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Framing Terrorism and Migration in the USA: The Role of the Media
in Securitization Processes

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Abstract

American security discourse has intensified profoundly since 9/11. For nearly two decades, anxiety about the threat posed by the foreign *other* against the American *self* has influenced policy debates, the legitimization (and execution) of exceptional measures and the public mood. These changes in security discourse have co-occurred with seismic shifts in the increasingly complex media and information marketplace. The proliferation of media actors has stimulated more targeted news produced for niche audiences, meaning that public processing of security issues has also changed dramatically. Cable news in particular has matured into a polarized genre of information that commands the widest audience in the US.

Through a cross-disciplinary approach that integrates *securitization theory* from International Relations and the broad *framing* scholarship from political communication, this thesis investigates the relationship of these developments. Specifically, it investigates the impact of media in the social (de)construction of security threats. Two illustrative case studies are considered across two presidential administrations from 2001-2016. First, the securitization of terrorism is explored with an emphasis on the discursive (de)legitimization of torture as an exceptional response. Even among exceptional measures, torture is exceptional: its practice has been banned both during and outside of wartime. That it is even up for debate – never mind that it briefly became “standard operating procedures” and nearly half of all Americans support it – is evidence of the successful securitization of terrorism. The second case study focuses on the securitization of unauthorized immigration, analyzing the contestation of competing remedy proposals and moral evaluations of the foreign *other*. Despite the oft-invoked immigration-terrorism nexus, American attitudes toward unauthorized immigrants have softened.

In both cases, press framing appears to have influenced public attitudes, above and beyond political elite signals, suggesting that the media can act as an independent and strategic actor. This has implications for securitization theory, which traditionally relegates media to a facilitating role, rather than an independent securitizing actor. This also has broader democratic implications as unelected press actors increasingly assume political roles and drive the (de)legitimization of exceptional measures. Further contributions of this project include the discovery of cross-sectoral patterns, such as the consequences of silencing and the effectiveness of euphemisms. Finally, this thesis

demonstrates the value of synthesizing concepts in framing scholarship with securitization theory. Methodological tools commonly used in framing studies – content and public opinion analysis – empower securitization theory with quantitative sophistication and hypothesis-tested assumptions that have been previously overlooked.

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Authors Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Printed Name: Syed Nasser Qadri

Signature: _____

Abbreviations

ACLU	American Civil Liberties Union
ANES	American National Election Studies
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CS	Copenhagen School
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CIR	Comprehensive immigration reform
DACA	Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals
DAPA	Deferred Action for Parents of U.S. Citizens and Lawful Permanent Residents
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
EBSVERA	Enhanced Border Security and Visa Entry Reform Act of 2002
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigations
GPW	Geneva Convention III on the Treatment of Prisoners of War
ICE	Immigrations and Customs Enforcement
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IIRIRA	Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996
INS	Immigration and Naturalization Services
IR	International Relations
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
MIP	Most important problem
SAP	Statement of Administration Policy
SBI	Secure Border Initiative
UN	United Nations
UNCAT	United Nations Convention Against Torture
US	United States of America
USA PATRIOT	Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

American security discourse has intensified profoundly since 2001 (Bigo, 2008; Holland, 2013; MacDonald & Hunter, 2019). The September 11 attacks that year ushered in nearly two decades of heightened anxieties, influencing policy debates and the public willingness to accept extraordinary measures aimed at curtailing the development of perceived security threats. This has been principally evidenced by terrorism and unauthorized immigration, two highly salient issues that have been used to justify a broad array of exceptional measures including military campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq (Donnelly, 2013); the use of torture in military prisons and “black-sites” abroad (McCoy, 2012); retrenchment of civil liberties and privacy (most infamously through the USA PATRIOT Act); the restructuring of federal government to combine policing of terrorism and immigration into a single Department of Homeland Security; the construction of extralegal border barriers (Mittelstadt, Speaker, Meissner, & Chishti, 2011: 9); and other policies ranging from minor airport security procedures to draconian deportation policies targeting children and families. The perceived severity of the threats that inspired and legitimized these measures has hardly diminished over time. Counterterrorism remains a central component of the U.S. National Security Strategy (2017), while Donald Trump’s presidential victory following a campaign of demonizing immigrants as “rapists” and criminals (Trump, 2015a) to be barred from entry by a border wall (Trump, 2015b) signal the continued characterization of foreign *others* as existential security threats to Americans. Proposed and materialized exceptional measures underscore the urgency to examine the mechanisms underlying their legitimization.

Yet the American public’s evaluation of security threats and tolerance for exceptional measures has been inconsistent. Moreover, attitudes have not always aligned with cues from political elites, traditionally regarded as the primary speakers in security (Buzan, Wæver, & De Wilde, 1998). Support for torture against suspected terrorists, for example, infamously increased, becoming the majority opinion briefly for the first time early in Barack Obama’s presidency, despite his anti-torture campaign rhetoric and immediate ban on his predecessor’s “enhanced interrogation” program (Zegart, 2012). Similarly, American attitudes have grown increasingly pro-immigrant (Hartig, 2018; Jones, 2019; Pew Research Center, 2018b) despite mixed signals from political elites:

border security bluster and record deportations in recent years have co-occurred with compassionate rhetoric and legal reprieve for “dreamers”. If not cues from political elites, what accounts for the observed variation in security attitudes?

In International Relations (IR), the social construction of security threats has been studied within the analytical framework of *securitization theory*. The theory suggests that security issues emerge and dissolve through a political elite-driven contestation of competing securitizing and desecuritizing discourses that respectively invest an issue with or detach it from a threatening complexion (Balzacq, 2011b). Recognizing the aforementioned disconnect between political elite cues and public security attitudes, this thesis advances securitization theory to consider the role of *media* in the social (de)construction of security threats. High engagement between the American public and the press (Knight Foundation, 2018; Media Insight Project, 2014) underscores the imperative to consider the impact the press has had on public security attitudes by accounting for its selection, emphasis and promotion of particular frames (Gitlin, 1980: 7). This link is all the more crucial as public trust in the media erodes (Jones, 2004) and concerns of “fake news” disrupting the political process proliferate. First, understanding the influence of media messaging on security attitudes can illustrate the depth and reach of this distrust. More specifically, it can demonstrate which press actors are considered more trustworthy and on which issues for different audiences. Second, if the press is shaping public security attitudes, then it may be driving political behavior and voting preferences (DellaVigna & Kaplan, 2007; Martin & Yurukoglu, 2017). Policymakers attuned to the mood of an electorate that is deriving its cues from the press may be reacting to these pressures when deliberating exceptional measures (Baum & Potter, 2008). In other words, media messaging may be driving policymaking on security issues by both influencing the voting electorate and tapping into the motivations of public officials seeking to score political points. Analyzing the role the press plays in security construction is thus critical not only for understanding its impact on public perceptions, but also on the broader political and *exceptional* politics process.

Through a cross-disciplinary integration of securitization theory and framing scholarship, two illustrative case studies are considered within the American security context across two presidential administrations (2001-2016). First, the securitization of terrorism is explored with an emphasis on the discursive (de)legitimization of torture as an exceptional response. While several exceptional measures have been proposed and

adopted in the counterterrorist effort, torture is exceptional even among exceptional measures: its practice has been banned both during and outside of wartime. That it is even up for debate – never mind that it briefly became part of “standard operating procedures” (Gourevitch & Morris, 2008) and nearly half of all Americans support it (Tyson, 2017) – is strong evidence of the successful securitization of terrorism. The second case study focuses on immigration security discourse, analyzing the contestation of competing remedy proposals and moral evaluations of the foreign *other*. Specifically, different characterizations of unauthorized immigration – as either a criminal threat to society or a procedural issue to be resolved through documentation – are juxtaposed. Together these two issues, terrorism and unauthorized immigration, represent two principal issues governing American security discourse; they are also interrelated constituents of a broader terrorism-migration nexus in securitization literature (Huysmans & Buonfino, 2008). A more in-depth justification for the selection of these cases is discussed below, but it is worth recognizing that, as “newsworthy” issues that contain dramatic and compelling arcs (Lewis, 2012), the issues are critical candidates for testing and developing the theoretical integration of securitization theory and media framing.

This introductory chapter identifies the theoretical points of entry, primary research questions and ambitions of this research. It is followed by a scene-setting discussion and justification of the two case studies selected – terrorism and immigration – and a necessary contextualization of the American media landscape. Finally, a summary of contributions is discussed alongside an outline of the chapters to come.

1.2 Theoretical Entry Point and Aims: Analyzing Security Discourse

The Copenhagen School’s (CS) securitization theory has been the primary vehicle for relating security and discourse in IR scholarship. Grounded in constructivism and the effort to broaden and widen security studies, the framework holds that security threats are constituted through an intersubjective negotiation between security speakers and their audience (Buzan et al., 1998). Rather than identifying security and threats as objective truths “out there”, the CS argues that threats are socially constructed through the articulation of an issue as a threat – or a speech act – and subsequent acceptance by the audience of this characterization (Balzacq, 2005; Balzacq, Léonard, & Ruzicka, 2016; Buzan et al., 1998; Waever, 1995a). In short, security is manufactured through intersubjective dialogue. The acceptance of an issue as an existential threat – or

securitization – pushes that issue outside the domain of everyday politics and potentially into the realm of emergency politics, where exceptional measures may be applied. *Desecuritization* moves in the opposite direction – it describes the discursive contestation of the securitization narrative and legitimacy of operating in the exception; when successful, exceptional measures can be delegitimized, shifting the contested issue back down to the domain of regular politics. While this socially constructed process opens the doors to a multitude of security issues in different sectors, there is always the potential for competing (de)securitizing narratives to pit different identities against each other: the threatened *Self* against the threatening *Other* and those that securitize against those that desecuritize (Hansen, 2013). The focus in this dissertation is on the latter set of competing identities: the securitizing *Self* versus the desecuritizing *Self*.

Recognizing opportunities for interdisciplinary cross-fertilization, this study synthesizes securitization theory with research on framing and framing effects. The marriage not only resolves some of the key theoretical, methodological and empirical limitations within securitization theory, it also draws on insights from the vast framing scholarship. Theoretically, the securitization framework overemphasizes political elites as securitizing actors to the neglect of other actors like the press (Watson, 2012). The press-state debate within framing scholarship and political communication more broadly, on the other hand, outlines the conditions under which the press can act autonomously and even drive policy (e.g., Baum & Potter, 2008; Callaghan & Schnell, 2001; Robinson, 1999). Further, while securitization theory offers a structuring logic and expectations for the process and implication of socially constructing security specifically, the literature on framing and framing effects offers useful more general quantitative methodological tools that can enrich the context-defining discourse analyses typically used in securitization research; this in turn enables oft-neglected cross-case comparison. Specifically, securitization theory points to a certain “internal, linguistic-grammatical” (Buzan et al., 1998: 32) set of rules for articulating security that are congruent with the “particular dialect of the different [security] sectors” (33). It steers the analyst toward language that (de)legitimizes exceptional measures or (un)characterizes an issue as a threat. Framing offers the logical next step: guidance on how to measure this discourse in a standardized, comparable and reproducible way. Moreover, through hypothesis-testing, framing effects research has identified key variables that influence when and why certain frames resonate with audiences. The

findings can be integrated to explain why certain (de)securitizing narratives are more successful, bringing the otherwise underdeveloped and inadequately measured audience (Balzacq, 2011a; Balzacq et al., 2016; Stritzel, 2007; Watson, 2012) more consciously into the securitization framework. Framing also provides methodological tools that enable objective and consistent measurement of the competition between securitizing and desecuritizing frames, thus giving more attention to the desecuritization process (Watson, 2012). In short, the inquiry is largely situated within and guided by the theoretical securitization framework, but complementary methodological tools and concepts from framing research are used to operationalize the empirical analysis, accommodating multiple actors (like the press and audience) and processes (like desecuritization) while also enabling quantitative comparisons across actors and cases.

A secondary aim of this thesis is to lay the theoretical and methodological groundwork for future securitization scholars seeking to show how security is (de)constructed from multiple perspectives using a flexible and widely applicable framework. While a rich scholarship already exists on studying securitization through discourse analysis (Balzacq et al., 2016; Watson, 2012: 282), a mixed-methods design that combines qualitative discourse and quantitative content analysis is lacking and the role of the audience remains critically underdeveloped (Balzacq, 2011a; Balzacq et al., 2016; Stritzel, 2007; Watson, 2012). Watson (2012) recognizes several abstract parallels between securitization and framing, recognizing the former as a subfield of the latter. This project aims to explicate and operationalize these parallels – in doing so, it makes theoretical, methodological and empirical contributions to securitization scholarship by justifying, implementing and drawing inferences from a robust research design.

The more immediate aims of this synthesis are to resolve important theoretical and empirical puzzles. Despite high engagement between the press and the public, the role of the former as an actor in the social construction of international security threats has received scarce attention. The press has largely been sidelined as a functional actor. Yet the persistent narrative of an increasingly influential press – and as evidenced in subsequent chapters, recognition among political elites of the loss of autonomy to the press – suggests that the press may be more than a mouthpiece for elites, and may instead be an independent securitizing actor. International relations literature has not engaged deeply with this possibility. Thus, this thesis is primarily driven by the following research question: *can the media be an independent (de)securitizing actor?*

Heeding calls in political communication scholarship (e.g., Baum & Potter, 2008), *the media* is not treated as some undifferentiated mass, but is disaggregated at the outlet level. Securitization theory acknowledges the press (again, as a functional actor), but stresses political elites as the primary speakers of security (Watson, 2012). This first research question analyzes the extent to which the press can act as an independent and strategic actor in the securitization process. Tactically, this requires investigating how framing – again, by specific media outlets – of security issues diverges from political elite messaging, and under which conditions divergence exists. Given that (de)securitization is an intersubjective process, the project will analyze whether frames trickle down to audiences in the form of framing effects. In doing so, this thesis addresses another theoretical gap in existing securitization research: the measurement of the audience in the intersubjective process. While the audience is recognized as an integral component of the securitization process, attempts to bring it into existing research have lacked scientific rigor and consistency. In short, the first question aims to resolve two gaps in existing securitization research: the role of media as a securitizing actor, and the measurement of audience in the intersubjective process.

The second research question addresses empirical puzzles related to two salient issues: terrorism and unauthorized immigration. The prevailing narrative suggests that the Obama administration promoted an anti-torture agenda. Nonetheless, the public has become more tolerant, with a majority of Americans briefly supporting torture against suspected terrorists early in Obama's presidency. Similarly, despite the discursive linkage of unauthorized immigration to terrorism – both in speech and policy – Americans have become more pro-immigrant in recent years. While these two paradoxical outcomes alone merit exploration, the simultaneous rejection of foreign Others in one case (demonstrated in the growing support for torture against suspected terrorists) and embrace of foreign Others in a separate case illustrate yet another striking puzzle: Americans have shown inconsistent attitudes toward foreign Others. These empirical puzzles motivate the second research question: *how did exceptional measures become (de)legitimized in the US in response to the perceived threats posed by terrorism and unauthorized immigration, and how were these contested by competing frames?* This question offers an opportunity to contrast securitizing and desecuritizing dynamics across two sectors of security – societal and military – offering, for the first time, an opportunity to explore how media and audience effects

materialize within and vary across sectors. These cases are described in greater detail and justified next.

1.3 Case Selection: Terrorism and Unauthorized Immigration in the US (2001-2016)

This thesis explores the securitization of *terrorism* and *unauthorized immigration* in the US from 2001 to 2016. The US represents a critical and revelatory case (Yin, 2009). As a democratic system with checks and balances that holds officials accountable (to the public and other branches of government) and requires the legitimization of exceptional measures, it is a critical case because it meets conditions for testing and developing securitization theory. Specifically, the interaction of a rich American media landscape – described in greater detail in the following section – and democratic institutions provides a useful test of whether the press can have an independent securitizing effect. As the site of the 9/11 attacks and primary instigator of the resultant “war on terror”, the US has undergone significant shifts in security discourse over the decade and a half following 9/11. Even discounting the role that media has played, a longitudinal study of security discourses post-9/11 is significant in its own right, because it contributes to a better understanding of how oppositional (de)securitizing identities were formed and juxtaposed. Nor are the discursive shifts limited to home: as the predominant military power in the world, the US can influence security discourses and priorities for its security partners. The insights drawn from analyzing the US can potentially inform securitization dynamics in other states with similar political and media landscapes. The US is also a *revelatory* case in that it has received comparably less attention in the largely European securitization scholarship (Watson, 2012). Still, its democratic political structure and free press norms make the case generalizable to other contexts.

The sixteen-year timeframe further adds longitudinal (Yin, 2009: 49) value, because it analyzes security issues in two different political contexts: a Bush-led Republican administration (2001-2009) and an Obama-led Democratic administration (2009-2016). Selecting two different administrations from different parties maximizes the range of possible discourse on politically charged issues. The wide timeframe also ensures a holistic analysis that minimizes bias by capturing discourse and public opinion not only when issues are salient, but also when they are relatively muted. Watson (2012: 298) notes that securitization research is typically limited to “episodic changes and short time frames” – he argues that integration with the framing research programme can

show how perceptions change over time and “in response to a number of external changes” . Donnelly (2013: 52) similarly argues that current securitization analyses should accommodate “the more subtle nuances in the way in which agents are speaking security from *beginning to end*” (emphasis added). By expanding this research through two presidential administrations, these subtleties are captured, thus contributing significantly to theory building (Yin, 2009: 47).

Despite the singular focus on the US, a multi-sectoral design is adopted to add empirical richness by analyzing (de)securitization in two different security domains. These are discussed in turn.

1.3.1 Military Sector: Terrorism

The first case study on terrorism is critical to theoretical debates on what constitutes a security issue, because despite the low threat objectively posed by terrorism (Mueller & Stewart, 2018), it has consistently ranked a high concern among the public since 2001 and has been invoked to justify an array of policies and exceptional measures. The threat has been described as “far and away the largest issue in American politics for almost a decade” (Mayer & Armor, 2012: 440); and recent attacks in the west (e.g., in Belgium, France, and the US) as well as a growing network of related issues (e.g., ISIS in Syria/Iraq, border security, and the curtailment of civil liberties) have secured terrorism a dominant position in political and press discourse and the broader international security climate (Agamben, 2005; Croft, 2006; Salter, 2011). Terrorism also fits neatly into the military sector of the securitization framework – it has been framed by security speakers as an existential threat to not only American lives (e.g., the near 3,000 deaths in the September 2001 attack), but also nation-defining ideals such as democracy and the “Western way of life” (Thorup, 2010: 130).¹ The inescapable “war

¹ Terrorism might also be analyzed within the securitization framework as a *societal* or *political* threat (e.g., to a “way of life”). The CS agrees that threats are not perfectly delineated, but the preference for analyzing terrorism within the military sector here is motivated by the nature of the response to the threat as one that employs armed forces and the intelligence community – entities commonly associated with the military sector – as well as how the threat is interpreted by the audience. Certainly the “traditional” role of the armed forces has expanded into non-military sectors like peacekeeping, nation-building, and civil society engagement (Brooks, 2017), but the primary counterterrorism missions and engagements have been within traditional military scope, such as militarized campaigns against al Qaeda, the Taliban and their sponsors.

on terror” as well as the military campaigns and normative debates it has inspired indicate that terrorism will remain a critical concern in American foreign policy, media coverage, and the public conscience (Croft, 2006; Mayer & Armor, 2012).

Still, while many have accepted that terrorism constitutes a problem, exceptional measures have been controversial. Several exceptional measures have been employed in the counterterrorism effort – including drone strikes, surveillance and military campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan – but *torture* offers the most pertinent contribution to securitization theory because it is exceptional, even among exceptional measures. Not only is it beyond “everyday politics” (a necessary condition for securitization), it is prohibited even in wartime (Malley-Morrison, McCarthy, & Hines, 2013). It is thus unlike other “exceptional measures” frequently justified and adopted in the military sector, such as airstrikes, ground troop deployment, and economic sanctions. The torture debate has also undergone major shifts: executive branch policy has fluctuated between and within administrations, and public opinion – well documented and tracked for over a decade – has moved from largely opposing torture before and immediately after Abu Ghraib to a near even split in more recent years (Mayer & Armor, 2012).

While it has received less attention in securitization research, a central component of framing research on torture is the use of alternative labels invoked by actors to signify the practice (e.g., Bennett, Lawrence, & Livingston, 2006; Jones & Sheets, 2009; Rowling, Jones, & Sheets, 2011) and the impact of different frames on individual attitudes in experimental settings (e.g., Blauwkamp, Rowling, & Pettit, 2018; Rios & Mischkowski, 2018). This research adds to these studies by engaging data across diverse contexts and tackling important questions with theoretical implications: how has this practice been legitimized over time, even against countervailing cues from political elites like President Obama, who outlawed the “enhanced interrogation” program within days of taking office? Moreover, how did it become legitimized despite being antithetical to liberal norms and legal wartime conduct? It is imperative to understand how torture was legitimized not only because of its empirical consequences, but also because it pushes the boundaries of securitization theory: specifically, it represents an extreme case of securitization where a universally forbidden method entered the realm of debate (and practice).

Finally, like terrorism, torture still haunts American public policy debates and the social conscious. The mercurial Trump administration has repeatedly signaled its willingness to reverse the Obama administration's ban and reintroduce torture (De Luce & McLeary, 2016). Mayer and Armor (2012: 439-440) further argue "the threat that caused the shift [in public opinion] remains present, and in the aftermath of future attacks, the use of torture or harsh interrogation techniques would certainly be reconsidered". What is lacking in securitization, framing and public opinion literature – a gap this thesis fills – is an investigation of how torture was legitimized through the interactions of political discourse, media messaging and public attitudes over time and across shifting political contexts. Specifically, the terrorism case study examines the paradoxical coincidence of the Obama administration's anti-torture tenure in office and a radical shift toward support for torture among nearly half of Americans.

1.3.2 Societal Sector: Unauthorized Immigration

Compared to terrorism, immigration has received substantially more attention in the securitization literature (e.g., Bigo, 2002; Buonfino, 2004; Huysmans, 2000; Karyotis & Patrikios, 2010), though largely in the European context. The US – despite its reputation as a "melting pot" nation founded on immigrants (Smith, 2012) – however offers no less fertile ground for analyzing the social construction of unauthorized immigration as a threat. Like terrorism, unauthorized immigration is a highly salient issue in American security discourse owing to historically high movement across the US-Mexico border and nativist anxiety – a Gallup study found that "illegal immigration" was ranked as the most important issue facing Americans in 2018 (Newport, 2018). Also like terrorism, proposed remedies have polarized both public opinion and policymaking, most clearly embodied by myriad failed legislative proposals to address illegal immigration through comprehensive immigration reform (CIR). No CIR bill has passed to date despite several attempts between 2006 and 2013. The discourses that developed throughout the Bush and Obama administrations have furthermore had lasting impacts that enable a more nuanced understanding of current immigration debates. Specifically, the Trump presidential campaign has made unauthorized immigration and border security the signature components of its political agenda. As shown in this thesis, his campaign's promises to build a "wall" between Mexico and the US, institute travel bans, deploy military personnel at the border to prevent asylum-seekers from entering, and overturn Constitutional birthright provisions are byproducts of framing contests that occurred after 9/11 and elevated unauthorized

immigration into the security realm. These presidential priorities have energized supporters and opponents alike, securing immigration's position as a top priority for Americans and making it an empirically crucial and timely case study for this project.

Other proposed (and adopted) measures over the last two decades have included enhanced border enforcement technology (e.g., surveillance and sensors), increased border enforcement personnel, the deputation of federal immigration enforcement powers to state and local police officers, and deportation or detention of unauthorized immigrants. What unites these exceptional measures is the attribution of criminality and illegality to immigrants. This creates a conceptual distinction between “exceptional” and “unexceptional” responses to immigration. Unlike terrorism, the securitization of immigration is characterized by what Huysmans and Buonfino (2008) call the dual “politics of exception” and the “politics of unease”. In some cases, *exceptional* measures are clear cut: they are recognized and articulated as such, contested as extrajudicial and may directly invoke security. In other cases, policies designed to deal with immigration are part of “everyday politics”, where the debate centers on the wellbeing of citizens (such as labor competition, welfare distribution, and culture/language preservation). These are often resolved through *unexceptional* political processes. This requires making subjective choices about where the distinction lies between routine responses to immigration/immigrants, and bona fide *exceptional* measures. To avoid this tension and its inevitable biases, the case study here focuses on *unauthorized* immigration (as opposed to *legal* immigration). This field of security sits somewhere between the “politics of unease” and the “politics of exception”, though closer in the US context to the latter. Certainly identity, culture and economic considerations are referent objects worthy of analysis as well, but these fields of (in)security have been invoked to justify less extreme measures, and thus sit closer to “unease”. Unauthorized immigration, on the other hand, has been used to justify border fences, deportation, detention, and constitutional amendment.² This thesis accordingly focuses on unauthorized immigration, because it better fits the politics of exception in the US.

² Cultural, economic, and xenophobic motivations may underlie attempts to securitize unauthorized immigration, but the analysis here focuses on the *frames* used by actors to justify exceptional measures, regardless of hidden motivations.

The vast literature on the framing of immigration and immigrants acknowledges that criminality is the most prevalent narrative used in discourse (Blinder & Allen, 2016; Dunaway, Branton, & Abrajano, 2010; Igartua & Cheng, 2009; Soroka, 2006; Suro, 2008) and that both political elite and press discourse is generally negative (Abrajano, Hajnal, & Hassell, 2017; Merolla, Ramakrishnan, & Haynes, 2013; Thorbjørnsrud, 2015). Examining frames that promote or contest this narrative over a sixteen-year period spanning two presidencies enables testing the negativity bias and analyzing cross-contextual differences in their prevalence. While existing research already points to the impact of media in shaping hostility towards ethnic minorities (Boomgaarden & Vliegthart, 2009; Domke, McCoy, & Torres, 1999; Oliver, 1999; Vergeer, Lubbers, & Scheepers, 2000), bringing the audience into this longitudinal analysis will show whether this effect on public attitudes is persistent or if it has varied over time and context, and how attitudes relate to exposure to specific frames. In short, this investigation can help deepen the understanding of when and why immigration frames produce high levels of anxiety and support for exceptional measures.

The immigration case study is also significant to theoretical debates on desecuritization and raises questions on where Americans are getting their cues. Despite inflammatory rhetoric, detention policies and record deportations that reproduce the criminal immigrant metaphor, Americans have become increasingly pro-immigrant over the last twenty-five years (Hartig, 2018; Jones, 2019), increasingly favor policies to grant legal status to unauthorized immigrants, and increasingly reject exceptional measures (e.g., Tyson, 2018). How does this harmonize with the vast literature that recognizes a predominant negative bias and criminal attribution in both political and media discourse? And if support for exceptional measures is declining, is this evidence of desecuritization? If so, unauthorized immigration offers a launchpad to a theoretical discussion of desecuritization with rare empirical evidence to explain it.

The two case studies under investigation then individually contribute to both theoretical debates within securitization theory and provide empirical insights on critical contemporary security issues. They also preliminarily point to divergent trends and contrasting logics, encouraging a multifaceted analysis: within the timeframe under consideration, support for torture has increased, suggesting that terrorism has become more deeply securitized over time, despite anti-torture cues from the Obama administration and infrequent terrorist acts in the US. Attitudes toward unauthorized

immigration, on the other hand, have softened despite a steady (though waning) stream of unauthorized immigrants entering the country and anti-immigrant political discourse.

Beyond the contributions of each individual case study to theoretical debates and empirical outcomes, the thesis secondarily aims to use an integrated methodology that enables cross-case comparison. Given that integration has been wanting in securitization (Buzan & Waeber, 2003)³, media (Bennett, 1990: 20; Soroka, 2002) and public opinion (Zaller, 1992: 2) research, analytical techniques are replicated across both cases to consciously identify cross-sectoral dynamics, overlaps and differences – this tests whether issue and sector attributes affect the dynamics of the public-political-media nexus. Both issues are already inextricably linked: terrorism “has involved rhetoric of exclusion and fear of foreigners combined with a political demand for intensifying control of the cross-border movement of people” (Huysmans & Buonfino, 2008: 766). Their shared context makes it practical to discuss the two salient co-occurring issues in a single project and to draw comparisons between both. As national-level priorities, they involve overlapping actors, institutions and dynamics.

These overlaps notwithstanding, different focuses are stressed to maximize analytical and knowledge gain. The siloing occurs along two sites of contestation differentiated by the specific function a frame serves to fulfill – whether to propose a remedy for a problem or offer moral evaluation of an issue (Entman, 2004). The terrorism case study centers on the *remedy proposal* frame function by exploring the legitimization of a specific exceptional measure – torture (or “enhanced interrogation”). Unlike other exceptional measures in counterterrorism, torture has remained separate from immigration discourse, because it has largely occurred beyond US borders (e.g., in Abu

³ With the exception of Buzan et al.’s (1998) *Security*, applications of the securitization framework tend to be limited to a single case within a sector. The same design and analytical techniques have rarely been applied across sectors. Certainly single cases can overlap across multiple sectors – immigration may have implications in the economic sector, and the “war on terror” may spill over into the political sector – but conscious evaluation of cross-sectoral dynamics has been overlooked. The approach here, on the other hand, enables determining whether, apart from the natural features of the threat, securitization dynamics differ across sectors; and if certain securitizing actors – such as media or political elites – or frames are more effective in one sector over another.

Ghraib and CIA black sites).⁴ The case study on the securitization of unauthorized immigration, on the other hand, explores oppositional frames along the *remedy proposal* and the *moral evaluation* axes. The former focuses on competing proposals to resolve unauthorized immigration: an expansionist approach that provides individuals a pathway toward citizenship; and a restrictionist approach that emphasizes border security. The moral evaluation axis centers on the threat itself, and competing attempts to (de)link unauthorized immigrants and criminality. This link in turn has consequences for audience evaluations of exceptional measures. The terrorism case study thus uses the remedy proposal axis to introduce the operationalization of securitization using framing methodology; and the immigration case study adds empirical richness and complexity by considering both the remedy proposal and moral evaluation axes.

1.3.3 Case Studies Disclaimer

Two disclaimers are necessary to calibrate expectations. First, this thesis does not aim to adjudicate the veracity or sincerity of arguments made by actors, nor the morality of exceptional measures; normative discussions are sidelined. The goal instead is to excavate, as objectively as possible, the attempts to discursively legitimize and delegitimize exceptional measures. While a sixteen-year case study naturally requires selecting some discursive events and excluding others, the focus is primarily on defining moments that had the potential to deepen or challenge the (de)securitization of threats (Donnelly, 2013) – this methodological device is explained in greater detail in Chapter 3. Moreover, for each case study, an inherently subjective discourse analysis is accompanied by a rules-based, computer-automated content analysis as a check on the former. Second, given that language and rhetoric are central elements of analysis, certain terms are preferred in the analyses. For consistency, *unauthorized immigration* is used as a catch-all for synonymous (albeit politically loaded) terms like *illegal immigration*, *undocumented immigration*, and *irregular immigration* that all describe the paperless entry of individuals into the US. The choice is somewhat arbitrary, and used primarily to differentiate the abstract concept from purposeful labels.⁵ Similarly, following convention in previous scholarship (e.g., Mayer & Armor, 2012; McCoy,

⁴ Compare this to, for example, the USA PATRIOT Act, surveillance measures, airport security and other border enforcement processes which were born out of a counter-terrorism agenda but also overlap significantly with immigration security discourse.

⁵ The choice also reflects consensus that the paperless entry of individuals into the US is a civil rather than a criminal infraction (e.g., Coutin, 2005: 13; Thorbjørnsrud, 2015: 779).

2012; Pyle, 2009) the term *torture* is preferred to alternatives like *interrogation* and *abuse* – the latter two are used largely to reference the particular use of those terms by either political elites or media actors.⁶

To summarize, this thesis examines how terrorism and unauthorized immigration became (de)securitized in the US since 9/11, and the role of the media in this process. The two cases share similar contexts and center on the conflict between the American self and foreign others. This overlap is recognized as an asset because it permits a coherent analysis between cases that have comparable logics. Both cases not only have the potential to contribute to theory development, but they also contain dramatic elements that make them newsworthy and thus prime candidates for identifying whether the press can have an independent (de)securitizing effect. For background, the next section provides a brief overview of how the press environment has evolved in recent decades.

1.4 Contextualizing the American Media Landscape

The tradition of objective journalism and balanced reporting has been a central tenet of the American media landscape. Even overtly slanted and partisan outlets at least pay lip service to this tradition, suggesting that it is a norm valued by audiences and critical to maintaining credibility. While critics have held that an ideologically liberal slant has long stained mainstream media (Groseclose & Milyo, 2005), network broadcast channels – like ABC, CBS and NBC – nonetheless sought to provide a “homogeneous and generic ‘point-counterpoint’” (Iyengar & Hahn, 2009: 20) experience for most of the post-World War II era. But the August 1987 repeal of the “fairness doctrine” – which obligated television and radio broadcasters to present both sides of any political opinion story – and technological advancements triggered the rise of a more polarized and fragmented information environment.

This shift was fueled particularly by partisan cable news. The success of CNN (established in 1980), the first channel to offer 24-hour nonstop news coverage, paved the way for the Fox News Channel (henceforth Fox News) and MSNBC to surface in 1996. Fox News emerged as a response to the dearth of conservative voices in cable

⁶ In subsequent chapters, italicized font is used to differentiate frames signifiers from more general uses of the term (e.g., *torture*).

news television. Building on the success of conservative talk radio program, it was only moderately more conservative than its two major cable news competitors for most of its first decade of existence. In fact, it aligned closely with MSNBC in terms of ideology between 2001 and 2004 (Martin & Yurukoglu, 2017). Beginning in the mid-2000s, however, the two networks began to diverge sharply – Fox News became increasingly politically conservative while MSNBC moved further left (Martin & Yurukoglu, 2017). This shift has largely been attributed to the proliferation of news actors (both digital and traditional) which created a competitive environment and business incentives to target niche audiences rather than the broad general public (Iyengar & Hahn, 2009; Stroud, 2008). The result has been increasing polarization and an “echo chamber” effect among audiences: the increasing diversity of information environments enable news consumers driven by motivations to reduce cognitive cost to customize their news experience so that it validates or aligns with existing viewpoints (Bennett & Pfetsch, 2018; Coe et al., 2008; Gentzkow, 2016; Stroud, 2008). The desire to retain and grow audiences motivates news organization to further cater content to specific audience preferences, resulting in the coexistence of separate, oppositional discourses (Benkler, Faris, & Roberts, 2018).

Still, all three cable news outlets preach norms of fairness, objectivity and balance, even though popular primetime evening programs have seen the replacement of dispassionate news anchors with often partisan personalities. The new genre of reporting bears stylistic resemblances to traditional network news – experts are invited to contribute, supporting footage accompanies stories, anchors speak from desks while graphics are superimposed to their side – but the separation between objective factual reporting and opinion commentary has blurred, where detached news reporting overlaps with often argumentative political punditry and personal commentary.⁷

While cable television outperforms all other sources of news in audience size, print newspapers and their online versions remain competitive, claiming readership by almost half of American adults (Shearer, 2018).⁸ The *New York Times*, in particular,

⁷ Key personalities that were figureheads of their respective networks from 2001 to 2016 included Sean Hannity and Bill O’Reilly on Fox News; Rachel Maddow, Chris Matthews and Keith Olbermann on MSNBC; and Lou Dobbs and Anderson Cooper on CNN.

⁸ While television and news websites command the largest audiences, social media and radio remain competitive with 20% and 26% of Americans respectively getting their news from these platforms.

holds not only the highest circulation among Sunday papers (Pew Research Center, 2014b), but its readership has also increased despite overall declines in newspaper readership (Barthel, 2017). As an esteemed and reputable source, it often sets the agenda and signals to other press actors which issues are most salient (Wanta & Hu, 1993). Certainly the *Times* is less overtly partisan than the three cable news actors – and its format precludes the belligerent style generally associated with primetime cable news – but it is still recognized as left leaning, particularly in its editorial pages. The “wall of separation” that exists between editorials and outwardly objective news coverage notwithstanding, Kahn and Kenney (2002) have demonstrated that bias expressed in the former can bleed into the latter. Thus, even newspapers like the *Times* are susceptible to partisan and ideological slant.

These partisan divisions in the American press are important, because they are likely fault lines along which different security discourses are debated and contested. The two-party dominated political system in the US – left-leaning Democrats and right-leaning Republicans – has resulted in most political contests occurring along partisan lines. Certainly there may be opponents and proponents of exceptional measures within a given security context on both sides, but partisanship is a useful heuristic for charting out competing discourses and the oppositional identities they align with. Still, this feature of American politics is not taken for granted: a thorough discourse analysis maps out the boundaries that divide identities on security issues, recognizing even that some issues (particularly immigration) can fashion alliances across party lines.

1.4.1 Audience Engagement and Trust

A central contribution of this thesis is recognizing the role of the audience in securitization theory. In the US, the public relies primarily on the press for learning about foreign policy issues (Baum & Potter, 2008; Graber & Dunaway, 2018; Paletz, 2009). Generally, Americans are highly engaged with news: nearly all Americans (92% in 2016 and 89% in 2017) believe that it is at least somewhat important to keep up with news and information; to that end, approximately two-thirds of Americans actively seek out news and information; the same amount also engage with news at least once a day (Media Insight Project, 2016, 2017a).⁹ Digital options and social media are

⁹ During election years, consumption is higher. In 2016, for example, 79% of Americans consumed news at least once a day (Media Insight Project, 2016).

becoming increasingly popular, but television still leads: over 80% of Americans rely on it as their primary source of information in 2016 (down from 87% in 2014); print newspapers conversely attract attention from 48% of Americans (down from 61% in 2014) (Media Insight Project, 2014, 2016).¹⁰ While print newspaper circulation has been dropping since the early 2000s, digital circulation has largely absorbed this share, suggesting that “traditional” newspapers are not only still relevant, but second only to television news (Pew Research Center, 2018a).

Despite high perceptions of bias in the media (Knight Foundation, 2018), public trust in the press is surprisingly high, and especially for individually preferred sources. Just over three-quarters of Americans report that the media is at least somewhat trustworthy, while 80% trust their own preferred media sources (Media Insight Project, 2017a). Similarly, 83% agree that media in general is at least somewhat accurate and 90% believe that their own preferred media is accurate (Media Insight Project, 2017a). These findings suggest that while perceptions of bias and distrust exist, these negative feelings are largely directed against *other* media sources. More consequentially for this study, individuals are likely to accept as reliable and trustworthy the news frames from their preferred outlets (Stroud, 2008). It is thus all the more critical to study the impact of individual outlets rather than the aggregate media as an undifferentiated mass. What remains to be resolved, however, is whether this trust drives security attitudes. Alternatively, and to reiterate the primary research question, can the media be an independent (de)securitizing actor?

1.5 Contributions and Thesis Outline

The contributions of this research are empirical, methodological and theoretical. Empirically, the case study on terrorism unravels the social construction of perhaps the

¹⁰ Notably, social media platforms have surpassed print newspapers in terms of audiences (Shearer, 2018). Still, as a news source, social media commands a smaller audience than television and news websites, the latter often an outlet for traditionally print sources to mirror their content to a wider audience. That attention to newspapers – both digital and print – remains competitive (Media Insight Project, 2017a, 2017b) despite subscription fees is an indicator of the continued relevance and importance of newspapers. For this reason – and also because social media platforms have become popular only in the recent decade – social media platforms are excluded from analysis in this thesis. Their growth nonetheless merits investigation in future studies bounded to timeframes that intersect more fully with the ubiquity of social media.

most salient security issue (Mayer & Armor, 2012) – and even a new security paradigm altogether (J. Collins & Glover, 2002; Silberstein, 2002) – in American policy discourse for nearly two decades; it is also an entrypoint for engaging the primarily Europe-centric securitization theory framework in a relatively scarcely examined American setting. The specific focus on the (de)legitimization of torture confronts and contributes to the debate on American support for torture and the drivers of attitudes (Blauwkamp, Rowling, & Pettit, 2018). While giving attention to political elites, the investigation also brings in previously underexamined actors like the press and the audience. The subsequent analysis of the securitization of unauthorized immigration similarly shows how audience attitudes towards exceptional measures related to both political and media frames. In a sharp reversal from previous studies, the analysis identifies significant changes in the way that unauthorized immigrants have been framed over the last sixteen years. The analysis largely focuses on the Bush and Obama presidencies, but it captures shifts that occurred toward the end of the latter's administration as Trump's campaign made immigration the signature component of its agenda. The case studies directly answer the two central questions in this dissertation. First, the analysis of different media frames demonstrates the extent to which press actors can behave as independent and strategic securitizing actors. Second, investigating competing frames over a sixteen-year period alongside corresponding attitudes explains how exceptional measures became (de)legitimized in the US in response to the perceived threats posed by terrorism and unauthorized immigration.

Several major theoretical and methodological contributions emerge from the research as well. First, both the immigration and terrorism case studies validate a key assumption undergirding securitization theory: security construction is an intersubjective process that does not necessarily depend on the presence of objective threats. Despite low incidents of terrorism, the issue remains heavily securitized, with American attitudes toward illegal exceptional measures to counteract the threat evenly split. Similarly, despite fairly steady immigration rates, attitudes toward unauthorized immigration have softened over time; quantitative models further show no effect of objective factors – like living in a region with high or low levels of unauthorized immigrants – on immigration policy attitudes. Security construction instead appears strongly linked to framing. Second, the findings suggest that press actors can be independent securitizing agents. There is some uncertainty given that the models preclude definitive causality, but even absent theoretical assumptions on the flow of

influence, the general alignment suggests reinforcing spheres of information. Third, the emphasis on the audience and methodological tools for measuring audiences fill major gaps and remove much of the conjecturing that is typical in securitization scholarship. Rather than cherry-picking a few convenient polls, the comprehensive and extensive approach here ensures accurate and methodical representation. Finally, the integration of framing theory with securitization brings methodological and operationalization advantages – like identifying and measuring the prevalence of competing securitizing and desecuritizing discourses – and an arsenal of explanations on why certain frames are more effective. The results show, for example, how euphemisms (like *interrogation* or *undocumented immigration*) may backfire at first, but can become normalized and mainstreamed over time. Specifically, euphemisms invoked with the intention to minimize the exceptionalism of a threat of exceptional measure can be recognized as a deceptive tool initially; as they are repeated over time, however, audiences can become desensitized and inured to them, such that the original duplicitous nature of the term becomes forgotten. The design presented here is also flexible, scalable and empirically agnostic, empowering future securitization scholarship to take advantage of the standardized approach and enabling cross-case comparisons.

These contributions are spread across the following seven chapters. Chapter 2 provides a theoretical foundation, introducing concepts from framing scholarship and securitization theory. Drawing on literature from political communication and psychology, the discussion on framing identifies what frames and framing effects are, how frames spread, and what makes some frames more effective than others. The discussion segues into a brief history and the key concepts within securitization theory. Some limitations are introduced, and justification is provided for integrating concepts from framing to overcome weaknesses in securitization theory. Chapter 3 dives deeper into this cross-fertilization and explains how the research is operationalized through a triangulation of methods. First an idealized and abstract model of securitization is broken down into key components: identifying frame competition, source differentiation and impacts on the audience. This breakdown guides the mixed methods design of a practical model, which includes a political elite discourse analysis, a mixed political elite and media content analysis, and tools for measuring audience alignments. A formalized discourse analysis framework based on Lene Hansen's (2013) security-identity nexus is introduced. Importantly, Chapters 2 and 3 equip the reader with

theoretical foundations and the required vocabulary to understand how to differentiate important terms like *major discourse*, *basic discourse* and *frames*.

Chapters 4 and 5 examine the social construction of terrorism as a security issue, recognizing it as a potentially new security paradigm altogether (Collins & Glover, 2002; Silberstein, 2002). This is the entry point for engaging the primarily Europe-centric securitization theory framework in a relatively scarcely examined American setting. The specific focus on the (de)legitimization of torture confronts and contributes to the debate on whether Americans have become more supportive of torture and what is driving this change (Blauwkamp et al., 2018). Chapter 4 presents a discourse analysis of political elite rhetoric – specifically, it charts the evolution of the torture debate within terrorism discourse. The analysis reveals that two competing frames were differentiated in the legitimization of the Bush administration’s intelligence-gathering program: one that centered on *torture* as an illegal and immoral act; and another that promoted *interrogation* as an effective counterterrorist option. The excavation is structured into four sequential, though overlapping, phases of denial, rebranding, justification and silencing. These findings are used to inform the quantitative analysis in Chapter 5, where the focus is broadened to include the press and the audience. Significant differences in press and political elite framings are exposed through a content analysis, suggesting a largely autonomous framing strategy between the two. Next, emphasizing the audience component of securitization, public attitudes toward torture are analyzed and modeled on exposure to these frames. The findings not only resolve the debate over whether the majority of Americans support torture (e.g., Blauwkamp et al., 2018; Gronke et al., 2010), but they also provide evidence that attitudes are strongly aligned with attention to media sources.

Chapters 6 and 7 comprise the unauthorized immigration case study. The discourse analysis in Chapter 6 shows that, on the one hand, unauthorized immigration became inextricably linked to 9/11 and terrorism discourse as the latter was attributed to foreign enemies and vulnerabilities at the border. The link moved immigration into the domain of national security, heightening the criminality narrative typically used to frame immigration. On the other hand, both Presidents Bush and Obama often emphasized shared values between Americans and immigrants, characterizing unauthorized immigration as a procedural problem rather than a criminal one. Though the content and audience analysis in Chapter 7 is similarly structured to the terrorism content

analysis, an additional layer of complexity is added by looking at two pairs of competing frames. Namely, analysis occurs along the remedy proposal axis (border security versus expansionist policies) and the moral evaluation axis (criminality versus procedural problem). This additional complexity is deliberate: the terrorism case study aims to acclimate the reader to the concepts, but the proverbial training wheels are removed in the immigration case study for a richer analysis. In addition to contributing to an empirical understanding of how unauthorized immigration was securitized in the US, the analysis reveals previously undiscovered patterns. In a significant departure from previous scholarship that has identified a strong negative bias and an overwhelming emphasis on the criminality frame in immigration news coverage, this project finds fairly balanced coverage by certain outlets throughout the Obama administration, demonstrating the value of a longitudinal (rather than episodic) study. As discussed in more detail in Chapter 7, these changes in press framing align with shifting (and increasingly pro-immigrant) public opinion.

The final chapter discusses findings from the two case studies in an integrative fashion, with an emphasis on cross-sectoral similarities and differences. The empirical, theoretical and methodological contributions are discussed in greater detail. A final section in the conclusion chapter considers limitations and identifies opportunities for future research.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Foundations

2.1 Introduction

The analysis of media and political elite influence on security attitudes is driven by a synthesis of securitization theory and framing. Securitization theory provides a critical constructivist account of how security issues emerge, evolve and subside. Its introduction to security studies has generated a rich scholarship on a variety of security issues that challenges traditional approaches to analyzing security as an objective experience restricted to the military domain; the theory instead offers that security is an intersubjective process that occurs in multiple sectors (Buzan et al., 1998). It provides an organizing logic and a set of expectations for how (in)security is constructed in these different sectors, which actors are involved, and the implications of speaking security.

Despite its wide applications and recognition among security scholars as a significant contribution to security studies (Balzacq, 2011a), however, the theory suffers key theoretical, empirical and methodological limitations. Theoretical limitations include the underdevelopment of key actors (e.g., the audience) and processes (e.g., desecuritization) (Watson, 2012); the overemphasis on political elites as securitizing actors; and ambiguity on what constitutes securitization. This has led to empirical gaps like a lack of guidance on how to operationalize the audience, how to measure legitimization of exceptional measures, and how to link both to securitizing moves. An overemphasis on political elites has also led to the cordoning off of the securitization process to one set of actors and the de facto designation of discourse analysis as the “obvious” method for understanding how security is constructed. While discourse analysis is indeed a powerful tool for studying political elites, it poses empirical challenges for measuring security discourse objectively and systematically across a wide array of actors and texts. Finally, the underdevelopment of desecuritization has also resulted in little guidance on how to identify and operationalize the undoing of security.

Scholarship on framing and framing effects offers a way to overcome these limitations and push securitization theory to its full potential, while answering the central question of this research: *can news media actors influence public attitudes on international security issues?* The vast literature on how frames emerge, how they influence

audiences through framing effects, what determines frames effectiveness, and how to measure these processes fills important gaps in securitization theory, making it possible to bring in the audience, other securitizing actors and rigorous methods to link the two (Watson, 2012). A rich scholarship on directions of influence between the news media and political elites (broadly the press-state debate) within framing literature also provides guidance on the conditions under which the media can drive a policy debate.

Toward setting the foundation for integrating framing and securitization, this chapter proceeds in three parts. It first introduces framing theory, defining key concepts like *frames* and *framing effects*, and explaining the mechanisms that drive them. Next, securitization theory and its key components are introduced. The chapter closes by identifying limitations of securitization theory and offering advancements through cross-fertilization with framing theory. In short, the framing literature offers richer methodological approaches and guidance on how to measure framing effects, while securitization theory provides an organizing logic and a set of expectations that are specific to the construction of security. Drawing on framing scholarship, three revisions are proposed for securitization theory: first, it should expand the role of who can speak security beyond political elites to include press actors; second, it should better account for the audience; and third, quantitative methods should be introduced to increase analytical rigor.

2.2 Framing Theory

The tension between the “myriad ways of describing events in the world” (Norris, Kern, & Just, 2003: 4) and constraints such as time and word limits requires compressing information into consumable packages that convey the most salient details of an issue. *Framing* is the process of “selecting and highlighting some aspects of a perceived reality, and enhancing the salience of an interpretation and evaluation of that reality.” (Entman, 2004: 26) Even absent a deliberate strategy to manage or manipulate perceptions, expediency and knowledge constraints lead to the natural selection and promotion of some aspects of an issue and the neglect of others (Entman, 1993; Norris et al., 2003; Sniderman, Brody, & Tetlock, 1993). Still, actors can and do employ strategies to promote their preferred frames (Edelman, 1993), and existing research has demonstrated how different variables influence the success of framing strategies.

In order to understand these strategies and what causes them to succeed or fail, this section begins by defining frames and framing effects. Relevant concepts are identified to show how scholars have operationalized frames and framing effects. Entman's (2004) cascade activation model is introduced as a foundational framework for identifying key actors and the processes in the emergence and spreading of frames in the American foreign policy context. The model also sets the scene for a broader debate on press-state relations that seeks to resolve who influences whom, providing context for two important questions for this thesis: 1) does the news media simply popularize political elite foreign policy discourse, or can it act independently? and 2) under what circumstances do these dynamics change? This section ends by outlining the variables that influence a framing strategy and determine whether a frame will gain traction (and produce framing effects) or fail to resonate with audiences.

2.2.1 Frame Anatomy

Robert Entman (2004) deconstructs frames into two analytical components: *function* and *focus*. The functional dimension analyzes the purpose or role of a frame – this can include problem definition, causal identification, moral evaluation, and remedy proposal (Entman, 2004). The primary function of a frame is to *define an issue* and explain its relevance. For example, a frame can highlight that deaths have occurred, further lives are at stake, and/or that the well-being of people or their values are threatened. A frame can also identify the *cause of the problem* – such as a terrorist group, a foreign government, or human error – and assign a *moral evaluation* to it – such as condemnation or praise. Finally, a frame can *propose a remedy* like military intervention, border security, or other forms of mobilization to address a problem. The second dimension of a frame is the focus or unit of analysis, which includes issues, events, and political actors (Entman, 2004: 24). *Issues* can include terrorism, immigration or political/economic problems; *events* can include specific attacks, humanitarian or economic crises, political elections or policy implementations; and *actors* can include political elites, the press, citizens, terrorist groups or migrants. A single frame may exhibit multiple frame functions and focuses: for example, Entman (2004: 24-25) illustrates a post-9/11 frame in which an event (the 9/11 attacks in the US, the problem definition) had been perpetrated by actors (al-Qaida and the Taliban, the cause) and ignited a further event (the war in Afghanistan, a remedial action).

Together, the two dimensions are lenses through which frames can be analyzed and understood. While a particular frame does not need to satisfy each of these dimensions – nor are the different lenses impervious to overlap – Entman’s matrix demonstrates the selections made by framers to describe, analyze, evaluate and deal with an issue, event or actor. Two frames might agree on the definition and cause of unauthorized immigration, for example, but they can differ on the proposed remedy (e.g., border enforcement versus immigrant integration) and moral evaluation of central actors (e.g., unauthorized immigrants as criminals or victims of a broken documentation system).

2.2.2 Framing Effect

A *framing effect* occurs when “alternative ways of posing a policy issue produce distinctly different public responses” (Bartels, 2003: 56). When the selection of features used to frame an issue to an audience accounts for the different preferences that the audience adopts, a framing effect is said to have occurred. This is in contradistinction to rational choice theory which suggests that individuals respond consistently through a process of reasoning over alternatives (Bartels, 2003; Druckman, 2004; Tversky & Kahneman, 1989; Zaller, 1992). Instead framing effects occur when variation in how frames are presented influence the considerations activated, thus shaping responses to those frames and attitudes more broadly (Bartels, 2003).

Druckman (2004: 672) distinguishes between *equivalency framing effects*, in which logically equivalent statements evoke different reactions; and *issue framing effects*, where by “emphasizing a subset of potentially relevant considerations, a speaker leads individuals to focus on these considerations when constructing their opinions”. Equivalent (or “objectively identical”) frames can vary by their valence (positive versus negative) or other logical manipulation. Quattrone and Tversky (1988) demonstrate this in their study which asked respondents to choose between two logically identical policy proposals. One set of respondents was prompted to indicate preference for either a policy that generated 90% employment and a 12% rate of inflation; or another policy that generated 95% employment and 17% inflation. The second set of respondents was presented the same policies, but with rates for workforce *unemployment* (10% and 5%). Though functionally identical, the prompts produced different preferences: the first group showed greater support for the 90% employment policy, while the second group preferred 5% unemployment. Similarly, Sapiro’s (1998) study asked one set of respondents to rate on a one hundred-point scale “opponents of abortion” and

“supporters of abortion”, while a second set rated “pro-life people” and “pro-choice people”. Again, despite being functionally equivalent, “pro-life people” and “pro-choice people” were rated more favorably than their counterparts, “opponents of abortion” and “supporters of abortion”.

Issue framing effects, on the other hand, result from “qualitatively different” attributes of a frame focus (Druckman, 2004: 672). The difference in audience reaction stems from assessment of distinct attributes of an issue rather than logical manipulations. Both Nelson et al.’s (1997) as well as Chong and Druckman’s (2007) studies, for example, find that different cues can shape responses to a white supremacist rally. The “pro” treatment group was prompted to consider free speech and was thus significantly more likely to express tolerance for the rally, while the “con” group was prompted to consider public safety concerns, leading them to show less support for the rally. Unlike Quattrone and Tversky’s (1988) employment-unemployment distinction, in which both frames essentially express the same outcome, the rally frames activate considerations of separate issues – free speech and public safety. Domke et al. (1999) similarly find issue framing effects for immigration: those prompted to consider economic factors were more likely to interpret immigration solely in material terms; whereas those prompted to consider human rights, morality and personal responsibility interpreted immigration in *both* material and ethical terms.

In short, framing effects imply that wording differences can influence audience evaluations even when the meanings of the different wordings are the same (Zaller, 1992: 34). This occurs both when the activated considerations are different (issue frames) and when the frames are functionally identical (equivalent frames). Attitudes are then neither invariant nor purely rational, but dependent on framing choices.

2.2.3 How Frames Emerge and Spread

2.2.3.1 Schema Activation and Spreading Activation

Frames rely on the *activation* – or “bringing thoughts and feelings to mind” – of *schemas* – “clusters or nodes of connected ideas and feelings stored in memory” – to emerge and spread (Entman, 2004: 7). Both the framer as well as the audience fit interpretations of reality into preexisting cognitions of related concepts. By “[encouraging] particular trains of thought about political phenomena and lead[ing]

audiences to arrive at more or less predictable conclusions” (Price, Tewksbury, & Powers, 1997: 483), frames act as shortcuts, enabling mental associations between existing “cognitive knowledge structures” (Domke et al., 1999: 573). Entman’s example of a terrorism schema links September 11 to nodes associated with “the World Trade Center, airplane hijackers, Osama bin Laden, the New York fire department, and New York mayor Rudolph Giuliani” (2004: 7), where each node in the network occupies shared emotional and cognitive space. When any one node in a schema is activated by a frame, networked nodes are also activated to “guide information processing and the construction of attitudes” (Domke et al., 1999: 573), a process known as *spreading activation* (Berkowitz & Rogers, 1986; Entman, 2004). Domke et al. (1999: 573) further add that “schemata activated by contextual cues remain on top of the mental bin, making them highly accessible for a period of time.” As mental associations are repeated and rehearsed, their commitment to long-term memory makes them easily accessible when similar frames are later encountered (Domke et al., 1999; Domke, Shah, & Wackman, 1998; Entman, 2004; Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Higgins & King, 1981; Lodge & Stroh, 1993). Entman’s September 11 schema, once learned, can then be retriggered every time “terrorism” or another issue seemingly related to terrorism is invoked. *Spreading activation*, Entman argues, means that the order of information intake is crucial, because “[f]irst impressions may be difficult to dislodge” (2004: 7).

Importantly, schemas that are activated by a frame are used by individuals to evaluate the frame’s focus (Domke et al., 1998). Rather than drawing on the “entire repertoire” of knowledge available to comprehend a reality, individuals apply only what is accessible (Domke et al., 1998; Higgins & King, 1981; Iyengar & Kinder, 1987) – in other words, only the nodes that have been activated by a particular frame are used to evaluate it. This differentiates two models of processing, *memory-based* and *impression-driven*: in the former, known facts in memory are used to comprehensively evaluate an issue; in the latter, impressions are made “on the fly” (Lodge, McGraw, & Stroh, 1989: 400-401). Impression-driven processing is more likely to occur, because it is less cognitively taxing. Thus, the choice of frames can activate nodes which condition audience evaluation of the frame focus; alternative frames activate other nodes, generating possibly different evaluations.

2.2.3.2 Cascade Activation Model

In the marketplace of competing frames and different interpretations, Entman's (2004) *cascade activation model* uses a hierarchy to illustrate the "flow of influence" between different actors in the activation and promotion of frames in the US political context. At the top of this structure is the *Administration*, composed of White House and cabinet officials (e.g., Secretaries of the State and Defense Departments). These actors are empowered with the most autonomy and flexibility to form the "first public expressions about an event" (9) and influence the boundaries of discourse available to subsequent levels, in declining influence: other elites (e.g., the legislature, political/military and foreign leaders), news media, news frames (the actual text and images employed by journalists), and the public. Similar chains-of-command exist within each tier as across the tiers – national newspapers, for example, are more influential than neighborhood gazettes. The *New York Times*, for example, sets the boundaries of discourse available to other media by privileging certain frames (Reese & Danielian, 1989; Wanta & Hu, 1993).

Actors use power and strategy to "spread their ideas through the cascading system" (Entman, 2004: 19) in order to deliberately "[magnify] those elements of the depicted reality that favor one side's position, making them salient, while at the same time shrinking those elements that might be used to construct a counterframe" (Entman, 2004: 31). Entman's (2004) illustrative study of the First Gulf War depicts how division among public opinion (and political elites) before the war motivated the Bush administration to use strategic narratives to rally support for military escalation. This was achieved by "explaining the policy better, by making a great public show of consulting Congress and obtaining U.N. approval" (Entman, 2004: 82), and by controlling the magnitude – or amount of coverage – of the administration's preferred hawkish frame. By reducing cognitive costs, signaling due diligence, repeating the preferred frame, and suppressing competing frames, the Bush administration drew support for its military escalation.

2.2.3.3 Press-State Models

Yet executive branch officials are not the only framing entrepreneurs. The cascade activation model recognizes both downstream and upstream influence – while actors at the top enjoy the most flexibility in production of frames, downstream factors can

impose constraints. A particularly important relationship exists between the press and political elites. The media's watchdog responsibility creates a natural inclination to engage with and respond to cues from the most powerful elites, because the latter are most likely to affect policy (Althaus, Edy, Entman, & Phalen, 1996; Bennett, 1996; Entman, 2004; Entman & Page, 1994). Entman argues the news media has less freedom and autonomy to shape and create news frames than political elites. It has the "capacity to ask questions and to decide precisely which words and images to assemble and transmit" (2004: 91), but must conform to the discursive domain set by the administration and other political elites. Certainly the press can voice dissent against political elite frames, but Entman argues that this requires "energetic sponsors" (2004: 110) in Congress or elsewhere; without this support, the media's watchdog attempts do not resonate with the public and are ineffective.

In the broader debate on press-state relations, Entman's characterization fits the *indexing* hypothesis, occupying the middle ground between the *manufacturing consent* model and more autonomous models of media behavior, like the *CNN effect*. At one end of the spectrum, the *manufacturing consent* model states that the media is exploited and used to promote official policy frames (Herman & Chomsky, 2002; Robinson, 1999). Influence flows from political elites to media and "media does not create policy but...is mobilized (manipulated even) into supporting government policy" (Robinson, 1999: 301). Robinson (1999) describes this *executive* version as the media's promotion of the official (e.g., White House-generated) frame. He distinguishes it from the *indexing* model, in which media coverage reflects (or indexes) debates occurring between political elites (see also Althaus et al., 1996; Bennett, 1990, 2016; Bennett et al., 2006). For Robinson and Entman alike, this means that "news coverage critical of executive policy is possible when – and perhaps only when – there exists elite conflict over policy" (Robinson, 1999: 304). Still, other models suggest that the news media can exert upward pressure through the *CNN effect* – or the notion that "real-time communications technology [can] provoke major responses from domestic audiences and political elites to global events" (Robinson, 1999: 301). This model endows the press with greater autonomy and the power to influence political decision-making by framing issues (such as humanitarian crises) in subjective and ethical terms, linking inaction to poor governance.

The tension between different press-state models and which ones to expect under which conditions remains unresolved. Some have argued that the issue itself determines press-state relations, because the press shifts allegiances based on the actors most capable of affecting policy in each case (Althaus et al., 1996). Callaghan and Schnell argue that “at least some of the time, the media themselves drive the political debate” (2001: 186), but they find that coverage of foreign policy, military affairs and macroeconomic policy best fits the indexing model, due to the “easy indexing capabilities” of such stories (201-202). Carruthers (2011) instead shows that with regard to war and conflict, the media is more likely to mobilize in support of political elites, lending support to the executive manufacturing consent model. This “calibration to power” (Entman, 2004: 78) is short-lived according to Baum and Potter (2008), who argue that media deference to political elites occurs in the early “rally around the flag” (43) stage of foreign conflict during which information asymmetry disadvantages the press and creates a reliance on the executive version of the facts (see also Althaus et al., 1996; Bennett, 1996). As the information gap narrows between actors and dissent becomes mainstreamed, media coverage can shift to better fit the indexing model. The CNN effect, on the other hand, is more likely to occur on humanitarian/ethical issues (Gilboa, Jumbert, Miklian, & Robinson, 2016). News coverage of the 1991 Kurdish refugee crisis (Shaw, 1996) and the 1995 Srebrenica massacre (Hansen, 2013; Robinson, 2000), for example, are both presumed to have driven Western intervention by using graphic language and images that made it difficult for political leaders (and their constituents) to ignore (Entman, 2004; Robinson, 1999). Similarly, Bennett et al. (2006: 468) suggest that “dramatic and troubling events” can motivate news media to break with political elites and produce their own frames (see also Livingston & Bennett, 2003) in pursuit of resolving the collective national dissonance.

Still others suggest that broader contextual factors determine which model will prevail. The news media’s increased autonomy and capacity to drive foreign policy-making, for example, has been attributed to the post-Cold War “collapse of the old anti-communist consensus” (Robinson, 1999). Entman (2004: 96) adds that “With the disappearance of the Red Menace, invoking patriotism to block opposition becomes more difficult, opening space for more independent influence by the media in defining problems and suggesting remedies.” Robinson (1999: 308) also finds that the press gains control when there is general uncertainty among political elites; but when government policy is

more coherent, it can “draw upon its substantial resources and credibility as an information source to influence news media output”.

Importantly, many of the press-state assumptions predate the proliferation of media actors and the extreme polarization (especially among cable news actors) discussed in section 1.4. Increased competition creates business incentives to specialize toward niche audiences; this in turn restructures media priorities away from objectively informing and toward sustaining viewership/readership. This necessitates a deeper investigation of the framing strategies used by the press and political elites. Still, a key implication of the press-state debate is that, contra Entman (2004), other scholars have found evidence of media acting autonomously of political elites, especially when humanitarian or ethical outcomes are at stake. This is also particularly likely to occur in the absence of a unifying threat (e.g., “the Red Menace”) and when political elites fail to construct a unified, coherent framing strategy (e.g., because of internal division). The following section describes in greater detail what drives an effective framing strategy.

2.2.4 Framing Strategy and Effectiveness

Despite the infinite ways to frame any given phenomenon, certain frames gain traction and “stick” while less effective frames are selected out and fail to cascade down. What determines a frame’s resonance? The variables that influence frame resilience occur at three levels of analysis: the source of a frame, attributes of the frame itself (such as strength, valence, magnitude, arrangement and cultural congruence), and the recipient of the frame.

2.2.4.1 Frame Source

Entman (2004: 106) notes that not all actors are equal in the American policy framing context: “Republicans, ideologically more unified on foreign policy and more amenable to following disciplined leadership, generally supply counter-frames more effectively than the fractious Democratic coalition”, making them better equipped to push frames to the public. Owing to their “flimsier control over news frames” (Entman, 2004: 106), Democrats are less effective at rallying the public. An ineffective strategy can enable “a power vacuum that opposing elites and journalists may enter with their own interpretations”, while effective ones “can endow frames with extra energy to penetrate down through elite networks to news organizations, journalists and their texts, and

finally to the public.” (Entman, 2004: 91) Page, Shapiro, and Dempsey (1987) find that popular presidents are also better able to persuade the public (see also Edwards, 1990; Entman, 1989, 2004).¹¹ Similarly, Chong and Druckman (2007) distinguish between “strong” (reputable and prominent) and “weak” sources, demonstrating through experiments that credible sources were more likely to produce framing effects than non-credible sources (see also Druckman, 2001). Certainly this indicates that framing effects are subjective: what is deemed credible to one audience may not be credible for other audiences. In the US political and media context, Democratic audiences may be more susceptible to frames produced and promoted by Democratic leaders and left-leaning press outlets, while Republican audiences will sympathize with Republican media and elites (assuming other frame attributes are constant).

2.2.4.2 Frame Attributes

Strength

Features of the frame itself, however, can predict its efficacy. The strength of a frame is defined as its “perceived persuasiveness” and logical coherence (Chong & Druckman, 2007: 638). Strength rests on three pillars: *availability*, *accessibility*, and *applicability* (Chong & Druckman, 2007: 639-640). Strong frames are able to activate schema that are stored in memory (availability) and within cognitive reach of the audience (accessibility). In order for an audience to process a frame, the frame must activate existing schemas (Chong & Druckman, 2007: 639). Even if the schemas are stored in memory, they must also be accessible through “passive, unconscious processes that occur automatically and are uncontrolled” (Higgins & King, 1981: 74). The schemas raised by a frame must also be relevant to its focus and useful to evaluating it (applicability) (Chong & Druckman, 2007: 640; see also Hartman & Weber, 2009; Slothuus, 2010; Zaller, 1992).

In their study, Chong and Druckman (2007) showed that frames that activated applicable schemas were more influential than weaker frames that did not. Interestingly, they found that weak frames can even backfire by causing the “recipient to infer that the weaker side has an indefensible position” (Chong & Druckman, 2007:

¹¹ Page et al. (1987) also find that media commentary influences public opinion, but they study political elites and media in isolation without acknowledging how the two compete. This thesis attempts to address this gap.

640; see also Herr, 1986; Martin & Achee, 1992). Entman's (2004) study of the media's mixed coverage of Cold War-era military ventures in Grenada, Libya and Panama also exemplifies a weak strategy: the incoherent use of pro- and anti-war frames prevented the latter from gaining traction, leading the public to sympathize with the comparably less ambiguous official executive frame. These findings suggest that logic and coherence can influence whether a frame resonates among its audience.

