending the normal rules of procurement and to mobilize popular support for the program. The F-35 wasn’t simply *an* option, it was the *only* option capable of staving off intolerable threats to Canada.

Treating the F-35 as a case of securitization may seem irrelevant—the strategy still failed. But understanding what went wrong is a crucial step in getting things right. The procurement failed not because of an incompetent rules-based procurement strategy, but because such a strategy was never attempted in earnest. Our efforts at a post-mortem autopsy then, should be focused on how the debate over the F-35 took shape as a series of failed securitizing moves.

## **6.2. Failure and the Politics of Embarrassment**

### *6.2.1 The Empirics of Failure*

Read as a series of securitizing moves, the failure of the F-35 procurement takes on a different meaning. Failure here is less about incompetence in implementing a rules-based

procurement strategy, and more about an inability to convince audiences—both popular and elite—of an urgent security issue demanding action. But the empirics of this case point to an added, and unintended, consequence to these securitizing moves. Instead of mobilizing fears over the vulnerability of the Canadian polity, the government's claims provoked anger, frustration, and suspicion.

In a tense exchange with Prime Minister, NDP Leader Thomas Mulcair derisively argued:

“Fearmongering and buck-passing is what the F-35 file has been about... The program has been a fiasco from the beginning: no tendering process, no clear requirements, and a bunch of ministers passing the buck in an attempt to hide their incompetence and their arrogance.” (HoC, 2012j:13208)<sup>155</sup>

Opposition MPs were openly resentful over how Conservative officials had questioned their patriotism and commitment to the military (Hoc, 2012j:13211). Parliamentary exchanges became increasingly acrimonious as government claims over the F-35 were openly scorned as existing in a “fantasy world” (HoC, 2012i:12899). Nor was this hostility confined to Parliament. Media commentators openly chastised the government, arguing “Canadians were nearly fooled again by politicians and bureaucrats who thought the rules didn't apply them” (Iverson, 2012; see also Coyne, 2012).

In other instances, laughter and ridicule became increasingly typical responses to government talking points. When responding to a question on the F-35, Public Works Minister Ambrose accidentally remarked that an “open and transparent process started right after the Auditor General's report” (HoC, 2012i:12899). This led the Opposition

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<sup>155</sup> See also the comments by Liberal Interim Leader in the same passage.

parties to break out in laughter; the joke being that the Minister had inadvertently admitted that the prior period was mismanaged (Wherry, 2012).<sup>156</sup> Similarly, when Associate Minister of Defence Julian Fantino argued that an article had been “critical of everything that is holy and decent about the government's efforts” to arm the Canadian Forces (McGregor, 2012), the authors offered a satirical response suggesting that the government had adopted a model of “faith-based procurement” rooted in the “Gospels of Lockheed Martin” (Webb & Byers, 2012). Elsewhere, NDP military procurement critic Matthew Kellway drew on colorful references to 1970s American pop music to mock officials’ sudden reversal of support. He suggested that the Minister of Public Works had “lost that loving feeling” for the F-35, and that the Defence Minister had “been through the desert on a horse with no [plane]” (HoC, 2012j:13209).<sup>157</sup>

These reactions point to how *tone* was one of the defining features of the F-35 debate. The growth in acrimonious language serves as a barometer for the broader emotional intensity of the exchanges. Liberal MP Rodger Cuzner, for example, didn’t simply say he disagreed with the government’s choice of fighter jet. He devised a satirical poem which thinly alluded to the procurement as ‘bullshit’ that needs to be flushed (HoC, 2012j:13206). The exchanges became so intense one Conservative MP openly pleaded for decorum, asking for the NDP to refrain from “name calling, profane language and baseless smears” (HoC, 2012g:7408). MPs and journalists are not alone in their use of acerbic language. Political scientist Kim Richard Nossal (2016) opted to use ‘Charlie

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<sup>156</sup> Aaron Wherry (2012) rightly describes this as a “Kinsley Gaffe”, a moment where an embarrassing political truth is inadvertently acknowledged.

<sup>157</sup> The lines are references to the songs ‘You’ve lost that loving feeling’, produced by the *Righteous Brothers* in 1964, and ‘A Horse With No Name’, produced by *America* in 1972.

Foxtrot’, a military euphemism for ‘cluster fuck’, to describe the same procurement process.

### 6.2.2 *The Politics of Embarrassment*

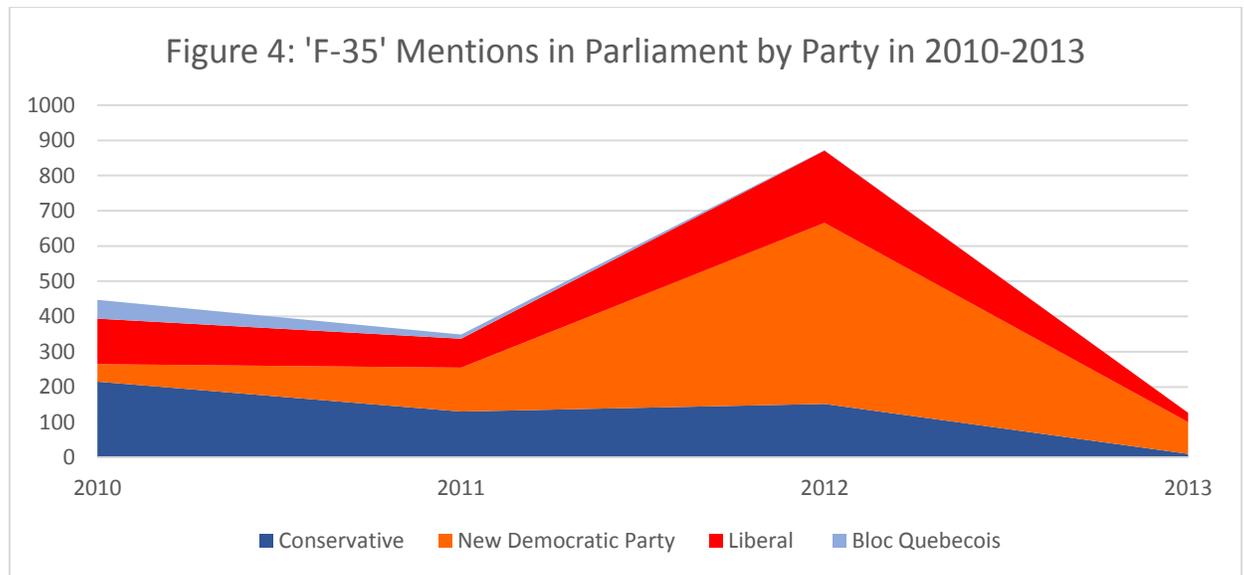
Collectively, these emotional dynamics point to what I call a *politics of embarrassment*. Whereas Goffman saw embarrassment as a tense situation when an actor projects incompatible images of themselves, I treat the *politics* of embarrassment as a struggle to regain and maintain composure over self-image. Embarrassed parties and their allies look repair or minimize the apparent damage to their public image; political opponents look to make the embarrassment all the more pronounced.

For Conservative proponents of the F-35 this struggle centered around at least three distinct strategies: *countering*, *avoidance*, and *deferral*. The first entails an effort to counter embarrassment by arguing that another party, is in fact, the one who is suffering embarrassment. In late July of 2010 the Conservative party released talking points suggesting that recent Russian bomber flights had embarrassed critics of F-35:

“Mere days ago [Liberal Leader] Michael Ignatieff pledged to cancel the new fighter jets the men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces urgently need. Embarrassingly for him, Russian bomber flights over the Arctic — just two days ago — underscore why our men and women in uniform need modern equipment to do their jobs.” (quoted in Leblanc, 2010)

The media release argued that Canadian Forces would not be so poorly equipped if it had not been for the previous Liberal government’s chronic underspending, what it describes as “a shameful period known as the ‘Decade of Darkness’”.

When these efforts proved unsuccessful and the F-35 became manifestly unpopular, Conservative proponents turned to a series of avoidance strategies. As the graph in Figure 4 highlights, between 2010 and 2013 the Conservative share of mentions of the F-35 in Parliament declined sharply as it came to be perceived as a negative issue for the party.<sup>158</sup>



Not only did the Conservative share of F-35 discourse decline, the most prominent defenders of the program became conspicuously silent. As Defence Minister, Peter Mackay was the nominal political authority in charge of the program. But despite the F-35 being referenced well over two-hundred times between June and December of 2012, he responded to only two questions on the subject. The program was also dropped from major political and policy documents. Thus, while the program featured prominently in the Conservative Party 2011 electoral platform (2011:16, 34), it was noticeably absent only four years later.

<sup>158</sup> The decline in the Conservative share of the F-35 discourse in Parliament is even more pronounced when taking into consideration the Conservatives *gained* an additional 23 seats in the 2011 elections.

Finally, officials opted to avoid further embarrassment by deferring future decisions to the newly created National Fighter Procurement Secretariat and its 7-Point Action Plan. A key feature of the 7-Point Plan was an emphasis on independent review mechanisms. This included an independent review of annual costing, independent review of the costing framework itself, independent verification that all steps in the acquisition were appropriately followed (National Fighter Procurement Secretariat, 2016), as well as an independent panel of experts to oversee how DND would evaluate different options to replace the CF-18s (Independent Review Panel, 2014). While these mechanisms served an important function in restarting a moribund policy process, they also serve another important purpose: distance. By deferring further decision making to a more independent policy process, officials worked to insulate themselves from future accusations of interference and incompetence.

