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Tall Tales of Danger and Security: How a Critical Human Security Approach can Address Major Contradictions Revealed Through a Critical Narrative Analysis of Dominant U.S. Security Strategies

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Tall Tales of Danger and Security:

How a Critical Human Security approach can address major contradictions revealed through a critical narrative analysis of dominant U.S. Security Strategies

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Master of Arts in International Studies Thesis

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May 25, 2018

**Tall Tales of Danger and Security: How a Critical Human Security approach can address
major contradictions revealed through a critical narrative analysis of
dominant U.S. Security Strategies**

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree

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in

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By

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Under the guidance and approval of the committee, and approval by all members, this thesis project has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree.

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Abstract

Over many generations, humans have developed many perspectives and practices regarding the best ways to recognize and address what they perceive to be dangerous. Stories are used to help shape and narrate perceptions about the world, and they serve to pass on vital information that impacts how a society responds to threats and vulnerabilities. These narratives of danger and security are subjective to the experiences and political intentions of society, and therefore in many ways are partial and biased in their assessments and policies. This results in flawed security practices that may actually exacerbate threats or create new insecurities. What this thesis examines is why the U.S. maintains harmful approaches to global security by contemplating how threats and insecurities are framed and discussed in the official narratives that guide their implementation. Using a critical narrative analysis to examine the words, phrases, value assumptions, and intentions of the 2015 and 2017 U.S. National Security Strategy (NSS), I illuminate how the shaping of perceptions in dominant security narratives limits the effective response to security problems by narrowing their assessments to militaristic and shallow analyses of the root causes of global insecurities. I then respond to the critical call for a broadening, deepening, and opening of security by expanding and applying Critical Human Security perspectives to the NSS in order to diagnostically engage each strategy in the spirit of humanizing their assessments and to reimagine new possibilities. Ultimately, I argue that perspectives and words matter because of their function in impacting political realities, that the strongly political nature of security narratives inhibits their effectiveness, and that the end-goals of protecting human rights and international law are better realized when more inclusive assessments and nuanced security practices allow people to comprehensively perceive and defend themselves from insecurity on all levels of society.

Keywords: Critical Human Security, National Security Strategy, Critical Narrative Analysis

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Dedication

To Tristan Holmes, and those of us who come home yet stay behind.

To all those who suffer as collateral of security practices and
to a future generation of humans committed to peace.

Acknowledgements

After six years of university study, it feels great to reflect on the journey. I've been blessed to study abroad in ten countries, where through homestays, field trips, adventures, and exchanges I was lucky to learn from people of diverse backgrounds and perspectives. And while the pathway has been sacred and scenic indeed, it has also been greatly challenging and overwhelming at times. Yet my professors have always shown patience, grace, and expertise. I am particularly grateful for my outstanding and inspiring thesis advisor, Professor Annick Wibben. Additionally, the entire USF and MAIS faculty have been wonderful, including my favorite Professors Kaiser, Gifford, Dowd-Uribe, Loperena, Zartner, Cantero, Canlas, and Millspaugh, and Administrators Christie Meno and Amanda Mitchell. I acknowledge all the blessings I have in my life, including my remarkable family and friends across the country and around the world. Specifically, I want to thank my beautiful Siberian partner, Elena Kobylina, for her inspiration and loving support through a cantankerous struggle to stay focused on this project. And finally, to Tubby McDucks— thanks my friend!

Notes

In this thesis I strive to use a common tone that provides a general, theoretical view of certain events and concepts that helps me narrate this inquiry into the deeper meaning behind dominant security narratives. International in scope yet focused on the U.S., I strive to contribute a new theoretical opening in Critical Security Studies by applying it to a narrative analysis, which is subjective and deconstructive in nature. I hope it generates critique, conversation, and curiosity for all readers. Further, I often utilize 'parentheses' to introduce important words or concepts, and I use *italics* to stress key points. I've grouped each section to compartmentalize and better visualize the comparative narrative studies and I have incorporated the literature throughout.

... Then she turned to me, let me see how angry she was, and that the anger was for me. She had been talking to herself, so what she said was a fragment of a much larger conversation. “You were just *babies* then!” she said.

“What?” I said.

“You were just babies in the war—like the ones upstairs!”

I nodded that this was true. We *had* been foolish virgins in the war, right at the end of childhood.

“But you’re not going to write it that way, are you.” This wasn’t a question. It was an accusation.

“I—I don’t know,” I said.

“Well, *I* know,” she said. “You’ll pretend you were men instead of babies, and you’ll be played in the movies by Frank Sinatra and John Wayne or some of those other glamorous, war-loving, dirty old men. And war will look just wonderful, so we’ll have a lot more of them. And they’ll be fought by babies like the babies upstairs.”

So then I understood. It was war that made her angry. She didn’t want her babies or anybody else’s babies killed in wars. And she thought wars were partly encouraged by books and movies.

...

So I held up my right hand and I made her a promise: “Mary,” I said, “I don’t think this book of mine is ever going to be finished. I must have written five thousand pages by now and thrown them all away. If I ever do finish it, though, I give you my word of honor: there won’t be a part for Frank Sinatra or John Wayne.

“I’ll tell you what,” I said, “I’ll call it ‘The Children’s Crusade.’”

She was my friend after that.

—Kurt Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse-Five*, 1969, p. 18-19

Chapter 1

Introduction

The Context of Security

As the world in the 21st century becomes progressively globalized, interconnected, and inhabited by ever-increasing numbers of humans and modes of collaboration, the vast concepts of *danger*, *vulnerability*, *security* and *insecurity* evolve alongside in response to emerging realities. Advances in science and technology make the merits of modernity obvious for many people and reflect the successes of centuries of innovation and ingenuity across many levels of global society, creating a sense of control over many rudimentary threats to existence. Yet, a simple survey of the widespread instability, poverty, disease, and violence around the world reveals a stark picture.

The modern task of identifying and responding to threats is crucial to effectively ‘practicing’ security, although this duty is complicated and rife with problems. When it comes to thinking about security on a national scale, what is designated as a danger can be subjective to the predispositions or interests of those in powerful positions who determine or influence major decisions of security. As a concept in the socio-political spectrum, the vastness and sheer variety of approaches to security are underlined by complex elements and phenomena that necessitate wide-ranging levels of analysis to understand (Graf, 2010). Social projects of security require ‘securitizing’ some ‘thing’ that may or not be viewed as a danger, depending on who is asked.

‘Doing’ security is a political process in the sense that it is constructed through relations between varying interests and exercised through power relations in society (Wibben, 2016, p. 2). David Campbell (1998) writes that “danger is not [just] an objective condition. It is not a thing that exists independently of those to whom it may become a threat... [it] is an effect of

interpretation” (p. 1-2). As a generally subjective perspective then, concepts of danger and practices of security are therefore projections of socio-cultural observations and biased notions of reality. In other words, they are politically constructed and managed to appear as natural or normative.

What does this mean for security-at-large in a globalized world when normalized assumptions actually lead to more insecurity? It calls for a serious investigation. Examining how a society perceives danger is important because this process illuminates how politics merge with reality in very complex and important ways that have tangible effects on people every day. This examination can be done by *analyzing the stories they create and share about danger*, revealing a lot of interesting clues to this question. One method to examine how a society thinks about and practices security is to conduct a narrative analysis of the ‘official,’ socially dominant, or prominent words and ideas that articulate types of danger and the security strategies undertaken by a group or society.

Comparing and contrasting the intentions and constructions of official narratives about security, such as those found in policy documents and political speeches, with the outcomes of actual security practices helps to illuminate certain discrepancies that exist between perceptions and practices of security and the actual outcomes of reducing vulnerability and eliminating threats. For example, viewing the Global War on Terror (GWOT) as a security mechanism reveals vast inconsistencies between the guiding policies and the actual impacts that have resulted in perpetuating many of the insecurities the GWOT assumes to address. ‘Reality narratives’ bring to light important elements of a story that go beyond what it says on the surface and more into what it actually means, asking what the implications are and why (Wibben, 2011, p. 45). The purpose of such an analysis is to appraise security efforts in order to evaluate and

hopefully improve them. In doing so, it becomes clear that some types of danger are more ‘valorized’ or socially approved as more imminent than others. Political stories are constructed that paint some threats as more looming while other sources of danger are devalued or ignored. So, security is political, and narratives help shape and permit what is designated as a security threat and how to address them.

My goal here is to tell a short *story about stories* that are told of danger and security. After discussing my motivations and the concepts of critical theory and narrative research in the introduction, I continue the journey in Chapter 2 by examining the contested history and crucial concepts of both ‘security’ and ‘human security’ leading up to the present moment. In Chapter 3, I discuss Critical Security Studies in light of evolving notions in the field, gaps in the literature, and new openings to be made. In Chapter 4, I pivot towards discussing the powerful role of narrative in society and why a critical narrative analysis is a potent tool to investigate and critique dominant security narratives. In Chapter 5, I discuss my methodology before conducting a critical narrative analysis of the *words* and *meanings* used to form the logic of the U.S. National Security Strategy (NSS) and endeavor to apply Critical Human Security concepts. Chapter 6 provides a discussion of my findings, a conclusion, and a vision for further research and new ways to (re)imagine security.

My overall objective is to demonstrate how the political nature of security leads to practices that exacerbate insecurity, and how this is perpetuated through dominant narratives that paint a false picture of security realities. Through the application of a critical framework that seeks to go beyond the surface of these stories, I challenge the words and underlying assumptions of U.S. national security and suggest new ‘openings’ to be filled with a more human-focused and less-biased notion of danger. Eventually, I propose that there are more

comprehensive and evidence-based approaches to security that ought to complement current practices, yet I make it clear that contemporary security practices are often responsible for many of the dangers they claim to address. I most acutely ask a question that seeks to better understand the power of stories, the outcomes of the actions they motivate, and ways to make them more inclusive:

How does a critical, comparative narrative analysis of the U.S. National Security Strategies of 2015 and 2017 illuminate ways that an integrated Critical Human Security approach might address current insecurities in a more comprehensive manner?

Motivation

My enthusiasm to compare and contrast the stories with policy and their outcomes rests upon a personal awareness that many current security practices do not achieve their proposed aims. In fact, many security practices actually promote *more* insecurity. Undeniably, there appear to be many serious inconsistencies between official state-level designations of danger and the lived realities of insecurity that people experience each day.

In many ways this thesis comprises not only a review of literature and an analysis of security narratives; it is also an artifact of time in my own life that culminates an interesting global education and sequence of unique experiences. It helps me examine both personal and professional questions. You see, my ‘escape’ from rural Missouri into the Global War on Terror as a Navy Corpsman fourteen years ago led me into places and situations that are hard to put words on. As a medic in a small combat unit, I developed early on an appreciation for critical, nuanced thinking as a way for me to stay sane in the often blunt, crude, anti-intellectual manner of military martial culture. The tension I lived between warrior and healer made me sensitive to

the power of socio-cultural roles of symbolism, rhetoric, persuasion, and the importance of communication in motivating people to think and act collectively.

Over the years, I experienced many questionable, dangerous, and often counterproductive things on behalf of the symbols and stories that surrounded me and guided my behavior. By this, I mean that I was devoted professionally to the will of the U.S. political and military machine despite personal opposition to policies and practices that I felt were counter-productive to overall short- and long-term objectives. Over time, I began questioning basic assumptions because I saw a disconnect between the values proposed by those ‘back home’ and the outcomes of practices on the ground in certain regions where the U.S. was engaging militarily.

My sentiment that values and practices don’t always align is nothing new, nor does it deny the power and strength that comes from believing and acting on ideals and values that transcend the individual self, which I believe is an amazing experience and is something humans seem to continually foster and cultivate through culture and society. Organized religion is probably the most acute example of this tendency to align oneself with a collective sense of a higher power, and the military, at its best, indeed can be a remarkable living experience of social ritual and devotion to a transcendent sense of cooperation. This cooperative power has been and can indeed be used positively and effectively to accomplish great things that promote human wellbeing, and so demands to be critiqued when the outcomes are less than amazing.

Considering the military as a primary tool of the U.S. national security apparatus, I often question the way things are discussed and represented for the sake of calling out inaccuracies and discrepancies. I am interested in the process of making our security assessments more accurate and actually effective in motivating action that is positive. Because, I ask, what happens when these often-noble ideals and values lead to sinister, violent outcomes? What happens when

guiding values do not align with the actions taken in the name of that value, and instead promote the opposition to that value? In my case, the experiences of war led me to see a discrepancy between the supposed values guiding the U.S. mission such as justice, democracy, and the promotion of liberty, and the outcomes of our actions. I'm curious how such vast miscalculations could be allowed to occur in a modern world supposedly guided by consideration for human rights and international laws. Understanding the power of symbolism and storytelling, I know that the dominant narratives in the military and across society *strongly impact perceptions and permissions* for what people do, say, and think.

The power of militarism is especially poignant in U.S. society because it directly references a sense of martial power that can be shared in by all who appreciate it, and because it invokes tribalism, a sense of power over the unknown, and because it can appeal to and align with primary emotional responses of perceptions of danger and the unknown (Becker, 1973). I believe that U.S. society, like many others, has been long conditioned by militarism and war mythology, so that after the attacks on September 11, 2001, of course it seemed natural to try to reduce vulnerability via military action in the minds of many (Wibben, 2018).

Yet I also believe that militarism and the impulse to resolve things with military violence is, like many things, *a socially-constructed orientation towards problem-solving* that comprises a set of values and beliefs that stem from a long history. If social conditioning accounts for the foundational worldviews that promote militarism as an obvious or preferable choice amongst many potential choices, then intentional efforts to construct new, more peaceful and inclusive worldviews are needed. When common approaches are questioned or exposed as inadequate, then the orientations can shift and less-self-destructive ways of problem-solving can ideally emerge. Critiquing the symbols and stories that seem 'natural' or commonplace isn't easy, but it

is necessary. Luckily, many people have been questioning social realities for a long time, providing inspiration and countless examples of crucial, critical thought to guide my inquiry.