Entman (2004: 31) argues that magnitude – the “*sine qua non*” of successful foreign policy framing – is also related to strength. Repetition and rehearsal make frames more likely to “penetrate the consciousness of a public with little motivation to pay foreign affairs much attention”. By increasing the exposure of a particular frame, it naturally becomes more accessible to the audience, and is thus more likely to form or influence public attitudes (Domke et al., 1999; Domke et al., 1998; Entman, 2004; Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Higgins & King, 1981; Iyengar, 1994; Lodge & Stroh, 1993; Nabi, 2003; Price & Tewksbury, 1996; Zaller, 1992). Those features of an issue that “get a greater allocation of an individual's cognitive resources” (Pan & Kosicki, 1993: 57) matter most for audience evaluations.¹² In the context of security, Oren and Solomon (2015: 317) argue that the repetitive utterance of ambiguous securitizing phrases by actors can generate a collective “ritualized chanting” within society – they liken the process to “the principal characteristic of modern mass marketing campaigns”: repetition. Through a disciplined strategy of persistent messaging – like a “drumbeat” – certain security frames can become lodged into the audience's memory akin to an “earworm” (324), increasing the likelihood of audience acceptance of that frame.

Valence and Emotional Cues

While frame strength determines effectiveness of *issue* frames, valence – or the positive/negative charge of the frame – can influence whether *equivalency* frames resonate with audiences and produce framing effects. In general, research points to a “negativity bias”, the notion that negative frames are more effective than positive frames (Druckman, 2004: 677; see e.g., Jordan, 1965; Kanouse & Hanson, 1972;

¹² Chong and Druckman's (2007) controlled experiment, however, finds that repetition is only effective when the frame is strong, and should thus be subordinate to frame strength in assessing frame influence. In other words, the frequency of exposure to a frame is important, but also depends on the frame's perceived persuasiveness.

Peeters & Czapinski, 1990; Tversky & Kahneman, 1991).¹³ Positive frames can nonetheless influence attitudes and spark “favorable associations in memory” (Levin, Schneider, & Gaeth, 1998: 164; see also Levin & Gaeth, 1988) as demonstrated in Quattrone and Tversky’s (1988) employment-unemployment study (see also Tversky & Kahneman, 1981). Similarly, Rasinski (1989) finds that a frame identifying “assistance to the poor” generates more sympathy than “welfare”, presumably because of the latter’s negative connotation; and others find that “not allowing” public speeches against democracy draws more sympathy than “forbidding” them (Rugg, 1941; Schuman & Presser, 1981).

Emotive rhetoric – particularly if complemented with visual images – can also increase a frame’s effectiveness by “constructing villains” (or *others*) to emphasize the existential nature of a threat posed to the public. This tactic enables political elites to frame corrective action as “an emotionally satisfying and politically beneficial tale of triumph” (Entman, 2004: 99). Gadarian’s (2010) research also shows that emotionally powerful frames can produce more hawkish preferences among the public. This has obvious implications for security issues: fear-inducing and threat-invoking news coverage may resonate more strongly with audiences, influencing support for exceptional measures.

Arrangement and Co-occurring frames

The arrangement and co-occurrence of frames alter what schemas are activated and in which order. Research suggests that joint and separate evaluations, for example, can influence preferences (Sniderman & Theriault, 2004). Illustrating this, Kahneman, Ritov, and Schkade (2000) asked participants to evaluate on a scale of 0 to 6 the importance of two issues: multiple myeloma among the elderly and cyanide fishing in coral reefs around Asia. When the two frames were presented in isolation, cyanide fishing was evaluated as more important on average; in the joint evaluation, however, the disease was deemed more important (see also Kahneman & Ritov, 1994). Schuman, Kalton, and Ludwig (1983) demonstrated a similar effect in their 1981 study (see also Hyman & Sheatsley, 1950; Schuman & Presser, 1981). They offered two frames:

¹³ As discussed in the immigration content analysis in Chapter 7, both the press and political actors give more attention to negative frames than positive frames.

- (1) Do you think the United States should let Communist newspaper reporters from other countries come in here and send back to their papers the news as they see it?
- (2) Do you think a Communist country like Russia should let American newspaper reporters come in and send back to America the news as they see it?

Presented in isolation or before frame (2), frame (1) generated little support; however, when the order was reversed, activating the respondents' considerations of reciprocity, frame (1) generated much more support.

The presence of counter-frames can also shift influences by activating competing interpretations (Druckman, 2004; Schuman et al., 1983). Druckman (2004) demonstrates that framing effects can be moderated by elite competition – where frames are complemented with counter-frames – as well as interpersonal deliberation in a group. Their findings show that individual frames can become less effective when the audience engages in deliberate evaluation of the frame and its alternatives rather than passively ingesting a single frame. In the same study, *reframing* effects are also tested to determine whether the most recently encountered or the “loudest frame” (in terms of magnitude) affects preferences *after* conscious deliberation of the original frame and counter-frame. For example, in the first step, a negative frame and a positive counter-frame are first presented, resulting in intermediate evaluation of both; in the second step, the negative frame is repeated, thus being the loudest and most recently encountered frame. The findings suggest that the intermediate evaluation indeed moderates the effect of the final frame (Druckman, 2004: 680-681). Framing effects may thus be moderated by competition, where competing interpretations cancel each other out, resulting in weak, if any, framing effects.

Cultural Congruence

Frames aim to reduce “cognitive cost” by adopting the grammar and structure of similar past events, enabling audiences to fit new concepts into existing schema (Entman, 2004: 14). The audience uses the familiar old as a reference point to process the foreign new. As certain frames are repeated and mainstreamed, they become reliable mental shortcuts “embedded in the social construction of reality” (Norris et al., 2003: 5). Subsequent frames can “tap into” these pre-formed and accessible memory

networks, simplifying audience processing, and becoming more effective (Entman, 2004: 24). These “culturally congruent” frames resonate with the least cognitive cost, are most likely to persist over time (Entman, 2004: 14-15), and are most likely to produce framing effects (6). Conversely, emotionally or cognitively dissonant frames that challenge existing beliefs are less likely to gain social traction and more likely to be blocked from spreading (Brewer, 2001; Chong & Druckman, 2007; Druckman & Nelson, 2003; Haider-Markel & Joslyn, 2001; Shah, Domke, & Wackman, 1996). In other words, frames that are less likely to produce cognitive dissonance are likelier to be more effective.

2.2.4.3 Frame Recipient

Unlike media and political elites, the general public is presumed to react “naturally” and non-strategically in adopting frames, without deliberating on which “mental associations to arouse either within themselves or on their interpersonal networks” (Entman, 2004: 91). Because this research focuses primarily on the aggregate public, a deeper discussion on the individual-level variables that determine frame resonance is sidelined here. Briefly though, audience susceptibility to framing effects varies by political sophistication – an individual’s “intellectual or cognitive engagement with public affairs” (Zaller, 1992: 21) – and motivation (Nabi & Oliver, 2009; Zaller, 1992). Political sophisticates are more likely to respond to news framing and to “understand (new) information and integrate this into their opinion formation” (de Vreese, Boomgaarden, & Semetko, 2011: 184). The evidence is mixed, but most studies support a strong relationship between high political sophistication and susceptibility to framing effects (Druckman & Nelson, 2003; Nelson et al., 1997; Sniderman & Theriault, 2004; cf. Kinder & Sanders, 1990; Valentino, Beckmann, & Buhr, 2001; Zaller, 1992). Chong and Druckman (2007) argue that sophisticates can more easily recall information, because their frequent engagement with political issues increases information accessibility. They find that less engaged individuals require increased exposure to frames in order for framing effects to appear, while frequency has little impact on sophisticates.

Framing effects can also be driven by motivations to minimize cognitive costs (Downs, 1957) and avoid emotional dissonance. This suggests a subconscious desire to “pull” in familiar frames that require minimal cognitive processing and are congruent with existing ideological and other belief systems (Entman, 2004: 13; see also Hartman &

Weber, 2009; Slothuus, 2010). Cognitively or emotionally costly frames are rejected in favor of familiar frames. This selective exposure may not only drive what types of content a person is motivated to consume, but also the sources and medium through which the content is delivered (Stroud, 2017).

2.2.5 Conclusion

The main implication of framing scholarship is that linguistic choices made by actors to discuss an issue can have consequences on how their audiences interpret the issue. Variations in framing can activate different schemas which condition how the frame recipient evaluates information. The strength and presence of these framing effects are further influenced by several variables, among which magnitude – or the frequency of frames and competing counterframes – and repetition are recognized as the most important (Entman, 2004; Oren & Solomon, 2015). Entman’s (2004) cascade activation model ties these concepts into the broad American policymaking context and explains how frames emerge and spread. He emphasizes a top-down model in which the flow of influence cascades down from political elites (and especially executive branch officials) to the media and the public. The press-state debate offers some expectations on when media actors can act autonomously; changes in the media landscape – like the proliferation of news sources and targeted programming – suggest that media actors may be increasingly independent.

Importantly for this thesis, the framing literature provides theoretical and methodological guidance on how to operationalize and measure competition between different actors, and how to measure the effects on the public. The framing strategy and frame effectiveness literature suggests that certain variables – principally the frequency of exposure and consistent “drumbeat” messaging – will increase the potency of frames and thus the impact on audience preferences. Scholars have also demonstrated that audiences do not draw on the entire repertoire of knowledge to assess issues, but instead respond to subtle variations in issue or equivalence framing that activate some considerations over others. This provides significant methodological guidance for this thesis, discussed in depth in Chapter 3; briefly, this thesis will identify issue and equivalence frames, measure their prevalence, and determine if exposure to these frames correlates with public attitudes. Top-down assumptions suggest that foreign policy information generally flows from political elites and media down to the public. Finally, framing literature also answers important questions on whether the media can

act independently: the consensus is that political elites set the boundaries of available discourse, while the press has more flexibility in choosing how to frame the issues. The press is likelier to exercise independence when political elites lack a coherent framing strategy. What remains to be resolved, however, is how these processes play out in the domain of security and in an evolving information environment, where cable news operates under a new paradigm. This necessitates first a better understanding of how security issues are socially constructed.

2.3 Securitization Theory and the Copenhagen School

2.3.1 Introduction - Securitization and Framing

In *securitization theory*, the Copenhagen School developed an operational framework for studying framing effects in international security studies (Watson, 2012). But rather than simply narrowing framing theory to a specific domain, securitization theory encapsulates a broader network of interconnected concepts, of which framing is a key component. The theory offers a rich set of explanations and expectations for how (*in*)security – in the IR context of existential threats – is constructed and potentially legitimizes the use of exceptional measures to ensure the survival of some referent object. Specifically, securitization theory injects the logic of international security into the framing process by advancing expectations on the primary actors involved, the contextual conditions that aid and derail (de)securitization attempts, and the political implications of framing effects (e.g., the legitimization of adopting exceptional measures). Securitization theory and framing both share the position that “societal actors construct problems/threats through discursive practices” (Watson, 2012: 283), but the former is attuned to the specific dynamics of security construction and its implications.

This underscores the value added by securitization theory to this dissertation and studying framing in international security broadly. On its own, framing theory is general and derives its analytical power from its wide applicability across domains (Watson, 2012: 287) – Neuman, Guggenheim, Jang, and Bae (2014), for example, focus on 29 issues from six domains including economics, foreign affairs, government, public order, social issues, and the environment. While securitization theory’s own five sectors intersect these issue areas, its authors delimit the scope of the theory to issues that pose an existential threat to some referent object. Ever cautious of diluting

“security” to the point of analytical uselessness (e.g., Waeber, 1995a), the Copenhagen School offers a tightly defined process for how an issue moves along a political-security continuum. Without guidelines to narrow the research, framing research risks becoming a subjective and atheoretical exercise in assigning certain frames importance and value without a priori guidance or justification. Framing research requires some organizing and structuring logic to guide a research agenda and set expectations for which actors, dynamics and frames to analyze. For international security issues, securitization theory fulfills that purpose.

Still, the absence of scholarly attempts to consciously and deliberately synthesize securitization theory and framing has left the former underdeveloped.¹⁴ Methodological approaches common to framing scholarship can empower securitization theory with analytical rigor and quantitative richness that it currently lacks. Entman’s (2004) cascade activation model, for example, provides a theoretical basis for expanding the set of actors involved in the framing process, while the vast literature on measuring frame effectiveness generates a useful guideline for anticipating and understanding why some (de)securitizing frames “stick” and others collapse. Moreover, tools for measuring the audience and processes like desecuritization address critical operational gaps in securitization theory. In short, lessons and concepts from research in framing theory can enrich securitization theory. This thesis aims not only to synthesize the two fields of inquiry, but also to improve securitization theory by laying the methodological groundwork for future scholars seeking to show how security is constructed from multiple perspectives. To that end, this section outlines the history and key components of securitization theory. It is followed in the next section by a discussion on the limitations and areas for advancing securitization theory through conscious and deliberate integration with framing theory.

2.3.2 Securitization Theory Overview and History

Born out of the Centre for Peace and Conflict Research in Copenhagen near the end of the Cold War, the Copenhagen School (CS) sought to “move security studies beyond a narrow agenda which focuses on military relations between states” (Huysmans, 1998:

¹⁴ Watson (2012) argues abstractly about the shared “theoretical terrain” and motivations for integrating securitization theory and framing, but he does not explain how to operationalize the integration or what such a synthesis would substantively look like.

482). The effort to widen the security agenda and create a framework for analyzing security largely came to fruition in the development of *securitization theory*, most comprehensively articulated in *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (henceforth *Security*) by Barry Buzan, Jaap de Wilde and Ole Waever (1998). Securitization theory provides a framework for analyzing how security issues develop and enable leaders to adopt counteracting measures. The theory challenges traditional interpretations of security as solely the domain of objective, military threats to be resolved by the use of force between states (e.g., Walt, 1991; Waltz, 1979; see also Waever, 1995a). Instead it argues that security issues are varied in their nature and are socially constructed. The theory has several fundamental components that illustrate how security is constructed, who is involved, the sites of security issues, and the undoing of security (desecuritization) – these concepts are discussed in turn.

2.3.2.1 The Speech Act and Securitization Move

According to securitization theory, security issues are constructed via a top-down process in which securitizing agents – typically political elites (Huysmans, 2002: 54) – attempt to convince an audience – typically the general public (Aradau, 2004: 395) – about the presence of an existential threat that requires an urgent and extraordinary response to curtail its development (Balzacq, 2005; Buzan et al., 1998). That the threat is existential reinforces the imperative to respond to it in ways beyond the normal deliberation and rules or procedures of everyday politics – the issue instead needs to be dealt with urgently because inaction will challenge the very existence of some threatened object worth protecting. Unlike rationalist and positivist IR approaches that attempt to propose “‘brute facts’ about the world, which remain true independent of human action” (Brown & Ainley, 2009: 48), securitization theory adopts a constructivist ontology and is unconcerned with whether a threat is “real”. Rather, for securitization scholars, threats are socially constructed through an intersubjective negotiation between speakers and their audiences. This is partly motivated by the widening agenda, but is also useful in explaining why an issue might be considered a security threat in one context, but not in another. Buzan et al. (1998: 24) highlight, for example, that culture might be securitized in the former USSR and Iran, but not in the UK or the Netherlands.¹⁵ Detecting securitization is then not just an analysis of the

¹⁵ That cultural threats have in recent years been articulated to justify, for example, Brexit in the UK and the “burqa ban” in the Netherlands – several years after the CS’ 1998 publication of *Security* – is

threat or threatened object absent context, but of the articulations that discursively “construct” the threat.

The *speech act* is the crucial articulative element of the framework. Building on Austin’s (1962) “performative” language framework, the CS argues that the existential nature of the threat and the necessity of extraordinary measures is conveyed through the actual or metaphorical utterance of “security”:

security is not of interest as a sign that refers to something more real; the utterance *itself* is the act. By saying it, something is done (as in betting, giving a promise, naming a ship). By uttering “security” a state representative moves a particular development into a specific area, and thereby claims a special right to use whatever means are necessary to block it. (Waeber, 1995a: 55)

The performative speech act can also constitute a *securitizing move*, the attempt to push an issue out of the domain of everyday *politics* and into the domain of *security*. By doing so, actors attempt to legitimize the use of exceptional measures to respond to the threat. *Exceptional measures* vary depending on the issue and referent object, but can include use of force, extrajudicial policies, or restraints on civil liberty. Once a securitizing actor articulates a security issue that poses an existential threat, the securitization move can be either accepted or rejected by the audience; if accepted, exceptional measures are legitimated (Buzan et al., 1998) and securitization is successful. Conversely an audience rejection can theoretically restrain the adoption of exceptional measures for fear of political backlash.

To be sure, not all cases of audience acceptance will result in the adoption of exceptional measures (Collins, 2005: 573; Jackson, 2016: 313) nor will all instances of audience rejection result in restraint (e.g., Roe, 2008). While Buzan et al. (1998: 25) argue that exceptional measures have to be legitimized, even if not implemented, Roe (2008) instead argues for two stages of securitization. In the *stage of identification*, the audience recognizes an issue as a security threat; in the *stage of mobilization*, the

emblematic of security issues being a rhetorical and contextual outcome rather than objective security issues.

responses (exceptional measures) to the issue are legitimized. Stritzel (2007: 367) argues that the CS' conceptual labeling of responses as "exceptional" neglects that "many security practices deal with 'threats' below the level of exceptionality" and thus "prohibits making securitization theory more widely applicable to 'real-world' securitizations". Huysmans and Buonfino (2008: 767) similarly distinguish the "politics of exception" – which focuses on existential threats and the measures they warrant – from the "politics of unease" that typically reflect less pronounced "deviant and illegal practice" and the policing efforts they require.

Similarly, not all successful cases of securitization will be preceded by a speech act – indeed some security issues can become institutionalized, particularly threats that are persistent (Donnelly, 2013: 48-49; Hansen, 2013: 39-40; Roe, 2008: 618-619). In the post-9/11 context, the terrorism frame achieved sufficient salience that securitizing actors did not need to fully explicate what was at stake to justify counter-terrorism efforts (Buzan, 2006: 1104; Vultee, 2011). These established security issues reinforce the notion that security is socially constituted.

2.3.2.2 Securitizing Actors

Securitizing actors are the persons or groups that declare a referent object existentially threatened. Overlapping with Entman's cascading activation model, securitizing actors can include "political leaders, bureaucracies, governments, lobbyists and pressure groups" (Buzan et al., 1998: 40) who may be representative of a bigger collective – such as the state, nation or other group. Huysmans (2002: 54) similarly argues that "statesmen representing the state and uttering security in the name of the state are the privileged agents in the securitization process". These agents must persuade an audience that a threat is sufficiently severe and requires the adoption of exceptional measures. The securitizing actor should not be conflated with the object being threatened, however – this is only appropriate in certain cases, such as the traditional military sense in which the securitizing actor and referent object may both be the state.

2.3.2.3 Referent Objects

Referent objects are the units "that are seen to be existentially threatened and that have a legitimate claim to survival" (Buzan et al., 1998: 36). While the state may still be the "privileged" referent object, other objects deemed worthy of protection can include

culture, the environment, or human lives, depending on the nature of the threat and the security sector in focus. Nor does this mean that *anything* can be labeled a referent object – securitization claims require the audience to agree that the object is worth protecting at the cost of implementing emergency measures.

2.3.2.4 Functional Actors

Functional actors influence securitization by contributing to the dynamics of the threat, sector or securitization process. They are neither referent objects – because they are not the object being threatened – nor are they securitizing actors, because they either lack the legitimacy to do so or have no interest. Buzan et al. (1998: 36) use a polluting company as an example of a functional actor in the environmental sector, for whom securitizing the environment would be counterproductive. Other functional actors recognized in the literature include promoters of the securitizing actor’s voice such as influential security actors (Nasu, 2012; Williams, 2003: 25), members of the media¹⁶ (e.g., Karyotis & Patrikios, 2010; O’Reilly, 2008; Wilkinson, 2011), and other high-profile elites. They can also be either agents of the threat (e.g., terrorists, mercenaries) or threat neutralizers, such as “instruments of force” or “the arms industry” (Buzan et al., 1998: 57).

2.3.2.5 Audience

Despite the CS’ undertheorizing and understating of the audience in their work (Balzacq, 2005, 2011a; Balzacq et al., 2016), the concept remains a fundamental part of the securitization process. Because of asymmetric access to information, the audience relies on the securitizing actor to communicate threats to them (Balzacq, 2005). Buzan et al. (1998) emphasize, however, that the audience, rather than the securitizing actor, decides whether a securitization move is legitimate and thus whether securitization is successful (see also Roe, 2008). Specifically, the audience “accept[s] that something is an existential threat to a shared value” (31). This point reinforces the intersubjective nature of securitization theory – threats are discursively negotiated between actors. It also shields securitization theory from ethical criticism by not defining a priori what a security threat is or what security should be, but allowing it to emerge through a socially constructed process (Williams, 2003). While there is debate on what comprises the audience (Léonard & Kaunert, 2011; Roe, 2008; Salter, 2008), Vuori (2008: 72)

¹⁶ Though it is contended in this thesis that the media can be more than a mere functional actor.

suggests redefining the audience as the group that can “provide the securitizing actor with whatever s/he is seeking to accomplish with the securitization”. In the absence of clearer theoretical guidance on who the audience is, most empirical applications of securitization theory adopt the general voting electorate as the empowering audience. Weaknesses in the CS’ (under)theorizing of the audience are described in greater detail in section 2.4.

2.3.2.6 Facilitating conditions

Facilitating conditions refer collectively to dynamics that “might enable a securitizing move to be more successful” (McDonald, 2008: 567). This concept within securitization theory overlaps significantly with the variables that contribute to framing effectiveness (Watson, 2012): facilitating conditions can include, for example, the grammar used in the speech act, the social position of the securitizing actor and attributes of the threat articulated (Buzan et al., 1998: 32-33; Stritzel, 2007: 364; Waever, 2000: 252-253). The “internal, linguistic-grammatical” (Buzan et al., 1998: 32) component emphasizes the actual language and contents of the speech act – it should not only follow the rules of articulating security, but also be congruent with the “particular dialect of the different sectors” (Buzan et al., 1998: 33). The extent to which the speech act is persuasive and applicable can determine how well securitizing moves resonate with the audience, and thus the likelihood of successful securitization. If the securitizing actor can “identify with the audience’s feelings, needs and interests”, success is likelier (Balzacq, 2005: 184; see also Léonard & Kaunert, 2011). The securitizing actor must also hold a position of sufficient authority to make the claim credible in the specific sector (Watson, 2012). While state leaders, for example, might monopolize securitization in the military sector, religious elites may be better equipped with social capital to command audiences on societal sector threats (e.g., Karyotis & Patrikios, 2010). Attributes of the threat itself, beyond what is articulated, can also facilitate securitization, particularly historical memories of similar threats (Buzan et al., 1998; McDonald, 2008; Waever, 2000, 2003). For example, the memory of a recent terrorist attack may increase support for the suspension of civil liberties or military engagements abroad to prevent future terrorism.

2.3.2.7 Sectors

The CS' choice to redefine security as an intersubjective negotiation with fluid components makes securitization theory applicable across multiple sectors. The different sectors – military, political, economic, environmental and societal – reflect different arenas where security threats can emerge (Buzan et al., 1998). While each sector has its own unique set of actors, referent objects, threats, and vulnerabilities (what it means to be existentially threatened), they share a common threat construction dynamic: security issues are constructed through a negotiation between securitizing actors and their audience via a speech act, potentially aided by functional actors and facilitating conditions. Empirical applications certainly have overlapping dimensions – for example, dynamics in the military sector overlap with those in the political sector – but the significance of cross-sectoral dynamics has received little attention. This has hindered generalizations and identification of patterns that may exist across different sectors.

2.3.2.8 Desecuritization

A heightened state of security, the Copenhagen School argues, is normatively undesirable, because it indicates a failure to solve an issue using established normal rules; it requires breaking existing rules and creating new emergency rules that prioritize national security over all other concerns (Wæver, 1995b). In addition to breaking rules, it is morally questionable as it heightens feelings of enmity and the possibility of violence (Avant, 2007; Wæver, 1995a). In most cases¹⁷, the goal should be desecuritization – the reversal of extraordinary measures and the return to normal politics in which everyday rules apply (Wæver, 1995a; Williams, 2003). The CS defines desecuritization as language that avoids references to security or proposes deescalating a security issue back down to regular politics (Buzan et al., 1998: 34), “thus undermining the extent to which democratic processes can be overridden” (Donnelly, 2013: 45). Wæver (1995a: 56) argues that “transcending a security problem by politicizing it cannot happen through thematization in security terms, only *away* from such terms” (emphasis in original). Other normative proponents of

¹⁷ Some have argued that securitization – and the increased focus and urgency it brings to resolve an issue through mobilization – may be normatively advantageous, particularly on threats related to the environment (Buzan et al., 1998; Trombetta, 2011), disease (Sjostedt, 2011), gendered security (Hansen, 2000), and minority rights (Roe, 2004).

deseuritization have argued that it can only occur by rethinking issues outside of the Schmittian enmity construct that perpetuates *us* versus *them* relationships (Aradau, 2004; Huysmans, 1998).

Despite this theoretical guidance, deseuritization has received comparably less empirical attention (Waever, 1995a; Watson, 2012; Hansen 2012) beyond its normative aspects (Aradau, 2004; Huysmans, 1998). This may be linked to ongoing debates on what deseuritization actually is – Hansen (2012), for example, identifies four variations of deseuritization. These include *change through stabilization* which entails shifting away from explicitly security-centric discourse toward a “less militaristic, less violent and hence more genuinely political form of engagement” (Hansen 2012: 539); the *replacement* of one security issue with another, thus pushing the original issue into a desecuritized state; the explicit *rearticulation* of resolving an issue using political means; and the *silencing* of issues altogether within security discourse. The myriad conceptualizations of deseuritization may have contributed to a difficulty in identifying what deseuritization looks like empirically.

Furthermore, Behnke (2006) argues that participating in discourses on security – even if to subvert them – inadvertently reinforces the nexus between the issue and security. For him, deseuritization can only occur from lack of speech. Donnelly (2015) contends, however, that deseuritization is possible through speech, demonstrating this through an analysis of how Queen Elizabeth II’s bilingual speech acts in her address to official counterparts at Dublin Castle may have contributed to a desecuritizing process. Still, the lack of direction on what desecuritizing frames look like in the real world points to a major limitation in securitization theory – this and other limitations are discussed in the following section with an aim to synthesize concepts from framing theory and address the Copenhagen School’s oversights.

2.4 Limitations and Advancements

Its vast contributions to security studies and numerous applications notwithstanding, securitization theory neglects important actors and processes, while overemphasizing discourse analysis over other methods of inquiry (Watson, 2012). Certainly political elites are privileged securitizing actors (Bigo, 2002: 75-76; Huysmans, 2002: 54), but, as described above, empirical research conducted on press-state models has

demonstrated that the press regularly acts autonomously and employs frames that can influence the public and political elites on a variety of political issues in different domains. Securitization scholars dismiss the press as a functional actor that simply popularizes political elite discourse (O'Reilly, 2008: 66) and the broader IR literature relegates news media to “a linkage mechanism rather than an independent, strategic actor” (Baum & Potter, 2008: 50). The press is frequently minimized to a mouthpiece for political elites (Bloch & Lehman-Wilzig, 2002; Herman & Chomsky, 2002; Malek & Wiegand, 1997). Given the widely recognized influence of media in framing literature – exemplified by the CNN effect – this oversight in securitization theory leaves underexplored the extent to which media and political elite frames compete for public influence on security issues.

The CS also shows mixed interest in the currently underdeveloped *audience* component (Watson, 2012). The ambivalence is rooted in a broader conceptual problem in securitization theory: its authors suggest at once that the speech act itself constitutes securitization – making discourse analysis the “obvious” method of inquiry – while suggesting elsewhere that audience acceptance of the exceptional measure determines a successful case of securitization (Stritzel, 2007: 364; see also Aradau, 2004: 395). Not only does this tension affect a coherent reading of securitization, the methodological implications are severe. Discourse analysis reduces audiences or removes them from analysis altogether. Moreover, the CS offer no guidance on how to precisely measure audience acceptance or rejection of securitizing moves. By extension, *desecuritization* is also unclear: without solid ground from which to identify securitization, identifying the reverse process becomes equally opaque, suggesting a plausible explanation for the lack of empirical attention given to desecuritization. While extensive attention has been given to what desecuritization means theoretically (Buzan et al., 1998; Waever, 1995b), its political implications (Aradau, 2004) and the blurring of separation between the exceptional and the “everyday” (Donnelly, 2013), considerably less attention has been given to what desecuritizing frames look like in practice.

The remainder of this chapter lays the theoretical foundation for cross-fertilizing framing and securitization theory as a means to addressing these limitations and better operationalizing security analysis. The justifications here pave the road for a deeper discussion on methodology in the following chapter. This section proceeds by first arguing that securitization theory should include actors beyond political elites; it then

discusses the limitations of the speech act as originally described by the CS; and finally, it recommends synthesis with framing scholarship as a means to address these gaps and enable empirical analysis of both securitization and desecuritization.

2.4.1 Beyond Political Elites

The CS' preference for political elites as primary securitizing actors in empirical studies (Salter, 2011: 118) is not itself problematic, but their neglect of other actors in this role is theoretically incoherent and empirically limiting. Theoretically, the emphasis on political elites perpetuates a realist hierarchical alignment of the state above other actors in security studies (Avant, 2007; McSweeney 1999; Williams, 2003) because political elites (especially heads of state) are representatives of the state. Reflecting realism's prioritization of the "survival of the state" (Williams, 2003: 516; see also Walt, 1991; Waltz, 1979), and "institutionalized hierarchy of decision making and agenda setting that determines the position from which security can be legitimately spoken" (Huysmans, 2002: 55), securitization theory privileges political elites as security speakers. This "ontological gerrymandering" is inconsistent with the CS' constructivist claims – Huysmans (1998: 493) argues that the CS is "radical constructivist in one sense and only basically constructivist in another sense". A more consistent constructivist approach should allow a variable (rather than fixed) field of security, where security speakers can vary by context. This logically follows from the CS' ontological and theoretical assumptions: fluidity should extend to both *threats* as well as *mediators* in the intersubjective processes that socially construct those threats. In most cases (particularly when threats first emerge), political elites may indeed be primary securitizing actors – as "generally accepted voices of security" (Buzan et al., 1998) who possess asymmetric access to intelligence, they are natural authorities on security issues (Entman, 2004). But as the information gap narrows, other actors may become empowered drivers of public discourse, promoting and selecting competing interpretations (Baum & Potter, 2008; Milner & Tingley, 2015; Mortensgaard 2018). These actors need to be brought into the securitization framework to facilitate a holistic analysis of the discursive marketplace. In short, a thorough securitization theory grounded wholly in constructivism must remain flexible to evolving social relationships and institutions, acknowledging the potential for other actors to drive (de)securitization.

Beyond theoretical inconsistency, the preference for political elites has empirical consequences: it renders analysis “too static and exclusive” (Stritzel, 2014: 50) and one-dimensional. A political elite-centric approach locks securitization theory into a static post-Cold War Western European experience wedded to the theory’s inception (Waeber, 2003: 26) and agnostic to shifting information environment like the current US cable news media landscape. A deeper constructivist approach that accommodates a constantly evolving media/information landscape can ensure that securitization theory stays flexible, modern, and relevant. Non-state actors that increasingly influence security policy – whether through direct impact on political elites (e.g., the CNN effect); strategic selection and promotion of certain frames and speakers (Watson, 2012: 299); or indirectly through shaping constituent preferences (Norris et al., 2003: 13) – can include the press (Baum & Potter, 2008; Callaghan & Schnell, 2001; Entman, 2004), interest groups (Cigler & Loomis, 2007), religious leaders (Karyotis & Patrikios, 2010), international NGOs and transnational corporations (Avant, 2007).

The wide audience that the press commands, the high level of engagement between the public and the press (as discussed in section 1.4.1), and the press’ powerful role as a mediator between political elites and the public makes it a particularly indispensable part of the securitization process. Per Entman (2004: 3), political elites may have the upper hand in shaping the domains of security discourse, but they are “conditioned in part by how fully the media cooperate.” The general public’s reliance on mass media – particularly accessible and low cost formats like television, print and radio news for political learning (Page et al., 1987: 24) – as the primary source of information on political content (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Krosnick & Kinder, 1990; McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Zaller, 1992) is likely intensified for security issues given that “[i]n times of crisis, citizens turn to political leaders and the media to make sense of new and frightening events” (Gadarian, 2010: 469). This layer of mediation between political elites and the public, however, can transform messages through partisan filters, as well as selection, emphasis and omission of certain features and frames, thus shaping audience evaluations and influencing voters’ political preferences (Dalton, Beck, & Huckfeldt, 1998; Page et al., 1987). In a democratic environment, these influences can trickle back up to shape “the public policy agenda, including the response to events by government officials and the security services” (Norris et al., 2003: 13). While other non-state actors – NGOs, religious elites, corporations, lobbyists – may have similar influences, their influence is constrained to specific domains and issue areas, and thus

smaller audiences. The press, on the other hand, cuts across individual differences (and thus commands more attention than other actors), covers a broad array of both general and specific subjects, and is more deeply embedded in society and individuals' everyday lives (owing to its accessibility and low cost). This also shifts the analytical focus from discrete securitizing moves invoked by political elites to subtler ongoing (de)securitizing processes in discourse (Mortensgaard 2018).

Further strengthening the case for considering the media as a securitizing actor, the press is inherently a political institution (Cook, 2006). As the oft-nicknamed “fourth branch” of the government, news media reflects the political culture both in content and structure (Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Kaplan, 2002), particularly in the US context, where divisions along ideological and partisan lines are visible in cable and print news. As discussed in section 1.4, the replacement of objective news anchors with partisan pundits has further endowed the press with political characteristics. The press also bridges political elites and the public they are accountable to by informing the latter of the goings-on of government and policymaking. As an intermediary between political elites and the public, then the press has great power to drive (de)securitization – it can filter, frame and reframe political and security developments by “form[ing] the lens through which all issues are viewed” (Frohardt & Temin, 2003: 6).

Still, the press has largely been neglected as a potential independent and strategic securitizing actor. On the theoretical front, Stritzel's (2014: 50) criticism of the “a priori selection of agency/agents within securitization theory” and Hansen's (2000) suggestion that actors are not constant and uniform, but are constituted through the speech act, both create a theoretical basis for democratizing the securitizing actor. Even the CS' hints at widening the array of agents in the securitization process is encouraging: they only stipulate that those with sufficient social capital and/or the will to raise an issue onto the security agenda can securitize (Buzan et al., 1998; Vuori, 2008: 77). While the press can satisfy both these criteria, however, extant securitization research has given little empirical attention to the media. When acknowledged (e.g., O'Reilly, 2008; Vultee, 2011; Wilkinson, 2011), it has largely been subordinated to political elites, thus “neglecting how the media actually grants, reproduces or challenges authoritative securitizing positions” (Watson, 2012: 299). Wilkinson (2011: 29) recognizes that the press functions as both a “securitizing actor” and “functional actor”, but she emphasizes the latter role, focusing on political and protest leaders as

the dominant securitizing actors. Vultee (2011: 78) settles on security as the domain of political actors, only to be “amplified or tamped down by the news media”. He acknowledges that media dissent only gains traction after becoming salient in political elite debates. Mortensgaard (2018) commendably integrates framing and securitization theories to acknowledge that the press can behave as a securitizing actor, but her qualitative approach forecloses the potential for a comprehensive and long-term analysis of (de)securitization processes; moreover, her analysis is limited to visuals. Unlike some framing and political communication scholarship – which recognizes the possibility of autonomous media capable of influencing both policy as well as public opinion (e.g., Althaus et al., 1996; Baum & Potter, 2008; Callaghan & Schnell, 2001; Gadarian, 2010; Robinson, 1999; Wood & Peake, 1998) – the securitization literature currently has given limited consideration to news media actors as independent and strategic securitizing actors.

Yet the proposed expansion of the securitization framework to include the media as a securitizing actor is consistent with the CS’ ontological and theoretical assumptions, and it also brings substantial empirical improvements. A hallmark of the security widening/deepening effort has been the expansion of types of actors in security, including referent objects and the audience (Buzan et al., 1998; Roe, 2008; Salter, 2008). Beyond the state, Buzan et al. (1998: 36) argue “a much more open spectrum of possibilities has to be allowed” for referent objects; elsewhere Buzan and Waever (1997: 243) “prefer to take a social constructivist position ‘all the way down’”, also in regard to referent objects. Similarly, there is agreement among securitization scholars that audiences vary across different cases and different sectors (Balzacq, 2011a; Léonard & Kaunert, 2011; Roe, 2008; Salter, 2008; Vuori, 2008; Waever, 2003). As allowances have been made for *referent objects* and the *audience*, expanding the *securitizing actor* beyond political elites to include press actors is well within the CS’ ambition to take a social constructivist position “all the way down.”

In addition to theoretical coherence, analysis of the press as a securitizing actor provides a more holistic empirical representation of the social field within which (in)security is formed, strengthening the original theory by making it more applicable to modern case studies. High levels of engagement between the American public and the press make it critical to factor news media into analysis of security construction. Moreover, as news options proliferate, press actors become increasingly integral

players in shaping elite and public opinions, and consequently foreign policy. The press reorganizes the social field that the CS takes for granted as structured and fixed (Stritzel, 2014). An analysis of social construction is severely narrow without factoring in a prominent information mediator, and the proliferation of mass media and its prevalence in society renders such investigations incomplete.

Actively bringing media into the securitization framework, however, brings methodological challenges. It expands both the qualitative scope and the quantitative scale of data. While the limited number of political actors and smaller volume of textual data (speeches, press releases, and executive statements) makes discourse analysis an attractive and practical method of inquiry for investigating political elite speech acts, news data is more voluminous. The press does not issue discrete and momentous “speech acts” like executive orders or policy declarations – its information stream is gradual and continuous. Discourse analysis is thus prohibitively impractical for a comprehensive reading of news media which frequently lacks these symbolic, defining speech acts. Further, the lack of institutionalized hierarchy among news sources precludes ascribing importance to individual articles or news segments, which rarely carry the symbolic weight to individually affect discourse or significantly shift public opinion, especially when compared to, for example, a single presidential state of the union address. This blurs the boundary between pivotal and trivial texts. Analysis of media content thus requires tools beyond discourse analysis.

2.4.2 Beyond the Speech Act and Discourse Analysis

Its inapplicability to news media analysis notwithstanding, the *speech act* concept as originally defined by the CS is fraught with limitations (Léonard & Kaunert, 2011; Waeber, 2003). In his critique of securitization theory, Stritzel (2007: 364) underscores that the CS “fluctuate between the terms *process* and *speech act/utterance* as if both were synonymous” (see also Balzacq, 2005, 2011a; Léonard & Kaunert, 2011; Williams, 2003). Securitization is defined both as an action taken by a securitizing actor and also as the effect of a mediated process between a securitizing actor and an audience. A focus on political elites suffices for examination of the first version, but the second version requires examining the audience’s evaluation (Roe, 2008; Stritzel, 2007), because it suggests that securitization involves both the securitizing actor’s speech act *and* audience acceptance (Balzacq, 2011a; Williams, 2011). The consensus in securitization literature points toward a preference for the process-oriented and

context-driven negotiation rather than a single speech act (Balzacq, 2005, 2011a; Donnelly, 2013; McDonald, 2008; Salter, 2011; Vuori, 2008; Williams, 2011). Accepting this version however escapes neither the predominance of the securitizing actor as the unit of analysis nor the CS' undertheorization of the audience. Important methodological questions are unanswered, like what audience acceptance looks like in practice (Léonard & Kaunert, 2011: 58; Watson, 2012); how to identify the audience(s) (Balzacq, 2005; Salter, 2008; Vaughn, 2009); and how to identify audience acceptance/rejection of a securitization attempt (Cavelty, 2008: 26; Salter, 2008).

While others have given more attention to the audience (e.g., Balzacq, 2011a; Léonard & Kaunert, 2011; Roe, 2008; Salter, 2008), the lack of guidance on how to operationalize audience evaluation has yielded disparate methods and underwhelming, unscientific evidence. Roe's (2008) use of public opinion polling and parliamentary voting results to measure audience evaluations of securitizing moves, for example, is a significant contribution, but he only presents sporadic data rather than a comprehensive account of these figures throughout the long process of securitizing the Iraq War in the UK. Leonard and Kaunert (2011) employ Kingdon's "three streams model" to demonstrate the UK's failure to securitize migration, but they provide only anecdotal evidence of audience evaluations. Salter's (2008) study also uses anecdotal evidence and lacks comparability across cases. Stritzel (2007: 359) laments that inconsistent and disparate analyses stymie comparative efforts and risk perpetuating the liberties future scholars take in imperfect assessments of the audience. Watson (2012: 298) further critiques that "most studies of securitisation connect successful securitising claims with policy or behavioural change, making it impossible to distinguish between acceptance, apathy and acquiescence".

The problematic implications of the speech act then are threefold: what audience acceptance/rejection is empirically remains unclear; guidance on how to measure audience preferences consistently across different cases is absent; and qualitative discourse analysis centered on securitizing actors (Balzacq, 2011a: 31) is the dominant method. This latter proclivity is not unfounded: discourse analysis examines the social construction of phenomena by placing texts in context. It explains how certain realities emerge through an intersubjective process, just as securitization demonstrates how security issues emerge and become existential threats through a negotiation between actors. Fierke (2004: 37) characterizes discourse analysis as the "mapping of process by

which worlds change” – so too is securitization a transition from a world of everyday politics to a world of emergency and security. It is not surprising then that securitization studies have relied so heavily on discourse analysis. But the exclusive use of discourse analysis leads to an overemphasis on the speech act and further neglect of the audience. Rather the goal should be to buttress discourse analysis with evidence of a representative and relevant audience’s acceptance or rejection.

2.4.3 Cross-Fertilizing Framing and Securitization Theories

These limitations in securitization theory can be overcome by integrating concepts and methodologies from framing scholarship. The two research programs are already compatible given that both focus on discursive practices and “assert that linguistic-grammatical composition is essential to understanding political outcomes” (Watson, 2012: 283). Framing scholarship, however, offers tools that can push securitization theory beyond its emphasis on political elites, the speech act and discourse analysis. This section builds a conceptual bridge between both securitization theory and framing scholarship, identifying how features of the latter can address limitations in the former. It sets the stage for a more practical discussion on methodological operationalization in Chapter 3.

Frames provide a useful heuristic to organize, quantify and operationalize competing securitizing and desecuritizing discourses. Certainly it is up to the analyst to identify the parameters of these oppositional frames through interpretivist approaches like discourse analysis, but once delineated, tools for evaluating frame effectiveness from framing research can be merged in to determine whether securitizing or desecuritizing discourses can penetrate through the public and produce framing effects. The strength or magnitude of oppositional (de)securitizing frames and the frame source’s credibility¹⁸, for example, can help predict and explain the outcome of competing discourses. Frame source credibility is subjective and can vary – thus it is important to differentiate audience segments according to their calibration toward “credible” sources (e.g., news watching habits). Framing scholarship also offers expectations on the moderating effects of co-occurring frames, where competing interpretations of issues may cancel out framing effects. This may be particularly consequential in the analysis

¹⁸ In CS parlance, this mirrors the “social capital” facilitating condition attributed to a securitizing actor (Buzan et al., 1998).

of certain media, where norms of balanced reporting may not render framing effects. In short, framing scholarship provides a roadmap of useful indicators of effective messaging – such as magnitude, valence and source attributes – that can be used to measure the potency of (de)securitizing frames.

Framing research also more thoroughly addresses the audience deficit in current securitization scholarship (Watson, 2012: 298). Not only does the concept of *framing effects* directly allude to an audience, but it also explains *how* framing effects occur. Schema activation suggests that audiences rely on fragments of discourse (as opposed to the entire repertoire of knowledge) when forming evaluations: the activation of one node can activate other nodes through cognitive links. These links can strengthen over time as they are repeated and rehearsed, making them more accessible. If a security threat is invoked with language that highlights certain familiar and institutionalized features, such as “terrorism”, then it will be more accessible to the audience. This focuses analysis to key accessible nodes that may trigger the activation of other nodes used for evaluation. Again, a prior comprehensive discourse analysis is necessary to chart out key nodes; but once they are identified, analysis can be extended to more voluminous types of content such as news media. As discussed in more detail in the following chapter, discourse analysis can be used to identify key frames and extend operationalization to a content analysis on a larger, more comprehensive data set. Still another asset in framing scholarship is the approach to measuring audience preferences through analysis of polls and public opinion data (Watson, 2012: 298). Again, while this has been utilized by some securitization scholars, the approach has typically been unsystematic and unthorough.

The scholarship on frame anatomy also provides useful axes along which to identify oppositional discourses – its integration with securitization theory can help operationalize securitization *and* desecuritization. To reiterate, frames can have multiple functions: to define a problem, identify its cause, provide moral evaluation and propose remedies (Entman, 2004). The latter two are particularly useful for securitization theory: oppositional (de)securitizing discourses can contest the moral evaluation of a potential issue (e.g., as a threat, a problem below threat level, or not a problem at all) or the remedy used to address it (e.g., exceptional measures in the case of securitizing discourses versus routine unexceptional procedures in the case of desecuritizing discourses). To identify comparable desecuritizing frames, the analyst

can refer to those frames that contest securitizing discourses along the remedy proposal or moral evaluation axis. Frames can also vary along the issue-equivalency distinction, providing yet another dimension of analysis for securitizing and desecuritizing frames. Importantly, these axes provide a way to identify, demarcate and measure the oft-neglected practice of desecuritization. Where actors filter, select, and emphasize aspects of an issue that move away from security (Waever, 1995b), the resulting frames may be desecuritizing. These frame components essentially provide useful axes along which securitizing and desecuritizing narratives can be juxtaposed. Watson (2012: 300) also argues that longer timeframes that are frequently used in framing research (as opposed to shorter episodic timeframes in securitization research) can better accommodate the examination of “processes of resistance that could serve as a model for exploring processes of desecuritization”.

Finally, the synthesis of framing and securitization reinforces the expectation that framing effects are top-down. While political elites and news media certainly consider the mood of the electorate and their audiences, the cascade activation model suggests that the flow of influence moves from political elites and the press to the public (Entman, 2004). Watson (2012: 286) notes that the “uneven contest” is shared between securitization and framing scholarship, where “certain actors hold a privileged position in signaling important developments and in establishing those developments”. This is important insofar as it identifies an audience in policymaking (the public) and it provides some expectations in causality and directionality. Specifically, audience alignment with particular sources – political elite or press actors – may be cautiously interpreted as a reflection of framing effects of the latter on the former.

2.5 Conclusion

By selecting and highlighting those aspects of a threat that convincingly demonstrate an existential threat to some referent object, securitizing actors attempt to persuade an audience of their interpretation of an issue as an existential threat, so that the audience arrives at similar evaluations and legitimizes the adoption of exceptional measures. The very notion of framing effects implies an intersubjectivity that is shared with securitization theory. Framing literature further suggests that attitudes are largely shaped by the considerations that are activated – rather than drawing on the entire corpus of relevant knowledge on an issue that an individual may hold, efforts to minimize cognitive costs result in only using the activated considerations to evaluate a

frame. Similarly, securitization theory argues that threats are not objective truths with a fixed meaning, but are socially constructed through discursive resources: threats are not objective realities, but must be framed as such. How this resonates with an audience – the framing effects – depends on who the framer is, the way the issue is framed, the considerations that it provokes and what is cognitively accessible to the audience.

Embracing the parallels between securitization and framing scholarship, this project also engages the areas where the two scholarships do not yet overlap. Securitization theory emphasizes that media can be a functional actor that popularizes the discourse of political elites (the manufacturing consent or indexing approach), but has not explored – as literature in framing scholarship has – whether media can act as an independent and strategic actor, influencing the audience (and perhaps political elites, as the CNN effect dictates). Framing literature also more consciously embeds the audience – or frame recipients – into analysis, both conceptually (through framing effects) and methodologically (using public opinion data). For securitization theory, the audience remains underdeveloped and inadequately measured. Having demonstrated then that the standard approach to securitization (1) potentially underprivileges the role of media as a securitizing actor; (2) is unable to satisfactorily incorporate the audience; and (3) ignores important processes (like desecuritization) through a methodological overreliance on discourse analysis, the next chapter outlines a mixed methods design that synthesizes the Copenhagen School's securitization theory and the framing research program into an operational framework.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction -Triangulating Methods

Integrating framing and securitization theories offers a way forward for addressing the primary research question of this thesis, and determining whether media can have a securitizing effect independent of political elites. Their integration also creates methodological opportunities to empirically expand securitization scholarship. According to the CS, discourse analysis – the investigation of “how the socially produced ideas and objects that populate the world were created and are held in place” (Hardy, Harley, & Phillips, 2004: 19; see also Hardy, 2001; Phillips & Hardy, 2002) – is the “obvious method” (Buzan et al., 1998: 176) for analyzing securitization (see also, Watson, 2012). Central to discourse analysis is the idea that meaning is fluid and that texts – whether literal written statements or other representations that convey meaning – are not intrinsically meaningful; rather meaning is mutable and derived from context (Neumann, 2008: 62-63). Discourse analysis is a natural fit for studying security, because it “says something about why state Y was considered an enemy in state X, how war emerged as a political option, and how other options were shunted aside” (Neumann, 2008: 62); for Balzacq (2011a: 39), discourse analysis “map[s] the emergence and evolution of patterns of representations which are constitutive of a threat image.” In short, it can reveal how threats and security issues are socially constructed through the interpretation of texts and the context in which they emerge.

Balzacq (2011a: 47) laments, however, that “discourse analysis is strong in understanding how securitization operates, but weak in uncovering why certain securitizing moves succeed and when.” Methodological pluralism, he argues, can help create “a much richer version of securitization processes” (52). With this ambition in mind, this chapter justifies new methods for the securitization toolkit. It begins with a definition of what an ideal model of securitization should look like and how this ideal model can be operationalized. The discussion next shifts to a broad overview of the methods used in this study and a justification for combining them into a singular framework. In the final two sections, the structure of analysis for each case study is discussed in more depth. Specifically, the case studies will be split into a *macroanalysis* and a *microanalysis*. The macroanalysis investigates securitization as a naturally occurring process, with all the complexities of sociohistorical context. It uses discourse

analysis to identify frames, which in turn inform the content analysis of news media texts. A longitudinal public opinion analysis introduces audience preferences and offers preliminary assessments on relationships between political elites, media and public attitudes. These relationships are made more explicit in the microanalysis, which uses multi-year cross-sectional survey data covering a representative sample of Americans to link support for exceptional measures to media and political attention.

3.2 Defining a Securitization Effect - From an Ideal Model to a Practical Model

An ideal model of a securitization effect should demonstrate that a securitizing actor's rhetoric can motivate an audience's preferences for adopting exceptional measures in defense of some referent object. In this research, such an idealized model should further differentiate securitizing actors (the news media and political elites) and their ability to drive securitization independently of each other. The source of the frame must be controlled for in contexts with multiple possible securitizing actors to isolate the origin of the effect on public opinion. A link should be established between exposure to securitizing (or desecuritizing) frames and support for (or opposition to) exceptional measures.

This ideal model requires measuring four constructs: frame competition, source differentiation, audience attention to sources, and audience acceptance/rejection of exceptional measures. One realization of this idealized model could be an experiment, in which participants are treated with different frames from different sources and asked to indicate their preferences for exceptional measures (e.g., Coe et al., 2008; Iyengar & Hahn, 2009). While traditional framing experiments have high internal validity, they lack external validity – oversimplified and unrealistic laboratory settings produce fleeting framing effects that have limited generalizability to real life (Abrajano et al., 2017). The advantage of manipulating frame competition, source differentiation and exposure is offset by the failure of the artificially controlled setting to account for the complexity of context and temporality. Moreover, experimental settings in which “individuals receive only a single frame in a single exposure” (Abrajano et al., 2017: 8) have dominated existing framing scholarship – this research aims to further contribute to existing research by developing a more realistic and practical model that accommodates longer timeframes and retains context (and thus exposure to multiple

frames) by separately measuring the four identified constructs and stitching insights together.

3.2.1 Frame Competition

The first objective is to identify and measure competing securitizing and desecuritizing frames. Securitizing frames emphasize the threat and promote support for (or positive evaluations of) exceptional measures by the audience, while desecuritizing frames promote negative/alternative evaluations that move away from security. The discussion on frame attributes in the previous chapter identifies several attributes that influence the effectiveness of a frame. Of these, frame magnitude has been recognized as the most powerful determiner of framing effects and thus is the primary vehicle through which frame competition is assessed in the following chapters. This suggests that, in a *competitive frame* environment, the most prevalent – or “loudest” – frames will become most accessible and should thus have the strongest impact on audience preferences (Bartels, 2003; Zaller, 1992). This effect is moderated, however, by other factors identified in Chapter 2: a weak or unpersuasive frame lacking in either one of availability, accessibility, and applicability will be less influential than a strong frame; “catchy” frames can resonate through repetitive invocation; negative frames on balance are more effective; the co-occurrence of multiple frames will promote internal deliberation and thus weaken the effect of any one frame; and culturally congruent frames that fit into established modes of interpretation and consensus values will be least cognitively costly and thus most effective, while frames that produce emotional or cognitive dissonance will be blocked.

3.2.2 Source Differentiation

Source differentiation measures variation in employment of frames by different actors. In order to isolate the impact of different sources, the diversity, balance and range of frames must be characterized. If audience attitudes align with the particular balance of frames being employed by a source, then there is increased confidence that framing effects are occurring; conversely, if audience attitudes do not align with a source’s output, then it is unlikely that the source is producing framing effects. Determining the differences in coverage of frames by different sources also provides evidence of whether or not different press actors are aligning with political elites (or with each

other). This targets the central component of independence in the primary research question that this thesis aims to answer.

3.2.3 Audience Attention to Source and Response to Exceptional Measures

Finally, a link must be made between the frames used by securitizing actors and audience attitudes toward exceptional measures and security threats to confirm a framing effect. Framing research suggests that a source's credibility and popularity will affect audience susceptibility to framing effects (Edwards, 1990; Entman, 1989, 2004); the CS similarly argue that the speaker's social capital is a facilitating condition. This requires, then, measuring both audience acceptance/rejection of exceptional measures while also determining (and controlling for) their calibration to sources they deem credible. Some clarity is required on what audience acceptance or rejection looks like empirically. Rather than creating arbitrary measures of success (e.g., 51% approval for some exceptional measure), linking changes in frames used by the press and political elites on the one hand and changes in public opinion on the other hand can indicate the persuasiveness of the frames. Thus, an ideal model should identify both trends in public opinion as well as static data that links audience preferences for exceptional measures to their calibration to actors.

When combined together, the four components – frame competition, source differentiation, audience attention to different sources, and audience evaluation of exceptional measures – can empirically identify securitization processes and link the appropriate actors. Frame competition and source differentiation help determine which frames – securitizing or desecuritizing – are most salient and the relationship between actors invoking those frames. Analyzing audience preferences over time recognizes shifts in support for exceptional measures that can be linked to frames used by actors. The next section shows how to operationalize these ideal concepts into practice.

3.3 A Mixed Methods Design

As discussed in the previous chapter, discourse analysis is an effective tool for analyzing political elite texts, but insufficient for analyzing audiences and other potential securitizing actors such as the news media. Audiences do not collectively produce texts the same way as political elites, making it difficult to include them in a discourse analysis; and the diversity of press actors and volume of content makes news

media incompatible with discourse analysis. A lack of formal hierarchy among press actors also makes it difficult to ascribe importance or symbolic value to individual articles or news segments, unlike, for example, presidential addresses to the nation. Hierarchies among political elites (e.g., the president), on the other hand, dictate which actors are most likely to impact discourse and deserve the most analytical attention. Discourse analysis is also more vulnerable than positivist approaches to researcher bias through “cherry-picking” (Santa Ana, Treviño, Bailey, Bodossian, & de Necochea, 2007), because of a priori assumptions of what is discursively relevant: only those texts that meet some researcher-subjective criteria of what is important are included in the discourse analysis. While this can help narrow research, focusing only on mainstream and salient events neglects the aggregated effect of “everyday” minutiae. This is problematic, because while some events may be individually insignificant, they may become meaningful when analyzed as a sum of their parts. A lone news article advocating exceptional measures may be trivial, but the aggregate effect of multiple such articles can constitute a significant shift in discourse. As discussed in section 3.3.2 below, a content analysis with broadly defined boundaries can widen the net, making research less vulnerable to analyst blind spots. Finally, the methodologically interpretivist logic of discourse analysis limits replication across sectors and cases, because the idiosyncrasies of one security issue will prevent the same path of discovery for another security issue (Buzan et al., 1998). This makes it harder to extrapolate patterns between contexts. A rules-based positivist approach, on the other hand, can overcome this limitation by applying a systematic framework for analysis and tweaking parameters (e.g., keyword search criteria) as necessary to fit different domains.

Still, discourse analysis should not be fully dismissed: a formalized and systematic design – such as Hansen’s (2013) framework for security discourse analysis – can mitigate subjective bias and standardize analysis. The proposed research design here retains discourse analysis but supplements it with tools grounded in positivism that not only show *how* securitization occurs, but *why* (Balzacq, 2011a: 47). Using mixed methods retains the contextual benefits of discourse analysis while injecting rules-based objectivity, reducing blind spots, and measuring with quantitative precision 1) the presence, breadth and relative proportion of (de)securitization frames attributed to different actors over time; and (2) audience acceptance/rejection of securitization attempts. These methods measure frame/source competition and audience acceptance/rejection of exceptional measures in a reliable, generalizable and replicable

way. While some subjective boundaries are necessary, this approach casts a wider net than discourse analysis and adds statistical rigor to an otherwise qualitative discourse analysis-driven framework.

The remainder of this chapter maps out in detail the methodological framework used in the following chapters. The framework is divided into a longitudinal macroanalysis – which includes a political elite-centric discourse analysis, a press-centric content analysis and an audience-centric public opinion poll analysis – and a cross-sectional microanalysis that links audience security preferences to their calibration to different information sources.

3.3.1 Political Elite Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis achieves two functions in this thesis: first it provides an in-depth illustration of political elite rhetoric and practices. Specific focus is given to competing securitizing and desecuritizing discourses. Second, the rhetorical links that signify and juxtapose the two opposing discourses are used to drive the subsequent content analysis of news media. Discourse analysis thus offers a way to map out the boundaries of discourse – set by political elites – through the analysis of texts and attribute them to both securitizing and desecuritizing identities. It is critical for addressing the research questions of this thesis, because it provides a reference point against which to compare media discourse and determine whether it mirrors or contests political elite rhetoric. In other words, it can demonstrate whether the press acts independently of political elites, thus satisfying a preliminary step in identifying whether the media can be an independent securitizing actor. Discourse analysis also demonstrates how threats were socially constructed – again, a first step towards identifying how exceptional measures emerged in public discourse and became (de)legitimized through audience interaction.

Taking seriously Balzacq's (2011a: 41) claim that "a minimum of formalization in discourse analysis is a scholarly requirement," the methodological point of departure here is Lene Hansen's (2013) framework for security discourse analysis developed in *Security as Practice*. She argues that foreign policy utterances – or "performances" (Butler, 1990: 25) – articulate "particular directions for action" (Hansen, 2013: 19), while also both invoking and (re)producing identities. On the one hand, identities are naturally invoked in foreign policy through a juxtaposition between the Self and the

Other. In security discourse, this can take the form of the Self recognizing the Other as a threat. For example, the recognition and articulation of a terrorist threat invokes a “terrorist” Other against a threatened Self. On the other hand, uttering security also reproduces competing Self identities: competing utterances can construct Selves that differ based on their relationship with the Other. For example, the identity of a “terrorist” Other can position the Self in a different space from identification of the same entity as a “freedom fighter” or “state sanctioned soldier” (Der Derian, 1992: 92-126; Hansen, 2013: 17). The choices made to interpret the Other necessarily reconstruct and pit opposing Self identities against each other: one version of the Self is threatened by the “terrorist”, while another Self recognizes the legitimacy of a “freedom fighter”. To choose one frame over the other not only differentiates the identity of the subject, but also of the speaker’s relation to the subject (Hansen, 2013: 16). Thus, alternative ways of defining a foreign policy issue can constitute different competing Selves. The construction of these different Selves gives other actors – political elites, the public and the press – a pole to affix their own identities to.

For Hansen (2013), the juxtaposing *basic discourses* that arise out of different Selves are components of a broader security policy debate, or a *major discourse*. She suggests identifying two to three basic discourses “that articulate very different constructions of identity and policy and which thereby separate the political landscape between them” (47). One way to do this is to identify discourses that vary in their radicalization of the Other – for instance, the identification of an illegal immigrant as an existential threat that must be ejected is a more radical construction of the Other than the characterization of the same immigrant as an entity to be received and integrated into society. The different constructions of the Other necessarily invoke (and reproduce) two different Self identities: a restrictionist Self that seeks to block immigrants from society and an expansionist Self that seeks to include and integrate immigrants. The construction of different Others and Selves means that competing basic discourses naturally lead to different foreign policies or recommendations for courses of action (Hansen, 2013: 48). In the context of security, the push for some exceptional measure will constitute a securitizing Self aligned with a securitizing basic discourse, while articulations *away* from security will constitute a desecuritizing Self aligned with a desecuritizing basic discourse. Both discourses compete within a broader (de)securitization debate (or a major discourse). It is these juxtapositions that reveal the different frames used by

competing (de)securitizing identities/discourses – e.g., to provide moral evaluation and propose remedies – and provide the foundation for the oppositional content analysis.

These oppositional discourses underscore a key strength of Hansen’s framework for securitization theory: it requires the analyst to position discourses relative to each other in order to identify what is *securitizing* and what is *desecuritizing*. Complex security issues can have several policies and related discourses in play. Analyzing any one in isolation requires making a subjective choice as to whether it is part of a securitizing or desecuritizing discourse. In some cases, this may be obvious, but in other cases, a policy could represent either discourse depending on its temporal, spatial and semantic proximity to other policies. The proposed detention and treatment of suspected terrorists as prisoners of war under Geneva Convention guidelines may appear at first to be part of a securitizing discourse; however, against an alternative proposal in which these detainees are recommended to be tortured in violation of Geneva Convention protocol in the name of security, the former discourse is a significant move away from the exceptionalism of the latter. Relatively speaking then, the former discourse is desecuritizing to the extent that it is a move down from the alternative discourse of torture and consistent with the rule of law.¹⁹ This is especially important given that different Selves can agree on the presence of some threat (stage of identification) without necessarily agreeing on the adoption of exceptional measures (stage of mobilization). By identifying different discourses per Hansen’s (2013) framework, they

¹⁹ Importantly, desecuritizing discourses need not fundamentally *unmake* security – nor do such discourses cause the securitization of an issue to entirely collapse. While the presence of competing desecuritizing discourses can certainly act as barriers toward securitizing an issue (like terrorism) and legitimizing exceptional measures, they are a single component of a broader discourse. In the case of terrorism, the legitimacy of torture as an exceptional measure was a single (albeit significant) component of the securitization of terrorism, alongside other exceptional measures like domestic surveillance, military campaigns and emergency legislation. Thus, desecuritizing discourses that aimed to delegitimize torture did not cause the securitization of terrorism to entirely collapse, but rather acted as a countervailing force in the tug-of-war between competing discourses. This reinforces Roe’s (2008) fundamental distinction between the stage of mobilization and the stage of identification: an issue can be identified as a threat, but still exist below the threshold of requiring exceptional measures. This thesis aims to catalog the securitizing and desecuritizing trends in discourse as a continuous and dynamic process, without necessarily adjudicating whether an issue is securitized/desecuritized as a final state.

can be mapped out and positioned relative to each other to identify what role – securitizing or desecuritizing – they play.

To that end, this research recognizes securitizing and desecuritizing basic discourses that are employed by and constitute competing Selves. Rather than specific actors, Selves are used to demarcate oppositional identities, where multiple actors can constitute a Self through alignment with basic discourses associated with that Self. Disagreement on the legitimacy of an exceptional measure can, for example, juxtapose a securitizing Self against a desecuritizing Self. Each identity subscribes to and promotes a particular basic discourse. For analytical purposes, these basic discourses are treated as general policy positions, vocabularies and modes of thinking that are interconnected with their associated Selves. Basic discourses can be further broken down into *frames*, which are used in the case studies as linguistic signs within the broader discourse (whether securitizing or desecuritizing). The identification of frames (as units of basic discourse) makes the discourse analysis conceptually translatable into guidelines for the content analysis.

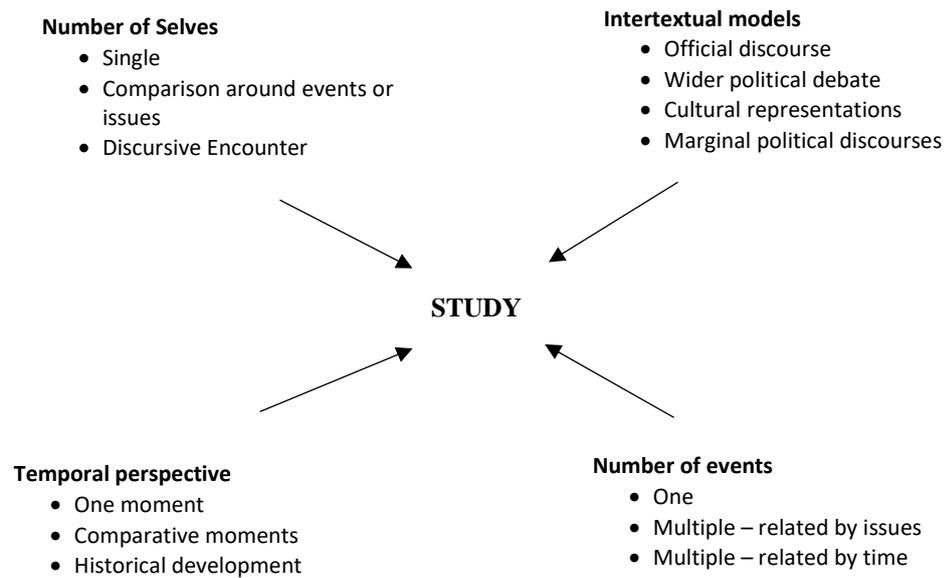
Tactically, identifying securitizing and desecuritizing frames requires a comprehensive review (through a discourse analysis) of the range of discourses surrounding a particular issue or threat and narrowing the focus to a particular site of contestation of the threat image or exceptional measure. Debates on the legitimacy of exceptional measures to counteract a potential security threat are key focal points, because they directly confront the question: is the issue sufficiently threatening that it requires operating within the realm of security and exceptional politics? In other words, should this issue be securitized? Opposition to exceptional measures suggests conversely that the issue is not sufficiently threatening to justify the use of exceptional measures – it is a move away from securitization, or in Hansen's (2012) typology of desecuritization, the *rearticulation* of resolving an issue using political mean. The arguments on either side of this debate can constitute securitizing and desecuritizing basic discourses. Distilling these to competing desecuritizing and securitizing frames then requires identifying the rhetorical links and differences that either bound or differentiate the two competing discourses. The analyst must ask: are there particular vocabularies or terms that distinctively represent either of the two competing discourses? The use of different rhetorical signs used in each of the different discourses can be used as indicators of a particular discourse. Similarly, securitizing and desecuritizing discourses/frames can

also emerge in the contestation of threat images. The characterization of an issue as threatening or in security-centric terms can belong to securitizing discourses, while less militaristic and less threatening characterizations can in comparison represent desecuritizing discourses – what in Hansen’s (2012) typology is marked as *change through stabilization*.

Hansen (2013: 65) acknowledges that “‘reality’ is always larger than the number of questions one can ask of it; to formulate a research project is therefore inevitably to make a series of choices.” Identification of and juxtaposition of different Selves is one such choice in her four-pronged research design. Figure 3.1 shows three other considerations for the analyst: the temporal perspective, the selection of texts (*intertextual models*), and the number of events to analyze. According to Hansen (2013: 69), “foreign policy can be studied as it addresses either events at one particular moment or through a longer historical analysis”. In the latter group, studies can either “[trace] the evolution of identities across centuries” (69), or – more appropriate for this study – be limited to a smaller number of events at “clearly defined points in time which are tied to particular foreign policy” issues (70). As argued in the case selection in Chapter 1, both the terrorism and immigration cases are delimited to the Bush and Obama administrations,²⁰ from 2001 to 2016. These represent, in Hansen’s (2013: 70) terms, “changes in important political structures or institutions” that are still comparable. Thus the temporal perspective for both case studies is a sixteen-year analysis of comparative moments (see figures 3.2 and 3.3).