For opponents of the procurement this struggle took the form in a different set of strategies focused on *humiliating* government officials and *widening* the embarrassment of the F-35 to other policy domains. Humiliation took the form of highly personalized attacks geared to further diminishing the standing of key government officials. Seizing on the silence of the Defence Minister in late 2012, NDP MP Matthew Kellway claimed:

“Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence is clearly reluctant to get on his feet about the F-35s, and I get that. He is embarrassed after his big announcement that the Conservatives are buying 65 F-35s and for calling us unpatriotic for questioning the F-35s.” (HoC, 2012f:11474)

In one instance, then Liberal Leader Bob Rae colorfully implied that the Prime Minister willfully ignored criminal behavior:

“You can't get away with the fiction that a \$10-billion mistake in calculating the cost of the F-35 stealth fighter ... had nothing to do with the man in charge, with the man whose name and whose moniker is on every single publication of this government... He cannot now pretend that he was just the piano player in the brothel who didn't have a clue as to what was really going on upstairs.” (Canadian Press, 2012b)

Running parallel to these efforts was an attempt to widen the embarrassment of the F-35 by connecting it to other policy domains with little or no connection to defence and security policy. Thus, the problems with the F-35 procurement surfaced in discussions focused on the protection of seniors (HoC, 2012d:11949), financial accountability for First Nations (HoC, 2012h:12228), as well as debates on budget appropriations (HoC, 2012f:11422). Opposition members constantly looked to re-enact and extend the embarrassment of the F-35 by linking it to other Conservative policies, even when those connections were tenuous at best.

These struggles point to two key features of the politics of embarrassment. First, the struggle over managing the embarrassment of this episode was, in effect, a conflict over how audiences should *feel* about the F-35. It was a conflict over what embodied judgments public audiences (popular and elite) would bring to bear when judging the jet's status as a security issue. From this perspective, the politics of embarrassment appear as a species of the kinds of contentious politics of emotion discussed in Chapter 3. Second, this struggle highlights how the politics of embarrassment functions as a form of *power* politics. In actively working to prolong the embarrassment of the F-35, opponents

of the program looked to mobilize constituencies, expand their collective influence, and to weaken government officials' authority to speak on security issues.<sup>159</sup>

We can see the latter dynamic in the career trajectory of the F-35's staunchest defenders. Despite being the longest serving Defence Minister in the Harper government, and publicly expressing his desire to retain the position (Canadian Press, 2013b), Peter Mackay was shuffled to the Justice Department shortly after the height of the controversy in 2013.<sup>160</sup> Equally intriguing, from a power-political perspective, is how this case reverses the conventional relationship between silence and securitizing moves. Security claims are often seen as working to silence political opponents by equating dissent with a lack of patriotism, a failure to 'support the troops', or simply aiding the enemy (Buzan et al., 1998:29; Roe, 2012:252). But when officials like the Defence Minister equated opposition to the F-35 with a deeper lack of support for the military (HoC, 2012a:5396), this appeared only to have galvanized Opposition MPs into even fiercer criticism of the government's position. The agents most effectively silenced in this case were not political opponents of the procurement, but were government officials who were forced to distance themselves from their original support of the program.

The securitization of the F-35 failed then, in the most significant sense, because it precipitated a politics of embarrassment. The result wasn't simply the collapse of the procurement itself, but a situation where its proponents were forced into an awkward position of distancing themselves from the issue, while at the same time enabling the program's opponents to exploit it for political gain.

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<sup>159</sup> This view of power politics draws directly from Goddard and Nexon's (2016) focus on political mobilization.

<sup>160</sup> Mackay also suffered criticism for using a search and rescue helicopter to attend a fishing trip.

What this leaves unexplained is the question of how this episode of embarrassment was possible. Political actors frequently look to throw opponents off-balance and provoke gaffes and scandals, but few of these become full-blown episodes of embarrassment like the F-35. What processes led to its emergence in this case? Or, to use the methodological language of Chapter 4, what are the repertoires of interaction which made this episode of embarrassment possible?

### **6.3 Repertoires of Embarrassment**

For Goffman experiences of embarrassment emerge from a specific history of social interaction.<sup>161</sup> If the source of embarrassment is incompatible images of the self, social agents must first project an image to others, and then act in a way that contradicts that image. In marketing and business studies this is seen as one of the central problems of “brand management” (da Silveira, Lages, & Simões, 2013). Inspired by Goffman, these studies examine how firms look to project positive, consumer-friendly brands, while at the same time minimizing any publicity which projects a negative image. Thus, when a company markets toys to children, and the toys appear to use the F-word (Elliot, 2016), then the company has gone ‘off-brand’ leaving it vulnerable to public embarrassment.

The language of branding is apt here because the management of the Conservative government’s public image was commonly likened to a political ‘brand’ during its tenure.<sup>162</sup> To understand how the F-35 became embarrassing then, we need understand

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<sup>161</sup> Despite being dated, Goffman’s discussion remains a foundational text in sociological discussions of embarrassment (Collins, 2004:20-21; Scheff, 1994; Turner & Stets, 2005:30). Interestingly, his analysis is also cited approvingly by cognitive psychologists studying embarrassment (Keltner & Buswell, 1997; Keltner, Young, & Buswell, 1999). While the differences between the sociological and psychological study of emotion are too large to detail here, they both point to an important role for embarrassment in preserving social order.

<sup>162</sup> For an extensive discussion see Marland and Flanagan (2013).

what facets of the Conservative ‘brand’ were at play, and what repertoires of interaction led officials to appear off-brand. In this context, I focus on two prominent features of the Conservative brand: the image of sober managers of security and the image of sound fiscal stewards.

The branding of the Conservatives as sober managers of security emerges from what Adam Chapnick (2012) characterizes as the party’s “counter-revolution” in Canadian foreign policy. Chapnick describes this as a response to the policies of previous Liberal governments and their emphasis on non-state actors, human security, and multilateral diplomacy (Chapnick, 2012:140). For Conservatives, this represented a dangerously naïve view of the world. As Chapnick notes, the phrase “dangerous world” became “a staple of Conservative rhetoric” (2012:146), and this pointed to the need for a party with a less idealistic and more sober vision of the manifold threats facing the country. Accordingly, the Conservative brand not only called for a more “muscular foreign policy” (Whyte, 2011), but a clearer understanding of the threats facing the country.

The only branding exercise which rivaled the Conservative emphasis on security was its focus on sound fiscal and economic stewardship. As McKercher and Sarson note, “[w]hether via tax cuts, fiscal austerity, or the ubiquitous ‘Canada’s Economic Action Plan,’ the Harper government sought to brand itself as a strong steward of Canada’s economy” (2016:352). Echoing its security rhetoric, the Prime Minister stressed that Canada existed in “sea of uncertainty” in the global economy (quoted in McKercher & Sarson, 2016:354). He derided other parties as offering “reckless” policies which threatened to “drain billions from taxpayers” (CTV News, 2011).

The problem with branding is that it sets a baseline for public expectations and a promise of future competency. A failure to stay ‘on brand’ can be perceived as failure in social obligation, provoking anger, frustration, or even suspicion that an actor is not who they claim to be. When actors inadvertently find themselves off-brand, it can make them vulnerable to comedy and ridicule.

### *6.3.1 The Russians Are Coming*

On July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the Defence Minister informed journalists that the Canadian Forces had recently “scrambled” two CF-18s to intercept Russian bombers flying near Canadian territory (CTV News, 2010). Although the Russian planes did not enter into Canadian airspace at any time, Minister Mackay described the CF-18s as “on the scene to repel [the] Russian bombers”, and remarked that the Russian aircraft had come “closer than we have seen in recent times” (CTV News, 2010). The incident was further dramatized in conservative media with one journalist even speculating that the planes may have been loaded with nuclear warheads (Lilley, 2010). In a thinly veiled allusion to the F-35 purchase, a Conservative party press release claimed the encounter “underscore[d] why our men and women in uniform need modern equipment to do their jobs” (Leblanc, 2010).

A similar incident took place in late August, although this time more notable since the messaging came directly from Dmitri Soudas, the Communications Director for the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO). In a highly unusual email sent to members of the national press gallery, Soudas described a tense standoff between Russian and Canadian aircraft, but claimed due “to the rapid response of the Canadian Forces, at no time did the

Russian aircraft enter sovereign Canadian airspace” (quoted in Roman, 2010).<sup>163</sup> The message came with an explicit promotion of the F-35, asserting it is “the best plane our Government could provide our Forces, and when you are a pilot staring down Russian long range bombers, that's an important fact to remember” (quoted in Roman, 2010).

These incidents fit into a broader repertoire of Conservative rhetoric focused on framing Russian actions in the Arctic as alarmingly aggressive. Harper described a Russian Arctic patrol which coincided with a US Presidential visit to Ottawa in 2009 as an “encroachment” on Canadian territory. He argued “[t]his is a real concern to us... I have expressed at various times the deep concern our government has with increasingly aggressive Russian actions around the globe and Russian intrusions into our airspace” (Chase, 2009).<sup>164</sup>

The problem with this characterization is that it was routinely contradicted by military officials. Commenting on the incident in 2009, the US Commander of NORAD remarked that “[t]he Russians have conducted themselves professionally; they have maintained compliance with the international rules of airspace sovereignty and have not entered the internal airspace of either of the countries” (Chase, 2009). A similar message was repeated by a NORAD spokesman after the Russian air patrol in August of 2010: “At no time did the Russian military aircraft enter Canadian or United States sovereign airspace” (CBC News, 2010b). Rather than supporting the government’s claims, Canadian military officials have explicitly downplayed the threat of military incursions in

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<sup>163</sup> The email is unusual because the public statements on the activities of the Canadian Forces usually come from the Department of National Defence and the Minister of National Defence. The email does fit however, with Marland et al. (2016) view on media messaging being centralized within the PMO during the Harper government.

<sup>164</sup> For a comprehensive discussion of government rhetoric on Russian air patrols between 2007 and 2011, see Lasserre and Têtu (2016).

the Arctic. In 2009, Canadian Chief of the Defence Staff General Walter Natynczyk declared that “[t]here is no conventional military threat to the Arctic. If someone were to invade the Canadian Arctic, my first task would be to rescue them” (quoted in Byers & Webb, 2011:219). Indeed, despite NORAD confirming that these flights occur several times over the course of the year (Lasserre & Têtu, 2016:315), they rarely become publicized.