Notes on Critical Theory

‘Security Studies’ rests within the disciplinary home of International Relations and takes as its goal the examination of all things related to the ideas and practices of *security*, creating a historicity of the mitigation of danger and protection from threats. The overall theories and methods of security studies generally seek to provide useful concepts concerning how to understand and address danger and evaluate threats between all levels of reference. Yet over time and across many disciplines, established or at least acknowledged theories are regularly found to be unable to fully account for everything relevant and emergent to the field. And with the intention to do so, limitations, biases, and errors are hopefully exposed by the careful work of researchers and through reflection on examples and data that provide some evidence of theory in practice (Graf, 2010). Ideally, the foundations of a discipline can be rethought, restructured, and ‘contested’ due to flawed premises or unethical procedures in methodology (Buzan, 1984, p. 26). This point is important because, as Ole Wæver (2011) points out, “the structure and nature of theory can have systematic political implications” (p. 465), resulting in various consequences in actual policy and practice and impacts on people. Inevitably, a theory or practice can be manipulated through a dubious comprehension or sinister handling for political, commercial, or ideological reasons.

Therefore, investigating the historically-influenced socio-cultural context is important when considering not only the subject itself but how the subject is approached and framed in academic and policy terms. Critical theory evolved to critique the basic foundations and

assumptions of society, to illuminate and contest. It challenges a naturalist version of knowledge production and “holds the opposite view, namely that theory is historical, subjective, and a part of society... never satisfied with asking what something means or how it works, it also has to ask what is at stake in such questions in the first place” (Buchanan, 2016, p. 22). Signs of evolution in Security Studies are obvious throughout the broad security discourse and reflect a progressive historical timeline with emergent concepts, theories, and policy in practice.

The philosophical roots of critical inquiry and narrative research stem from postmodernism, social constructionism, feminism, and constructivism (Etherington, 2011). The emergence of Feminist Security Studies (FSS) and Critical Security Studies (CSS) over the past several decades have energized the inquiry into the very foundational assumptions of society and security, calling out the dark history and violent tendencies that define many security practices over time. Most importantly, these approaches strive to dissect how the associated projects of security have in fact created and reinforced many of the things that cause insecurity in the first place, and call upon critical scholars, themselves political agents, to suggest new openings.

Official stories, or dominant narratives, of security and related topics provide useful examples for understanding the way that the very focus of security— danger— becomes framed in different contexts across all domains. Annick Wibben (2011) notes in *Feminist Security Studies* that, “Meaning is constructed during the process of drawing the unfamiliar into our context to make it intelligible... meanings are possible only within a context, a tradition, a narrative framework” (p. 27). Looking beyond popular media and political stories that talk about danger in the U.S. illuminates a vast range of crucial perspectives and experiential knowledge concerning complex and often misunderstood or ignored issues related to danger and security.

Critical security scholars pay attention to “alternative sites of security... [and critique] the epistemological conventions of International Relations (IR) and the epistemic violence embedded in its framing of security” (Wibben, 2016, p. 2). Many seek to broaden and deepen the meaning and applications of security, yet often this leads to simply adjusting the state apparatus of security technology to ‘securitize’ things rather than deal with them through political processes. Wibben calls for an ‘opening’ of security that “engages the politics of security as its central concern [since] it is not enough to simply develop alternative frameworks for studying security” (ibid.).

I agree with this assessment. By focusing on the importance of security narratives in influencing security practices, my thesis calls attention to the role of value-assumptions and perspectives in threat assessments and attempts to insert a measure of accountability into the U.S. National Security Strategy by gauging worst-case and best-case outcomes on different time scales. Practicing critical theory enables a sort of space, some *breathing room*, to examine alternative or even ‘taboo’ perspectives that are often dismissed from the outset, leading potentially to new frameworks of inquiry and deeply uncomfortable answers, while addressing many crucial questions in today’s rapidly evolving global atmosphere (Wibben, 2011).

In sum, I will be employing, as best as I can, a critical stance with the goal of revealing inadequacies that could be better addressed with a compassionate human-concerned security approach.

Chapter 2

Securitas

The Self and Security

Every day, people around the world are experiencing countless varieties of actual and perceived dangers stemming from both natural hazards and human sources. These threats are responded to through different means and methods, on levels ranging from the psychological to the physical to the material, in order to reduce personal vulnerability and increase levels of protection and resilience. Safety is a primary human concern if the goal is to survive and evade pain, and an awareness of potential danger is necessary to anticipate and protect oneself and others against it. Pain is a powerful part of the drive to evade danger and establish defenses.

On a personal and limited collective level, guarding from all types of painful danger is an ancient and seemingly impulsive, subconscious matter of daily activity (look both ways before crossing street, don't touch the hot stove, be wary of dark alleys, avoid jaguars and quicksand, etc.), much of it learned through cultural conditioning and reinforced by daily experiences (Becker, 1973). Being self-aware means not only being able to conceive abstract ideas, but also being able to anticipate a future moment in time and space that will necessarily include the experience of pain and death. This moment is unpredictable and indefensible.

The awareness of vulnerability to danger is probably both a cause and symptom of the higher cognitive function that separates humans from other living species and has presented complex outcomes in the development of humankind and our impact on the earth (Solomon et al., 1991, p. 96). Evolutionary biology and psychology provide many clues into the fascinating instinctual capacities we've developed that help us survive, and the merit of these adaptations are

evident in the reality that the earth now cradles 7.6 billion human beings spread across vastly different environments.

The evolution of collective consciousness in relation to emerging modes of culture and social norms reflects the continuously shifting experiences throughout history that infer a sense of ‘self’ within an ‘us’ (as belonging to our self or our group) versus an ‘other’ or non-member of our group (perhaps the member of another, even hostile group) (Said, 1978; Alaszewski, 2015, p. 210). The incredible psychological ability to discern a past, present, and future, and the ability to distinguish and conceptualize a vast array of abstract information, symbols and shapes, and distinct sensual data has contributed to this evolution of consciousness, human self-awareness, and the eventual rise of human society and all that is related to our presence here on the earth (Becker, 1979). These traits help us detect, deter, and make plans for defense against danger.

In the simplest of terms, *danger* is defined as a *threat of harm or death* from something, be it external, internal, naturally hazardous or human-made, from the bacterial to the nuclear. The “recognition of danger in animals requires that they distinguish dangerous stimuli from others... and distinguish among different forms of danger” (Gregory, 2006, p. 13). Since danger refers then to being vulnerable to a threat, *security* refers to the *opposition of danger* through the actions taken to reduce vulnerability, by defending and protecting against threats to safety and wellbeing.

The Latin words *securitas/securus* form the basis for the highly evolved notion of security (Neocleus, 2000). The meaning alluded originally to the idea of *sine cura*, or freedom from care, and related to the safety that was potentially gained by living in a lawful society of some sort. Over time, the concept of security became political, referring to notions of *securitas publica*, or the ‘safety or defense of empire,’ and to the authority granted by individuals to the

state for their protection. By the 18th century, the concept of security became increasingly linked with emerging political theories of individual human liberty and the “assurance of legal freedom” (Humboldt as quoted in Neocleus, 2000, p. 9) with the state acting as the primary guarantor of security.

Security as a concept signifies the bolstering of both the *feelings* of security from danger, as well as to actualities of *being secure* from or made less vulnerable to dangers that exist both immediately and in future moments across all environmental conditions. Security in action is “freedom from danger, risk... freedom from care, anxiety, doubt...something that secures or makes safe,” against a range of vital security concerns (Castree, 2016, p. 55).

Being secure in the ideal sense is “the condition and associated feeling of being free from danger or threat...personal or collective...real or imagined” (Campbell, 1998, p. 55). Yet security is also constructed as a *performative act* that seeks to bolster the sensation of security by creating a consciousness of security for those being secured. As a political entity aligning with political aims, “governments (or any level of social organization) concerned with threats [do not] just engage in technological or organizational responses...they also generate new discourse of fear, security, possible futures...imagined geographies of safety and danger” (Campbell, 1998, p. 55). Therefore, my definition of security used in this thesis consists of the *practice* of making secure as well as the forming and actualizing of *ideas* surrounding what constitutes a danger and how to approach it.

Society as Security

The power of belonging to a group and the urge to both benefit from and protect itself from other groups demonstrates a pervasive history of both inter-group peace and cooperation, as

well as warfare and sacrifice in the name of group survival (Campbell, 1998). Threats to survival, already high due to the comically unforgiving forces of nature, became even more complicated alongside the growth and restlessness of human society, with each epoch of history adding another layer to the survival story that is humanity.

Many theorists consider the ‘insider/outsider’ division to be a major component to potential feelings of division between groups, motivating a range of activities and examples of both conflict and cooperation (Graf, 2010; Said, 1978). As endurance techniques have passed down through generations and groups began emerging across new territory into new formations of society, the threat of intergroup conflict became a primary concern, especially for those with desirable resources and assets. In short, early forms of society and eventually ‘civilization’ represent the outcome of the social need for security, and ‘security’ is a primary motivation leading to civilization.

In groups, these designations are often determined by a hierarchical or dominant source of social authority. Security in action becomes the intentional protection from whatever it appears to be and imagined as, from the vantage point of those securing against some ‘thing’ deemed as dangerous. From small groupings for safety in numbers all the way to the modern global network of vast state-level and international regimes, security is a primary factor motivating the collective ‘group projects’ of society.

Sovereignty as Security

Nowadays, the primary task of the modern ‘state’ is to protect sovereign integrity and manage state affairs while anticipating dangers and discerning threats (proactively, ideally) on behalf of citizens and in conjunction and for the benefit of their overall state interests. These

projects, however, diverge wildly and depend on countless variables such as geography, history, and local realities, all lending to varied perceptions of danger and practices of security depending on the vantage point (Alaszewski, 2015).

While early notions of sovereignty had been established in various ways for centuries, including pre-Roman notions of imperial law and divine rule, the evolving conceptions referred to an external/internal recognition of the complete control and command of that and those within the specified boundaries held by a group or political entity (Joseph, 2017). Decisions made by a sovereign power in the domestic arena would be considered absolute by other powers, and the limits of leadership were constrained only by those placed upon it or entered as determined internally.

Characteristics of early sovereign authority include an interesting dichotomy concerning the ideas of *de jure*, or the legal and political recognition of authority over an entity ('on the books'), and *de facto* authority, or actual control in a physical sense over the entity (Graf, 2010). This contrast, or perhaps balancing act, between the perceived control of something and actual control over interests of 'the sovereignty' exposes the liminal spaces of power and tenuous levels of authority in the effort to enforce authority over something effectively.

The roots and modern foundations of sovereignty— the 'post-Westphalian' era— were established through treaties such as the 1648 Peace of Westphalia, 1678 Treaty of Nijmegen, and 1713 Treaty of Utrecht (Campbell, 1998; Newman, 2010; Grim, 2015). These and many other pacts evolved from decades of bloody warfare, especially the Eighty- and Thirty-Year's wars which devastated populations through widespread conflict, famine, and disease. They established new precedents in the levels of respect and authority normalized in relations and led to emerging political relationships between various powers. The evolving notions of independent 'statehood'

established early foundations of international law by determining that larger concepts, values, and laws should and could transcend borders and establish mutual recognition and respect of boundaries, based on the agreements set forth by distinct, yet theoretically equal, bodies of authority (Grimm, 2015).

Over time, the homogenization of these general political understandings and practices of nation-statehood, exported across the world from Europe through colonialization, imperialism, and various political and economic forces including communism and capitalism, have been established as the foundational organizing structure in International Relations (IR). In common terms and how I'm using it here then, states are the grand structures of collective human and group organization and the foundation of modern global society. From here on in this thesis, the term 'state' refers to this coherent entity as a sovereign socio-political grouping, *in the view that the state ideally acts on behalf of the interests of the nation*, at least nominally (Wallerstein, 1977; Agamben, 2005; Scott, 1998).

The 'Great Security Pivot'

For states to function as coherent entities in relation to other states, the abiding of transcendent rules and regulations as baselines of diplomacy is a necessary foundational step. Yet for centuries, the dominant instrument of foreign policy and primary deterrent was found in the legal use of warfare, underlined by the concepts of *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*, which provided frameworks and understandings about what legally permits warfare and how to conduct it (Alaszewski, 2015). Mutual defense treaties between allies had largely kept the threat of foreign invasion or conquest at bay, providing a sense of security through assured military assistance.

Nevertheless, the rapidly evolving technologies of death and growing concern over the devastation and destruction these wrought increasingly made warfare simply untenable for a growing number of people. Until this point, the primary notion of security was in the traditional sense, which is largely centered around a state-centric approach by emphasizing “the need to protect the state and its territorial integrity with militarization, assimilation of weapons, and power politics as supreme in the national security paradigm” (Joseph, 2017, p. 8). Defending the state through military apparatuses had led to millions of civilian deaths, and this was no longer plausible according to emerging global values. The limits and gaps in traditional approaches were revealed through countless examples of the utter disregard for the human person in the actual practice of security, and the toll finally led to a reckoning (Homolar, 2015).

Towards the end of the 18th century and through the end of the First World War, many foundational international treaties, tribunals, organizations, and relationships were established in response to the effects of modern warfare and increasingly human-drive disasters across the international spectrum (Graf, 2010). I call this period the Great Security Pivot (GSP) because the modern conceptions of international laws and treaties came to fruit at this time, all of which have led to the present foundational understandings and practices of security. The Treaty of Versailles (1919) and the League of Nations (1920) are examples of these.

On August 27, 1928, something largely forgotten in popular memory occurred in Paris: the signing by fifteen nations of the General Treaty for the Renunciation of War, also called the Paris Peace Pact. Six years later, nearly every nation at the time (63) had joined the pact (Menand, 2017). By *outlawing* warfare as a “legal and legitimate instrument of state action” (Hathaway, 2017, p. 2), the ‘old world order’ of security was transformed in a revolutionary way.

In the old world, war was a “tool for responding to threatened or actual wrongs where no peaceful option remained” (ibid.) and led to “the terrible culmination” (ibid.) of World War One. This destructiveness was so great that theorists reconsidered the very foundations of the guiding political assumptions that had led them to such carnage. The treaty sought to confront the logic of warfare by attacking “the evil [of war] at it’s very root by depriving war of its legitimacy” (ibid., p. 5). This was indeed a revolutionary step forward in the understanding and practice of what until then had been a major instrument of state security.

Critically, while these new political and social norms and legal tenets have proven to be crucial to modern international relations, it is important to remember that they have been won largely through the often needless and barbaric bloodshed of millions of humans. The Paris Pact didn’t prevent Japan from invading Manchuria in 1931 before WWII, for example, yet it did provide a new set of standards and legal proceedings that placed military action into the realm of common defense and deterrence. It offered a sort of ‘check-in-balance’ on the use of military force. However, despite these treaties and efforts to abolish warfare, large-scale conflict continued, and continues today.