²⁰ Political actors are frequently generalized and referred to collectively as “the administration” for ease. While a monolithic “Bush administration” or “Obama administration” is an oversimplification, this shortcut makes it possible to identify the main actors and official policy positions in the debates surrounding terrorism and immigration (see also Donnelly, 2013, p. 9).

Figure 3.1 Security Discourse Analysis Research Design Template



Note: This is a replication of Hansen’s (2013) template for a security discourse analysis research design.

Next, Hansen’s recommendations for material selection stretches from analyzing official discourse – particularly primary texts like “statements, speeches, and interviews” – to an “intertextual” approach that includes “journalism, academic writing, popular non-fiction, and, potentially, even fiction” (2013: 49). Because the overall aim of this thesis is to understand the role that the press plays in influencing securitization, academic, fiction and non-fiction literature are excluded from analysis. Further, since the aim of the discourse analysis is to uncover the boundaries of political discourse – with the aim of analyzing media content in subsequent chapters – official texts are the primary focus.²¹ Executive and legislative branch actors set the rhetorical agenda, thus creating boundaries for the range of discourse (and thus frames) available to others, including the media (Althaus et al., 1996; Entman, 2004). These agents are few in number, but symbolic and compelling for shaping perceptions of reality – the articulations of a few prominent elites (e.g., the president or congresspersons) influence “what count as proper representations within a particular foreign policy issue” (Hansen,

²¹ Respecting the audience emphasis and acknowledging that most Americans did not have access to classified documents, texts are emphasized as they enter mainstream discourse in time. The discourse analysis is written with the broad US electorate as its reference point. It seeks to deconstruct texts and events in ways that the average American might have experienced and interpreted them.

2013: 6-7). Individual journalists lack this capacity making discourse analysis better suited to analyzing political elites than the press. Nonetheless, it is impractical to wholly exclude the media, since political elites and media respond to one another to construct discourse. Abu Ghraib, for example, broke to the public via news media, and necessitated a political response (Hansen, 2013: 54); and immigration policy debates in 2006 and 2007 were heavily influenced by media mobilization. To ensure priority is given to political elite constructions, major media contributions are identified, but with emphasis on how political elites responded. Following Hansen's (2013: 76) recommendations, primary texts are selected using the following criteria: they clearly delineate identities, they are widely read and they "have the formal authority to define a political position."²²

The analysis goes a step further and considers legislation, executive actions and other programs put into place, since these events can shape public impressions and influence security discourse (Bigo, 2002). Moreover, these events frequently draw responses – whether in support or protest – in the form of "traditional" discourse and speech acts. In short, these practices generate discourse and the responses can forge new or reify existing identities, thus further influencing the security environment (Bigo, 2002).

Finally, discourse analysis can revolve around a single event or multiple events that are related to each other by the issue or period of analysis. In this research, events are selected by their relation to two issues, terrorism or immigration. Event selection is guided by Donnelly's (2013) concept of "defining moments" and Hansen's (2013) similarly characterized "key events". Both have similar thresholds: for Donnelly, *defining moments* are significant events that can change the direction and magnitude of securitization dynamics. These events can amplify securitizing dynamics, but can also polarize public opinion in the short-term, leading to either the survival or collapse of an ongoing securitization process. Moreover, these events are likely to engage (de)securitizing actors. Similarly, Hansen defines (2013: 28) *key events* as "situations

²² Still, other types of content in Hansen's (2013) intertextual approach can naturally fall into a research design that attempts to circumscribe analysis to solely political elite content. Culturally salient texts (like films and television) can elicit reactions and commentary from political elites, thus indirectly contributing to foreign policymaking. The film *Zero Dark Thirty*, for example, drew public reactions from Senators on the torture debate (discussed in more detail in Chapter 4). While outside the domain of strictly political elite texts, artefacts that provoke political elite texts are also considered.

where ‘important facts’ manifest themselves on the political and/or the media agenda and influence the official policy-identity constellation or force the official discourse to engage with political opposition and media criticism.” She argues that key events offer a way to trace official discourse and “construct a timeline”.

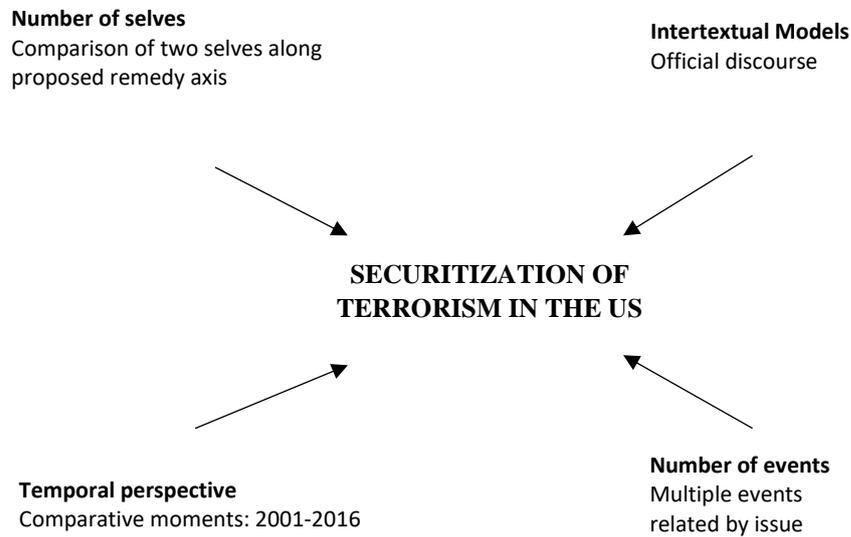
Emphasizing the latter point, events are presented in chronological order to best understand how frames develop meaning (Hansen, 2013: 79). Meanings are unfolded over time, and to present them nonsequentially overlooks how discourses gain meaning from previous discourses and how they inform future ones (Hansen, 2013: 49). Neumann (2008: 66) cautions, “A given discourse cannot be entirely detached from all other discourses. They are ordered and scaled in relation to one another.” The discourse on terrorism and immigration in particular is mired in euphemisms, redefinitions and heuristics, whose meanings depend on their temporal and spatial locations (Balzacq, 2011a: 40). For Hansen (2013: 49), this means “that texts are situated within and against other texts, that they draw upon them in constructing their identities and policies, that they appropriate as well as revise the past, and that they build authority by reading and citing that of others.” If language is neither fixed nor do words speak for themselves, a deconstruction of meaning requires a chronological, sequential unfolding, lest the meaning of syntactically similar symbols be erroneously conflated across different temporal or spatial contexts.

3.3.1.1 Terrorism

The securitization of terrorism in the US is analyzed in this study through the specific (de)legitimization of torture as an exceptional measure. As shown in figure 3.2, two Selves are juxtaposed in the debate: one side employs securitizing discourse to legitimize torture by linking it rhetorically to successful intelligence gathering, counterterrorism, and the prevention of attacks. It is invoked as part of a broader schema of links that emphasize the existential threat posed by terrorism and necessity, while also justifying torture through ambiguous euphemisms like “enhanced interrogation.” A separate counter-discourse opposes the pro-torture identity and appeals to American liberal democratic values as well as international norms and laws (e.g., the Geneva Conventions). The analysis uncovers two different frames for the remedy proposal function of Entman’s (2004) model: one that aims to legitimize *interrogation* as an appropriate, lawful method; and a counter-frame that attempts to delegitimize the same practice, recognizing it as illegal *torture*. Importantly, the

discourse analysis shows that these two signifiers, *torture* and *interrogation*, were referring to the same practice but with different evaluations of each.

Figure 3.2 Securitization of Terrorism in the US Discourse Analysis



Note: Using Hansen's (2013) template, this is the proposed design for the terrorism discourse analysis in this study.

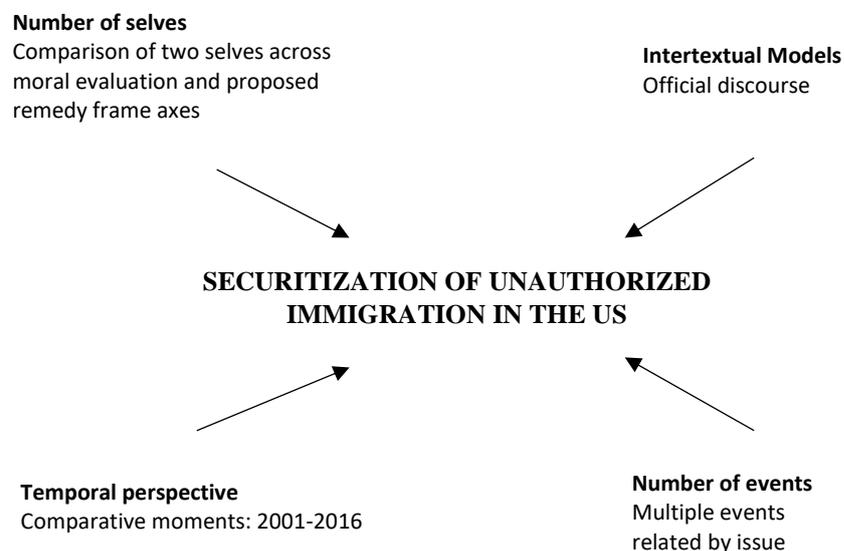
3.3.1.2 Unauthorized Immigration

The unauthorized immigration discourse analysis differentiates Selves along both the remedy proposal and moral evaluation functional axes (see figure 3.3).²³ The moral evaluation axis juxtaposes characterizations of immigrations as either criminal (securitizing) or non-criminal (desecuritizing); while the remedy proposal axis juxtaposes restrictive measures aimed to block unauthorized immigrant access to the US (securitizing) against expansive measures aimed to include and regularize unauthorized immigrants through, for example, pathways to legalization and citizenship (desecuritizing). Both frame functional axes pit two Selves against each other: restrictionists versus expansionists. As with terrorism, the immigration securitization

²³ While the debates naturally differentiate identities of the Other as well (e.g., criminal versus non-criminal immigrants), the focus in this thesis is on the differentiation of Selves. Still the two are essentially mirror images of each other: by invoking a different Other, the speaker constitutes a different Self.

debate employs metaphors, euphemisms and other rhetorical strategies to link immigrants to criminality and construct them as threats to society. It has coexisted with an oppositional discourse that aims to deconstruct the threatening image and push a humanizing portrayal of immigrants as individuals who should be integrated into American society through legalization. The rhetorical links and signifiers that make up these competing narratives are uncovered through a discourse analysis and are used as parameters in the media content analysis.

Figure 3.3 Securitization of Unauthorized Immigration in the US Discourse Analysis



Note: Using Hansen’s (2013) template, this is the proposed design for the unauthorized immigration discourse analysis in this study.

3.3.2 Media Content Analysis

Content analysis – “a summarizing, quantitative analysis of messages that relies on the scientific method” to measure frames “as they ‘naturally’ occur” (Neuendorf, 2004: 33) – has been widely employed in framing literature to analyze political elite and media texts (Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 2014). Like discourse analysis, content analysis generates meaning from text (Weber, 1990: 19), but unlike discourse analysis, it allows the analyst to control contextual factors to, for example, weight identical units of text (e.g.,

words) equally.²⁴ A constructivist approach to discourse analysis is predicated on the ideal that the analyst will arrive at (nearly) the same subjective interpretation as what naturally occurs among the actors in the case being studied – it is vulnerable to the whims and subjectivities of the analyst. Content analysis, on the other hand, replaces these subjective decisions with defined rules and parameters (Blinder & Allen, 2016). It can be more “accurate” (Balzacq, 2011a: 51) because it is

objective in the sense that the analytic categories are defined so precisely that different coders may apply them and obtain the same results; systematic in the sense that clear rules are used to include or exclude content or analytic categories; and quantified in the sense that the results of content analysis are amenable to statistical analysis (Hardy et al., 2004: 20)

Quantification and standardization further enables comparisons between actors and across cases/sectors (Blinder & Allen, 2016).²⁵

Content analysis is used in this project to quantify securitizing and desecuritizing frames in primarily media but also political elite discourse. While the discourse analysis guides the content analysis by identifying the key securitizing and desecuritizing frames and their signifiers, the content analysis charts the prevalence of competing frames over the entire period of analysis, recognizing important *periods* of coverage rather than singular texts. By quantifying the frames through their signifiers, it is possible to measure competition between opposing frames in each source (demonstrating, for example, whether and by how much a particular actor favors the desecuritizing or securitizing frame); map the evolution of frame coverage and framing strategies over time; compare frame prevalence across multiple news sources to identify overlaps and divergence in framing strategies; and compare the press to

²⁴ An advantage of content analysis is its ability to accommodate context as needed through the use of rules. The term “wall”, for example, can refer to border security or finance (Wall Street). A rule can be added that 1) checks for the term “border” within *k* words of “wall”; 2) ignores collocations of “wall” and “street”; and 3) requires that the stem “immigr” occurs in the text. Context is thus coded into the content analysis model in a controllable and replicable way (Neuendorf, 2004: 34).

²⁵ Content analysis, in fact, necessitates some comparison – whether it is across time, actors or topics – in order for quantitative data to be useful (Hermann, 2008: 160-161).

political elites in an objective and systematic way. This makes it possible to explicitly answer the primary research question of this thesis and demonstrate whether the press can be an independent securitizing actor. It also addresses the secondary research question, because content analysis makes it possible to quantify the contestation of competing frames.

If content analysis improves upon discourse analysis because it ensures the same results by anyone following the same coding plan, its primary deficit is its inability to capture context and nuance in meaning and understanding of the world as it occurs naturally. Meanings of texts and words evolve, even in short periods, and content analysis cannot adequately account for these shifts in meaning in language. This limitation is overcome by adopting both methods, drawing on the advantages of each. Discourse analysis provides a holistic understanding of contextual factors that can then be built into the content analysis as rules to ensure only relevant features are quantified.²⁶ The ability to leverage computer assistance, meanwhile, accommodates analysis of much larger volumes of textual data in a consistent and meaningful way (Blinder & Allen, 2016), a necessity for analyzing large sets of text, such as new media. The corpora used in this study cover over 300,000 texts – analyzing these using discourse analysis (or even manual content analysis) has obvious time and resource costs. Human analysis of a smaller corpus is also problematic because it risks an unbalanced analysis, the result of influence and “learning” from previous texts. Computer assisted content analysis ensures consistency and minimizes bias while accommodating large volumes of text data (Baker, 2006; Mautner, 2009).²⁷ News coverage is also more compatible with the aims of content analysis: unlike discourse analysis which uncovers how frames become meaningful, content analysis makes it possible to measure and quantify important attributes of frames (such as strength and magnitude) and explain why they influence

²⁶ This still raises the concern that content analysis reproduces the same subjectivity bias that it seeks to overcome in discourse analysis in the selection of rules and frames to analyze. Some choices are necessary to make in order to guide and narrow the analysis. The content analysis nonetheless improves on discourse analysis by widening the selection of texts analyzed.

²⁷ Roberts et al. (2014) further demonstrate significant overlap and high correlations in findings between automated and hand-coded content analyses, lending confidence in the former as a replacement for the latter.

public preferences (Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2009; Dunaway, Goidel, Kirzinger, & Wilkinson, 2011; McLaren, Boomgaarden, & Vliegenthart, 2017).

Neuendorf (2004: 35) suggests a sequential strategy in which discourse analysis provides “clues” and coding guidelines that help shape the parameters and boundaries of a content analysis. Despite being more “objective”, content analysis requires subjective decisions to bound and guide analysis – choices must be made “about the limits of what is or is not included in a model or data set” (Herrera & Braumoeller, 2004: 18). Discourse analysis can adequately provide this contextual information (Hermann, 2008). A content analysis on terrorism, for instance, requires delineating the general discourse – e.g., who are the major players, what context of terrorism is relevant to the study, and in which media/settings are relevant messages on terrorism likely to exist. Discourse analysis can inform the limits of content analysis, while the latter adds replicability and reliability (Balzacq, 2011a: 51; Hardy et al., 2004: 20) through “the assurance that the findings are not entirely the product of one analyst’s opinion” (Neuendorf, 2004: 35). Each can uncover findings not captured in the other (Neuendorf, 2004: 35).

3.3.2.1 Operationalization

The content analysis measures frame competition and source differentiation across four news media sources – CNN, Fox News, MSNBC, the *New York Times* – and political elites (presidential and congressional discourse). While the analysis of news media introduces to the securitization process four news actors that represent a range of ideology and mediums, the inclusion of political elites serves to both complement the discourse analysis and quantify political discourse so that it is comparable with media analysis. The *New York Times* is selected because of its strong agenda-setting effect on other news sources (Golan, 2006; Page & Shapiro, 1984; Wanta & Hu, 1993), its demonstrated influence on foreign policy decision-making (Bartels, 1996; Van Belle, 2003), and its wide readership acknowledged in Chapter 1. Wanta and Hu (1993: 255) suggest that even individuals who do not consume it “may have been exposed to other media that had taken salience cues from coverage in the *Times*.” Its inclusion here offers a chance to test the relationship between a frame’s effectiveness and its source’s credibility (Druckman, 2001).

The three cable news networks accommodate the growing influence of television, which “serves as the key international news source for most Americans” (Golan, 2006: 330; see also Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017). This trend has especially favored CNN, Fox News and MSNBC (Pew Research Center, 2016b), which collectively represent a diverse ideological spectrum and reach wide audiences. Several studies find that Fox News has a conservative and Republican bias; CNN ranges from center to slightly left of center; and MSNBC has a heavy Democratic and liberal gravitation (Aday, Livingston, & Hebert, 2005; Chalif, 2011; Feldman, Maibach, Roser-Renouf, & Leiserowitz, 2012). These affiliations are important as the proliferation of news sources and increased partisanship among the electorate has led to targeted programming and consumption (Feldman et al., 2012; McCombs, 2005) where, for example, Fox News targets conservative Republicans (Aday et al., 2005; Gil de Zúñiga, Correa, & Valenzuela, 2012; Groseclose & Milyo, 2005), while CNN and MSNBC target liberal Democrats (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2012). Fragmentation determines how audiences calibrate to different sources and the frames they are likely to encounter (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2012). Moreover, as leading sources of news, these four actors have more flexibility and autonomy in developing frames (Entman, 2004).

Executive branch texts attributed to the president and vice president as well as congressional texts are also included to directly compare the press and political elites in compatible terms. These texts are opportunities for political leaders and actors to articulate their policies, influence public expectations and preferences, and shape their personas (Winter, Hermann, Weintraub, & Walker, 1991; Winter & Stewart, 1977). They also provide raw versions of political elite discourse before it is filtered through media incentives to select what “will sell” (Hermann, 2008: 154). While the discourse analysis primarily focuses on defining moments and symbolic key events (e.g., executive orders or presidential vetoes), the content analysis adds a complementary perspective on the everyday minutiae of political rhetoric to show, more granularly, how language evolves, patterns emerge, and trends and shifts occur in political elite texts spanning across presidents and terms. This validates findings from the discourse analysis by linking objective data to interpretations of defining moments, and also facilitates comparisons with news media content, uncovering relationships between both types of actors.

A corpus – or collection of texts – is built for each actor using keyword searches (listed in table 3.1) in LexisNexis Academic (for press actors), the American Presidency Project²⁸ hosted by the University of California at Santa Barbara (for presidents and vice presidents) and the Congressional Record (for congressional actors). The texts include newspaper articles and transcripts of shows for the cable networks; executive branch leaders’ speeches, press releases, public remarks, press briefings, executive orders, interviews, proclamations and other statements; and remarks, hearings, debates and proceedings from Congress. Prior to analysis, all texts are preprocessed using natural language processing tools in Python to extract meta data (e.g., date and source of text) and remove unwanted features (e.g., HTML tags).

Table 3.1 Keyword Search for Content Analysis

	<i>Terrorism</i>	<i>Unauthorized Immigration</i>
Keywords	terrori! OR gwot OR "war on terror" OR "overseas contingency operation"	migran! OR migrat! OR immigra! OR refugee! or asyl!
Begin Date	Jan 1, 2001	Jan 1, 2001
End Date	Dec 31, 2016	Dec 31, 2016

Following previous framing scholarship (e.g., Bennett et al., 2006; Rowling et al., 2011; Simon & Jerit, 2007), frames are identified based on the presence of signifiers.

Signifiers can be words (e.g., *immigrant*), word stems (e.g., the feature *immigr* includes instances of *immigration*, *immigrant(s)*, and *immigrate(d/s)*), sequences of words (e.g., *illegal immigrant*), more complex combinations of words like collocations (e.g., *wall or fence* occurring within five words of *border*; see also Blinder and Allen, 2016), or some combination of these rules. Because journalists adopt similar ways of presenting topics – or “conventional frames” (Norris, Kern, & Just, 2004; Pan & Kosicki, 1993)²⁹ – the same signifiers are used for each actor. The selected signifiers employed in this research

²⁸ <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/>

²⁹ Political elites face similar constraints: Hansen (2013: 6-7) argues that it would be “extremely unlikely—and politically unsavvy—for politicians to articulate foreign policy without any concern for the representations found within the wider public sphere as they attempt to present their policies as legitimate to their constituencies.”

are specific enough to capture the construct that the content analysis aims to measure, while also remaining broad enough to prevent overfitting. Overfitting risks understating the presence of frames, and not fully accommodating the nuanced ways in which different actors/sources invoke “conventional frames”. The signifiers are thus defined in this research using minimal keywords and restrictions.³⁰ This choice follows precedents set by other scholars who demonstrate framing effects resulting from the substitution of a few keywords (e.g., Bennett et al., 2006; Kahneman & Tversky, 1984; Simon & Jerit, 2007).

Both frames and their primary signifiers are identified in the discourse analysis. Specifically, the discourse analysis focuses on rhetorical links and differentiation between competing (de)securitizing *basic discourses*. These rhetorical links are used in the content analysis as signifiers to identify frames used in the securitizing and desecuritizing discourses. Multiple frames may constitute a securitizing basic discourse: in the immigration debate, for example, securitizing discourses include moral evaluation frames (immigrants as criminals and threats) and remedy proposal frames (increased border security). Desecuritizing discourses, conversely, move away from security and employ frames that provide different moral evaluations (immigrants as victims) and remedy proposals (pathways toward legalization and citizenship). The discourse analysis for each case study drives signifier selection, and the content analysis uses these signifiers to measure frame prevalence.

Frame competition is measured by comparing the magnitude of opposing securitizing frames and desecuritizing frames. Given wide scholarly agreement that frame magnitude is the most important predictor of framing effects, it is the preferred mechanism here for measuring competition between (de)securitization frames. Guided by this consensus and extant research (Bennett et al., 2006; Rowling et al., 2011; Simon & Jerit, 2007), magnitude is measured as the number of occurrences of each signifier. For example, the magnitude of the *border security* frame in a single document could be

³⁰ The content analysis also does not discriminate between foreign policy, arts, sports, or style sections. This choice reflects the assumption that audience knowledge is constructed from different sources and settings (Blinder & Allen, 2016: 9). In expressing their policy preferences, they are likely to draw on whichever nodes are accessible (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; see also Domke et al., 1998; Higgins & King, 1981), rather than deliberating on the literary, foreign policy or security connotations of, for example, torture and immigrants.

the number of instances of “border wall”, “border fence” or “border security” that occur in the text. In order to control for varying sizes of texts – television show transcripts, for example, are much longer than news articles – frame magnitudes are standardized to rates of the frame occurrence per ten-thousand words. Both aggregate and quarterly time series measures of magnitude are constructed for each actor and each frame.³¹ These are converted into a single construct (e.g., a ratio of securitizing-to-desecuritizing frame magnitudes) to measure *frame competition*. Both trends as well as aggregate measures of frame magnitudes are observed to assess differences in actor coverage of securitizing and desecuritizing frames (*source differentiation*), paving the way for analysis of how this relates to audience preferences. Importantly, the emphasis is on relative measures rather than absolute measures. In other words, the prevalence of frames is compared among actors, rather than specifying an arbitrary baseline against which to draw inferences (Hofstetter, 1976).

3.3.3 Audience Evaluation

Public opinion data has been underutilized in securitization research, but regular surveys and polls conducted by news organizations, governments, universities, think tanks, and polling agencies enable measuring public preferences for policies – such as exceptional measures – both cross-sectionally and longitudinally. These instruments are useful because of their “‘objective’ and seemingly decisive nature, as well as their ability to account for a multitude of individual opinions” while remaining “unprejudiced by ideology” to “communicate the general will” (Herbst, 1993: 2). Conducted on representative samples, public opinion surveys and polls accommodate geographically large and ideologically diverse audiences. By quantifying audience sentiment, it becomes possible to determine the extent of public support for exceptional measures across different security issues at different times, directly satisfying the secondary research question of this thesis.³² Identifying audience acceptance/rejection

³¹ The use of time series to measure media effects has been used widely in framing literature to demonstrate interactions between the media and political agenda (Bartels, 1996; Baumgartner, Jones, & Leech, 1997; Box-Steffensmeier, Darmofal, & Farrell, 2009; Fogarty & Monogan III, 2016; Kellstedt, 2000; Simon & Jerit, 2007; Soroka, 2002; Vonbun, Königslöw, & Schoenbach, 2016; Walgrave, Soroka, & Nuytemans, 2008; Wood & Peake, 1998). The current study shares these previous studies’ objective of quantifying the rhetoric of different actors and evaluating potential directions of influence.

³² Balzacq (2011a) cautions that polls should be used in securitization theory strictly as indicators of the prominence of an issue – and not as evidence of securitization – because of their dual nature as *effects in*

of exceptional measures is also necessary for answering the primary research question – whether the press can be an independent securitizing actor – because a link needs to be made between press use of frames and audience attitudes. The use of public opinion polling and survey data makes it possible to directly measure whether audiences support or reject exceptional measures.

Several studies outside of securitization have used polling and survey data to relate the public and other actors: Zaller (1992) shows that elite discourses shape mass opinion; Groeling and Baum (2008) use content analysis to show that elite rhetoric shapes public opinion on foreign policy and military issues; Berinsky (2007: 975) finds that “patterns of conflict among partisan political actors shape mass opinion on war”; and other studies (Hertog & Fan, 1995; Page et al., 1987) find that news media can influence public attitudes. These studies employ different methods toward different agendas, but they share a reliance on polls as indicators of public opinion on policy issues (though largely non-security ones) and the assumption that framing effects are top-down. In other words, political elites and the media influence the public rather than the other way around. This direction is cautiously assumed in the case studies in this research as

and *effects of* securitization: “the results of polls can be instrumentalized and play a role in securitizing moves, but can also be utilized to account for (successful) cases of securitization” (42). On the one hand, public opinion is influenced by policy proposals and is a result of the securitizing move (*effect of*); on the other hand, securitizing actors can adjust policy to synchronize with public preferences (Campbell, 2012; Jacobs & Shapiro, 2002) – the *effect in*. Balzacq’s concern, then, is that using public opinion to measure the *effect of* discounts the possibility that public opinion may also be an *effect in*. This is especially problematic if the poll is only an *effect in* and never an *effect of* previous securitizing discourse. To mitigate this concern, the analyses in the case studies use several polls, recognizing that some may drive the *effect in*, but that those follow securitizing moves necessarily reflect the *effect of* (even though they may also be “instrumentalized” by securitizing actors for future securitizing moves).

The problem is further mitigated by focusing on polls that measure audience evaluation of the specific exceptional measure proposed. These specific measures are only going to be the subject of public opinion inquiry after they have been proposed as potential policy options – in other words, the securitization move has already occurred. It is by virtue of being “newsworthy” or part of public debate that an issue warrants public opinion inquiry; it is unlikely to find a poll that queries the public’s concern for a threat (or support for exceptional measures to reduce the threat) before the threat has even materialized (or the measures have even been proposed).

well³³ – specifically this project applies methods used in past research to measure audience acceptance or rejection of an exceptional measure, the level or extent of acceptance/rejection, and temporal shifts in these levels. In doing so, the following questions are addressed:

- 1) *Does* the audience accept or reject the exceptional measure?
- 2) *How much* does the audience accept or reject the exceptional measure?
- 3) Has audience acceptance/rejection increased or decreased *over time*?

These questions are answered using longitudinal poll and cross-sectional survey data to holistically analyze the audience in securitization. This approach to audience evaluation can accommodate large audience sizes and variability in parsimonious representations and models. While discourse analysis risks reducing the securitization audience to an invariable, monolithic and overgeneralized entity, longitudinal and cross-sectional models introduce variance and representative samples of the audience. Quantified data also make it possible to compare effects of different variables both within and across cases, because audience acceptance or rejection of securitization can be measured with precision in replicable ways. To that end, the macro-level *longitudinal* analysis charts audience evaluation over time, showing how public responses evolve during defining and low-salience moments. Using data from identically or similarly worded question-response pairs,³⁴ both audience threat anxiety and support/opposition for various

³³ Certainly public opinion influences policy outcomes, especially on highly salient issues (Campbell, 2012). The literature widely acknowledges that public opinion influences policy (e.g., Aldrich, Gelpi, Feaver, Reifler, & Sharp, 2006; Burstein, 2003; Hartley & Russett, 1992; Smith, 1999); that policy outcomes affect public opinion (e.g., Stimson, 2015; Wlezien, 1995); that policy outcomes and public opinion are reciprocally linked (e.g., Erikson, Wright, & McIver, 1993; Hill & Hinton-Anderson, 1995; Monroe, 1998; Page, 1994; Page & Shapiro, 1983, 2010; Stimson, MacKuen, & Erikson, 1995; Wlezien, 1996); or that in some cases no relationship exists at all (Page & Shapiro, 1983: 189). But these studies emphasize policy *outcomes* rather than policy *proposals*. In securitization, audience reactions to policy proposals are the primary focus.

³⁴ Variability in phrasing, time, sampling methods, and context across polls can impact framing effects by activating different schemas and cognitions. Eichenberg (2005: 153) suggests this may be a methodological advantage though and recommends that “a reliable analysis requires the study of many survey questions that employ a variety of wordings.” Still, one way to minimize these contaminating effects and overcome this concern is to analyze only a subset of polls conducted by the same organization that frame the question similarly over time. If the subset yields trends and findings that are

policies are used to measure securitization. Because public opinion is measured during the same time period of the content analysis, preliminary assessments can be made regarding the influence of actors on audience preferences (e.g., McLaren et al., 2017; Simon & Jerit, 2007).

A limitation with the longitudinal public opinion data used in the case studies that follow is that key individual-level variability is not always captured. For example, while attitudes toward threats and exceptional measures may be collected, attention to particular news sources and demographic information (that can potentially influence torture and immigration attitudes) may be overlooked. This forecloses linkages between frame exposure and preferences for exceptional measures. The *cross-sectional* analysis overcomes this limitation by using survey data that contain this individual-level richness. Specifically, survey data is used to estimate regression models that isolate and measure the relationship between support for exceptional measures and attention to sources. This complements the longitudinal analysis, which can show support or opposition toward exceptional measures over time, but cannot explain definitively what drives variation below the aggregate level. Read alongside results from the content analysis, the cross-sectional models can better link individual policy preferences to media exposure. While these models provide inferential richness and variability, they only provide a snapshot of public opinion at a given moment in time. To address this limitation, multiple waves of survey datasets are used.

While cross-sectional models reveal potential alignments between attitudes and media consumption, they do not necessarily prove causal direction. Instead, they demonstrate the statistical significance, magnitude and polarity of alignments that may exist. For example, a positive statistically significant relationship between support for torture and consumption of a particular news source be interpreted as either attention to the particular news source producing support for torture or the news source calibrating its messaging to fit audience preferences. Securitization theory and the cascading activation model identify framing effects as a top-down process, where media frames flow to the public instead of the other way around. This process is assumed in the analyses. Certainly media actors are privy to the public mood and will tailor content to

congruent with aggregate results, confidence in findings from the super set is increased. When possible, the case studies here use such subsets to validate inferences from larger data.

align with audience preferences. This feedback loop will nonetheless strengthen audience resolve on policy preferences, leading to a continuous reproduction of framing effects. Still, the limitation associated with the uncertainty of causality is discussed in greater detail in the final chapter.

To summarize, the longitudinal and cross-sectional analyses are mutually reinforcing dimensions of audience reaction to (de)securitization frames from different sources. The former shows how audience evaluation moves over time and compares this to the evolution of political elite and the media frames. It provides preliminary evidence of audience responsiveness to content and source frames. The cross-sectional analysis focuses on individual moments along this timeline to make definitive links between individual-level variation in support for exceptional measures and attention to different sources. It shows whether individual preferences mirror the frames employed by the sources they pay attention to. While the macroanalysis shows how public opinion responds to frames over time, the microanalysis statistically links audience evaluation to the sources using those frames.

3.3.3.1 Operationalization

The operationalization of audience analysis is specific to each case study and is thus expanded upon in Chapters 5 and 7; nonetheless, some procedures apply generally. In both case studies, the longitudinal analysis uses polls to measure audience acceptance of the threat (the stage of identification); and audience acceptance of exceptional measures (stage of mobilization). The stage of identification is measured using polls that ask respondents to attribute levels of importance to various issues, while the stage of mobilization is measured using polls that ask respondents to indicate their support or opposition toward specific exceptional measures (and for the immigration case study, *unexceptional* policy proposals). Polls are retrieved from the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research using a keyword search, yielding question-response pairs from multiple polling firms. Table 3.2 shows the search criteria used to collect the data for each security sector. Using a combination of manual and automated techniques,³⁵ question-response pairs were vetted and retained based on their ability to meet the

³⁵ This involved an iterative process of manually reviewing question-response pairs and using a rules-based automation approach to find other similar pairs. Similar question-answer pairs were grouped. This process was repeated until all pairs were matched to a particular group or discarded as irrelevant.

following criteria: *construct validity* (the question-response pair measures the desired construct); *consistency* (the selected question-response pairs use identical or near identical wording that minimizes the range of meaning perceived by respondents); and *generality* (questions-answer pairs are broad and concise, with minimal contaminating cues).³⁶ Question-response pairs that did not match the logic of the stages of identification and mobilization were removed from consideration.

³⁶ Despite these strict criteria, the poll data is vulnerable to some limitations. While enforcing generality at the question level limits bias, it was difficult to control for other contextual influences (preceding questions, the format of the poll/interview, self-selection concerns) that may have affected responses. This research attempts to mitigate these concerns by using question-answer pairs that have a large respondent size as well as using a large number of question-answer pairs for the time periods under study in order to offset effects in individual polls.

Table 3.2 Search Query for Polls

	<i>Terrorism</i>	<i>Unauthorized Immigration</i>
Keywords	terrori% OR tortur% OR interrog%	migran% OR migrat% OR immigra% OR refugee% or asyl%
Begin Date	Jan 1, 2001	Jan 1, 2001
End Date	Dec 31, 2016	Dec 31, 2016

Following other research on media effects (e.g., Coleman & Banning, 2006; Hetherington, 1996; Iyengar & Simon, 1993; Kellstedt, 2000), the microanalysis employs survey data from the American National Election Studies (ANES), conducted during the general election years 2012 and 2016. The ANES surveys are conducted every general election year on a representative sample of Americans that are eligible to vote. The surveys are administered face-to-face and on the Internet. ANES data is used to estimate regression models that isolate the impact of attention to news media and political elites on evaluations of exceptional measures by controlling for demographic and contextual factors identified in previous research as significant drivers of support for those exceptional measures. These can include, for example, political ideology and partisanship (other control variables are discussed in the case study chapters).

The dependent variables, listed in table 3.3, are uniform in all models for the military sector case study: respondents were asked to indicate their levels of support for torture as a counterterrorism policy. For the immigration case study, three different exceptional measures are explored across the two surveys.

Table 3.3 Dependent Variable Selection for Microanalysis

	<i>Terrorism</i>	<i>Unauthorized Immigration</i>
Dependent Variable	Support for torture (2012, 2016)	Support for status checks (2012) Support for constitutional amendment (2016) Support for border fence (2016)

3.4 Conclusion

In defense of methodological pluralism, Balzacq (2011a: 38) notes that “although one method could help grasp the main features of securitization... [others] could be mutually supportive in accounting for the nuances of the design and evolution of a security problem.” In this spirit, the components of the design proposed here – discourse analysis, content analysis and audience analysis – converge upon a holistic model of securitization. What distinguishes this pluralist framework from existing securitization research is that it is driven by two complementary components: (1) a longitudinal macroanalysis that characterizes each of and highlights relationships between media, political discourse and public opinion and (2) a cross-sectional microanalysis that tests findings from the macroanalysis in a statistically robust way. Each analysis overcomes limitations of others, and identifies, measures and explains different aspects of the securitization process. Nor are the disparate methods incompatible with each other. Discourse analysis, for example, provides the necessary “clues” to bound and guide the content analysis (Neuendorf, 2004: 35), which in turn offers a validity check on discourse analysis. Both contextualize and characterize securitizing actor rhetoric. Content analysis also standardizes discourse into quantitative features that can be used in conjunction with public opinion data to estimate relationships between (de)securitizing actors and their audiences. A similar symbiosis exists between the macroanalysis and microanalysis. The results of a content analysis illustrate frame competition and source differentiation, specifically linking different sources to different frames over time. Cross-sectional models can show whether individual attitudes mirror the frames used by their preferred sources of information while controlling for myriad other variables that influence opinion on the issues analyzed. This brings the generally under-analyzed audience into the securitization framework.

Moreover, the research design described in this section provides an opportunity to blend the methods frequently used in framing literature with discourse analysis, the preferred approach for securitization scholarship. In doing so, it introduces a novel approach to both traditions by uncovering securitization dynamics at multiple levels over time. It also improves empirically upon extant research in securitization theory by studying two security issues in different sectors under a standardized research design, offering a chance to confidently determine where sector dynamics intersect and diverge.

The following chapters operationalize this methodology across two case studies: terrorism and immigration. To maximize theoretical and empirical gain, the terrorism case study focuses on the remedy proposal frame (specifically, the torture debate) while the immigration case study focuses on both the remedy proposal and the moral evaluation frame (evaluation of immigrants as criminals). For each case study, a discourse analysis first maps out juxtaposing identities and the competing (de)securitizing basic discourses that emerge (Chapters 4 and 6). Special attention is given to political texts at defining moments when the identities of (de)securitizing actors are most vulnerable (Donnelly, 2013). Next, media and political discourse are quantified (using frame signifiers identified in the discourse analysis) in a time-series representation to characterize frame competition and source differentiation between political elites and the press over a sixteen-year period (Chapters 5 and 7). The content analysis reveals whether press actors and political elites acted in concert or independently. This is compared to public opinion data during the same time period to characterize audience preferences and make preliminary assessments about (de)securitizing framing effects. Finally, individual-level cross-sectional models demonstrate whether preferences for exceptional measures mirror information consumption habits, while controlling for other attitude drivers.

Chapter 4: The Gloves Come Off: Political Elite Discursive Legitimization of Torture

4.1 Introduction

The “failure of imagination” (McCaul, 2016) on the part of security analysts to anticipate the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack (9/11) created in its aftermath an urgency for intelligence-gathering to predict and prevent future attacks. This had a profound effect on American security policy and public attitudes, most markedly on the use of torture against suspected terrorists. Early allegations of torture first appeared in the context of prisoner detention at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, and at Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) operated black sites in Afghanistan, Poland, Romania, Thailand and elsewhere (ACLU, 2007; Honigsberg, 2009; McCoy, 2012; Pyle, 2009). But the debate was propelled into mainstream security discourse following the 2004 revelation of “abuse” at the Abu Ghraib Iraqi prison facility. Photographic evidence confirmed rumors of US personnel subjecting detainees to various forms of physical and psychological torture, including intimidation by dogs and sexual humiliation (Central Intelligence Agency Inspector General, 2004; McCoy, 2012; U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee, 2008). Further investigations would reveal that sleep deprivation, waterboarding (a technique that evokes a sensation of drowning), shoving, and threats to harm family members were all techniques used by the CIA to attempt to produce intelligence.

While Americans initially rejected these abuses, growing tolerance eventually divided two competing sides: one that claimed torture was justified in some circumstances and another that categorically rejected it as antithetical to liberal values and international norms and laws, such as the 1984 UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, and Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT). The UNCAT specifically defines torture as:

any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any

reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity. (UN General Assembly, 1984)

The Convention further states that “No exceptional circumstances whatsoever, whether a state of war or a threat of war, internal political instability or any other public emergency, may be invoked as a justification of torture” (UN General Assembly, 1984). This prohibition against torture is further enshrined in the Eighth Amendment to the US Constitution, which bans the use of “cruel and unusual punishments”; the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states, “No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment” (UN General Assembly, 1948); and in the Third Geneva Convention which states that “No physical or mental torture, nor any other form of coercion, may be inflicted on prisoners of war to secure from them information of any kind whatever” (ICRC, 1949).

These obligations notwithstanding, a debate on the admissibility of torture has continued within the US. Drawing on the methodology laid out in Chapter 3, this chapter analyzes how two competing basic discourses emerged between 2001 and 2016, and the opposing Selves they constructed in the terrorism security dialogue. These are uncovered through an analysis of speech acts contained in key speeches, official statements, interviews, and policy texts. Proponents of torture attempted to rebrand the techniques as *interrogation*; they emphasized the severity of the threat of terrorism and both potential as well as materialized successes of the “enhanced interrogation” program as an intelligence tool. By constructing a threatening terrorist Other, and rebranding and justifying torture through executive memos, legislation and media campaigns, this *securitizing* Self sought to legitimize torture. Opponents countered that, while the threat of terrorism was real, torture was to remain prohibited. Appealing to liberal values and international obligations on the treatment of prisoners, this *desecuritizing* Self moved away from security-centric language. The emergence of these opposing Selves was not inevitable; instead the Selves were constructed and invoked in response to each other and concurrent defining moments. This chapter charts their development, and the discursive links that bound and differentiated them. It uncovers both the basic discourses associated with each of the two competing selves – securitizing and desecuritizing – and key frames that constituted the basic discourses.

The debate is presented in chronological order, beginning with a specific securitization discourse ignited by 9/11. Key defining moments that occurred in four overlapping phases of denying, rebranding, justifying and silencing are presented. Following 9/11, allegations of torture at Guantanamo Bay and extraordinary rendition of prisoners to countries where torture was probable were denied as early as 2002 by the Bush administration (Pyle, 2009: 103; Rumsfeld, 2002b); Abu Ghraib was similarly blamed on “a few bad apples” and officials insisted that torture was not part of US security policy. The *torture* frame was invoked as part of a desecuritizing discourse that emphasized adherence to laws and norms. A strategy of rebranding the intelligence-gathering process over the next few years produced a drumbeat of euphemisms like *harsh interrogation* or *enhanced interrogation*. This coincided with attempts to justify *interrogation* by linking it to counterterrorism and intelligence successes. While the securitizing basic discourse – which sought to justify and cultivate public support for *interrogation* – was predominant during the Bush administration’s final years, the Obama administration promoted the desecuritizing discourse early in its first term before ultimately retreating from the debate altogether. These two discourses are analyzed to identify frames and frame signifiers that can in turn be used to inform the content analysis in the following chapter.

4.2 Political Discourse Analysis

4.2.1 Discursive Innovation: A New Security Paradigm

The 9/11 attacks and the subsequent “global war on terror” sparked a new discourse in security policy that constructed a radical image of the terrorist Other (Davis et al., 2013; Hynes, Lamb, Short, & Waites, 2016). This new manifestation “marked an historic juncture in America’s collective sense of security” (Schlesinger, Brown, Fowler, Horner, & Blackwell, 2004), ushering in a “new paradigm” that “require[d] new thinking in the law of war” (Bush, 2002). Vice President Dick Cheney (2002) argued that

9/11 changed everything. It changed the way we think about threats to the United States. It changed our recognition of our vulnerabilities. It changed the terms of the kind of national security strategy we need to pursue.

This defining moment triggered an urgency to obtain information, as signaled in Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's remarks that "the most important thing, of course, is to try to find out as much intelligence as we can through the interrogations, and that is our principal focus." (Rumsfeld, 2002c) President George W. Bush similarly called to do "whatever is necessary to protect America and Americans," (2001h) emphasizing that:

We will direct every resource at our command -- every means of diplomacy, every tool of intelligence, every instrument of law enforcement, every financial influence, and every necessary weapon of war -- to the disruption and to the defeat of the global terror network. (2001a)

This commitment was echoed by Vice President Dick Cheney, who announced in a televised *Meet the Press* interview:

We also have to work, though, sort of the dark side, if you will. We've got to spend time in the shadows in the intelligence world. A lot of what needs to be done here will have to be done quietly, without any discussion, using sources and methods that are available to our intelligence agencies, if we're going to be successful. That's the world these folks operate in, and so it's going to be vital for us to use any means at our disposal, basically, to achieve our objective. (Cheney, 2001)

Cofer Black of the CIA's Counterterrorism Center underscored the exceptionalism of the new threat in his testimony to Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, noting that "[a]fter 9/11 the gloves come off" (Black, 2002). In a 2002 memorandum for the President, then White House Counsel Alberto Gonzales emphasized the novelty of the current security situation as well as the urgency for intelligence through interrogation:

... the war against terrorism is a new kind of war. It is not the traditional clash between nations adhering to the laws of war that formed the backdrop for GPW [Geneva Convention III on the Treatment of Prisoners of War]. The nature of the new war places a high premium on

other factors, such as the ability to quickly obtain information from captured terrorists and their sponsors in order to avoid further atrocities against American civilians, and the need to try terrorists for war crimes such as wantonly killing civilians. In my judgment, this new paradigm renders obsolete Geneva's strict limitations on questioning of enemy prisoners and renders quaint some of its provisions requiring that captured enemy be afforded such things as commissary privileges, scrip (i.e., advances of monthly pay), athletic uniforms, and scientific instruments. (Gonzales, 2002)

These speech acts on the "new paradigm" and urgency to obtain intelligence using "any means at our disposal" had a performative effect: they set in motion the construction of new security identities and a new major security discourse. The discourse constructed the identity of the Other (terrorists) as a radical enemy, and in so doing, simultaneously juxtaposed two Self identities: a new securitizing posture that sought to work "the dark side", do "whatever is necessary" to fight this "new war", and free itself from the constraints of the Third Geneva Convention in the quest for intelligence gathering; and by implication, a hypothetical Self that would have resisted this posture.³⁷ The repeated drumbeat-like messaging reinforced the threatening complexion of terrorism and the urgency for intelligence. But at this early stage, this securitizing basic discourse was largely uncontested: public insecurity following 9/11 created little appetite in its immediate aftermath for anything less than aggressive political leadership and reassurances that measures would be put in place to prevent a future terrorist attack. Thus the securitizing basic discourse was largely unchallenged and became the primary component of the overarching major security discourse; it comprised a problem definition frame centered on terrorism and a remedy proposal frame centered on

³⁷ Far from inevitable, the framing choices in these speech acts reveal subjective decisions made by the Bush administration. Donnelly (2013: 23) argues that "the acts of violence on September 11, 2001 did not speak for themselves." But by labeling the attacks as "war" (Bush, 2001i, 2001l, 2001m, 2001n; Rumsfeld, 2001), the Bush administration constructed and reified a representation of the attacks that at once, necessitated an exceptional response befitting "war" conditions; closed off any possibility of not responding; and widened operational latitude (Donnelly, 2013: 22-23). The administration essentially both legitimized and necessitated its own course of action by choosing to invoke "war."

information gathering, establishing a strong rhetorical link between *intelligence* and the securitizing basic discourse.

4.2.2 Denying Torture

4.2.2.1 Torture and the Emergence of a Differential Discourse

Still, the Bush administration did not indicate publicly whether *torture* would be part of “every resource at our command” – in fact, officials denied it when it was first alleged in early 2002 media reports (e.g., Reid, 2002; Smyth, 2002). Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld rejected claims of torture, stressing that:

...there are so many charges that it's hard to categorize them, but I've seen in headlines and articles words like “torture” and one thing and another, which is just utter nonsense. The policies of the United States government are humane, and the way the prisoners -- the detainees are being treated is humane. (2002b)

Amnesty International (2002: 16) responded that it was “disturbed by allegations in March 2002 that the US authorities had transferred ‘dozens of people’ to countries where they may be subjected to interrogation tactics – including torture” and that “US intelligence agents remained closely involved in the interrogation”. It further added that

an alleged leading member of al-Qa’ida, Abu Zubaydah, was arrested in Pakistan on 28 March 2002 and taken into US custody. Media reports suggested that he might be transferred to a third country where torture could be used during interrogation. The Secretary of Defence said that such reports were “irresponsible and wrong”. Nevertheless, pressed by a journalist as to whether he was excluding the possibility that Abu Zabaydah, “even if he’s under the control of the US”, could be interrogated in a country other than Afghanistan, Pakistan or the USA, he replied “I am not going to systematically rule out this, this, this and this”. Amnesty International is concerned at his unwillingness to issue a categorical denial.

A February 2004 International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) report similarly identified abuse in the Iraqi prison facility Abu Ghraib and stated that “persons deprived of their liberty under supervision of Military Intelligence were at high risk of being subjected to a variety of harsh treatments ranging from insults, threats and humiliations to both physical and psychological coercion, which in some cases was tantamount to torture, in order to force cooperation with their interrogators” (ICRC, 2004).

These criticisms and concerns surrounding the use of torture by Americans reflected the emergence of a desecuritizing basic discourse, the first fracture in the major securitization discourse constructed immediately after 9/11. Amnesty International and the ICRC voiced high-profile challenges to the post-9/11 securitizing basic discourse on intelligence-gathering, creating a confrontation between two differential Selves: a law-abiding identity concerned that torture was occurring against the earlier gloves-come-off identity that urged using “any means at our disposal”. Bush administration personnel that had previously indicated international norms on the treatment of prisoners – such as the Third Geneva Convention – do not apply were now challenged by this new desecuritizing basic discourse that alleged human rights violations and torture. The juxtaposition placed those willing to work “the dark side” of the intelligence world against those wanting to observe rules and norms. Importantly, neither of the two basic discourses challenged the severity of the threat – they instead disagreed on the appropriateness of the response: while terrorism remained a threat, it was, according to the desecuritizing Self, not sufficiently threatening to adopt torture as an exceptional measure. This was thus *desecuritizing* to the extent that it was a move *away* from previous articulations to do whatever is necessary, and instead sought to impose restraint.³⁸ Nor did actors previously aligned with the securitizing basic

³⁸ One interpretation of the emerging anti-torture discourse is that, rather than a desecuritizing discourse, it may have been a counter-securitizing narrative that sought to place American norms and values as the referent objects that were being threatened and had a legitimate claim to survival. In other words, the participation of the US government in torture was a threat to the American identity as a champion of liberal values. A key component of the securitization process requires that exceptional measures be imposed to counter a threat. In the case of the anti-torture discourse, no such exceptional measure was being advocated: instead, the push was toward a return to the status quo approach of *not* torturing. This was a call to return to procedures of detention that were consistent with established and accepted institutions, like the Geneva Convention.

discourse advocate using torture at this stage. When confronted with allegations, Rumsfeld and others rhetorically distanced their activities from “torture” and insisted that detainees were being treated humanely. The Bush administration appeared to briefly realign itself with the desecuritizing Self on the torture debate.

While the *intelligence* frame had become strongly associated with the securitizing basic discourse through speech acts immediately after 9/11, these later episodes established a desecuritizing basic discourse comprised primarily of a *torture* frame, in which torture was rejected as antithetical to American laws and values. The Amnesty International and ICRC reports both expressed explicit concern for practices that were “tantamount to torture”. Further, both linked *torture* to *interrogation* and *coercion*, suggesting that the two activities were related, but different in scale and legitimacy. Still, while the *torture* frame had been introduced as part of the desecuritizing discourse, *interrogation* had not yet become fully associated with an oppositional securitizing discourse: officials were not defending *interrogation* as something that was different and oppositional to *torture*. This may have been part of a strategy by the Bush administration to distance itself from torture altogether: given the semantic proximity of both *torture* and *interrogation*, a concession of *interrogation* might activate links to *torture* for audiences, thus implicating the Bush administration. Strategically, it was best to simply reject *torture* – hence Rumsfeld’s attempt, as Defense Department chief, to insist detainees were being treated humanely and dismiss accusations of torture as “utter nonsense”.

4.2.2.2 Abu Ghraib Revelations

In April 2004, two months after the ICRC report failed to generate wide media attention, CBS television news released images of prisoners “stripped naked, sexually humiliated, blindfolded, and painfully shackled” (McCoy, 2012, Introduction) at the Abu Ghraib detention facility in Iraq. This accelerated Bush administration denials and defensive statements, who insisted that a few low-level personnel were responsible and that “abuse” at Abu Ghraib was not official policy. In public remarks to the press, Bush stated:

Let me make very clear the position of my government and our country.

We do not condone torture. I have never ordered torture. I will never order

torture. The values of this country are such that torture is not part of our soul or our being. (2004a)

Vice President Cheney went further, claiming in an interview that prisoners were being treated “in accordance with the standards, for example, that we adhere for the Geneva Convention” (2004). He also acknowledged that while the need for intelligence remained, the methods applied in Abu Ghraib were extreme:

But there’s a right way to do it and a wrong way to do it. And these forces in Iraq, people captured in Iraq, are subject to the Geneva Convention. And so, as I say, there are legitimate ways to handle that. And I don’t think in this case, you would want to call these methods legitimate. (Cheney, 2004)

Still, Cheney’s position on the Geneva Convention was ambiguous. On the one hand, he claimed that, as unlawful combatants, “those people do not need to be treated under the Geneva Convention”³⁹ (Cheney, 2004); but he later argued:

So you've got a set of rule there that, in this particular case, given the United States' status as an occupying power, the *Geneva Convention does apply to anybody captured in Iraq*, and they're supposed to be treated accordingly. (Cheney, 2004, emphasis added)

Despite the ambiguity, Cheney settled on impressing upon the public that the administration was so far from making torture part of its official policy that detainees were treated in accordance with Geneva Convention protocol. In a reversal from previous post-9/11 remarks to “spend time in the shadows of the intelligence world”

³⁹ This echoes similar points made by Rumsfeld (2002a) two years earlier who said of Guantanamo Bay detainees:

They will be handled not as prisoners of wars, because they're not, but as unlawful combatants. The -- as I understand it, technically unlawful combatants do not have any rights under the Geneva Convention. We have indicated that we do plan to, for the most part, treat them in a manner that is reasonably consistent with the Geneva Conventions, to the extent they are appropriate, and that is exactly what we have been doing.

(2001) and work “the dark side”, Cheney’s new rhetoric was de-escalatory and further aligned the Bush administration with the desecuritizing Self at this stage.

Thus, Abu Ghraib was a defining moment that widened the rift between two Selves, but also further defined both. The photos themselves had a performative effect in that they reified a Self that defied rules and legal obligations, and was willing to take a “gloves-come-off” approach by torturing suspected terrorists. The Bush administration initially sought to distance itself from this identity by villainizing those “bad apples” who were acting outside of “standard operating procedures”, insisting its own official policy on the treatment of detainees was humane and consistent with the Geneva Convention. This aligned the administration instead with a different Self that did not condone torture and sought to tackle terrorism the “right way” without compromising laws and values. While terrorism remained a security threat for both Selves, the difference was that one Self was willing to employ torture, while the other was not. The latter Self’s unwillingness to use certain exceptional measures positioned it in relative opposition to a more extreme, pro-torture securitizing Self – it was desecuritizing to the extent that it moved away from a particular exceptional measure and toward a rules-based system. The effect was not to unmake the threatening image of terrorism, but instead to scale back the exceptionality it warranted.

It could be argued that, rather than desecuritization, the anti-torture response produced from the Abu Ghraib revelations constituted a counter-securitization (see Stritzel and Chang 2015), in which the Bush administration (and others) sought to protect the shattering identity of Americans as adherents to liberal values and norms. This representation, however, is inconsistent with the CS’ conception of securitization, because it lacks the central ingredient of proposing exceptional measures. Little was proposed to restore this identity beyond holding a set of individuals accountable – and accountability processes, in this case through court-martial, is certainly not an exceptional response – it instead falls within the standard operating procedures of penalizing military personnel.

Instead, the anti-torture discourse was desecuritizing, because it emphasized the illegitimacy of operating in the exception, and both explicitly and by implication, called for a return to treating detainees “the right way” and in accordance with the established – and thus unexceptional – Geneva Convention. In Hansen’s (2012) characterization of

deseuritization, this would be a rearticulation of resolving an issue using less violent approaches.

Abu Ghraib also reinforced the link between the term *torture* frame and the deseuritizing basic discourse. As Bush, Cheney and other administration officials responded to Abu Ghraib, they insisted that torture was not part of official policy and that it ran counter to American laws and values. Whenever *torture* was invoked – whether by administration officials, the ICRC or Amnesty International – it was part of a frame that rejected a particular exceptional measure in the fight against terrorism.

Denial and alignment with the anti-torture basic discourse and deseuritizing Self limited damage to the Bush administration's reputation when its legitimacy and overarching securitization of terrorism was particularly vulnerable. The initial public response and revulsion to the graphic photos of detainees at Abu Ghraib provided little political space for the administration to justify torture without drawing criticism. Rejecting torture instead shielded the administration from losing legitimacy and rendered a public impression of deference to laws. The damage contained and the national cognitive dissonance stayed, this denial, however, constrained future discourse. In its response to Abu Ghraib, the administration had ruled out torture as a weapon of intelligence on the grounds that it was anathema to legal and normative institutions. By reifying the rhetorical link between *torture* and these institutions, the Bush administration sealed off opportunities to condone torture in the future; doing so would destroy the particular impression of Self it had constructed and make itself vulnerable to criticisms that it had violated the normative and legal institutions it had so defiantly defended previously. Any public shifts in intelligence-gathering policy would have to be reconciled with this identity through a new rhetorical strategy.

4.2.3 Rebranding and Justification

4.2.3.1 The Detainee Treatment Act

Bush's second election victory in November 2004 precipitated a more audacious stance on intelligence-gathering and increasing realignment with the securitizing Self/basic discourse. Continued denials of torture were accompanied now by attempts to define conditions under which the administration had the authority to apply it if it wanted to,

while euphemisms were adopted and repeated to rebrand and justify intelligence-gathering as constituting *interrogation* instead of *torture*.

In October 2005 the administration tried to stop a legislative effort (led by Senator John McCain, a wartime victim and vocal opponent of torture) to ban torture against detainees. Appealing directly to Senate Republicans, Vice President Cheney insisted that even though torture is not part of official policy, “the administration needed an exemption from any legislation banning ‘cruel, inhuman or degrading’ treatment in case the president decided one [sic] was necessary to prevent a terrorist attack.” (Espo & Sidoti, 2005) Despite his efforts, the legislation passed as the Detainee Treatment Act of 2005, but President Bush appended the following signing statement⁴⁰ to it:

The executive branch shall construe Title X in Division A of the Act, relating to detainees, in a manner consistent with the constitutional authority of the President to supervise the unitary executive branch and as Commander in Chief and consistent with the constitutional limitations on the judicial power, which will assist in achieving the shared objective of the Congress and the President, evidenced in Title X, of protecting the American people from further terrorist attacks. (Bush, 2005)

The Act itself, apart from banning “cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment” also protected any personnel that had previously engaged in torture:

In any civil action or criminal prosecution against an officer, employee, member of the Armed Forces, or other agent of the United States Government who is a United States person, arising out of the officer, employee, member of the Armed Forces, or other agent’s engaging in specific operational practices, that involve detention and interrogation of aliens who the President or his designees have determined are believed to be engaged in or associated with international terrorist activity that poses a serious, continuing threat to the United States, its interests, or its allies, and that were officially authorized and determined to be lawful at the time

⁴⁰ Kelley (2007: 738) defines a signing statement as “the presidential commentary on a bill after it is signed into law.”

that they were conducted, it shall be a defense that such officer, employee, member of the Armed Forces, or other agent did not know that the practices were unlawful and a person of ordinary sense and understanding would not know the practices were unlawful. ("Detainee Treatment Act," 2005)

Bush's caveat to the Act signaled that "he might not always act in compliance with it" (Goldsmith, 2007: 210) and that he reserved the right to overrule its constraints on "cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment" treatment. It deviated from the administration's post-Abu Ghraib alignment with the desecuritizing basic discourse that rejected torture as inconsistent with American values; now the administration was signaling that there may be situations in which such actions were justifiable contingent on the president's judgment. While not an outright shift to support for *torture*, the signing statement was a move that began to slowly and steadily realign the Bush administration with the securitizing Self it had distanced itself from immediately after Abu Ghraib. It was similar in spirit to the early post-9/11 securitizing basic discourse on doing "whatever is necessary" to gather intelligence – in this case, even "cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment" if sanctioned by the president.

The further indemnification in the Act of personnel who had engaged in "specific operational practices" that were "lawful at the time they were conducted" also moved away from the previous disposition that abuse at Abu Ghraib was isolated to a few "bad apples". The need to protect personnel – even after perpetrators at Abu Ghraib had been exposed – implied that illegal conduct had not only occurred but may have been more widespread. While no concession was made that the abuses were "officially authorized", the Act at least ensured that those carrying out the abuses would receive official protection. The pivot from villainizing "bad apples" to protecting any "officer, employee, member of the Armed Forces, or other agent of the United States Government" signaled another shift in official discourse away from the desecuritizing basic discourse in the post-Abu Ghraib uproar.

The Detainee Treatment Act marked a rhetorical turning point as well: the only two appearances of the term *torture* within the entire Act were both references to the title of the *United Nations Convention Against Torture*. It otherwise avoided *torture*, preferring instead *cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment*, and the more euphemistic

specific operational practices. This rhetorical juggling enabled President Bush to append his signing statement giving him authority to overrule the Act without explicitly linking the administration to *torture*. It instead associated the administration with *cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment*, a link it perhaps found more politically palatable. This strategy to rebrand intelligence-gathering away from *torture* and toward different labels was necessary, because the administration had so vigorously championed anti-torture norms following Abu Ghraib. It had constrained its ability to justify torture; any legitimization of intelligence-gathering that resembled torture would have to be relabeled. The language in the Detainee Treatment Act provided the administration rhetorical cover and commenced a pattern of adopting substitute labels or euphemisms to ultimately replace *torture* and silence the anti-torture narrative.

4.2.3.1 Enhanced Interrogation: Securitization by Euphemism

The rebranding of intelligence-gathering was further advanced by the emergence of a new frame that invoked the label *interrogation* and underscored CIA successes. President Bush's 2006 remarks on the interrogation of senior terrorist leader Abu Zubaydah were emblematic of this strategy:

We knew that Zubaydah had more information that could save innocent lives, but he stopped talking. As his questioning proceeded, it became clear that he had received training on how to resist interrogation. And so the CIA used an alternative set of procedures. (Bush, 2006c)

In the same address, President Bush linked the *alternative set of procedures* to actionable intelligence on “the design of planned attacks on buildings inside the United States and how operatives were directed to carry them out”; “Al Qaida's efforts to obtain biological weapons”; “a planned attack on the U.S. consulate in Karachi using car bombs and motorcycle bombs”; “a plot to hijack passenger planes and fly them into Heathrow or the Canary Wharf in London”; finding Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, “the mastermind behind the 9/11 attacks”; and other “information that has saved innocent lives by helping us stop new attacks” (Bush, 2006c). He further added:

We're getting vital information necessary to do our jobs, and that's to protect the American people and our allies. Information from the terrorists

in this program has helped us to identify individuals that Al Qaida deemed suitable for Western operations, many of whom we had never heard about before. They include terrorists who were set to case targets inside the United States, including financial buildings in major cities on the east coast. Information from terrorists in CIA custody has played a role in the capture or questioning of nearly every senior Al Qaida member or associate detained by the U.S. and its allies since this program began. By providing everything from initial leads to photo identifications to precise locations of where terrorists were hiding, this program has helped us to take potential mass murderers off the streets before they were able to kill. (Bush, 2006c)

Just over a month later, President Bush stressed again the successes of the intelligence program during his signing of the Military Commissions Act of 2006:

This bill will allow the Central Intelligence Agency to continue its program for questioning key terrorist leaders and operatives like Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the man believed to be the mastermind of the September the 11th, 2001 attacks on our country. This program has been one of the most successful intelligence efforts in American history. It has helped prevent attacks on our country.... Were it not for this program, our intelligence community believes that Al Qaida and its allies would have succeeded in launching another attack against the American homeland. By allowing our intelligence professionals to continue this vital program, this bill will save American lives. (Bush, 2006b)

Bush's list of intelligence successes bolstered the securitizing Self and basic discourse, because it linked the CIA interrogation program to foiled terrorist plots and American lives saved. Again, Bush avoided the label *torture* and instead promoted labels like *interrogation* and *alternate set of procedures*. These combined efforts steadily primed the public and set the stage for further executive efforts to systematize torture under the label of *interrogation*. On July 20, 2007, for example, Bush issued Executive Order 13440, allowing the CIA to resume its previously suspended interrogation program (DeYoung, 2007), drawing criticism that "as long as the intent of the abuse is to gather intelligence or to prevent future attacks, and the abuse is not 'done for the purpose of

humiliating or degrading the individual’ -- even if that is an inevitable consequence -- the president has given the CIA carte blanche to engage in ‘willful and outrageous acts of personal abuse.’” (Kelley & Turner, 2007) Notably, the executive order failed to “ban waterboarding, forced feeding, extremes of hot and cold, deafening noise, sensory deprivation, or long-term isolation” (Pyle, 2009: 169); it also excluded sleep among “basic necessities of life” accorded to detainees (Pyle, 2009: 168; Shrader, 2007). While the executive order was itself public, media reports indicated that it was accompanied by a classified document that detailed exactly which “enhanced interrogation techniques” were available to CIA operatives (Shane, Johnston, & Risen, 2007; Shrader, 2007). This became the subject of a July 22, 2007, taping of NBC’s *Meet the Press*, in which interviewer Tim Russert questioned then Director of National Intelligence, Admiral Mike McConnell, about the methods authorized, prompting the latter to repeatedly insist that “enhanced interrogation” did not constitute torture:

MR. RUSSERT: Let me ask you about the executive order the president issued about enhanced interrogation measures. What does that allow a CIA-held target—what kind of measures can they use to get information from them?

Admiral McCONNELL: Well, Tim, as you know, I can’t discuss specific measures. [...] So I won’t be too specific. Let, let me, let me go back to a higher calling in this context. The United States does not engage in torture. President’s been very clear about that. This executive order spells it out. There are means and methods to conduct interrogation that will result in information that we need.

[...]

MR. RUSSERT: But by the use of the term “enhanced interrogation measures,” there clearly are things that are used to elicit information. Have we eliminated waterboarding? Can you confirm that?

Admiral McCONNELL: I would rather not be specific on eliminating exactly what the techniques are with regard to any specific. When I was

in a situation where I had to sign off, as a member of the process, my name to this executive order, I sat down with those who had been trained to do it, the doctors who monitor it, understanding that no one is subjected to torture. They're, they're treated in a way that they have adequate diet, not exposed to heat or cold. They're not abused in any way. But I did understand, when exposed to the techniques, how they work and why they work, all under medical supervision. And one of the things that's very important, I think, for the American public to know, in the history of this program, it's been fewer than 100 people. And so this, this is a program where we capture someone known to be a terrorist, we need information that they possess, and it has saved countless lives. Because, because they believe these techniques might involve torture and they don't understand them, they tend to speak to us, talk to us in very—a very candid way.

MR. RUSSERT: Does this new executive order allow measures that if were used against a U.S. citizen who was apprehended by the enemy would be troubling to the American people?

Admiral McCONNELL: I can report to you that it's not torture.

[...]

MR. RUSSERT: And we would find it acceptable if a U.S. citizen experienced the same kind of enhanced interrogation measures?

Admiral McCONNELL: Tim, it's not torture. I would not want a U.S. citizen to go through the process, but it is not torture, and there would be no permanent damage to that citizen. (Meet the Press, 2007)

The ambiguity surrounding *torture* and *enhanced interrogation* continued as administration officials evaded press prodding. CIA director General Michael V. Hayden declined to comment when asked in a media interview if “enhanced interrogation” was “close to torture” (Shane, 2007). White House Press Secretary Dana Perino (2007) similarly skirted the issue of defining “enhanced techniques”, offering

instead that “the most important source of information we have on where the terrorists are hiding and what they are planning is the terrorists themselves, and that's why you have to interrogate them.” Two weeks later, President Bush was similarly evasive during a news conference:

Q. What's your definition of the word "torture"?

THE PRESIDENT: Of what?