The mismatch between military officials’ assessment and government rhetoric spurred a series of hostile reactions from both opposition parties and media figures. Liberal MPs accused the government of using the Arctic flights as a “diversion” from public scrutiny of the F-35 (CBC News, 2010b). Journalists expressed skepticism over the timing of the government’s concern with the Russian flights:

“It turns out that this kind of thing actually happens about a dozen times a year. And each time it does, a note from the PMO does not land in reporters' inboxes. Although the last time we heard about a similar incident was at the end of July, just two weeks after the announcement that Canada would be spending \$9 billion (not including the maintenance and servicing costs) on 65 new F35 fighter jets.” (Roman, 2010, see also Galloway, 2010)

Other reactions were openly derisive. One columnist later described the email from the PMO as “contain[ing] an industrial quantity of bullshit”; an alarmist missive whose tone suggested “that if our lonely flyboys don’t stare down the Russians they will be dropping their lethal payload on Edmonton any minute now” (Wells, 2012). Columnist John Ivison mocked the email from the PMO, suggesting it sounded like it was written by “Tom Cruise’s Maverick character from the Cold War-era favourite Top Gun” (2010b).

Writing for the *Toronto Star*, defence academic Michael Byer's denigrated the government's framing of the flights as "a make-believe threat" and suggested that, like Don Quixote, the Prime Minister and Defence Minister "have been tilting at make-believe enemies... in the form of Russian planes in international airspace" (Byers, 2010). Others ridiculed the putative threat, suggesting the worst the Russian planes could do is "Drop pamphlets advertising real estate deals in Siberia" (Riley, 2010).

Beyond serving as fodder for comedy, Conservative rhetoric on Russia was viewed as provoking a deep frustration over what appeared as reckless posturing. As Byers argued, such bellicose rhetoric not only threatened a series of cooperative initiatives between Canada and Russia on the Arctic, they also worked against the "importance placed on improved U.S.-Russian relations by the Obama administration". Antagonizing Russia risked "running interference against the United States — [Canada's] largest trade and defence partner" (Byers, 2010). Ivison suggested this frustration extended into the government bureaucracy: "Sources inside the [Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade] said there is increasing frustration at a hostility toward Russia that is manufactured for entirely domestic political purposes". Far from giving serious thought to Canada's national interests, the rhetoric from the PMO appeared in "the style of a wannabe *Top Gun*" (Ivison, 2010b)

The cumulative effect of these interactions was to produce a public image of the Conservative government which was starkly different from that of sober managers of security. Instead of producing a clear-eyed vision of the threats facing the country, Conservative officials were seen as reckless and alarmist. They were engaging in what Chapnick has described as a "rhetoric of fear" (2012:143) in a transparent attempt to

manufacture support for the F-35. Yet instead of mobilizing broad public support for the plane, it rendered the government vulnerable to a particularly enervating form of embarrassment.

### 6.3.2 *Competing for Status*

Alarmist rhetoric over Russia was not the only way in which the government's branding on security became challenged. A similar problem emerged when officials worked to frame the F-35 as a key international *status* symbol. Status-seeking behavior itself was not the issue here: the problem lay pursuing status in a way that failed to resonate with the Canadian context. For audiences accustomed to viewing Canadian pride and prestige through the lens of multilateral diplomacy, treating the F-35 as a valuable status symbol appeared alien and unfamiliar.

In the F-35 debate this status-seeking behavior took the form of specific rhetorical repertoire concerning Canada's status as a 'reliable partner'. In announcing the plane's procurement Minister MacKay acknowledged the importance of the plane to protecting Canadian sovereignty, but he also stressed that the "fighter will help the Canadian Forces... remain a strong and reliable partner in the defence of North America" (DND, 2010b). The trope of being a reliable partner makes repeated appearances in the *Canada First Defence Strategy* (GoC, 2008), and surfaced again in parliamentary debates on the F-35.<sup>165</sup> The connection between weapons procurement and 'reliable partner' status reflected a broader shift in Canadian foreign policy which began to equate status and

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<sup>165</sup> "[these] fifth generation jets... will be used by the Canadian Forces to defend the sovereignty of Canada's airspace in order to remain a strong, reliable partner" (HoC 2010c:6125, 6150).

influence with military capability. In the words of Prime Minister Harper, “if you don’t have the capacity to act you are not taken seriously” (quoted in Chapnick, 2012:146).

As Massie (2011) notes, these arguments point to a clear status-seeking motivation in the decision to procure the F-35. From this perspective, “Canada’s F-35 acquisition is less about countering core threats to its physical security than it is about securing its status (or reputation) as a prominent ally” (Massie, 2011:260). More specifically, the F-35 offered state-of-the-art technologies—namely stealth and advanced interoperability—which would allow Canadian Forces to participate at the visible forefront of expeditionary missions, and thus secure its “prominent ally” status (Massie, 2011:261). This explanation fits comfortably within a long line of arguments in IR over how states, both large and small, engage in status seeking behavior, especially through the acquisition of advance military technologies.<sup>166</sup>

As incisive as Massie’s explanation is, it remains underdeveloped in two key respects. First, like most literature on the subject, it fails to recognize status seeking as an intensely emotional phenomenon. Indeed, one of the central contributions of the emotions literature in IR has been in demonstrating how often the pursuit of status is bound up with the experience of pride, prestige, shame, anger, and humiliation (Fierke, 2013; T. Hall, 2011, 2016; Lebow, 2008; Saurette, 2006). Far from being epiphenomenal, these experiences can have powerful mobilizing effects among publics and elites, as they work to legitimate national projects to defend, and advance, national standing. From this perspective, the Conservative government’s status-seeking language surrounding the plane indicates something more than a narrow elite motivation: it is a

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<sup>166</sup> For a recent summary see de Carvalho and Neumann (2015). An important and systemic statement can be found in Lebow (2008:60-72, 122-164).

strategy for mobilizing a broader public constituency by raising fears over the loss of ‘reliable ally’ status. Not acquiring the F-35 risks Canada not being ‘taken seriously’ on the global stage.

Second, an effect of Massie’s focus on the F-35 is that status becomes inadvertently narrowed to military capability. But as Musgrave and Nexon (2013) argue, competition for status occurs across a range of different social fields, each involving different forms of capital. A state’s position in the hierarchy of international society is not:

“driven solely by military and economic capabilities, but also by the possession of other socially valued assets: cultural capital of various kinds, social capital in the form of relationships with other actors, and the ability to engage in performances that signal various levels of social status” (Musgrave & Nexon, 2013:3)

This means there are *multiple* pathways for pursuing status. This is especially the case for small and middle powers like Canada where pursuing status through economic and military capabilities becomes prohibitively expensive, and status-seeking manifests itself in arenas like multilateral organizations, scientific research, and sport (de Carvalho & Neumann, 2015). This doesn’t mean governments can engage in any status seeking behavior; Canada cannot suddenly decide it wants to be a beacon of excellence in the sport of cricket. Practices of status seeking must be recognizable and legitimate in the eyes of both a peer group *and domestic audiences*.

It’s unlikely the purchase of the F-35 satisfies this latter criterion. In fact, there are good reasons for believing that the Canadian domestic context privileges status-seeking via multilateral engagement over status-seeking via military capabilities. As

Roland Paris (2014:286-294) argues, positive public attitudes towards liberal internationalism in the form of the UN and peacekeeping remain stubbornly strong in Canada. In 2012 when Canadians were asked about their country's most positive contribution to the world, the leading response was peacekeeping (Paris, 2014:291). This is despite the Harper government's extensive efforts to promote Canada as having a "courageous warrior" tradition focused on "martial prowess" (Paris, 2014:283). Canadian popular culture overwhelmingly envisions multilateral initiatives as the clearest pathway to pride and prestige.

Indeed, this dynamic was on full display at the same time as the F-35 debate. In October of 2010, only months after the F-35 procurement was announced, the Conservative government suffered a historical loss in a bid to win a seat at the UN Security Council. While this failure was welcomed by a small domestic constituency skeptical of the UN, it was more widely seen as a marked loss in Canadian status. That Canada experienced its first ever failure in a Security Council election appeared as a "deep embarrassment" (Ibbitson & Slater, 2010), an "international black eye" (Toronto Star, 2010b), and a "major diplomatic humiliation" (Iverson, 2010a). By contrast, there's no obvious precedent for treating military capabilities as sources of pride and prestige in Canada. This is unlike the United States where symbols of American military power are ubiquitous in popular culture, including the ritual of the military flyover at major sporting events. When the Royal Canadian Air Force tried to emulate this practice in 2015 with a flyover of a football game in Ottawa, it was so unexpected it caused panic amongst the local residents (CBC News, 2015a). When the practice was repeated at a football game

in Montreal two years later it still prompted a series of confused 911 calls and led the host team to issue a public apology (Hinkson, 2017).

The Conservative government's fixation on pursuing 'reliable partner' status then, marks a break with its brand as sober managers of security because it envisages status in a way that is, for the most part, alien to the Canadian context. By pursuing status concerns that appeared largely unfamiliar and irrelevant to domestic audiences, it made the purchase of the F-35 appear all the more inexplicable. Absent a clear military rationale, or obvious import for Canadian pride and prestige, media commentators treated the F-35 diminutively as an expensive, high-tech "toy", and little more.<sup>167</sup>

### *6.3.3 The Sacred Taxpayer*

One issue receiving comparatively little attention in studies of the F-35 is the role of the 'taxpayer'. By suggesting the 'taxpayer' has received little attention I am not claiming that the financial or economic dimensions of the procurement have gone unexamined—they have.<sup>168</sup> Instead, I'm referring to the role of the 'taxpayer' here as what Randall Collins would call a "sacred object". Sacred objects emerge from rituals which honour what is collectively valued in a society (Collins, 2004:25). For Goffman these objects appear as the 'little gods' which structure interactions in everyday life by prompting deference to the moral values they come represent (Collins, 2004:25). Because of their moral value, these objects are also acute sites of emotional investment.