The United Nations, Human Rights, and a New Era for Security

The reasons behind much conflict and many of the major wars, including the World Wars, are often diluted by mythology and political fog. A closer reading of the actual intents and actions undertaken across all sectors of society during these times, especially the political and economic, shows the collusion of financial, industrial, and communications sectors in support of policies and practices (many of them unknown to the public) that led to the most profit (Stone, 2015). War, and the industry of it, was made profitable in many ways. The collaboration of great

minds across previously unacquainted disciplines and trades in the service of national defense, for example, have led to previously unknowable heights in technology and social theory (Owen, 2014). Yet, despite the various successes and benefits of global treaties and bodies to curb military violence, many of the legal norms and treaties established were bound through consent rather than strict legal enforcement.

After the even greater destructiveness of WWII, an increasing notion of a common humanity was (re)born and began to permeate the consciousness of political and international relations. The formation of the United Nations (UN) in the aftermath of World War Two in 1945 ushered in a new era of global politics by normalizing certain relations, solidifying further the concepts of sovereignty, and forming a range of important and celebratory international agreements and new heights in the communicative and diplomatic practices that now dominate the global sphere (UN, 2009; Adger, 2014; Reveron, 2011). In 1949, the Geneva Conventions were developed to protect civilians, or non-combatants, from violence and to regulate the way that armies fight each other, banning the usage of chemical weapons, torture, and protecting the rights of the wounded and captured (Joseph, 2017).

The United Nations can “take action on the issues confronting humanity in the 21st century, such as peace and security, climate change, sustainable development, human rights, terrorism... and more” while offering a “forum for its members to express their views” (UN, 2017). In essence, the UN provides a forum and framework for global dialogue and cooperation amongst competing powers and interests. It also helps level the playing field between nations of various levels of power and influence in other regards while establishing baselines and guidelines of political conduct.

One of the most important developments to emerge from the carnage of WWII has been the ‘Human Rights’ (HR) paradigm, which established a new foundation in international law and which has slowly been integrated into many domestic policies. It seems that the need to prevent and protect against the atrocities of war were viscerally comprehended across society (despite being a common understanding for civilians throughout most of history up to the present), and a new sympathy towards the importance of valuing the human being as a sacred entity with inherent rights deserving protection was elevated in the global consciousness as the UN began organizing and enacting its goals. In light of the recent events of the Holocaust, of the nuclear attacks in Japan, and the general destruction across the world, and as the process of de-colonization and a new emphasis on the sovereignty of the individual occurred, the terrified and battered yet firmly established states and world powers sought a range of important and progressive measures to prevent similar events in the future (Reveron, 2011).

In 1948, the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) was established as the foundation of the new legal and political groundwork for the coming century and future. Comprising 30 articles addressing various areas of concern, it lays out the basic foundational natural and social human rights that are recognized, theoretically, by each member-state of the UN. This process established the guidelines and basic protections for individuals, including freedom of thought, opinion, and expression, the right to own property, practice religion, participate in politics, and raise a family, as well as a right to “life, liberty, and security of person” (Pitts, 2017; UN, 1948).

The recognition of ‘unalienable’ human rights as “common standards of treatment for all peoples and all nations” produced an explicit recognition of the sovereignty of the individual human being (ibid., 1948). This process energized great changes in security theory by shifting

the primary referent of security from the state to the individual and brought the affairs of state into alignment with an international norm and understanding of the value of human life.

The UDHR encourages consent-based adoption through voluntary agreements into national and local policies and practices. This momentous development formally established the concept of a human-centric approach to security by relating the protection of human rights, belonging to the citizens, with those of the state. This is an important consideration for international relations and especially security studies because it demonstrates the *possibility for rationality and diplomacy to prevail when conflicts arise*, as they seem to do unceasingly. In security terms, these new levels of cooperation are positive because they reduce the likelihood of certain kinds of threats, such as an invasion by a foreign country or mass genocide, because of the coalitions and counter-measures and guarantees ensured through treaties and agreements. The outlawing of war in 1928 and the rise of the UN and adoption of human rights in 1949 have certainly helped usher in a new global era with interesting implications for security studies.

The 1994 UN Human Development Program Report and Human Security

With the human individual as a new center of attention, concepts of state security have been redefined by the everyday dangers that affect people on a scale much greater than those posed by contingencies in a narrow, military sense. In this way, the global inauguration of human rights and the (theoretical) emphasis on the human being as an entity of significance to the state represents a sort of ‘third wave’ in the grand evolution of security, in the sense that the original motivation for the ‘social project’ is safety in numbers, which has led to such complexities and odd outcomes in the modern age that the need to explicitly re-acknowledge and redefine the core reason for socializing in the first place has to be made (Jones, 1999).

In the years following the Cold War, amidst reduced tensions and threats of nuclear destruction, new assessments and ideas of security began to take shape. The neorealist assessment of ‘mutually assured destruction’ as a consequence of breaching sovereignty no longer held as much sway, as the spread of democratization and human rights norms began taking hold (Newman, 2016). The early 1990’s saw an emergence of growing concern for the interconnectedness of issues that seemed formerly disconnected from security concerns as the dubious effects of ‘liberal state building’ in accordance with the ‘Washington Consensus’ were becoming more obvious (Homolar, 2015).

Globalization helped to reveal the relations between poverty and political instability, corruption and conflict, and disease and development. These connections were looked at in a new light, essentially revealing that the goal of security should extend beyond concerns of state security alone. The human being, now firmly established, at least on paper and in theory, as possessing human rights and the protection of international laws, was increasingly seen as the fundamental referent of security-at-large, since the goal of the state, in theory, was to protect those comprising the state- the citizen- from existential harm by protecting its interests and borders (Graf, 2010).

Moving beyond the protection of these entities alone, the state could establish security through peace and harmony in society by looking at transcendent issues that affect the individual on a day-to-day basis. Questions asking how, for example, issues of chronic poverty, ethnic violence, human trafficking, climate change, health pandemics, terrorism and economic downturns affect the daily lives of people and the long-term development goals of society and overall security goals were asked (Mahoney-Norris, 2011). By shifting towards upholding international law and integrating human rights law into domestic practice, sovereign states would

contribute to internal, regional, and international peace through the pursuit of national tranquility and prosperity. More importantly, insecurities that drove instabilities that motivate larger conflict or corruption were being viewed as serious security concerns by the state, as threats *to the state*.

It was realized that promoting state stability depended greatly on the wellbeing of the citizen, and that threats actually posing the greatest danger to the state could be regarded as those seemingly simple threats faced everyday by people. Rather than military invasions, it was essentially hunger, disease, and violence that preyed most harshly on the safety and wellbeing of citizens. By shifting the referent of national security from the state level down to the human being, which in actuality comprises ‘the state,’ real security could be achieved, and in some way achieve the ultimate goal of national security-at-large, which is to promote peace so that the state can conduct state business on behalf of its citizens (United Nations Human Security Unit, 2009).

While the concept of the human individual as a referent of formal, organized security efforts actually stems from premodern concepts of security-at-large. Human-focused security began emerging at a time when the interconnectedness of human suffering was understood as an increasingly transcendent issue that needed an intervention (Alaszewski, 2015, Graf, 2011, p. 9). The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was an early advocate for the human at the center of social and political concern and continues to call for humanitarianism at the center of political practice (Hampson, et al., 2002, p. 17). Early terms related to this newly inclusive way of thinking about security were “extended security,” “common security,” and “cooperative or comprehensive security” (ibid., p. 9).

In 1994, the UN Development Program released the Human Development Report (UNHDP) which mentioned Human Security (HS) for the first time (Reveron, 2011, p. 13). Arguing that the concept of security was too focused on military solutions, they argued that “job

security, income security, health security, environmental security, security from crimes,” among others, were vital issues that needed to be addressed more acutely and explicitly beyond the narrow confines of national security and military defense (HSU, 2014). Human Security was intended to complement, yet not necessarily replace, traditional security approaches by making the human being the primary *referent* of security efforts by the state and military apparatus.

While national security and human security are distinct approaches comprising different aims and goals, and while national security remains the dominant security paradigm by far, Human Security tends to be more comprehensive, nuanced, and creative in its approach to security because it links the root causes of individual instability to the larger effects these have on society, which flow and ebb in response to social realities. While the experiences and effects of poverty vary depending on location and other countless factors, it can be generally agreed on that reducing individual and social poverty reduces violence, promotes more human actualization, and allows society to function better than otherwise (Owen, 2014).

The 2003 Commission on Human Security (CHS) report *Human Security Now* underscored a foundational concept of human security that emphasizes the collaboration between “all sectors of state and society” to address two major threats to security: fear and poverty (CHS, 2003). Poverty in this sense includes lack of social infrastructure, access to basic resources, education or employment, often in conjunction with systematic marginalization, oppression, or denial of rights, enabled often with a healthy dose of corruption and political instability. Reducing poverty in turn promotes the advancement of the individual and the harmony of society, thereby enabling a regional and international peacefulness and wellbeing. The following table categorizes the general perspectives, goals, and referents of traditional security and human security approaches:

Table 1.1: Comparison of Security Approaches

	Traditional/National Security	Human Security
Main Actors	The State Military, National Defense Efforts	Human Individual People, Civil Society, Government
Principal Interests	Sovereignty, Regime and Political Stability, State Security	Human Rights, Economic Wellbeing, Individual Security and Liberty
Primary Threats	Military, Economic, and Diplomatic coercion; Breach of Sovereign Rights	Poverty, Disease, Crime, Violations of Human Rights, Inequality, Violence
Origin of Threats	Rival states and state-level interests, Hostile/Rogue states, Weak states, large para-military or terror affiliations	Non-state actors, Transnational issues (climate change, disease, conflict), Illegal armed groups, Repressive/Corrupt regimes, Poverty
Measure of Might	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Military strength, Economic strength, Border control, Appeal of National Values • Perceived security through protection of state interests • Healthy state = healthy society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human and Social actualization • Human Development Index (HDI): quality of life, education, opportunities, and life expectancy • Healthy human = healthy society
Foundation/Basis	National Interests, Domestic Integrity	Universal Human Rights, Needs and Values; International law
Ultimate Goals	“National Sovereignty, Territorial Integrity, Vitality of Government, Civic Institutions, and Society” (CHS, p. 5)	“Freedom from Want, Freedom from Fear, Freedom of Expression, Freedom of Belief” (CHS, p. 5)
Legal Foundation	Historical precedence, UN Charter and International Law	UDHR and R2P, Domestic Implementation

Note: Synthesized into authors own words, unless otherwise noted, from 1994 UNHDP and 2003 CHS. Adapted with permission.

Furthermore, the 2003 *Human Security Now* report defined seven specific areas to be explicitly addressed by HS, in order to...

“...protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that advance human freedoms and human fulfilment. Human security means protecting the fundamental freedoms—freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from critical (severe) threats and situations. It means using processes that build on people’s strengths and aspirations. It means creating *political, social, environmental, economic, military, and cultural systems* that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood, and dignity” (CHS, 2003, p. 4).

Table 1.2: Seven Main Areas of Human Security

	Main Threats	Solutions Posed
Economic	Poverty and Unemployment	Access to “assured basic income” through work or social welfare
Food	Hunger and Famine	Physical and Economic access to basic food sources
Health	Deadly infectious disease, Unsafe food, Malnutrition, Lack of access to health care	Strives to enable minimum protection from disease and unhealth, Access to basic levels of healthcare, Food safety
Environmental	Environmental degradation, Resource depletion, Natural disasters, Pollution, and Global climate change	Strives to reduce and mitigate harmful anthropogenic effects on environment, Provide clean water, Weather protection
Personal	Physical and Domestic violence, Crime, Terrorism, Predation, Labor abuse	Protection from violence at all levels, Labor laws, Work safety, Human Rights
Community	Inter-ethnic, Religious, and other Identity or status-related tensions	Protect all human rights, Value diversity, Education, Respect, and Inclusion
Political	Socio-political repression, HR abuses, Forces of populism and partisanship	Protect Human Rights, outlaw Political repression, torture, mind control

Note: Synthesized into authors own words, unless otherwise noted, from 1994 UNHDP and 2003 CHS. Adapted with permission.

In 2009, the UNDP's *Arab Human Development Report* expanded the definition as “the liberation of human beings from those intensive, extensive, prolonged, and comprehensive threats to which their lives and freedom are vulnerable” (p. 14), which helps to distinguish the goals of each approach while emphasizing the connectedness between the two. This report sought to more explicitly define human security, responding to many candid criticisms that dismissed HS as being too vague to be operationalized in policy and practice.

Taylor Owen (2010) points out three important points that made this so. First, there tends to be confusion and ambiguity surrounding the term ‘Human Security’ and it is often conflated with concepts of ‘Human Development,’ since “in theory and practice, the two are often used interchangeably” (p. 216). However, this stems more to a lack of precision in using these terms by different parties than to confusion of their meanings. Secondly, there has tended to be an overlap of the concepts of Human Security and Human Rights, which each bear distinct definitions, yet the U.N. system has largely failed to differentiate them in theory and practice. Owen’s third critique relates to the “conceptual overstretch” (p. 216) of Human Security that too easily allows any issue of significance to ‘fit’ inside the vagueness of Human Security by policy-makers and practitioners. This can lead to “false priorities and hopes, create causal confusion, can encourage military solutions to non-military problems and non-military solutions to military problems” (MacFarlane and Khong as referenced by Owen, 2010).

The Human at the Heart of Security

Human security, at the heart of it, is about placing the human being at the center of attention when it comes to all security practices. This is a paradigmatic shift in the way of thinking about security since it has been dominated by national and traditional security concepts

throughout history. Indeed, Amartya Sen (2016) insists that, “security ultimately is a matter in which the leading concern should be around human life” (quoted in Samarath, p. 33). Further, as a “positive formula, human security corresponds to development policies and relies on... [the] erosion of the old concept of undivided state sovereignty” (Graf, 2011, p. 9). It overcomes state boundaries “for the sake of people’s human rights and the security of their basic livelihood” (ibid. p. 9).