Q. The word "torture." What's your definition?

THE PRESIDENT: That's defined in U.S. law, and we don't torture.

Q. Can you give me your version of it, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Whatever the law says. (Bush, 2007a)

The reluctance to clarify *torture* and *enhanced interrogation* suggested that the differences were largely rhetorical. The response following Abu Ghraib made the label *torture* too politically toxic for the administration to use, but rebranding the CIA program as *interrogation* sheltered the administration from the criticism of having reversed its previous anti-torture position. Still, Bush's 2007 executive order was perceived by military and legal professionals as an authorization of torture dressed up as “interrogation” – and press interactions exposed an administration struggling to differentiate *torture* from *interrogation* beyond the claims that *torture* was indefensible, while *interrogation* was acceptable and even successful. This further reinforced the juxtaposition between the *torture* frame and the *interrogation* frame, with the former having already been established as part of the desecuritizing basic discourse, and the latter increasingly associated with the securitizing basic discourse because it promoted exceptional measures. The Bush administration had realigned from a desecuritizing Self soon after Abu Ghraib – in which officials moved away from supporting exceptional measures linked to intelligence-gathering – back to its post-9/11 securitizing Self – in which the administration sought to protect its interrogation program while also touting its successes in preventing terrorist attacks.

4.2.4 Silencing the Desecuritizing Basic Discourse

The end of the Bush administration was characterized by a louder securitizing basic discourse and an increasingly muted desecuritizing basic discourse that continued into the successor Obama administration. President Bush either vetoed or threatened by Statements of Administration Policy⁴¹ (SAP) to veto legislation that would have curbed CIA interrogation powers. Vice President Cheney used public engagements to promote the securitizing basic discourse, effectively drowning out the desecuritization basic discourse. Finally, President Obama, though initially vocal in his resolve against torture, grew silent on the issue, both in rhetoric and judicial action. His administration's failure to prosecute Bush era officials reflected a general desire on his part to discontinue the torture debate.

4.2.4.1 Securitization by the Power of the Pen

A series of Congressional legislations that sought to scale back CIA interrogation powers throughout the years of Bush's presidency were derailed by executive veto power. In November 2007, the House of Representatives passed and submitted for Senate approval H.R. 4156, the Orderly and Responsible Iraq Redeployment Appropriations Act (2008a). The White House responded with an SAP, declaring that it would veto the bill, emphasizing, among other criticisms, the bill's limitations on interrogation:

The Administration strongly opposes section 102 of H.R. 4156, which would require the CIA to use only those interrogation techniques authorized by the United States Army Field Manual on Interrogations. This bill would jeopardize the safety of the American people by undermining the CIA's enhanced interrogation program, which has helped the United States capture senior al Qaeda leaders and disrupt multiple attacks against the homeland, thus saving American lives. Section 102 has

⁴¹ Rice (2010: 692) defines Statements of Administrative Policy as documents produced by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB), [that] outline the official administration position on legislation under consideration in Congress. Comments on the bill under consideration are solicited from relevant executive departments, and the OMB coordinates these (and presumably censors those inconsistent with the president's views) into a single document containing the administration's views on the bill.

no place in an emergency wartime appropriations bill that should be focused on ensuring that the men and women of our Armed Forces have the funding they need to complete their mission. (Bush, 2007c)

Unlike previous statements from the administration, this speech act made no references to nor proffered any rejections of *torture* – it emphasized instead solely the value of the *enhanced interrogation* program. The absence of the desecuritizing torture frame suggested that the administration was no longer interested in rejecting torture, and was primarily concerned with promoting its CIA program through the *interrogation* frame. The SAP also strengthened the link between the *interrogation* frame and the securitizing basic discourse by again emphasizing that “interrogation techniques” would ensure the “safety of the American people”; it also argued that any attempt to curb these options had “no place in an emergency wartime appropriations bill”. The very fact that Congress was trying to bar these techniques – given that they were beyond what was authorized in the U.S. Army Field Manual – shows that these methods were exceptional. The bill stalled in the Senate and was not enacted.

In December 2007, the administration issued another SAP, threatening to again veto H.R. 2082, the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 on the same grounds that the prohibition of certain interrogation techniques would “prevent the United States from conducting lawful interrogations of senior al Qaeda terrorists to obtain intelligence needed to protect” (Bush, 2007b). Specifically, the bill would have prohibited the CIA from using certain methods, such as waterboarding (Myers, 2008). Like the November SAP, this new one did not reject *torture* nor did President Bush’s February 2008 defense of his plan to veto the bill in a BBC interview (Bush, 2008a), further silencing the desecuritization narrative while amplifying the securitization narrative.⁴² The bill passed Congress, but was vetoed by President Bush in March

⁴² Nor did the official statement of veto issued by the press secretary, which read:

The President believes that he has no higher responsibility than protecting the American people. The President also believes in making sure the Intelligence Community has the tools necessary to protect America from attack. By requiring the Intelligence Community to use only the interrogation methods authorized in the publicly available Army Field Manual, the bill would have eliminated the legal alternative procedures in place in the CIA program to question the world's most dangerous and violent terrorists. The CIA

2008, who defended his decision saying, “Because the danger remains, we need to ensure our intelligence officials have all the tools they need to stop the terrorists.” (2008b)

Similar threats of veto occurred throughout 2008. On May 15, 2008, Bush threatened by SAP to veto H.R. 2642, the Supplemental Appropriations Bill (2008b), because the bill again stipulated adherence to the U.S. Army Field Manual. The clause was removed from the final version of the bill. A week later, the president issued an SAP (Bush, 2008d) threatening to veto H.R. 5658, the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 (2008), which contained a “Requirement for videotaping or otherwise electronically recording strategic intelligence interrogations”. Once the bill had passed the House, Bush issued another SAP (Bush, 2008f) on September 9, 2008, threatening to veto the Senate version in objection of both its “Prohibition on interrogation of detainees by contractor personnel” as well as the original videotaping concern. This prompted the Senate to remove both requirements. A final SAP (Bush, 2008e) issued on July 16, 2008, threatened to veto H.R. 5959, the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009, with objection to its “Prohibition on the use of private contractors for interrogations” of CIA prisoners.

While *interrogation* was defended in all four SAPs, the *torture* frame was entirely absent, demonstrating a complete abandonment of the previously used desecuritizing basic discourse. Previous statements that extolled the success of interrogation were at least balanced by assertions that torture was against American values; the SAPs, instead, were one-sided. These moves had the effect of drowning out the anti-torture narrative through the repetition and promotion of the securitizing frame.

4.2.4.2 Cheney’s Media Offensive

In interviews and remarks through throughout the last year of the Bush administration’s term, Vice President Cheney continued to repeat the securitizing frame while silencing the desecuritizing frame. In ten of seventeen interviews (Cheney, 2008c, 2008d, 2008e, 2008f, 2008g, 2008h, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c, 2009d), he did not invoke the *torture* frame, but did invoke the *interrogation* frame; in all interviews where he was willing to

program has produced critical intelligence and helped us prevent a number of attacks.
(Bush, 2008c)

denounce *torture*, he defended *interrogation*. Again, this was a marked shift from the early post-Abu Ghraib period during which the administration either balanced both frames, or invoked the desecuritizing frame on its own. Cheney's pattern mimicked Bush's: threats were emphasized, CIA successes were highlighted and *interrogation* was linked to both. In a January 2008 interview on the Rush Limbaugh Show, for example, Cheney noted:

But the fact of the matter is, the threat is still there, it still exists. I look at it every day in our intelligence brief. We need to perpetuate and protect our capabilities here, as well as in terms of our ability to interrogate prisoners. (2008c)

In an interview with the *Washington Times*, Cheney suggested that “it would have been unethical or immoral for us not to do everything we could in order to protect the nation against future attacks” (Cheney, 2008b). In a December 2008, interview on Fox News, he argued that

There has not been a single attack against the homeland, against the United States, in seven-and-a-half years. There have been attacks in Madrid, Spain; in London, England; in Mumbai and Bali and Mombosa -- all over the globe. And the threat is still out there and still very real. But the actions that we took, based on the President's decisions and based on some outstanding work by the intelligence community and by the military, has produced a safe seven-and-a-half years, and I think the record speaks for itself. (Cheney, 2008a)

Cheney's interviews not only amplified the securitizing interrogation frame, but they did so for a particular audience. Because the *Washington Times*, Fox News and the Rush Limbaugh Show have a primarily conservative and Republican bent – and thus were more willing to provide Cheney airtime – the securitizing Self that Cheney embodied became closely linked to the broader Republican/conservative identity.⁴³

⁴³ This is discussed in greater depth in the following chapter on media content and audience attitudes.

4.2.4.3 Silencing under Obama

On the other end of the political spectrum, Barack Obama spoke out against torture throughout his campaign and early presidency. He largely avoided the term *enhanced interrogation*, using it for the first time publicly well into his presidency during an April 15, 2009, interview in which he said, “some of the practices of enhanced interrogation techniques, I think, ran counter to American values and American traditions.” (Obama, 2009c) As candidate and president-elect, he widely invoked the desecuritizing *torture* frame, arguing that torture was antithetical to America’s “moral leadership” (Obama, 2008f), “moral standing” (Obama, 2008c), and “moral stature” (Obama, 2008a). He invoked this frame in eight texts for the year prior to his inauguration (Obama, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d, 2008e, 2008f, 2009b, 2009d) and avoided the securitizing *interrogation* frame altogether. Like Bush during the Abu Ghraib revelations, Obama was resolute that

Our government does not torture. ... That includes, by the way, renditions.
We don't farm out torture. We don't subcontract torture. (2008b)

Two days after taking the oath of office in January 2009, President Obama issued Executive Order 13491 to rescind the previous administration’s program, and firmly declare that

Effective immediately, an individual in the custody or under the effective control of an officer, employee, or other agent of the United States Government, or detained within a facility owned, operated, or controlled by a department or agency of the United States, in any armed conflict, shall not be subjected to any interrogation technique or approach, or any treatment related to interrogation, that is not authorized by and listed in Army Field Manual 2-22.3 (Manual). (Obama, 2009a)

Obama’s Attorney General Eric Holder appointed a special prosecutor, John Durham, in August 2009 to “determine whether a full criminal investigation of the conduct of agency employees or contractors was warranted”. This prompted Dick Cheney to once again take to the airwaves and defend the CIA program in a Fox News interview:

But the interesting thing about these is it shows that Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and Abu Zubaydah provided the overwhelming majority of reports on Al Qaida, that they were, as it says, pivotal in the war against Al Qaida, that both of them were uncooperative at first, that the application of enhanced interrogation techniques, specifically waterboarding, especially in the case of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, is what really persuaded him he needed to cooperate.

I think the evidence is overwhelming that the EITs were crucial in getting them to cooperate and that the information they provided did, in fact, save thousands of lives and let us defeat all further attacks against the United States. (2009e)

Over the next few years, several judicial decisions would clear Bush administration officials and CIA personnel of wrongdoing. In February 2010, the Justice Department issued a report clearing Jay Bybee and John Yoo – both responsible for authoring and signing off on the infamous torture memos⁴⁴ – of “professional misconduct” (Lichtblau

⁴⁴ This collection of memos, authored in 2002 and 2003 by Deputy Assistant General John Yoo in the Department of Justice’s Office of Legal Counsel (OLC) and signed by his supervisor, Assistant Attorney General Jay Bybee, provided legal cover to interrogators. The limelight on Abu Ghraib and increased attention to torture precipitated the leak of these documents, the first one disclosed in June 2004. This memo (dated August 1, 2002) expanded the legal threshold for and narrowed the definition of torture. It limited culpability to *intent* to torture, stating that a “defendant is guilty of torture only if he acts with the express purpose of inflicting severe pain or suffering on a person within his custody or physical control” (Bybee, 2009: 45). It further defined torture as “equivalent in intensity to the pain accompanying serious physical injury, such as organ failure, impairment of bodily function, or even death.” (Bybee, 2009: 41) A second memo issued the same day cleared personnel for torturing Abu Zubaydah.

When the first memo leaked to the press in June 2004, then head of the OLC Jack Goldsmith revoked both torture memos and resigned (Cole, 2009: 17; Honigsberg, 2009: 27). His revocation was not publicized until December 2004, when Assistant Attorney General Daniel Levin publicly issued a revised memorandum to replace the original two. While the memo acknowledged that “Torture is abhorrent both to American law and values and to international norms” (Levin, 2009: 128), it detracted from the spirit of the original withdrawal and instead clarified the meanings of “severe”, “severe physical pain or suffering”, “severe mental pain or suffering”, and “specifically intended” in order to legitimize the boundaries of what was permissible. A footnote affirmed “that the CIA’s previous actions were not illegal, thereby assuring the interrogators that their previous, and even present, conduct would continue

& Shane, 2010; McCoy, 2012, Chapter 7). In November that same year, the Justice Department's investigation of the destruction of CIA interrogation videotapes ended with no criminal charges (Mazzetti & Savage, 2010). On June 28, 2011, special prosecutor John Durham also cleared interrogators of wrongdoing, but recommended another investigation into the deaths of two CIA prisoners (Lichtblau & Schmitt, 2011). That investigation too ended without prosecutions, "eliminating the last possibility that any criminal charges will be brought as a result of the brutal interrogations carried out by the C.I.A." (Shane, 2012).

Though these judicial decisions did not explicitly advance the securitizing basic discourse, they damaged the efficacy and legitimacy of the desecuritizing narrative. Impunity signaled that, contrary to the desecuritizing basic discourse, either torture had not been committed or that it was not punishable. In either case, impunity challenged the coherence of the desecuritization narrative and sheltered the securitization narrative from fracturing. Cheney's aggressive speech acts on Fox News and other conservative outlets defending "enhanced interrogation techniques" and its successes "in the war against Al Qaida" thus were left unchallenged by any equivalent drumbeat of desecuritizing discourse.

The May 2, 2011, killing of Osama bin Laden further fueled the securitizing basic discourse. Yoo (2011) and Cheney insisted that intelligence gleaned from the waterboarding of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed led to the eventual killing of bin Laden, with the latter claiming on Fox News, "I would assume that the enhanced interrogation program that we put in place produced some of the results that led to bin Laden's ultimate capture" (Herridge, 2011). The 2012 release of the film *Zero Dark Thirty* – which chronicled the events leading to bin Laden's assassination – also endorsed the securitizing basic discourse that the CIA interrogation program produced intelligence that helped find bin Laden. This narrative became so salient that it prompted, in a rare demonstration of bipartisan agreement, Senators Dianne Feinstein, Carl Levin and John McCain to issue a public letter to correct the film's inaccuracies:

to be protected" (Honigsberg, 2009: 27). The memo also contained a classified appendix that "expressly authorized the CIA to continue a number of coercive techniques, including waterboarding" (Pyle, 2009: 112).

Regardless of what message the filmmakers intended to convey, the movie clearly implies that the CIA's coercive interrogation techniques were effective in eliciting important information related to a courier for Usama Bin Laden. We have reviewed CIA records and know that this is incorrect. (Feinstein, Levin, & John, 2012)

Nonetheless, the film put the torture debate on the 2012 presidential campaign agenda, with Republican candidates adamantly promoting the securitizing frame. McCoy (2012) identifies key moments in the debate on torture, by then

fully normalized – no longer a crime that shocked the conscience and violated international law, but a routine policy option whose adoption or rejection was a matter of personal preference. At the Republican foreign policy debate in South Carolina, the leading candidates advocated waterboarding in a matter-of-fact manner, stripped of artifice or euphemism or allusion. Asked “whether waterboarding constitutes torture or is an enhanced technique,” candidate Herman Cain said it was not torture and promised to revive the practice if elected. Similarly, Representative Michele Bachmann (Republican, Minnesota) called waterboarding “very effective” and condemned President Obama for “allowing the A.C.L.U. to run the C.I.A.” Straining to best his opponents in pleasing the Republican Party's right wing, front-runner Mitt Romney insisted that anyone bearing arms for Al Qaeda “is fair game for the United States of America.” ... Romney later confirmed his view that waterboarding was not torture and promised to use “enhanced interrogation techniques ... against terrorists.” (McCoy, 2012, Chapter 7)

The ambiguity surrounding what constituted torture further damaged the desecuritizing narrative, making it incoherent and vague. In comparison, the securitizing narrative was much clearer and more cohesive, making it easy not only for Republican political elites to align their identities to it, but also to promote in settings like the debates. In contrast, while President Obama stressed his early 2009 ban on torture during the 2012 (and 2016) campaign season, he remained otherwise disengaged from the debate. This reluctance persisted through 2014, when the Obama administration attempted to delay the declassification of the Senate Intelligence Committee Report on torture which

concluded that *enhanced interrogation techniques* did indeed constitute torture. On its release, President Obama reiterated his preference to move on from the debate, saying “Rather than another reason to refight old arguments, I hope that today's report can help us leave these techniques where they belong: in the past” (Obama, 2014f). This move eliminated yet one more major opportunity – and perhaps the last one – to legitimize the desecuritization basic discourse, relegating it to the sidelines as Obama’s tenure ended.

4.3 Conclusion

The 9/11 attacks led to the formation of a new security discourse centered on the threat of terrorism and ultimately the torture debate. Early statements by Bush administration officials sought to reassure an anxious electorate that intelligence-gathering efforts would be commensurate with the new threat. Speech acts emphasized a new kind of war that would require working in the “shadows of the intelligence world”, establishing a rhetorical link between intelligence-gathering and the developing securitizing discourse. This discourse was largely uncontested until Abu Ghraib shocked American citizens, and compelled the executive branch to assert and reinstate moral leadership by denouncing the “abuse”. The narrative of intelligence at all costs was for the first time challenged: a key frame that emerged in this desecuritizing basic discourse was that *torture* was inconsistent with American laws and values, and that while terrorism was still a threat, it was not sufficiently threatening to walk back norms.

As the memory of Abu Ghraib receded, and following the Bush administration’s election to a second term, anti-*torture* desecuritizing rhetoric was increasingly replaced by a rebranding of the CIA’s coercive intelligence-gathering program as *enhanced interrogation*. The program was repeatedly celebrated by President Bush and other executive branch officials as successful, and congressional attempts to scale it back and make it consistent with the U.S. Army Field Manual were met with rhetorical and formal resistance. Through veto, the White House repeatedly protected the interrogation program when it was vulnerable. These acts and Obama’s general disengagement from the torture debate allowed the securitizing basic discourse to go largely uncontested in the final years of Obama’s tenure as the ambiguity and incoherence surrounding the desecuritizing counter discourse facilitated its loss of credibility.

Hermann (2008: 156) observes that “...what is not said may be as important as what is said, particularly if a theme emphasized over a length of time all of a sudden disappears.” If this is the case, what effect did Obama’s silencing of the desecuritizing discourse have on public opinion? McCoy (2012, Introduction) suggests that

The release of the photos from Abu Ghraib produced a shock to the American psyche, creating a short-lived potential to reverse the processes of impunity that had been decades in the making. But the American self-image soon recovered, and the public pressure for reform faded. Already accustomed to their leaders’ argument that torture, or “enhanced interrogation,” was necessary for national security, Americans, by now inured to abuse through its glamorized media representations, tried to move on as if nothing had happened.

The following chapter, however, exposes a more drastic outcome: rather than moving on “as if nothing had happened”, the American public seems to have grown increasingly tolerant of torture – far more than they were before Abu Ghraib. Political discourse can partially explain this behavior; a fuller investigation of the (de)securitizing frames requires turning to the news media and audience themselves.

Chapter 5: The Exceptional Becomes Acceptable: Media's Influence on Public Tolerance of Torture

5.1 Introduction

While the discourse analysis in the previous chapter revealed two of the competing discourses in the overarching securitizing of terrorism, this chapter endeavors to resolve how press and state actors promoted frames associated with each basic discourse, and how audiences responded. Previous research has documented a steady increase in American support for torturing suspected terrorists (Gronke et al., 2010; Mayer & Armor, 2012; Zegart, 2012). Paradoxically, the rise in support coincided with the transition from a Republican White House administration that promoted torture to a Democratic administration under President Barack Obama that was associated with anti-torture legislation and rhetoric. By the end of Obama's second term in 2016, Americans held the third most favorable views on torturing enemy combatants (behind only Nigeria and Israel), with the percentage of Americans who opposed torture declining from 65% in 1999 – the last time the ICRC poll was conducted – to just 30% in 2016 (ICRC, 2016). The disconnect between public opinion and political cues offers unique conditions for testing security framing effects: contrary to both securitization theory and Entman's cascading hierarchy, audiences appear to be rejecting political elite cues. Even as president, Obama's early anti-torture stance was unable to stem the tide of growing support for torture. This paradox suggests that the traditional reading of securitization theory – in which political elites drive public preferences for extraordinary responses to threats – merits reconsideration.

To that end, this chapter operationalizes the debate on competing press-state models and introduces media actors as potential (de)securitizing actors. The discourse analysis from the preceding chapter already provides some evidence that the news media – particularly conservative and Republican leaning outlets – gave airtime to former Bush administration officials to promote their preferred securitization *interrogation* frame. This chapter builds further evidence in three steps to identify which actors, if any, produce framing effects on public attitudes. First, the results of a holistic content analysis of news sources and political texts are presented to demonstrate frame competition and source differentiation as described in Chapter 3. Next, frame prevalence is related to public attitudes through a comprehensive analysis of aggregate-

level longitudinal public opinion data. Expanding significantly on previous research (e.g., Gronke et al., 2010) – both in depth and breadth – public assessments of terrorism as a threat and willingness to mobilize against the threat using torture are presented. Attitudes are mapped to press coverage and political content to reveal preliminary alignments between public opinion and trends in framing. The final analytical section of this chapter cements these tentative findings on framing effects by explicitly modeling attitudes toward torture and attention to news sources, while controlling for other drivers of torture support. From a variety of perspectives, the analyses show that attitudes on torture – at the aggregate and individual levels – reflect the news frames individuals are most exposed to, increasing confidence that the press can act as an independent (de)securitizing actor.

5.2 Content Analysis

5.2.1 Frames and Features Selection

Table 5.1 lists the two competing basic discourses and their constituent frame signifiers that were invoked strategically by political elite actors in the context of intelligence-gathering to combat terrorism. The securitizing basic discourse emphasized the need to collect information using any means necessary. It was expressed by the executive branch through an *interrogation* frame that justified, protected and promoted the successes of its CIA program. Whether described as “harsh interrogation” or “enhanced interrogation techniques”, the *interrogation* frame was employed to legitimize exceptional measures in the name of security. The Bush administration also downplayed the exceptionalism of torture in an attempt to legitimize it (Rowling et al., 2011). A desecuritizing discourse, conversely, sought to delegitimize the CIA program through the *torture* frame. Adherents of this desecuritizing discourse used the *torture* frame to argue that the program constituted torture and ran counter to both American and international norms, laws and values. It was employed to scale back the exceptionalism of the threat: while terrorism remained a threat, it was not sufficient to overstep these institutions. These two issue frames formed different schematic interpretations; like Chong and Druckman’s (2007) study on reactions to a white supremacist rally, the two frames on intelligence-gathering here became associated with different signifiers – *torture* with human rights and liberal values considerations, and *interrogation* with security and protection against the threat of terrorism.

Table 5.1 Content Analysis Frame Signifiers

	Remedy Proposal/Issue Frame
Securitizing discourse	<i>Interrogation</i>
Desecuritizing discourse	<i>Torture</i>

These signifiers, *torture* and *interrogation*, are thus used to drive the content analysis. While the discourse analysis demonstrated that each signifier was associated with a particular broader frame – and thus activated different schematic interpretations by the audience – previous research has also demonstrated differential effects. Rios and Mischkowski (2018), for example, demonstrate through a series of five framing experiments that using the signifier *torture* produced more negative evaluations than *interrogation*. Similarly, Blauwkamp, Rowling and Pettit’s (2018) experimental study demonstrates that framing in poll questions influences torture preferences – but they do not link attitudes to political and media frames. The approach here empirically tests whether similar framing effects emerge in natural settings where political elites and the press supply the information marketplace with competing discourses.

Existing research on framing by press and political elite actors has also explored competing frames by using signifiers. Bennett et al. (2006) distinguish between *abuse* and *torture* to demonstrate that the indexing model best reflected the relationship between news media and political elites. In their eight-month content analysis from 2004, they find that the press largely adopted the Bush administration’s preferred *abuse* frame over the less popular *torture* frame. Rowling et al. (2011) expand on this study and examine network and print news actors as well as congressional and executive texts over a longer period (2004-2006), to conclude – contra Bennett et al. (2006) – in favor of the cascading activation model. In short, they find that while congressional Democrats employed the *torture* frame and challenged the Bush administration’s preferred frames, the media neglected these cues. Jones and Sheets (2009) similarly find that the *abuse* frame dominated the *torture* frame in American print media outlets from 2004 to 2005.

While these studies are individually informative to understanding the competitive framing of torture, their confinement to the few years surrounding Abu Ghraib predates shifts in public opinion toward support for torture, and overlooks long-term trends in discourse, like the shift toward the *interrogation* frame and contextual political changes like the transition to the Obama administration. Further, the previous studies have restricted content analysis to certain network and print media actors – cable news has been largely ignored. This is a glaring omission given that cable news commands the widest audience in the American media landscape. Finally, extant literature has yet to link frames in natural settings (as opposed to experimental settings) – whether from the press or political elites – to attitudes on torture. The remainder of this chapter addresses these gaps.

One newspaper – the *New York Times* – and three television networks – CNN, Fox News and MSNBC – are analyzed, collectively representing a spectrum of ideology and mediums. The broad corpus of texts was downloaded from the Nexis Academic database for each of the four news sources using the following search query:

terrori! OR gwot OR "war on terror" OR "overseas contingency operation"⁴⁵

Political elite content was retrieved using similar search queries from the American Presidency Project and the Congressional Record. The keywords in the search query accommodate the different ways to represent the *terrorism* threat frame, aimed at casting a wide net and capturing all relevant articles. For all sources, the data was subset to content published between January 1, 2001, and December 31, 2016 – as discussed in Chapter 3, this timeframe was chosen to encompass the entire Bush and nearly entire Obama administrations. The discourse analysis in the previous chapter revealed that both administrations took different positions in the torture debate, ensuring that this selected timeframe will capture rich variability in official framing. Guided by Entman’s cascade activation model and framing theory’s expectation that downstream actors are

⁴⁵ Items in quotes are searched as a phrase; exclamation marks indicate wildcard searches, where terrori! matches “terrorism”, “terrorist” and “terrorists”. The term “gwot” is shorthand for “global war on terror[ism]”.

bounded in their range of discourse by cues from political elites, this variability is assumed to extend to the press.

Table 5.2 lists the total number of texts collected and analyzed for each source, which together total 254,250 – this includes news articles for the *New York Times*; transcripts of individual shows for each of the television networks; texts from the Congressional Record; and speeches, press briefings, remarks, debate transcripts, addresses, and a variety of other texts attributed to the president and vice president. Unsurprisingly, news coverage largely exceeds political discourse in number of texts – as noted previously, news coverage is more voluminous while political discourse is more symbolic. Notably, however, the number of MSNBC segments that mentioned terrorism is only slightly more than the number of executive branch texts for the same period and less than the number of congressional texts. This may be attributed to MSNBC’s domestic orientation: a study led by the Pew Research Center found that CNN’s coverage of foreign stories (30% in 2007; 23% in 2012) led both Fox News (21% in 2007; 15% in 2012) and MSNBC (25% in 2007; 7% in 2012)⁴⁶ – findings that are fully consistent with the data in table 5.2 (Jurkowitz et al., 2013).

Table 5.2 Number of texts by source

Source	Number of texts
CNN	79,145
Fox News	31,172
MSNBC	10,580
New York Times	101,782
Presidential Elites	7,031
Congressional Elites	24,558
Total	254,250

⁴⁶ While the Pew study (Jurkowitz et al., 2013) does not specify which topics were included in “political” or “foreign” stories, the attribution of terrorism to foreign agents – e.g., al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden – and the protection against threats from abroad suggests that coverage of terrorism would be contained in “foreign” news.

5.2.3 Frame Competition

5.2.3.1 Aggregate Analysis

Given the wide consensus in literature that framing effects are primarily contingent on the frequency of exposure to a particular frame (e.g., Domke et al., 1999; Entman, 2004; Oren & Solomon, 2015; Price & Tewksbury, 1996), frame competition is operationalized here by comparing the prevalence of the securitizing and desecuritizing frames within each source. A Python script was used to iterate over all texts, counting the occurrences of specific keywords and patterns that were linked to each of the two frames (see Appendix A for details on frame features and extraction methods). Table 5.3 shows the frequency of occurrences of the securitizing (*interrogation*) and desecuritizing (*torture*) frames, and for additional context, the threat (*terrorism*) frame. Despite the *Times* having a higher aggregate volume of texts in the complete corpus (table 5.2), CNN had the highest frame count across all three frames – this is primarily because television news segments are longer than print news articles⁴⁷ and thus contain potentially more frame instances. The relative primacy of CNN across all three frames in terms of total counts thus reflects not only its relatively large word count, but also its stronger foreign-policy calibration among the different cable news actors. The length and political commentary format of television shows also allows for a more diverse set of topics which explains the low frame rates (measured as frame occurrence per-ten-thousand words). Newspaper articles, conversely, are focused on specific topics within each article, yielding a higher frame rate. For the *Times* then, when a frame was present, it was more likely to be the focus of the entire article.

⁴⁷ The average word count for each source was: 5,302 for CNN; 2,911 for Fox News; 8,256 for MSNBC; 852 for the Times; 2,226 for presidential elites; and 8,397 for congressional elites.

Table 5.3 Terrorism and Issue Frame Aggregate Prevalence by Source

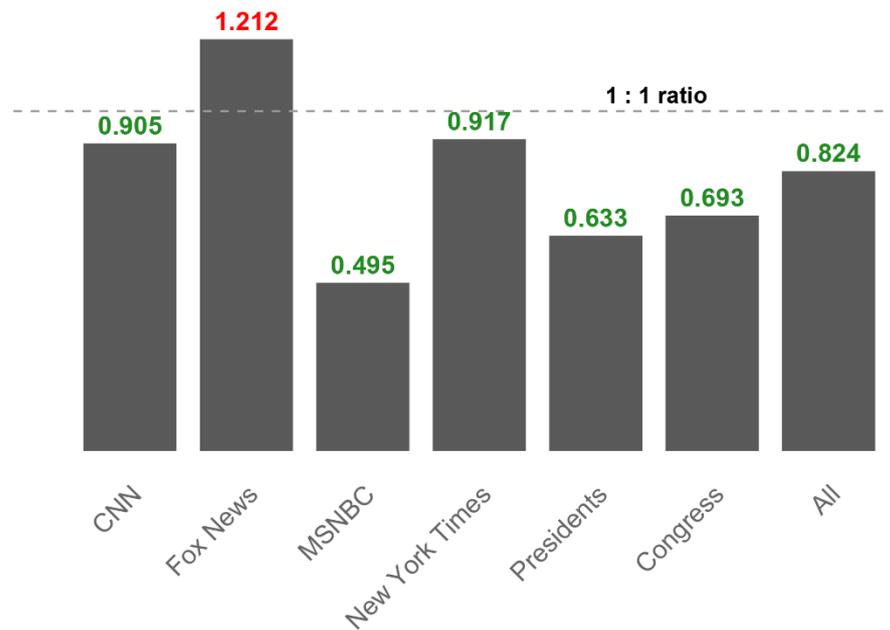
	Terrorism	Interrogation	Torture
<i>CNN</i>			
Total	315,838	15,803	17,466
Rate	7.526	0.377	0.416
<i>Fox News</i>			
Total	113,350	6,632	5,473
Rate	12.491	0.731	0.603
<i>MSNBC</i>			
Total	61,112	4,485	9,069
Rate	6.997	0.513	1.038
<i>New York Times</i>			
Total	158,527	10,612	11,571
Rate	18.291	1.224	1.335
<i>Presidential Elites</i>			
Total	34,863	452	714
Rate	22.334	0.290	0.457
<i>Congressional Elites</i>			
Total	198,741	6,536	9,436
Rate	9.638	0.317	0.458
All Sources			
Total	901,209	44,945	54,577
Rate	9.774	0.487	0.592

Note: Total values indicate the number of instances of each frame. Rate is calculated as the presence of the frame per ten-thousand words.

Turning to the two opposing issue frames, the ratios of securitizing frames to desecuritizing frames in figure 5.1 suggest that, with the exception of Fox News, actors were likelier to employ the desecuritizing torture frame. Fox News alone was more likely to employ the securitizing interrogation frame – this is unsurprising given that it consistently provided airtime to Bush administration officials. Its conservative and Republican orientation drove it toward the preferred party frame and actors. Interestingly, figure 5.2 shows that Fox News leaned slightly toward the desecuritizing frame throughout the Bush administration; its aggressive securitizing strategy occurred largely in the Obama administration – in the absence of Republican political cues –

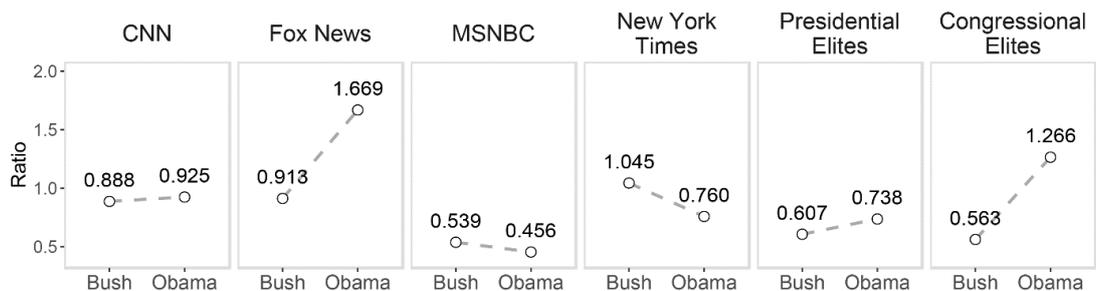
where it led with the securitizing frame by a factor of 1.7 to one. While this rebellion against Obama’s preferred anti-torture stance presents strong evidence of at least one press agent acting independently of the executive branch, it does tentatively suggest an alignment between Fox News and Congress, whose coverage also became increasingly securitizing during the Obama administration according to figure 5.2.

Figure 5.1 Aggregate Ratio of Securitizing Frame to Desecuritizing Frame (2001-2016)



Note: Ratio is calculated by dividing the number of securitizing frames by the number of desecuritizing frames. The dashed line represents the cutoff for equal coverage of both securitizing and desecuritizing frames.

Figure 5.2 Ratio of Securitizing Frame to Desecuritizing Frame by Presidential Administration (2001-2016)

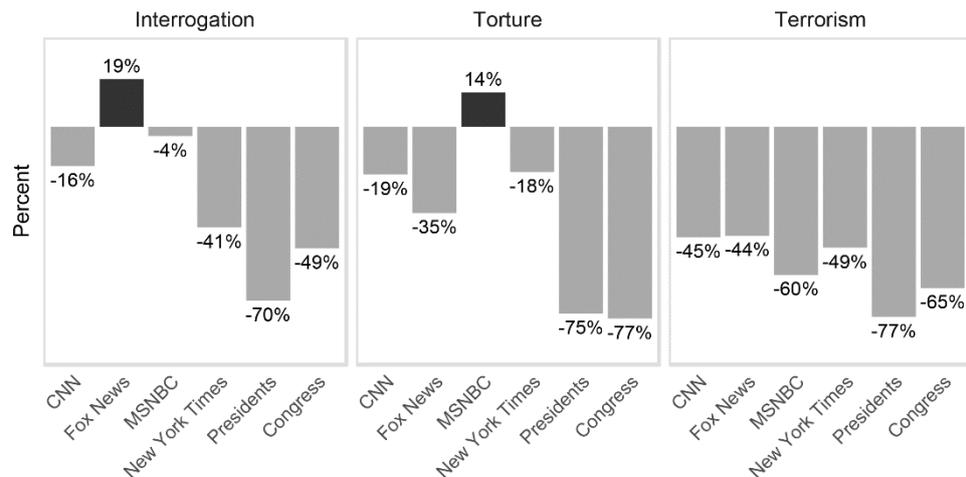


Note: Ratio is calculated by dividing the number of securitizing frames by the number of desecuritizing frames.

At the other end of the spectrum, MSNBC covered the securitizing frame least among press actors in volume, and least among all actors relative to the desecuritizing frame. At the aggregate level, it covered the *torture* frame over twice as much as the *interrogation* frame. This performance was consistent across both administrations, and unlike Fox News, MSNBC's coverage shifted in the opposite direction toward *more* desecuritizing coverage from the Bush years to the Obama years. The *Times* also moved toward increased desecuritizing coverage, but at a steeper rate than MSNBC, indicating a more drastic shift in tone between the two administrations. While the *Times*' ratio of coverage is similar to CNN's at the aggregate level, figure 5.2 show a critical difference: CNN's coverage did not change very much, and remained fairly balanced through both presidents. In this regard, it shared with MSNBC a resistance to shift its tone between different political contexts, also indicating some separation from official influence on coverage between both administrations.

The wide disparity between Fox News and MSNBC suggests that these two sources are likely to have strong framing effects on their audiences in opposite directions. Framing theory suggests that Fox News audiences, more exposed to the securitizing frame, are more likely to support torture as an exceptional measure, whereas MSNBC viewers, predominantly exposed to the desecuritizing frame, are likelier to reject torture. This expectation is strengthened by the increased coverage both actors gave to their preferred frame over time: figure 5.3 shows specifically that Fox News covered the securitizing frame 19% higher in the Obama years than in the Bush years, while MSNBC covered the desecuritizing frame 14% higher in the same timeframe. This is striking given that both decreased their coverage of the *terrorism* frame by 44% (Fox News) and 60% (MSNBC). Despite declining coverage among all other actors of all three frames, Fox News and MSNBC alone increased coverage of their preferred frames. Like MSNBC, the *Times*' shift towards the desecuritizing frame suggests a likely alignment between its readers and opposition to torture during the Obama administration. On the other hand, CNN appears less likely to produce framing effects given its ambivalent coverage of both frames (see Druckman, 2004).

Figure 5.3 Percent Change in Frame Volume Between Bush and Obama Administrations



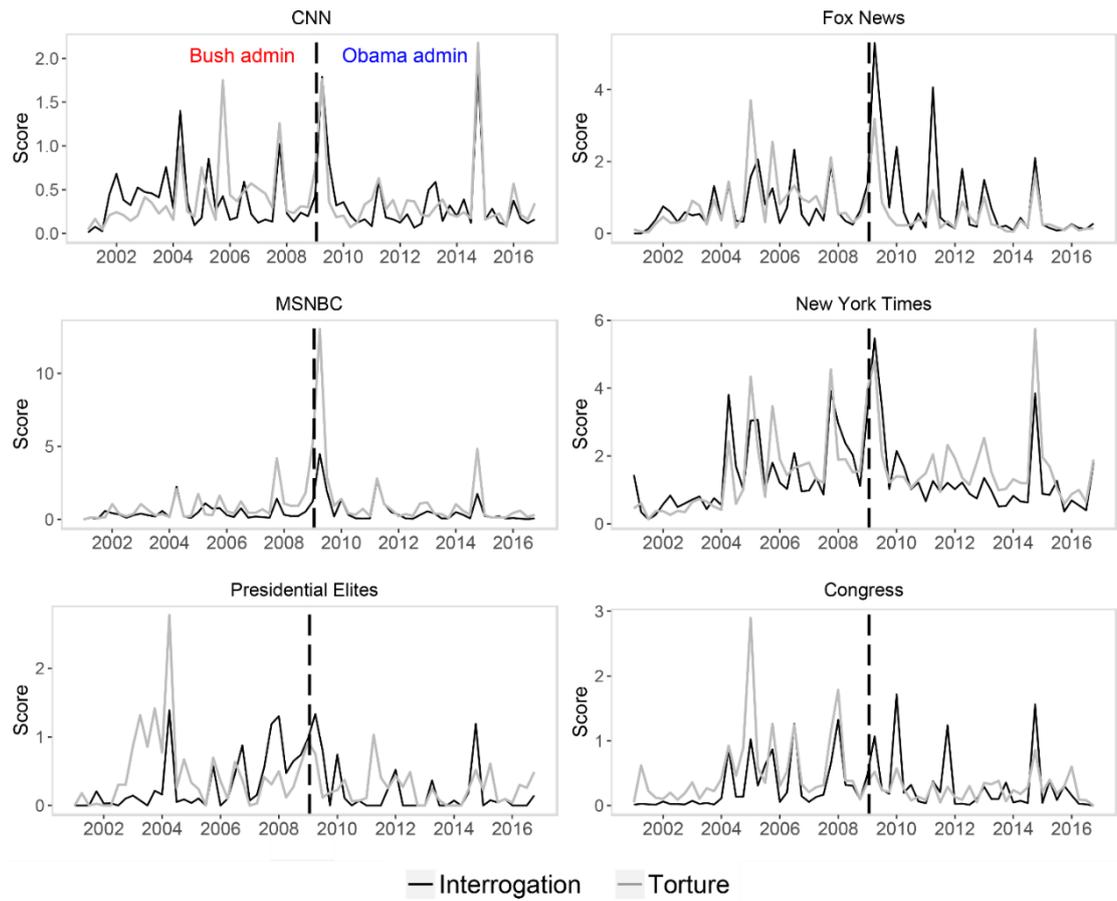
Note: For each frame and actor, percent change is calculated by subtracting the number of invocations during the Bush administration from the number of invocations during the Obama administration and dividing by the number of invocations during the Bush administration.

While at the aggregate level, both congressional actors and White House leaders were more likely to employ the desecuritizing frame, the differences between administrations show surprising results. Both congressional elites and presidential elites increased their coverage of the securitizing frame relative to the desecuritizing frame. The latter finding is especially interesting, because it suggests that the Obama administration was more likely to use the securitizing frame than the Bush administration, even though both showed an overall preference for the desecuritizing frame. This largely reflects the impact of Abu Ghraib, which necessitated a strong and loud anti-torture stance from the Bush White House (as discussed in chapter 4). During this phase, the Bush administration invoked the desecuritizing frame much more aggressively than either administration did in later phases. Moreover, Obama's general disengagement from the debate – and thus fewer invocations of either frame evidenced in figure 5.3 – makes the ratio more sensitive to small changes. Congress, similarly, shifted from a heavy focus on the *torture* frame in the early post-Abu Ghraib period toward mostly securitizing coverage in the Obama years. But like presidential elites, Congress also invoked both frames much less, making its ratio of securitizing to desecuritizing more sensitive to small differences between the two. The drastic drop in coverage for both sets of political elites is illustrated in figure 5.3 – both Congress and presidential elites showed the highest drop in coverage of all three frames across all actors, suggesting that the press largely kept terrorism part of public discourse.

5.2.3.2 Quarterly Time-Series Analyses

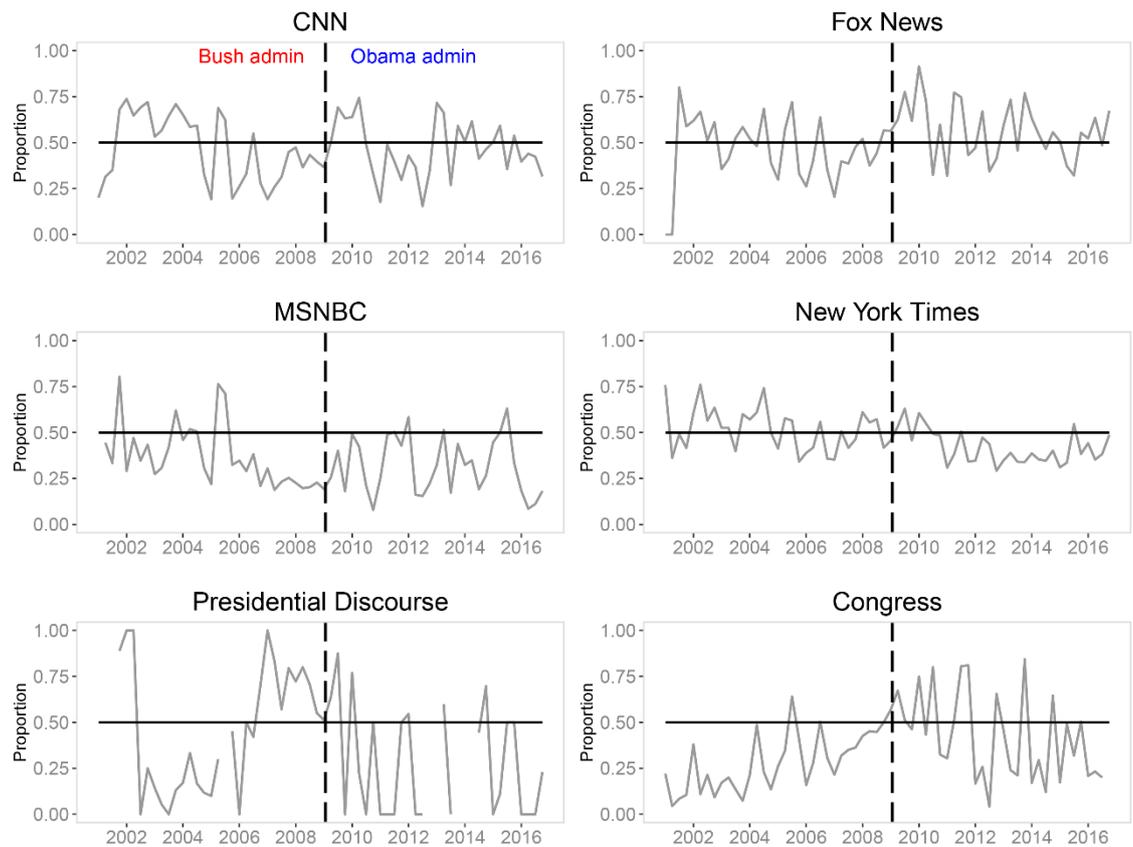
Disaggregating the data into quarterly time-series illustrates further nuances in frame invocations over time. Figure 5.4 shows the volume of securitizing and desecuritizing frames, measured in occurrences per ten-thousand words. It shows how much of overall terrorism discourse was made up of the *torture* and *interrogation* frames for each actor. Higher scores indicate periods of increased salience of either frame in terrorism discourse. Figure 5.5 illustrates the competition between the two frames: specifically, it plots the proportion of securitizing frames that occur in the sum of both securitizing and desecuritizing frames. In each panel of figure 5.5, the solid horizontal line at $y=0.5$ marks the point at which the volume of securitizing and desecuritizing would be equal: the space above the line indicates a louder securitizing frame, while the space below indicates a louder desecuritizing frame. The vertical dashed line in the middle of each panel in both figures 5.4 and 5.5 marks the point at which the Obama administration came into office.

Figure 5.4 Frame Coverage as Word per Ten-Thousand for News Media and Political Elites



Note: Each panel plots the rate of the *interrogation* and *torture* frames per ten-thousand words for each source. The vertical dashed line in 2009 marks the beginning of the Obama administration.

Figure 5.5 Quarterly Interrogation-Torture Proportion (2001-2016)



Note: Each panel plots the proportion of securitizing frames that occur in the sum of both securitizing and desecuritizing frames for each source. The area above the horizontal line at $y = 0.5$ indicates a louder securitizing frame. The vertical dashed line in 2009 marks the beginning of the Obama administration. Gaps in the presidential discourse plot indicate periods of no coverage of either frame.

The results are congruent with aggregate findings, but also provide critical insight into frame competition and salience in different political contexts. Beginning with press actors, figure 5.4 suggests that CNN was largely balanced at the aggregate level, but figure 5.5 suggests that its coverage was cyclical – while it led with the *interrogation* frame during the Bush administration’s first term, it mostly invoked the desecuritizing frame in the second and similarly oscillated throughout the Obama administration. Compared to other press actors, its coverage of both frames was less salient in overall terrorism discourse (measured in frame coverage per ten-thousand words). Both its ambiguous coverage and low salience of either frame suggests it likely had little if any effect on public attitudes toward torture. The *Times*, on the other hand, largely invoked the desecuritizing frame beginning in 2010 after a tenure of mixed coverage during the Bush administration. It shared with MSNBC a preference for the desecuritizing frame

during Obama's administration, though MSNBC overwhelmingly reflected this pattern across almost all quarters, as evidenced by figure 5.5. During Obama's presidency, only Fox News maintained a strong securitizing frame (relative to the desecuritizing frame). Figure 5.4 shows periods of high *interrogation* invocations by Fox News in multiple quarters during the Obama presidency – notably, many of these peaks are not echoed by other media actors. Again, Fox News was the only actor that invoked the securitizing *interrogation* frame more during Obama's presidency than during Bush's, while MSNBC was the only actor that increased its number of invocations of the desecuritizing *torture* frame from Bush to Obama.

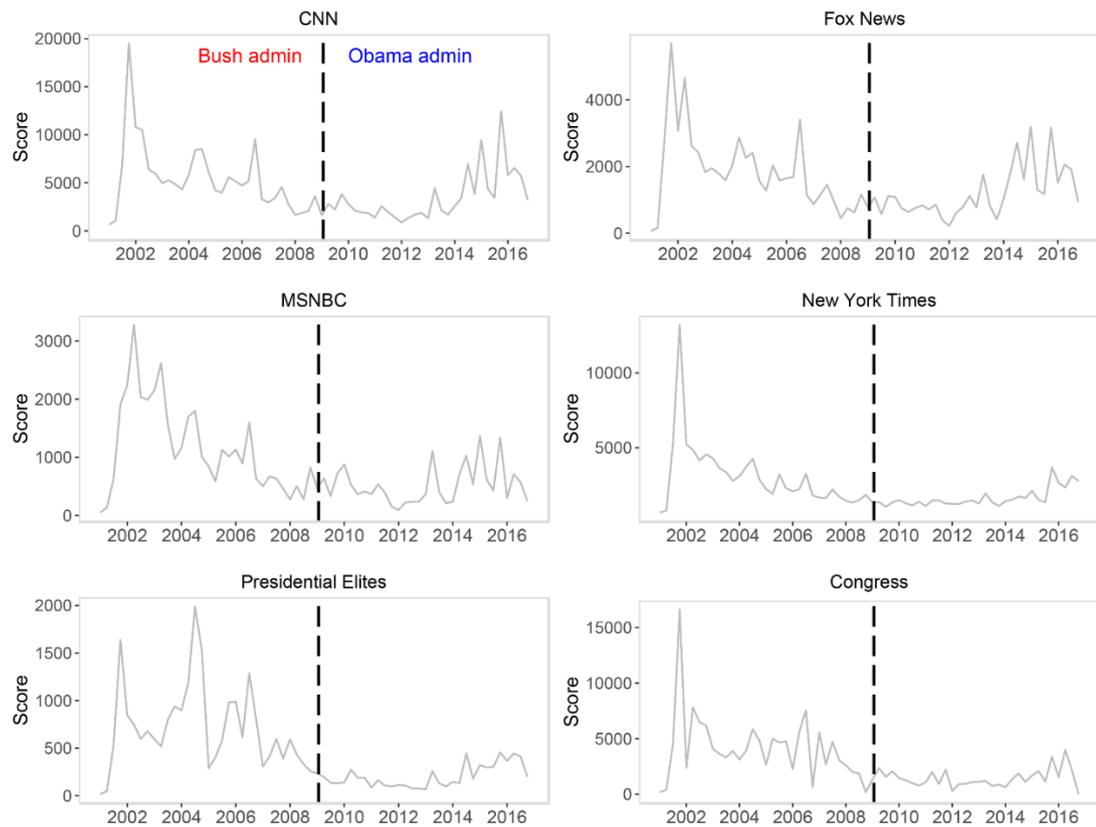
The time-series data also show that presidential elite content is mostly consistent with the discussion in the discourse analysis: the desecuritizing frame was adopted in the aftermath of Abu Ghraib (2004) during which the Bush administration insisted that torture was not part of its official policy; rebranding and justification followed with a brief preference for the securitizing frame; and finally, an overall silencing of the debate occurred throughout Obama's presidency, as indicated by several gaps in figure 5.5. Still figure 5.5 provides evidence that Obama engaged the *interrogation* frame at a higher rate than expected – spikes in 2009 and 2014 correspond to Obama's executive order (which banned torture) and the release of the Senate Intelligence Committee Report on the CIA's program. In several quarters, Congress also gave more attention to the securitizing frame than the desecuritizing frame. Again, these peaks of securitizing coverage by congressional and presidential elites reflect an increased sensitivity given the reduced usage of both the securitizing and desecuritizing frames between the Bush and Obama presidencies.

These results reaffirm previous findings of the media acting independently of political elites. MSNBC and the *Times* both moved toward increased relative attention to the desecuritizing frame from one presidential administration to the next, while political elites – both Congress and the executive branch – moved in the other direction. The shift was more drastic for the *Times*. Perhaps motivated by the lack of political leadership and cues from the executive leadership, the *Times* more aggressively promoted the preferred liberal and Democrat *torture* frame, a reflection of the paper's own leaning. While MSNBC's coverage was relatively more stable, it was the only actor that invoked the desecuritizing frame more frequently moving from one administration to the next. Fox News did the same for the *interrogation* frame. As the

debate became less salient (in both political and media discourse), MSNBC and Fox News amplified the *torture* and *interrogation* frames respectively, signaling further evidence of independence from political elites. Even though Fox News and Congress aligned in their relative coverage of the two frames from one administration to the next, for Congress this was largely a reflection of lower coverage of both frames and thus increased sensitivity to differences. The *Times*, Fox News and MSNBC, then, appear to give increased attention to those frames that most reflected their political orientation as political elites gradually disengaged from the debate.

Providing additional context and boosting confidence in these readings, figure 5.6 shows that the prevalence of the threat frame (the total number of invocations of the *terrorism* frame) was largely similar across actors: it declined through 2012 for all actors before rising again briefly. The rise in later years is most prominent for cable news actors, indicating some similarity between them and a diversion from the *Times* and political elites. Still, together the sources showed higher consistency in the threat frame than in the (de)securitizing threat response frames, suggesting that the threat frame is adequately controlled for in interpreting differences between coverage of the *torture* and *interrogation* frames across actors. In other words, the differences across actors in securitizing and desecuritizing frame prevalence are not the effect of differential threat frame coverage. Trends in MSNBC's coverage of the threat frame nearly mirror Fox News' coverage, but MSNBC gives much less attention to the securitizing frame relative to the desecuritizing frame. CNN's threat coverage is also similar, but its remedy proposal coverage differs significantly from its competitors. The synonymous attention by each actor to the threat frame suggests that differences in attention to the *torture* and *interrogation* frame by the actors are independent of *terrorism* coverage.

Figure 5.6 Quarterly Threat Frame Prevalence (2001-2016)



Note: Each panel plots the number of invocations of the *terrorism* frame for each source. The vertical dashed line in 2009 marks the beginning of the Obama administration.

5.2.4 Summary of Content Analysis

From a variety of perspectives, then, the press appears to act independently of political elites. Fox News stands out especially: it was the only actor to have a greater volume of securitizing frames than desecuritizing frames at the aggregate level; it was the only media actor to increase its coverage of the securitizing frame in raw numbers moving from the Bush administration to the Obama administration; it had the highest ratio differential between the two administrations; and it continued to promote the securitizing *interrogation* frame, when the threat frame (for all actors) was near its sixteen-year low. Attention to Fox News appears a likely predictor for pro-torture attitudes. MSNBC and the *Times* are the only two actors that invoke the desecuritizing frame at a higher rate than the securitizing frame between the two administrations – while the change is steeper for the *Times*, MSNBC has the lowest securitizing to desecuritizing ratio at all times. Both are likely candidates for producing a desecuritizing effect on the public. CNN’s coverage is ambiguous: its coverage is nearly

balanced at the aggregate level through both administrations and neither the *torture* nor *interrogation* frames are highly salient: this suggests weak (if any) effect of CNN viewership on torture attitudes.

The differences between the actors not only suggests autonomy, but also provides strong evidence against a monolithic media that parrots the official frame. If any single media actor was popularizing the official frame, those moving in competing directions are necessarily not. What remains to be resolved is whether these differences in media coverage influenced public attitudes toward the threat of terrorism and the exceptional measures proposed to fight it – or in other words, whether the media had a (de)securitizing effect. The following two sections introduce the audience into the analysis by (1) evaluating relationships between changes in aggregate public attitudes and frame prevalence over time and (2) estimating the relationship between attention to specific sources and individual attitudes.

5.3 Longitudinal Aggregate-Level Public Opinion Analysis

This section uses public opinion data to measure two securitization constructs over the sixteen-year period: audience identification of the threat and audience preferences for mobilization. Identification of the threat is measured using polls that ask the respondents to indicate the most important problem (henceforth MIP) and their level of concern about a terrorist attack. Support for mobilization is measured as level of support for torture against terrorists. This data is used to tentatively relate audience attitudes and trends in framing across the sixteen-year period.

5.3.1 Data

Poll data was acquired from the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research using broad search queries to get a comprehensive list of question-response pairs.⁴⁸ Table 5.4 summarizes the data size for each group. All polls underwent similar preparation for analysis, including converting responses to a binary structure where relevant and discarding uninformative and neutral responses (e.g., “Don’t know” or “No answer”).

⁴⁸ The following search query was used to return all terrorism related poll questions and responses: `terrori! OR gwot OR "war on terror" OR "overseas contingency operation"`. A second query was used to obtain polls related to torture and interrogation: `tortur OR interrogat`

Polls frequently presented response options using a likert scale or other ordinal structure. For example, the following question and response options were frequently used in polls conducted by the Pew Research Center measuring attack concern:

How worried are you that there will soon be another terrorist attack in the United States?...Very worried, somewhat worried, not too worried, not at all worried

To standardize different question-response pairs and make them compatible with each other, these responses were recoded from a 4-point scale (*very worried, somewhat worried, not too worried, not at all worried*) to binary responses (*worried, not worried*). The percentages for the upper half of options (*very worried* and *somewhat worried*) were summed to create a *worried* measure, while the bottom half (*not too worried, not at all worried*) were summed to produce a *not worried* measure.⁴⁹ Similar recoding was applied to all poll questions that had more than two response options. Noncommittal and neutral responses (e.g., “Don’t know”, “No opinion”, or “Refused”) were removed.⁵⁰

Table 5.4 Public Opinion Data Summary

	Number of poll questions	Average sample size
<i>Identification</i>		
MIP	311	1117.69
Attack Concern	86	1786.52
<i>Mobilization</i>		
Torture Support	114	1126.26

⁴⁹ This method for collapsing responses makes different data more uniform; it also follows Gronke et al.’s (2010) analysis of disparate public opinion data on torture (who attribute this method to Pew People and Press director Andrew Kohut).

⁵⁰ When an odd number of substantive response options were provided, the middle value was also removed to ensure a balanced binary structure.

5.3.2 Stage of Identification: Audience Assessment of Threat

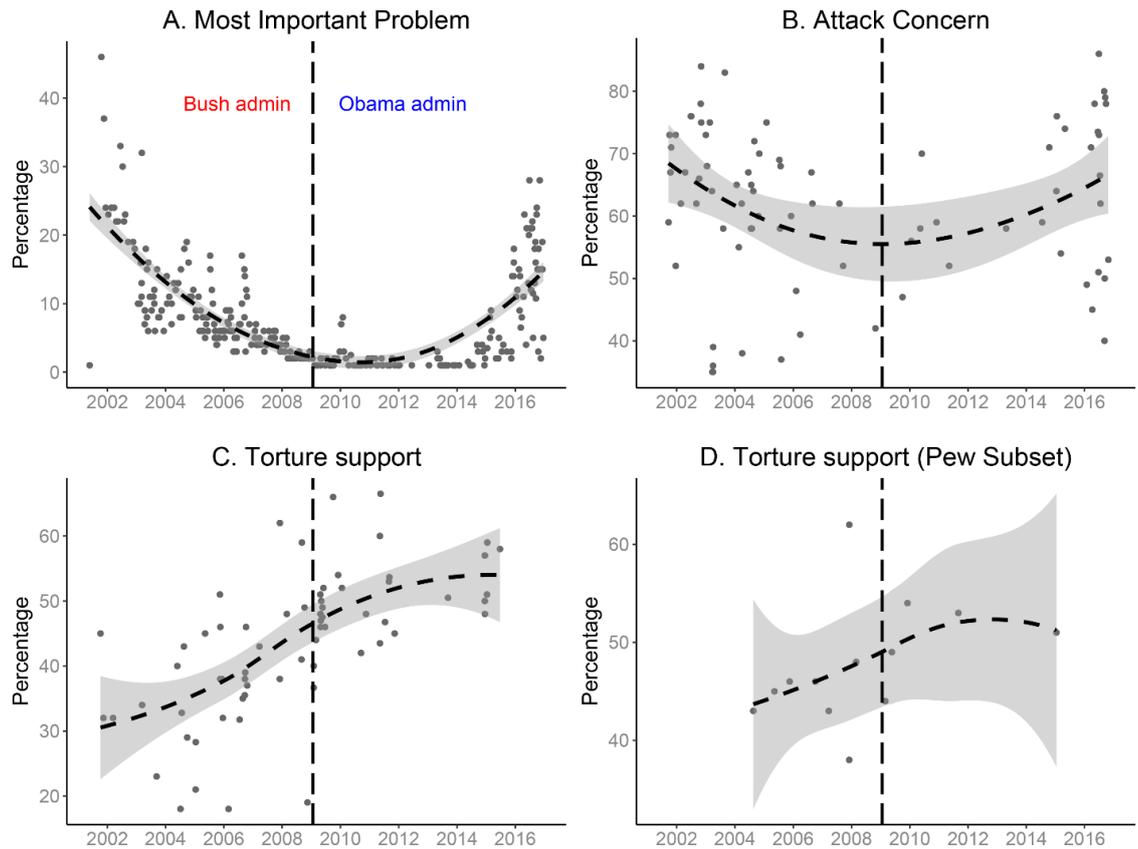
The MIP class of polls asked respondents to indicate what they perceived to be the most important problem. With subtle variations in wording across polls, the question was generally framed as⁵¹:

What do you think is the most important problem facing this country today?

Figure 5.7A shows the percentage of individuals that selected terrorism as the most important problem (dots) as well as a loess smoothed curve of this data (dashed line) over sixteen years. Terrorism as the MIP peaks soon after September 11, 2001, and then begins to decline, particularly in the years surrounding the 2008 financial crisis. It remains low until 2014, where it begins to increase in response to worldwide terror attacks, but still remains below its 2001 peak. Public perception of terrorism as the most important problem trends closely with cable news coverage and, to a lesser extent, political elite invocations of the threat frame (figure 5.6). As with the prevalence of the threat frame, there was a general decline in the attribution of most important problem to terrorism before an uptick beginning in 2012 for cable news. While this does not reveal anything about the differential framing effects of different press/political actors on audience attitudes, it suggests an alignment between the public and cable news. Political elite invocations of the threat frame, on the other hand, show a weaker alignment with public threat perceptions in the later years of analysis.

⁵¹ Previous research has found that “most responses to ‘the most important problem’ (MIP) question are generally not affected by wording changes” (Soroka, 2002: 271; see also Smith, 1985).

Figure 5.7 Public Opinion on Terrorism and Torture, 2001-2016 Quarterly



Note: Scatter points represent individual poll results and dashed lines represent loess smoothed curves. Shaded region represents the 95% confidence interval.

To increase confidence in these assessments, an additional measure of threat identification was analyzed. With subtle variations in wording, this second set of polls typically asked respondents:

How worried are you that there will soon be another terrorist attack in the United States?...Very worried, somewhat worried, not too worried, not at all worried

Figure 5.7B shows the percent of respondents who indicated some level of anxiety (e.g., *very worried* or *somewhat worried*). Concern over the possibility of a terrorist attack in the US follows a U-shaped pattern similar to the identification of terrorism as the MIP. While responses largely varied over time, the smoothed line suggests that anxiety about an attack was high soon after 9/11, but declined in the mid-2000s, before

again reversing course and rising through the early 2010s. The responses suggest that the audience was more anxious about terrorism than news coverage and MIP polls reflected. As with the MIP polls, there are notable dips in public anxiety near the economic crisis of 2008 – this is expected as attention and anxiety largely shifted toward the economy. However, concern about an imminent attack bounced back soon afterward and stayed relatively high.⁵²

Both sets of threat identification polls show a strong alignment with cable news, but less alignment with the *Times* and political elites. Again, CNN, Fox News and MSNBC showed similar U-shaped patterns in their coverage of the threat frame (figure 5.6), with high coverage soon after 9/11, and a general decline until 2012 before bouncing back. Public perceptions of the threat of terrorism then appear to be strongly related to cable news media coverage, and less so with political elites. This relationship may reflect two underlying mechanisms at work: first, cable news, as a televisual medium, is naturally more prone to sensationalist content. The ability to show dramatic visuals of terrorist attacks and their aftermath offers cable news actors an opportunity to attract a wider audience. Second, as discussed in Chapter 2, emotive rhetoric and fear-inducing coverage can produce strong framing effects (Gadarian, 2010), as evidenced by both sets of polls discussed here. The heightened use of such rhetoric and emotive visuals in cable news (and the lack of it in the comparably dispassionate and measured *Times* or political discourse) suggests a logical relationship between public threat perceptions and cable media coverage.

5.3.3 Stage of Mobilization: Audience Assessment of Exceptional Measures

Against the backdrop of shifting threat perceptions, audience acceptance/rejection of exceptional measures was assessed using polls that asked respondents to indicate whether they thought torture was justified or unjustified when used against suspected terrorists. The typical question read:

⁵² The divergence from the MIP may be due to the latter's measurement of what individuals consider to be the *most* important problem. With the memory of 9/11 fading and a lack of other large-scale terrorist attacks, relative concern for terrorism declined. The 2008 economic collapse further replaced terrorism with the economy as the primary concern. However, terrorism remained a salient concern, if not the *most* important one, as evidenced by figure 5.7B.

Do you think the use of torture against suspected terrorists in order to gain important information can often be justified, sometimes be justified, rarely be justified, or never be justified?

Again, for uniformity and following the precedent set by Gronke et al.'s (2010) seminal discussion on American torture attitudes, polls were recoded and collapsed into two possible outcomes: *support torture* and *oppose torture*. In the example question above, those that selected *often justified* and *sometimes justified* were collapsed into a single *support torture* variable, and the original *rarely justified* and *never justified* responses were combined into a single *oppose torture* measure.

Figure 5.7C plots the percentage of individuals that indicated support for torture (dots) as well as a loess smoothed curve of this data (dashed line) over sixteen years. Support for torture generally increased over time. Given the myriad ways to frame poll questions on torture and the potential for this to bias responses (Blauwkamp et al., 2018), eleven polls conducted by the Pew Research Center (in which the same question was asked every time) are presented in isolation in figure 5.7D. The Pew data matches the upward trend seen in the composite data, and notably shows a slim majority preference for torture from late 2009 through 2015. Even when threat perception and the prevalence of the threat frame was low, support for torture increased, indicating during certain periods an unusual rise in support for exceptional measures against a diminishing sense of threat.

Looking at specific periods, pre-Abu Ghraib support for torture was low, as expected. Torture and interrogation was only minimally part of public discourse at that time, and had not yet become a salient feature of the terrorism securitization. Nonetheless, early allegations by Amnesty International and the ICRC of torture at Guantanamo Bay and extraordinary rendition of prisoners to countries with lax torture policies in 2002 pushed torture onto the public opinion agenda, making it a salient enough issue to poll on. During this period and throughout much of the early post-Abu Ghraib period, average support for torture remained low. This likely reflects both the public revulsion toward the Abu Ghraib images as well as a heightened identification with American liberal democratic values as a counterreaction to torture allegations. Support begins to rise 2006 onward, eventually surpassing an average of 50% during the Obama administration's time in office.