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<sup>167</sup> On the F-35 as a "toy", see Campion-Smith (2012), CBC News (2010a), Feschuk (2012), and Ivison (2016).

<sup>168</sup> In the Canadian context see Bezglasnyy and Ross (2011) and Byers and Webb (2011). For a recent international perspective see Vucetic (2013).

In the procurement debate the sacred object of the taxpayer became a means for establishing the moral value of different positions on the F-35. The F-35 was desirable, in the words of the Minister Ambrose, because it represents “the best possible value for Canadian taxpayers” (HoC, 2010c:6122). An open tender could be dismissed, one Conservative MP argued, because it would be “an expensive sham and a waste of taxpayer money” (HoC, 2011a:8751). Even skepticism of the procurement was positioned as a defence of the taxpayer. During the opening F-35 hearings, Bloc Quebecois MP Claude Bachand implored the government “to stand up for taxpayers” and ensure any contract came with guaranteed industrial benefits (SCND, 2010b:7). More than a signaling of costs and benefits, these references signaled that the sacred object of the taxpayer was being respected.

This repertoire of deference to the taxpayer has an important historical precedent. Whether one calls it “neo-liberalism”, “neoconservatism”, or “free market fundamentalism”, popular sentiment on taxes in Canada has shifted dramatically since the 1970s (Fodor, 2013).<sup>169</sup> A key feature of this transformation is how conservative activism has worked to create “a deeply affective and emotional vision” of the role of taxes in Canadian society (Saurette & Gunster, 2013:251-252). Crafted through ritualized use of anti-tax tropes likes “tax burden” and “tax relief”, and given substance by social memories which incorporate every episode of government mismanagement into a longer history of taxpayer abuse, the resulting vision is what Saurette and Gunster have called a “politics of resentment” (2013:227, 253). Far from being a marginal feature of Canadian politics, this emotional vision of taxes is a central and constitutive force. The

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<sup>169</sup> For an expansive discussion see the volume by Himelfarb and Himelfarb (2013).

modern Conservative party first came to power in 2006 immediately in the wake of the Sponsorship Scandal, an incident where the governing liberals had illegally directed taxpayer funds towards liberal-friendly businesses. Campaigning in 2006, the Conservative party promised to “replace a culture of entitlement and corruption with a culture of accountability” (CPC, 2006:1), this accountability, of course, being to taxpayers. Respecting the sacred object of the taxpayer had become central to the conservative brand of sound fiscal stewardship.

This history made it extremely problematic when financial questions began to emerge surrounding the taxpayer-funded F-35 procurement. In summer of 2010 Liberal MPs asked the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO)—a position created by the Conservative government to provide parliamentarians with independent financial analysis—to examine the plane’s procurement costs. The resulting report flagged several issues. While DND had estimated an acquisition and sustainment costs of \$17.6 billion for 65 fighter jets, the PBO projected the cost would reach an estimated \$29.3 billion (OPBO, 2011b:10). Moreover, the cost was at risk of increasing due to a number of problems with the Joint Strike Fighter program. As the report notes:

“F-35 development is now five years behind the schedule set at the outset of the program, and total [systems development and demonstration] overruns are projected to exceed US\$ 21 billion—60 per cent above the original goal” (OPBO, 2011b:15).

Even more problematic is that the PBO’s report implied that DND had failed to conduct its own independent costing of the program. DND was unable, or unwilling, to provide the PBO with any information on its own costing methodology or assumptions. Instead, it appeared “that DND has relied upon the 2009 Selected Acquisition Report (SAR),

published by the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), as well as figures provided by the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) Program Office” (OPBO, 2011a:i). As the PBO notes, these sources did not account for recent restructurings and cost overruns faced by the program.

The Auditor General’s 2012 report proved even more compromising. Focused more on whether DND officials followed the procedural rules of procurement, the report found several concerns:

“we observed that in the lead-up to [the July 16, 2010,] announcement, required documents were prepared and key steps were taken out of sequence. Key decisions were made without required approvals or supporting documentation” (OAGC, 2012:21).

Key decision makers, including the Minister of National Defence, were never adequately informed of the “problems and the associated risks of relying on the F-35 to replace the CF-18” (OAGC, 2012:25). Most troubling of all was the variance between the DND’s internal costing and what it provided to the public. In 2011, the Department publicly stated that the 20-year procurement cost for the F-35 would be an estimated \$14.7 billion. But as recently as 2010 the Department’s own internal estimates placed the 20-year cost at \$25.1 billion (OAGC, 2012:27). The discrepancy between what DND reported to the public, and what it used for internal decisions, was more than \$10 billion.

The Auditor General’s findings spurred the government’s creation of a Seven Point Action Plan which included an independent review of DND’s costing for the F-35 (National Fighter Procurement Secretariat, 2012). This review projected a lifecycle cost of \$45.8 billion (KPMG, 2012). While operating under different methodological

assumptions, this costing still appeared as a major departure from the \$18 billion figure first estimated when the project was first announced in July of 2010 (CBC News, 2010a).

These financial missteps left Conservative officials vulnerable to having their reputation of defending taxpayer's interests turned against them. Debates on the F-35 in Parliament between 2010 and 2013 are littered with accusation by Opposition MPs over how officials supposedly disrespected, misled, or otherwise failed the Canadian taxpayer:

“Our military deserves better and Canadian taxpayers deserve better than the handing over of a blank cheque. Why are the minister and the Prime Minister so irresponsible with taxpayer money?” (HoC, 2010b:5832)

“Will the Prime Minister show respect for the Canadian taxpayer and launch an open competition that will maximize value for money?” (HoC, 2010a:5939)

“The price of the F-35s continues to skyrocket every day, but the Conservatives are causing confusion by trying to have Canadians believe that the price is \$10 billion less than the actual cost. Why are the Conservatives hiding the truth from taxpayers?” (HoC, 2012e:7525)

“The Conservatives wasted months stopping the Standing Committee on Public Accounts from reviewing the F-35 purchase... Will someone over there finally come clean with Canadians and acknowledge that the government deliberately wasted Parliament's time and a lot of taxpayer money?” (HoC, 2012b:13019)

“Mr. Speaker, we have seen nothing but incompetence from the government on the F-35 file for two and a half years now. It would be funny if it were not so tragic. At stake is billions of dollars of taxpayers' money.” (HoC, 2013:14626)

With no small irony, Opposition MPs quickly appropriated the repertoire of deference to the taxpayer which Conservatives had spent years cultivating. In doing so, they were to tap into a pre-existing and acutely emotional vision of the role of taxes in Canadian society.

Outside of Parliament these financial missteps provoked ridicule and comic derision. Lamenting the release of the Auditor General's findings, conservative commentator Rex Murphy launched into a dramatic jeremiad on primetime news:

“The Auditor General made it clear today that the cost would have been known throughout government, that the Defence Department's \$16 billion-dollar estimate was moonshine, and, most importantly, that all of this was known before the last election. If Stephen Harper were in opposition now and it was Liberals who brought about this mess he would be heaving thunderbolts and breathing righteous fire about arrogant and incompetent Liberals – and he would be *right*.” (The National, 2012)

The F-35 controversy was also parodied in a mock infomercial by the Canadian sketch comedy show 22 Minutes. The infomercial features a model replica of the F-35 whose cost steadily increases over the course of the advertisement, going from \$19.99, to \$29.99, to \$49.99, to finally only five payments of \$149.99. The fake advertisement ends with a series of terms and conditions, including “only blank cheques” being accepted (22 Minutes, 2012).

One of the clearer indices of the controversy's broader impact is how it was represented in political cartoons. Visual imagery, especially comic imagery, is often ignored in studies of security. But as Hansen has argued, visual images like cartoons can play a key role in the "public constitution of threats and dangers" (2011:51).<sup>170</sup> The significance of visual media for securitization comes from how images possess specific properties which enable them to operate differently from verbal utterances. For example, images often "evoke an immediate, emotive response that exceeds that of the text" (Hansen, 2011:55). Images also benefit from a "circulability" in that they can be easily transmitted and shared across social networks, especially in the case of social media (Hansen, 2011:57). Hansen's argument is persuasive, but it needs to be extended to cases where the emotions provoked by images can frustrate and constrain securitizing moves, rather than simply enabling them.

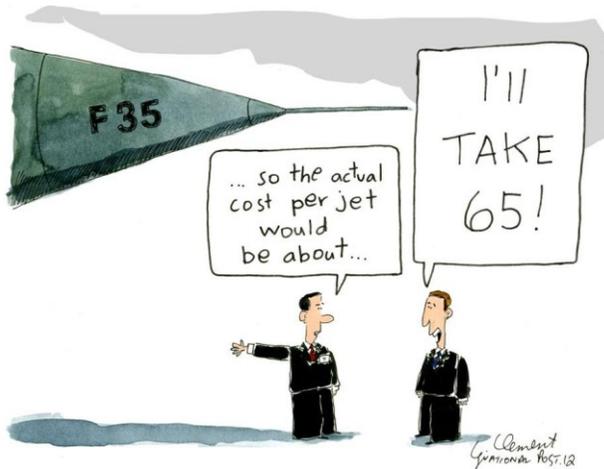
The F-35 offers one such case. Since the plane's announcement in 2010 the ensuing controversy spurred the creation of dozens of political cartoons critical of the F-35 procurement.<sup>171</sup> Figure 5 offers a sample of those images focusing on the treatment of the taxpayer.

### **Figure 5: Sample Political Cartoons of the F-35**

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<sup>170</sup> See also Williams (2003).