Human Security is *people-centered, multi-sectoral, comprehensive, context-specific, and prevention-oriented* (Reveron, 2011, p. 13). It seeks to understand security from a more dynamic, gendered, and intersectional lens. Where national security focuses on top-down ‘protection’ against outside threats, human security takes bottom-up approach that recognizes ‘empowerment’ as the most effective means of establishing true security that transcends national interests. However, human security isn’t a fantasy approach and many scholars recognize the valid need for both types of security to mutually reinforce each other in practical terms.

Human security attempts to address the root causes of insecurity, rather than just the obvious symptoms, by “identifying the concrete needs of population under stress... [giving] rise to more immediate and tangible results” (HSU, 2014, p. 5). It does this by reducing vulnerability in individuals and populations by addressing their day-to-day insecurities. Rather than viewing security solely as protection from conventional, foreign sources, it takes a long, deep view into what actually causes insecurity on a day-to-day level and seeks to “address the root causes behind current and emerging threats,” identify actual needs and priorities, and call out “mismatches between local, national, regional, and international policies and responses” (ibid. p. 5).

Table 1.3: Operationalizing Human Security – Values and Approaches

	Human Security Approach
People-centered	Inclusive, participatory, collective, focuses on subjectively defining needs
Multi-sectoral	Promotes communication and cooperation between key actors at all levels across “traditionally separate sectors/fields” (p. 5)
Comprehensive	Universally analyzes actors, sectors, fields of security, spectrum of threats and develops inclusive, wide-ranging solutions
Context-specific	In-depth analysis of specific situations, focuses on fundamental freedoms and rights, concrete needs, and accounts for perspectives at all levels
Prevention-oriented	Detects root causes of risks, threats, and hazards, addresses them preventatively through protection and empowerment

Note: Synthesized into authors own words, unless otherwise noted, from HSU, 2014. Adapted with permission.

Furthermore, human security is normative in that it suggests new ways of being and doing in order to improve and remedy past and current approaches to security. It pays “attention to the social arrangements for safety,” and avoids a detached view of the human person by focusing on the “more elementary rather than the entire range of human rights” (Sen, as referenced in Dang, 2014, p. 466). It allows a deep analysis of the differences in outcomes between national security and human security and reveals many direct links between local, individual insecurity and the larger security issues that affect the state.

Human security strives to analyze and include broad empirical social science and psychological research into practice. Widespread poverty, for instance, is viewed in HS as a major barrier to security on all levels, because it has a direct relationship between the health of the individual and the social outcomes they experience and impact (Graf, 2010, p. 10; Young, 2009). Poverty and social oppression exacerbate individual health and collectively lead to a more

stressed-out, pissed-off, worn-out, and violence-prone society that breeds corruption, crime, and repression. The forces of racism, xenophobia, and other social evils often incubate where inequality and corruption create tensions and barriers between groups and classes of people (Terburg, 2009, p. 216).

Behavioral psychology bolsters HS concepts by demonstrating that hardship (in all its forms, internal and external) raises base cortisol levels in the body, leading to a heightened stress-response and a less rational drive to protect oneself from perceived threats (Lupian, et al. 2001, p. 655). In this state of being, the ‘flight-or-fight’ mechanism is engaged more often and leads to a higher tendency to react ‘poorly’ to stressors (Terburg, 2009, p. 220). A person living in chronic stress is more likely to react to problems using less input from the prefrontal cortex, which governs rationality and creativity, and is guided more by the hindbrain response, which regulates base instincts and physiological survival mechanisms. Essentially, humans evolved so that in the face of stress the survival instincts kick in and help get them out of danger. When there is no real chance to effectively release this chronic stress, cortisol builds up in the body and “wreaks havoc on the mind” (Bergland, 2013). This has dire, direct impacts on the security of people and society.

In this day in age, it is easy to understand why so many humans are living in states of hyper-stress. Urbanism, segregation, inequality, environmental and noise pollution, and other modern social tribulations all potentially contribute to higher levels of stress across global society (Maclean, 2015, p. 5). The modern environment often over-stresses people beyond their evolutionary limits. By recognizing the impacts of stress on social health as a whole, human security accounts for the need to address individual insecurity as a direct way to reduce the overall likelihood of intergroup conflict and exploitation (Young, 2009).

Implementation and Added-Value of Human Security

The total concept of human security imagines a two-pronged approach. Human security is the ‘bottom-up’ approach that seeks to reduce vulnerabilities such as poverty and violence and protect the rights and wellbeing of the individual. By enlisting community resources, non-profit, nongovernmental and aid organizations, charities and religious groups, and by improving law enforcement and infrastructural capabilities of society, a new framework for security is possible. By focusing on the roots of insecurity at the human level, this approach complements the overall national security efforts to provide “freedom from want, freedom from fear, and freedom to live in dignity” as originally suggested by President F.D. Roosevelt in 1941 and implemented slowly into global consciousness over the century (HSU, 2014, p. 4). The top-down traditional national security approach, enacted by the government or ruling bodies that focuses on the reduction of existential threats from foreign entities and serves to protect borders and national interests, would ensure that domestic efforts could be made in peace (Reveron, 2011, p. 215).

Table 1.4: Building Blocks of Human Security Approaches

	Protection- “Top Down”	Empowerment- “Bottom Up”
Approach	“Strategies, set up by states international agencies, NGO’s, and the private sector, [to] shield people from menaces.” (p. 5)	“Strategies [that] enable people to develop their resilience to difficult situations.” (p. 5)
Characteristics	Systematic Hierarchically Comprehensive (Claims to be) Preventative	Develop Human Capability Develop Community Resilience Protect/Enable Fundamental Rights

Note: Synthesized into authors own words, unless otherwise noted, from HSU, 2014. Adapted with permission.

Clearly, there are many tensions to analyze between these major approaches. The presumed overlap between traditional and human security is certainly unequal, and the top-down approach consists of vastly more powerful and deeply established elements which tend to overlook or dismiss the sensitivity of human security. Further, human security efforts in many ways are confined within the narrow frameworks of top-down state security considerations and must operate cooperatively in ways that undermine the very principles that guide human security. The state, in other words, has the power to determine ways to integrate HS into its realm as a tool amongst many rather than human security determining how traditional security operates. This allows many security practices that exacerbate human insecurity to continue and makes human security concepts more nominal rather than transformative in security policies and practices.

Actually, implementing human security concepts and frameworks in to policy and practice can be challenging for many reasons. There are various ways of approaching human security. One way is to view HS broadly, considering “all threats to human integrity” as concerns to be addressed from a “development-oriented approach” that finds support with policymakers (Newman, 2010, p. 80). The second view is narrower and looks at the personal consequences of armed conflict “and the dangers posed to civilians by repressive governments and situations of state failure” (ibid.). This view allows analysts to focus on the security risks laying beyond conventional scrutiny while narrowing on armed conflict as a major cause of insecurity. The third view “uses [HS] as an umbrella concept for approaching a range of ‘non-traditional’ security issues— such as HIV/AIDS, drugs, terrorism... landmines, and trafficking” (ibid.).

While HS is intended to complement and bolster national security efforts, it can often be dismissed as too idealistic, too broad, or simply naïve. I agree there is a realistic need to maintain some conventional national security efforts, and I acknowledge that military force will indeed

remain a primary tool in protecting rights and defending sovereign interests (despite many reasonable objections). The world is too deeply embedded within certain perspectives and practices to turn them upside-down overnight, unfortunately. Many theorists, however, argue that enabling a process of ‘securitization’ towards seemingly distant or unrelated fields of concern provides a powerful way to bring previously dismissed security referents underneath the umbrella of security-at-large. More importantly, this permits more resources to be spent on these concerns (Wæver, 2011). However, many theorists simultaneously call for an eventual process of ‘de-securitization’ that enables current insecurities to transcend the need to be analyzed and approached through a security lens and allows them to be addressed through socio-political rather than security measures (Huysmans, 2006).

‘Human development,’ for instance, is broadly linked to the health and wellbeing of a society. Considering development to be a process of enacting global, long-term security allows for the combination of a bottom-up and top-down approach as a tangible practice that satisfies many actors (Castree, 2016). The human development goal of “growth with equity” is complemented by the human security dimension of “downturn with security” that recognizes the insecurity that comes when conflict and disaster “undo years” of social development (HSU, 2009, p. 12). As such, numerous theorists have argued (successfully in many cases) that human development *is* security because enabling ‘healthy’ advances in society (through infrastructure, education, protection of rights, access to necessary services, etc.) leads to less conflict and more safety for more people in tangible ways (ibid., p. 13).

Securitization in HS, therefore, has become a crucial, integrated, and often disputed perspective within Security Studies-at-large and in the application of human security concepts. It seeks to align the goals of international development with those of the total security apparatus in

order to “overcome the artificial divide between state-centered and transnational history... connecting them to highly relevant issues in contemporary international politics” (Graf, 2011, p. 10). Much of the controversy surrounding this approach deals with the actual negative and insufficient outcomes of global international development, which many consider to be continuations of the colonial and imperial trajectories that have led to such underdevelopment and inequality in the first place (Jones, 1999).

Human security concepts have indeed been integrated in many policies and practices over the past several decades. In general, governments “retain the primary role for ensuring the survival, livelihood, and dignity of their populations” (UNTFHS, 2017) and benefit from the deeper social analysis that HS can provide. However, the emerging role and scope of civil society organizations including NGO’s and non-profits enables crucial actors to ratify human security principles across many sectors. Transnational organizations, especially the UN, have adopted and adapted to the emerging security landscape by providing transnational, global perspectives and more nuanced efforts to address insecurity.

The 1994 UNHDR, 1999 UN Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS), 2003 Commission on Human Security *Human Security Now* report, the establishment of the Human Security Unit (HSU) in 2004 and the Friends of Human Security (FHS) group, and the various Human Security panels, debates, and summits each represent serious, concerted efforts by the global assembly to discuss and implement HS concepts into practice (HSU, 2009, p. 8-9). In 1999, the Human Security Network (HSN) was launched, comprising twelve nations. Major outcomes of this effort led to several of the most successful HR- influenced campaigns, including the Ottawa convention, which escorted the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), and the establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC) (ibid., p. 10). Each

effort leads to “mainstreaming” HS concepts into society and culture (HSU, 2014, p. 14).

However, actual implementation of these efforts depends on many variables, including levels of commitment and legal binding to those treaties and agreements. And unfortunately, as of late, the early human security ‘craze’ has lost some of its momentum.

There have been a number of projects funded and organized by the UNTFHS leading to varying measures of success around the world, from Kosovo to El Salvador to the Democratic Republic of Congo. Each of these have led to varying outcomes and effects, yet most are regarded as excellent case-studies from which to garner experience and data to apply to ongoing and future efforts elsewhere. Most importantly, the breadth of topics and issues that these projects address are expansive and demonstrate how HS can be applied to a range of locations and situations. Human security potentially succeeds in many ways because of the broad, deep view it takes towards insecurity, its malleability, and in the creative flexibility it inspires.

Major Criticisms of Human Security

Many of the early criticisms of human security allude to its broadness and criticize its seemingly lack of boundaries or definitions of security. Shortly after the cold war and alongside new debates about evolving notions of security leading to the 1994 UNHDP, Daniel Deudney wrote against linking environmental security to national security (albeit in 1990), saying that “...not all neologisms (a newly coined term, phrase, or expression) are equally plausible or useful... [and that] before either ‘expanding’ [or] ‘redefining security,’ it is worth examining just how much the national pursuit of security from violence has in common with [the environment]” (p. 462). This point is important, because it cautions against the tendency to reimagine non-securitized issues as needing the sort of paternalistic protection that come from state security

initiatives. It seeks to restrain the perhaps overzealous belief that the end of the cold war signified the prevailing ‘rightness’ of Western hegemony leading towards an emancipated future in which state and citizen lived happily ever after.

The linking of ‘human’ issues previously unrecognized within traditional security frameworks represents a kind of ‘crisis mentality’ that seeks to push these concerns into the well-resourced fold of national security-at-large (McDonald, 2011). Yet, since the release of the 1994 UNHDP report and over the following several decades, this question of linking seemingly non-security issues into concepts of Human Security has traversed many ups and downs.

One major critique relates to the chief concern of a ‘lack of precise definition’ of the concept and the fact that some actors, according to Roland Paris (2001) “appear to have an interest in keeping the term... vague” (p. 88). However, these appraisals have since been addressed in many ways because human security concepts have been actually applied and many lessons learned over the past fifteen years. The early “jumbled coalition of ‘middle power’ states, development agencies, and NGO’s— all of which seek to shift attention and resources away from conventional security issues” (Krause, 2009, p. 140) in order to gain recognition for their causes, has since evolved towards more precise definitions and organized action. The early ‘slipperiness’ of the concept has gained traction as it has been enacted and more clearly defined since the early days (Homolar, 2015). However, questions regarding the breadth, depth, and precise applications of human security in reality remain.

Another critique of human security is that there is “a wide gap between the discourse of human security and the practices of states or international organizations” (Muggah, 2006, p. 191). This relates to the task of actually defining and implementing the concept to situations from different vantage points, and to the gap between research in security and application, and

between security and development. From a theoretical point of view, HS concepts in academia know few boundaries; indeed, it is tempting to link it to a ‘grand narrative’ of human society and where the future ought to lead in an ideal sense. This can be problematic when the reality meets the theory, and when hard decisions must be made by policymakers. The UN Human Security Unit has done well to address these concerns by developing actionable frameworks meant to be flexible and adaptable to a range of potentialities and locations. Furthermore, as time passes and as HS concepts are mainstreamed into popular and political consciousness, the limits of the concept in action are revealed as feedback provides case-studies and examples to analyze.

A further critique is that the “emancipatory and critical potential of the concept... has been captured and co-opted by states and other international actors” (Chandler, 2008, p. 428) which fortifies rather than challenges present security policies and practices. This relates to the deeper critique that “the rhetoric of human security conceals... [harmful] governmentality, biopolitics, intervention, and control” (Grayson, 2008, p. 57). In other words, there is a real concern that ‘humanizing’ security only leads to dressing the wolf in sheep’s clothing, so to speak. Rather than actually providing a fundamental paradigmatic shift in the total orientation towards security and modern society as a whole, many scholars call out the way that ‘human’ security allows a kind of verbal gymnastics that perpetuates the same old security practices in the disguise of humanitarian intervention (Paris, 2001).