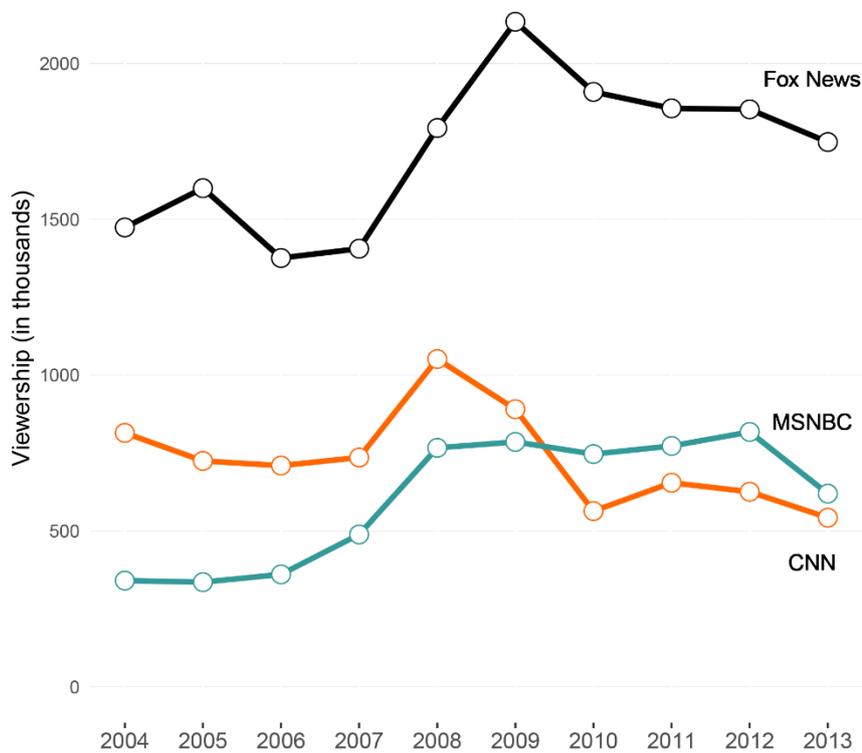
Relationships between polls and media/political frames should be read with caution, given the diversity of polling methods, and framing effects in poll questions (Blauwkamp et al., 2018). Still spikes and periods of high variance in public support for torture coincide with or lag closely behind increased coverage of both frames by all four press actors, suggesting a strong relationship between attitudes and media frames. For example, both Fox News and MSNBC covered the securitizing frame at its highest annual rate in 2005, 2009 and 2011.⁵³ In all three of these years, torture support exceeded 50% – in fact 2009 and 2011 had the highest levels of support for torture, at 66% and 66.5% respectively. The year 2009 also marked the highest annual coverage rate of the securitizing frame for all press actors and presidential elites. Still, low coverage of both frames in 2015 did little to dislodge public support – which reached 59% – suggesting that previous coverage of securitizing frames had created enough momentum to sustain support for torture.

In general, the upward trend in support for exceptional measures suggests a strong relationship between aggregate public opinion and Fox News coverage of the securitizing frame, providing some confirmatory evidence of framing effects predictors discussed in Chapter 2. Both aggregate as well as time-series data suggest that Fox News preferred the securitizing frame, adhering to the “sine qua non” of successful framing: repetition and magnitude. Even though MSNBC provided a sharp counterargument in both magnitude and valence – with a score of 1724 desecuritizing frames against Fox News’ 664 securitizing frames in both news sources’ most active period, the second quarter of 2009 – public support for exceptional measures continued to rise. While this lends some support to the negativity bias that previous research on frame valence has found (frames that emphasize threats and danger are more likely to be effective), it contradicts the claim that frame magnitude influences frame effectiveness. The MSNBC desecuritizing frame was more than double Fox News’ securitizing frame, but seems to have had little overall impact on public support for torture. A likely explanation for this is variation in audience sizes: a 2014 Pew study found that Fox News had maintained the largest prime-time audience since 2002, with 1.7 million viewers in 2013 – “a bigger audience than CNN, MSNBC, and HLN [Headline News] combined” (Holcomb, 2014). Figure 5.8 demonstrates the extent of Fox News’ leadership over its competitors. While MSNBC may have covered the

⁵³ See Appendix C for annual rates.

deseuritizing frame over twice as much as Fox News covered the securitizing frame, Fox News reached almost three times the audience of MSNBC. Both framing theorists (e.g., Edwards, 1990; Entman, 1989, 2004; Page et al., 1987) and Copenhagen School scholars alike argue that popularity and source credibility – or “the social conditions regarding the position of authority for the securitizing actor” (Buzan et al., 1998: 33) – are important factors in frame effectiveness. Based on these criteria then, Fox News was able to reach a more critical mass in the framing competition.

Figure 5.8 Cable News Prime-Time Viewership



Note: Each of the three sets of points represents the audience size for different cable news actors. Data was only available for the years 2004 through 2013. Source: Pew Research Center (Holcomb, 2014).

Other factors also explain the effectiveness of Fox News. Even though the magnitude of the Fox News securitizing frame was relatively low compared to, for example, CNN and MSNBC prior to 2009, it eventually became the “loudest” and most consistent voice. From late 2009 to late 2014, Fox News provided the most salient discussion of either frame relative to past coverage, emphasizing the securitizing frame. CNN covered the securitizing and deseuritizing frames at volumes comparable to Fox

News, but its position was ambiguous. In the absence of salient desecuritizing competition to offset Fox News' securitizing frame, support for torture thrived. Because framing effects are weakened when competing frames are discussed simultaneously (Druckman, 2004; Sniderman & Theriault, 2004), CNN was unable to offset the imbalanced Fox News coverage. Fox News' emphasis on the securitizing frame (when the desecuritizing frame was less salient) also benefitted from cultural congruence. Support for torture was already increasing (and briefly in the majority) – the securitizing frame only further validated audience preferences. As support began increasing, desecuritizing frames – particularly ones that questioned the morality of torture – may have been rejected by an audience seeking to avoid emotional and cognitive dissonance. The resilience of torture support even in the absence of a strong securitizing frame in 2015 underscores this cultural shift.

Presidential elite rhetoric, similarly, had little obvious influence on support for torture: there were few quarters in which securitizing rhetoric exceeded desecuritizing rhetoric, and aggregate coverage favored the desecuritizing frame: still, torture support continued to rise. Congressional rhetoric, on the other hand, may have played a larger role in driving attitudes – its coverage became increasingly securitizing from one administration to the next, and thus appears to align with public support for torture. Still, as previously discussed, its coverage of both frames was significantly lower during the Obama years, when support continued to grow. Attention to political elites nonetheless merits further analysis and is more closely inspected in the next section.

5.3.4 Summary of Longitudinal Aggregate-Level Public Opinion Analysis

The longitudinal analysis demonstrates from a variety of vantage points that news media may have had a (de)securitizing effect, independently of political elites, in the securitization of terrorism. Fox News and MSNBC stand out because of their polarizing employment of (de)securitizing frames; the *New York Times* also staked out a position during the Obama years. Integrating these insights with public opinion data, it seems MSNBC's dominance in frame magnitude was unable to offset Fox News' audience reach, cultural congruence, frame coherence and negative news advantage. Thus the longitudinal audience and content analyses provide strong evidence that Fox News had a securitizing effect, challenging orthodox perceptions of media as simply a mouthpiece for political elites. Still, the evidence does not discount the influence of congressional rhetoric on attitudes: there is compelling evidence that media may have

played a role in the securitization of terrorism, but a direct link has yet to be made. The data presented thus far also obscure the impact of frames on attitudes at the individual level, particularly when controlling for other drivers of torture support. These limitations are addressed next.

5.4 Cross-Sectional Individual-Level Public Opinion Analysis

While the content analysis demonstrated a gap in media and political elite discourse in the framing of *torture* and *interrogation*, this section uses data from the 2012 and 2016 American National Election Studies (ANES) nationally-representative surveys to estimate whether a similar gap exists in individual attitudes. It links attitudes directly to media sources at two specific points in time to make the relationship between framing and attitudes more explicit. The datasets are used to estimate linear regression models and determine if torture attitudes mirror the frames most frequently employed by the sources respondents pay attention to, while controlling for other predictors of torture support. The dependent variable in the model is derived from responses to the following question:

Do you FAVOR, OPPOSE, or NEITHER FAVOR NOR OPPOSE the U.S. government torturing people, who are suspected of being terrorists, to try to get information?

Respondents indicated the severity (*a great deal, moderately, or a little*) of support or opposition, producing a 7-point scale in which higher values of the dependent variable indicated increased levels of support for torture.

5.4.1 Independent Variables

The independent variables include both the potential framing effect variables – measured as attention to media and political elites – as well as several control variables identified in the literature as contributors to torture preferences. These include demographic variables and other security-specific variables.

5.4.1.1 Framing Effect Variables

Respondents indicated their attention to the *New York Times*, and programs from several television networks. The programs of interest included in the models here are

Anderson Cooper 360°, *O'Reilly Factor*, *Chris Matthews Show* (2012)⁵⁴ and the *Rachel Maddow Show* (2016). Each of these represents prominent shows that are typical in commentary of their respective networks and are thus used as proxy variables for measuring attention to CNN, Fox News and MSNBC. Respondents were asked to select the programs or content they consume regularly. For each item, the response was 1 if the respondent selected it and 0 otherwise.

Similarly, attention to political elites was measured using responses to the following question:

How often do you pay attention to what's going on in government and politics?

The available responses were recoded for this survey to reflect, in congruence with media variables, that higher values indicate greater attention: 1 – *Never*; 2 – *Some of the time*; 3 – *About half the time*; 4 – *Most of the time*; 5 – *All the time*.

5.4.1.2 Security Variables

Fear (likely attack)

Steele (2017) argues that public insecurity drives support for torture, because people convince themselves that torture works and is justified. Similarly, Stam, Von Hagen-Jamar, and Worthington (2012: 61) find a correlation between fear – defined as “the belief that the world is a dangerous place” – and support for hawkish foreign policies (see also Nacos, Bloch-Elkon, & Shapiro, 2007). They concede that the correlation is imperfect and limited because it ignores other variables. The multivariate models here address this shortcoming and determine whether a perception of the world as a dangerous place affects support for torture when controlling for other variables. Other studies (Davis & Silver, 2004; Huddy, Feldman, Taber, & Lahav, 2005) have found that higher threat perceptions of a future terrorist attack in the US are more likely to

⁵⁴ The 2012 ANES survey specifically mentioned *Chris Matthews Show*, Chris Matthews' program on NBC which he hosted in parallel to his tenure on MSNBC's *Hardball with Chris Matthews*. Since the hosts were the same, and since NBC News and MSNBC are nearly ideologically identical (Pew Research Center, 2014a), and no other MSNBC programs were offered in the 2012 dataset, the *Chris Matthews Show* is used as a proxy for MSNBC.

lead to support for antiterrorism policies like “a curtailment of civil liberties” (Huddy et al., 2005: 604). Nisbet and Shanahan (2004) find that heavy consumption of television news increases terrorism threat perceptions, thus motivating the inclusion of a variable to control for individual threat anxieties. Directly related to the threat in focus here, the following question is used to measure respondents’ fear: “During the next 12 months, how likely is it that there will be a terrorist attack in the United States that kills 100 or more people?” Responses are recoded from the original ANES format and range from 1 – *Not at all likely* to 5 – *Extremely likely*.

Military Experience

Because military experience incurs socialization toward and desensitization from violence, torture might appear to be less reprehensible and more tolerable (Beckham, Moore, & Reynolds, 2000; Jakupcak et al., 2007) to veterans and service members. But the fear of reciprocity as well as firsthand experience of the costs associated with violence (e.g., depression, guilt, and post-traumatic stress disorder) should motivate caution otherwise inaccessible to civilians (Gronke et al., 2010; Wallace, 2014: 502). Wallace (2014) and Nincic and Ramos (2011), however, find that when respondents were told that other side is using torture, they were not more or less likely to support torture. Other competing findings show that active duty soldiers serving in Iraq opposed torture (Gronke et al., 2010); veterans are likely to support torture (Wallace, 2014); and that there is no difference between veterans and non-veterans (Richards, Morrill, & Anderson, 2012). These studies suffer some limitations: Gronke et al.’s (2010) respondents are active servicemen with direct experience in Iraq, while Wallace’s (2014) experiment and Richard et al.’s (2012) opinion survey focus on veterans and civilians, excluding active duty servicemen. The analysis employed here considers all respondents with both active and previous military service. A dummy variable is coded 1 for respondents with military experience, and 0 otherwise.

Retributiveness (Support for Death Penalty)

In addition to intelligence-gathering or utilitarian functions, torture has a potential retributive function: a detainee’s criminal past or possible connection to terrorism justifies punishment, even in the form of torture. Carlsmith and Sood (2009: 191) also find that “the desire for harsh interrogation is largely isomorphic with the desire to punish” and not the “perceived effectiveness” of the method used. The analysis below follows previous research (e.g., Liberman, 2006; Liberman, 2007) and uses attitudes

toward death penalty as a proxy to control for retributiveness as a predictor of torture support. A dummy variable is coded as 1 if the respondent favors the death penalty and 0 otherwise.

5.4.1.3 General Demographic Variables

Several demographic variables are included as controls. These variables have been identified in the existing literature as being statistically significant predictors of support for torture.

Race

Hertel, Scruggs, and Heidkamp (2009: 451) find that “non-whites are 2.28 times more likely than whites to say that torture is an inviolable human right,” suggesting that race may have an influence on torture support. They argue that non-dominant groups (i.e., non-whites and females) that are more vulnerable to becoming victims of human rights abuses or violence are driven by self-interest and empathy to oppose torture. Richards et al. (2012) also confirm in their opinion survey analysis that whites are more likely to support torture than non-whites. Still, Wallace (2014) and Liberman (2013) find that race is not a statistically insignificant predictor of torture support. To control for any possible influence, race is included in the models below. Following Hertel et al. (2009), the race variable used here is coded 1 for *White Non-Hispanics*, and 0 for all other categories.

Income

Gronke et al. (2010) suggest that worsening economic conditions at the time of their study led to declines in aggregate opposition to torture. They cite Miller’s (2010) finding that per capita income and opposition to torture are directly related; and Hafner-Burton and Ron’s (2009) related finding that human rights norms receive greater support as per capita income increases. Mayer and Armor (2012), however, find that at the individual level, higher incomes predict support for torture. These competing effects are explored and controlled for in the models presented below. Annual income is measured using a 28-point scale, where higher values indicate higher income.

Region of Residence

While some research suggests that residents of the American South tend to be more hawkish (Gartner, Segura, & Barratt, 2004; Nisbett & Cohen, 1996), Haider-Markel and Vieux (2008) find no statistically significant relationship between region of residence and support for torture. Still, given the link to hawkishness, a dummy variable is coded as 1 for respondents residing in the South (Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Washington DC, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia or West Virginia); all other states are coded as 0.

Gender

Existing evidence has yielded mixed results for the effect of gender on torture attitudes. Some research shows women are more likely to support hawkish foreign policies, including torture (Stam et al., 2012: 63-64) and the use of force (Eichenberg, 2003: 137), and that women “have a higher perception of the world as a dangerous place” (Stam et al., 2012: 63), making them more likely to support the use of force when the US is threatened. Other research suggests that women are less likely to support torture for a variety of reasons (Flavin & Nickerson, 2009; Haider-Markel & Vieux, 2008; Hertel et al., 2009; Richards et al., 2012; Wallace, 2014; Wemlinger, 2014). Hertel et al. (2009) suggest that sympathy for marginalized groups intensifies women’s support for human rights. Aggressive policies like torture also conflict with traditional anti-violence socialization (Smith, 1984; Wemlinger, 2014) or an “ethic of caring and nurturance that translates into sympathy for the disadvantaged” (Cook & Wilcox, 1991: 1111). Women are also likelier to lean Democratic (Kaufmann & Petrocik, 1999; Norrander, 1999) and liberal (Norrander & Wilcox, 2008) – both affiliations linked to anti-torture Self identities. More generally, other studies have found that women are less aggressive and less supportive of using force in foreign policy (Shapiro & Mahajan, 1986; Wilcox, Hewitt, & Allsop, 1996). In the models below, a dummy variable is coded 1 for *females* and 0 for *males*.

Political ideology

The overwhelming consensus in the vast literature linking political ideology to torture attitudes is that conservatives are likelier to support torture than liberals (Flavin & Nickerson, 2009; Haider-Markel & Vieux, 2008; Hertel et al., 2009; Malka & Soto, 2011; Mayer & Armor, 2012; Wallace, 2014; Wemlinger, 2014). This finding is

compatible with research on ideological correlates with human rights attitudes and hawkishness in general – liberals are more sympathetic to human rights (e.g., Crowson, 2004; Moghaddam & Vuksanovic, 1990), while conservatives (and Republicans) lean toward hawkish foreign policies (Huddy et al., 2005; Shapiro & Bloch-Elkon, 2007). Though these are not direct measures of torture support, hawkishness and support for human rights overlap with motivations that determine torture attitudes. Political ideology is measured on a 7-point scale using the following categories: 1 – *Extremely liberal*; 2 – *Liberal*; 3 – *Slightly liberal*; 4 – *Moderate, middle of the road*; 5 – *Slightly conservative*; 6 – *Conservative*; and 7 – *Extremely conservative*.

Partisanship

There is also virtual unanimous consensus in the literature that Republicans are more likely to support torture (Crandall, Eidelman, Skitka, & Morgan, 2009; Flavin & Nickerson, 2009; Gronke et al., 2010; Haider-Markel & Vieux, 2008; Malka & Soto, 2011; Mayer & Armor, 2012; Richards et al., 2012; Wallace, 2014; Wemlinger, 2014). In agreement with the discourse analysis presented in the previous chapter, Gronke et al. (2010: 437) argue that “torture may have become a partisan symbol”. They cite a 7% contraction in opposition to torture among Republicans in World Public Opinion surveys conducted in 2004 and 2009. In addition to views on torture, Republicans are more hawkish on foreign policy, especially in response to terrorism (Huddy et al., 2005; Hurwitz & Peffley, 1987; Shapiro & Bloch-Elkon, 2007). Partisanship is measured using the ANES’ party identification 7-point summary variable, where 1 indicates *Strongly Democrat* and 7 indicates *Strongly Republican*.

Age

Existing research suggests largely agrees that younger people are more likely to support torture (e.g., Flavin & Nickerson, 2009; Haider-Markel & Vieux, 2008; Mayer & Armor, 2012; Wallace, 2014; Wemlinger, 2014). Age is measured here directly in years.

Education

Mayer and Armor (2012: 440) argue that because education is generally an indicator for support of “Miranda rights and other protections against government violations of civil liberties”, it should affect support for torture too. Specifically, higher levels of

academic completion should predict lower levels of support for torture. Along with others (e.g., Flavin & Nickerson, 2009; Wallace, 2014; Wemlinger, 2014), they find this holds true. Education is also useful here as a proxy variable for measuring political engagement – Malka and Soto (2011: 1095) note that education “tends to be correlated with more direct indicators of political engagement and to hold similar patterns of correlates as do the more direct indicators.” Education is measured here using a 16-point scale where 1 represents *Less than 1st grade* and 16 represents *Doctoral degree (for example, PHD, EDD)*.

Religion

Religiosity may have competing effects on support of torture. Emphasis on prosocial norms (Burroughs & Rindfleisch, 2002), humanitarian values, forgiveness (McCullough & Worthington Jr, 1999) and kindness suggest opposition to torture. Dubensky and Lavery (2006: 164) argue, for example, that “[m]any Christians agree that, as a matter of faith, torture is intrinsically wrong, is a sin, and an insult to God.” Christian fundamentalists’ sympathies for Israel and aversion to Islam (Mayer, 2004), however, may offset prosocial attitudes. The strong alignment between religiosity on one hand and politically conservative and Republican identification on the other hand (Claassen, Tucker, & Smith, 2015; Fiorina, Abrams, & Pope, 2006; Layman & Carmines, 1997; Layman & Green, 2006; Malka, Lelkes, Srivastava, Cohen, & Miller, 2012; Olson & Green, 2006; Unger, 2007) could also increase support for torture (Malka & Soto, 2011).⁵⁵ Because conservatism is associated with more hawkish foreign policy (Baumgartner, Francia, & Morris, 2008), religion may indirectly motivate a tough stance against potential terrorists. Religion may also stimulate us-versus-them self-conceptualizing (Hunsberger & Jackson, 2005) and thus fear or rejection of the Other, moderating natural inclinations toward forgiveness or kindness.

⁵⁵ Layman and Carmines (1997) test which of either religion or postmaterialism – both indicators of cultural conflict in politics – has a stronger effect on political preferences. They find that “while Material-Postmaterial value priorities do have some impact on American political behavior, a conceptualization of cultural conflict that takes into account the contemporary divisions between religious traditionalists on the one hand and religious liberals and secularists on the other hand fares considerably better in explaining the political orientations of the citizenry as a whole” (767). For this reason, religion – but not postmaterialism – is controlled for in the models used here.

Green (2007) finds contradictory evidence suggesting that weekly churchgoers (even Evangelicals who would most likely be associated with conservatism and Republicanism) are opposed to torture,⁵⁶ but more recent studies suggest this effect may be outdated. Mayer and Armor (2012), for example, find that Catholicism and Protestantism are statistically significant predictors of support for torture. Malka and Soto (2011) find more nuanced effects: religious individuals with higher levels of political engagement are more likely to support torture, while religious individuals with lower levels of political engagement are likelier to oppose torture.

In the models used here, religiosity is measured using responses to the question, “Do you consider religion to be an important part of your life, or not?” Affirmative responses are coded 1, while negative responses are coded 0.

Children

Haider-Markel and Vieux (2008: 14) argue that “those with younger children might be more anxious than others about a terrorist attack, and therefore be more likely to support harsh interrogation techniques.” This is particularly the case for mothers, whose concern for threats that may affect their children increases their support for hawkish policies they might have otherwise rejected. Wemlinger (2014: 118) finds that mothers, unlike non-mother females, do not differ from men in terms of opposition to torture, suggesting that having children indeed can affect foreign policy preferences. This variable is included in the models below to control for the possibility of these effects. A dummy variable is coded as 1 for respondents who indicate they have any number of children under the age of 17 and 0 otherwise.

5.4.2 Results

Table 5.5 displays the results of four linear regression models using the 2012 and 2016 ANES datasets. Two models are presented for each dataset – a baseline model that excludes the media and political attention variables, and another that includes them. Models 1 and 2 are the baseline and full models respectively for the 2012 dataset, while models 3 and 4 are the baseline and full models respectively for the 2016 dataset. The effects of media and political attention on public support for torture are discussed first;

⁵⁶ No conclusions can be drawn, however, regarding less observant individuals because of statistically insignificant results.

this is followed by a discussion of other key findings and how they relate to previous research.

Table 5.5 Support for torture (2012 and 2016)

	<i>Torture Support</i>			
	2012 (1)	2012 (2)	2016 (3)	2016 (4)
<i>Framing Effect</i>				
Attention to politics		0.006 (0.039)		-0.028 (0.060)
CNN		0.017 (0.108)		0.168 (0.142)
Fox News		0.836*** (0.114)		0.455*** (0.155)
MSNBC		-0.241* (0.143)		-0.485*** (0.173)
New York Times		-0.318*** (0.122)		-0.250** (0.119)
<i>(In)Security</i>				
Fear of likely attack	0.236*** (0.029)	0.180*** (0.042)	0.166*** (0.033)	0.079 (0.052)
Military experience	0.038 (0.084)	0.031 (0.110)	0.064 (0.112)	-0.174 (0.182)
Retributiveness	0.945*** (0.062)	0.967*** (0.087)	0.959*** (0.079)	0.935*** (0.121)
<i>General Demographic</i>				
Race (white)	-0.159** (0.063)	-0.190** (0.091)	-0.303*** (0.086)	-0.221* (0.134)
Income	0.005 (0.004)	-0.003 (0.005)	0.001 (0.005)	-0.012 (0.008)
Region (south)	0.062 (0.056)	0.030 (0.078)	-0.032 (0.071)	-0.111 (0.111)
Gender (female)	-0.220*** (0.058)	-0.277*** (0.082)	-0.081 (0.072)	-0.076 (0.111)
Political ideology	0.189*** (0.024)	0.151*** (0.035)	0.216*** (0.032)	0.158*** (0.052)
Partisanship	0.088*** (0.017)	0.081*** (0.024)	0.167*** (0.023)	0.154*** (0.037)
Age	-0.003* (0.002)	-0.007** (0.003)	-0.011*** (0.002)	-0.011*** (0.004)
Education level	-0.064*** (0.012)	-0.069*** (0.018)	-0.075*** (0.017)	-0.097*** (0.027)
Religiosity	0.094 (0.062)	0.043 (0.085)	0.136* (0.078)	0.128 (0.118)
Children	0.139** (0.065)	0.068 (0.095)	0.010 (0.079)	0.068 (0.120)
<i>Constant</i>	2.132*** (0.206)	2.876*** (0.324)	2.341*** (0.267)	3.535*** (0.465)
Observations	4,517	2,293	2,614	1,031
R ²	0.163	0.223	0.260	0.325
Adjusted R ²	0.160	0.217	0.257	0.313
Residual Std. Error	1.795 (df = 4503)	1.746 (df = 2274)	1.716 (df = 2600)	1.641 (df = 1012)
F Statistic	67.414*** (df = 13; 4503)	36.190*** (df = 18; 2274)	70.377*** (df = 13; 2600)	27.096*** (df = 18; 1012)

Note: OLS regression coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. Models 1 and 3 for each year excludes framing effect variables, while models 2 and 4 include them. Because of missing values in the ANES dataset, observations are reduced between the baseline and full models for each year.

* $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$;

5.4.2.1 Framing Effect Variables

Both models 2 and 4 show a strong alignment between news media consumption and effects on attitudes toward torture in 2012 and 2016. While the relationship does not prove causality, top-down influence assumptions from securitization theory and the cascade activation model increase confidence that attention to these news sources helped shape individual attitudes. Across both years, Fox News, MSNBC and the *New York Times* are statistically significant indicators in directions consistent with expectations from the content analysis: Fox News viewers are likelier to support torture, while MSNBC viewers and *Times* readers are likelier to oppose torture even when controlling for ideology, partisan identification, and other germane factors. These effects are consistent with expectations from the content analysis: Fox News was not only the sole actor that preferred the securitizing frame at the aggregate level, it was also the only media actor that favored the securitizing frame after 2009. MSNBC and the *Times* both promoted the desecuritizing frame at the highest relative levels across all media actors. The effects of these three news actors on individual attitudes are thus highly reflective of their coverage of the different frames.

The coefficients' magnitudes shown here also align with the content analysis. In 2012, among the news variables, Fox News had the strongest effect (over three times that of MSNBC) on individual preferences for torture, but ceded its advantage to MSNBC in 2016. Part of this difference may be explained by the different proxies used for measuring attention to MSNBC in the models: while the *Chris Matthews Show* was used as a proxy for MSNBC in 2012, the more popular MSNBC program *The Rachel Maddow Show* was used in 2016.⁵⁷ Maddow's more popular show reached a wider

⁵⁷ A variable for Maddow's show was not available in the 2012 dataset. Maddow's show was used in the 2016 models, because its popularity (Katz, 2016) suggests it was more representative of MSNBC's framing effects on the public. A separate regression model was run substituting Chris Matthews' MSNBC show (*Hardball with Chris Matthews*) with Maddow's show in the 2016 model. In this new model (see model 8 in Appendix B), *Hardball with Chris Matthews* was not a statistically significant predictor of support in 2016. Given the strong effect of Maddow's program in 2016, it is likely then that

audience, increasing its potential for producing framing effects at the individual level consistent with MSNBC's overall preferred frame. Still, Fox News' high coefficient in 2012 reflects its dominance in cable viewership and persistent coverage of the securitizing frame leading up to 2012 – a period when MSNBC (and other sources) were less active in their coverage of the debate (see figure 5.4). The 2014 Senate Intelligence Committee Report revived that debate within media, an outcome evidenced by the narrowing disparity of magnitudes between MSNBC and Fox News in the 2016 model. MSNBC even overtakes Fox News in terms of effect size, reflecting the disparity in each outlet's frame coverage leading up to 2016: from 2013 to 2016, MSNBC covered the desecuritizing frame 2.42 times as much as it covered the securitizing frame; in the same time period, Fox News covered the securitizing frame only 1.25 times as much as it covered the desecuritizing frame. While both outlets favored different frames, MSNBC's coverage was much more skewed than Fox News' relatively more mixed (and thus ambiguous) coverage; this likely diluted Fox News' framing effect between 2012 and 2016. Still, these effects are confined to the individual level; at the aggregate level, Fox News commanded a larger audience than MSNBC, resulting in public opinion, more broadly aligning with the former's securitizing frame.

The *Times* is statistically significant and predicts opposition to torture in both years. This reflects the *Times*' preference for the desecuritizing frame during the Obama administrations. Specifically, the content analysis revealed that after fairly mixed coverage since 2001, the *Times* began to heavily favor the desecuritizing frame in beginning 2011. This later shift appears to have motivated readers' attitudes toward torture. Moreover, as the only print news source measured in the models, the *Times*' statistical significance suggests that framing effects are not exclusive to cable news platforms – which allow for lengthier commentary and debate formats – but extends to the more objective, terse and dispassionate newspaper format – again, this assumes that influence flows from media to audience. In addition to asserting the continued impact and relevance of print news in driving attitudes, this increases confidence that the underlying motivator of security attitudes is framing itself rather than idiosyncrasies of television, such as its stimulating visual components.

it would have also had a statistically significant and negative effect on torture support in 2012 had it been available in the dataset.

In neither year is attention to CNN a statistically significant predictor for torture. Even when substituting *Anderson Cooper 360* with a different CNN program, *Erin Burnett Outfront*, CNN viewership remains statistically insignificant (see model 7 in Appendix B). This is unsurprising and aligns with expectations from the content analysis: CNN was the most neutral actor throughout the Obama administration's tenure. Despite having the most voluminous coverage, it showed no overwhelming preference for either frame, thus failing to produce framing effects. This reflects (and reinforces) the theory that frame moderation – in this case, CNN's coverage of both securitizing and desecuritizing frames in near equal proportions – reduces framing effects.

Like CNN, political attention did not produce a statistically significant effect in either model, suggesting that political elite discourse may have had a less powerful effect on respondents' attitudes toward torture than press actors. Certainly survey respondents may have conflated their attention to politics with attention to news sources – in which case, the news variables may have been capturing some of the effect of exposure to political elite discourse. To check for this, a separate set of regressions were estimated where variables for the press actors were removed (see models 5 and 6 in Appendix B). While political attention became a positive and statistically significant predictor of torture support in 2012, it remained insignificant in 2016. This reduces confidence that political elites had no effect in 2012, but reinforces the finding that media securitization effects were more likely, since the media variables were statistically significant in the complete models. Accepting that exposure to political elite discourse cannot be entirely disentangled from exposure to media sources, the results in table 5.5 at least show that through mediation, press actors can emphasize, select and spin elite discourse significantly enough to produce attitudinal differences.

To the extent that “attention to politics” is an indicator of exposure to political elite discourse (even if it is an imperfect indicator as discussed above), however, its statistical insignificance in the models likely reflects the lack of messaging on the torture debate among political elites: the content and discourse analysis showed that presidential elites and Congress were much less engaged than they were during the Bush administration, allowing press actors to fill the discursive void. Another explanation for the lack of political elite framing effects may be that the Obama administration's overall preference for the desecuritizing frame offset Congress' stronger securitizing frame. In other words, mixed signals from different branches of

political elites could have had a moderating effect on each other. Because the ANES datasets do not distinguish attention to Congress from attention to presidential elites, it is impossible to isolate the effects of each and test this possibility. The ambiguity in political discourse, nonetheless, may have driven individuals to derive their cues from less ambiguous news actors to resolve the dissonance.

5.4.2.2 Security Variables

The models indicate that insecurity drives support for exceptional measures. Anxiety over terrorism – measured here as the likelihood of a terrorist attack in the next year – was a statistically significant predictor of torture opinion in both 2012 models and in the 2016 baseline model. This finding is somewhat consistent with the findings from the longitudinal public opinion analysis which showed that concern about an attack (figure 5.7B) began to rise after 2008, coinciding to some degree with the rise in public support for torture. Still, once news and political attention are introduced into the 2016 model, anxiety becomes insignificant, suggesting that press framing may have been more influential on support for exceptional measures than identification of the threat itself. The difference between the 2012 and 2016 complete models suggests that perhaps, by 2016, torture preferences had become embedded in individual ideology above and beyond the link to terrorism.

Contradicting some previous research (e.g., Gronke et al., 2010; Wallace, 2014), the models show that military experience has no effect on torture attitudes. This may reflect a broader shift in military attitudes over time; the effect of collapsing active duty personnel and veterans into a single category; or an offset of competing reciprocity concerns where some respondents were willing to use torture knowing that it was used against American soldiers, while others proactively rejected torture for fear that it may be used against Americans in the future. Either way, these results present an opportunity for further research between military experience – active duty and veteran – and support for exceptional measures. Finally, the link between torture and retributiveness – which is positive and statistically significant across all four models – corroborates previous findings.

5.4.2.3 General Demographic Variables

For the most part, demographic variables align with expectations. Support for torture is strongly linked with lesser educated, younger, Republican and conservative males. These findings are largely in line with previous literature. A novel finding, however, is that political identification and media were simultaneously strong predictors of support across all models, showing that the effects of the latter reached beyond political identification. In other words, news actors had a statistically significant effect even when controlling for party identification and ideology location, suggesting that framing effects occupy a separate construct from political affiliation. Despite the strong political leanings of both Fox News and MSNBC, they continued to have an effect when political identity was controlled for.

One notable divergence from existing literature is the finding in this study that whites are less likely to support torture – this holds true even in baseline models before the key theoretical variables are included. This either reflects a shift in demographics since earlier studies, or the effects of a more nuanced model that controls for factors neglected in previous research. Nonetheless, given the disparity between these results and findings elsewhere, future research should explore more deeply the link between race and support for torture.

5.4.3 Summary of Cross-Sectional Individual-Level Public Opinion Analysis

The linear regression models confirm a strong association between attention to key press actors and torture attitudes. Specifically, at the individual level, torture attitudes generally reflect the frames used most frequently by the information sources consumed. Not only is there a statistically significant effect for Fox News, MSNBC and the *Times*, the direction of effects is consistent with expectations from the content analysis: Fox News is the lone actor that aligns with pro-torture attitudes while MSNBC and the *Times* align with anti-torture attitudes. The strength of framing effects produced by Fox News vis-à-vis MSNBC from 2012 to 2016 also mirrors the content analysis: Fox News became less skewed in its coverage between those years, while MSNBC became more skewed. To the extent that the alignment is indicative of a top-down effect, the models consequently show Fox News' framing effects moderate over time while MSNBC's framing effects become more potent. Attention to CNN has no statistically significant effect, suggesting that it had a weaker framing effect on torture attitudes.

Previous framing effects research suggests that CNN's mixed (and thus incoherent) coverage and ambiguity is the likely reason for its lack of effect. While exposure to political elite discourse cannot be entirely disentangled, the models at least demonstrate that "attention to politics" similarly has no statistically significant effect on torture attitudes, reflecting both the silencing among political elites as well as the mixed signals from different branches of government.

5.5 Conclusion

Building on the discourse analysis from the previous chapter, this chapter demonstrated how securitizing and desecuritizing frames manufactured by political elites were employed by the press. An analysis of public opinion – both at the aggregate and individual level – illustrated the influence that both sets of actors may have had on (de)securitizing the threat of terrorism through the use of oppositional basic discourses on exceptional measures. This section presents a summary of results and select theoretical and empirical implications of the torture debate within terrorism. A more comprehensive discussion of implications is relegated to the concluding chapter.

The content analysis demonstrated that press actors acted independently of political elites when framing the torture debate within terrorism discourse. Fox News, MSNBC and the *New York Times* stood out as especially interesting because of their preferences for specific frames. Fox News prioritized the securitizing frame throughout the sixteen years, but also was the only actor to increase its coverage of the securitizing frame between the two presidential administrations. MSNBC did the same for the desecuritizing frame, covering it largely throughout the entire analysis. While the *Times* was fairly balanced and ambiguous in its coverage during the Bush administration, it privileged the desecuritizing frame when political elites (under Obama) became less engaged. CNN, on the other hand, remained ambiguous and balanced in its coverage throughout the entire sixteen years. Presidential and congressional elites showed conflicting results, but most importantly, both showed a significant disengagement from the torture debate under the Obama administration. These results from the content analysis led to some preliminary expectations: Fox News viewership should have a securitizing effect, while MSNBC viewership and the *Times* readership should have a desecuritizing effect. The effects of CNN viewership and attention to political elites were expected to be minimal, if present at all. Another significant finding in this

section was that, while the press frequently acted independently of political elites in its coverage of the torture debate, press actors also acted differently from each other.

The audience was introduced in the following section, first at the aggregate level, and next at the individual, cross-sectional level. The first set of data revealed that public tolerance of torture increased over time – particularly by 2009 (the first year of Obama’s presidency), a majority of Americans found torture to be justifiable. Considering that Fox News commanded the largest audience among its competitor news organizations, aggregate public opinion appeared to follow Fox News. This relationship was made more explicit in the individual-level analysis, which showed that respondents’ attitudes towards torture reflected the frames that they were most exposed to. This was especially true for audiences of Fox News, MSNBC and the *Times*. Again, even though MSNBC and the *Times* aligned with desecuritizing effects at the individual level, Fox News’ wide viewership appears to have sustained overall support for torture at the aggregate level. Attention to politics had no discernible relationship with torture attitudes, thus increasing confidence that news outlets were more influential (de)securitizing actors than political elites in framing the torture debate to audiences. Certainly the models cannot fully account for causality, but theory-driven top-down assumptions suggest that elite frames likely influenced attitudes. From a variety of vantage points, then, the torture debate demonstrates that press actors not only played an independent role in (de)securitization, but that they may have exceeded political elites in producing framing effects.

By cataloging the gradual acceptance of such an extreme measure, this case study has demonstrated its analytical utility in understanding how language can legitimize even the illegal in security climates. The results generally demonstrate that terrorism remained a salient and highly securitized threat through 2016, and that the press has been an integral purveyor of pro- and anti-torture messaging. Importantly, the press has buoyed the torture debate even as political elites have disengaged from it, pointing to the pivotal role of the former in driving an important component of terrorism discourse. At least in the case of torture, the press may have become more effective than political elites in shaping attitudes. Certainly, political elites played a role in the securitization process by setting the initial boundaries of permissible discourse – Bush administration officials gave meaning to the *torture* and *interrogation* frames – but as these dichotomous frames became institutionalized in mainstream discourse, political elites

forfeited their framing effect advantage to the press. While this analysis has focused on one domain of overall terrorism discourse – namely, torture – the press may be having similar impacts in other areas, suggesting that any political effort to deescalate the threat of terrorism will necessitate cooperation with (or at least strategizing around) influential news actors.

The case study also contributes to framing effects research. Comparing different measures of frame effectiveness – volume, frame rate, and ratio of oppositional frames – in a real-world scenario over a sixteen-year period reveals what strategies matters in the long-term for news actors. CNN was unable to produce significant framing effects despite having the largest overall volume of coverage of either frame. In the torture debate, the *ratio* of coverage of oppositional frames determined which actor(s) would lead in a competitive framing environment. While magnitude may be important in framing effects, it is severely moderated by the strength and co-occurrence of competing frames. In other words, *relative* magnitude matters most. Despite the *Times*, MSNBC and Fox News all having lower volumes of coverage than CNN, their relative coverage of preferred frames strengthened their framing effects; conversely, CNN's more balanced coverage may have inspired its failure to produce framing effects.

Finally, the analysis of the securitization of terrorism has demonstrated how powerful the press is as an agent in international relations and international security. Press actors gained a competitive edge in shaping public opinion when political elites stepped away from the debate. In the specific case of torture, Jackson (2007) argues that the social legitimation of torture was not inevitable: "Discourses are never completely hegemonic or consistent, and must be continuously defended and reproduced in order to remain dominant" (368). While this point explains Fox News' competitive edge at the aggregate level – Fox News consistently promoted the securitizing frame – it also points to a limitation of this case study. The individual-level analysis focused on two years, 2012 and 2016, during which political elites were less active. These results may still be generalizable – especially given that the 2014 Senate report on torture was produced in between these years and led to a spike in political elite messaging – but the comparison of vocal and less vocal actors clouds a complete understanding of what can occur in a more competitive context. The disengagement of political elites during the Obama administration created conditions under which Fox News could promote the securitizing frame with little opposition – but can the press command significant levels

of influence on issues actively debated by political elites? Having shown in this chapter one condition under which the press can lead in framing effects, the next case study explores how securitization unfolds in a more competitive discursive context.

Chapter 6: Some Are Evil: Mixed Political Elite Discourse on Unauthorized Immigration

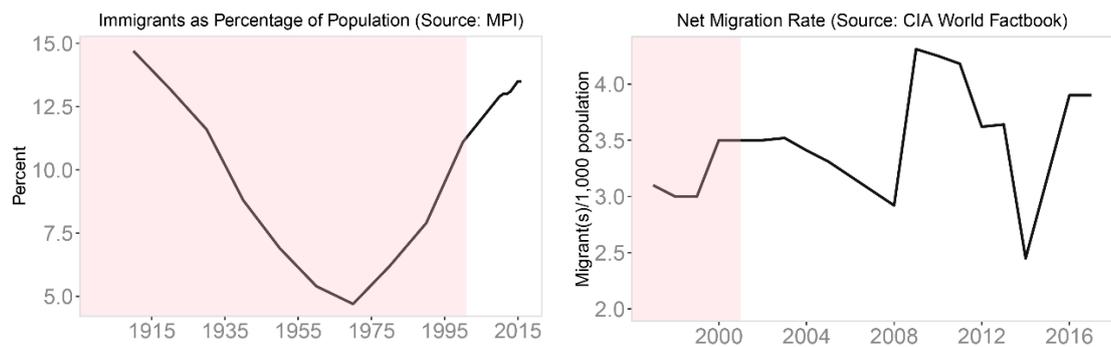
6.1 Introduction

While immigration has been a major part of American policy debates for several decades, the sixteen-year period from 2001-2016 saw significant fluctuations in how the debate was framed. The 9/11 attacks – carried out by foreign nationals – generated a new security narrative that intertwined terrorism with vulnerabilities in the immigration system. This produced a renewed focus on the latter as a national security issue, and prompted the establishment of an immigration-terrorism nexus in security discourse (Huysmans & Buonfino, 2008). As a security issue then, immigration has occupied the societal sector as a predominantly cultural and criminal issue and, more recently, as a national counterterrorism concern. But the rich tradition of immigration, the economic gains it has reaped and a large sympathetic electorate in the US have simultaneously produced a pro-immigrant, expansionist counternarrative that has sought to provide legal status to unauthorized immigrants. Efforts to resolve the competing interests of immigrant expansion and border security came in the form of multiple attempts to legislate comprehensive immigration reform. All of these attempts have failed, leaving the unauthorized immigration problem unresolved to date.

Interestingly, the shifts in discourse have co-occurred with fairly steady immigration trends, suggesting that subjective factors have been driving the debate more than objective measures. Figure 6.1 shows that the size of the immigrant population in the US has been growing at a relatively linear rate since the early 1970s. Specifically, the share of foreign-born individuals in the U.S. increased from 11.1% in 2000 to 13.5% in 2016 (Migration Policy Institute, 2017), while net migration increased slightly from 3.5% to 3.9% (Central Intelligence Agency) and the number of unauthorized immigrants grew from 8.6 million to 11.3 million in the same timeframe (Passel & Cohn, 2017). This period has also witnessed, significantly, a net outflow of Mexican nationals from the US back to Mexico, the latter being the largest source of unauthorized immigrants in the former; specifically, approximately 1 million Mexicans returned home from the US between 2009 and 2014, while only 870,000 arrived (Gonzalez-Barrera, 2015; Gonzalez-Barrera & Krogstad, 2018). Further, apprehensions of unauthorized border-crossers decreased steadily, though significantly, between 2000

and 2016: the number of unauthorized Mexican migrants apprehended fell from 1.6 million in 2000 to just under 193,000 in 2016 (U.S. Border Patrol, 2019).⁵⁸ These objective measures have been surprisingly inconsequential to the ebbs and tides of immigration discourse.

Figure 6.1 US immigration Rates



Note: Data retrieved from the Migration Policy Institute and the CIA World Factbook. The shaded region shows data for years that fall outside the range of this study (2001-2016), but contextualize current immigration levels.

This chapter thus turns to subjective factors to explain shifts in immigration discourse. The primary aims are to identify how exceptional measures were (de)legitimized over time; investigate the construction and reproduction of competing basic discourses in the US immigration debate; and to identify the rhetorical links that united and differentiated the two Selves, revealing key frames that constituted each basic discourse along two functions: *moral evaluation* and *remedy proposal*. While there is little disagreement on the recognition of unauthorized immigration as a problem, the moral evaluation and remedy proposal functions constitute sites of contestation that have produced two distinct Selves and accompanying basic discourses. A securitizing basic discourse has constituted a restrictionist agenda that emphasizes border security (remedy proposal) and perpetuates the metaphor of unauthorized immigrants as criminal Others (moral evaluation). Its use has widened the gulf between the American Self and the immigrant Other. A competing desecuritizing basic discourse has

⁵⁸ The number of non-Mexican migrants apprehended rose from 39,555 in 2000 to 222,847 in 2016 (U.S. Border Patrol, 2019). Nonetheless, given the large decline in Mexican migrants, overall apprehensions decreased by over 75%.

promoted an expansionist agenda that seeks to integrate immigrants through pathways toward legalization/citizenship (remedy proposal) and recognizes unauthorized immigration as a procedural documentation problem rather than a criminal one (moral evaluation). In the latter case, unauthorized immigrants have been characterized as less of a threat through rhetoric that highlights shared values, narrowing the gap that separates the Self and the Other.

Specifically, major political texts – including speeches, statements, interviews, debates, legislative acts, and executive policies – are analyzed to chart the evolution of these competing Selves and their respective (de)securitizing basic discourses between 2001 and 2016. Events are first described and then analyzed from a social constructivist and discursive analytical lens to show how certain patterns of behavior and rhetoric had a performative effect on the (de)securitization of unauthorized immigration. More than simply identifying speech acts and summarizing texts, this requires emphasizing how texts were contemporaneously interpreted. The latter effort is aided through analysis of responses – whether critical or in support – to speech acts and texts by political elites. While the focus is largely on rhetorical moves and frames, actual legislation and implementation of exceptional measures are also discussed as relevant, because these become constitutive of ongoing securitizations (Bigo, 2002). Unlike the press, political actors do more than “speak”. They shape discourse and reproduce the criminal immigrant metaphor through rhetoric as well as public implementations of policy or legislation. The actualization of exceptional measures reinforces the (in)security implications of immigration – e.g., broadening the powers of the immigration enforcement agencies has a securitizing effect because it reifies the threatening complexion of immigration, increasing perceptions of insecurity. These public discourse-defining actions are then also included in the analysis.⁵⁹

Unlike the terrorism debate – which is often driven by discrete acts of terrorism – immigration is an ongoing phenomena that occurs as a continuous, long-term process (Suro, 2008). The goal is thus not to provide a comprehensive summary of the far-

⁵⁹ While the same can be said about other security threats and issues, policy on immigration is more transparent and widely accessible to the public than, for example, policy on counterterrorism (like intelligence-gathering) that can be secretive, opaque and visible to the public only through speech acts and text.

reaching and multifaceted immigration debate over two presidential administrations, but rather to analyze – following Donnelly (2013) and Hansen (2013) – those defining moments that changed the direction and/or magnitude of (de)securitization dynamics. The analysis begins with a discussion of pre-9/11 immigration policy and rhetoric to set the context and identify the baseline discourse against which to measure later developments. Notably, in the seven months between President Bush’s inauguration in January 2001 and September 11, his administration worked to remove barriers toward legalization, increase the number of temporary workers, and encourage respect toward immigrants. The September 11, 2001, attacks however heralded a new securitizing narrative that linked counterterrorism to a restrictionist immigration agenda.⁶⁰ Still political elites under the Bush administration’s leadership sought to balance policies by marrying immigration expansion with border security measures in multiple failed attempts at comprehensive immigration reform. While the Obama administration tried to fulfill this ambition, the congressional stalemate it oversaw was emblematic of a generally bipolar tenure on immigration policy. The analysis ends with a discussion of Donald Trump’s hardline yet discursively innovative approach to securitizing immigration during his 2016 presidential campaign, which largely overshadowed other elites’ rhetoric.

6.2 Political Discourse Analysis

6.2.1 Expansionism: *El Grande Amistad Entre Nuestros Pueblos*⁶¹ (2001)

The months leading to 9/11 were characterized by political rhetoric and efforts aimed at removing immigration barriers and accelerating legalization for unauthorized immigrants already in the US. Newly elected President Bush employed a sympathetic and expansionist tone that encouraged respect toward immigrants and a dignified, inclusive immigration system. At a July 2001 Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) ceremony held at the Ellis Island Immigration Museum – a symbolic gateway for immigrants to the US – President Bush declared

⁶⁰ Lest the two case studies in this thesis be conflated, the discussion here focuses primarily on the immigration components of counterterrorism (unlike the terrorism case study, which focused largely on the torture component).

⁶¹ *The great friendship between our countries*. The line was spoken by President Bush during joint remarks with Mexican President Vicente Fox on February 16, 2001 (Bush, 2001e).

Immigration is not a problem to be solved. It is a sign of a confident and successful nation. And people who seek to make America their home should be met in that spirit by representatives of our Government. New arrivals should be greeted not with suspicion and resentment but with openness and courtesy. (Bush, 2001g)

In the same speech, he committed to reforms that would decrease processing hurdles, simplify sponsorship of children, and relax residency requirements. The president's close relationship with Mexican President Vicente Fox – their five meetings as heads of state prior to September 11 included Bush's symbolic first state visit and first hosted state dinner – motivated a shared ambition to grant legal status to over three million Mexican residents in the US (Rosenblum, 2011: 3; Schmitt, 2001) among other reforms. Both leaders tasked senior cabinet-level officials to “[forge] new and realistic approaches to migration to ensure it is safe, orderly, legal and dignified” (Bush, 2001c). That effort included “respecting the human dignity of all migrants, regardless of their status; recognizing the contribution migrants make to enriching both societies; shared responsibility for ensuring migration takes place through safe and legal channels” in order “to reach mutually satisfactory results on border safety, a temporary worker program and the status of undocumented Mexicans in the United States.” (Bush, 2001c) In remarks to the press in late August 2001, President Bush reaffirmed his “great relation” with his Mexican counterpart and likened immigrant ambitions to American values:

And I remind people all across our country, family values do not stop at the Rio Bravo. There are people in Mexico who have got children who are worried about where they are going to get their next meal from. And they are going to come to the United States if they think they can make money here. That's a simple fact. And they're willing to walk across miles of desert to do work that some Americans won't do. And we've got to respect that, it seems like to me, and treat those people with respect. (Bush, 2001d)

Similarly, pre-9/11 congressional efforts related to immigration included Section 245(i) of the Legal Immigration Family Equity Act which relaxed residency requirements for unauthorized individuals (Rosenblum, 2011: 2; U.S. Department of Justice, 2001),

provided reprieve from deportation, expanded visa categories, and increased the number of temporary professional workers (Storrs, 2005); the August 2001 introduction of the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act aimed at providing legal status to individuals who had arrived to the US as children; and the July 2001 introduction of the Agricultural Job Opportunity, Benefits, and Security Act intended to provide legal status to guest-workers in the agricultural sector (Rosenblum, 2011: 2). Certainly there was resistance to “blanket amnesty” and certain provisions (Schmitt, 2001), but bipartisan efforts in Congress prior to 9/11 urged legal status for a growing immigrant population.

President Bush’s early presidency was thus characterized by discourse that humanized rather than criminalized immigrants. This was a major reversal from the last major immigration legislation under his predecessor, the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA), which promoted a more threatening complexion of unauthorized immigrants: the act aimed to deport and detain immigrants, expanded the Border Patrol force, and restricted benefits access to immigrants. Moving away from this metaphorical representation of immigrants as criminal Others that needed to be expelled through heightened border security, President Bush’s desecuritizing moves pushed unauthorized immigration down to a procedural issue to be resolved through integration. Rather than preventing immigrants from entering, he encouraged facilitating entry and residency. A key rhetorical feature in his speech was the use of “undocumented” rather than the more ubiquitous “illegal” in the September 2001 joint statement – again, this reinforced the procedural (rather than threatening and criminal) nature of unauthorized immigration. Further, Bush’s close ties with his Mexican counterpart and attempts to relate immigrants’ “family values” to Americans’ rhetorically minimized the distance between the American Self and the non-threatening immigrant Other. His habitual use of Spanish in his speech acts (e.g., Bush, 2001e, 2001f, 2001j) had a performative effect: they directly confronted public anxieties over the erosion of English in communities and schools and embraced differences. Certainly Mexico (and other Spanish-speaking countries) did not constitute the only immigrant-sending nation, but as the largest sender of immigrants to America, Bush’s approach was symbolic. In short, Bush’s desecuritizing rhetoric stood in opposition to the securitizing spirit of the 1996 IIRIRA: while the latter perpetuated an impression of immigrants as criminals and promoted border security, Bush emphasized

nonthreatening features like shared values, and respect and dignity for “undocumented” immigrants.

6.2.2 Securitization by Association: The Immigration-Terrorism Nexus

September 11, however, precipitated a sharp return toward securitization, shifting unauthorized immigration from a law enforcement problem to a national security threat. This shift was accelerated by the revelation that the 9/11 attacks were organized and executed by student and visitor visa holders – including at least two persons who had overstayed their visas – suggesting a vulnerability in America’s border control and immigration processes. Thus the need to secure borders became closely intertwined with terrorism discourse through executive branch-led policies, congressional legislation, and expansion of immigration enforcement. These developments collectively contributed to characterizing the immigrant Other not only as a criminal, but as a national security threat, propelling the securitizing basic discourse.

6.2.2.1 Foreign Terrorist Tracking Task Force

The Bush administration formally forged the link between terrorism and immigration in its October 29, 2001, announcement of the newly formed Foreign Terrorist Tracking Task Force, intended “to work aggressively to prevent aliens who engage in or support terrorist activity from entering the United States and to detain, prosecute, or deport any such aliens who are within the United States” (Bush, 2001b). In remarks to the press about the multi-year program, President Bush explicitly linked 9/11 to immigration:

September the 11th taught us an interesting lesson, that while by far the vast majority of people who have come to America are really good, decent people, people that we're proud to have here, there are some who are evil. And our job now is to find the evil ones and to bring them to justice, to disrupt anybody who might have designs on hurting—further hurting Americans. (Bush, 2001k)

The task force directive authorized a diverse array of actors – including immigration authorities like the INS, Customs Service, the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), the Secret Service, the intelligence community, “military support components”, and federal agencies (the Departments of Justice, State and Treasury) – to “deny entry” to

incoming individuals and “locate, detain, prosecute, or deport” those already in the US that were suspected of “[engaging] in, or supporting terrorist activity” (Bush, 2001b). The directive also ordered an increase in “the number of Customs and INS special agents assigned to Joint Terrorism Task Forces” resulting in “new positions over and above the existing on-duty special agent forces of the two agencies” (Bush, 2001b). Student immigrants became targets, especially those studying “sensitive” subjects “with direct application to the development and use of weapons of mass destruction”. Finally, the directive called for technological improvements to monitor immigrants and develop a shared immigration database with Canada and Mexico in order to tighten border controls (Bumiller, 2001). Underscoring the exceptionalism of the threat and the extrajudicial latitude available to enforcement agencies, Bush declared that “To the extent that there may be legal barriers to such data sharing, the Director of the [Office of Science and Technology Policy] shall submit to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget proposed legislative remedies”. (Bush, 2001b)

Bush’s directive intensified the securitization of immigration by expanding the scope of actors involved in immigration enforcement – to now include the intelligence community, law enforcement and the military – and authorizing the mobilization of technology to tighten border security. The inclusion of immigration enforcement personnel (namely Customs and INS agents) in a counterterrorist task force not only strengthened the association between criminal terrorists and immigrants, but also reified the threatening nature of unauthorized immigration as a problem to be resolved through exceptional law enforcement. This new frame diverged from previous evaluations of immigrants as individuals who “should be greeted not with suspicion and resentment but with openness and courtesy” – now, some immigrants were recognized as “evil” persons who needed to be expelled. The restrictions on students was also a marked reversal in tone from pre-9/11 discourse aimed at facilitating youth immigration. Moving away from empathetic rhetoric that emphasized shared family values and ambitions between the immigrant Other and American Self, Bush’s new tone emphasized conflict and differences between the two. By referring to immigrants as “aliens” eight times (against only one reference to “immigrants” in his opening), his speech act increased the metaphorical foreignness of the immigrant Other relative to the American Self. The directive also introduced a different remedy proposal frame: while previous rhetoric was aimed at expansionism and integration, Bush’s directive called for mobilization of technology to bolster border security. The introduction of new,

more sophisticated exceptional measures alone was indicative of a securitizing stance, but the directive's invitation of "legislative remedies" to overcome legal barriers provided rare explicit latitude to abandon existing rules: the waiver underscored the exceptionalism of the threat and signaled to audiences that immigration enforcement was a high enough priority to overturn existing laws.

In short, Bush's directive not only widened the distance between the immigrant Other and the American Self, it also created a juxtaposition between two Self identities: a pre-9/11 desecuritizing Self and a post-9/11 securitizing Self. The new securitizing basic discourse was qualitatively different from the desecuritizing basic discourse in two main respects: along the moral evaluation axis, immigrants were increasingly linked to criminality and terrorism; and along the remedy proposal axis, border security replaced integration and expansionism, whether through technological solutions or expansion of border security personnel.

6.2.2.2 Immigration in Counterterrorist Legislation

Less than two weeks after 9/11, Justice Department chief John Ashcroft explicitly linked immigration to the counterterrorism effort in his presentation of the Bush administration's multi-pronged anti-terrorism proposal to the House Judiciary Committee. By placing immigration enforcement alongside proposals to improve the intelligence-gathering infrastructure through surveillance of communication metadata, raise the "penalties for conspiracy to commit terrorist acts to a serious level", and seize financial assets, the Attorney General cemented the link between immigration and counterterrorism. Using both the criminal and border security frames, he requested

to enhance the authority of the Immigration and Naturalization Service to detain or remove suspected alien terrorists from within our borders. The ability of alien terrorists to move freely across our borders and operate within the United States is critical to their capacity to inflict damage on our citizens and facilities. Under current law, the existing grounds for removal of aliens for terrorism are limited to direct material support of an individual terrorist. We propose to expand these grounds for removal to include material support to terrorist organizations. We propose that any alien who provides material support to an organization that he or she

knows or should know is a terrorist organization should be subject to removal from the United States. (*Administration's Draft Anti-Terrorism Act of 2001*, 2001)

Ashcroft's proposals paved the way for Title IV of the PATRIOT Act⁶² – entitled “Protecting the Border” – signed into law on October 26, 2001. While the PATRIOT Act itself constitutes an exceptional measure, it simultaneously had a securitizing effect in that it perpetuated the link between immigration and terrorism more publicly. Alongside a number of counterterrorist measures, the act authorized the indefinite detention of immigrants and non-citizens (American Civil Liberties Union, 2001); a waiver of INS employment caps; a budget increase to triple the size of Border Patrol and other immigration authorities; \$50 million to the INS and Customs Service for surveillance technology improvements; improvements to technology for background checks; a system to grant immigration authorities access to FBI criminal records; and data system integration with law enforcement databases as well as implementation of biometric technology at entry and exit ports (U.S. Congress, 2001).

The immigration components of the PATRIOT Act also strengthened the association between border security and criminality frames on the one hand and the securitizing basic discourse on the other hand. The specific calls to increase the size of Border Patrol (as well as other immigration enforcement) personnel and funding for border surveillance signaled to the public that immigration was a problem to be resolved through exceptional measures like increased enforcement – both personnel and technology – at the border rather than procedural citizenship- or status-granting means. Measures like detention and integration with FBI and other law enforcement agency data systems, on the other hand, helped to reinforce the criminal immigrant metaphor by linking immigrants to processes typically associated with illegality. Importantly the PATRIOT Act garnered significant attention in mainstream discourse, ensuring that it was widely received by (if not necessarily accepted) and accessible to the public.

Immigration became even more intertwined with terrorism and national security the following year when the previously independent INS was broken up into three new

⁶² Alternatively, the USA PATRIOT Act, which is an abbreviation for Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001.

agencies – U.S. Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services – and placed under the authority of the newly formed Department of Homeland Security (DHS) (Rosenblum, 2011: 4). As the “largest restructuring of executive-branch functions since the establishment of the Department of Defense after World War II” (Rosenblum, 2011: 4), the move placed all immigration related functions into the DHS, including internal enforcement, border security, and even citizenship granting services. Both the magnitude of this change as well as the permanent institutionalization of immigration under the umbrella of “homeland security” reified the heightened perception of immigration as a national security threat.

Several other high-profile securitizing moves promoted a threatening characterization of unauthorized immigration, invoking language that perpetuated a criminal and terrorist immigrant metaphor. The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, for example, provisioned funds for “additional surveillance, border enforcement, and immigration detention beds.” (Rosenblum, 2011: 5) Passed by the House in 2005 (though later rejected in the Senate), the Border Protection, Anti-Terrorism and Illegal Immigration Act sought to criminalize “illegal immigration” and aid to unauthorized immigrants, and erect a 700-mile double-layered fence along the US-Mexico border.⁶³ Directly linking immigrants to terrorism, it required that all unauthorized immigrants be cleared against a terrorist watch-list before being granted legal status. Finally, the REAL ID Act of 2005 linked immigration to terrorism by including provisions for deporting unauthorized persons and denying asylum to individuals associated with terrorism. The act also permitted waivers of environmental restrictions and other laws that obstructed the construction of physical barriers along the border, suggesting, like the 2001 Bush directive, that legal obstacles could be overcome in the name of security.

Beyond the immigration-terrorism nexus, several other key immigration enforcement and border security initiatives emerged after 9/11 that continued to promote the securitizing basic discourse using border security and criminality frames. These

⁶³ The Act also had a provision requiring the DHS to “conduct a study and report to Congress respecting the necessity and feasibility of constructing a barrier system along the northern U.S. land and maritime border” (U.S. Congress, 2005).

included the 287(g) program, the Enhanced Border Security and Visa Entry Reform Act (EBSVERA), the Secure Border Initiative (SBI) of 2005 and the Secure Fence Act of 2006. The 287(g) program extended federal immigration enforcement powers to state and local law enforcement agencies through a partnership with the INS (and later, ICE), authorizing “state and local officers to screen people for immigration status, issue detainers to hold them on immigration violations until the federal government takes custody, and generate the charges that begin the process of their removal from the United States” (Capps, Rosenblum, Chishti, & Rodríguez, 2011: 1). Enacted in May 2002, EBSVERA mirrored PATRIOT Act mandates to accelerate data sharing and immigrant tracking systems (Rosenblum, 2011: 5). Like the REAL ID Act of 2005, both the SBI and Secure Fence Act aimed to expand border security through infrastructure and technological measures. Specifically, SBI sought to increase the number of Border Patrol agents; expedite removal and increase detention capacity; deploy unmanned aerial vehicles, sensors and surveillance systems along the border to assist enforcement; waive legal barriers “to ensure expeditious completion of the 14-mile Border Infrastructure System”; and bolster interior enforcement through employer compliance mechanisms (Department of Homeland Security, 2005). The Secure Fence Act was more focused, calling for “the construction of an estimated 700 miles of double-fencing and additional surveillance infrastructure along the Southwest border” (Rosenblum, 2011: 8).

By linking immigration to terrorism and expanding enforcement mechanisms, these securitizing moves were a major reversal from the Bush administration’s early expansionist agenda. They marked the (re)emergence of major efforts to regulate immigration through traditional tools – including deportation, detention, expansion of enforcement personnel and authority – as well as new technological capabilities that improved cross-agency data sharing, equipping immigration authorities with data and resources from law enforcement agencies like the FBI. Immigrants were not only linked to criminality, but now also to national security. Executive policies and legislative acts pooled immigration enforcement with terrorism, applying measures generally reserved for tackling national security threats in the context of immigration. While the coexistence of immigration enforcement and counterterrorism methods created an implicit link between the two, the consolidation of immigration enforcement agencies and citizenship granting functions into the Department of Homeland Security explicitly made immigration a national security issue. Even though these acts did not

explicitly say immigrants were terrorists, the simultaneous utterance of both identities alongside each other within the same context reinforced a rhetorical and metaphorical link between immigration and terrorism. The repetition and rehearsal of these links by political elites in speech, policy documents and legislation helped to commit these associations to long-term memory and to institutionalize the securitizing discourse. The spreading activation model also suggests that repeatedly linking immigration to terrorism helped reshape existing (or construct new) schemas that created mental associations between immigrants and terrorism. The activation of any one node – “immigration” or “terrorism” – could then trigger activation of the other. Consequently, these invocations made it possible for “terrorism” and “immigration” to occupy overlapping discursive and conceptual spaces.

Post 9/11 speech acts and policies also strengthened the association of the border security frame with the securitizing basic discourse. The exceptionalism of the threat of immigration was underscored by multiple policies and statements sanctioning the waiver of existing laws to bolster border security. By April 2008, DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff had “waived more than 30 laws dealing with environmental protection, Native American autonomy, and historic preservation, in order to facilitate construction of border fencing at US-Mexico border.” (Mittelstadt et al., 2011: 9) This signaled to audiences that immigration was sufficiently threatening to nullify existing laws and thus operate in a state of exception beyond everyday politics. Collectively, post-9/11 speech acts and policies constructed a more radical conception of the immigrant Other, and by extension constructed a new securitizing Self that identified immigration as more threatening than before.

6.2.3 Media Mobilization Kills Bills

Still, the securitizing identity and discourse was not always unopposed, nor were political elites the only active participants in immigration discourse. Spurred by political debate on immigration between 2005 and 2007, several outspoken press actors – especially in talk radio and cable television – mobilized on both sides of the debate, playing key roles in inspiring and affecting legislation and the political mood. Specifically, the press helped derail two major attempts at comprehensive immigration reform (CIR) in 2006 and 2007, respectively. The CIR bills married border security, pathway toward citizenship or legalization, and a temporary worker program that was responsive to US labor market demands. While several structural factors regarding the

press landscape contributed to the potency of the media narrative⁶⁴, a lack of sustained political leadership meant that political elites surrendered much of their influence to the press. President Bush – whose approval ratings had plummeted from 58% in 2004 to 33% in 2006 (Suro, 2008: 35) – faced a crisis in credibility following a botched response to Hurricane Katrina and an unpopular war in Iraq; congressional Republicans were divided by infighting; and Democrats’ ambitions for regaining control of Congress in 2006 and then subsequent desire to protect narrowly won majorities motivated a more passive politics on divisive issues like immigration (Suro, 2008). Press actors rushed to fill the leadership void.

Breaking party ranks, conservative media first criticized President Bush’s January 2004 proposal for immigration reform. Emphasizing that immigration “represents the best tradition of our society, a society that honors the law and welcomes the newcomer” (Bush, 2004b), Bush encouraged Congress to pass legislation that would create new channels for matching temporary workers to employers according to labor market demands. His compassionate tone was exemplified by his preference for labeling unauthorized immigrants “undocumented” (a term he used six times in his remarks) over “illegal” (used only once). Despite Bush’s insistence that his proposal did not constitute “amnesty”, the conservative press insisted it did and rejected his compassionate tone (Suro, 2008). Fox News, for example, ran a story on its website headlined “Bush Amnesty Plan Raises Immigration Concerns”, noting that “any plan that allows, as the new Bush plan does, illegal aliens to remain legally and permanently in the United States without having to return to their home countries and apply to enter the United States legally like everyone else, is, in fact, an amnesty.” (Fox News, 2004) Similarly, the National Review argued in its article entitled “Amnesty Again” that Bush’s policy “is described as a guest-worker program, but the ‘guest’ concept is deceptive; in fact, the program would provide for the permanent importation of thousands of new workers from overseas and amnesty for illegal aliens already here.” (Krikorian, 2004) Notably, from a framing standpoint, these articles reflected a broader

⁶⁴ As highlighted in the introductory chapter, the effectiveness of media messaging during this era can be attributed to increased polarization and the repeal of the fairness doctrine, enabling pundits to promote one-sided, unverified and partisan exaggerations to drive a point (Suro, 2008: 8).

conservative rejection of the president's use of "undocumented", referring to unauthorized immigrants instead as "illegal".