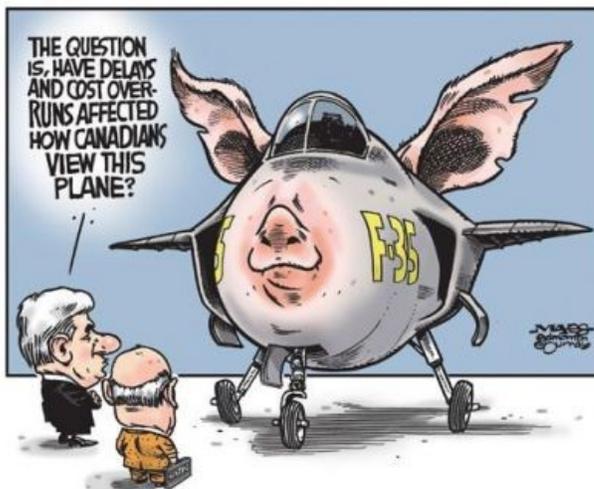
<sup>171</sup> One library can be viewed at <https://www.artizans.com/search.htm?n=1&searcht=%22f-35%22&subj=1&imgtype=7>.



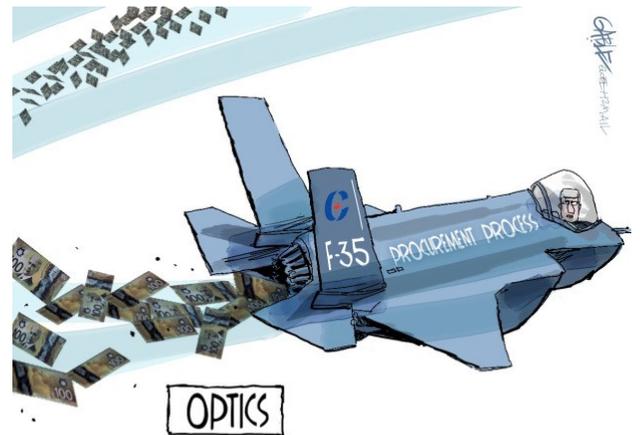
(Clement, 2012)



(Campbell, 2012)



(Mayes, 2012)



(Gable, 2012)

Each of these images engages in a different representational strategy. The upper two images take aim at Defence Minister Mackay. While both focus on the popular perception that he was inordinately enthusiastic about the plane, the first suggests that he was too quick in his judgment to consider costs, the second suggests that he was simply indifferent. In the bottom two images the treatment of costs is even more overt. The likening of the F-35 to a pig taps into long history of satirical tropes which portray

government waste as ‘pork’. In a nod to growing public suspicions about the procurement, the characters in the frame—Prime Minister Harper and Associate Minister of Defence Fantino—are more concerned with how Canadians view the plane than its actual costs. The final and most blatant image simply shows the F-35 exhaust spewing \$100 bills with the Prime Minister in the pilot seat. While each of these images employs different representational strategies, the thematic thrust is similar: the government has failed to diligently manage taxpayer funds. The result is frustration, anger, and suspicion over a break with the government’s prevailing image as sound fiscal stewards.

#### **6.4. Conclusion: The Unexpected Costs of Embarrassment**

In this chapter, I’ve argued for treating the F-35 debate as a series of securitizing moves derailed by a politics of embarrassment. Treating the F-35 as an instance of securitization not only fits better with what government officials were actually arguing, it explains why the process so consistently circumvented the regular rules of procurement. The politics of embarrassment allows us to make sense of the acutely emotional and hostile reaction. Instead of mobilizing fears over the vulnerability of the Canadian polity, the government’s security claims precipitated a series of embarrassing public encounters. The genesis of these embarrassing moments can be traced to a series of political repertoires which compromised the government’s public image as sober managers of security and sound fiscal stewards. From alarmist Russian rhetoric, to treating the F-35 as a status symbol, to a series of financial missteps in the procurement process—the behavior of the government failed to accord with the ‘brand’ it had long cultivated for itself.

It bears mentioning that all governments suffer embarrassment. In 2017 Harjit Sajjan, the Liberal Defence Minister, embellished that he was the “architect” of Operation Medusa in Afghanistan a decade prior. He apologized shortly afterward, but his public image as a soft-spoken minister not prone to exaggeration was punctured. The year prior, Liberal Prime Minister Justin Trudeau found himself in a heated dispute in Parliament where he accidentally elbowed an Opposition MP. For a leader with a public persona committed to positive politics and ‘sunny ways’, the incident was deeply embarrassing. These are everyday experiences of politics, brought about lapses in competence, as well as political adversaries looking push actors off-balance.

But against these more common experiences the case of the F-35 stands out for at least three reasons. First, the embarrassment of the F-35 was acutely transformative in ways that transcend the reputation of any one actor. The reactions it provoked created a wholly new emotional context—what I described in chapter 3 as a distribution of embodied judgment. From this point, the public conversation dramatically shifted from a debate over how this plane would ensure the security of Canada, to a debate over the competence and truthfulness of the government. These effects went beyond a simple change in language. Leadership over the program was taken away from DND and given to Public Works, and the newly created National Fighter Procurement Secretariat hoped “to restore the confidence of Parliament and the Canadians in the process that will be used to replace the CF-18 fleet” (NFPS, 2017). In sum, the experience of embarrassment de-securitized the F-35.

Second, it’s remarkable how this emotional context configured the certainty of different actors within the debate. For proponents of the F-35 there was little doubt that,

absent this one particular aircraft, Canada would be at an intolerable risk. For opponents angered, frustrated, or suspicious of the government's performance, there was often no question that the acquisition of the F-35 was the worst possible outcome. This produced some paradoxical behaviors, including the Liberal party's commitment to hold both an open competition *and* exclude the F-35 from consideration. Despite the blooming complexity of the F-35 debate, actors could quickly sort through a range of different representations and settle on those which aligned with their emotional disposition. By suffusing certainty, emotions narrowed the parameters of the debate.

Finally, while embarrassing moments are rarely intentional, the sheer scale of unintended consequences in this case is impressive. Instead of leading to positive news cycles about the government's efforts to recapitalize the military, the embarrassment of the F-35 created a significant public backlash, even among usually sympathetic conservative voices in the media. Instead of ensuring the CF-18s were replaced on schedule by 2020, the episode forced the government to invest in costly life-extending upgrades (Canadian Press, 2014). Perhaps most significant of all is how the embarrassment of the F-35 weighed upon the prospects of Conservative governance when it should have been at its strongest. Soon after the Conservatives won a majority government in 2011 criticism of the F-35 peaked, and what should have been an empowered institutional position quickly transformed into a posture of constant defensiveness. Theorists of securitization have long suggested that one of the main attractions of invoking a security arguments is in how it empowers actors to "gain control" over a situation (Wæver, 1995:54). In the case of the F-35, that control proved to be an illusion.

## 7.0 Balancing the Ledger

The crux of this dissertation is that emotions matter for the politics of security, but in ways that are starkly different than normally realized. In the introduction, I distilled these differences into two central arguments: going ‘beyond monochrome’ and moving ‘from grease to glue’.

In going ‘beyond monochrome’, I argued that security studies should widen the ambit of emotional experience it considers important and move beyond its conventional focus on fear. Although this widened analytical lens peeks through at various points in the history of security studies, such as Niebuhr’s fascination with pride (Ross, 2013), and is visible in IR’s more recent emotion turn, the field of security studies as whole retains a narrowed and skewed focus towards fear. This analytical focus on fear can still be hugely diverse—we can look at fear of interstate war, fear of disease, fear of migration, fear of the collapse of the liberal international order, and even fear of fear itself (Williams, 2011b). We can debate how these fears will stack up against each other in a hierarchy of threats (Buzan & Wæver, 2009). We can point to how fears play a key role in modern techniques of governance (Debrix & Barder, 2009). We talk about how the concrete fear of enemies central to realism offers a bulwark against deeper forms of epistemic uncertainty (Huysmans, 1998a). But none of this escapes the fundamental emotional monochrome which structures how we think and theorize about the politics of security. Discussing emotions and the politics of security becomes about debating the political potency of different shades of grey.

By contrast, a core argument of this dissertation is that security discourse can be sites of vibrant, messy, admixtures of emotion. Popular fears can mingle and intermix

with anger, shame, comedy, and host of different affects to create highly diverse emotional contexts. The intensity and specificity of these emotions ebbs and flows in relation to a history of social and political interaction. This diversity isn't exceptional, it is the "default setting" world politics (Ross, 2014:21). Mixed emotional experiences are products of what I described in Chapter 3 as competing processes of entrainment; processes which signal different groups, interests, and identities, all of which are embedded in different political projects and visions of order. From this view, such diverse emotional experiences are an inevitable result of the fact that there is no lasting, universal agreement in human societies over how to feel when confronted with different problems and situations. In security studies, we take it for granted that accounting for different interests, identities, and norms is essential to understanding political action. It's time to extend this presumption to different emotional experiences as well.

In calling for the field to move 'from grease to glue', this dissertation makes an argument for thinking about how emotions not only facilitate political action, but can also frustrate and constrain it. It's true that IR in general lacks a coherent vision of the role of emotion and affect in political action (T. Hall & Ross, 2015; E. Hutchison & Bleiker, 2014). In security studies however, most thinking has tacitly gravitated towards treating fear as an instrument of collective mobilization—what I called the fear-as-mobilization thesis in Chapter 2. Security claims are viewed as working to instill, circulate, and intensify popular fears over a threat to a community and thus become a chief source of legitimacy in generating new powers and practices. Popular fears are viewed as offering a brief window of opportunity which enables actors to 'slip' free of the constraints of normal political order. These arguments have their roots in a much older view of

emotions as a disruptive force in political life; essentially a mistake which subverts what would have been otherwise rational behavior (Mercer, 2006:291-292).

Popular emotions can certainly empower political actors to disrupt social order, overturn existing social conventions, and to mobilize support for alternative political projects. But this is only part of a more complicated story. Another part of this story is how emotions can be a powerful constraint which binds order in place and severely limits political action. For sociologists operating in the tradition of Durkheim, emotions have always served an important function as the “glue” that hold society together (Collins, 2004:102-103). The argument is not entirely unfamiliar to IR: a research program on ‘naming and shaming’ continues to explore how NGOs, journalists, and international organizations instrumentalize shame to force states in meeting their human rights commitments (e.g. Risse & Sikkink, 1999). But this research typically ignores the emotional dimensions of shame, often treating it as a strategy of moral “persuasion” which looks to leverage actors’ identities. The distinctiveness of my project comes from arguing that we should examine how emotions frustrate and constrain actors in the context of security discourse. The cases that we need to consider are when security discourses appear to ‘misfire’ and provoke public outrage, when security claims invite accusations of shameful or dishonest behavior, or when such claims leave officials vulnerable to public embarrassment.