At the heart of this debate is the question of whether it is *really* possible to separate the orientations of security practice, which almost necessarily rely in some way on militaristic or punitive measures to operationalize, from the deep concept of ‘human wellbeing,’ which almost always suffers in some form due to the outcomes of militarism. It is hard to justify much military action when use of military force *always* leads to collateral damage and casualties on some level,

even when ‘in the name’ of peace or other vague ideals. This makes it hard to separate or justify the ‘security’ aspect of ‘human security’ because the heart of human security is human rights and wellbeing, which are antithesis to military violence on all levels (Homolar, 2015).

Ken Booth (2007) alludes to this dilemma by recounting the recent U.S.-led ‘humanitarian’ interventions and ‘peacebuilding’ operations throughout the world that, on paper, sound benevolent and in alignment with many of the proposed human security end goals as their justification— yet, this leads to an image of “the velvet glove on the iron hand of hard power” (p. 324). Furthermore, the obvious outcomes of these actions point to clear signs and symptoms that a militaristic approach always includes violations of the foundational human rights that form the basis of human security.

Yet I disagree with many of the conventional critiques that are posed by theorists simply because I believe that time will reveal the merits of the human security approach. Even though global norms and values relating to security are still very much aligned (and deeply established by their profitability) with traditional concepts of security, and still largely fail to effectively link and address the roots of much insecurity, I have hope that tides do indeed rise and fall. Indeed, the usual sentiment that “if human security means almost anything, then it effectively means nothing” (Paris, 2001, p. 93) is a premature and boring analysis of a concept that has already demonstrated a new level of nuance and comprehension of the myriad dangers that threaten humans.

Many scholars have since found positive examples of the evolution of human security in policy and practice yet caution that for human security to actualize in the full potential of its emancipatory spirit, there will need to be definitive shifts within the total conventional security paradigm. Essentially, this means turning the U.S. and global Military-Industrial-Complex (MIC)

inside-out and intentionally reorganizing the entire orientation of security that views militarism as *the* primary tool to solve complex problems. It will take a shift towards an actual human security framework that primarily links militarism to pervasive social violence, and it will have to ultimately reject military action as this primary force of enabling and maintaining ‘peace.’

While the terms and concepts can (and will) certainly continue to be more precisely defined and elaborated upon, I believe that time will tell as the intentional shift towards a more human focused referent of security efforts continues to amplify. Importantly, many of the early critiques of the concept seemed to focus mostly on the lack of precision in terms, values, definition, and empirical research on HS efforts. Now, the most poignant appraisals of human security deal less with these and more on actual outcomes and implementations of the concept.

Luckily, there seems to have been a shift beyond the initial ‘nay-saying’ due to a lack of faith or for want of specific examples, and now the major critiques focus on what these efforts fail to accomplish. The term and concepts of HS have moved into a ‘next stage,’ so to speak, via some years now of experience and acceptance— and yes, through much failure as well. And alongside this trajectory, a range of theories, schools, and scholars have developed under a new academic umbrella going beyond security studies: Critical Security Studies.

With this said, the notion of human security as a paradigmatic shift has yet to permeate security practices-at-large in ways that are truly transformative. While the many efforts to refocus the attention of security towards the aims of human development and the protection of rights have indeed changed the language and inserted a heightened level of sensitivity towards human concern in security practice and policy, there remain many problematic elements in the conventional practices of security, as well as in the application of HS principles around the world. These concerns need to be more critically examined, and new ideas must emerge.

Chapter 3

Securitas Hominum Critica

Critical Security Studies

Critical security scholars have long been interested in the meanings and larger implications of the political nature of security and endeavor to conduct “innovative and timely research on issues of war, peace, security, conflict, and much more” (Stern and Wibben, 2014, p.1) which have led to numerous schools of thought and theoretical approaches to the topic. In recent years, Feminist Security Studies (FSS) and Critical Security Studies (CSS) scholars have undertaken this task, and often call out the exploitation of Human Security concepts by the very state mechanisms that have led to many of the insecurities addressed. The tendency to create meta-narratives and overarching liberal state conceptions of the citizen as a subject in need of ‘securitizing’ is strongly critiqued by feminists who draw attention to the historical, socially-constructed, gendered power differentials that underlay much of modern society. By paying “attention to the workings of gender in order to ask questions about security, [FSS refuses] any line of distinction that separates ‘security’ from the workings of gender” (ibid., p. 2).

Several conspicuous schools of critical thought seek to enact the deconstruction of security and actualize ‘non-traditional’ outcomes in some way. The ‘Copenhagen School,’ as “primarily descriptive and explanatory” (Graf, 2010, p. 15), seeks to raise concerns regarding the ‘securitization’ of issues that would be better addressed through other means than what a Human Security approach in general can offer. Influenced by Barry Buzan, Jaap De Wilde, and Ole Wæver, it regards securitization as itself a risk that narrows issues into counterproductive domains, including the military and police, and strives to expand the meaning of security and shine light on the limits of security practices.

The ‘Welsh School’ (or Aberystwyth), and especially the work of Ken Booth and Richard Wyn Jones, seeks to securitize issues for the sake of calling attention to their direness and effects on insecurity and wellbeing through ‘emancipatory realism’ (Booth, 2007). This process seeks human security solutions as ‘emancipation’ that frees people “as individuals and collectivities, from contingent and structural oppressions” (ibid., p. 86; Nunes, 2012). Yet other critical theorists rest upon the ‘Frankfurt School’ of critical social theory, which inspired these later schools, that rejects “the determinism of realism and [instead promotes] alternative objectives for ‘security’” (Newman, 2010, p. 86). Further, a range of alternative and non-Western schools of security thought have emerged and contribute to the literature.

Critical Human Security analysis and application should also endeavor to be gendered and intersectional, striving to better understand the interactions between various elements of identity, power, and society in relation to security studies. Intersectional theory, evolving from the work of Kimberlé Crenshaw and many other feminist and social justice activists, refers to the interaction of various characteristics, social identities of a person or group in relation to the levels of power given or restricted by a dominant structure of society (Hancock, 2016).

In Critical Diversity and Race Studies, for example, the concept of intersectionality helps widen, deepen, and open up levels of analysis into aspects that may not appear obvious or may be ignored or hidden using conventional frameworks. It shows that single or surface identifiers do little to tell the full picture of a person or people. By drawing attention to the varying interactions—the intersections—of social identity and relations to power, and how these are employed or ignored in the ‘political practice’ of society, researchers can better inform policy-makers of the complexities and nuances of reality. Employing an intersectional lens in the

examination of security actively challenges simple assumptions and seeks out the deep connections between seemingly disassociated ideas.

Further, critical scholars seek to understand the ways that human security “was being conceptualized at the time [of emergence], warning of the dangers of masking difference when the multiplicity of identities and experiences suggest that relationality and contextualization must be taken seriously in any operationalization of human security (Hudson, 2005, as referenced in Stern and Wibben, 2014). Doing so calls into question the definitions of *the state*, *the human being*, and *security* by asking: for whom and what? Knowing that security is inherently political, critical scholars understand that the context matters, and more importantly, how the context benefits the power structures that determine social norms.

Other critical scholars reject the notion of security outright. Rather than being potentially emancipatory, security is instead regarded as “one of the essential categories in the self-understanding of bourgeois society” (Neocleus, 2000, p. 7) Taking issue with the foundational trajectory of civil society as a project of class division and exploitation, thereby rendering ‘security’ a grand project of control over people’s lives, turns the concept of ‘securitization’ upside-down and pauses the momentum of human security. The linking of security to the ills of industrial modernity illuminates many of the historical factors that have indeed led to poverty, conflict, and pollution and certainly leads to anxieties about the long-term goals it poses.

Since “all security is defined in relation to insecurity... any appeal to security [must] involve a specification of the fear which engenders it” (ibid., p. 12), leading to what James Der Derian calls the *paradox of security* (as referenced in Neocleus, 2000). The balance between recognizing a real need for security within the confines of society and the rejection of the social elements that create insecurity can be difficult to manage. There is a great tension that arises with

this understanding because “transforming social issues into questions of security plays into the hands of corporate power by turning us into consumers [of security]” (ibid., p. 13). Security becomes something to ‘receive’ from the hand that feeds while simultaneously keeping people locked into unbalanced relational processes that promote insecurity.

Liberal assumptions about personal autonomy, the trajectory of the ‘human spirit,’ and the meaning and future of society are themselves conceptions that stem from long histories of oppression and class exploitation that benefitted some (members of) societies while keeping others down. Regardless of the many valid trepidations by critical scholars regarding both the production and intentions of human security, I believe that within the confines of modern society, studying concepts of security provides an important vantage point to examine and critique many other things on a deeper level.

Thinking about how security efforts relate to the global economy, how they drive technological advances, and how external security measures are relied on as a right by some and hardly existent for others all lead down complicated paths, each revealing how deeply embedded *securitas* remains as a central organizational task of human beings around the world. Studying security critically illuminates a particular aspect of society that lies in the cross-hairs of many industries and relationships, providing a hey-day for reflection and critique on positive and negative elements of modernity.

Critical Human Security Concepts

Edward Newman (2010) argues that “critical and non-traditional security studies have largely shunned human security ideas... [since] human security may already be subsumed within critical security studies, and thus may be superfluous” (p. 77). Further, he poses that the “policy

orientation of human security... has made critical security scholars suspicious” because they view it as a “hegemonic discourse co-opted by the state,” leading to a dismissal of it as being “uncritical and unsophisticated” (ibid., p. 77). This is because many human security scholars and advocates do indeed address security through theories and approaches rarely regarded as critical or actionable, and since they relate the concepts to policies and practices decidedly naïve by many accords. However, I believe that the ‘human’ part of human security is what gives it such a potentially critical and crucial edge. In a society that increasingly values corporations and material interests over the wellbeing of people, any theory or practice that reemphasizes the primacy of human wellbeing at the center of the society opens up space for a critical and transformative inquiry. The battle is uphill, and this is precisely where alternative and critical theories of security can have their day in the sun.

If human security then is “normatively attractive, but analytically weak,” (Newman, 2010, p. 82) how can a Critical Human Security (CHS) approach help to better define and operationalize a concept that clearly has merit in many ways? The answer isn’t simple, but one way is to take a step back from the theory and investigate the practices and the outcomes of security concepts through the words and stories used to bolster them, since “from a critical perspective, the influence of an idea is ultimately not measured by the discourse alone. Ideas... do not change the world; rather a concept must in some significant way inform and be linked to particular practices” (Krause, 2014, p. 82). Linking the way that security is discussed with how it is practiced is a way to link the deep biases and political nature of security with the larger outcomes and implications around the world.

Yet these links are not easy to evaluate because it is hard to separate recent implementations of human security from the initiatives that “pre-date the elaboration and

adoption” of the discourse from other efforts to protect and ‘securitize’ human problems (ibid. p. 83). By narrowing and more clearly defining the goals of a human security-based practice, such as choosing ‘freedom from fear’ or ‘freedom from want’ as specific aims, actors can better understand exactly what they are trying to achieve without muddling security concerns with things that really are not security related.

A Critical Human Security approach calls out the “selective pursuit of particular issues on the human security agenda— child soldiers, but not military spending; the illicit trafficking in small arms, but not the ‘legal’ dark trade or existing state stockpiles” (Nunes, 2012, p. 350) and seeks to clarify not only the values and assumptions of a security approach. At the same time, it also criticizes the absolute hypocrisy of the modern military-industrial-socio-political spectrum that perpetuates the very insecurities it proposes to address.

Critical Human Security is aware of the fact that many human security initiatives strive to bolster their appeal and implementation, not by critiquing the foundations and outcomes of state-level security practices but by seeking to actually strengthen the “role and resources of the state” (Krause, 2014, p. 89) in order to gain the funding and attention it needs. This process of ‘humanizing’ conventional security efforts is a major concern of CHS because this fails to call out the counter-productive security measures that lead to further insecurities, and because the very foundations of the modern neorealist state relate in many ways to the deep human insecurities that HS strives to remedy (Wæver, 2011). Indeed, calling this out can be a lonely task when assumptions about the warlike nature of humankind prevail and dominant storylines perpetuate the idea that warfare will continue as a matter of fact. Critical theories almost always question and challenge the neorealist...

“...emphasis on parsimony and coherence; its privileging of a rational, state centric worldview based upon the primacy of the military in an anarchic environment; its

emphasis upon order and predictability as positive values; and its structural view of international politics as ahistorical, recurrent, and non-contextual” (Newman, 2010, p. 84).

Further, a Critical Human Security theory questions the ontological and epistemological realist conceptions of the world as obvious, universal, positivist, and value-neutral in its concern for ‘truth’ and ‘knowledge’ (Newman, 2010, p. 85). A critical approach understands that power differentials play a strong role in the ‘production’ of security, and that, as a subjective exercise influenced by generations of unequal levels of influence and power, it is biased and partial in its construction.

Moreover, a critical attitude towards implementing Human Security in practice challenges how success (in terms of security or development) is often measured and evaluated materially according to “the measurement of physical variables” (ibid., p. 86) while ignoring “ideational factors” (ibid.). A Critical Human Security approach to security questions and contests the “problem-solving” notion of realism. It demonstrates the political nature of realism and rejects any claim to an ‘objective’ reality by revealing the historical and ideological nature of realist schools of thought. This is achieved by creating a broader understanding of the subjectivity of security through deconstruction of the values presumed to underline the perspective or practice of security (ibid. p. 85).

Influenced by a broad range of critical scholarship, CHS most poignantly calls out the tendency for conventional human security approaches to be ‘problem-solving’ through the lenses of “prevailing social relationships, and the institutions into which they are organized, as the given and inevitable framework for action” (Newman, 2014, p. 89). A critical approach takes caution with the (understandable) tendency to ‘inject’ existing, traditional institutions with human security principles, since these institutions are themselves fundamentally flawed. Instead,

CHS seeks to discover how the concepts of ‘security’ and ‘society’ are constructed, what this means, and how deconstruction can actually allow the very noble principles of human security to be applied in this spirit (Christie, 2010).

Many critical security scholars sound alarm at conventional approaches that strive to “complement state security” (Wibben, 2011, p. 83) with human security concepts, because this perpetuates the power structures and singular narratives that coerce state interests above people. An honest Critical Human Security approach in practice does more than call out the deep relationships between capitalism and pollution, militarism and violence, intervention and rights abuses, development and gender and inequality, although these efforts in themselves are worthy tasks requiring vast energy and endurance to sustain. Ideally, a CHS approach suggests new kinds of relationships and guidelines that reduces the pathologies of modernity and violence.