In addition to criticizing "amnesty", the press amplified the border security frame. This was most visible in 2005, when outlets gave disproportionate attention to the anti-immigrant protest at the border staged by the vigilante citizen-border patrol group, the Minuteman Project (Douzet, 2009; Suro, 2008: 23). In an interview with the project's founder Jim Gilchrist, Fox News anchor Sean Hannity voiced his support, invoking both the link to terrorism as well as the urgency for border security:

I hope you call a lot of attention to it [the protest], because if we don't secure the borders of this country, we will always be potential victims of terror. And both parties aren't getting it now. And I hope they hear your message loud and clear. (Hannity & Colmes, 2005)

The protest drew significant coverage by other media actors as well (Suro, 2008: 23), intensifying for many viewers the perception of an urgent and imminent immigration threat along the border.

Empowered by this securitizing discourse, other anti-immigrant and pro-enforcement organizations – such as the Center for Immigration Studies, the Federation for American Immigration Reform and Numbers USA – also sought media coverage, motivating their members to apply pressure on lawmakers and thus cultivating “a highly effective echo chamber that reverberated on Capitol Hill” (Suro, 2008: 39). The combined pressure from these actors as well as the popularization of the securitizing basic discourse in the press culminated in the controversial House-passed Border Protection, Anti-terrorism and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005 (H.R. 4437). As noted in the previous section, the bill called to criminalize unauthorized immigration (raising the penalty from a misdemeanor to a felony) and construct a 700-mile border fence. If the bill was not a direct byproduct of media influence, it was at least a reflection of the prevailing securitizing discourse the press was promoting.

But the conservative press framing was not unchallenged. In response to H.R. 4437, Spanish language news media – including Telemundo, Univision and a number of radio

stations – mobilized and helped spur mass protests in American cities from March through May of 2006. Across three months, over 3.5 million people marched in 120 cities, heeding the press’ calls to protest the bill’s criminalization statute (Suro, 2008: 37). Just as the House had reacted to anti-immigrant press and the Minuteman Project, the Senate this time responded to pro-immigrant press coverage and the mass protests. It countered the controversial H.R. 4437 with its own CIR legislation, the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2006 (S. 2611). While H.R. 4437 had focused solely on the criminal and border security frames, the Senate’s S. 2611 attempted to find the middle ground: it invoked border security (a 370-mile wall) alongside provisions for a pathway toward citizenship and a special visa targeted toward guest workers. Unlike the House bill, S. 2611 did not link immigrants to criminality, and its concession for a border wall (albeit a smaller one than the House bill called for) was matched with expansionist provisions. Also unlike the House bill – which exclusively referred to unauthorized persons as “illegal aliens” – the Senate bill used a mix of qualifiers, including “illegal” and “undocumented”. Nonetheless the Senate bill was again attacked by the conservative press, prompting President Bush to remark: “Some in this country argue that the solution is to deport every illegal immigrant, and that any proposal short of this amounts to amnesty. I disagree.” (Bush, 2006a). The inability to reconcile the two vastly different bills led to both H.R. 4437 and S. 2611 being killed.

A similar fate befell the 2007 attempt at legislating CIR. Despite attempts to negotiate and pass the bill quietly and quickly outside the media spotlight (Suro, 2008: 35), Congressional disagreement and infighting delayed voting, giving the conservative press sufficient time to launch an attack campaign (Baum & Groeling, 2007). The media response was largely one-sided: in the weeks surrounding the debate, CNN’s Lou Dobbs – who was a strong advocate of anti-immigration restrictionist measures (Facchini, Mayda, & Puglisi, 2017; Merolla et al., 2013) – devoted 43.1% of his program to immigration; Fox News’ Bill O’Reilly devoted 19.4% of his airtime to immigration; and Sean Hannity and Alan Colmes devoted 16.5% of their program’s airtime to immigration. On the generally liberal MSNBC, conversely, Chris Matthews only gave 5.1% of its newshole to immigration (Pew Research Center, 2008). While conservative pundits were vociferous in promoting their securitizing restrictionist agenda, their liberal counterparts were largely silent, enabling the securitizing basic discourse to become salient while other perspectives were marginalized. As with the

2006 attempt, the 2007 CIR bill was largely rejected by conservative personalities as amnesty, with conservative CNN anchor Dobbs invoking the *illegal* frame and emphasizing the threat to national security in his rebuff of the deal:⁶⁵

The pro-illegal alien and open borders lobby today winning what is an apparent major political victory. A bipartisan group of senators announcing a deal to give as many as 20 million illegal aliens amnesty. There are rising concerns tonight that that amnesty compromise could threaten national sovereignty and security, opening U.S. borders even further with Mexico and Canada. (Dobbs, 2007)

Again, President Bush's attempts to stave off such criticism as "empty political rhetoric trying to frighten our citizens" (Rutenberg, 2007) could not save the doomed bill. Like its predecessor the year before, the bill never passed.

While the media's role in (de)securitizing the immigration debate is explored in more detail in the following chapter, it is worth underscoring here that press rhetoric not only influenced prevailing discourse (especially as political elites became publicly less vociferous on the controversial immigration issue), but also helped mobilize legislative action. First, conservative outlets' criticism of President Bush's 2004 "amnesty" proposal combined with increased coverage of anti-immigrant and pro-border security groups like the Minuteman Project helped popularize the securitization basic discourse and its major component frames (border security and criminality). The press narrative that Bush's amnesty proposal was rewarding "illegal aliens" for unlawfully entering the US aligned with the criminal frame while the increased focus on vigilante patrol groups emphasized the border security frame. These securitizing messages saturated immigration discourse, and helped popularize the impression of an urgent threat at the border. On the other hand, the counterreaction from Spanish language press to H.R. 4437 also inspired action beyond rhetoric by encouraging protests. Explicit instructions given to protestors to wave the American flag over their own home country's flag helped to narrow the gap between immigrant Others and the American Self, because

⁶⁵ A separate content analysis of media coverage found that, from May to June of 2007, Lou Dobbs mentioned "amnesty" in every one of 42 stories on immigration, while Bill O'Reilly mentioned "amnesty" in 18 of 34 stories (Suro, 2008: 39).

the gesture signaled a shared patriotism. Rather than emphasizing differences, press actors encouraged protestors to underscore similarities. Whether the effect was successful or not, the intention was at least to promote the perception that immigrants were not a security threat to Americans, but instead shared the same values (patriotism) and identities (being American). Finally, the second attempt at CIR sparked renewed censure from the conservative press, that again mainstreamed the securitizing basic discourse. Rhetoric by actors like Dobbs, who claimed the bill was a threat to “national sovereignty and security” helped to prevent it from being enacted.

6.2.4 Compromising Discourse under the Obama Administration

Like Bush, Obama’s speech acts and policies were mixed. Obama emphasized the need for border security in speech acts, but was more judicious in his invocation of the criminal frame and opted to describe unauthorized immigrants as “undocumented” more frequently than “illegal”. From a policy perspective, not only did CIR fail to pass under the new president, but detention practices during the 2014 migrant crisis and record-level deportations executed through internal raids promoted the impression of immigrants as criminal threats to be deported. These actions earned Obama the title of “deporter in chief” (Krogstad, 2014); Obama nonetheless rebutted this accusation, calling himself instead the “champion in chief of comprehensive immigration reform” (Obama, 2014c), owing to policies like the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals and other executive actions during his presidency that either secured or attempted to secure temporary legal status for 3.5 million unauthorized immigrants. His presidency thus oversaw a mixture of both securitizing and desecuritizing basic discourses and frames.

6.2.4.1 Mixed Rhetoric

Characteristic of his compromising approach to immigration, Obama frequently related his policies to his Republican predecessor’s; rather than construct a wholly new Self to differentiate himself from Bush, Obama characterized his own ambitions as continuous with his predecessor’s. Early in his presidential campaign, Obama, like Bush, emphasized shared traits between Americans and immigrants, thus shrinking the gap between the Self and Other. In a June 2008 speech, he stated:

America has nothing to fear from today's immigrants. They have come here for the same reason that families have always come here, for the same

reason my father came here – for the hope that in America, they could build a better life for themselves and their families. (Obama, 2008g)

Similarly, after his election, in a July 2010 speech, he noted that the “estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants” are “simply seeking a better life for themselves and their children.” (Obama, 2010) Still, he argued that “the presence of so many illegal immigrants makes a mockery of all those who are going through the process of immigrating legally.” Whether deliberate or otherwise, these excerpts interestingly reveal that Obama employed different qualifiers: when emphasizing shared ambitions, Obama used the term “undocumented immigrants”, but when acknowledging the threat to legal institutions, he used the term “illegal immigrant.”⁶⁶

Obama also sought to pass CIR legislation, using (perhaps intentionally) the same term for it as his predecessor. Days after his 2012 reelection, Obama spoke:

And when I say comprehensive immigration reform, it is very similar to the outlines of previous efforts at comprehensive immigration reform. I think it should include a continuation of the strong border security measures that we've taken, because we have to secure our borders. I think it should contain serious penalties for companies that are purposely hiring undocumented workers and taking advantage of them. And I do think that there should be a pathway for legal status for those who are living in this country, are not engaged in criminal activity, are here simply to work. (Obama, 2012a)

In response, the Senate introduced its 2013 CIR bill. Mirroring the 2006 and 2007 legislations it was modeled upon, the bill advanced a mixture of expansionist and restrictionist measures, including a path to citizenship for unauthorized workers; temporary visa categories for guest workers; funding for fencing and technology along the Southern border; and an increase in border security personnel by over 40,000 agents (U.S. Congress, 2013). Obama recognized the similarity with Bush’s attempts, noting

⁶⁶ This differentiation occurred again in a May 2011 speech (Obama, 2011).

that his success would “be in large part thanks to the hard work of President George W. Bush” (Obama, 2013).

Still, despite bipartisan Senate support for the bill, the House declined to vote on it, effectively killing the legislation. House Republicans responded instead with their own set of immigration principles, which used securitizing rhetoric and emphasized in a preamble that the nation’s immigration system is “jeopardizing our national security” (“Standards for Immigration Reform,” 2014). The proposals in the document emphasized exceptional measures like border security, but rejected legal status for immigrants “who broke our nation’s immigration laws” (“Standards for Immigration Reform,” 2014). When House Republicans failed to vote on the CIR bill, Obama again alluded to his predecessor:

It wasn't that long ago that my predecessor, George W. Bush, a Republican—a conservative Republican from Texas, with whom I disagreed with on a whole lot of things, made immigration reform one of his core priorities. “We cannot build a unified country,” he said, “by inciting people to anger or playing on anyone's fears or exploiting the issue of immigration for political gain.” That's what he said. Think how much better our economy would be if the rest of his party got the message. (Obama, 2015)

The frequent comparisons between his own policy and Bush’s policy in speech acts suggest that Obama may have been strategically appealing to both sides – hardline restrictionist Republicans as well as pro-immigrant expansionist Democrats – of the immigration debate. This was evident in his rhetoric as well, which mixed securitizing calls for border security with desecuritizing calls for paths to citizenship. While he was more constrained in his use of the criminal/terrorist frame than his predecessor, he at least recognized that unauthorized immigrants had broken the law; still, Obama largely emphasized shared values, thus narrowing the gap between the American Self and the immigrant Other. The Self identity he had constructed through his rhetoric was also similar to the Self identity constructed by Bush era discourse – the difference was that Obama invoked the criminal frame less frequently, and thus promoted the threatening criminal metaphor less than his predecessor.

6.2.4.2 Expansionist Executive Actions

Despite failed CIR attempts, the president provided temporary legal status to a large category of childhood arrivals and protected their parents from deportation through his 2012 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, affecting 580,000 immigrants (The Guardian, 2014). In a Rose Garden announcement, Obama invoked a familiar sympathetic tone that, again, minimized the distance between the American Self and the immigrant Other, while also suggesting that unauthorized persons were victims of a documenting procedure rather than criminals:

Now, these are young people who study in our schools, they play in our neighborhoods, they're friends with our kids, they pledge allegiance to our flag. They are Americans in their heart, in their minds, in every single way but one: on paper. They were brought to this country by their parents--sometimes even as infants--and often have no idea that they're undocumented until they apply for a job or a driver's license or a college scholarship. (Obama, 2012b)

Similarly, when the House failed to vote on the 2013 CIR bill, the Obama administration responded in 2014 with its Immigration Accountability Executive Action aimed at both improving border security as well as granting temporary legal status and work permits to certain categories of unauthorized immigrants. On the border security front, the policy largely reiterated previous commitments to prioritize “national security threats, serious criminals, and recent border crossers” for expulsion. The key new additions, however, were increased flexibility for current visa holders, the expansion of eligibility for DACA, and further protection for undocumented parents of legal permanent residents (Obama, 2014b). The latter policy, Deferred Action for Parents of U.S. Citizens and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA), protected parents from deportation and enabled them to apply for work permits for up to three years at a time. While the executive action did not provide a pathway solution, it would have benefited at least 3.5 million of the 11 million unauthorized immigrants at the time of its announcement (Goo, 2015a). In his speech announcing the executive action, Obama balanced both a securitizing message on border security with an overall desecuritizing push to protect certain unauthorized immigrants from deportation. Specifically, he provisioned “additional resources for our law enforcement personnel so that they can

stem the flow of illegal crossings and speed the return of those who do cross over” (Obama, 2014a), while also noting of immigrants that

They work hard, often in tough, low-paying jobs. They support their families. They worship at our churches. Many of their kids are American-born or spent most of their lives here, and their hopes, dreams, and patriotism are just like ours. As my predecessor President Bush once put it, "They are a part of American life." (Obama, 2014a)

Notably, in the same speech, Obama made five references to “undocumented immigrants” and no references to “illegal immigrants”, suggesting his preference to identify immigrants as a largely procedural problem rather than a criminal problem. The U.S. Supreme Court, however, ultimately blocked DAPA after Republicans in Congress challenged Obama’s authority to pass a policy that resembled legislation.

Obama’s attempts, nonetheless, contributed to minimizing the threatening complexion of unauthorized immigrants. Specifically, the promotion of DAPA moved away from securitizing rhetoric (such as labeling unauthorized immigrants criminals) and instead focused on emphasizing similarities between immigrants and Americans. Obama further suggested that certain classes of unauthorized immigrants were not sufficiently threatening to warrant removal. The ensuing legal battle over DAPA however implied that the president was attempting to effect a significant policy that overstepped his authority; this had the effect of further otherizing unauthorized immigrants, because it suggested any attempt to integrate them required Congressional deliberation.

6.2.4.3 Restrictionist Executive Actions

Obama’s expansionist measures were matched by heavily criticized detention policies and a record number of formal removals – over three million between 2009 and 2016 (Breisblatt, 2017; Chishti, Pierce, & Bolter, 2017) – that helped promote a threatening and criminal impression of immigrants in public discourse.⁶⁷ Certainly, the deportation statistics are more nuanced: while formal removals increased significantly under Obama, “voluntary returns” – or the process of allowing unauthorized border-crossers

⁶⁷ For context, the previous Bush administration deported just over 2 million individuals; and the Clinton administration deported less than 700,000 individuals (Chishti et al., 2017).

to return across the border without formal proceedings – decreased significantly, meaning that Obama actually oversaw fewer overall deportations than his predecessors. Moreover, Obama’s deportations became more focused throughout his tenure: his policies aimed at deporting noncitizens who had been convicted of “serious crimes” as well as those that had crossed the border recently. From 2009 to 2016, the percentage of noncitizens removed who had been convicted of “serious crimes” increased from 51 to 90 percent. Meanwhile the emphasis on recent border crossers targeted individuals who were less likely to have established strong roots within the US. These considerations notwithstanding, the dominant narrative in immigration discourse focused on the increase in formal removals, signaling an aggressive border security strategy to the public.

The Obama administration also signaled a hardline approach in its border enforcement policies and handling of the Central American migrant crisis in 2014. That year, an estimated 68,500 unaccompanied children were apprehended by Border Patrol at the Southwest border (Kandel, 2017), many fleeing regional violence and poverty in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras (Gonzalez-Barrera, Krogstad, & Lopez, 2014). In response, Obama requested from Congress across two letters in June and July of 2014 the authority to pursue “an aggressive deterrence strategy focused on the removal and repatriation of recent border crossers”; and to “support a sustained border security surge through enhanced domestic enforcement, including air surveillance” (Obama, 2014d, 2014e). Certainly requests were made for the resources to “care for children and adults” and “immigration litigation attorneys” (Obama, 2014d), but these latter measures were largely overshadowed in public discourse by the former border security elements. The American Immigration Council (2017) accused the Obama administration of “not [treating] this influx of Central Americans as a humanitarian issue, but rather as an enforcement issue”, adding further that poor detention facilities resulted in family separation, “substandard medical care” and “psychological distress including depression, anxiety, and difficulty sleeping”.

Later that year, the DHS further emphasized both the border security and criminal frames in its announcement of “Policies for the Apprehension, Detention, and Removal of Undocumented Immigrants”. The memo stressed that “DHS's enforcement priorities are, have been, and will continue to be national security, border security, and public safety” (Johnson, 2014), and it listed several criteria for high priority removal targets.

These included “aliens engaged in or suspected of terrorism or espionage, or who otherwise pose a danger to national security”; “aliens convicted of an offense for which an element was active participation in a criminal street gang”; “aliens convicted of an offense classified as a felony”; and “aliens convicted of an ‘aggravated felony’” (Johnson, 2014). The “deportation raids” became systematized under the DHS’ Operation Border Guardian (enacted in January 2016) which focused on repatriating individuals who arrived as unaccompanied children after January 1, 2014, but had since become adults. Criticism from organizations and politicians demonstrate the discursive effect that these policies generated at the time. A joint letter signed by over 150 immigrants’ rights organizations scolded: “The very title of this operation points to a much larger problem: DHS’s treatment of a humanitarian situation primarily as a border security issue.” (American Civil Liberties Union, 2016) It further noted, in protest of the administration’s use of the illegal frame, that “Statements by this Administration calling refugee unaccompanied children and mothers with their children an ‘illegal’ migration is not only false, but is inhumane.” (American Civil Liberties Union, 2016) The raids also drew criticism from congresspersons, who condemned the “enforcement operation targeting refugee mothers and children” (Johnson, 2016).

Obama’s immigration legacy – and the (de)securitizing signals it produced in public discourse – thus remains mixed. On the one hand, his reputation for expanding the number of formal removals and detaining Central American migrants during the 2014 crisis reified the perception of immigrants as criminals. The combination of record deportations and the specific targeting of individuals with criminal records also furthered the impression that there were a record number of criminal immigrants in the country, again strengthening the criminal-immigrant narrative. Similarly, the targeting of mothers and children from Central America in the 2016 raids sent the signal that the crisis was a border security and enforcement issue rather than a humanitarian one. On the other hand, the passage of DACA (and attempts to institute DAPA) signaled an expansionist agenda and promoted the desecuritizing basic discourse. Moreover, Obama’s rhetoric surrounding these policies was aimed at emphasizing similarities between the American Self and immigration Other. His Rose Garden speech, for example, argued that DACA beneficiaries lacked documentation, but had attended the same schools and played in the same neighborhoods as “our kids”. Similarly, in his 2013 speech supporting CIR, he likened immigrants’ experiences to “our lives”, which, again, minimized the distance between the American Self and the immigrant Other.

Obama's efforts generated, at the same time, criticism from both sides of the debate. When his policies had the potential to send securitizing signals (e.g., in his handling of the 2014 migrant crisis), frequent criticism from pro-immigrant groups buoyed the desecuritizing basic discourse. Similarly, Obama's support for pathways toward legal status was answered by the House Republican set of immigration principles that emphasized border security. Interestingly, Obama's attempts to appease two opposing sides, thus, ultimately cost him legitimacy among both.

Another distinguishing feature of the Obama presidency was his attempt to align his immigration policy with his predecessor's. Even during the campaign, Obama indicated that he would pass the CIR bill that his predecessor fought for. Further, like Bush, Obama employed a compassionate tone towards immigrants, using language that humanized immigrants and minimized the distance between the Self and the Other. Obama was also accused of providing amnesty and defended himself by insisting his proposals did not constitute amnesty. At the same time, Obama, again, like Bush, also called for border security measures and used detention. Most of all, however, Obama's support of a CIR bill was portrayed as a continuation of his predecessor's goal for immigration policy. The Self identity that Obama had constructed was – whether deliberately or otherwise – proximate to the Self identity that Bush had constructed. Both had shared agendas and similar rhetoric; both also oversaw several legislative and executive failures in their immigration expansionist attempts.

6.2.5 Discursive Innovation: The Trump Campaign

The final two years of Obama's presidency were marked by a major disruptive shift in immigration discourse, led by Donald Trump's campaign rhetoric between 2015 and 2016. Trump not only promoted anti-immigration policies that differentiated himself from both the Bush and Obama administrations, but he explicitly identified his agenda as different from his predecessors' approach. Where his predecessors had sought a compromise in the form of CIR and often employed a compassionate tone, Trump instead campaigned on a strong securitizing narrative that exclusively emphasized the border security and criminal frames. In doing so, Trump's speech acts constructed a more austere Self that simultaneously constructed the Other as far more threatening than it was perceived to be under the Bush and Obama governments. Trump was entrepreneurial to the extent that his tone wholly rejected compromise – then a salient feature of CIR and existing political discourse on immigration – and instead shifted all

attention to securitizing rhetoric. His statements at the December 2015 Republican primary debate are perhaps most emblematic of his overall position on immigration:

We are not talking about isolation. We're talking about *security*. We're not talking about religion. We're talking about *security*. Our country is out of control. People are pouring across the southern border. I will build a wall. It will be a great wall. People will not come in unless they come in legally. Drugs will not pour through that wall. As far as other people like in the migration, where they're going, tens of thousands of people having cell phones with ISIS flags on them? I don't think so, Wolf [debate moderator]. They're not coming to this country. And if I'm president and if Obama has brought some to this country, they are leaving. They're going. They're gone. (Presidential Candidate Debates, 2015, emphasis added)

Not only did Trump underscore at the outset that immigration was a *security* concern, but his speech act linked immigrants to terrorism by invoking ISIS, crime by invoking drugs, and security by invoking exceptional measures like a wall and deportation. His promise to undo Obama-era policies further constructed an oppositional Self. Certainly campaigns are arenas ripe for differentiating oneself from predecessors (especially among oppositional parties); but Trump's rhetoric aggressively reshaped the boundaries of political discourse even while using familiar immigration framing devices like border security (e.g., the wall and deportation), criminality and terrorism.

Border Security

Trump's June 2015 presidential bid announcement set the tone for his immigration stance and border security policy. He introduced what would become his signature campaign promise on immigration: he "would build a great wall, and nobody builds walls better than me, believe me, and I'll build them very inexpensively, I will build a great, great wall on our southern border. And I will have Mexico pay for that wall." (Trump, 2015a) While border barriers were not new, Trump's insistence that Mexico would foot the bill was innovative and thus attracted significant attention from the press, other political elites and the public. Emboldened by the spotlight, Trump made the point a common refrain in his public events, and during a Republican primary debate held in December 2015, he justified both his wall and deportation, saying:

People that have come into our country illegally, they have to go. They have to come back into through [sic] a legal process. I want a strong border. I do want a wall. Walls do work, you just have to speak to the folks in Israel. (Presidential Candidate Debates, 2015)

As the campaign progressed, Trump's border security measures became more formalized as key components of legislation he promised to pass if elected. The proposed "End Illegal Immigration Act", for example, proposed to fund "the construction of a wall on our southern border with the full understanding that the country Mexico will be reimbursing the United States for the full cost of such wall." (Keith & Montanaro, 2016) The wall was also the foremost item in Trump's ten-point proposed immigration policy (Trump, 2016c). In the same plan, he emphasized "[tripling] the number of ICE deportation officers"; "[ensuring] that other countries take their people back when they order them deported"; and ending the "catch and release" program: "anyone who illegally crosses the border will be detained until they are removed out of our country and back to the country from which they came." In doing so, Trump differentiated himself from Obama by rebuking Obama's policy allowing border-crossers to be returned to Mexico without formal removal proceedings.

Further differentiating himself from previous presidents, Trump insisted he would remove all 11 million unauthorized immigrants (as of 2015) within two years (Haddon, 2015; Preston, Alan, & Richtel, 2016), through a "deportation force" (DelReal, 2015). In an August 2016 speech, he warned that "For those here illegally today who are seeking legal status, they will have one route and one route only. To return home and apply for re-entry like everybody else" (Trump, 2016c). Even at the height of the Syrian refugee crisis, following the Obama administration's announcement that it would take in ten thousand refugees, Trump declared "If I win, they're going back", suggesting that "[t]hey could be ISIS, I don't know" (Finnegan, 2015).

Criminal/Terrorist Frame

Furthering the immigrant-terrorism narrative, Trump repeatedly linked immigrants to ISIS and criminality. Again, during his presidential bid announcement speech in June 2015, Trump infamously remarked that Mexican immigrants "have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing

crime. They're rapists.” (Trump, 2015a) The following month, he claimed to have placed himself in “great danger” by visiting the Mexican border (Hohmann, 2015), implying that proximity to Mexico increased his exposure to crime. Trump also invoked the criminality frame in the aforementioned ten-point policy plan laid out in August 2016, which called for “[zero] tolerance for criminal aliens” and the immediate repeal of “President Obama's two illegal executive amnesties in which he defied federal law and the Constitution to give amnesty to approximately five million illegal immigrants” (Trump, 2016c).

Beyond the criminal link, Trump used the terrorist-immigrant narrative more aggressively than Bush. In an October 2015 Fox News interview, for example, he argued that his immigration policies could have prevented the 9/11 attacks; and he explicitly differentiated himself from President Bush by adding, “I’m not blaming George Bush. But I don’t want Jeb [Trump’s Republican primary opponent] to say ‘my brother kept us safe’” (Richardson, 2015). Again, in June 2016, Trump drew a link between immigration and terrorism in his discussion of the Orlando mass shooting:

The killer, whose name I will not use, or ever say, was born to Afghan parents who immigrated to the United States. His father published support for the Afghan Taliban, a regime which murders those who don’t share its radical views. The father even said he was running for president of that country. The bottom line is that the only reason the killer was in America in the first place was because we allowed his family to come here.
(Trump, 2016b)

In the same speech, after linking “radical Islam” to terrorism, he warned that his opponent “Hillary Clinton’s catastrophic immigration plan will bring vastly more Radical Islamic immigration into this country, threatening not only our security but our way of life”. He added, “If we want to remain a free and open society, then we have to control our borders” and that “[w]e have to control the amount of future immigration into this country to prevent large pockets of radicalization from forming inside America.” (Trump, 2016b) His proposed strategy was to institute a “complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our country’s representatives can figure out what is going on” (Trump, 2015b). Later deemed the “Muslim ban”, the idea evolved into a general suspension of immigration from certain countries. During the

same June 2016 speech in which he criticized Hillary Clinton's plan, he promised, "When I am elected, I will suspend immigration from areas of the world when [sic] there is a proven history of terrorism against the United States, Europe or our allies, until we understand how to end these threats." (Trump, 2016b; see also Trump, 2016a)

Compared to Obama's mixed securitizing and desecuritizing rhetoric, Trump's speech acts were more focused, direct and one-sided. While both Bush and Obama had interlaced their border security policies with expansionist rhetoric – and in the case of Obama, expansionist actions like DACA – Trump solely promoted the securitizing basic discourse through repetition of threatening images of immigrants as criminals and terrorists. His repeated signature campaign promise for a border wall paid for by Mexico not only perpetuated the urgency for an immigration barrier, but it strengthened the link between border security and the securitizing frame. It also strengthened the construction of Mexican immigrants as a threatening Other from whom protection was urgent. The insistence that Mexico would pay for the wall helped to propel Trump's message into mainstream discourse. There was nothing novel about a border fence – indeed, barriers were largely in place already owing to previous legislation like the REAL ID Act (2005) and the Secure Fence Act (2006). The suggestion that Mexico would pay for the wall made Trump's rhetoric more sensational and newsworthy. The press naturally amplified the rhetoric and political elites responded. Nor was there anything new about linking immigrants to criminality (a persistent metaphor in the American immigration debate for decades) and terrorism (President Bush's administration had pushed this association after 9/11). Trump, however, garnered attention for his employment of these frames by going beyond the typical criminal immigrant narratives, and emphasizing with specificity that immigrants were "rapists", drug-dealers (Trump, 2015a), "killers" and "gang members" (Rappeport & Haberman, 2016), again, making his frame novel and attracting increased attention. In both cases, the securitizing basic discourse commanded a larger proportion of overall immigration discourse. Trump was thus able to disrupt and reshape immigration discourse while still recycling the familiar securitizing border security and criminality framing devices.

Trump was also innovative in that he deliberately presented his policies as different from his predecessors'. His hardline approach broke with the bipartisan climate aimed at achieving CIR (a key component of his competitors' presidential campaigns). Rather than appealing to both sides of the debate – expansionists and restrictionists – Trump

emphasized threats. In doing so, Trump constructed and mainstreamed a new Self identity that stood in opposition to the more moderate (at least by comparison) Selves constructed under Bush and Obama. The impact of this was that it potentially gave the already polarized press, other political elites and the public a new identity to align with. While the extent to which the press and public rallied around this message is explored more deeply in Chapter 7, Trump's electoral success – and the fact that immigration was a key part of his agenda – suggest that the securitizing Self he constructed through his securitizing speech acts may have resonated strongly with audiences.

6.3 Conclusion

Several critical insights emerge from this sixteen-year analysis of political discourse, providing a rare dissection of the immigration security debate spanning two presidencies. First, there were striking similarities between the Obama and Bush presidencies on immigration. Both presidents generally used compassionate rhetoric that minimized the distance between the American Self and the immigrant Other – specifically, the two presidents repeatedly invoked shared values and ambitions. Both also signaled to their audiences the desire to establish compromise through CIR legislation – with Obama explicitly linking his ambitions to his predecessor's. Both presidents also saw these efforts fail in Congress repeatedly. While their rhetoric was largely compassionate, the two leaders sent securitizing signals in their policies: Bush oversaw the passage of the PATRIOT Act, the merger of immigration enforcement agencies under the DHS, and the waiver of several laws for border fence construction. Under Obama's presidency, the DHS systematized “deportation raids” in Operation Border Guardian, and detention of unauthorized immigrants during the 2014 migrant crisis drew significant mainstream criticism. Still, 9/11 precipitated a terrorist immigrant link that Bush repeatedly invoked, leading to a generally stronger securitizing discourse under his administration; Obama avoided this narrative, keeping his overall discourse more balanced between the securitizing and desecuritizing frames.

Trump, on the other hand, led an anti-immigrant campaign that exclusively invoked securitizing frames. If Bush and Obama had constructed relatively similar Selves through their rhetoric, Trump's abandonment of moderation constructed a securitizing Self that was substantially new. Interestingly, Trump used familiar securitizing frames – border security and criminality – but in hyperbolic ways, making his messages more novel, and perhaps more newsworthy. His electoral victory – even in the face of

criticism from members in his own political party – suggests that repetition, and focused innovative securitizing discourse can both tap into and heighten anxieties, achieving a critical mass more effectively than compromising efforts like CIR. Not only does this align with framing literature that suggests a strong focused message is more effective than a moderated ambiguous one (e.g., Chong & Druckman, 2007), but it also confirms the negativity bias. To the extent that Trump’s electoral victory reflects his immigration agenda, securitizing discourse (that portrays immigrants using negative narratives like criminality and terrorism) driven by a few individuals may be more effective than desecuritizing messages employed by a wide array of actors. While the impact of desecuritizing discourse cannot be wholly dismissed – Spanish language radio and other press actors were able to mobilize significant popular protest of the 2005 criminalization bill through their amplification of pro-immigrant frames – it has yet to produce a victory on the scale of Trump’s presidential election.

Still, the media’s influence on the immigration security debate was significant. Press frames and their impact are discussed in greater detail in the following chapter, but it is worth highlighting the magnitude of media impact on congressional legislation. The press backlash to the 2005 House criminalization bill prompted the Senate to pass a CIR bill that introduced pathways toward legalization and an expanded temporary worker program; similarly, press criticism of both that bill and the 2007 CIR bill effectively killed both attempted legislations (a further indicator of the likely greater strength of securitizing frames over desecuritizing frames). Bush’s and congresspersons’ outspoken frustrations that media was driving the immigration debate provide preliminary evidence of not only press independence from political elites, but also admission of press influence on the political process. The attempt to push the 2007 CIR bill through Congress quietly and quickly before a media narrative could impede legislation underscores both the fear that political elites had of the press, as well as the power of press framing.

Another interesting finding was the predominance of the subjective narrative over objective indicators and outcomes. While there was significant variation in discourse, objective trends in immigration stayed relatively stable, as identified in the introduction. Even more striking is the resonance of Trump’s strong securitizing language and insistence on a wall at the US-Mexico border when the net flow of Mexican migrants was in the opposite direction and border apprehensions were at their

lowest since 2000 (U.S. Border Patrol, 2019). This validates key tenets of securitization theory: securitizing discourses can emerge and resonate even in the absence of an objective threat; or in the case of immigration, in the presence of countervailing evidence. Again, to the extent that Trump's 2016 victory reflected his immigration stance, his securitizing speech acts may have been key drivers of threat perceptions among audiences at a time when the threat was objectively least potent since 2000.

Two final insights are notable about the discourses and frames more generally: 1) there is significant continuity between frames over the sixteen years; and 2) a longitudinal analysis here reveals that securitizing and desecuritizing discourses frequently cooccur. On the first point, border security and criminality were key recurring components of the securitizing basic discourse. Even new developments were framed using old tropes: 9/11 produced a heightened criminal narrative (linking immigrants now to terrorism); the 2014 migrant crisis activated a border security narrative, with a focus on deportations and detention at the border; and though his insistence that Mexico would pay for it was novel, Trump's promotion of a wall fit squarely within border security. Similarly, the desecuritizing basic discourse largely tried to minimize the criminality link, seeking instead to present unauthorized immigration as a procedural and documentation issue; it also tried to shrink the distance between the Self and Other. The sixteen-year focus here showed that these frames never occur in isolation. Even if one frame or basic discourse is predominant at some point, given enough time, a securitizing basic discourse can produce a sharp desecuritizing response, and vice versa. Though they may come from different (usually oppositional) actors, the polarizing nature of the immigration debate saw both accusations of amnesty and inhumanity directed at both Bush and Obama, sometimes simultaneously. Most illustrative of this effect is the inability to pass CIR legislation at any point since 2006: its border security policies have drawn criticism for being too strict, while its expansionist policies have been reduced by its critics to amnesty. The following chapter builds on these insights, using a content analysis to measure the prevalence of co-occurring frames and identify which actors aligned with the two basic discourses over time. Moreover, it aims to define what impact these frames had on public opinion and the extent to which (de)securitizing discourses were successful.

Chapter 7: Shifting Media Coverage and Public Attitudes Toward Unauthorized Immigration

Against the backdrop of shifting political elite discourse, this chapter introduces the press and audience into the (de)securitization process. Key themes that emerged in the discourse analysis were the juxtaposition of expansionist and restrictionist policies within the immigration debate; and a contestation between criminal and procedural frames. The attribution of illegality and criminality to immigrants was used to promote border security measures and restrict immigrant entry, while the procedural frame sought to remove the criminal stigma, and encourage pathways toward citizenship/legalization for unauthorized persons. This practical dichotomy underpins the analyses presented in this chapter.

Previous research sets expectations that securitizing frames will be predominant. There is near unanimous agreement that the press tends to emphasize the criminal components of immigration over positive consequences of immigration (Blinder & Allen, 2016; Dunaway et al., 2010; Igartua & Cheng, 2009; Soroka, 2006). But public opinion has largely moved in the other direction. Across a wide array of indicators, American public attitudes toward immigrants – legal or otherwise – have become increasingly tolerant since 2001 despite an expanding enforcement framework that continuously reproduces the criminal immigrant metaphor. A 2018 Pew study found that 24 percent of respondents say that legal immigration into the US should be decreased (down from 53 percent in 2001) and 32 percent say that legal immigration should be increased (up from 10 percent in 2001) (Pew Research Center, 2018b). Similarly, the share of respondents who believe immigrants strengthen the country through hard work and their talents more than doubled from 31 percent to 63 percent between 1994 and 2016, the “highest level in more than twenty years of Pew Research Center surveys” (Pew Research Center, 2016a); the share of respondents that view immigrants as a burden to the country’s jobs, housing and healthcare more than halved from 63 percent to 27 percent (Pew Research Center, 2016a). This has occurred despite record deportations and enforcement actions (notably under the Obama administration); recessionary periods and heightened economic anxiety (Pew Research Center, 2013a); and a decade-plus long record of stalemated attempts to achieve comprehensive immigration reform.

That news coverage of immigration is largely negative (e.g., Abrajano et al., 2017; Dunaway et al., 2010; Igartua & Cheng, 2009; Merolla et al., 2013; Soroka, 2006; Thorbjørnsrud, 2015) suggests at first that American attitudes are out of sync with press framing. But the effect of immigration frames on public opinion over time has received insufficient attention; while extant scholarship generally shows, unsurprisingly, that negative frames produce negative attitudes (Igartua & Cheng, 2009; Valentino, Brader, & Jardina, 2013), in the U.S. policy context, quantitative research linking public opinion and media coverage has been limited to cross-sectional studies or short-term studies centered on only some salient policies (e.g., the 2006 and 2007 CIR debates).⁶⁸

This chapter addresses that gap by analyzing media framing and public opinion over a sixteen-year (2001-2016) period, beginning with a content analysis of a range of influential actors – the executive branch, the legislative branch, cable news and print press – and a concurrent breakdown of public opinion on multiple measures of immigration attitudes. Building on the discourse analysis from the previous chapter, the content analysis focuses on constituent frames of the basic securitizing and desecuritizing discourses employed in the immigration debate. Both political elite and press rhetoric are analyzed to identify which frames prevailed under different political contexts. Next, public opinion is examined to determine how closely attitudes align with press coverage and political discourse over time. The data demonstrates not only the extent to which the public recognizes immigration as a problem (stage of identification), but also its willingness to adopt exceptional measures (stage of mobilization). Trends in public opinion are tentatively mapped to trends in political and press frames to identify potential relationships that may exist; these relationships are made more explicit in the final analysis which models audience attitudes toward exceptional measures in the immigration debate as a function of attention to politics and press actors. The main findings of these analyses are that media coverage is neither monolithic nor static: for most actors, coverage has become desecuritizing over time. Further, framing effects are evident for news actors across multiple years.

⁶⁸ McLaren et al.'s (2017) time-series study of media and public opinion notably covers a larger period than other research, 1995-2011, but their focus is on the British context. Other longitudinal analyses include those conducted by Héricourt and Spielvogel (2014) who cover 2002-2010 across Europe; and van Klingeren, Boomgaarden, Vliegthart, and de Vreese (2014) who cover 2003-2010 in Denmark and the Netherlands.

7.1 Content Analysis

7.1.1 Frames and Features Selection

Two pairs of contrasting frames (presented in table 7.1) are analyzed along three dichotomous dimensions: frame tone (securitizing and desecuritizing); frame type (issue and equivalency); and frame function (moral evaluation and remedy proposal⁶⁹). First, the attribution of criminality and illegality to immigrants is contrasted against frames that attempt to evaluate immigrants in non-criminal terms. These were regular themes in political elite discourse. The production of criminal immigrant representations in the press has also received wide scholarly attention (Thorbjørnsrud, 2015; e.g., Blinder & Allen, 2016; Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008; Innes, 2010; Kim, Carvalho, Davis, & Mullins, 2011; Suro, 2008), and deservedly so: Kim et al.'s (2011) content analysis found that crime was covered in the press more than any other consequence of immigration, including unemployment, national security, and social welfare. This prevalence has been attributed to a press tendency toward sensationalism and profit-maximizing incentives to appeal to large audiences already predisposed to anti-immigrant attitudes (Branton & Dunaway, 2009; Entman, 1990; Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000; Gilliam, Iyengar, Simon, & Wright, 1996). Kim et al. (2011: 310) argue that linking crime and immigration “will necessarily involve drama, conflict, good, and evil, the ingredients to attract a larger audience.”

Table 7.1 Immigration Content Analysis Frames

	Moral Evaluation/Equivalency	Remedy Proposal/Issue
Securitizing frame	<i>Illegal immigrant</i>	<i>Border security</i>
Desecuritizing frame	<i>Undocumented immigrant</i>	<i>Pathways to legal status</i>

⁶⁹ The moral evaluation and remedy proposal frames functions are selected for analysis here, because they represent the axes along which contestation is most likely to occur. While there is some agreement on the cause and definition of the problem of immigration, there is more debate – and thus greater competition – on how to evaluate and resolve the problem.

The content analysis here tests this inclination by examining the prevalence of labels used to *morally evaluate* immigrants as either “illegal” on the one hand and “undocumented”, “unauthorized” or “irregular” (henceforth *undocumented* frame) on the other hand. These equivalency frames (Merolla et al., 2013) reflect strategic signifier choices to either stigmatize immigrants as lawbreakers (Thorbjørnsrud, 2015) through a *securitizing* basic discourse that constructs immigrants as a threat (Innes, 2010); or a *desecuritizing* basic discourse that moves away from the immigrant criminal threat construction. The *illegal immigrant* frame has been preferred by immigration restrictionists who argue that euphemisms like “undocumented immigrant” can “mask the fundamental legal violations committed by those who overstay their visas or enter the country without one” (Merolla et al., 2013: 790; see also Santa Ana et al., 2007; Westen, 2009: 4). Conversely, Blinder and Allen (2016: 18) note that “frequently describing immigrants as illegal” contributes to “constructing a particular conception of immigration that (1) highlights the issue of legal status and (2) depicts immigrants as law-violators”, inevitably associating immigration with illegality. Pro-immigration advocates argue that this signifier “tilts[s] policy debates in favor of immigration enforcement and restriction” (Merolla et al., 2013: 793; Santa Ana et al., 2007). They argue alternative labels – like “undocumented” – can humanize immigrants and remove the criminal stigma.

Previous research shows that the *illegal immigrant* frame dominates cross-nationally and across news sources. Blinder and Allen (2016) find in their 2010-2012 content analysis of British media coverage on immigration that “illegal immigrant” was the most frequently occurring collocation of the word “immigrant”. Merolla et al. (2013) also find in their content analysis of American media from 2007 to 2011 that the *illegal* frame dwarfed the *undocumented* frame by, at its minimum, 96% to 4% (for the *Times*). Fox News invoked it at the highest rate (99%), followed in descending order by CNN, MSNBC and the *Times*. The authors also find that conservative newspapers were likelier to mention illegal immigrants in stories on immigration. Santa Ana et al. (2007) similarly find in their content analysis of immigrant press attention that the *illegal* frame dominated the *undocumented* frame in US newspapers from 2001-2005 despite President Bush’s use of *undocumented*. More generally, elite-left media have been linked to pro-immigrant frames (Figenschou & Thorbjørnsrud, 2015) while elite right

media have been found to promote anti-immigrant speakers and emphasize the problems illegal immigration creates for society (Benson & Wood, 2015: 802).

Having explored the moral evaluation axis, this chapter next operationalizes the *remedy proposal* axis by juxtaposing exceptional security measures and unexceptional policies promoted by different actors to resolve the perceived immigration problem. Issue frames from two oppositional basic discourses are examined: a restrictionist one that aims to deter immigration through border security; and an expansionist one that seeks to integrate immigrants through pathways toward legalization or citizenship. The *pathways* frame has been favored by pro-immigrant advocates while those against immigration have invoked the *border security* frame (Merolla et al., 2013). Not only do these frames fit neatly into the securitization model – as unexceptional policies and exceptional security measures respectively – but as demonstrated in the previous chapter, they represent the most persistent policies discussed in the US immigration debate (Zamith, 2013) and are both key components of CIR. Kim et al. (2011: 311) found that these two “opposite approaches to reducing illegal immigration” received the most attention across policies, including economic aid to sending countries and stricter law enforcement.⁷⁰ The salience and importance of these frames is further evidenced by their frequency in polls: in all immigration-related public opinion polls conducted in the U.S. since 2000 that were collected for this study, questions on pathways and border control dominated all other questions on specific immigration policy.⁷¹

While these two controversial policies have been the subject of persistent debates in immigration policy, the dramatic imagery of a physical barrier at the border suggests that border security may be more newsworthy, particularly for television (Kim et al.,

⁷⁰ Dekker and Scholten (2017) find in their media analysis that the economic frame is the least covered, suggesting strong reason to exclude it in content analyses of immigration.

⁷¹ Using data from the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, between 2005 and 2018, there were 203 questions asking respondents to choose between deportation and pathways as an appropriate policy solution for dealing with immigrants. The only question types that exceeded this number were questions asking respondents to list the most important issue (485 questions) and questions asking respondents to specify how important immigration was (274 questions). There were 30 poll questions during the time period that gauged support for a wall or fence; and 139 queries on whether (and in which direction) immigration levels should change.

2011; Shoemaker & Reese, 2011). The cognitive costs associated with complex pathways solutions suggest that it will receive less attention. But surprisingly, Kim et al. (2011) find parity between the *pathways*⁷² and *border security* frames in their content analysis, attributing this “coexistence of two contradicting solutions” to the “philosophical disagreement in America on how to approach the issue” (Kim et al., 2011: 311). Figenschou and Thorbjørnsrud (2015) also find that *enforcement* is only slightly more prominent than *reform* in American news coverage of immigration, and that this difference is even narrower for elite-left newspapers and broadcaster websites. Comparing both the moral evaluation and remedy proposal axes, Merolla et al. (2013) find that the framing of policy matters more than labels like “undocumented” and “illegal” in terms of producing framing effects on immigration attitudes. They also find that CNN and Fox News led in their use of anti-immigration policy frames, while MSNBC and the *Times* were more likely to use the *pathways* frame.

While a negative bias and a net plurality of securitizing frames is expected to emerge in the content analysis for both the moral evaluation and remedy proposal frame sets, this chapter builds on previous findings to determine whether these effects can be generalized across multiple political contexts and over sixteen years. Again, anti-immigrant attitudes among audiences and media tendencies toward sensationalism (Branton & Dunaway, 2009) largely converge upon negative depictions of immigrants, either as “illegals” or a threat to be deterred by erecting walls. What remains to be resolved is the extent to which these securitizing frames dominate desecuritizing labels like “undocumented” and more esoteric pathways-oriented solutions, and how this varies over time, across news sources and across varying political contexts.

⁷² The authors categorize their frame as “immigration reform”, defining it as “the effort to correct the restrictive and complicated process to become a legal alien” (Kim et al., 2011: 311). The label “pathways” is preferred here for the same concept to avoid ambiguity arising from the similarity between Kim et al.’s label and “comprehensive immigration reform”, of which both *pathways* and *border security* are constituent components.

7.1.2 Data

Television transcripts (for CNN, Fox News and MSNBC) and newspaper articles (for the *New York Times*) were downloaded from LexisNexis using the following search query and a date range of January 1, 2001, to December 31, 2016:

migran! OR migrat! OR immigra! OR refugee! OR asyl!⁷³

The search query is broad enough to capture all texts related to immigration, including stories on refugees and asylum-seekers.⁷⁴ Similar queries were used to retrieve political discourse texts from the American Presidency Project (for presidential elites), and the Congressional Record (for congressional actors). Table 7.2 lists the total number of texts retrieved for each source. Immigration coverage is lower for every actor compared to coverage of terrorism (Chapter 5), but the relative ordering between the actors is equivalent for both issues: the *Times* leads all other sources in volume of texts, while CNN leads the television media actors, followed by Fox News and MSNBC. Presidential elites have the lowest total number of associated texts – this is expected given the relative infrequency of presidential statements.

Table 7.2 Number of texts by source

Source	Number of texts
CNN	39,420
Fox News	14,666
MSNBC	7,562
New York Times	84,041
Presidential Elites	2,872
Congressional Elites	6,157
Total	154,727

⁷³ Exclamation marks denote a wildcard where migran! includes both “migrants” and “migrant”. The OR connector between root words is used as a boolean to return only articles with at least one of the root words. The word roots here are chosen to collectively return the majority of articles related to immigration. These match similar search queries used by others doing corpus linguistics analysis of immigration (e.g., Blinder & Allen, 2016).

⁷⁴ Blinder (2015) and Innes (2010) find that asylum-seekers are frequently conflated with immigrants.

7.1.3 Frame Competition

7.1.3.1 Aggregate Analysis

Using keyword and regular expression patterns as identifiers for frames, table 7.3 shows the aggregate prevalence (both total and rate of frame occurrence per ten-thousand words) of the threat frame as well as the opposing securitizing and desecuritizing frames. Details on frame features and frame extraction can be found in Appendix A. On balance, these aggregate figures confirm that a negative bias against immigrants exists in the press: along the moral evaluation axis, all actors were more likely to employ the *illegal* frame over the *undocumented* frame; and along the remedy proposal axis, all were more likely to emphasize *border security* over *pathways*. Notably, across all frames analyzed here, the alternative immigrant labels received the least attention, with a mean occurrence rate of 0.159 per ten-thousand words across all sources, while border security received the most aggregate attention at a mean occurrence of 0.919 per ten-thousand words.

Table 7.3 Immigration Aggregate Frame Prevalence by Source

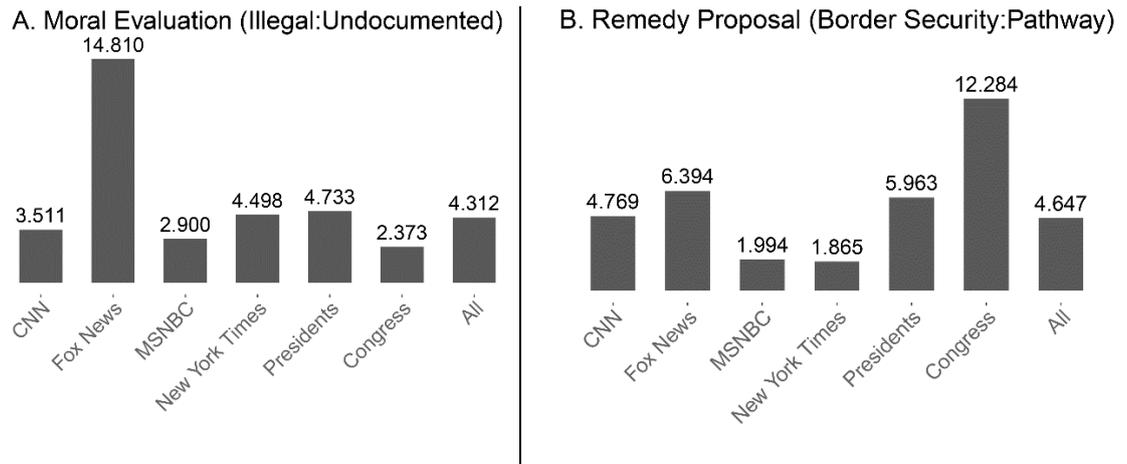
	Threat Frame	Securitizing Frames		Desecuritizing Frames	
	Immigration	Illegal	Border security	Undocumented	Pathway
<i>CNN</i>					
Total	176,738	14,782	19,850	4,210	4,162
Rate	7.114	0.595	0.799	0.169	0.168
<i>Fox News</i>					
Total	57,547	7,079	8,824	478	1,380
Rate	10.376	1.276	1.591	0.086	0.249
<i>MSNBC</i>					
Total	38,238	2,558	2,704	882	1,356
Rate	5.877	0.393	0.416	0.136	0.208
<i>New York Times</i>					
Total	223,447	13,023	5,148	2,895	2,760
Rate	24.504	1.428	0.565	0.317	0.303
<i>Presidential Elites</i>					
Total	10,737	407	1,461	86	245
Rate	14.787	0.561	2.012	0.118	0.337
<i>Congressional Elites</i>					
Total	93,937	1,507	14,164	635	1,153
Rate	8.443	0.135	1.273	0.057	0.104
All Sources					
Total	613,526	40,408	54,209	9,371	11,666
Rate	10.399	0.685	0.919	0.159	0.198

Note: Total values indicate the number of instances of each frame. Rate is calculated as the presence of the frame per ten-thousand words.

Across the press, figures 7.1A and 7.1B show that Fox News was the likeliest to use the securitizing frames. Along the moral evaluation axis, Fox News preferred the *illegal* frame by an astonishing factor of almost fifteen to one – a factor over three times higher than the next highest and five times higher than MSNBC’s ratio of coverage. Surprisingly, however, figures 7.2 and 7.3 show that Fox News and MSNBC were very similar to each other in terms of the relative coverage each gave to the securitizing and desecuritizing frames throughout the Bush administration; MSNBC, however, shifted its tone significantly by the Obama administration, offering the most desecuritizing coverage of either axis among the press. Interestingly, all actors showed a steady decline in securitizing coverage from the Bush to Obama administrations, but the decline was least steep for Fox News, especially for its coverage of remedies to immigration. This suggests that while it was more willing to accommodate alternative labels for immigrants, Fox News showed little appetite for shifting its tone on border security vis-à-vis pathways. CNN, MSNBC and the *Times*, on the other hand, all shifted toward desecuritizing labels for immigrants as well as expansionist policies.

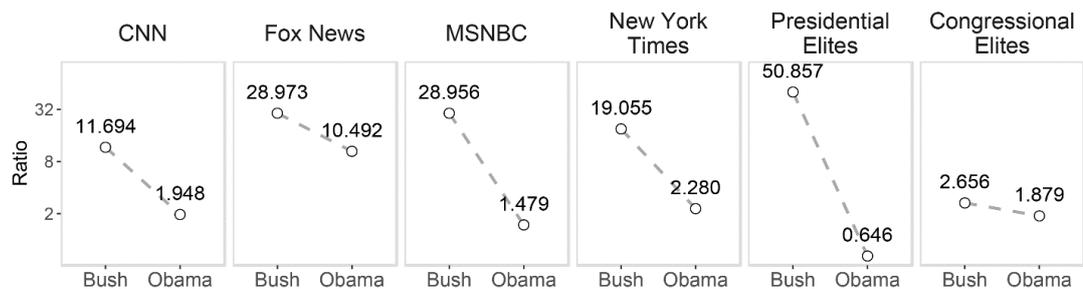
Political elites – both in the White House and in Congress – also showed a steady decline in securitizing rhetoric between the two presidential administrations. The sharpest decline was in presidential elites’ labeling of immigrants: Obama’s White House showed a preference for the *undocumented* frame after the Bush administration’s extreme preference for the *illegal* frame by a factor of 50 to one. Notably, Obama’s preference for the desecuritizing label is the only instance of any actor preferring the desecuritizing label over its oppositional securitizing label. While not as drastic, there was also a desecuritizing shift between both administrations in proposed remedies. Obama was more willing to engage the pathways debate than his predecessor. In comparison, Congress showed much less consistency across the two axes: while it was the most willing to use pro-immigrant labels, it also showed the highest preference for restrictionist security measures over expansionist policies. It covered the *border security* frame over twelve times as much as *pathways* (figure 7.1B), showing the highest preference for the *border security* frame across all actors (figure 7.3). This latter finding is consistent with previous scholarship that identifies congressional framing of immigration as being more security-centric (e.g., Frederking, 2012).

Figure 7.1 Aggregate Ratio of Securitizing Frames to Desecuritizing Frames (2001-2016)



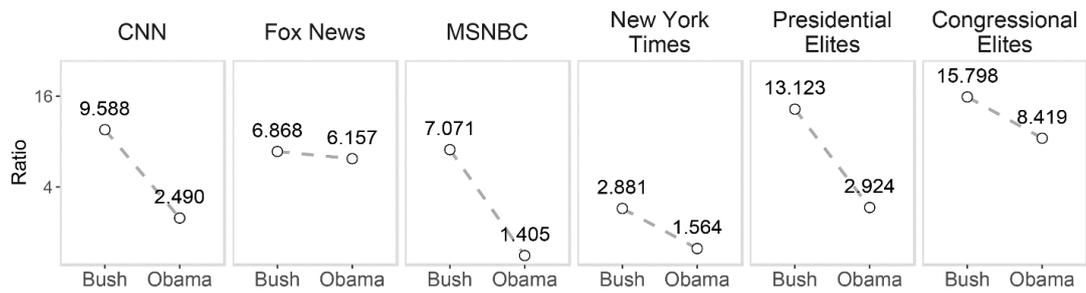
Note: Ratio is calculated by dividing the number of securitizing frames by the number of desecuritizing frames. Panel A shows the ratio of securitizing-to-desecuritizing frames for the competing moral evaluation frames, while panel B shows the ratio for the remedy proposal frames. A ratio of 1 indicates equal coverage of both frames; thus, the panels here show that securitizing coverage was predominant.

Figure 7.2 Ratio of Securitizing Frames to Desecuritizing Frames by Presidential Administration - Moral Evaluation Axis



Note: Ratio is calculated by dividing the number of securitizing frames by the number of desecuritizing frames. The y-axis is presented on a log scale. Based on ratio, all actors became increasingly desecuritizing between the Bush and Obama administrations.

Figure 7.3 Ratio of Securitized Frames to Desecuritized Frames - Remedy Proposal Axis



Note: Ratio is calculated by dividing the number of securitized frames by the number of desecuritized frames. The y-axis is presented on a log scale. Based on ratio, all actors became increasingly desecuritized between the Bush and Obama administrations.

Despite an overall preference for securitized frames, these aggregate findings demonstrate a trend toward pro-immigrant rhetoric. The findings also tentatively introduce some disconnects between press coverage (especially Fox News) and political discourse. First, all four press actors showed much less preference for *border security* than Congress – even Fox News was nearly twice as likely as Congress to invoke *pathways*. And while aggregate presidential discourse on remedies was nearly aligned with Fox News’ coverage, the latter showed little movement between the two administrations while presidential elites moved significantly. CNN moved closely with presidential elites, but, like MSNBC and the *Times*, it was slightly more willing to discuss pathways. The relatively lower coverage of *border security* by news actors compared to political elites is surprising, because the press appears to be opting out of employing dramatic and simple frames. Border walls are not only easier to understand – particularly in comparison to complex pathways policies that may be inaccessible and more cognitively costly for audiences – but they are also more captivating stories. Despite border security being more newsworthy and a larger component of legislator debate, the discussion of pathways toward citizenship/legalization is competitive, especially for MSNBC and the *Times*. While surprising, this result is consistent with previous research on the relationship between *pathways* and *border security* frames (Figenschou & Thorbjørnsrud, 2015; Kim et al., 2011).

A second major disconnect between the press and political elites is Fox News’ overall preference for the securitized *illegal* label. In general, it showed the most resistance

toward the *undocumented* label. While other press actors – CNN, MSNBC and the *Times* – had aggregate ratios that were similar to political elites, a closer inspection of these figures between administrations reveals some sharp differences. The Bush administration was much more likely to use the *illegal* frame than any of the press actors during its tenure, while the Obama administration was much more likely to invoke the *undocumented* frame during its tenure. Congressional use converged with some press actors by the time Obama was in office, but was largely out of sync with the press during the Bush years.

7.1.3.2 Quarterly Time-Series Analyses

For additional context and granularity, figures 7.4 and 7.5 break the data down into quarterly time-series and depict the proportion of securitizing frames invoked by media and political actors over time. In each panel of these two figures, the solid horizontal line at $y=0.5$ signifies a boundary where the area above the line indicates a higher proportion of securitizing coverage, and the area below indicates a higher proportion of desecuritizing coverage.⁷⁵ The vertical dashed line in the middle of each panel in both figures marks the point at which the Obama administration came into office.

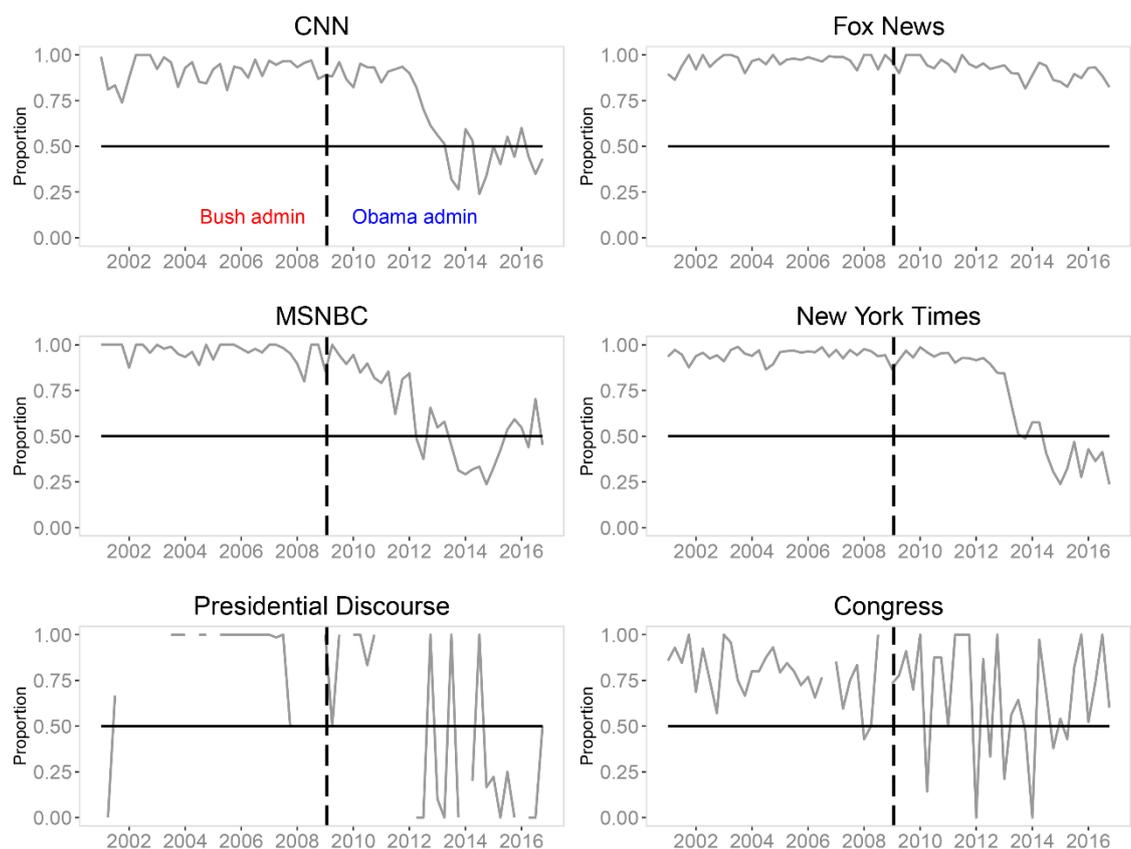
Moral Evaluation Axis

CNN, MSNBC and the *Times* all shifted from the *illegal* frame to the *undocumented* frame in 2012 (for MSNBC) and 2013 (for CNN and the *Times*). This major finding marks the first instance in extant immigration research of any actor invoking the *undocumented* frame more than the *illegal* frame and indicates a striking shift in otherwise anti-immigrant press coverage. The *Times*' shift is likely a consequence of its style guide update, which was updated in 2013 to “consider alternative terms” to “illegal immigrant” (Merolla et al., 2013: 794; see also Hallin, 2015). This shift is also evident in figure 7.6, which shows that the *Times*' rate of the *illegal* frame (again measured in occurrences per ten-thousand words) fell significantly beginning 2013 while its rate of *undocumented* climbed steeply – similar trends occur for MSNBC and CNN, though less steeply. The discursive shift, nonetheless, seems to have been led by Congress, who was the first of the six actors to privilege the *undocumented* frame. This is surprising given that Congress itself showed little overall preference for this frame,

⁷⁵ Gaps in the plot (e.g., presidential discourse between 2001 and 2003 in figure 7.4) indicate no coverage of either frame within a quarter.

but it conforms to expectations set by the cascading activation model that, as discursive entrepreneurs, political elites can set the boundaries of discourse. In this case, some press actors picked up on this cue and led with the *undocumented* frame. Fox News, on the other hand, largely ignored it and used the *illegal* frame – figure 7.6 shows that, from 2012, it trailed its news competitors in usage of the *undocumented* frame, and beginning 2014, it led all other press actors in usage of the *illegal* frame. Emblematic of this tone was Fox News’ Bill O’Reilly, who “repeatedly recounted crimes committed by illegal migrants as evidence of failed immigration policies” (Suro, 2009: 10).

Figure 7.4 Moral Evaluation Axis (Illegal and Undocumented) Frame Proportion (2001-2016)



Note: Each panel plots the proportion of securitizing frames that occur in the sum of both securitizing and desecuritizing frames for each source. The area above the horizontal line at $y = 0.5$ indicates a louder securitizing frame. The vertical dashed line in 2009 marks the beginning of the Obama presidency. Gaps in the presidential and congressional discourse plots indicate periods of no coverage of either frame.

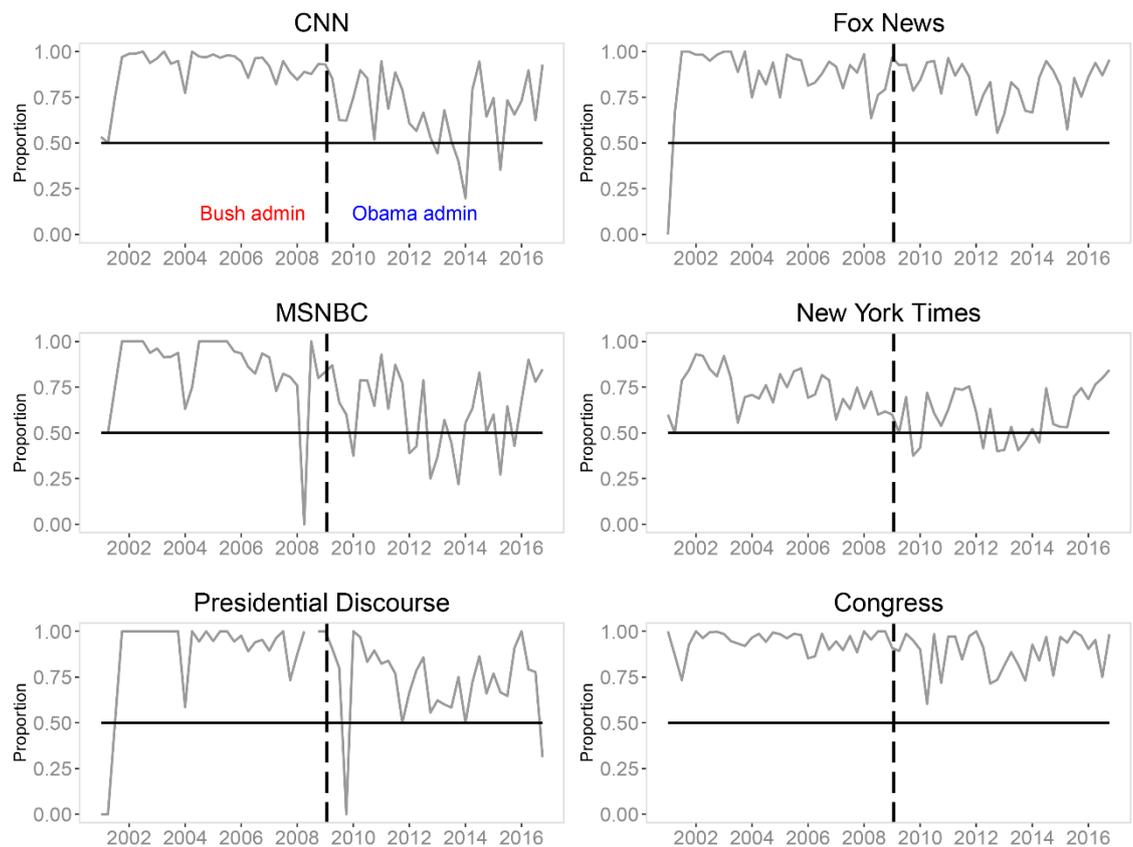
Turning to political elites, presidential and congressional actors favored the *illegal* frame in much of the first half of the time-series but shifted in later years to more mixed usage. Beginning in 2010 (for Congress) and 2012 (for the Obama administration), overall preference for the two terms oscillated, suggesting no consistent preference for either term. In general, Bush and Obama used either of these frames rarely, hence the gaps and extremes in figure 7.4.⁷⁶ Congress, similarly used both phrases infrequently during certain periods, but opted for a stronger securitizing label in the final two years, when Obama administration officials (and some news actors) were slightly likelier to invoke the desecuritizing label. The volatile and mixed usage of the two frames by political elites differed from CNN, MSNBC and the *Times* on the one hand – all of whom had higher desecuritizing coverage and less volatility – and Fox News on the other hand – which steadfastly preferred the securitizing frame.