This final chapter completes the arc of the argument with two discussions. The first section discusses the implications of the argument current and future research. In the final section, I leverage the findings of this project into a normative argument over how

this view of the contentious politics of emotion can be used to urge greater caution and restraint for security actors.

## **7.1 Implications for Current and Future Research**

### *7.1.1 Current Research*

While the ideas presented here reach beyond securitization theory, there is no denying the affinity between my argument and this body of work. Securitization theory is, and will likely continue to be, an extremely useful way for thinking about the social construction of security politics.

At the same time this project flags two key problems for the securitization approach. One is the issue of the audience: the group security actors are trying convince. As I argued in Chapter 3, securitization theory provides a far too passive picture of audiences. Audiences, whether they are popular or elite, are not passive vessels waiting to have fears spoken into them by some state official or political elite. Audiences can be hostile. They can laugh. They can be angry. They can be totally indifferent. They can view the speaker's claims as shameful or embarrassing. As the empirical discussion in Chapters 5 and 6 show, audiences can react to security claims in a range of different ways, including outright belligerence. There's nothing stopping audiences from decrying an official's claim of an urgent threat as "an industrial quantity of bullshit" (Wells, 2012). Audiences may be the ultimate "judge of the act" of securitization (Buzan et al., 1998:41), but we need to be clear about what this judgment looks like. In this project I've argued audiences interpret security claims through the prism of emotions. As embodied judgments, emotions serve as beacons of social navigation; some guiding us to

accept a security interpretation, others sounding the alarm when we are way off course. When we see hostile emotional reactions like those described above, we know a security claim has missed its mark.

A closely related issue here is language. There is too much stock put into the performative power of language, especially in poststructural variants of securitization theory which hold that “‘there is nothing outside the text’ and that meaning can never be fixed” (Stritzel, 2007:361). The power of language is important, but if we ignore its limits then we come to an awkward position where we are unable to explain why some words have an effect of close to zero. In stressing how emotions shape and constrain linguistic opportunities, this project joins second-generation securitization theorists (Balzacq, 2005; Stritzel, 2007), as well as linguistic pragmatists (Goddard & Krebs, 2015a), in stressing the contextual constraints of political action.

While securitization theory is important, this project also has deep ties to IR’s emotion turn.<sup>172</sup> I draw on this literature on a number of points—most notably Ross’s conceptualization of entrainment. But I also look to push the literature further in key ways. The most significant here is methodological. Methodology is a topic routinely ignored by emotion scholars and is often seen as inimical to discussions of such an ephemeral subject matter. I disagree.

Central to this methodological vision is tracing popular emotions through their emergence in repertoires of interaction. For example, the collective pride and veneration surrounding Remembrance Day in Commonwealth countries comes from a specific repertoire of interactions: the wearing of red poppies, the minute of silence, the visiting of

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<sup>172</sup> For a good overview see E. Hutchison and Bleiker (2014).

war memorials, giving thanks to veterans, honoring fallen soldiers, as well as political speeches about the virtue of sacrifice. Repertoires are simultaneously sites of agency where emotions are circulated and entrained, as well as sites where the structuring effects of emotions are most visible in terms of representations and dispositional behaviours. Embedding emotions in interactions makes them tangible and historical. As political analysts we can look at how the emotions generated through these interactions comes to weigh upon and structure future behaviour—such as in how Labour Leader Jeremy Corbyn sparked a fierce controversy over whether he would wear a red poppy to memorial services (Khan, 2015). By looking at how emotions generated in past interactions enable and constrain opportunities for current and future action, we can use emotions to explain political outcomes.

There are, of course, limits to this approach. The repertoires described are not 1:1 representations of reality; they're caricatures of complex patterns of social activity. Causality here is not the efficient causality of 'if A then B', but a dispositional causality.<sup>173</sup> The result are explanations which are far more case specific and less generalizable. But even with these limitations, the interactionist approach taken here likely offers a better path forward than the methodological individualism discussed in Chapter 4.

Finally, there is an unmistakable overlap between this project and realist IR theory. The view of emotional life developed in the preceding chapters is fundamentally unharmonious. How communities come to feel is a product of struggles in arenas like popular culture, practices of memorialization, and public rituals. To be sure this is a very

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<sup>173</sup> See Chapter 3's discussion of Guzzini and dispositions.

different picture of struggle from the conventional military conflict associated with realism. But it is a struggle nonetheless. Emotions are also presented as deeply intertwined with questions of power. They shape the boundaries of what can and cannot be said (Chapter 5), as well as the costs actors confront for saying the wrong things (Chapter 6). The politics of emotion is a power politics.

Critics may argue that this view is so at odds with realism's longstanding treatment of states as rational actors operating under anarchy, that it is simply alien and unrelated. Yet this neglects how emotions have formed a key analytical focus in classical realism. As Solomon (2012a) has argued, Morgenthau had a deep interest in the relationship between love and power. Likewise, Ross (2013) points to how Morgenthau and Niebuhr both saw emotions as playing a key role in shaping dynamic political allegiances. Like Solomon and Ross, this project suggests that there is a deeper, unexamined role for emotions in realist thought, one which has yet to be fully explored.

### *7.1.2 Future Research*

As much as this project has exhorted widening security studies' focus beyond fear, it's also called for a clearer understanding of the role of fear in security studies as well. The discussion of the fear-as-mobilization thesis in Chapter 2 contributes to this goal, but has obvious limitations. For example, discussions of fear in the discipline extend beyond the four clusters of IR theory engaged with in Chapter 2. Equally problematic is that this examination is limited to only contemporary forms of IR theory.

One possibility for future research is a *semantic history* of fear in IR. In his history of crowd theorizing in sociology, Christian Borch describes semantics as the "concepts or vocabulary with which a society uses to describe itself". Following

Luhmann, he argues these semantics often evolve “in close interaction” with a society’s underlying social structure (2012:4). Looking at the language and concepts a discipline uses to articulate a problem—in Borch’s case the problem of crowds—can tell us something about the organization and constitution of an academic field. When we make this analysis historical, meaning we trace how the language and concepts surrounding a problem have evolved over time, we’re able to recover compelling disciplinary histories over what was thought to constitute a compelling ‘problem’ and why. My bet is that examining how IR has conceptualized and problematized fear across different periods and subfields will likely tell us something interesting about how the discipline has constituted itself. This could be a major contribution to the growing interest in disciplinary history and the sociology of knowledge in IR (e.g. Guilhot, 2008; Schmidt, 2002).

The connection between uncertainty and emotion posited in Chapter 3 presents a rich line of inquiry for the immediate future. With the election of Donald Trump, the emergence of Brexit, the international roll-back of democratic institutions, and the rise of right-wing populism more generally, the problem of uncertainty has regained a prominent place in global politics. Wendt’s earlier admonition that “far from facing profound uncertainty, states are confident about each other’s intentions almost all of the time” (2006:207) appears to have aged particularly poorly. This is especially true considering how he framed the United States as a major source of certainty in the international system.

This doesn’t mean however, a return to the rationalist image of uncertainty as the absence of information. Indeed, the problem of contemporary global politics is not so

much a paucity of information, but an excess. How do political actors sort between discourses produced by venerable media and scientific institutions, state governments, and ‘fake news’ outlets? How is the certainty surrounding what were once thought to be deeply embedded humanitarian and democratic norms gradually eroding? The challenge for constructivist IR is not in demonstrating that social facts matter—as was the case in the 1990s. The challenge is explaining *which* social facts come to matter and why.

The reversal of the uncertainty problem is equally intriguing. How do groups become so certain of conspiracy discourses that their views remain all but invulnerable to change? What is it that causes reflexivity, that human capacity for self-reflection and change long vaunted by constructivists, to seize up and shut down? The nexus between (un)certainly and emotion is sure to be a crucial point of departure for unpacking these puzzles.

Also important is understanding the genesis of emotions in world politics. The impact of the Aylan Kurdi photograph on refugee debates was powerful and pervasive, but it was also entirely unpredicted. Why was this image capable of achieving an intense and widespread emotional reaction, while others were not? The approach of studying emotions through repertoires of interaction developed here has promise. But it could also potentially benefit from engaging another recent development in IR theory: the study of micropolitics.

As described by Solomon and Steele, the growing interest in micropolitics is a result of the disenchantment with grand theory in IR and its focus on larger “global systems and structures” (2016:268). A turn to micropolitics represents a curiosity in the practices and experiences through which everyday life in international politics is enacted,

yet slip through the larger analytical net cast by traditional grand theories (2016:270). This doesn't entail activity limited to the Waltzian first or second images (i.e. the individual or the state). The rhythmic chant of 'hands up, don't shoot' by the transnational movement Black Lives Matter, for example, is a micropolitical move which transcends borders. In this project, the areas I identified as important sites of emotional entrainment—popular culture, public rituals, and memorialization—can be understood as arenas of micropolitical activity which concatenate into larger outcomes. Those interested in micropolitics and emotions will likely benefit from greater dialogue and cross fertilization of ideas.

Finally, the different species of the contentious politics of emotion and security discussed in this project do not exhaust the universe of possibilities. The role of trauma and shame in constraining the securitization of indigenous protest, and the role of embarrassment in derailing the acquisition of the F-35, represent only two examples of the ways which in emotion can frustrate and constrain security practices. One context where this kind of explanation may prove useful is the quintessential case of a stalled securitizing move: climate change.