While many critical scholars have addressed the concerns of human security, and while Edward Newman has come the closest (as far as I can find) to developing a ‘theory’ of Critical Human Security, there remain many issues with operationalizing critical theory into the practice of human security. This is partly because the critiques tend to be largely theoretical rather than tangible or functionally equipped to complement policy and practice, even though many scholars make important observations and suggestions towards the implementation of human security in ways that are diagnostically motivated. By this, I mean that there is a gap between the work of scholars and analysts and the practices and implementation of their findings by policy-makers and practitioners.

In a world where war has been outlawed and human rights implemented, how is it that security practices still enable warfare that always lead to human rights violations? It doesn’t make sense until this deep, critical inquiry is performed, and then it becomes clear: security is

political and the political operates by manipulating the ‘truth’ in favor of special rather than holistic interests. The political seeks to convince others of its rationality and normativity and gets away with murder because of ignorance (of its deeper motivations). The *Politika*, as both the ‘total complex of relations between people living in a society’ and the ‘art and science of government,’ remains a contested notion, permeating all things in myriad ways, and needs to be considered as a primary element guiding and shaping security practice and policy (Merriam-Webster, 2018). Upon this recognition, many aspects of security become clearer, and new sets of lenses can be donned through which to view the understandably complicated nature of insecurity.

So, how can Critical Human Security principles be better operationalized? I believe that CHS concepts needs to be developed into a more formal approach, a general framework, to supplement a narrative analysis and other kinds of scholarly pursuits. While there have indeed been several efforts made to do this, what I offer next is my own contribution to this task that re-emphasizes the primacy of the human being at the center of security and suggests ways to more clearly compartmentalize important elements of security assessments.

Call to Action: A Critical Human Security Framework

To push-start a renewed approach that could work towards imagining tangible outcomes, what human security needs is a *jumpstart* to reinvigorate the original intent and spirit of its focus. Besides the features involved in critical theory, human security, International Relations theory, and politics, there are other concepts that can be integrated into Critical Human Security as a whole, including philosophy, psychology, mythology, medicine, and the natural sciences. A critical bio-medical approach, for instance, would add a deeper understanding of the effects of processed food, transportation-related pollution, the impacts of pelagic plastic, etc. on security,

global health, and the environment. Critical comparative religious studies postulate fantastic layers of subjectivity, esoteric realities, and supernatural explanations for insecurity that are important to consider in relation to the role of bias and ideology, whereas a mathematician or statistician may suggest an algorithmic approach to assessing impacts and effects of security practices. My point here is that I believe there are countless lens and perspectives that influence security and that can also be used to analyze it critically. Critical Human Security scholarship is scarce, and it needs to be discussed, energized, and supplemented with new ideas, thoughts, and words from every angle. Choosing what I believe is important to implement and consider in a Critical Human Security approach, that is what I strive to do here.

In the spirit of Annick Wibben's call to action for an opening of security, Edward Newman's hailing towards a Critical Human Security concept, and in light of Ernest Becker's theory of 'culture-through-narrative-as-social-immortality-projects' that deeply impact human endeavor, I now integrate concepts of Critical Humanism and Humanitarianism into CHS and add four areas of inquiry into an approach I call a *Critical Human Security Framework (CHSF)*. While still rudimentary, it supplements Critical Human Security by suggesting a functional structure that can be used in analyzing security policy and practices, and which will be later applied to my analysis of security narratives in Chapter 5 (Wibben, 2016a; Newman 2010b; Becker, 1973; Solomon, 1991).

First, I discuss two theoretical contributions to my framework that, essentially, reunites the original human-focused concern into the forefront of the inquiry, inquiring at every step after the well-being of people as its central concern. The two theoretical contributions that I integrate are Critical Humanism (CH) and Humanitarianism, each providing new angles from which to view security as well as in approaching new possibilities regarding its practice. Then I suggest

four areas of inquiry that I consider to be essential ‘spaces of inquiry’ for any critical analysis of security practices, policies, or narratives— *Insecuritization, Outcomes and Impacts, Time-Scale, and Political Light*. These form the basic guidelines for the Critical Human Security Framework.

Critical Humanism as a concept has been posed by scholars Alfred McLung Lee (1973) and most recently Kenneth Plummer (2013) who, motivated by countless others throughout history, draw upon a rich saga of philosophical inquiry into the nature of human kind and what it means to be alive in human society. Plummer poses that “humanity, in truth, has not proved to be a very kind humanity... [and] the challenge for sociology is to grasp this complex, ever-changing humanly produced lived and everyday social world... what we might call *the sociology-humanist paradox*” (Plummer, 2012, p. 4-5). Modern CH stems from the “great crisis over the nature of what a human being was” (ibid., p. 9) that vitalized the Enlightenment and continues today.

This tension between the social and individual “marks a humanist sociology” (ibid.) and links to four big ideas: The Human, the Humane, the Humanities, and finally the Humanitarian (ibid., p. 8). The human refers to the individual person at the center of all society, the humane corresponds to “kindness, sympathy, and benevolence towards others” (ibid.), the humanities allude to the “broad human search for wisdoms and understanding” (ibid.), while the humanitarian refers to the concern for the wellbeing of global human society. Each of these stands concerned with “oppositions to the human... where we ignore people... where we are cruel... where we are ungenerous and [self-interested]” (ibid., p. 9).

Critical Humanism, in short, explicitly rejects that which opposes the wellbeing of humanity and strives to fully place the human at the heart of all social decision-making, yet also rejects “the myth of the universal man” (ibid., p. 11) or any attempt to homogenize or discount contextual and alternative human realities. I integrate this important point into my framework as

a major threshold guiding security recommendations from a CHS perspective. Security needs aren't the same everywhere for everyone, nor should they be approached in a homogenized fashion, especially through a forced military or policing approach. CH

Next, I add in the basic sense of humanitarianism, which as a concept is benevolent, compassionate, and non-violent. Despite the loaded political co-option of 'humanitarianism' into mainstream political practices that have unfortunately led to violent outcomes, my intent here is to reclaim the original meaning of the term. CHSF, then, inserts a clear notion into security that rejects any practice that detaches human wellbeing from its primary goal of sustaining health and safety. It goes beyond conventional Human Security concepts by rejecting the practices of militarism that lead to the destruction of life and materials, and therefore critiques HS for its willingness to bolster traditional security practices that lead to any violent outcomes.

By inserting a clear Critical Humanistic understanding of global humanity along with a strictly Critical Humanitarian impetus into security practices, a Critical Human Security Framework seeks to explicitly draw out the 'human' in security narratives in order to bolster attention to the tensions and potentially violent outcomes it may lead to. This is done to evaluate how 'the human being' is framed, approached, related to, considered, and manipulated in the document. CHSF also strives to address how inconsistencies or problems may arise if the security practice is operationalized and it suggests new ways to approach security so that human wellbeing remains intact first and foremost.

A Critical Human Security Framework completely rejects the 'realist' assumptions and notions of collateral damage as an acceptable price to pay and strictly rejects violence as an expeditionary practice of global, national, or local security efforts. While this framework recognizes the realities of violence as a common occurrence across human society, it cautions

against and discards any organized violence beyond self-defense as archaic, unnecessary, and socially evil. This means it rejects outright military force as a primary tool of global security and demands alternative ways to reduce violence and defend the public from society. There are no easy answers here, but the Critical Humanitarian impetus demands this intention.

Now, with these concepts acting as guides, CHSF includes the imminent awareness of the wickedness of warfare and the need for world peace, as free of violence as possible, as well as the freshness and willingness to adapt that allowed human security to emerge at such a high level when it did. These theories offer a reminder of the human being at the heart of security, and the need to both protect and prevent from danger, but not at the expense of others safety. To apply these concepts, a Critical Human Security Framework focuses on four areas of inquiry that can be analytically applied to any security narrative, policy, or practice. These include the following:

1) *Outcomes and Impacts* (best versus worst in terms of violence) works to identify the potential for collateral damage in the pursuit of security by considering what is at stake. If a practice could lead to death and destruction of civilians and infrastructure, it is rejected as a viable long-term security policy or practice. I include this element to emphasize that some security practices lead to greater damages than others, or that pursuits such as military violence have deep impacts and ramifications in ways that undermine their goals, for example.

2) *Time-Scale* (short-term versus long-term considerations of effectiveness and goals) examines the time consideration of security strategies, and seeks to focus attention to the most pressing, dire insecurities and contrast the necessity of ‘securitization’ with the time-frames assumed by the strategy. For example, what is the time-scale thought process behind building a border wall or restricting immigration in the name of security? At what cost? Is there is different,

more precise, and ideally quicker way to deal with the insecurities related to relocation that doesn't violate rights, discriminate, or exacerbate the reasons that lead to 'illegal' migration?

Additionally, what is the ten-, fifty-, hundred-, five-hundred-, or one-thousand-year forecast when it comes to security policy and practice? What impacts will a practice have on the shaping of social norms and habits, and how can security be streamlined and 'security theater' reduced (in airports, for instance)? What are the pollution costs and socio-cultural impacts on the local people during an occupation or through generations of militarism?

3) *Political Light* consciously seeks to illuminate the political nature and partisanship of the document to reveal bias, ideology, and propaganda. It highlights 'catch-words' or clearly biased political notions that affect the clarity and salience of security assessments. This area looks at the historical and current meanings and implications of political parties and ideologies and ways they relate to how danger is perceived, and practices and policies employed.

A big piece of the security puzzle relates to the political nature of it, and that fact that policies are made within the 'political-vacuum' that rewards actors through very specific ways of attaining power or achieving their political aims. Being critical of the entire security or state apparatus is rarely considered the proper or effective way to engage in politics or to enact change from a political position. Moreover, critical scholars, many of them working academics or security practitioners, may stand removed from inner circles of decision making or have little power to effect hegemony or the status quo. History provides enough examples of those who see past the confines of society, imagining new ways yet being shunned or disciplined when they sound the alarm bell. Human Security, in some way, seeks to be this alarm bell. Yet it does so by integrating within the narrow confines of hegemonic security practices that are motivated largely

by economic and material factors (Christie, 2010). CHSF seeks to draw attention to the political nature of security as well as the political limitations that prevent people from enacting changes.

And finally, 4) *Critical Insecuritization*, which analyzes profit margins of security practices, asking: who does it benefit and what does it cost economically, materially, physically, and socially? Critical Insecuritization (CI) opposes the ways that insecurity is profitable to actors that perpetuate violence. It considers the Military-Industrial-Complex (MIC), including defense spending, arms manufacturing and trade, military technology and deployment, and general militarism, to be key antagonists to Human Security goals. I'm unaware of the term Critical Insecuritization being used elsewhere in security literature and utilize it here to refer specifically to the idea that some dangers and levels of insecurity are caused by certain forms of security practices and the industries that enable them. A CHS Framework grasps that what human security deems as necessitating securitization may also at the same time perpetuates violent social structures and habits and strives to demonstrate how insecurities perpetuate through the status-quo of business-as-usual attitudes towards global politics. The power of these practices and industries make them resistant to reduction, change, or abolishment. They have been integrated profitably into society and are antagonistic to Critical Human Security goals.

This term is used in the framework to denote those and that which contribute to insecurity by measuring the worst impacts or outcomes of a practice or policy. As a category in the CHSF, the concept of insecuritization is used to evaluate the data taken from the narrative analyses of dominant security stories and contrasted with as much empirical data as possible to establish a clearer idea of what motivates practices that perpetuate insecurity.

Insecuritization stems from the idea that insecurities are incentivized in the global market through the profits of the MIC and through the revenues of underground, illicit markets that

thrive off of prohibition and governmental corruption. These factors are made possible through the prevalence of militarism and militaristic nationalism, which are deeply embedded in modern industrial and financial practices and perpetuated through popular media, social mythologies, fashion, and art. Militarism operates through normative social perceptions of an anarchic world order that needs to be militarily managed by those in power. Since the profits of defense and arms manufacturing are so great, it has become business-as-usual to assume that the defense industry operates for a more benevolent reason rather than as being complicit in the perpetuation of harmful practices and rights violations. In fact, the outcomes of militarism and defense technology are actually dire and deeply misguided.

A Critical Human Security Framework primarily serves to simply draw attention to these elements so that a deeper understanding of security can be made consciously. It aligns with Taylor Owen's Thresholds-based security analysis method, as well as other efforts to 'map' security and conduct deep investigation (Owen, 2004). His approach includes a threat assessment, data collection and organization, data visualization and analysis, and *spatial correlation* (looking at local contexts to understand local-global needs) (ibid.). His aim is to separate "human security from human development" (ibid., p. 10) and draw out the root causes that impact the goals of each. CHSF bolsters this effort by also seeking the thresholds in security practices that most contradict the protection of rights and compartmentalizes what I consider to be crucial areas of inquiry.

It is notoriously difficult to link or implement critical theories into practice, since they often undermine the very foundations that the structures or entities being critiqued rely upon to exist. It's a catch-22 that keeps critical scholars up at night, and there are no easy answers. However, this is part of the reason why I chose to focus on critiquing the dominant narratives

that operationalize security practices using a narrative analysis. By critically examining the perspectives and words of these security narratives, attention can be drawn to the ways that threats are formulated and approached.

An operational Critical Human Security Framework approach needs to offer a useable starting point through which human security concepts can morph beyond the confines of international, state, or regional capacities to ‘do’ security. There are many possibilities, and for my part here, I start with examining the words underlying the assumptions of security in dominant narratives. This offers a direct link in to the thoughts and intentions underlying security practices, opening them and illuminating their meanings. So, how can Critical Human Security theory be mainstreamed by critical analysis methods that call out partisanship, negative biases, ignorance, and ideological hazards in a way that is easily integrated and readily acceptable by the merit of its transcendent intention? How can critical scholars point out the political nature of security and reveal its bias in a way that leads to actionable changes in policy and practice?

By drawing attention to the narratives of security and their many inaccuracies or inconsistencies, we can energize the process of ‘opening’ up the meanings of security to better align them with the practices and outcomes of security that actually achieve their proposed aims. One way to begin this is to dive in and critically analyze narratives of security—the words and symbols themselves—creating ‘thick’ descriptions of the values, meanings, and perspectives that form the security assessment. This process gives them a history, calls out their biased agendas, and allows for a deeper understanding of the political nature of their intent. The next chapter sets the stage for this process by introducing and conceptualizing the importance of narrative as a primary element of human society and introduces the critical narrative research method as a powerful analytical tool.