Remedy Proposal Axis

Political elites were more active in their discussion of remedies, preferring *border security* to *pathways* (see figure 7.5). The 2006 and 2007 CIR debates in Congress were especially lopsided, owing to the withdrawal of Democrats from the conversation, giving Republicans an uncontested platform from which to promote the *border security* frame (Suro, 2009: 17). Congressional actors showed more willingness to invoke *pathways* in 2010 and 2012 – coinciding with the debate of the first CIR bill to be considered under the new administration and the president's DACA announcement respectively – but this was short-lived and never exceeded *border security* invocations. Consistent with the aggregate findings, Congress regularly prioritized border security over expansionist measures – even during the 2013 CIR bill debate, when it gave peak attention to the *pathways* frame (see figure 7.7), it devoted nearly eight times as much attention to the *border security* component of the bill.

⁷⁶ Low levels of usage will yield more extreme proportions as shown in presidential discourse in figure 7.4. In the second and third quarter of 2012, for example, there were a low number of invocations of the *undocumented* frame, but no invocations of the *illegal* frame – this results in an extreme proportion of zero. In the final quarter of 2012, however, there were two invocations of the *illegal* frame, and none of the *undocumented* frame – yielding an extreme proportion of one.

Figure 7.5 Remedy Proposal Axis (Border Security and Pathways) Frame Proportion



Note: Each panel plots the proportion of securitizing frames that occur in the sum of both securitizing and desecuritizing frames for each source. The area above the horizontal line at $y = 0.5$ indicates a louder securitizing frame. The vertical dashed line in 2009 marks the beginning of the Obama presidency. Gaps in the presidential discourse plot indicate periods of no coverage of either frame.

Presidential rhetoric was also unbalanced during this time. Even Obama's 2012 DACA announcement did not upend the administration's emphasis on border security. Given that 2012 was a general election year, this may have been a political strategy to balance a tough message on immigration while energizing a democratic base through anti-deportation policies. Still, compared to the Bush administration, the Obama presidency showed a narrower preference for the *border security* frame over the *pathways* frame.

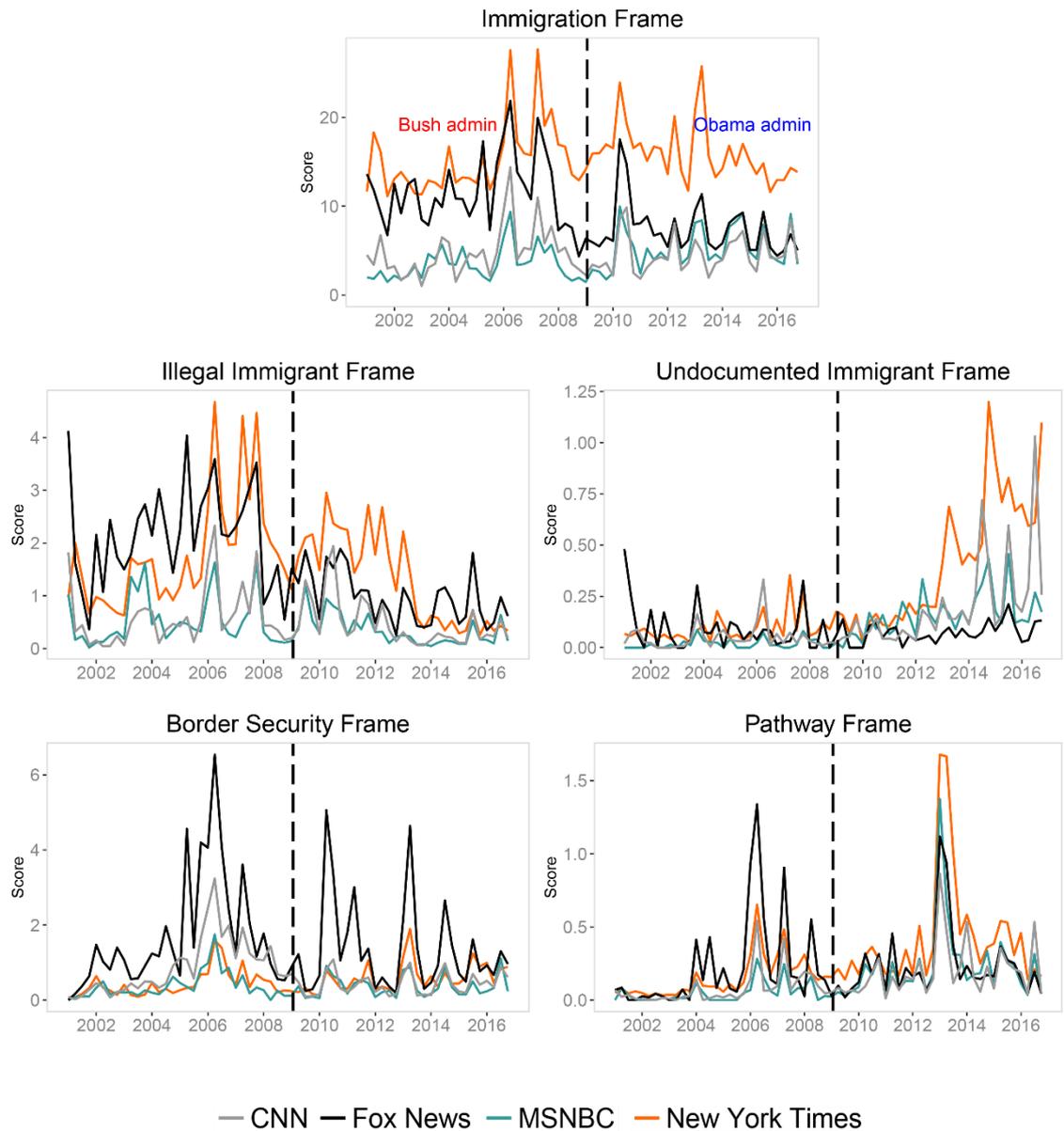
Border security dominated press coverage during the Bush administration as well. Again, during the 2006 and 2007 CIR debates, conservative news actors – like Fox News and CNN's Lou Dobbs (Akdenizli, 2008: 57; Facchini et al., 2017) – capitalized

on Republican infighting and Democratic silence by filling the “leadership vacuum” (Suro, 2009: 14) and emphasizing border security. Surprisingly, Fox News led other media in its *pathways* coverage during the 2006 and 2007 CIR bill debates (see figure 7.6), but only to criticize it as “amnesty” (Suro, 2009: 3)⁷⁷ – and it still gave much more attention to the *border security* frame at this time too. As discussed in the previous chapter, Conservative media’s exceptionally vocal coverage contributed to derailing both bills. Other evidence confirms that coverage was heavily one-sided during 2007: a Brookings study found that “Immigration was not in the top 10 stories for evening programs” for MSNBC, while “it was the third biggest story” for Fox News in 2007 (Akdenizli, 2008: 57). Looking at specific programs, MSNBC’s Chris Matthews filled only 5.1% of his show with immigration coverage against Bill O’Reilly’s 19.4% on Fox News during the 2007 debate (Akdenizli, 2008: 53) – essentially “the conservative talkers and bloggers roared” while liberal actors were muted (Suro, 2009: 18).

Similarly, Fox News accelerated its coverage of the *border security* frame immediately following the bipartisan Senate-passed bill in June 2013. The bill – which proposed a path to citizenship alongside \$40 billion in border security (The Guardian, 2014) including provisions for a two-layered 700-mile border fence (U.S. Congress, 2013) – generated qualitatively different coverage for different sources. While other news sources certainly addressed the border security components of this bill, they were less one-sided than Fox News – the *Times* and MSNBC instead focused more attention on the *pathways* component (figure 7.6).

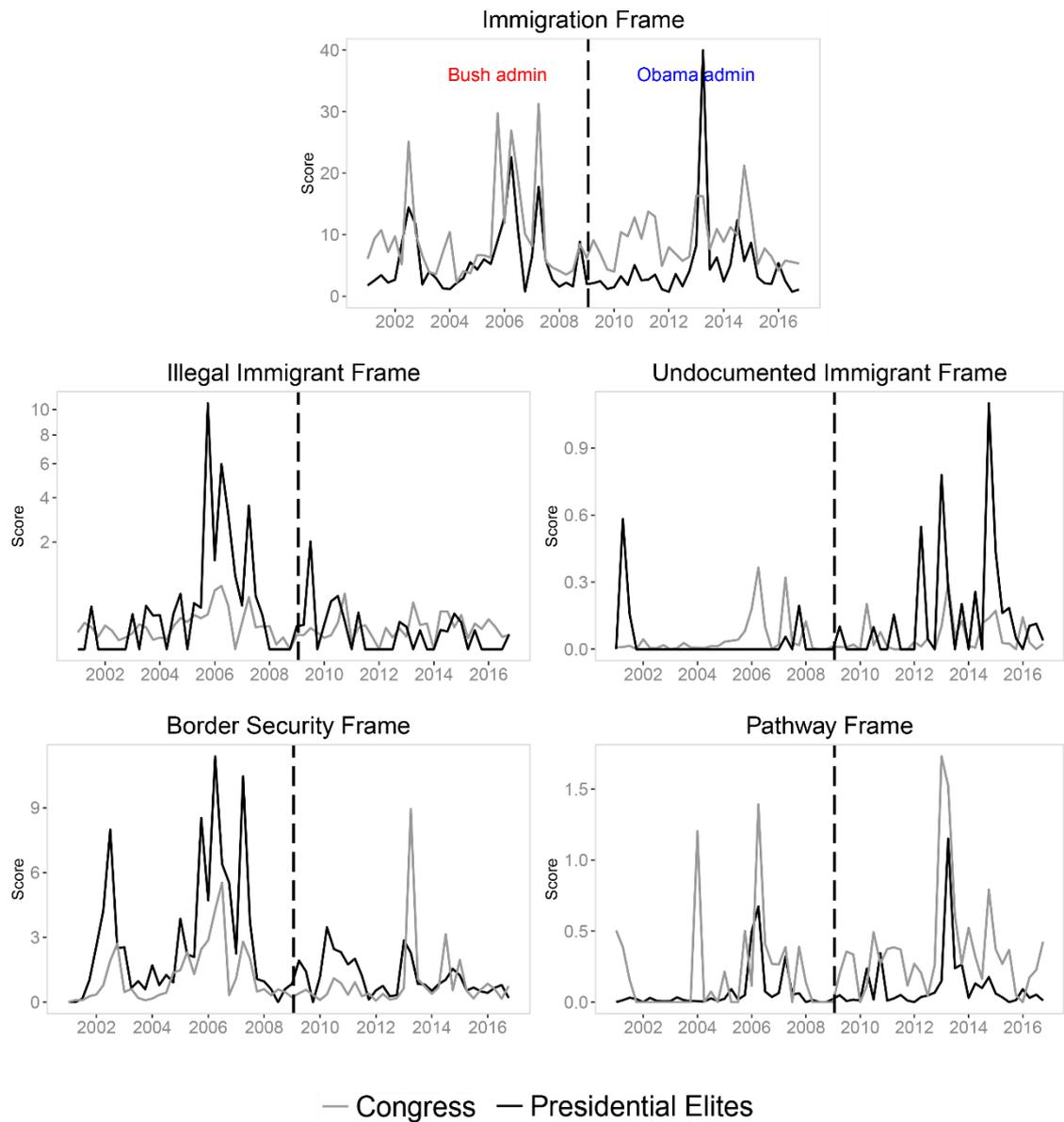
⁷⁷ See Appendix C for annual time-series data of the *amnesty* frame across all actors. Fox News’ coverage rate of the *amnesty* frame reaches its highest points in 2006 and 2007 respectively, lining up with its increased attention to both the *pathways* and *border security* frames. Fox News leads its competitors in the *amnesty* frame by over a factor of two in 2006, and by a slightly smaller margin in 2007. Lou Dobbs brought CNN close behind in both years.

Figure 7.6 Frame Coverage as Word per Ten-Thousand for News Media



Note: Each panel plots the rate of a specific frames per ten-thousand words for each news media source. The vertical dashed line in 2009 marks the beginning of the Obama administration. The panel in the first row represents the threat frame, while the panels in the second and third row represent each of the securitizing (left) and desecuritizing (right) frames for the moral evaluation (second row) and remedy proposal (third row) axes.

Figure 7.7 Frame Coverage as Word per Ten-Thousand for Political Elites



Note: Each panel plots the rate of a specific frames per ten-thousand words for political elites. The vertical dashed line in 2009 marks the beginning of the Obama administration. The panel in the first row represents the threat frame, while the panels in the second and third row represent each of the securitizing (left) and desecuritizing (right) frames for the moral evaluation (second row) and remedy proposal (third row) axes. For visualization, the y-axis on the *Illegal Immigrant Frame* plot uses a square root scale to accommodate high presidential values while still keeping congressional trends visible.

In general, Fox News covered the *border security* frame at high rates throughout the period analyzed. Not only was it more likely to cover *border security* over *pathways* in

all quarters (except for the first quarter in 2001⁷⁸), its coverage rate exceeded all other press actors. Conversely, CNN, MSNBC and the *Times* showed a stronger appetite for the *pathways* frame than both Congress and Fox News, especially during Obama's presidency. For CNN, the sudden drop in relative attention to *border security* in 2009 corresponded with Lou Dobbs' exit from his primetime program. Regarded at the time as "perhaps the nation's most visible critic of illegal immigrants" (Foltenflik, 2009), as demonstrated in his routine criticism of the 2007 CIR bill as amnesty and lacking on border security (Akdenizli, 2008: 52; Merolla et al., 2013: 792), Dobbs "led the way in characterizing unauthorized immigrants as threats to the health and safety of ordinary Americans, portraying them as a category of people who are not merely undesirable but who need to be expelled in order to preserve the nation." (Suro, 2009: 9-10; see also Facchini et al., 2017; Merolla et al., 2013) His CNN replacement, John King, on the other hand, was noted at the time for being "more consistent with CNN's intended brand as a source of objective reporting" (Foltenflik, 2009). The lineup change was followed by increased desecuritizing coverage throughout Obama's presidency.

Unlike its competitors, the *Times* showed less deviation toward the extremes, and particularly during the Obama administration, it straddled the center line, suggesting that its coverage was the most balanced across actors for the remedy proposal axis. This strongly mirrors the aggregate findings (figure 7.1B), which show that the *Times* was closest out of all actors examined here to giving equal coverage. The *Times* also emphasized the *pathways* frame at the highest rate through most of the Obama administration (figure 7.6), suggesting it had the strongest desecuritizing coverage across all actors along the remedy proposal axis.

Still, in the final years of the analysis, coverage of *border security* begins to rise for all press actors. This rise coincides with the 2016 general election campaign season, during which presidential candidate Donald Trump's anti-immigrant rhetoric triggered intense media attention toward his proposal for a border wall to be funded by Mexico. Both the novelty and newsworthiness of his candidacy and hardline immigration message drew significant press attention as well as responses from other political elites

⁷⁸ This early preference for the *pathways* frame may have been a response to President Bush's efforts to promote diplomacy with Mexico when he first entered office.

(including fellow White House contenders), further amplifying the *border security* frame in campaign coverage, and leaving little space for discussion of expansionist policies. The temporal parameters of this research preclude an analysis of whether the press' orientation to Trump was persistent or if some actors – like the *Times*, MSNBC and CNN – were able to regain their autonomy once the novelty of a new discourse wore off and competing actors had sufficient time to reintroduce pro-immigrant messages into the discursive marketplace. The analysis here is also limited to the volume of frame coverage rather than the *tone* or *valence* of coverage – while the *Times*, MSNBC and CNN undoubtedly increased their coverage of the wall during Trump's candidacy, it is possible that the coverage was critical rather than supportive.⁷⁹

7.1.4 Summary of Content Analysis

The aggregated and time-series data converge upon similar findings and reveal previously undiscovered trends in framing that indicate a profound transformation in media coverage of immigration. While previous research literature has largely found that criminal metaphors and anti-immigrant press coverage are predominant, the results here show that some media actors became increasingly pro-immigrant and moved away from the criminal characterization by the end of 2016. For example, previous research found that the *illegal* frame dominated the *undocumented* frame by at least 96% to 4% as recently as 2011. The analysis here shows that in several instances, CNN, MSNBC and the *Times* used the *undocumented* frame more than the *illegal* frame. They also showed an increased willingness to discuss expansionist policies alongside restrictionist border security measures during the Obama presidency, indicating a sea change from the 2006 and 2007 CIR debates, during which only conservative commentators were vocal. The increased attention to the *pathways* frame signaled a change in the perceived problem of immigration from a security threat to an issue centered on documentation, legalization and citizenship. Political elites also showed more willingness to invoke the *pathways* and *undocumented* frames during the Obama administration.

Despite this overlap between the press and political elites, however, there are noteworthy differences in relative attention to frames that indicate a disconnect between both sets of actors. Along the moral evaluation axis, the press was more

⁷⁹ This limitation is discussed more deeply in Chapter 8.

consistent – CNN, MSNBC and the *Times* became more desecuritizing over time, while Fox News was consistently securitizing. Political elites showed volatility along the moral evaluation axis during the Obama years – while this was a shift from largely securitizing discourse under the Bush administration, presidential and congressional actors were less consistent than the press. Another major difference was that congressional actors showed a significant preference for discussing border security over pathways toward legalization/citizenship. While this tone was shared by Fox News (and to a lesser degree, CNN), MSNBC and the *Times* were more willing to invoke pathways.

In summary, three trends stand out in the content analysis. First, Fox News led press actors in its coverage of securitizing frames while CNN, MSNBC and the *New York Times* led in coverage of desecuritizing frames. The combination of Fox News' preference for the securitizing frame along both the moral evaluation and remedy proposal axes creates the expectation that it had a strong securitizing effect. Second, *over time*, desecuritizing frames became louder in some cases. The criminality and *border security* frames rates declined – even for Fox News – while formal stylistic changes and discursive shifts propelled the *undocumented* frame to substantial growth in CNN, MSNBC and the *Times*. Even though Fox News maintained a high ratio of coverage of securitizing frames, its overall rate of securitizing frames shrank over the years, at a time when CNN, MSNBC and the *Times* shifted toward desecuritizing labels and slightly more competitive coverage of the *pathways* frame. All three of the latter press actors are thus likely to have produced a desecuritizing effect, particularly during Obama's second term. Finally, press coverage frequently drifted from political elite rhetoric, suggesting a disconnect between the two. Press coverage was less volatile along the moral evaluation axis and more willing to employ the desecuritizing frame for both axes. The effect of political elites as a whole is uncertain – while Congress and executive branch actors alike largely invoked the border security frame over pathways, both were mixed in their moral evaluation of immigrants during Obama's term. These concurrent mixed signals may be offsetting each other, limiting framing effects altogether. The next two sections explore whether framing effects occurred by linking these trends in messaging to evolving public opinion.

7.2 Longitudinal Public Opinion

This section explores trends in aggregate public opinion to assess whether attitudes match trends in framing. Preliminary evidence of framing effects is provided by mapping audience reactions to press and political elite frames across multiple measures of attitudes toward immigration. These measures include polls that ask respondents to indicate the most important problem (MIP); satisfaction with current levels of immigration; preference for deportation over pathways; and support for building a border wall or security fence. The first two sets of polls measure respondents' anxiety towards immigration (the identification component of securitization), while the latter two measure audience approval for proposed remedies (the mobilization component).

Previous research has shown that the public is largely critical of irregular immigration (Beyer & Matthes, 2015) – more so than news media (Hallin, 2015) – and that exposure to frames linking immigrants to crime stimulate negative attitudes toward immigrants (Igartua & Cheng, 2009; Jacobs, Meeusen, & d'Haenens, 2016; Valentino et al., 2013). These conclusions lead to the expectation that public opinion, though largely anti-immigrant, will otherwise follow trends in news media frames. The content analysis in the preceding section showed that while securitizing news frames dominated throughout the Bush administration, the rhetoric later dampened across all press actors, if not in proportional coverage (e.g., CNN, MSNBC and the Times), then in overall invocation rate (e.g., Fox News). Political elite rhetoric was more mixed – while Congress and presidential elites remained largely devoted to border security throughout the sixteen years, they were mixed on moral evaluations. In this context, the following section analyzes trends in aggregate American immigration attitudes to assess which actors public opinion on immigration aligned most closely with.

7.2.1 Data

Poll data was retrieved from the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research and classified into relevant categories.⁸⁰ For each category, uninformative and neutral responses like “Don't Know” or “Decline to Answer” were discarded. Polls with multiple responses (e.g., those using a likert scale) were collapsed into a binary

⁸⁰ The following keyword search query was used to gather all polls:

migran% OR migrat% OR immigra% OR refugee% or asyl%

oppositional structure. For example, the responses “strongly favor” and “somewhat favor” were collapsed into a single category (by summing their percentages), while “strongly oppose” and “somewhat oppose” were collapsed into a separate category. Multiple polls that were asked on the same day were averaged to simplify scatterplot visualizations. Table 7.4 provides a summary of the data collected for each class of polls.

Table 7.4 Public Opinion Data Summary

	Number of poll questions	Average sample size
<i>Identification</i>		
MIP	435	1132
Levels	124	1614
<i>Mobilization</i>		
Pathway/Deport	158	1465
Fence	37	1210

7.2.2 Stage of Identification: Audience Assessment of Threat

Figure 7.8 shows the percentage of respondents that indicated immigration was the most important problem (MIP) facing the country⁸¹ (solid black represents the loess smoothed curve while black points represent individual poll results). For comparison, other issue areas (the economy, healthcare and terrorism) are also plotted. Anxiety

⁸¹ While the MIP polls took various forms, they were similarly worded and the most commonly asked version of this question was:

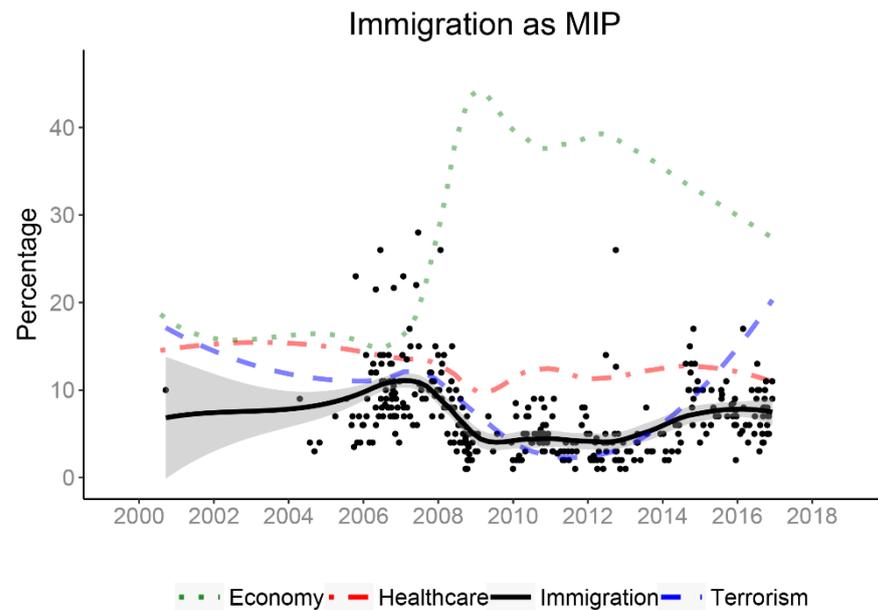
Which of the following issues would you say is most important to you in deciding how to vote for Congress?...Education, Social Security, retirement and investments, terrorism, health care/Rx (prescription drugs), the economy, jobs, taxes, crime and safety, environment, national defense/foreign affairs/Iraq, national deficit/spending, energy, gas prices, immigration

The data was filtered to retain only responses related to immigration – in this subset, the three most frequent available responses were “Immigration” (n=278), “Illegal Immigration” (n=131) and “Immigration issues” (n=8).

towards immigration has for the most part remained low in comparison to other salient issues. Concern grew from 2006 to 2007, coinciding with the heavy conservative media criticism of the two CIR debates that occurred in both years. The preceding content analysis showed that Fox News and CNN (during Lou Dobbs' tenure) covered the *border security* frame at their highest levels in 2006 and at high levels again in 2007. The *illegal* frame was at its highest coverage in the *Times* during these two years as well, with Fox News coverage close behind. Immigration's overtaking of terrorism as the MIP between 2010 and 2013 also corresponds closely to news coverage – Fox News covered the *border security* frame at its second highest overall rate in 2010, and its third highest in 2013. The *Times* also covered the *illegal* frame at high rates during this time frame – its last time before switching to the *undocumented* frame. Importantly, however, all news media devoted significant attention to the *pathways* frame from late 2012 through 2013 (perhaps driven by Obama's 2012 DACA announcement). This suggests that immigration as the MIP might be multifaceted: respondents may be expressing concern not only toward immigration as a threat, but also as a problem to be resolved (e.g., through pathways toward citizenship).⁸²

⁸² Figure 7.8 should be interpreted with caution given that it reflects only what individuals listed as the most important problem. Research on immigration attitudes suggests that anti-immigrant sentiments rise during recessionary periods (Burns & Gimpel, 2000; Dunaway et al., 2010; Kwak & Wallace, 2018). The MIP data obscures this, because respondents may have listed the economy as the MIP during the global economic recession over immigration. In reality, anxiety about immigration may also be increasing, as a lower order concern. For clarity, other public opinion indicators are assessed in this section.

Figure 7.8 Immigration as the Most Important Problem



Note: Black scatter points reflect the percentage of individuals that selected immigration as the MIP; solid and dotted lines reflect loess smoothed curves. The shaded region represents the 95% confidence interval for the immigration smoothed curve. Data was retrieved from the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research.

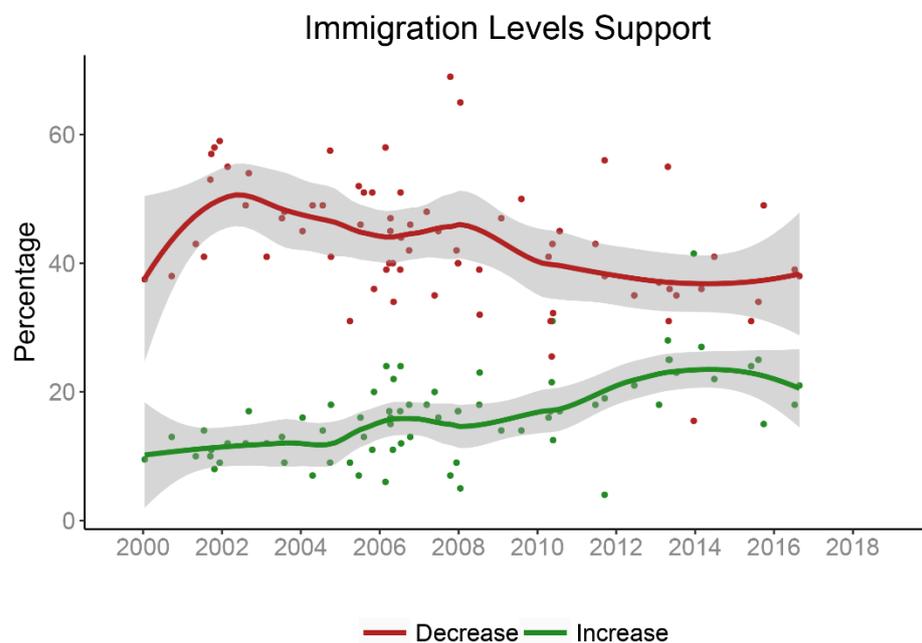
To explore this possibility further, an additional measure of immigration opinion was considered. Figure 7.9 – which shows the percentage of respondents that favored increasing/decreasing immigration levels⁸³ – supports this dual interpretation. The 2006 and 2007 CIR debates were marked by a brief leveling off of support for increasing the level of immigration – in fact, data points between 2006 and 2008 suggest that support briefly decreases. This reflects, again, the “roars” of conservative and anti-immigrant media. Following a brief slump in pro-immigration attitudes around the 2008 recession – during which Americans expectedly see immigrants as a threat in the labor market and thus want to see immigration lessened – support for increasing the level of immigration recovered around 2009, and steadily climbed, narrowing significantly during years when later MIP scores were high. The difference between support for increasing and decreasing levels of immigration shrank from its December 2001 peak of 50% to a remarkable 4% in May of 2010, just before the Senate passed its CIR Act

⁸³ The highest frequency question in the levels category was:

Should legal immigration into the United States be kept at its present level, increased, or decreased?

of 2010. The next lowest difference (6%) occurs in May 2013, just before the Senate voted on its CIR bill. What differed between the 2006 and 2007 CIR debates on the one hand and the ones that occurred during the Obama presidency on the other hand was that conservative frames were largely uncontested in the first round. As securitizing frames became less prominent and CNN, MSNBC and the *Times* increased their desecuritizing coverage, public opinion en masse appears to have followed their cues.

Figure 7.9 Support for Immigration Levels



Note: The plot shows the percentage of polled individuals that either favored increasing (green) or decreasing (red) immigration levels. Scatter points represent individual poll results and solid lines represent loess smoothed curves. Shaded regions represent 95% confidence intervals.

While MIP scores then do not necessarily demonstrate a securitizing or desecuritizing effect, they do show that public concern about immigration co-occurs with periods of heightened immigration coverage in news media and political discourse. Read alongside the levels data, however, it becomes clearer that periods of high immigration concern can also coincide with rising support for increasing immigration levels. That the narrowest margins on the immigration levels data occurred during the CIR debates in 2010 and 2013 suggests that the heightened coverage of the *pathways* frame in those

years – which would have facilitated immigration – may have resonated more strongly than the *border security* frame – which would have decreased immigration.

7.2.3 Stage of Mobilization: Audience Assessment of Exceptional Measures

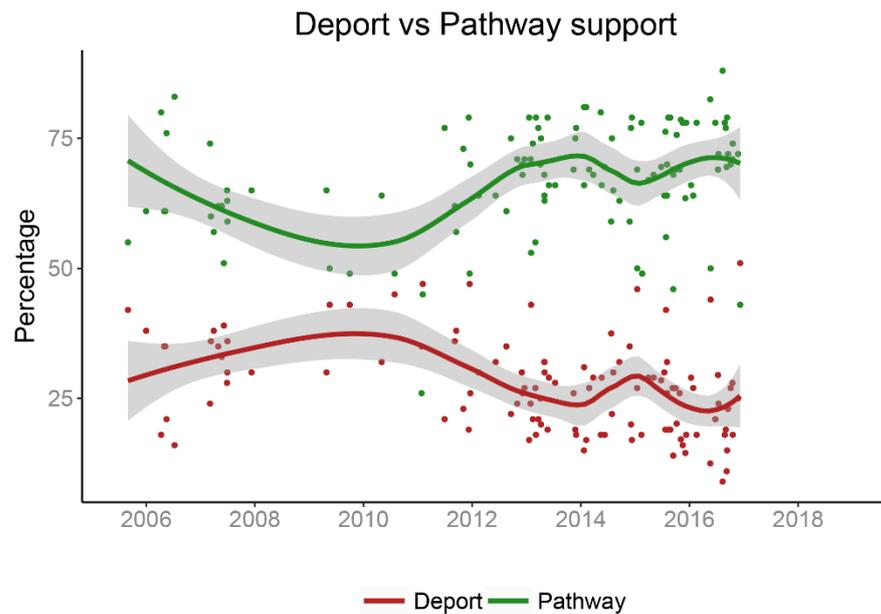
Figures 7.10 and 7.11 support these inferences and show directly that, since 2010 – again, the year the Senate passed a CIR bill – public support for pathways increased, while support for deportation and a border wall dropped.⁸⁴ In both cases, this suggests a reversal of a previous trend toward more restrictionist attitudes, particularly during the global recession. Figure 7.10 shows that support for deportation was growing and support for pathways was shrinking, but both leveled off in about 2009, before reversing in 2010. This coincided with a general desecuritizing shift in press coverage for CNN, MSNBC and the *Times*.

⁸⁴ The most frequently occurring question in the deport/pathways category was:

Which statement comes closest to your view about how the immigration system should deal with immigrants who are currently living in the US illegally? The immigration system should...allow them a way to become citizens provided they meet certain requirements, allow them to become permanent legal residents, but not citizens, or identify and deport them?

The most frequently occurring question in the border wall category was:

Do you favor or oppose building a wall along the US-Mexico border to try to stop illegal immigration?

Figure 7.10 Support for Deportation versus Pathways

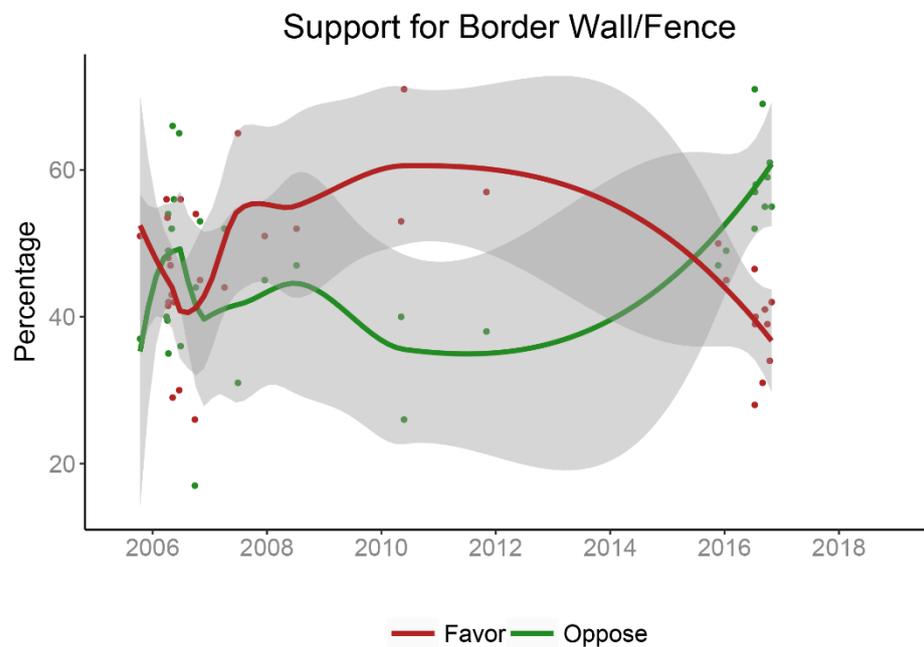
Note: The plot shows the percentage of individuals that preferred either deporting unauthorized immigrants (red) or providing pathways toward citizenship/legalization (green). Scatter points represent individual poll results and solid lines represent loess smoothed curves. Shaded regions represent 95% confidence intervals.

Both figures 7.10 and 7.11 also suggest that the public rejected political elite cues in some cases. Support for pathways declined while support for deportation increased in the lead up to the Obama presidency. However, Obama's high deportation record may have increased public resistance toward deportation. Public support for deportations dropped in consecutive years of record deportations.⁸⁵ Interestingly, support for deportations began to increase again in 2014, perhaps a reaction to the surge in unaccompanied children from Central America and resulting anti-immigrant protests (Marlow, 2015). In further evidence of rejecting political elite cues, neither President Obama's 2014 executive action to expand the number of irregular immigrants allowed to stay in the US (Obama, 2014a) nor congressional efforts to respond to the border crisis through its Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act in the same year staved off this rise. Instead, the public followed the media's cues here too: border security coverage had increased for all four news actors analyzed here in 2014. The public did

⁸⁵ The United States Department of Homeland Security provides the following estimates for removals under Obama: 391,283 (2009); 381,593 (2010); 385,778 (2011); 415,900 (2012); 433,034 (2013); 405,589 (2014); 326,962 (2015); and 340,056 (2016). (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2017)

not reverse course again until presidential candidate Donald Trump called for deporting immigrants and building a wall along the border (Goo, 2015b), demonstrating yet another instance of the public rejecting political elite cues.⁸⁶ Figure 7.11 shows that, for the first time since Obama became president, the majority of Americans shifted to opposing the wall following Trump's 2015 statements.⁸⁷ The shift in public opinion further validates the possibility that increased news coverage of the *border security* frame during the 2016 presidential campaign by the *Times*, MSNBC and CNN may have largely been critical of Trump's policies.

Figure 7.11 Support for Border Wall



Note: The plot shows the percentage of individuals that either favor (red) or oppose (green) a border wall. Scatter points represent individual poll results and solid lines represent loess smoothed curves. Shaded regions represent 95% confidence intervals.

⁸⁶ This suggests that Trump's general election victory (his loss of the popular vote notwithstanding) may not be entirely attributable to his immigration policies.

⁸⁷ Confidence intervals in figure 7.11 are spread out, because of the shortage of polls between 2008 and 2015, indicating some uncertainty about exactly when majorities shift, but it is nonetheless evident that the majority of Americans opposed the wall after Trump's statements were made.

7.2.4 Summary of Longitudinal Aggregate-Level Public Opinion Analysis

The analysis thus far has demonstrated overlaps between trends in press coverage and aggregate public opinion on immigration. During periods of high securitizing coverage and silenced desecuritizing coverage (i.e., the 2006 and 2007 CIR debates), the public expressed a lower tolerance for immigrant levels and a greater willingness to erect border barriers or deport. Consistent with press coverage, however, public opinion has become increasingly tolerant and expansionist toward immigration over time, even during periods of record deportations and anti-immigrant political rhetoric. The end of Obama's presidency marked, for the first time since before his presidency began, greater public opposition to a border wall than support for it. It also witnessed decreasing support for deportation and growing support for pathways toward legalization and/or citizenship. The content analysis illustrates that these changes in public opinion largely co-occurred with desecuritizing movements in news coverage.

The findings also add to existing research by illustrating how immigration is covered and perceived not only during salient periods of crisis and political debate – like the CIR debates and the unaccompanied migrant children border crisis in 2013 – but also in the periods in between. This is important, because immigration is itself not an episodic or cyclical phenomenon, but a steady process, and the results here show how both the media and public response vary by context. During periods of dominant anti-immigrant press coverage – as during the 2006 and 2007 Republican-led CIR debates – the public responded similarly negatively, despite Republican politicians' own calls for tolerance and laying the blame for failed legislative attempts on fearmongering in the rightwing press (Pew Research Center, 2013b; Suro, 2009: 17-18). Silence and a lack of counterbalancing pro-immigrant voices in media may have enabled these uncontested securitizing frames to harden public attitudes. During periods when immigration was less salient, the public still seemed to get its cues from the press. As some news sources shifted toward more desecuritizing or balanced coverage over time, public opinion followed. This is especially evident during Obama's presidency, following the departure of Lou Dobbs from CNN and the increased replacement of the *illegal* frame by the *undocumented* frame to qualify immigrants.

Importantly, the public softening on immigration seems unrelated to political elite discourse and action: Obama's record deportations, tough stance on immigration (Hennessy-Fiske, 2016), and overall preference for border security in rhetoric and

practice did little to reverse pro-immigration public attitudes.⁸⁸ Nor did Congressional preference for invoking *border security* over *pathways* reverse public attitudes. Yet these inferences are only preliminary, and do not definitively link public attitudes to press framing effects. While the content and poll analyses paint an aggregate picture, they blur the drivers of attitudinal gaps at the individual level and cannot demonstrate a rigorous statistical link between individual attitudes and exposure to frames. The following section addresses this shortcoming by linking individual attitudes on immigration to media and political attention.

7.3 Cross-Sectional Individual-Level Public Opinion Analysis

While the content analysis indicated differences in media coverage (and political discourse), this section clarifies if a similar gap exists in immigrant attitudes between individuals, and if this gap is related to news consumption habits and political attentiveness. Regression models are estimated using data from the 2012 and 2016 American National Election Studies (ANES) nationally-representative surveys to link audience evaluation of exceptional measures directly to news media consumption and attention to political elites.

Previous studies offer strong evidence that negative frames produce anti-immigrant attitudes in different geographic and temporal contexts (Blinder & Allen, 2016; Dunaway et al., 2010; Facchini et al., 2017; Héricourt & Spielvogel, 2014; Innes, 2010; van Klingeren et al., 2014). In U.S-centric studies, Facchini et al. (2017) used survey data to illustrate that media exerted influence on immigration attitudes during the CIR debates in that year. Specifically, they found that Fox News viewers were 9% more likely than CBS viewers to oppose an immigration expansionist legislative bill, and that CNN viewers responded similarly, attributing the latter to the “Lou Dobbs effect”. Surprisingly, they found no effects for MSNBC in 2006. Merolla et al. (2013) used an experiment to find strong support for issue framing effects – emphasizing *pathways to citizenship* over *amnesty* in survey prompts produced statistically significant

⁸⁸ The American Civil Liberties Union recognizes the following as evidence of Obama’s anti-immigration record as of 2012: 1) deportations amounting to over 1.5 million immigrants leaving “hundreds of thousands of U.S. citizen children without parents and in foster care”; 2) record detentions; continuation of the 287(g) program granting local and state police federal immigration enforcement powers; and 3) record border enforcement spending (Jain, 2012).

differences in support for the policy being discussed. However, both their research and Knoll et al.'s (2011) experimental survey – conducted in 2007 and 2008 – found null effects for equivalence framing effects, which they tested using the immigrant labels, *illegal* and *undocumented*. While neither of these latter two studies tested for specific media effects, their results suggest that exposure to pro-immigrant framing will produce more lenient attitudes on immigration policy.

Given the increasing use of alternative labels emphasized in the preceding content analysis, there is reason to believe that the null findings on experimental manipulations of equivalency frames may be outdated. Both Knoll et al. (2011) and Merolla et al. (2013) used survey data that preceded the *Times*' style guide change and the general adoption of the “undocumented” frame by other news sources. Using more recent survey data, the current analysis implicitly tests whether discursive shifts have made terms like “undocumented” more accessible, thus influencing their capacity to produce framing effects. In addition to using data from a new discursive context – particularly outside of the 2006-2007 CIR bill debates – this research also adds to existing scholarship by linking media consumption habits directly to support for a wider range of immigration policies, including status checks, birthright and the border fence.

Beyond the US, notable case studies in other Western countries have also linked media coverage to public support for immigration policies. McLaren et al.'s (2017) longitudinal design (1995-2011) shows that negative news has stronger effects on British immigration attitudes than positive news, suggesting that anti-immigrant news sources are likelier to resonate with public.⁸⁹ While Blinder and Allen (2016) and Innes (2010) do not use empirical public opinion data, they infer from their respective content and discourse analyses that negative news media characterizations of immigrants and asylum-seekers as threats has contributed to anti-immigrant attitudes among Britons. Outside of the UK, Jacobs et al. (2016) find that attention to commercial news coverage is a predictor of negative attitudes toward immigrants in Belgium; van Klingereren et al. (2015) find that positive news coverage reduces anti-immigrant sentiment among

⁸⁹ McLaren et al. (2017) make a strong case for their decision to use MIP public opinion data as a proxy for anti-immigrant sentiment. While this may be appropriate to their context, the longitudinal poll analysis in this research suggests that MIP values have increased at the same time as pro-immigrant attitudes in the U.S., suggesting that their methodology would have limited applicability to the U.S. immigration landscape.

Dutch respondents; and Hericourt and Spielvogel (2014) find in Europe broadly that newspaper readers are likelier than television news viewers to hold pro-immigrant attitudes, but that attention to media in general predicts anti-immigrant attitudes. This section explores whether variation in framing across different actors can create differentiation in attitudes in the US context.

7.3.1 Dependent Variable

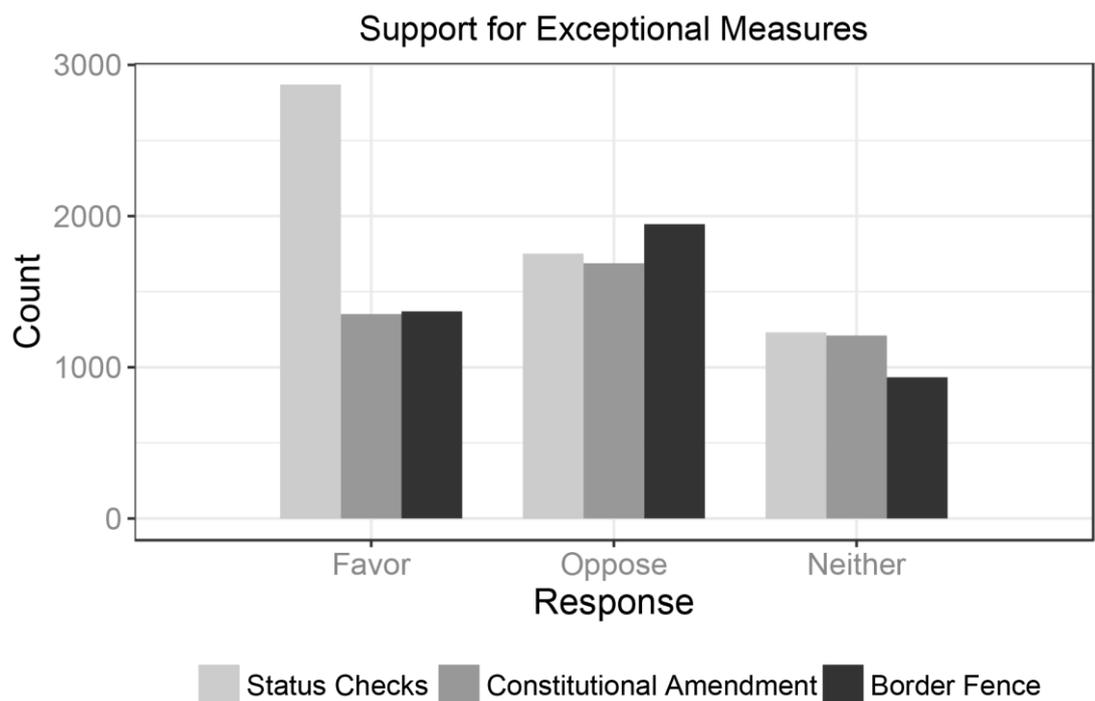
To account for the multifaceted nature of immigration policy and thoroughly investigate securitization effects, three different exceptional measures are used as outcome variables using two surveys from 2012 and 2016. They represent contemporaneous issues that were salient in immigration policy in a timeframe that has received little attention in current framing effects scholarship on American immigration attitudes in the US. The available response options for each issue were *favor*, *oppose*, or *neither favor nor oppose*. Favorable responses for exceptional measures were coded as 1, while the other two were coded 0 in order to construct binary variables (accordingly, logistic regression models are used for estimation), such that positive statistically significant coefficients on predictors indicate support for exceptional measures. This coding strategy was selected to better align with the prevailing assumption in securitization theory that acceptance of exceptional measures is the anomaly (or the *exception*) and thus represents a deviation from the baseline.

Two models are estimated for each policy issue: a baseline model that excludes the media/political attention variables, and a second test model that includes all predictors. The first pair of models estimates support for legislation that would grant federal immigration enforcement powers to state and local police. The ANES question specifically prompts:

Some states have passed a law that will require state and local police to determine the immigration status of a person if they find that there is a reasonable suspicion he or she is an undocumented immigrant. Those found to be in the U.S. without permission will have broken state law. From what you have heard, do you favor, oppose, or neither favor nor oppose these immigration laws?

The question is reminiscent of Section 287(g) from the Immigration and Nationality Act legislation – which gave state and local officers federal immigration enforcement powers. It became salient in 2012 when ICE called for discontinuing the program. The proposal also resembles the controversial 2010 Arizona State Senate bill, SB1070, which required police to check the citizenship status of suspected unauthorized immigrants (Migration Policy Institute, 2013). Importantly, by invoking law enforcement and requiring police officers to check the status of individuals, the measure links immigrants to criminality, offering a reliable proxy to measure individual assessments of immigrants as *illegal* criminals or otherwise. Figure 7.12 shows Americans overwhelmingly supported this measure in the 2012 ANES surveys.

Figure 7.12 Support for Immigration Exceptional Measures in ANES Surveys



Note: Status checks data retrieved from the 2012 ANES (5,853 responses).

Constitutional amendment and border fence data retrieved from the 2016 ANES (4,250 and 4,251 responses, respectively).

The 2016 survey measured respondents' attitudes to two other salient exceptional measures. The first prompted:

Some people have proposed that the U.S. Constitution should be changed so that the children of unauthorized immigrants do not automatically get citizenship if they are born in this country. Do you favor, oppose, or neither favor nor oppose this proposal?

The proposed change to the Constitution was intended to limit birthright citizenship and discourage so-called “anchor babies” (Merolla et al., 2013). It was exceptional in that it sought to not only restrict citizenship, but proposed to do so by curtailing the breadth of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution which states that “all persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States.” Though more extreme, the question also serves as a proximate measure of attitudes toward pathways toward citizenship given the overlap with naturalization procedures. Pro-immigration advocates have asserted that the Constitutional right should not be changed. Consonant with growing support for pathways toward legalization and citizenship discussed in the previous section, figure 7.12 shows that more people opposed this proposal than supported it in 2016.

The second issue addressed in the 2016 survey – support for a border fence – similarly exhibits greater opposition than support. It asked respondents:

Do you favor, oppose, or neither favor nor oppose building a wall on the U.S. border with Mexico?

While slightly more respondents were in favor of the wall than were in favor of the constitutional amendment, more were opposed to it, and there were fewer uncommitted responses. This also mirrors findings in the preceding public opinion analysis: beginning in 2015, more Americans opposed the border wall than supported it, indicating an aggregate rejection of Trump’s campaign rhetoric.

7.3.2 Independent Variables

The independent variables include both the main theoretical variables – attention to media and political elites – as well as several control variables identified in previous research as predictors of immigration attitudes. These include demographic variables,

contextual variables and other drivers of insecurity that, once controlled for, provide greater confidence in evaluating the isolated effects of the key framing effect variables.

7.3.2.1 Framing Effect Variables

Both the 2012 and 2016 ANES surveys asked respondents to indicate their consumption of the *New York Times*, and specific cable news programs, including *Anderson Cooper 360°* (CNN), *Hardball with Chris Matthews* (MSNBC)⁹⁰, and the *O'Reilly Factor* (Fox News). As prominent news programs representative of their respective networks' tone, these variables are instrumental in gauging the effects of CNN, Fox News and MSNBC on immigration policy support. Respondents were asked to select the programs or content they consume regularly. For each item, the response was 1 if the respondent selected it and 0 otherwise. Attention to political elites was measured using responses to the following question:

How often do you pay attention to what's going on in government and politics?

The available responses were recoded to: 1 – *Never*; 2 – *Some of the time*; 3 – *About half the time*; 4 – *Most of the time*; 5 – *All the time*.⁹¹

7.3.2.2 Contextual and Insecurity Variables

Border State

Dunaway et al. (2010) find that media coverage of immigration is more voluminous in border states. Their analysis of MIP public opinion polls shows that residents of border states also express higher anxiety about immigration. Others find similar evidence to support the influence of exposure to immigration – living in a border state, proximity to environmental cues like border barriers – on political behavior and attitudes (Branton,

⁹⁰ In the 2012 ANES survey, the prompt asked respondents if they viewed *The Chris Matthews Show*, which was Matthews' concurrent show on MSNBC's ideologically equivalent (Pew Research Center, 2014a) sister network, NBC. Given the shared host, ideologically similar networks and similar show formats, this variable is used as a proxy for MSNBC in 2012, while the 2016 survey directly measures support for Matthews' MSNBC program, *Hardball with Chris Matthews*.

⁹¹ In the original dataset, these codes were reversed. They are recoded here to align with the four news variables, which are coded higher values (1) for consumption and lower values (0) for no consumption.

Dillingham, Dunaway, & Miller, 2007; Tolbert & Hero, 2001). Following Dunaway et al. (2010), a variable for border state was assigned a value of 1 for respondents from Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, California and Florida⁹² and 0 otherwise. As an additional objective measure of ethnic context, a separate variable was used to control for the size of the unauthorized immigrant population in the respondent's state of residence. Using 2014 data from the Pew Research Center (Passel & Cohn, 2016), this variable stored the population of unauthorized immigrants in the respondent's resident state as a percentage of the state's total population.

Financial Situation Concern

Previous research has linked anxiety about the economy and finances to immigration attitudes. Because immigrants can be perceived by natives as competition for employment, they are regarded as a threat. The effects of the economy – both perceived and objective – however remain unresolved in existing scholarship. Valentino et al. (2013) and Sides and Citrin (2007) find links between negative personal financial outlooks and support for anti-immigrant attitudes among Americans. Others similarly relate pessimism about the economy to negative perceptions of immigrants (Burns & Gimpel, 2000; Dunaway et al., 2010). On the other hand, however, Citrin, Green, Muste, and Wong (1997) find that higher optimism about the economy increases opposition to immigration. This influence is controlled for using a variable that records how worried the respondent is about their current financial situation, recoded on a scale of 1-5 where 1 signifies *Not at all worried* and 5 signifies *Extremely worried*.

Terrorist Attack Concern

Border security became a part of counterterrorism discourse following 9/11. In addition to economic factors then, immigration anxiety may also be linked to traditional security concerns. In support of this, Hopkins (2010) found that 9/11 incited anti-immigrant attitudes for a brief period; Legewie (2013) used survey data to show that in various European countries, individuals became more anti-immigrant following terrorist attacks; and Hainmueller and Hiscox (2007) show that immigration opposition increases when immigrants are linked to crime more generally. Anxiety of a terrorist

⁹² While Florida does not share a land border with another country, its proximity to Caribbean countries (e.g., Cuba) and large immigrant inflow makes its inclusion in this list pertinent. Moreover, excluding it had no impact on the significance or direction of the key theoretical variables in the regression models.

attack is controlled for using the question, “During the next 12 months, how likely is it that there will be a terrorist attack in the United States that kills 100 or more people?” Responses are recoded from *1 – Not at all likely* to *5 – Extremely likely*.

Group Bias and Cultural Anxiety

Anti-immigrant attitudes may simply be a reflection of ethnocentrism or negative affect toward immigrant groups. Lee and Ottati (2002) find that support for anti-immigration policies was higher among Anglo-American participants when the target of this legislation was Mexicans immigrants, and lower when the target was Anglo-Canadian immigrants, suggesting an out-group bias. Valentino et al. (2013) use feeling thermometer measurements to show that negative attitudes toward Hispanics have a significant influence on support for restrictive immigrant policies. Sides and Citrin (2007) similarly find that cultural unity and preservation of national identity are stronger predictors of anti-immigrant attitudes than economic dissatisfaction. Following Valentino et al. (2013), this study uses a feeling thermometer to assess respondent affect toward Hispanics. Respondents were asked to rate their feelings towards Hispanics on a scale of 1 to 100.

7.3.2.3 General Demographic Variables

Race

Existing research suggests that whites and blacks are more likely to oppose immigration (Abrajano et al., 2017; Suro, 2009: 3), while Hispanics are more likely to hold pro-legalization attitudes (Espenshade & Calhoun, 1993; Facchini et al., 2017). Given these differences, the models here control for race by using a dummy variable, coded 1 for Hispanic respondents and 0 otherwise.

Income

While Espenshade and Calhoun (1993) find no relationship between income and immigration attitudes, other research agrees that higher income (and higher occupational status) correlate strongly with support for pro-immigration policies (Facchini et al., 2017; Scheve & Slaughter, 2001). Valentino et al. (2013) find, counterintuitively, that higher income predicts opposition to immigrants. Hainmueller and Hiscox’s (2007) more nuanced results show that wealthier natives are less likely to oppose low-skilled immigration compared to poorer natives. The effect of income is

tested in the models here to control for these tensions. It is measured using a 28-point ordinal scale where higher values indicate higher income.

Gender

For the most part, females have been linked to pro-immigrant attitudes (Dunaway et al., 2010; Knoll, Redlawsk, & Sanborn, 2011), but Facchini et al. (2017) find that this effect is statistically insignificant when controlling for ideology and party identification. They explain this by noting that “women are on average more liberal than men so that – when not controlling for ideology – the ideology effect on illegal immigration attitudes is absorbed by the female dummy” (Facchini et al. 2017: 20). Still O’Rourke and Sinnott (2006) find in their study of 24 countries that women tend to be more anti-immigrant than men. These mixed findings are controlled for here using a dummy variable, coded 1 for females and 0 otherwise.

Political ideology and Partisanship

Consistent with the content and discourse analysis, there is near unanimous support that Republicans and conservatives are more likely to oppose immigration and support anti-immigration policies (Abrajano et al., 2017; Dunaway et al., 2010; Knoll et al., 2011; Suro, 2009). Partisanship is measured using a 7-point summary variable in the ANES dataset where 1 indicates *Strongly Democrat* and 7 indicates *Strongly Republican*; ideology is measured on a seven-point scale where 1 represents *Extremely liberal* and 7 represents *Extremely conservative*.

Age

The effects of age on immigration attitudes are mixed – while some research has found that older respondents are more likely to perceive immigration as a problem (Dunaway et al., 2010; Espenshade & Calhoun, 1993; O’Rourke & Sinnott, 2006; Suro, 2009) and favor restrictions (Mayda, 2006), others find mixed effects (Facchini et al., 2017). Age is measured directly in years.

Education

Higher educational attainment predicts pro-immigration attitudes (Chandler & Tsai, 2001; Facchini et al., 2017; Mayda, 2006; O’Rourke & Sinnott, 2006; Scheve & Slaughter, 2001) and less concern about immigrants as a problem (Dunaway et al.,

2010; Espenshade & Calhoun, 1993). Burns and Gimpel (2000) find education to have the strongest influence on immigration attitudes. Education is measured here on a sixteen-point scale, with 1 representing *Less than 1st grade* and 16 representing *Doctorate degree (for example: PHD, EDD)*.

Children

Immigration restrictionists have frequently expressed concern that non-English speaking immigrants will burden school systems that accommodate secondary language development and divert resources away from English-speaking students. This concern is likely to be more salient for respondents with children since their children are likely to be affected. To control for this anxiety, a dummy variable is coded 1 if the respondent has children and 0 otherwise.

Authoritarianism

Pettigrew, Wagner, and Christ (2007) find a strong link between authoritarianism and anti-immigration preference. Claassen and McLaren (2019: 21) add nuance to these findings, showing that “it is primarily individuals with authoritarian predispositions who become increasingly intolerant in the face of threats to social conformity”, particularly when posed by “culturally distinct migrants”. Other literature has also shown that authoritarians have negative attitudes toward those perceived to stray from social norms or uniformity (Altemeyer, 1996; Stenner, 2005). Yet, American identification with egalitarian and humanitarian values can also moderate tendencies to reject outsiders, suggesting a possible link between authoritarianism (in this case adherence to American tradition and values) and positive affect towards immigrants (Oyamot, Fisher, Deason, & Borgida, 2012). This study uses the ANES authoritarianism measure to control for either relationship, where the dummy variable is coded 1 for the presence of an authoritarian characteristic and 0 otherwise.

7.3.3 Results

Table 7.5 presents logistic regression results from the 2012 (models 1 and 2) and 2016 (models 3-6) ANES data sets. For each of the three exceptional measures analyzed, a baseline model (that excludes the experimental framing source variables) and a full model are presented.

Table 7.5 Support for restrictionist exceptional measures (2012 and 2016)

	<i>Status Checks</i>		<i>Constitutional Amendment</i>		<i>Border Fence</i>	
	2012 (1)	2012 (2)	2016 (3)	2016 (4)	2016 (5)	2016 (6)
<i>Framing Effect</i>						
Attention to politics		-0.031 (0.053)		0.069 (0.087)		0.313 ^{***} (0.102)
CNN		-0.297 [*] (0.153)		0.058 (0.212)		-0.364 (0.269)
Fox News		1.043 ^{***} (0.179)		0.570 ^{***} (0.209)		0.951 ^{***} (0.235)
MSNBC		-0.455 ^{**} (0.213)		-0.287 (0.276)		0.576 [*] (0.321)
New York Times		-0.798 ^{***} (0.182)		-0.395 ^{**} (0.182)		-0.721 ^{***} (0.225)
<i>Contextual and Insecurity</i>						
Border state resident	0.170 (0.114)	0.166 (0.171)	0.290 [*] (0.153)	0.554 ^{**} (0.251)	-0.222 (0.175)	-0.167 (0.308)
Percent unauthorized	-0.020 (0.028)	-0.024 (0.040)	-0.022 (0.038)	-0.019 (0.063)	0.050 (0.043)	0.007 (0.076)
Financial concern	0.147 ^{***} (0.030)	0.147 ^{***} (0.046)	0.081 ^{**} (0.041)	0.103 (0.069)	0.094 ^{**} (0.046)	0.134 [*] (0.081)
Terrorist attack concern	-0.216 ^{***} (0.039)	-0.172 ^{***} (0.058)	-0.112 ^{**} (0.044)	-0.045 (0.075)	-0.244 ^{***} (0.051)	-0.116 (0.090)
Hispanic thermometer	-0.015 ^{***} (0.002)	-0.019 ^{***} (0.003)	-0.013 ^{***} (0.002)	-0.016 ^{***} (0.004)	-0.014 ^{***} (0.003)	-0.017 ^{***} (0.005)
<i>General Demographic</i>						
Race (Hispanic)	-1.240 ^{***} (0.119)	-0.838 ^{***} (0.182)	-0.792 ^{***} (0.199)	-0.690 ^{**} (0.350)	-0.684 ^{***} (0.216)	-0.654 (0.403)
Income	0.013 ^{***} (0.005)	0.004 (0.007)	0.006 (0.007)	0.005 (0.012)	-0.011 (0.007)	-0.003 (0.014)
Gender (female)	-0.109 (0.071)	0.048 (0.105)	-0.171 [*] (0.092)	-0.141 (0.154)	-0.136 (0.105)	0.125 (0.184)
Ideology	0.281 ^{***} (0.031)	0.261 ^{***} (0.047)	0.244 ^{***} (0.043)	0.186 ^{**} (0.072)	0.444 ^{***} (0.050)	0.385 ^{***} (0.086)
Partisanship	0.253 ^{***} (0.021)	0.239 ^{***} (0.031)	0.154 ^{**} (0.029)	0.156 ^{**} (0.051)	0.347 ^{***} (0.033)	0.307 ^{***} (0.059)
Age	0.008 ^{***} (0.002)	0.001 (0.004)	0.008 ^{***} (0.003)	0.009 (0.005)	0.009 ^{**} (0.003)	-0.009 (0.006)
Education level	-0.067 ^{***} (0.017)	-0.055 ^{**} (0.025)	-0.031 (0.023)	-0.048 (0.040)	-0.109 ^{***} (0.026)	-0.159 ^{***} (0.047)
Children	-0.002 (0.084)	-0.095 (0.131)	-0.055 (0.108)	-0.122 (0.176)	0.060 (0.123)	0.082 (0.206)
Authoritarianism	-0.270 ^{**} (0.073)	-0.234 ^{**} (0.106)	-0.028 (0.097)	-0.157 (0.167)	0.352 ^{***} (0.106)	0.423 ^{**} (0.187)
Constant	-0.082 (0.345)	0.471 (0.550)	-1.141 ^{**} (0.454)	-0.990 (0.813)	-1.882 ^{***} (0.507)	-1.892 ^{**} (0.940)
Observations	4,436	2,248	2,582	1,022	2,576	1,020
Log Likelihood	-2,452.523	-1,174.598	-1,451.040	-545.482	-1,164.863	-406.726
Akaike Inf. Crit.	4,935.045	2,389.196	2,932.079	1,130.963	2,359.725	853.452
Model χ^2	1244.326 ^{***}	765.136 ^{***}	392.224 ^{***}	202.074 ^{***}	943.088 ^{***}	422.375 ^{***}

Note: Logistic regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Models 1, 3 and 5 for each year exclude framing effect variables, while models 2, 4 and 6 include them. Because of missing values in the ANES dataset, observations are reduced between the baseline and full models for each year.

* p < 0.1; ** p < 0.05; *** p < 0.01;

Framing Effects Variables

Across the board, attention to the *New York Times* and attention to Fox News were statistically significant predictors of attitudes toward immigration policies, in directions consistent with the content analysis: *Times* readers were less likely to support status checks, amending the Constitution to end birthright citizenship, and border fences while Fox News viewers were likelier to support all three policies. Causality cannot be ascertained from this model; but assuming a top-down flow of influence, the odds ratios (presented in table 7.6) suggest that the impact of both sources was larger on status checks and border fence preferences than on the birthright issue. Again, assuming theoretical directions of influence, this suggests that the sources had stronger framing effects on the former two issues. Specifically, Fox News viewers were almost three times as likely to support status checks and the fence respectively, but less than twice as likely to support constitutional changes than non-viewers; while *Times* readers were just less than half as likely to support status checks and the wall, and just over two-thirds as likely to support constitutional amendments as non-readers. This is unsurprising given that the corresponding frames for each of these issues received congruent levels of attention in the content analysis: the *illegal* and *border security* frames received more attention in the press than the *pathways* frame for all actors. Both the *Times* and Fox News gave significant attention to these frames as well, but their coverage was also qualitatively different: while Fox News showed the greatest preference for the border security frame among the media actors, the *Times* showed the least. Fox News also showed the greatest preference for the *illegal* frame across all actors (by a factor of nearly 15 to one). Criminal and border security frames – and their desecuritizing counterparts – then seem to have produced significant framing effects on audiences. Importantly, even though the *Times* allotted more overall coverage to the securitizing frame than the desecuritizing frame, its readers were still unlikely to support exceptional measures, indicating that Americans may expect a baseline level of negative coverage of immigration. As long as that negativity remains below a certain threshold, the press can still generate pro-immigration effects.

Table 7.6 Odds Ratios

	<i>Status Checks</i>	<i>Constitutional Amendment</i>	<i>Border Fence</i>
Political Elites	0.970	1.072	1.367***
CNN	0.743*	1.060	0.695
Fox News	2.839***	1.768***	2.588***
MSNBC	0.635**	0.750	1.779*
<i>New York Times</i>	0.450***	0.673**	0.486***

Note: Odds ratios correspond to logistic regression results presented in table 7.5.

MSNBC and CNN may have missed this threshold in 2016, given that their viewers were less uniform in expressed support for anti-immigration measures. While both predicted a negative relationship with support for status checks in 2012, CNN viewers were neither more nor less likely to support either exceptional measure in 2016, and MSNBC viewership surprisingly predicted support for the border fence. These findings may be attributable to a broader “scrambled” politics described by Benson (2013) as the convergence of ideologically opposed identities into “strange bedfellow alliances” (7). Jobs, the labor market, and environmental protection – traditionally leftist concerns – for example, might unite Democrats with anti-immigration conservatives (Benson, 2013; Benson & Wood, 2015). This effect is amplified during election years when ideological gerrymandering becomes an attractive strategy to pull swing voters. The 2016 general election, however, did not witness anti-immigration agendas by Democrats, making it unlikely that MSNBC would go out of its way to promote this frame. Moreover, the content analysis shows limited evidence to support this: the only major difference between MSNBC and the *Times* is a sudden reversal for the former in 2016 toward preferring the “illegal” frame over the “undocumented” frame.

A more likely explanation for this counterintuitive result may be idiosyncrasies associated with Chris Matthews’ show, which was used as a proxy for MSNBC. Matthews had been an outspoken critic of Obama’s and Democrats’ weaknesses on border security (Jain, 2012), his anti-immigration viewpoints culminating in an election night 2016 on-air spat with co-anchor Rachel Maddow about the lack of an enforceable immigration system. However, replacing this variable with Rachel Maddow’s more

popular primetime program in model 6 resulted in a null effect for MSNBC (see table B.2 in Appendix B). While it may be that Maddow's show shares similar idiosyncrasies, other factors may also be at play. Maddow's show does, for example, become statistically significant in the expected direction when excluding partisanship and ideology, suggesting that the political identity variables may be capturing some of the effect of the MSNBC program.

Still, the finding that viewers of Matthews' show are likely to support the border wall, in spite of this contradicting MSNBC's general political orientation, is significant evidence of media actors – in this case, Chris Matthews – having influence. Attention to one anchor alone predicted anti-liberal policies, despite being on a liberally biased network. This is further impressive given that, at the aggregate level, Americans were largely against the wall by 2016, and that immigration was a highly salient issue in the 2016 general election. To the extent the alignment between attention to Matthews' show and respondent preferences indicates influence of the former on the latter, Matthews was able to overcome partisan/ideological beliefs and push cognitively dissonant frames that conflicted with the majority opinion both in the country and in the ideological camp. Future research would benefit from conducting isolated content analyses of specific shows to determine the extent to which particular anchors – like Matthews – deviate from the broader network message and tone.