Despite the preponderance of evidence, the growing number of extreme weather events, and uniform expert warnings, the notion that climate change might constitute a security issue remains preposterous and ridiculed by major constituencies in western countries. What are the repertoires of interaction which lead to an emotional context where the threat of climate change can be jeered and mocked? The emotional dynamics surrounding this issue may also be more complex than a simple focus on comic derision allows. Norgaard's (2006) ethnographic fieldwork on climate change in Norway, for

example, hints a very different set of dynamics. Her research suggests Norwegians have avoided taking the threat of climate change seriously because doing so would have resulted in feelings of guilt over how much of Norway's prosperity is linked oil production. Exploring these different types of emotional dynamics may go some ways into accounting for securitization theory's longstanding inability to explain why the securitization of climate change often fails (e.g. Floyd, 2010; McDonald, 2012).

## **7.2 Balancing the Ledger: Tragedy, Emotion, and the Politics of Security**

Studies of security politics face an enduring tension. On the one hand, there is a perennial attraction to the type empowerment entailed by securitizing moves. From the high-level state officials to the grassroots activists, invoking the symbol of 'security' is attractive precisely because it can have "enormous power as an instrument of social and political mobilization" (Buzan quoted in Wæver, 1995:50). As Bigo (2002) and Mueller (2009) argue, security professionals are not simply framing migration and terrorism as security problems because they represent objective and self-apparent threats to society; they do it because it legitimates a steady expansion institutional powers and resources. For more traditional political actors, securitizing moves have a legacy of suspending democratic procedures, silencing opposition, accelerating decision making, and expanding executive prerogative (Aradau, 2004). Whatever the specific benefits, there is a wide and indelible attraction to how security talk promises political actors a specific means to "gain control" over a situation (Wæver, 1995:54).

On the other hand, the attraction of this kind of politics sits in sharp contrast to its ethical problems. To democrats, civil rights activists, and proponents of government oversight, each of the attractions cited above is a cause for major concern. There is an

entire subfield of the securitization literature dedicated to probing the ethical problems of designating something as a security issue.<sup>174</sup> Overwhelmingly, this scholarship has a negative view of the politics of security, often regarding it as a destructive political practice (Roe, 2012).<sup>175</sup> As McDonald describes:

“Those engaging directly with the political function of security overwhelmingly view security as not an end to be furthered or desired, but as a political technology that consistently favours the interests of the powerful and enables both violence and exclusion” (2015:154).

The effects on democracy are a major concern here. In the strongest form of this critique, the fear and enmity mobilized by security discourse offers a wholly different form of political legitimation, one which is in an “inherent tension” with democratic politics (Huysmans, 2014:8-10; see also Aradau, 2004).

I’m not convinced security and democracy are necessarily inimical, or that securitizing moves always have negative effects.<sup>176</sup> On this point I agree with Balzacq: viewing “security in exclusively negative terms amounts to a cheap ethics” in that it forces scholars to “resist anything that looks like a security practice” (2015a:4-5). But none of this detracts from the fact that this kind of politics is often extraordinarily destructive. If nothing else, the post-9/11 period offers a vivid reminder of how excessive practices of securitization have justified torture, reckless wars, expansive surveillance, humanitarian crises, and beyond. One can hold that securitization is

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<sup>174</sup> See Williams (2003), Aradau (2004), Floyd (2010), and Roe (2012) for key contributions.

<sup>175</sup> Again, this does not mean all scholars have a negative view of securitization. As Floyd (2010) argues, under certain conditions, the securitization of the environment can have positive effects.

<sup>176</sup> See Floyd (2010) and Roe (2012) for critiques that security is always a negative. See Williams (2015) for an argument that there is a positive, democratic potential at the heart of the extraordinary politics entailed by securitization.

ethically desirable in some cases, but still believe that this kind of politics is practiced far too widely.

Yet despite thoughtful analyses of these dangers, critics have had little success in diminishing the attractiveness of security politics. This failure is not new. Bigo (2002) noted long ago that despite a wealth of critiques, migration continues to be framed as a security problem because the putative threat of migrants empowers a wide range of political actors. Likewise, it would be naïve to assume that ethnic nationalist politicians would suddenly abandon their mobilizing xenophobia if we simply told them their rhetoric contributed to racial prejudice and violence. The attraction of this type of politics is simply too great. Critics who appeal to democratic values to curb this behavior often find little success. In part, this is because these democratic values have never been as universal as some have come to believe. In part, this is because the mobilizing effects of security politics are simply too attractive.

For critics and scholars, the key question then becomes what can be done to offset the seemingly indelible attractiveness of security politics? How can we balance the ledger, so to speak, between the energizing allure of security politics on one hand, and its manifold dangers on the other?

This is where this project offers its most important contribution. More than anything, the vision of contentious politics developed here underscores how the mobilization of fear is a fickle and fragile phenomenon. Rendered this way, the politics of security becomes less as a predictable means for acquiring power, and more as risk-laden strategy that can backfire. These risks come from how securitizing moves often lead to perverse and unintended consequences.

In Chapter 5 these perverse and unintended consequences came in the form of a conflict between treating indigenous protest as a security issue and the political project of truth and reconciliation. The choice to frame groups like Idle No More as a source of danger undermined the belief that the Canadian state was wholly committed to a radical transformation of its relationship with indigenous peoples. Likewise, the scale and breadth of security agencies' surveillance practices brings into doubt Prime Minister Harper's (2008) claim that Canada is no longer a place for the "attitudes" (read 'colonial attitudes') that inspired residential schools. Equally problematic is how public revelations of this surveillance have only served to bolster of critics of truth and reconciliation. For critics, such practices of surveillance signal more continuity than change, and point to how fears of indigenous resurgence are an enduring feature of Canadian politics. When these surveillance programs are revealed, it serves to confirm critics' belief that reconciliation is little more than gestural. Most problematically, the existence of these programs threatens government officials' capacity for future acts of reconciliation. The failure of a past apology's promised change in behavior to materialize comes to weigh on the sincerity of future apologies. The risk becomes that officials will be unable to appear as genuine without engaging in ever more dramatic and politically costly acts of contrition. These problems need to be added to the possibility that indigenous communities will become aware of how their activism has been construed as a security issue, and that this will spur even greater mobilization amongst indigenous communities.

In Chapter 6 the unintended and perverse consequences were different but no less severe. The original plan to replace the CF-18s before the end of their lifetime failed, and

the government was forced to pursue costly life-extending upgrades. The procurement debate left the Conservative government vulnerable to the accusation that it had misled Parliament and the public over the F-35's costs. It had debilitating effects on the government's public image as sober managers of security and sound fiscal stewards. The attempt to justify the F-35 by raising alarm over Russian Arctic bomber flights was seen as reckless and alarmist. The lack of financial due diligence over the procurement allowed opposition figures to appropriate the Conservatives' most powerful and emotionally evocative trope: that of respecting taxpayers. The F-35 debate also likely caused irreparable damage to the careers of politicians tasked with promoting it, including Defence Minister Peter Mackay who was forced from his position soon after. The F-35 became an intense source of political embarrassment, fueling mocking and derision in Parliament, serving as fodder for cartoonists and comedians, and weakening the government at precisely the moment it should have enjoyed a potent parliamentary majority.

These are not the outcomes of empowered political actors. They represent the perverse and unintended consequences of the choice to respond to a problem by treating it as a security problem. Nothing about these choices was inevitable. Officials could have responded to the grievances of indigenous social movements in a number of different ways, including nation-to-nation diplomacy and negotiation—as was the case with the aborted Kelowna Accord. The need to replace the CF-18s could have been pursued through a rules-based procurement process centered on a transparent and open competition. Both alternatives certainly would have faced challenges, and perhaps they

would have failed for different reasons.<sup>177</sup> But it's also arguable that these alternatives may have resulted in less risk for the actors involved, and fewer perverse outcomes. It's difficult to see how negotiating with indigenous groups would have left government officials as vulnerable to the accusation of shameful and illegitimate behavior as surveillance by security agencies has. Likewise, a rules-based procurement process similar to the New Fighter Acquisition program in the late 1970s<sup>178</sup> may have saved the Conservative government from the embarrassment brought about by the F-35. Instead, there was a misplaced certainty in the belief that a security framing represented the most effective way to manage these problems.

The connection between unintended and perverse consequences and misplaced certainty is significant because it resonates with a much older tradition of thought in the security studies: the security dilemma. I'm not referring here to the security dilemma found in modern versions of neorealism and their reading of the dilemma through the lens of game theory.<sup>179</sup> Instead, I'm referring to its original formulation by John Herz (1950) as a *logic of limitation*.<sup>180</sup>

While deeply influenced by the setting of the Cold War, Herz used the dilemma to describe a context where political actors were likely to ignore the deep uncertainty of social life, make reckless choices, and incur tragic results. Herz saw both "political idealists" and "political realists" as equally prone to this kind of outcome. The former

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<sup>177</sup> For example, it's not clear the Kelowna Accord contained enough funding to 'close the gap' between indigenous and settler communities. There was also no guarantee that the promised funding would have been delivered.

<sup>178</sup> See the discussion of the NFA in Nossal (2016:84, 101-102).

<sup>179</sup> Space constraints limit discussion here, but I elaborate a fuller critique in Van Rythoven (forthcoming).