Chapter 4

Storytelling and Narrative Research

The Manufacturing of Meaning-Making

With this understanding of security as political, as manipulative, and highly contested, I now shift my focus towards the relationship between security as a social concept and practice and the narratives, or stories, that give it life. Without narrative, the world as we know it wouldn't exist in the way we understand it. In *Narrative and the Making of U.S. National Security*, Ronald Krebs (2015) notes that “it is through narrative that human beings order disordered experience and impart meaning to themselves and their world. Insofar as any grand strategy rests on a coherent portrait of the global environment, it rests on narrative” (p. 2). Narrative, or storytelling, is the usage of language, as symbols, sounds and words, to communicate abstractions and ideas through speech and writing.

The phenomenon of narrative lies in the same spiritual trajectory as Ernest Becker's (1973) explanation for culture as a “group immortality project” to quell death anxiety, bolster self-esteem, and create a sense of transcendence over nature. Narratives allow humans to formulate and explain the sensory perceptions of reality. Narrative breathes life into the symbols, rituals, habits, and beliefs of a society as living artifacts to illustrate and construct meaning and generate culture. Across all human time and space, “language is a crucial medium, means, locus, and object of contest... through language, actors exercise influence over others' behavior” (Krebs, 2015, p. 2).

‘Narrative’ stems from the Latin roots of *narrare*, meaning ‘to tell’ and *gnarus*, meaning ‘skilled’ (Oxford, 2007). A skilled telling of events is more than just noise-making. Placing these ideas in a certain pattern or manner can bolster or deflate their meaning and level of conviction.

The phrasing of words and construction of sentences in a coherent way is an important social skill to utilize language effectively as a mode of communication. Krebs (2015) points out the universality of narrative as an ‘impulse,’ serving to deliver order unto disorder through interpretation to “shape how people group ideas, what they remember, and what solutions they find most attractive” (p. 10). Early forms of storytelling comprise the earliest examples of how narratives develop and serve as vehicles for knowledge, ideas, and beliefs (Krebs, 2015, p. 10). This is done through a ‘semiotic,’ or meaning-making, formalization of sequential events, giving a sense of a beginning and a direction towards a goal or future event.

In literary theory, narratives are understood as “*selective* in their presentation of events,” “*temporally* ordered,” or with a sequential organization of events, and “*meaningfully* constructed” in a way that justifies the selection and ordering so that the plot makes sense (ibid. p. 11). A narrative strives to organize a series of potentially disconnected events and ideas so that they are both credible and convincing. Whether the stakes are high or low, from the individual person to a large organization, stories are told every day that seek to explain and justify the vast range of activities and efforts considered essential for survival and cultural continuity.

Narratives are present in all manners of human activity, representing vast creativity. Their role, as Aristotle believed, is the “production of meaning... not persuasion... [but] rather the *detection of the persuasive aspects of each matter*” (quoted in Krebs, 2015, p. 31). The role of rhetoric, as a narrative art, is to choose the words and symbols that best represent the closest external approximation of an internal belief or feeling. Depending on the state of the internal source, the way this belief or feeling is communicated is a matter of choice and is intended to “make the speaker’s conclusions seem *naturally* right, so that the listener feels that she has discovered for herself something that should have been obvious all along (ibid. p. 31).

From art to religion, narratives give life to the things we do, providing a history and a meaning for them. Yet, the way we interpret and choose to narrate the world is a subjective experience. Everybody has different experiences and perspectives, leading to different interpretations. Further, people have some choice in the way they interpret and narrate their experiences and beliefs. While common understandings, including rules and regulations for grammar, writing, and speech certainly exist, it remains that words and symbols aren't fixed in time in relation to some objective framework or set of values; rather these are living elements of the human experience that result in widely varied and continually evolving constructions, interpretations, and definitions of reality. In this way, humans adopt a historical toolbox of storytelling and the agency to create and develop these in any way desired.

Subjectivity of Security Narratives

In the context of modern security affairs, it is well understood that phrases, slogans, and ideas can relate powerful ideas and understandings about the world. Politicians and leaders craft their words in ways that promote their agenda and interests. These interests stem from culture, ideology, political beliefs, and personal experiences, leading to various perceptions and opinions that require an articulation to convey their meaning and intent. Humans “cannot direct power, nor can they interpret its exercise, in the absence of language,” since we “have words without a world, but no world without words or other symbols” (Krebs, 2015, p. 8; Goodman, 1978, as cited in Krebs, 2015). Narratives become living artifacts crafted and shaped in the image of their beholder to both convey and convince others of their merit. It is easy to understand, then, why narratives become much more than sounds or images alone: they are symbols with a real power in creating and guiding the world of humans.

Considering that, especially in politics, narrative plays a primary role in conveying the meaning of ideas that lead to decisions and actions that impact the physical realm, it is important to recognize the power of storytelling in promoting certain points of view. In the act of “defining reality, narratives do not stand opposed to reason, but rather make rational decision-making possible. They are the vehicle through which human beings formulate understandings of self and other (identity) and what self and other want (interest)” (Krebs, 2015, p. 10). Because narratives are “composed for some audience... so too are interests, which are not the stable property of atomistic actors, but vary according to the story being told” (ibid. p. 10). If interpretation is subjective and the agenda is to shape the narrative to convince others of its merit, then any narrative will necessarily leave out some aspects of reality that are either unknown or unwanted (Wibben, 2011).

Yet why is it that some stories become more ‘dominant,’ or widely disseminated and adhered to? Clearly, the dominant narrative doesn’t necessarily represent all of those widely varying perspectives contained by the common masses, or else there would probably be free health care and other social services. Instead, it seems that certain powerful elements of society, stemming from upper and political classes who, in a capitalist society, possess power and resources. Yet it takes more than money to influence society. Bruce Lincoln (1994) states that more than idle power and resources to influence the collective consciousness, it takes a mix of power and *props* as “the conjecture of the right speaker, the right speech and delivery, the right staging and props, the right time and place, and an audience whose historically and culturally conditioned expectations establish the parameters of what is judged ‘right’ in all these instances” (quoted in Krebs, 2015, p. 31).

Narratives of Danger and Security in a Dynamic World

The development of the field of psychology has been influential on the way humans think about and react to danger, offering crucial insights for security studies. One important insight refers to how the perception of danger tends to be *biased*, from individual to collective levels. This idea has vital implications once the realities of modern security paradigms and practices unfold. Just as theories and methods are biased and limited by the dominant frameworks of the day, so are the perceptions of danger and practices of security (Solomon, 1991).

Cryptographer and computer security expert Bruce Schneier coined the terms ‘security theater’ and ‘movie plot threat,’ essentially calling out the recent efforts to bolster the image of security rather than the substance of safety, in both narratives and practices, especially since the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 (Schneier, 2008). He presents four common biases that influence security practices and perceptions of danger. The first is a tendency to downplay significant or certain ‘spectacular risks’ (climate change) while focusing too much on ‘uncommon, unlikely risks’ that are often portrayed in popular media (*Die Hard*-style terror attacks). The second bias is the idea or feeling that the ‘unknown’ is riskier than ‘the familiar,’ which explains the tendency to assign blame to an ‘other’ from another culture (Muslims are currently ‘in vogue’ in this regard) (ibid.).

The third bias shows that ‘personified’ risks, or those stemming from human or familiar, easily identified sources are considered more threatening than ‘anonymous’ risks such as weather and future climate events. This can be seen in the way that threats are portrayed in movies—as people rather than disease, for example. And fourthly, some threats of danger are perceived to be more dangerous than others due to their ‘availability heuristics’ or how easy to imagine they are. If some threats are talked about, represented, or reenacted more often than others, they will likely

be considered more likely and therefore more dangerous than risks that are less available (Schneier, 2010). This shows that biases in perceptions of security risk are largely influenced by outside forces and play a role in distinguishing and judging a potential danger.

A common example refers to the differences in perception and political action regarding terrorism versus climate change. The availability heuristics of terrorism are acute, more easily understood temporally, and flush with images, stories, and actual outcomes that provide very serious and frightening reasons to be afraid of it. We are afraid of terrorism because we are regularly exposed to both real examples of its dire effects (in the news and in the words of politicians) as well as because society ‘valorizes’ terrorism by narrating it in a certain way (Hall, 2016). Terrorism exists as a major plot element in popular media and Hollywood, and understanding the fear the terror invokes, plays upon it by retelling the story over and over again in ways that are often quite enjoyable. Yet this salience of terrorism has deep psycho-social impacts and shapes how people think about danger.

Despite the statistics demonstrating the statistical improbability of most people being victims of terrorism, it remains a primary security concern for many people partly because of the stories that represent it. On the other hand, the vastness, unpredictability, and uncertain prognoses of climate change make it hard to feel the same level of acute fear that stems from terrorism—and few Hollywood films exist that paint the climate as a salient, personalized threat. The gradualness of climate change conflicts with the immediateness of terrorism, at least in the mind, and therefore motivates differing reactions and opinions about how to approach them (Mead, 2015; Sustain, 2007).

Another interesting concept to integrate into the trajectory of this discussion on security is that of different ‘landscapes’ that comprise the world, and especially the movement, of

humans. There is no doubt that globalization is continually complicating and disrupting previously held perceptions and notions about how the world works and where it ought to be heading. These processes are dynamically leading to all sorts of new potentials, many of which complicate past notions of best policy and practice.

New levels of analysis are required to understand these changes and their complications. Arjun Appadurai has expanded a theory that helps me better understand these new realities. He identifies five landscapes that have emerged in the postmodern, global world: an *ethnoscape* comprising people in the physical space, always shifting; an *ideoscape* and *mediascape* comprising the thoughts, communications, information, media, data, etc. that emerge everywhere; and the *financescape* and *technoscape* which encompass emerging and evolving social, cultural, and financial frontiers (Appadurai, 1996, p. 35). Each of these areas demonstrate the complexity, rapidity, and interconnectedness of the globalized era of the present day. The recognition of this complexity also helps motivate an inquiry into the stories we use to narrate these rapidly evolving human landscapes.

By recognizing the continually more complicated and dynamic elements of modern human affairs, we can better understand how the question of security also needs to account for new ‘landscapes’ and therefore must adapt. Regarding security studies, examining narratives is a behemoth but crucial task. The way that stories construct a “we” versus “them,” help define the nature of the world and the dangers lurking and prescribe the actions and attitudes to protect ourselves are endlessly fascinating and often disturbing (Pyszczynski, 2002). Through rhetoric, or the “art of discourse,” politicians present their arguments in a socio-cultural framework that ‘speaks’ to people with the goal of informing and convincing them of their position (Krebs, 2015, p. 34). Rhetoric is “designed to make an impression on and evoke a response...” by

speakers who are “social beings and strategic actors... sensitive to what audiences expect and deem legitimate” (ibid. p. 32).

Knowing that subjective experience is too narrow to provide any one individual with every human perspective necessary for the full understanding of life processes, and since the objective information a person integrates into their worldview is often culturally-biased, it could be deduced then that most narratives, and the rhetoric used to express them, are limited and biased expressions of ideas. Indeed, “all stories are fictional, in the sense that they level out the jagged discontinuities of human experience in favor of coherence” (Krebs, 2015, p. 11).

Examining the U.S. National Security Strategy then provides insight into the ‘grand strategy’ or the “state’s theory about how it can best *cause* security for itself” (Posen, 1984, p. 3, as cited in Krebs, 2015, p. 13). This requires a definition of certain things, a narrative of strategy leading towards security, that broadly “fixes priorities and provides standards by which the appropriate choices among alternatives may be made” (Krebs, 2015, p. 14) as well many calculations including how to use resources and assets, together forming the dominant security narrative.

National security is a huge social project, a grand narrative in itself, requiring a vast array of resources and intentional effort to enact. To convince the U.S. population of the merit of their assessment and actions towards security, especially when it comes to military action, the government must employ massive efforts to “regularize and institutionalize... [make] reasonable and unquestionable” those actions it prescribes (Jackson, 2005, p. 1). This includes propaganda and caricatures of public debate, as well “the construction of a whole new language... that manufactures approval while simultaneously suppressing individual doubts and wider political protest” (ibid. p. 1). Propaganda is the intentional use of biased information in the task of

convincing people to think and act in a specified way, motivated through ‘loaded language,’ that crafts certain terms and phrases to coerce and convince someone of something (Brincat, 2016).

The ‘dominant security narrative’ in the U.S. adheres largely to “routine, or settled, narrative situations” from which “elites... legitimate their preferred policies with reference to it and thereby reproduce it” (Krebs, 2015, p. 33). This process “limits the scope” of policy debate yet doesn’t possess total control over the way society will think about the issue (ibid.). There is always much more laying beyond this ‘legitimate’ story, yet due to the power differentials and varying ‘conjectures’ they are often relegated to the sidelines. However, when the circumstances allow, these ‘unsettled’ alternatives can come to prominence, especially in wake of “critical junctures” (ibid.). These moments broaden the “scope of debate” as “politicians and activists legitimately... advance a wide range of policy stances, grounded in a variety of narratives” (ibid.).

The space between the ‘settled,’ dominant story and the ‘unsettled,’ alternative stories open, reveals that “social life is not always and everywhere equally contested” (Krebs, 2015, p. 35). Indeed, what constitutes an issue of importance in California may be very different from Missouri. The vastness and dynamism of the U.S. and the world makes it especially difficult for dominant narratives to be established without vast efforts to communicate them. This process relies on building a sense of commonality and national unity and must champion certain values that are viewed as basic frameworks for U.S. society.

Dominant narratives are imperfect and susceptible to continual scrutiny and challenge, requiring “ceaseless work by its spokesmen” to protect since they “always contain contradictions that disputants can exploit” (ibid.). The vastness of perspective and opinion in the U.S. means that there are many alternative narratives that would challenge the fundamental beliefs held

within the dominant narrative, and this means then that the efforts to sustain the dominant narrative are powerful and ongoing at all levels of society.