The relationship between attention to politics and public opinion is also mixed. Certainly attention to political elites cannot be entirely disentangled from the media variables (given that individuals learn about political elite rhetoric from consuming media); the models thus do not fully isolate the effect of political elite discourse. Still, political attention is a statistically significant predictor of support for only the border wall. This may be attributable to Trump's outsized influence – his oft-cited promise of the border wall funded by Mexico received disproportionate interest (particularly in comparison to changes to the Constitution), overexposing politically attentive individuals to this cue and attracting press coverage. Then, in the case of immigration, political discourse appeared to resonate when the message was sensational, provocative and disruptive. Second, the fact that political attention is positively related to support for the wall suggests that political elite-driven framing effects are acting against the majority public opinion, given the overall decline in support for anti-immigration policies (and the wall specifically). While the decline in support for exceptional

measures represented in the ANES dataset between 2012 and 2016 (figure 7.12) should be read with caution – given that all three variables measure different policies – it aligns with previous aggregate-level findings that Americans have become increasingly supportive of pathways toward legal status, against the wall, and against deportation. In short, Trump’s entrepreneurial disruption to the overall discourse on a highly salient issue may have driven support for an otherwise unpopular policy.

The findings generally align with the scholarly consensus that anti-immigrant frames produce anti-immigrant attitudes. Facchini et al.’s (2017) analysis of public opinion from the 2006 CIR debates showed that Fox News and CNN viewers held anti-immigrant beliefs and MSNBC produced no effect. Fox News produces similar results here while CNN and MSNBC were mixed. Again, CNN’s moderation is likely the effect of Lou Dobbs’ departure. Merolla et al. (2013) and Knoll et al. (2011) found null effects for equivalency frames (*illegal* and *undocumented*). The former explain this 2007 result as an issue of inaccessibility for the public: “mainstream news media outlets made little reference to undocumented immigrants (as opposed to illegal immigrants)” which “may limit the extent to which the term resonates with the general public and is associated with more positive or neutral stances towards the group” (Merolla et al., 2013: 800). Their predictions that increased usage would make the distinctions between *undocumented* and *illegal* more accessible are largely supported here: while a definitive link cannot be made using the data presented in this research, the timing of MSNBC’s sudden reversal in 2016 to preferring the *illegal* frame over the *undocumented* frame aligns closely with its audience’s shift toward support for anti-immigration policies like the fence.

Contextual and Insecurity Variables

Turning to ethnic context and other insecurity variables, subjective variables have a stronger effect on immigration attitudes than objective factors. Group bias and concern about one’s personal financial situation are statistically significant indicators in almost all models, suggesting that for many Americans, support for anti-immigration measures is linked to unfavorable feelings towards Hispanics and economic insecurity. There may also be some conflation between immigrants and terrorist actors, given that increased concern about a likely terrorist attack is a strong predictor of support for anti-immigration policies in 2012, and in the 2016 baseline models. By 2016, at least part of this relationship can be attributed to news sources and/or political elites. Surprisingly,

objective factors are less conclusive: the size of the local unauthorized immigration population has no statistically significant effect in any of the models, and when the framing effect variables are introduced to the models, border state residents are more likely to support only a change to the Constitution.

The disparity between objective and subjective variables generates significant support for securitization theory. It shows that public support for exceptional measures is driven more by perception than by objective reality, and that immigration attitudes may be unrelated to immigration rates. Further, having children had a *negative* relationship with support for the wall (the only time this variable was statistically significant), suggesting that respondents with children were unlikely to support exceptional measures. This is surprising given the anti-immigration argument that immigrants burden schools, divert resources away from Americans to support foreign language speakers, and have other adverse effects on students. In reality, parents are no more likely than non-parents to support anti-immigration policies, and in one case, non-parents are likelier to support anti-immigration policies. Together, these objective variables were only intermittently significant, whereas subjective variables – bias against Hispanics and personal financial outlook – were significant in every model. The added significance of media variables in all the models suggests that the press may be managing the public’s perceptions, above and beyond “real” conditions experienced by individuals. This is congruent with other research: Blinder and Allen’s (2016) findings lead them to make the case for “media as an autonomous influence” on public opinion even when actual patterns of immigration flow are incongruent with media coverage; and Sides and Citrin (2007) also find that immigration attitudes are unrelated to contextual factors like immigration flow or the objective state of the economy.

General Demographic Variables

The only consistent finding across demographic variables is that Republicans and conservatives were more likely than Democrats and liberals to support anti-immigration measures in all cases; and that Hispanics were least likely to support anti-immigration measures in most cases. Gender did not play a role in any of the full models, suggesting that it had little influence when other variables were being controlled for. In contrast to Espenshade and Calhoun’s (1993) finding that age and education were strong predictors of public opinion toward unauthorized immigration and immigrants, the effects of age and education here are mixed, but generally show

that lower educated and older individuals are more in favor of anti-immigration policies. Age was only significant in the baseline models, thus suggesting that some of its effect was subsumed in the framing effect variables.

7.3.4 Summary of Cross-Sectional Individual-Level Public Opinion Analysis

Integrating top-down assumptions into this analysis, the results largely suggest that news media and, to a lesser extent, political elites – at least by 2016 – were able to influence attitudes toward immigration policies. The *New York Times* and Fox News in particular predicted attitudinal gaps for all three policies, mirroring differences found in the content analysis: while the *Times* led other sources in covering desecuritizing frames (particularly after 2012), Fox News led its competitors in covering securitizing frames. The corresponding individual-level analysis here showed that respondents' attitudes mirrored the messaging of their preferred information sources, particularly on criminality (as measured through status checks) and border security (the fence) – both are sites in which the *Times* and Fox News predicted the strongest (de)securitizing effects. Lending greater support to securitization theory, the results here also demonstrated that objective threat indicators – including proximity to borders and the percent of unauthorized immigration in one's state – had little effect on attitudes. Instead, subjective indicators – like economic anxiety and group bias – were key contextual drivers of support for exceptional measures.

7.4 Conclusion

This chapter analyzed changes in political elite and press frames on immigration over different political contexts – in this case, two presidential administrations spanning sixteen years – and mapped these to public attitudes. An additional layer of conceptual richness was added by examining frames along multiple dichotomous dimensions, including frame tone (securitizing and desecuritizing), frame functions (moral evaluation and remedy proposal) and frame types (issue and equivalency). The moral evaluation axis differentiated functionally equivalent labels that linked immigrants to criminality (*illegal immigrant*) or to a procedural problem (e.g., *undocumented immigrant*). The remedy proposal axis, on the other hand, juxtaposed frames linked to border security with those linked to pathways toward legalization and/or citizenship. These two issue frames sought to resolve the perceived immigration problem through either restrictionist barriers or integrative, expansionist policies. This final section

describes key findings in the operationalization of these dimensions within the content and audience analyses; it also presents theoretical and empirical implications unique to the immigration debate. Broader implications for securitization theory are discussed in the following chapter.

In contrast to earlier research on immigration frames, the content analysis here found a profound transformation in press coverage, which had become increasingly desecuritizing and pro-immigrant by the end of 2016. The shift along the moral evaluation axis was especially notable, because it showed that left-leaning press actors – CNN, MSNBC and the *Times* – had gone from largely preferring the *illegal* label toward euphemisms like *undocumented* to describe unauthorized immigrants, thus diluting the long-running criminal metaphor. These same actors also showed an increased willingness to contribute to the debate on how to resolve the perceived problem of immigration, marking a shift from their general disengagement during the Bush years. Still, the press was not monolithic: while pro-immigrant frames became more common among some actors, Fox News showed more resistance. It was the only actor to consistently prefer anti-immigrant securitizing rhetoric throughout all quarters of the Obama presidency, whether in promoting the criminality link or border security. Political elites also showed an increased willingness to promote desecuritizing frames, but there were significant differences in comparison to the press. Political elites demonstrated more volatility and much less consistency along the moral evaluation axis, and a stronger preference for the border security frame than most press actors.

Over time, audiences seemed more receptive to the pro-immigrant press coverage at the aggregate level – this has been demonstrated by growing support for increasing immigration; growing support for offering unauthorized immigrants a pathway toward legalization or citizenship; decreasing support for deportations; and increasing opposition to a border wall. Importantly, while a majority of Americans had supported a wall throughout the Obama administration, a shift occurred late in his presidency and during the 2016 general election campaign, suggesting a sharp rejection of Trump's proposal for a border wall. This finding was echoed in the individual-level cross-sectional analysis which not only showed that a plurality of Americans opposed the wall (and a constitutional amendment restricting citizenship to immigrants), but that attitudes to immigration policies were strongly linked to press attention, in expected directions: *Times* readers were likelier to oppose restrictionist policies while Fox News

viewers were likelier to support them. Political elites (as measured through attention to politics more generally) only predicted support for the border wall in 2016 – this is likely linked to Trump’s oversized influence on immigration discourse. Another major finding in this section that validates key assumptions in securitization theory is that subjective evaluations – such as economic anxiety and group bias – were stronger predictors of immigration attitudes than objective factors – like proximity to a border or the level of unauthorized immigrants in the respondents’ state.

While the immigration debate has received wide attention in securitization and framing studies, this chapter makes several novel contributions to understanding what immigration (de)securitization looks like in the US and how it has evolved over a sixteen-year period that covers two different political contexts. First, previous research has found that terms like “undocumented worker” backfire because the public recognizes them as manipulative euphemisms (Westen, 2009). While this may be the case in early stages, the analyses here suggest that alternative labels eventually become mainstreamed and normalized. Aradau (2004: 402) argues that “dangerous others” can only be desecuritized by losing their securitized identity: “What is first needed is a process of dis-identification, a rupture from the assigned identity and a partaking of a universal principle”. The audience analysis here suggests that these effects may have been at play: as the *undocumented* frame became more common relative to the *illegal* frame – thus diluting the criminality metaphor typically applied to immigrants – the public appears to have become more pro-immigrant by some indicators.

Growing pro-immigration attitudes and media frames notwithstanding, the content analysis here supports claims in extant research that the media focuses disproportionately⁹³ on the criminal immigrant narrative (see also Blinder & Allen, 2016; Merolla et al., 2013; Santa Ana et al., 2007), but it also demonstrates that alternative depictions are becoming competitive. That pathways toward legalization and citizenship have sometimes received as much, if not more, coverage than border security is especially surprising, because the press is forgoing potentially more stimulating and dramatic content for drier, more esoteric policies. The exception may be Chris Matthews on MSNBC, whose coverage and viewers were more sympathetic to

⁹³ In reality, illegal immigrants and legal immigrants are just over half and one-fifth, respectively, as likely as natives to be incarcerated (Landgrave & Nowrasteh, 2018).

a border fence. While this was a surprising result, it is reinforcing evidence of the significance of media actors as strategic and independent. Not only was Matthews able to overcome his network's general liberal bias, but also the prevailing national mood on the border fence.

Finally, Donald Trump's entrance into the immigration debate showcases a turning point in framing trends, and also offers a deeper understanding of how discursive entrepreneurs can affect the behavior of the press and public. The novelty and sensationalism of Trump's provocative campaign statements drew significant media coverage and may have reshaped the boundaries of immigration discourse. This suggests that it may be strategic and expedient to use extreme and disruptive language to influence (or reverse trends) rather than attempting to introduce changes gradually. The press' natural tendency to calibrate toward sensationalistic events increases the likelihood of producing a shock in discourse as Trump's proposal for a border wall did. But the audience analysis also suggests that shocks may be unpopular at the aggregate level, even if they resonate strongly at the individual level. As with terms like *undocumented*, however, this aggregate revulsion may be temporary: audiences might receive extreme language with skepticism at first and be suspicious of manipulation, but consistent drumbeat messaging may result in a gradual normalization, leading to tolerance, acceptance and even support for frames previously considered radical. Even if the effect is audience polarization, disruptive content certainly increases the likelihood of framing effects during early stages as seen in the analyses presented here. A content analysis of the press and political discourse beyond the temporal limits of this research can demonstrate the full extent of Trump's influence and whether the press was able to regain some autonomy during his presidency. But through 2016, the press appeared to calibrate its coverage toward Trump's message.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

The Bush administration's early characterization of the post-9/11 national security climate as a "new paradigm" (Bush, 2002) was prophetic. For nearly two decades, anxiety about the foreign Other has profoundly influenced policy debates, the legitimization (and execution) of exceptional measures and the public mood. While terrorism has been the predominant concern in security discourse since 2001, the threat was extended to unauthorized immigration as well – certainly immigrants have long been associated with criminality, but the post-9/11 narrative further added the complexion of a national security threat. These changes in security discourse have cooccurred with seismic shifts in the ever-complex media and information marketplace, meaning that public processing of these issues has also changed dramatically. The proliferation of media actors, digital and traditional, has stimulated more targeted news produced for niche audiences. While cable news was well out of its infancy by 2001, it has since matured into a more polarized genre of news that commands the widest audience among any other type of news source.

These two broad changes are the impetus for the primary research question explored in this thesis: *can the media be an independent (de)securitizing actor?* In answering this question, the contributions of this research are theoretical, methodological and empirical. Securitization theory in IR has largely dismissed the potential of media actors to act as independent and strategic agents in security discourse generation – this is understandable given the wide literature in political communication that accords the press a conveyor-belt function (Baum & Potter, 2008; Bennett, 1990; Bennett et al., 2006). Yet shifting media business incentives and a changing landscape have prompted, in the latter discipline, revised models that accommodate the possibility of independent and strategic press actors. This thesis has sought to bridge that gap within the particular logic of security framing, and demonstrate that media actors are more than mere functional actors (Buzan et al., 1998). The contribution also spans media research: analytical models explaining the interaction between mass media, public opinion and political elites have traditionally simplified the media to an undifferentiated mass (Baum & Potter, 2008). Here, *the media* has been disaggregated into specific outlets,

recognizing the dynamism and diversity in the information marketplace, and also that media consumption is a different experience for different American audiences.

Yet the prescribed methodology in securitization theory, discourse analysis, has been inadequate for measuring press discourse and its framing effects on audiences. The methodological contribution of this thesis thus stems from cross-fertilization with the broad framing scholarship. Specifically, the integration of quantitative content and survey data analyses with traditional discourse analysis makes it possible to fold in these two sets of actors who have generally been either neglected or underdeveloped in securitization theory (Balzacq, 2005, 2011a; Watson, 2012). Quantification also facilitates objective and standardized comparisons across actors and cases. Certainly discourse analysis plays a major role – it was used here to identify unique features of competing securitizing and desecuritizing narratives. The goal was to bolster discourse analysis with other tools, ultimately using a method of triangulation to fuse insights from different vantage points.

Finally, the empirical contributions are manifold. While the US itself is a novel setting for the largely Eurocentric securitization theory, terrorism and unauthorized immigration have been principal security concerns for nearly two decades, making them critical targets for analysis. The period under analysis has also seen majority swings in support for exceptional measures to address these issues: public opinion moved from largely being against torture soon after Abu Ghraib, to supporting it early during Obama's first term, and now stabilizing at a near even split; attitudes toward a border wall have swung from mostly in favor to mostly opposed in recent years. This thesis has attempted to deepen the understanding of these swings and the role that elite/media framing played in influencing them. Given that attitudes have moved in different directions on these two issues, the case studies contribute to a better understanding of both securitization and desecuritization, helping to answer the secondary research question in this thesis: *how did exceptional measures become (de)legitimized in the US in response to the perceived threats posed by terrorism and unauthorized immigration, and how were these contested by competing frames?*

This final chapter first presents the main findings of this thesis with a focus on synthesizing cross-sectoral similarities and differences. While the two case studies – terrorism and unauthorized immigration – have largely been discussed in isolation, the

focus now shifts to thematic overlaps and differentiations between the two. The discussion then segues into the implications of this project for securitization theory, media and framing studies, and policymaking. Finally, limitations are acknowledged and directions for future research are recommended.

8.2 Cross-Sectoral Summary of Research Findings

Both case studies explored the emergence of frames in political elite discourse; the selection, prioritization and presentation of particular frames by the press; and the impact of discourse on public evaluations. Theoretical assumptions in the cascade activation model suggest that political elites largely set the initial boundaries of discourse available to downstream actors (Entman, 2004). The analyses here showed that once oppositional (de)securitizing discourses and identities emerged, press actors increasingly exercised autonomy in their selection, prioritization and presentation of particular frames. While an immediate causal impact on attitudes cannot be demonstrated, evidence from multiple vantage points shows a strong association between public opinion and media frames. Even if theoretical assumptions about the direction of influence from the press to the public are suspended, the association at least points to a continuous reproduction of (de)securitizing discourses: press actors may certainly be tailoring their framing to satisfy preexisting attitudes, but framing choices reinforce audience attitudes and perpetuate a shared understanding of security issues. These effects were analyzed across both case studies, but using varying degrees of complexity along the frame functional axis. The first case study on terrorism focused on competing remedy proposals; the second case study on immigration focused on the moral evaluation and remedy proposal axes. Key findings are summarized below.

8.2.1 Emergence of (De)Securitizing Frames in Political Elite Discourse

While both Presidents Bush and Obama largely toed their respective party lines, the discourse analyses unearthed surprising similarities between the two. Expectedly, President Bush reflected typically hawkish Republican values in his support for torture. Still, the support was not automatic, but cultivated over time through a rebranding of the administration's interrogation program as an effective intelligence strategy that was separate from torture. The administration's initial reaction to Abu Ghraib created little political space to promote torture outright, but by erecting a rhetorical wall of separation between its "enhanced interrogation" program and torture, the Bush

administration negotiated a politically sustainable securitization narrative. President Obama, on the other hand, rejected the practice – whether labeled *torture* or *enhanced interrogation* – both rhetorically and procedurally (e.g., banning the Bush-era program through executive order) early in his tenure. While both presidents rejected *torture*, Bush used that rejection as a rhetorical strategy to differentiate and cultivate support for his administration's *interrogation* program. Obama, on the other hand, recognized *interrogation* as just a euphemism for the practice of torture.

More surprisingly, in the case of immigration, both presidents (and congresspersons from opposing parties) showed considerable overlap. For Bush, 9/11 propelled an immigrant-terrorist linkage that manifested in rhetoric and policy, such as the USA PATRIOT Act and the consolidation of immigration enforcement agencies under the Department of Homeland Security. Still, despite this linkage, Bush minimized the distance between the immigrant Other and the American Self through language that emphasized shared family values and economic ambitions. He pushed for compromise legislation that married border security with pathways toward legalization. Obama's presidency was similarly characterized by compromise: pro-immigrant rhetoric and integrative programs like DACA and DAPA coincided with record deportations and an aggressive enforcement strategy. Like Bush, Obama also pushed for and oversaw failed attempts in Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform. And while the absence of attacks on the scale of 9/11 prevented an immigrant-terrorist linkage during his administration, the 2014 Central American migrant crisis catalyzed a detention and border security program that prompted criticism of Obama for mishandling a humanitarian issue using enforcement measures.

While these cross-sectoral differences may be attributable to the personas and political/security priorities of the two presidents involved, they may also reflect broader variation in tolerance for exceptional measures in the military and societal sectors between Democrats and Republicans. Again, general hawkishness may make exceptional measures in the military sector more palatable to Republicans. Democratic support for international norms and institutions, on the other hand, likely drives resistance to exceptional measures outlawed by the Geneva Conventions and UNCAT. Military sector events – especially 9/11 – are also more pronounced, creating the potential for hardened attitudes and greater polarization. While societal sector issues can also be sensational – such as the 2014 migrant crisis – they may be less polarizing,

resulting in relatively greater policymaking leeway. Immigration in particular may fit this bill, because of its tendency to produce a “scrambled politics” and “strange bedfellows” alliances (Benson, 2013; Benson & Wood, 2015). The adverse effects of unauthorized immigration on the labor market, the environment (e.g., through overcrowding of cities and urban sprawl), and welfare programs – all traditionally leftist concerns – may generate greater tolerance for exceptional measures among Democrat leaders in the societal sector, hence Obama’s occasional hardline approach. Similarly, awareness of shifting demographics and the increasing make up of immigrants in the American voting electorate creates political incentives to balance hardline approaches with pro-immigrant rhetoric and policies, demonstrated by both Bush and Obama.

A key overlap between the case studies was the use and mainstreaming of euphemisms – yet this rhetorical mechanism served different agendas in terrorism and immigration discourses. In the securitization of terrorism, the euphemism *interrogation* was used to legitimize an exceptional measure, thus serving a securitizing function. The Bush administration initially used the term alongside *torture* to juxtapose the two practices: the former was rejected as illegal and against American values, while the latter was presented as an acceptable alternative that was linked to counterterrorism and intelligence successes. While this research does not aim to adjudicate the objective boundaries of *torture* and *interrogation*, the discourse analysis revealed that opposing identities privileged one term over the other, and that the labels became symbolic of competing issue frames. *Torture* had a desecuritizing effect to the extent that it challenged the legitimacy of a particular practice in the fight against terrorism; the *interrogation* narrative, on the other hand, promoted that practice as an acceptable measure. Thus *torture* and its euphemism, *interrogation*, were signifiers of two broader competing issue frames.

In the case of immigration, the euphemistic qualifier *undocumented* served a desecuritizing purpose: it was used to cast unauthorized immigration as a procedural issue linked to documentation (or lack thereof). This was regarded by opponents as rhetorical maneuvering to sugarcoat the criminal infraction at the root of *illegal immigration*. Immigration expansion advocates however sought to destigmatize unauthorized immigrants from the association with criminality imposed by *illegal*. While in the *illegal* interpretation, societal security was at stake (*illegal immigrants*

were a threat to legal institutions), the *undocumented* interpretation shifted attention toward the everyday procedural aspects of immigration, moving it outside the security domain. These different evaluations had remedy ramifications too: the criminality frame was employed in the promotion of border security and immigration enforcement. On the other hand, *undocumented* highlighted the documentation component of immigration; it was part of a more compassionate discourse that promoted integrating individuals through citizenship and legalization pathways.

While previous scholarship suggests that euphemisms are recognized as tools of deception by audiences and thus largely rejected (e.g., Westen, 2009), this longitudinal study suggests otherwise. The use of *interrogation* co-occurred with rising public support for torture; and the widening use of *undocumented* as a substitute for *illegal* correlated with growth in pro-immigrant attitudes – even if framing effects did not occur and a causal relationship does not exist, the alignment between attitudes and frame prevalence suggests that euphemisms at least did not produce a backlash. Certainly audiences may initially recognize euphemisms as duplicitous tools to influence evaluations, but over time, these vocabularies can become mainstreamed and cemented in discourse, eclipsing their original intent. In short, euphemistic representations may be an effective *long-run* policy framing tactic.

8.2.2 Selection of Frames in Media

Cross-sectoral similarities in framing across media actors were more pronounced than across political elites. In both case studies, Fox News was more likely to employ securitizing frames than its other cable news competitors and the *New York Times*. At the aggregate level, MSNBC and the *Times* showed the greatest preference for the desecuritizing frames, while CNN's coverage fell in between. It is difficult to generalize from only two case studies, but the content analyses suggest that Fox News may be more prone to advocating securitizing discourses, at least in the societal and military sectors.⁹⁴ As sectors that juxtapose an American Self against a dangerous foreign Other, this may reflect an inward orientation for Fox News, and a more cosmopolitan orientation for MSNBC and the *Times* – alignments that mirror their respective conservative and liberal audiences. On the whole these alignments may be

⁹⁴ As discussed more deeply in the final section of this chapter, the environmental sector may produce different dynamics.

an indictment on these actors' obligations toward objectivity and balanced reporting. It is at least confirmatory evidence of a media strategy moving away from capturing (or maintaining) the broadest viewership possible and toward fostering a narrower, but stronger audience base.

There were also broad differences in the direction of trends and magnitude of coverage between media actors in both security sectors. In the case of terrorism, moving from the Bush to the Obama administration, the *Times* and to a smaller degree MSNBC showed an increase in relative coverage of the desecuritizing frame (compared to the securitizing frame), whereas Fox News went in the other direction. While coverage grew more desecuritizing between the two administrations for all actors in the immigration case study, the magnitude of the change was less dramatic for Fox News. Two major takeaways emerge from this, both challenging the perception of a monolithic media and reinforcing the value of examining media as a set of disaggregated actors. First, framing strategies change differently across actors over time. These actors responded to context and contemporaneous events differently, suggesting competing strategies and interpretations of the news they were reporting. The divergence in the torture debate (and to a lesser extent in immigration coverage) may be constructing different albeit parallel realities for American audiences of these outlets – an outcome that is discussed in more detail below. Second, divergence between news outlets necessarily means that at least some press actors acted independently of political elites at various times, providing strong evidence that the media can be an independent and strategic (de)securitizing actor – actors are selecting and prioritizing alternate frames, and thus constructing varying representations of reality.

Differences in political elite attention to each issue may explain cross-sectoral variation in news coverage trends. Specifically, the Obama administration disengaged from the torture debate early in its tenure. The lack of salient cues from the White House thus created a vacuum, freeing media actors to form their own narratives, largely unopposed by prominent political elite cues. Fox News amplified its coverage of the former Bush administration's security-imperative framing of interrogation, while MSNBC amplified its coverage of the preferred liberal desecuritizing version. The immigration debate, on

the other hand, enjoyed no equivalent long-term lull in political elite discourse⁹⁵ – political elites actively contributed during both administrations. In this case, while the magnitude of the shift was different across all actors, the direction was the same – all actors employed the securitizing frame at a smaller rate vis-à-vis the desecuritizing frame moving from the Bush administration to the Obama administration. The silencing of political elites in security dialogue then has the potential to generate less uniformity and more independence among media actors, while political elite engagement can rein in the boundaries of media discourse.

Still, it is interesting that immigration coverage became less anti-immigrant (at least in terms of ratio) across all actors between the two presidential administrations. Even though the magnitudes of change differ, this is striking given the wide negative bias recognized in most scholarship on media coverage of immigration. The starkest evidence of this was in the moral evaluation of immigrants – while previous scholarship has recognized only insignificant usage of the *undocumented* label, this research found that it had outpaced the *illegal* label in several quarters during the Obama administration, suggesting a major discursive shift in the way immigration is discussed. Desecuritizing frames became more common (relative to securitizing frames) in the terrorism case study for MSNBC and the *Times* moving from the Bush administration to the Obama administration, but the shift was less pronounced; and CNN and Fox News moved in opposite directions. This suggests that security discourse on immigration – at least with regard to the components analyzed here – softened between the Bush and Obama administrations, whereas media coverage of terrorism – and more specifically, the debate on torture as an acceptable response – remained mixed. While a predominant negativity bias still exists in immigration coverage, the gap is closing and a shift may be under way, heralding a profound change in how immigrants are discussed in the press.

8.2.3 Framing Effects on Audience

There were significant cross-sectoral differences in aggregate public opinion. While Americans have become increasingly supportive of torture, they have simultaneously become more pro-immigrant across an array of immigration attitude indicators.

⁹⁵ Short-term disengagement by political elites occurred briefly during 2005-2007, when the press took advantage and largely drove the debate.

Immigration may remain a securitized threat, but public opinion appears to be moving with the media shift recognized in the content analysis. This suggests that insecurity is felt more profoundly in the military sector than the societal sector; or alternatively, despite both security dialogues constructing an American Self versus an Other, the terrorist Other resonates as a more compelling threat than the immigrant Other at the aggregate level. What accounts for this cross-sectoral difference in attitudes? Silencing may play a role here as well – Fox News’ coverage of the immigration debate generally decreased at a time when other news actors (particularly the *Times*) picked up their coverage of the desecuritizing frame. This is different from the torture debate, where Fox News actually amplified both its volume and securitizing ratio of coverage of the securitizing frame. While MSNBC did the same for the desecuritizing frame, its viewership was much lower than Fox News’, and was thus unable to have a comparable influence on attitudes.

Surprisingly, these framing effects persisted even when controlling for objective factors – in the case of immigration, the size of the unauthorized immigration population in one’s own state, for example, had little effect on attitudes toward exceptional measures altogether. Instead, the individual level analyses showed that attitudes toward exceptional measures in both sectors largely aligned with the dominant frames used in preferred news sources. The results were most consistent for viewers of Fox News – who aligned with positive support for exceptional measures across the board – and *New York Times* readers – who opposed exceptional measures in all the models. MSNBC viewers were mostly against exceptional measures, though were somewhat surprisingly more likely to support the border wall in 2016 than non-viewers. This effect was attributed to the use of Chris Matthews’ MSNBC show as a proxy variable for the whole network; departing from the network’s general tone, he was largely in favor of increased border security. The effect is also significant validation of media influence on attitudes: attention to this program alone was able to generate framing effects that ran counter to both the overall network’s ideology and the aggregate sentiment on the wall, suggesting that Matthews overcame both ideological beliefs and the tide of general public opinion. Attention to CNN was largely unrelated to support for exceptional measures, suggesting that it had no major framing effect. As discussed in each of the case study chapters, this was unsurprising given the ambiguity in frames employed by CNN. Similarly, attention to politics – used as a proxy for exposure to political elites – mostly failed to show any relationship with attitudes. The only exception occurred in

2016, when attention to politics was a significant predictor of support for a border fence – this is unsurprising, given that Trump’s campaign largely centered around this salient issue. Those paying close attention to political elites may have been persuaded by overexposure to Trump’s campaign rhetoric.

8.3 Implications and Major Contributions

These findings implicate securitization theory, media research and public policy. For securitization theory, the main takeaway is that the press can be a strategic and independent (de)securitizing actor; it should accordingly be factored into analyses as an active participant in the social (de)construction of security threats and the (de)legitimization of exceptional measures. The case studies here demonstrated that press actors were not only speaking differently from each other, but also from political elites, thus confronting orthodox perceptions of media as simply a functional actor in the securitization process. Most citizens learn about international security and foreign policy issues from the press, because, unlike domestic issues, they are less likely to be impacted by these issues on a day-to-day basis (Baum & Potter, 2008; Graber & Dunaway, 2018; Paletz, 2009). Thus, audiences are especially susceptible to framing effects in the news, since it is their primary form of exposure to foreign policy issues that they cannot directly experience. Moreover, increased polarization and politicization in the U.S. media over the last few decades has blurred the line between dispassionate, apolitical journalists/commentators and political elites, resulting in news personalities (especially on cable news) on whom the American public depends for information assuming politician-like identities. As perceived authorities, these commentators then have substantial influence on preferences for exceptional measures, and on evaluations of threats themselves.

Beyond securitization theory, the politicization and polarization in news evidenced here reinforces existing literature on echo chambers and attitudinal segregation. News frames impact not only *what* audiences learn, but *how* threats and exceptional measures are cognitively processed. A negative outcome then is that different interpretations of exceptional measures are promoted by press actors to non-overlapping audiences. The immediate consequence is that self-selecting audiences will be under-informed (or worse, misinformed), because unlike politics, disagreeing news outlets – like Fox News and MSNBC – need not come together to compromise or resolve differences in traditional political arenas like Congress. Absent a balanced news diet, audiences are at

risk of being exposed to a limited subset of frames and only one side of a debate. The longer-term ramification of two fundamentally opposed and isolated discourses is that, without any attempt to resolve differences, further polarization within society will fuel mistrust of “fake news” generated by real or perceived political opponents. Rampant assertions by news personalities and cable network slogans of being the most “fair and balanced” news source will foster unearned confidence in one’s own views and rejection of others’, resulting in further electoral segmentation and societal polarization. Populations will coexist in separate but parallel realities, confounded every four years to realize half the country does not share their political outlook. This is especially concerning given that neither political predispositions nor objective contextual factors (such as the rate of unauthorized immigration or terrorist attacks) can block framing effects. Moreover, given the expanding reach of cable news, politicians may find it politically expedient to align their own framing with news actors, thus ceding their autonomy and independent decision-making to unelected journalists and commentators, and shifting the power balance between the press and political elites. The press is then likely to become an even more powerful agent in international relations and international security, particularly when political elites become briefly disengaged from a policy debate and let news personalities fill the discursive void. Combative rhetoric and attacks against competing news outlets already gives press actors the semblance of politicians – it is reasonable to expect audiences to then regard them as political authorities, elected or not.

Two lessons follow for policymakers: first, policymakers should be cautious about becoming disengaged and silent on security issues, especially if they hope to maintain control of the narrative and public attitudes. This research has demonstrated that political elite silence can result in ceding discursive influence to press actors. This effect was especially evident in the torture debate: rather than taking cues from the Obama administration’s disengagement and pulling back, Fox News and MSNBC actually *increased* their coverage of their preferred frames. But even in the immigration analysis, it was clear that Democrat silencing allowed media actors to control the narrative and obstruct passage of compromise immigration bills during Bush’s second term, to the frustration of political elites in both parties. A second consideration for policymakers is to reinstitute formalized norms of objectivity, balance and fairness into the press. While it may be too late to close Pandora’s box for cable news, the reintroduction of regulation akin to the fairness doctrine that existed until 1987 for

other news media may help foster a more balanced and diverse news diet. Alternatively, further resources and subsidies could be devoted to support and promote non-commercial media, such as the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), where business incentives to reach niche audiences through biased content would be mitigated.

Like silencing, another rhetorical mechanism with broad implications for future academic research and policymaking is euphemistic language. As discussed previously, even if they are recognized as tools of deception (e.g., Westen, 2009: 4), euphemisms can gain resonance over time, eventually replacing the terms they were designed to sugarcoat. Again, this appears to have happened with terms like *interrogation* and *undocumented immigration*. The mainstreaming of these terms does not necessarily mean that interlocutors and audiences overlook the strategic and political intentions beneath the terms – it may simply be a symbol of a particular identity for others to rally around. In short, euphemisms may provide a useful heuristic for identity formation and alignment. Policymakers should recognize the powerful potential of these rhetorical devices. Scholars studying frames and framing effects – whether in international security or more generally – should also consider whether euphemisms can serve as proxies for broader frames and discourses. For securitization theory, euphemisms can have different effects – they can securitize by downplaying exceptional measures (e.g., *interrogation*) (Bandura, 2002: 101; Richards et al., 2012: 73; Wolfendale, 2009: 54), where the exceptional can be framed in unexceptional terms to drive support for exceptional measures. Alternatively, euphemisms can be used to desecuritize by rhetorically minimizing the severity of a threat (e.g., *undocumented immigrant*).

In an era of proliferating “fake news” and information warfare, policymakers should also pay attention to and cultivate a strategy to counteract attempts by foreign (or domestic) adversaries seeking to weaponize effective framing tactics and misinform American audiences. This thesis reinforces conclusions from extant framing scholarship that the quantity of coverage of a particular frame can have significant impacts on attitudes. The 2016 general election season saw several misinformation campaigns flooding social media sites targeting the American public (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017). Their success may be linked to the sheer volume of content peddling identical frames, ensuring that audiences were repeatedly exposed from different angles (e.g., different websites made to resemble legitimate news sources) (Benkler et al., 2018). As one method of defense, policymakers could design media literacy

educational programs to help citizens both recognize biased frames and balance their news diet. Alternatively, machine learning tools can be integrated with the content analysis methods applied in this research to detect and respond appropriately (e.g., through counter-messaging) to anomalies, such as spikes in coverage of particular topics and frames.

Such counter-framing responses may be necessary to reverse the trend of growing support for torture in particular. Against international norms and the liberal democratic consensus against torture, that a debate is even occurring is a stain on American morality and leadership. Whether or not terrorism is to remain heavily securitized, political elites should unambiguously rule out torture and clearly signal that intelligence-gathering efforts will respect domestic and international rules. The failure to provide these signals will further erode American soft power – it may also inspire reprisals by foreign adversaries, ultimately creating an inescapable loop of retributive attitudes among the electorates on whose behalf the belligerents are acting. Still, this project (and the immigration case study in particular) reveals the limits of political elite framing – while Trump’s campaign rhetoric may have appealed to some, it coincided with generally pro-immigrant attitudes and rejection of exceptional measures at the aggregate level. His shocking securitizing rhetoric appears to have briefly backfired among most Americans (if not his base). But these effects may be short-term, and akin to the anti-torture public opinion wave that followed the shocking revelations of Abu Ghraib. As the shock and novelty (and thus newsworthiness) of his message wears out, the public may also become inured to the rhetoric. Absent a strong counter-frame from other elites or the press, the long-term effects of unchecked political discourse could be a normalization of anti-immigrant discourse and an uncritical acceptance of threat constructions as Americans become resigned to the new reality and new way of framing unauthorized immigration. In short, media as the fourth branch of government may be desirable, but a balance should be sought where political elites and the press act as checks on *each other*.

Finally, this thesis demonstrates the value of synthesizing concepts in framing scholarship with securitization theory. Methodological tools commonly used in framing studies – content and public opinion analysis – empower securitization theory with quantitative sophistication and hypothesis-tested assumptions that are overlooked in discourse analysis, the preferred approach for securitization theorists. Extant framing

literature, for example, has pointed to several mechanisms – derived from experimental studies – that determine frame efficacy, such as strength, magnitude, and cooccurrence with competing frames. This provides a set of expectations on what will make certain discourses more effective and more likely to cut through to produce shifts in audience attitudes. These insights can be applied within securitization theory to explain and understand why (de)securitizing discourses succeed or fail. A quantitative content analytic approach also enables rigorous comparison of multiple actors – in this case, political elites and a diverse set of media outlets – across multiple cases, making it possible to isolate effects in the securitization process. The approach here, for example, was able to point to particular news outlets (and television programs) that likely influenced audience attitudes toward threats and exceptional measures. Finally, the identification of competing frames along different functional axes (e.g., remedy proposal or moral evaluation) provides a conceptual and methodological basis for identifying and measuring desecuritizing frames. In short, this synthesis unlocks and aids analysis of several underexplored features within securitization theory, including non-political elite securitizing actors, audiences, and desecuritization. Future scholarship in securitization theory should use the research design presented here, triangulating insights from a combined discourse analysis (to identify frames and the boundaries of discourse), content analysis (to objectively measure the prevalence of frames) and public opinion analysis (to measure discourse impacts on audiences).

8.4 Limitations/Future Research Directions

The contributions of this research notwithstanding, its limitations should guide and be addressed in future research. First, limited consideration is given to framing and framing effects in poll questions. In observing political and media vocabulary, securitizing and desecuritizing frames are isolated, but no such distinction is made in poll questions. In the terrorism study, for example, the ANES survey data used the term “torture”. Assuming that audience information processing is based on the impression-driven model described in Chapter 2, the use of “torture” in questions should activate a negative response. Interestingly, the results of the polls and ANES surveys suggest otherwise and show that “torture” is not a barrier to Fox News viewers indicating support (nor are MSNBC and *Times* audiences swayed by the “suspected terrorist” cue in the prompt). This seeming contradiction – that framing effects can occur in media and political texts, but not in questions – may be the outcome of extra contextual information provided in media and political elite texts that is missing in public opinion

polls. The term “torture” alone does not create the desecuritizing effect, but it indicates the probable presence of the desecuritizing frame in a larger text; in other words, “torture” itself does not constitute the entirety of the desecuritizing frame. In the form of a short survey prompt and without additional context, “torture” may lose the moral and legal connotations that are constructed in larger media and political texts. Drawing from research in cognitive psychology, Simon and Jerit (2007: 267) note that moral judgment can be regarded “as a function of social intuition as opposed to a deliberative process” and that “humans typically generate responses to everyday moral questions, including surveyed attitudes, spontaneously and without conscious thought”. If this is the case, then framing effects in polling questions (unlike longer and context-rich news and political elite texts) should be negligible, because they lack the supporting details that help construct (de)securitizing effects. The rising support for torture in polls and the results of the microanalysis support this claim. Simon and Jerit (2007) further postulate that when faced with competing frames, individuals can “select” different terms and reason over them according to their learned schema. In that case, respondents may have selected those aspects of the prompt that fit their existing schema; or else, the cues may have simply offset each other.

Nonetheless, the possibility that this phrasing may have influenced results should not be dismissed (see also Blauwkamp et al., 2018). Future studies should accordingly control for framing effects in questions for thoroughness. This could entail different versions of the question being administered, where key words (like “torture” or “illegal immigrant”) are substituted by their (de)securitizing complements (“interrogation” and “undocumented immigrant”). Moreover, polls can be both reflective and constitutive of discourse – they can lead the public into particular lines of thought, set boundaries for permissible options and normalize security discourses (Solomon, 2009). Thus, future research should examine public opinion polls as a site of discourse formation as well as a reflection of audience preferences.

A second key limitation is the assumption of causality underlining framing effects. The alignment between news frames and audiences exposed to those frames yields two possible interpretations. A conservative reading is that the press and their audiences share security dialects because of higher-order traits, like political and cultural identity. Partisan news sources, privy to the public pulse, will employ frames that are likely to be culturally congruent with their audiences, and audiences will select ideologically

consonant news sources, because it is less emotionally and cognitively costly (Scheufele, 1999). The prevailing assumption, however, is that foreign policy issues are distant from citizens' lives, and thus attitudes must be activated through cues from the press (Baum & Potter, 2008; Powlick & Katz, 1998). This top-down assumption is implied in securitization theory and Entman's cascade activation model as well. This is especially the case for agnostic or undecided individuals whose exposure to the press can motivate and harden attitudes. Political identity may initiate calibration to particular news sources, but it is the news source that motivates attitudes. Thus, a causal relationship between media frames and audience attitudes is possible from a theoretical standpoint, but the cross-sectional models are insufficient to definitively prove this. For this reason, statistical relationships have been cautiously noted as associations; and cause-effect claims have been caveated with theoretical assumptions.

Still, a more accurate representation may be an information marketplace model resembling economics, where feedback loops generate and reinforce particular discourses between a variety of actors (Baum & Potter, 2008). Future research may want to explore other ways to model this behavior. One approach is to estimate a vector autoregressive model that links current and lagged measures of political elite discourse, news content and public opinion to determine whether there are statistically significant directions of influence. This model was ruled out in this study because of the lack of public opinion data to build complete time-series datasets; but future research can consider other proxy data that has a similar cadence to news and political elite content, such as twitter or other social media data. Oren and Solomon (2015: 324) argue that securitization succeeds when the audience repeats (or "chants") the "mantras" used by securitizing actors, effectively promoting and perpetuating elite discourse, such that they become "materially 'inscribed' in people's bodies". Social media analysis could thus demonstrate the extent of "catchy" rhetorical devices (like *enhanced interrogation* or *undocumented immigrant*) permeating public discourse.

Third, the measurement of frames using key terms may be reductive. Admittedly, word differentiation (e.g., *torture* versus *interrogation* and *illegal* versus *undocumented*) forecloses consideration of pejorative intentions or nuances in language like sarcasm and valence. However, as discussed in Chapter 2, schema activation suggests that related concepts are stored cognitively in clusters of networks; the activation of one node within a network triggers the activation of other nodes through the process of

spreading activation. Certainly context can change the semantic interpretation of text with minimal additional cognitive cost, but the utterance of a particular term will still activate a particular connotation and its related nodes. Even pejoration and sarcasm rely on a pre-negotiated cultural understanding of a term, in order for the pejorative or sarcastic intent to be effective. To refer to “so-called undocumented immigrants” pejoratively acknowledges that the term *undocumented immigrants* belongs to a cultural connotation that is being challenged or attacked. Not only is that cultural meaning recalled then (along with other nodes that share its schematic space), but it can even be reinforced. Negation experiences a similar problem, in that a particular connotation is still activated, even if the overall construction of the statement is to contest that connotation. This echoes a similar point by Huysmans (2002) regarding the normative dilemma of reinforcing security linkages when trying to dismantle them. In dismissing the euphemism “interrogation” or “undocumented” as being fictitiously benign, a discursive link is established between the terms and benignity. Oren and Solomon (2015: 325) also argue that speakers with a desecuritizing agenda can “contribute to the consolidation of a generalized atmosphere of threat” by simply invoking securitizing phrases in their speech. By using the same terminology in securitizing discourse, opponents “partake in fostering a shared sense of danger” (Oren & Solomon, 2015: 327). It is unsurprising, then, that the cross-sectional analyses from 2012 and 2016 validate the methodological choice to use terms as indicators of frames: they show that support for exceptional measures aligns with attention to the news sources that most frequently used the securitizing frame; and that opposition aligns with attention to actors that most frequently employed the desecuritizing frame.

Future research can nonetheless mitigate this limitation by leveraging natural language processing and sentiment analytical methods to better capture nuance and subtleties in language. While sarcasm remains difficult to detect, other rules-based methods can help identify valence and negation. Rather than a naïve binary (present or not-present) classification for frames then, a probabilistic model could be adopted where the likelihood of frames is calculated as a function of labels as well as additional contextual factors, such as proximate negation terms or other indicators of challenging the frame. This approach should be used to compare results against the binary approach used in this research to determine the extent of overlap between both methods.

Finally, scope and depth considerations limited the extent to which this project could consider additional actors, sectors and regions. While cable television and traditional newspapers continue to be the dominant sources of news and information for Americans, social media and other digital options are catching up. Between 2016 and 2018, the percentage of American adults that use social media as a news source increased from 18% to 20%, while cable news fell from 57% to 49% (Shearer, 2018). While a significant gap still exists, the continuation of this trend and curation algorithms portend new dynamics in security attitude formation. The rise of podcasts and preeminence of conservative talk radio also makes these two mediums fruitful areas of future research. Press actors (traditional or otherwise) need not be the only drivers of security attitudes – other entertainment media like television and movies should also be considered, particularly given the potential for these formats to heighten the sensationalism already attached to security issues like terrorism (e.g., Croft, 2006). Depictions of torture and terrorism violence in television (e.g., *24* and *Homeland*) or Hollywood (e.g., *Zero Dark Thirty*) may desensitize audiences and even advance the narrative that torture works. Hansen's (2013) security discourse analysis structure similarly accommodates other fiction and non-fiction genres. Future research should test the effects of these disparate media in producing (de)securitization effects.

Similarly, this research was limited to two case studies in the societal and military sectors of the US. First, a further analysis of other sectors would be illustrative of broader themes and trends in American security discourse. This thesis finds somewhat contradicting outcomes: despite the internal logic of both threats being somewhat similar (i.e., a foreign Other threatening the American Self), in the military domain, Americans have become more accepting of exceptional measures, but in the societal sector, they have become more resistant. The particular logic of foreign Other versus American Self produces similar dynamics in some media: Fox News promotes securitizing rhetoric while MSNBC and the *Times* increasingly promote desecuritizing rhetoric. How does this vary in other security sectors that belong to different logics? For example, environmental security (e.g., climate change) has historically been a liberal priority; certainly, MSNBC, CNN and the *Times* would be more likely to accentuate the severity of the threat, while Fox News would downplay or neglect it. Future studies should expand the sectoral focus in the US to see how the press behaves under different threat logics. This effort may unearth different rhetorical mechanisms (comparable to euphemisms in this research) that can aid securitization analysis.

Second, scholars should investigate whether the media effects seen here replicate across non-American contexts. European contexts are obvious candidates given that securitization theory is well established and diverse media landscapes offer potentially rich results. But illiberal and autocratic regimes where the press is more restrained may also be insightful. Scholarly comparative pursuits can contribute to a more universal understanding of securitization and media dynamics.

The combination of exponential information growth and near frictionless transmission of content across borders underscores the urgency of these efforts. Certainly access to information is a normatively desired outcome – a healthy democracy requires an informed electorate. But the proliferation of news sources has resulted in different versions of (mis)information and different realities for news consumers – in the U.S., the fault lines largely occur along already fractious political identity, limiting the possibility of dialogue and exacerbating echo chambers. The broad ramifications of this are not only distrust in “other” media, but also in fellow citizens and truth itself, spawning what has been dubbed the “post-truth” era (Benkler et al., 2018). For security issues, the consequences are especially severe: public legitimization of exceptional measures like torture removes a powerful barrier against such legal and moral abuses – the fragility of legal and normative institutions is all the more acute under impulsive leadership. Understanding the discursive mechanisms that motivate these dynamics can inform policy and behavior to either reverse the disturbing trend of misinformation, or build defenses to mitigate its damage.

Appendix A - Content Analysis Frame Extraction

All text was first lowercased to accommodate variations in case. Next a Python script iterated over all text to count the number of pattern matches.

Table A.1 shows the pattern matches for the terrorism case study. For example, if a word started with *interrog*, it was counted as an instance of the securitization frame.

Table A.2 shows the pattern matches for the immigration case study, which used Pythonic regular expressions to identify frames.

Table A.1

Remedy Proposal	
Securitizing (Interrogation)	[starts with] <i>interrog</i>
Desecuritizing (torture)	[starts with] <i>tortur</i>

Table A.2

Moral Evaluation	
Securitizing (Illegal immigrant)	<code>illegal\w{0,4}\W+(?:\w+\W+){0,10}?w{0,2}migrant\w{0,8} \w{0,2}migrant\w{0,8}\W+(?:\w+\W+){0,10}?illegal\w{0,4}</code>
Desecuritizing (<i>Undocumented immigrant</i>)	<code>undocumented\W+(?:\w+\W+){0,10}?w{0,2}migrant\w{0,8} \w{0,2}migrant\w{0,8}\W+(?:\w+\W+){0,10}?undocumented unauthorized\W+(?:\w+\W+){0,10}?w{0,2}migrant\w{0,8} \w{0,2}migrant\w{0,8}\W+(?:\w+\W+){0,10}?unauthorized irregular\W+(?:\w+\W+){0,10}?w{0,2}migrant\w{0,8} \w{0,2}migrant\w{0,8}\W+(?:\w+\W+){0,10}?irregular</code>
Remedy Proposal	
Securitizing (Border security)	<code>border\w{0,3}\W+(?:\w+\W+){0,8}?wall\w{0,3} wall\w{0,3}\W+(?:\w+\W+){0,8}?border\w{0,3} border\w{0,3}\W+(?:\w+\W+){0,8}?fenc\w{0,4} fenc\w{0,4}\W+(?:\w+\W+){0,8}?border\w{0,3} secur\w{0,4}\W+(?:\w+\W+){0,8}?border\w{0,3} border\w{0,3}\W+(?:\w+\W+){0,8}?secur\w{0,4}</code>
Desecuritizing (<i>Pathways to legal status</i>)	<code>path\w{0,4}\W+(?:\w+\W+){0,10}?legal\w{0,8} legal\w{0,8}\W+(?:\w+\W+){0,10}?path\w{0,4} path\w{0,4}\W+(?:\w+\W+){0,10}?citizen\w{0,5} citizen\w{0,5}\W+(?:\w+\W+){0,10}?path\w{0,4} citizen\w{0,5}\W+(?:\w+\W+){0,10}?bearn\w{0,2} \bearn\w{0,2}\W+(?:\w+\W+){0,15}?citizen\w{0,5} \bearn\w{0,2}\W+(?:\w+\W+){0,10}?legal\w{0,8} legal\w{0,8}\W+(?:\w+\W+){0,10}?bearn\w{0,2} path\w{0,4}\W+(?:\w+\W+){0,10}?bearn\w{0,2} \bearn\w{0,2}\W+(?:\w+\W+){0,10}?path\w{0,4} \w{0,3}migr\w{0,4}\W+(?:\w+\W+){0,10}?path\w{0,4} path\w{0,4}\W+(?:\w+\W+){0,10}?w{0,3}migr\w{0,4} path\w{0,4}\W+(?:\w+\W+){0,10}?bresid\w{0,6} \bresid\w{0,6}\W+(?:\w+\W+){0,10}?w{0,3}path\w{0,4}</code>

Appendix B - Alternate Regression Models

Table B.1 lists alternate regression models from the terrorism case study. Models (5) and (6) include just the political attention variable and none of the media variables. Model (7) substitutes Erin Burnett's show for Anderson Cooper's on CNN. Model (8) substitutes Chris Matthews' program on CNN for Rachel Maddow's.

Table B.2 shows an alternate regression model for the immigration case study. Model (9) substitutes Rachel Maddow's program for Chris Matthews' on MSNBC.

Table B.1 Alternate regression models for terrorism case study

	<i>Torture Support</i>			
	2012 (5)	2016 (6)	2016 (CNN substitution) (7)	2016 (MSN substitution) (8)
<i>Framing Effect</i>				
Attention to politics	0.062** (0.026)	-0.040 (0.034)	-0.022 (0.060)	-0.038 (0.060)
CNN			0.006 (0.253)	0.130 (0.144)
Fox News			0.471*** (0.155)	0.453*** (0.156)
MSNBC			-0.444*** (0.171)	-0.221 (0.180)
New York Times			-0.238** (0.119)	-0.249** (0.120)
<i>(In)Security</i>				
Fear of likely attack	0.234*** (0.029)	0.170*** (0.033)	0.078 (0.052)	0.080 (0.052)
Military experience	0.034 (0.084)	0.064 (0.112)	-0.177 (0.182)	-0.155 (0.183)
Retributiveness	0.954*** (0.063)	0.954*** (0.079)	0.940*** (0.121)	0.941*** (0.121)
<i>General Demographic</i>				
Race (white)	-0.157** (0.063)	-0.301*** (0.086)	-0.235* (0.134)	-0.225* (0.135)
Income	0.004 (0.004)	0.001 (0.005)	-0.012 (0.008)	-0.012 (0.008)
Region (south)	0.061 (0.056)	-0.028 (0.071)	-0.105 (0.112)	-0.094 (0.112)
Gender (female)	-0.202*** (0.058)	-0.092 (0.073)	-0.077 (0.111)	-0.076 (0.111)
Political ideology	0.190*** (0.024)	0.216*** (0.032)	0.153*** (0.052)	0.171*** (0.052)
Partisanship	0.086*** (0.017)	0.166*** (0.023)	0.154*** (0.037)	0.161*** (0.037)
Age	-0.004** (0.002)	-0.010*** (0.002)	-0.011*** (0.004)	-0.012*** (0.004)
Education level	-0.068*** (0.012)	-0.072*** (0.017)	-0.097*** (0.027)	-0.099*** (0.027)
Religiosity	0.087 (0.062)	0.136* (0.078)	0.127 (0.118)	0.136 (0.119)
Children	0.137** (0.065)	0.008 (0.079)	0.073 (0.120)	0.054 (0.120)
<i>Constant</i>	1.993*** (0.214)	2.422*** (0.276)	3.544*** (0.466)	3.516*** (0.467)
Observations	4,517	2,614	1,031	1,031
R ²	0.164	0.261	0.324	0.321

Adjusted R ²	0.161	0.257	0.312	0.309
Residual Std. Error	1.794 (df = 4502)	1.716 (df = 2599)	1.642 (df = 1012)	1.646 (df = 1012)
F Statistic	63.078*** (df = 14; 4502)	65.452*** (df = 14; 2599)	26.982*** (df = 18; 1012)	26.579*** (df = 18; 1012)

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table B.2 Alternate regression models for immigration case study

	<i>Border Fence</i> 2016 (9)
<i>Framing Effect</i>	
Attention to politics	0.321 ^{***} (0.102)
CNN	-0.265 (0.264)
Fox News	1.002 ^{***} (0.235)
MSNBC	0.041 (0.392)
New York Times	-0.683 ^{***} (0.223)
<i>Contextual and Insecurity</i>	
Border state resident	-0.148 (0.306)
Percent unauthorized	0.000 (0.075)
Financial concern	0.132 (0.081)
Terrorist attack concern	-0.117 (0.090)
Hispanic thermometer	-0.017 ^{***} (0.005)
<i>General Demographic</i>	
Race (Hispanic)	-0.622 (0.400)
Income	-0.003 (0.014)
Gender (female)	0.122 (0.184)
Ideology	0.369 ^{***} (0.086)
Partisanship	0.304 ^{***} (0.059)
Age	-0.008 (0.006)
Education level	-0.160 ^{***} (0.047)
Children	0.087 (0.206)
Authoritarianism	0.425 ^{**} (0.187)
Constant	-1.803 ^{**} (0.942)
Observations	1,020
Log Likelihood	-408.295
Akaike Inf. Crit.	856.591
Model χ^2	419.236 ^{***}

Appendix C - Raw Scores and Frame Rates

Table C.1 Terrorism Case Study Frame Annual Scores and Rates (News Media)

Year	Fox News				MSNBC				CNN				New York Times			
	<i>Torture</i>		<i>Interrogation</i>		<i>Torture</i>		<i>Interrogation</i>		<i>Torture</i>		<i>Interrogation</i>		<i>Torture</i>		<i>Interrogation</i>	
	Count	Rate	Count	Rate												
2001	68	0.192	102	0.288	22	0.120	59	0.322	221	0.159	402	0.289	303	0.338	267	0.297
2002	242	0.355	386	0.567	322	0.448	196	0.273	483	0.202	1157	0.484	330	0.343	601	0.625
2003	355	0.728	314	0.644	650	0.648	355	0.354	642	0.335	999	0.521	527	0.644	567	0.693
2004	393	0.645	376	0.617	545	0.693	549	0.698	1443	0.419	1927	0.559	908	1.146	1465	1.849
2005	882	2.061	591	1.381	622	1.049	452	0.763	2361	0.779	1295	0.427	1485	2.649	1225	2.185
2006	630	1.073	651	1.109	487	0.676	251	0.348	1720	0.467	1124	0.305	1037	1.679	844	1.367
2007	491	1.118	341	0.776	722	1.317	238	0.434	1961	0.606	1092	0.337	1010	2.114	797	1.668
2008	212	0.467	204	0.450	574	1.214	159	0.336	725	0.277	530	0.203	667	1.709	812	2.080
2009	652	1.472	1179	2.663	2694	5.984	927	2.059	2046	0.760	2270	0.843	967	3.106	1042	3.347
2010	107	0.264	424	1.046	308	0.732	194	0.461	418	0.188	474	0.214	372	1.288	443	1.534
2011	186	0.480	463	1.195	387	1.236	353	1.127	938	0.429	612	0.280	582	1.665	360	1.030
2012	208	0.489	293	0.690	163	0.539	53	0.175	543	0.284	245	0.128	567	1.569	340	0.941
2013	182	0.368	319	0.644	273	0.512	162	0.304	552	0.287	773	0.402	561	1.522	314	0.852
2014	531	0.593	644	0.719	1041	1.589	396	0.604	1865	0.684	1712	0.628	974	2.464	616	1.558
2015	196	0.187	159	0.152	133	0.194	120	0.175	513	0.154	522	0.157	567	1.250	347	0.765
2016	138	0.147	186	0.199	126	0.364	21	0.061	1035	0.317	669	0.205	714	1.148	572	0.920

Table C.2 Terrorism Case Study Frame Annual Scores and Rates (Political Elites)

Year	Presidential Elites				Congress			
	<i>Torture</i>		<i>Interrogation</i>		<i>Torture</i>		<i>Interrogation</i>	
	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate
2001	2	0.035	8	0.138	206	0.161	21	0.016
2002	19	0.146	5	0.038	253	0.151	49	0.029
2003	132	1.150	13	0.113	531	0.239	91	0.041
2004	257	0.961	93	0.348	1227	0.684	660	0.368
2005	39	0.356	23	0.210	2439	1.145	1402	0.658
2006	56	0.355	53	0.336	1144	0.713	848	0.529
2007	21	0.182	54	0.467	1083	0.489	559	0.252
2008	35	0.369	82	0.864	781	0.714	603	0.551
2009	39	0.627	57	0.917	433	0.340	659	0.517
2010	12	0.195	13	0.211	192	0.259	406	0.547
2011	21	0.498	3	0.071	195	0.225	512	0.591
2012	11	0.282	6	0.154	89	0.132	31	0.046
2013	5	0.105	6	0.126	215	0.276	166	0.213
2014	15	0.214	28	0.399	252	0.386	275	0.422
2015	23	0.262	5	0.057	275	0.290	221	0.233
2016	27	0.264	3	0.029	121	0.181	33	0.049

Table C.3 Immigration Case Study Frame Annual Scores and Rates (News Media)

CNN										
Year	Amnesty		Illegal		Undocumented		Border Security		Pathways	
	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate
2001	261	0.442	308	0.522	29	0.049	93	0.158	17	0.029
2002	85	0.125	77	0.113	4	0.006	209	0.308	4	0.006
2003	110	0.176	294	0.47	30	0.048	235	0.375	9	0.014
2004	340	0.319	440	0.413	60	0.056	627	0.588	45	0.042
2005	277	0.211	547	0.416	44	0.033	1461	1.111	36	0.027
2006	2914	1.336	2807	1.287	336	0.154	5285	2.424	528	0.242
2007	3008	1.287	2744	1.174	114	0.049	3189	1.364	453	0.194
2008	869	0.506	631	0.367	40	0.023	1698	0.989	244	0.142
2009	271	0.177	1062	0.695	99	0.065	516	0.338	99	0.065
2010	350	0.206	2126	1.252	149	0.088	1169	0.689	266	0.157
2011	274	0.248	641	0.581	58	0.053	465	0.421	114	0.103
2012	201	0.13	679	0.441	178	0.116	328	0.213	237	0.154
2013	283	0.2	219	0.155	250	0.177	726	0.513	616	0.435
2014	397	0.29	300	0.219	586	0.429	795	0.582	294	0.215
2015	578	0.248	874	0.374	795	0.341	1090	0.467	524	0.225
2016	1226	0.367	1033	0.309	1438	0.43	1964	0.587	676	0.202

Fox News										
Year	Amnesty		Illegal		Undocumented		Border Security		Pathways	
	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate
2001	130	1.126	141	1.221	13	0.113	47	0.407	2	0.017
2002	107	0.686	266	1.706	13	0.083	186	1.193	4	0.026
2003	46	0.527	183	2.095	6	0.069	68	0.779	2	0.023
2004	142	1.517	190	2.029	5	0.053	129	1.378	23	0.246
2005	176	1.006	464	2.651	14	0.08	488	2.788	24	0.137
2006	855	2.951	832	2.872	18	0.062	1354	4.674	243	0.839
2007	612	1.842	957	2.88	40	0.12	698	2.1	123	0.37
2008	160	0.696	236	1.027	7	0.03	243	1.057	49	0.213
2009	78	0.372	316	1.508	11	0.052	145	0.692	11	0.052
2010	388	1.079	564	1.568	31	0.086	1120	3.114	90	0.25
2011	157	0.602	305	1.17	14	0.054	434	1.664	51	0.196
2012	128	0.41	212	0.678	13	0.042	132	0.422	47	0.15
2013	354	0.952	282	0.758	29	0.078	881	2.37	260	0.699
2014	735	1.142	620	0.964	58	0.09	1042	1.62	108	0.168
2015	650	0.735	889	1.005	123	0.139	868	0.982	232	0.262
2016	474	0.462	622	0.607	83	0.081	989	0.965	111	0.108

Table C.3 Immigration Case Study Frame Annual Scores and Rates (News Media)
(Continued)

MSNBC										
Year	Amnesty		Illegal		Undocumented		Border Security		Pathways	
	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate
2001	30	0.27	29	0.261	0	0	9	0.081	2	0.018
2002	77	0.304	51	0.201	2	0.008	78	0.308	1	0.004
2003	141	0.38	348	0.937	9	0.024	72	0.194	5	0.013
2004	137	0.688	81	0.407	4	0.02	67	0.336	9	0.045
2005	38	0.164	93	0.402	2	0.009	108	0.467	3	0.013
2006	393	0.963	407	0.997	15	0.037	485	1.188	67	0.164
2007	224	0.67	264	0.79	8	0.024	134	0.401	38	0.114
2008	51	0.215	47	0.198	5	0.021	43	0.181	16	0.067
2009	16	0.081	128	0.644	8	0.04	32	0.161	8	0.04
2010	85	0.224	282	0.744	46	0.121	227	0.599	81	0.214
2011	77	0.271	131	0.462	38	0.134	112	0.395	32	0.113
2012	72	0.129	128	0.23	98	0.176	84	0.151	93	0.167
2013	238	0.293	136	0.167	133	0.164	439	0.541	570	0.702
2014	315	0.417	89	0.118	218	0.289	342	0.453	162	0.215
2015	196	0.238	203	0.246	199	0.242	219	0.266	201	0.244
2016	138	0.251	141	0.256	97	0.176	253	0.459	68	0.123

<i>New York Times</i>										
Year	Amnesty		Illegal		Undocumented		Border Security		Pathways	
	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate
2001	152	0.282	623	1.156	41	0.076	98	0.182	31	0.058
2002	85	0.17	421	0.843	26	0.052	171	0.342	19	0.038
2003	67	0.149	626	1.393	24	0.053	88	0.196	23	0.051
2004	89	0.198	519	1.155	49	0.109	127	0.283	52	0.116
2005	92	0.19	649	1.341	25	0.052	195	0.403	42	0.087
2006	303	0.533	1707	3.004	68	0.12	624	1.098	209	0.368
2007	239	0.455	1814	3.454	102	0.194	332	0.632	162	0.308
2008	93	0.196	914	1.929	40	0.084	180	0.38	95	0.2
2009	80	0.193	730	1.758	59	0.142	97	0.234	80	0.193
2010	108	0.251	985	2.293	46	0.107	197	0.459	122	0.284
2011	148	0.275	1100	2.043	85	0.158	343	0.637	124	0.23
2012	144	0.228	1126	1.779	122	0.193	184	0.291	189	0.299
2013	211	0.326	749	1.156	336	0.519	681	1.051	785	1.212
2014	230	0.361	329	0.517	430	0.675	342	0.537	258	0.405
2015	261	0.355	294	0.4	569	0.774	603	0.82	316	0.43
2016	355	0.325	437	0.4	873	0.798	886	0.81	253	0.231

Table C.4 Immigration Case Study Frame Annual Scores and Rates (Political Elites)

Presidential Elites					
Amnesty	Illegal	Undocumented	Border Security	Pathways	

Year	Count	Rate								
2001	16	0.716	2	0.089	4	0.179	10	0.447	4	0.179
2002	3	0.142	0	0	0	0	78	3.69	0	0
2003	3	0.189	3	0.189	0	0	20	1.258	0	0
2004	39	0.882	12	0.271	0	0	52	1.175	13	0.294
2005	31	1.448	87	4.062	0	0	105	4.903	5	0.233
2006	160	3.062	174	3.329	0	0	399	7.635	35	0.67
2007	100	1.799	78	1.403	3	0.054	279	5.019	15	0.27
2008	1	0.046	0	0	0	0	14	0.65	1	0.046
2009	1	0.029	19	0.545	1	0.029	40	1.148	7	0.201
2010	5	0.113	14	0.315	1	0.023	114	2.567	9	0.203
2011	1	0.027	3	0.08	2	0.053	51	1.355	12	0.319
2012	3	0.05	2	0.033	9	0.151	26	0.435	10	0.167
2013	3	0.049	2	0.033	17	0.278	101	1.649	62	1.012
2014	18	0.25	7	0.097	29	0.404	75	1.044	34	0.473
2015	3	0.042	3	0.042	14	0.197	51	0.718	18	0.253
2016	3	0.033	1	0.011	6	0.066	46	0.506	20	0.22

Congress

Year	Amnesty		Illegal		Undocumented		Border Security		Pathways	
	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate
2001	44	0.053	53	0.063	5	0.006	132	0.158	15	0.018
2002	54	0.077	30	0.043	10	0.014	1072	1.535	9	0.013
2003	68	0.07	57	0.059	9	0.009	324	0.334	14	0.014
2004	56	0.072	62	0.08	7	0.009	491	0.633	8	0.01
2005	265	0.262	186	0.184	49	0.048	2036	2.009	55	0.054
2006	1283	1.632	427	0.543	188	0.239	3366	4.281	343	0.436
2007	689	0.601	235	0.205	123	0.107	1840	1.605	154	0.134
2008	16	0.027	15	0.026	13	0.022	273	0.464	4	0.007
2009	50	0.053	42	0.045	13	0.014	322	0.343	23	0.025
2010	187	0.547	68	0.199	27	0.079	197	0.576	59	0.173
2011	15	0.034	19	0.044	1	0.002	222	0.51	8	0.018
2012	28	0.069	24	0.059	6	0.015	97	0.24	17	0.042
2013	441	0.777	117	0.206	104	0.183	2501	4.408	354	0.624
2014	285	0.54	77	0.146	35	0.066	604	1.144	58	0.11
2015	118	0.179	61	0.093	26	0.04	424	0.645	14	0.021
2016	73	0.166	34	0.077	19	0.043	263	0.599	18	0.041

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