<sup>180</sup> For a similar take on limitations in classical realism, though more oriented around Morgenthau, see the detailed discussion in Williams (2005). On the important role the idea of limitations play in Herz's work, see Sylvest (2010), Stirk (2005:298), and Schale (2008:414).

overestimated the prospects for rational cooperation, peaceful relations, and a transcending of egotistical interests. The latter were prone to seeing force as the “easy” solution (1950:180), and failed to appreciate how unrestrained power politics quickly spirals out of control. Both views presumed a control of outcomes in ways that ignored how uncertainty is an indelible feature of political life. Herz’s response was a call for a more moderate and restrained posture, a “Realist Liberalism” which:

“must, above all, be conscious of the limits which the ‘gladiatorial’ facts put to its endeavors. Realist Liberalism is the theory and practice of the realizable ideal. As Koestler once put it, ‘the difference between utopia and a working concern is to know one's limits.’” (Herz, 1950:179)

It’s important to note here, if for no other reason than it represents a major departure from how neorealism understands the concept, that Herz’s dilemma is both analytical *and* normative. The purpose of the security dilemma was to provoke political actors into a moment of reflexivity where they could become aware of their own limitations and avoid tragic outcomes. Tragedy, in this context, does not mean something ‘bad’ or ‘unfortunate’ has happened. Nor does tragedy refer to a situation where you are compelled to engage in conflict with others (Mearsheimer, 2001:3). Tragedy occurs when limitations are dismissed, confidence turns to hubris, and miscalculation ends in disaster (Lebow, 2003:20).

Herz saw scholars as playing a key role in provoking this moment of reflexivity. Contrary to the scientific naturalism of contemporary realists which puts them at an awkward distance with their object of inquiry (Oren, 2009), Herz placed a clear premium on public advocacy. The dangers the dilemma came to represent, and in particular global

nuclear war, “fueled Herz’s argument that IR scholars had to become activist(s) by substituting ‘the ideal of the uncommitted, ivory-tower researcher [for] that of *homme engagé*, if not *homme révolté*’” (quoted in Sylvest, 2008:451). This rejection of fact/value divide in naturalistic science is most evident in the “strategic” and “rhetorical” character of Herz’s scholarship, a character which employed realist tropes to thinly veil a liberal humanism (Sylvest, 2008:444). Consider how he placed caution over the pursuit of security in a seemingly innocuous appeal to self-interest. By framing both aggression and complaisance as equally dangerous, Herz redefined actors’ self-interest in terms of moderation. By presenting moderation and self-preservation as one and the same, Herz engaged in a rhetorical strategy that covertly inserts a liberal impulse to de-escalation and diplomacy, but without any overt recourse to liberal values and ideals (Sylvest, 2008:446). The effect is that scholars look to restrain intemperate actors by pointing to how the unintended and perverse consequences of their actions will harm their own self-interest.

Contemporary scholars can take Herz’s thinking as a model for balancing the ledger between the attractiveness of security politics and the pernicious dangers which follow. The most effective way to diminish the allure of security politics may not be by appealing to some higher liberal, democratic, or emancipatory ideal. Instead, the best option may be to present the choice to engage in the politics of security as a threat to self-preservation and self-interest. Here the analyst presents the move to securitize as a risk-laden and potentially self-defeating strategy, something that threatens prospective actors’ broader political aspirations, public image, and even personal legacies. The analyst works to draw parallels between contemporary actors and historical figures such as

George W. Bush or Tony Blair—figures whose naïve embrace of security politics led to a series of perverse and unanticipated consequences and, ultimately, a tarnished legacy. The effect of these efforts is to recast the practice of securitization as a dilemma: a type of politics that appeals because of its mobilizing potential, but whose attractiveness is equally balanced by the danger of perverse and unintended consequences.

The image of a contentious politics of emotion and security is a crucial resource in this kind of normative engagement. This is because it captures why these perverse and unintended consequences are so recurrent. Feeling confident in their understanding of their abilities and environment, political actors ignore how security discourse is open to a range of emotional experiences, some of which frustrate and constrain security practices. Failing to recognize the contentious relationship between emotion and security, actors engage in securitizing moves unaware that the political control assumed by the fear-as-mobilization thesis is often a fleeting illusion. Unprepared for the hostile and emotional reaction to their claims, actors often double down and engage in even more dramatic, and often more implausible security claims.<sup>181</sup>

By pointing to these perverse and unintended consequences, scholars can frame the choice to securitize as a dilemma; something which remains attractive because of its capacity for mobilization, but whose appeal is weighed down by the danger it may provoke an angry backlash, come to be seen as shameful, or linger as a source of embarrassment for the speaker. The point of this is not to eliminate or “escape” security politics (McDonald, 2015), but to bound it in way that can avoid its most pernicious

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<sup>181</sup> Consider how the debate over the F-35 began with need to protect Canadian sovereignty and ended with the claim not purchasing the plane would somehow ‘crater’ the Canadian aerospace industry.

dangers. In this task, the contentious politics of emotion can play a constructive and positive role.

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## Appendix A: Acronyms

Aboriginal JIG	Aboriginal Joint Intelligence Group
AFN	Assembly of First Nations
APTN	Aboriginal Peoples Television Network
ATIP	Access to Information and Privacy Request
AWMM	Annual Women's Memorial March
CBC	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
CHRT	Canadian Human Rights Tribunal
CPC	Conservative Party of Canada
CSIS	Canadian Security and Intelligence Service
DND	Department of National Defence
DoD	Department of Defense
GOC	Government Operations Center
HoC	House of Commons
INAC	Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada
IR	International Relations
IRBs	Industrial and Regional Benefits
ITAC	Integrated Terrorism Assessment Center (formerly Integrated Threat Assessment Center before 2011)
JSF	Joint Strike Fighter
MP	Member of Parliament
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDP	New Democratic Party
NFPS	National Fighter Procurement Secretariat
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NORAD	North American Aerospace Defense Command
NWAC	Native Women's Association of Canada
OAGC	Office of the Auditor General of Canada
OPCC	Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada
OPBO	Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer
PMO	Prime Minister's Office
RCAP	Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
SCND	Standing Committee on National Defence
TRCC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada
UN	United Nations

## **Appendix B: Interview Questions**

### **Indigenous Protest, Collective Emotions, and National Security**

#### *Preamble*

Thank you for meeting with me today. This interview is for a case study into a research project on the relationship between collective emotions and national security in Canada. We'll spend roughly an hour and a half discussing a national security issue as identified by the Canadian federal government.

The interview will focus on your understanding and interaction with this issue. While I'll be asking the questions it is your special insider experience and knowledge that tells the story. A broad portion of the discussion will concern the ways in which collective emotions either facilitate or constrain the recognition of something as a national security issue.

When answering these questions it's important to note that there is not necessarily a right or wrong answer. Instead I'm interested in how you feel about this issue, and how you think these feelings might be shared by broader portions of society. It's Ok if you feel you need to take some time to elaborate on your answer. Based on your answers I may ask follow up questions. This may include asking for elaboration or examples, or returning to something you stated earlier in the session.

If at any time in the course of the session you feel uncomfortable please let me know and we'll stop the session. Do you have any questions before we begin?

#### **Part 1**

Today we we'll be focusing on the issue of the surveillance of indigenous protest. I'd like to start with you walking me through a few general background questions.

1. What immediately comes to mind when you think about indigenous protest? In thinking about your answer, imagine you are meeting someone from outside of Canada and you need to give them a brief overview of this issue. What would you want to say?
2. If you had to briefly summarize two or three of the main issues surrounding indigenous protest in Canada, what do you think they are?
3. How do you think this issue is perceived by broader Canadian society? Is this an important issue for Canadians? Why?

#### **Part 2**

1. Do you think this issue should be viewed as a matter of national security? Why or why not?
2. Increasingly, we are seeing reports from journalists, activists, and academics that indigenous protests and social movements are being surveilled by federal agencies. Reports suggest the rationale for this surveillance is that these groups are seen as constituting a potential threat to the national security of Canada.

From your perspective, why do you think this issue is viewed as a matter of national security?

3. Why do you think some people object to framing this as a national security issue? Who are these groups and how do you think these objections play out in broader Canadian society?

### **Part 3**

1. When you hear the term ‘national security’, what feelings or emotions come to mind?
2. What kind of fears, if any, do you think might circulate around the issue of the surveillance of indigenous protest in Canada?
3. Do you think these fears are justified?
4. What other kinds of emotions do you think circulate around the issue the surveillance of indigenous protest in Canada? Try and think about groups who are critical or opposed to this framing of national security, as well as groups who support this view.

### **Part 4**

1. There appears to be a reluctance by security officials and certain politicians to publicly frame indigenous protest as a national security issue. While internal government documents make this connection, the association between the two is rarely made in public.

In your view, do think there is a reluctance on behalf of these officials to make a connection between national security and indigenous protest in public? Why or why not?

2. Let’s go back to the kinds of emotions surrounding the surveillance of indigenous protest in Canada.

From your point of view, is there any way these feelings may have limited officials’ ability to frame this issue as a matter of national security? In other

words, how might have the emotions surrounding this issue limited officials ability to say this is a national security issue?

## **Part 5**

1. When we talk about popular emotions, especially in relation to national security, we often make reference to historic memories of national or international traumas. For example, when talking about national security policy in the United States it's difficult not to mention the trauma of 9/11.

What kind of traumas or historical memories helped to shape the emotions surrounding the framing of this national security issue?

2. Often when we talk about popular emotions and national security the discussion tends to gravitate towards certain kinds of symbols, icons, images, or everyday practices which are both sources and expression of particular emotions. For example, Remembrance Day in Canada is shaped emotionally by the symbol of the poppy and the practice of the moment of silence.

When you recall the emotions surrounding the surveillance of indigenous protest what kind of symbols, icons, or images come to mind? For example, is there an image in newspapers or social media that is important in shaping how people feel about this issue?

3. Relatedly, do you recall any practices or social movements that are important in shaping how people feel about this issue? These can come from government, or they come from broader civil society.
4. How does the framing of the surveillance of indigenous protest as a matter of national security make you feel? Why?
5. How do you think the framing of the surveillance of indigenous protest as a matter of national security makes other groups feel? What makes you believe they feel this way?
6. How do you think these emotions, both those of which support this framing of national security as well as those which are critical of it, have shaped yours or others interactions in this issue? Put another way, how do those emotions surrounding this issue shape how people interact in venues such as parliament, the media, or civil society?

## **Part 6**

1. The conventional pattern in cases of national security is that collective fears legitimate the creation of a new security policy to mitigate that source of

insecurity. Thinking about this case, what are some of the ways in which these emotions may have led to unintended or unpredictable outcomes?