Krebs (2015) distinguishes between two types of rhetoric used by public speakers: argument and storytelling (p. 36). They differ in “*purpose*: arguments seek to persuade the audience of the correctness of a course of action, while stories seek to explain a series of events to an audience” (ibid.) that is or perceived to be ignorant or ‘confused’ by the speaker. An argument can be ‘instrumental’ in that it seeks to explain and legitimize things rationally, as “costs and benefits, advantages and harms” (ibid.) by arguing around “disrupted means” (ibid.) or contested areas. A ‘normative’ argument seeks to legitimize its appeal through a “logic of appropriateness” (ibid.) and alignment with ‘common values and idea’ about the world. Each of these “presume a settled system of political language” (ibid., p. 37) and attempt to ‘naturalize’ the argument as obvious and normal.

Storytelling seeks to provide context to a case by transporting “audiences into a world of meaning” (Krebs, 2015, p. 38). It strives to align with and construct a world that is familiar in ways that make it seem ‘natural’ by presenting a series of events, a cast of protagonists, their exchanges, and what this means in relation to larger events. Storytelling “structures the field of political play” by articulating a socio-political identity and, while “full-blown storytelling is rare” in politics, it is used to buffer arguments in certain “ritualized” moments during which “communal identity is performed and re-inscribed” (ibid. p. 39). In politics, storytelling is used in conjunction with an argument to inject a personality and sense of community into the agenda. It reaches out and touches the audience on many levels, and often helps reinforce the dominant narrative.

The direness of war-making is such that it takes massive efforts— great stories and grand pageantry— on nearly every level of society to construct the conditions and willingness to engage in it. It also takes massive efforts to silence those who challenge the dominant narrative. And usually, it is this dissent that fuels the hegemonic forces to buckle down and spend even greater effort to bolster their views. However, exposing the fallacies and cognitive dissonance in popular discourse and dominant narratives is a powerful exercise, and each exposure provides space— and opening— for even more rigorous debate and potential solutions to real-world problems (Jackson, 2005).

Since narratives inform public perceptions of danger and frameworks of security practices, then it is wise to first examine the words used to construct and justify these. The crucial task of critical theory is to help illuminate these gaps of ignorance present in security studies and actual practice and policy, and to fill them in with empirical, comprehensive answers and better solutions. The critical process ultimately is necessary for the re-imagining and reconfiguring of security in a way that benefits the most people, and benefits from a deep understanding of the power of narratives as social symbols and immortality projects.

Critical Narrative Research Methods: Studying Stories Suspiciously

Narratology, as “the theory and systematic study of narrative” (Wibben, 2011, p. 44), seeks to illuminate how stories construct perceptions of experiences, events, and ideas. Emerging during the twentieth century as the “art of narrative form and structure” that pursued a “universal plot,” inherent in all human cultures, narratology dominated primarily as a form of literary critique until the mid-1980’s, during which time it broke free of its rigidity and was applied to “all kinds of cultural artifacts that have narrative elements” (ibid., p. 45).

Critical narrative research methods, with their foundations resting in post-modernism, social constructionism, constructivism, and feminism, are consciously investigative and suspicious of dominant storylines. Importantly, each of these influences are interested in reflexive analysis, where the researcher is aware of their own biases that stem often from within or in relation to the very subject of their research. The aim is to reflect upon and critique society for the sake of generating new ideas and discourses for reasons, that ultimately, are ethical and moral (Wibben, 2016a).

Conventional narratology strives to simplify a text, to “construct unity” between various, perhaps contradictory elements, and to illuminate a “dominant theme” that explains its meaning (Wibben, 2011, p. 44). ‘Narrative’ also includes the spoken words as well as symbolic and otherwise ritualistic forms of mass communication. However, many post-structural and critical theorists resist the urge to simplify the text and assign all meaning in reference to the dominant theme. For them, narrative “always has more to say than can be captured in analysis,” (ibid.) allowing a “reintroduction of historical perspectives” (ibid., p. 45) and providing a contextual basis from which to understand narrative in political terms. This allows an intentional opposition to the “organization of knowledge in binary oppositions,” (ibid., p. 45) and challenges the tendency of binary thinking to value a dominant or majority perspective over others, such as good over evil, for example.

The process of deconstruction requires an examination of much more than the dictionary definition of the words in relation to themselves and each other (although this is important as well, specifically concerning the etymology of words) or to the overall theme or plot. It requires a way to ‘go-inside’ a text using a critical lens to identify and understand the contextual, historical natures of narrative artifacts and the limits these may impose on the meaning and

agenda of a story. This is crucial to grasp the power of a narrative. This act is ‘hermeneutical’ in the tradition of interpreting scripture or texts to understand their meanings from within as they relate to the external. For my narrative analysis in the following chapter, I utilize Weber’s and Heidegger’s ‘hermeneutical circle,’ showing that each individual part of the text relates to the larger whole and the historical socio-cultural realities from which they emerge, forming a circle of connected meanings and phenomena (Wibben, 2011, p. 31-31; Porter & Robinson, 2011, p. 1-4).

While there is debate concerning which aspects of the text to emphasize, such as the author and her intention, the context in which it was written, or the context in which it is being interpreted, each approach allows for an opening into the text far beyond its face-value (Porter & Robinson, 2011, p. 3). Because meaning is made through interpretation with the help of social cues and symbols, the way things are both narrated and understood is a hermeneutic process, an “interplay between prejudice/prejudice” (Wibben, 2011, p. 27). “All experience... is hermeneutic” (ibid., p. 36) since all knowledge is “always relative to a tradition” (ibid.). Therefore, narrative is liminal; it occupies a space between the known and unknown, a pre- and post-being that takes on a life of its own, providing meaning through the interpretations of phenomena only in relation to social, interpersonal knowledge.

Critical narratology, then, is the study of narrative structures with an understanding that all stories contain elements of personality, social or political bias, and other limitations that may affect their empirical validity. From the outset, critical narratology views narrative as inherently partial and subjective, because the narrators are themselves partial and subjective in their knowledge and worldview. It is a skeptical approach, meant not to discredit the narrator necessarily, but to illuminate gaps and dis- or misinformation in the narrative. By now, countless

examples demonstrate the common dichotomies between ideals and actions and words and intentions in politics, and the way that politicians use this to their advantage to craft perceptions and energize a specific agenda (Fehn, Hoesterey & Tatar, 2014).

Security-at-large calls for a critical narrative analysis because “the deployment of language by politicians is an exercise of power and without rigorous public interrogation and critical examination, unchecked power inevitably becomes abusive” (Jackson, 2005, p. 3). These discrepancies, discussed earlier, between resources spent and security rewards gained during the past several decades alone necessitate a critical reconsideration of the U.S. worldview and global security strategy. A first place to start is to understand the context of how danger and security are viewed by the state: indeed, what do these *mean* to the state in their own words? This requires questioning how meaning is made, and how narratives construct meaning “during the process of drawing the unfamiliar into our context to make it intelligible” (Wibben, 2011, p. 27).

Richard Jackson (2005) notes a key concern, “that the language of the ‘war on terrorism’ actually *prevents* rather than facilitates the search for solutions to political violence; that it actually encourages terrorism and increases the risk to vulnerable populations... [it entrenches] cycles of global violence which will be extremely difficult to break, and... misunderstands and misinterprets the nature of terrorist violence” (p. 4). Accepting this assessment consequently requires an examination of the words and documents that reveal this ‘exercise’ of power in order to understand how words and phrases are used to manipulate and persuade.

A critical narrative analysis can help do this through a range of approaches to choose from. It can focus on the ideology behind the narrative by examining beliefs, values, and assumptions that stem from socio-cultural sources. Another way is to examine how certain symbols, phrases, or patterns are used by ‘clustering’ them and comparing their usage with other

artifacts or narratives. Additionally, trying to understand why a story is told using certain phrases and images helps to reveal the lens and belief system guiding it.

Examining the rhetorical, persuasive elements of a story shines light on the motivations and concerns that motivate its telling (Lynch, 2017, p. 243). However, Mieke Bal (1997) cautions the urge to seek an overarching, meta-theory using narrative analysis because meaning “is a cultural phenomenon... [and as] the condition of possibility... [it is] the result of the interpretation by the reader” (as cited in Wibben, 2011, p. 46). Therefore, a narrative theory “can only provide insights into how certain mechanisms are used” (ibid.) rather than evaluate their qualities and values against some ultimate ‘truth’ or concept of reality. For critical researchers, this point is important, since ‘objectivity’ and ‘truth’ are recognized as themselves products of socio-cultural and political environments in which no person is free from these bounds. Acknowledging the role of bias in all things doesn’t limit the research— it actually energizes it and demands that heightened sensitivity and compassion are fellow guides in the journey.

Diving In(words)

With that said, there are a number of methods and approaches that organize and categorize elements of a narrative. Wibben (2011) discusses how Bal “distinguishes three layers of analysis: text (medium), story (presentation), and *fabula* (content),” offering different levels and lenses to examine either individually or in relation to each other (p. 47). The narrator can be external (telling about others but not a part of the story) or internal (part of the story), acting as a ‘focalizer’ by presenting the vision or general aim of the story either as their own or as another’s (ibid., p. 47-48). Wibben (2011) further emphasizes the importance of this understanding in the narrative analysis of political texts especially, because traditional narratological concepts fail to

“make a distinction between... the vision through which the elements are presented... [and] the identity of the voice that is verbalizing that vision” (p. 49). Identifying and distinguishing between the narrator and the narrative vision, as well as the different levels that comprise the narrative itself, opens up the *liminal spaces* to examine power relations, socio-cultural biases and assumptions, and other targets of critical inquiry. Doing, at the very least, exposes the gaps between reality and fantasy, or between values and outcomes.

With so much political nonsense and partisan noise permeating the airwaves across the U.S., it is important that critical scholars continually seek to engage the dominant narratives being told from a place of skepticism and an eye towards ways to reconcile them with more accurate and nuanced perspective. Perspectives and words are important in shaping security outcomes because they act *as* a sort of security by painting the world in a certain light. They are meant to assure, to assert, and to *insert* their perspectives into public consciousness in ways that convince and coerce. The inherent untruthfulness in these efforts, especially as of late, requires critically engaged people to elevate the conversation and demand accountability.

In the next chapter, I put into practice the concepts discussed so far. I strive to understand the power of *words* by examining the 2015 and 2017 U.S. National Security Strategy. These documents represent the political and ideological viewpoints of the executive branch towards global security, and specifically of the president. Divided into two sections, overview and narrative analysis, I critically analyze the way words and phrases are used to impart certain understandings of danger and to motivate certain responses. Ultimately, I work to understand how this exercise opens up space and allows the application of the Critical Human Security Framework. But for now, on to the narratives.

Chapter 5

Critical Narrative Analysis: Why Words Matter

Reading into the U.S. National Security Strategy

Focusing now on the fundamental questions of this thesis, and with the takeaway thoughts of the previous vignette in mind, I will comparatively scrutinize two important documents that summarize the security strategy, asking: *How does a narrative analysis of the U.S. National Security Strategy provide insight into ways that an integrated Critical Human Security approach might address current insecurities in a more comprehensive manner?*

The documents examined here are the *2015 National Security Strategy* and the *2017 National Security Strategy*. The National Security Strategy (NSS) is a publication by the Executive branch of the U.S. It was legislatively mandated by the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 and requires the president to submit an annual report to congress outlining the major security interests, goals, and objectives. The executive branch “carries out and enforces laws and includes the President, Vice President, the Cabinet, executive departments, independent agencies, and other boards, commissions and committees” (USA.gov, 2017).

The NSS recommends actions necessary to “deter aggression and to implement the national security strategy” (NSS Archives, 2017). It is intended to provide a general overview of the president’s security strategy and to communicate an intention towards a varied audience, including congress, foreign governments and organizations, political or special interest audiences, and various governmental and public agencies concerned with issues of security.

The National Security Strategy document represents an important political narrative that reflects and influences the way that Americans think about and respond to security issues. The

words used in these documents characterize crucial perspectives regarding the mindset and strategic outlook of the U.S President. Each NSS articulates a respective global threat assessment and the security recommendations that would best serve their departmental and overall political and national security needs. Furthermore, it illuminates the broad political vision and general worldview and perspective from the president, which in many ways echoes those of the U.S. population. The words, phrases, intentions, and value-systems provide a snapshot summary of the current political mindsets of the executive branch (Hall, 2016).

Tall Tales of the 'Post-9/11 Presidents'

While the NSS is supposed to be published each year, only four have been produced since G. W. Bush became president in 2001. A survey of these four documents reveals many differences in beliefs and opinions but also many similarities. The events and impact of post-September 11, 2001 on security practices here in the U.S. and globally have become a new basis from which political parties on every side measure and gauge their positions. The Global War on Terror (GWOT) has shaped these past sixteen years and provides a vantage point from which the current U.S. strategy operates. The current era of Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) conducts itself in much the same way as GWOT, but it relies more on foreign internal defense and special operations missions rather than large troop surges (Leonard, 2009). Current major actions include Operation Freedom's Sentinel in Afghanistan, Inherent Resolve in Iraq and Syria, and Odyssey Lighting in Libya (DOD, 2018).

Barack Obama released only two NSS documents during his two terms, the first in 2010 and the last in 2015. Having inherited much of the global conflict and disarray of the G.W. Bush years, he attempted to supplement existing strategies with more diplomatic, development, and

economic-focused initiatives, while maintaining and utilizing much of the expeditionary military posture and practices (Camp, 2018). The contrasts between presidents G. W. Bush and B. Obama stemmed not only from their personal and political differences, but from the experiences and lessons of the national security strategy in practice over the past two decades (Ellis, 2017).

Importantly, those who surround and advise the president can greatly influence the NSS and how it ranks and phrases certain security concerns. The way the NSS tends to describe prominent threats, such as terror and climate change, reveals a range of interesting observations and opinions. Not only does bias impact the clarity with which the NSS narrates and responds to these issues, but also the perception of desired outcomes based on an ‘imagined’ political body and national and global audiences (Campbell, 1998). What this shows is that the same events can be interpreted differently depending on the vantage point and intentions of the president and those of close council, just like we saw in the reports earlier.

Trump’s highly-anticipated 2017 NSS provides a look into the guiding perspectives that underline the administration. At 55 pages long, the 2017 NSS is 26 pages longer than the 2015 NSS at 29 pages. The chapters, labeled *Pillars*, are also divided into 6 sections focused on different themes, similar to the 2015 NSS. The contrast between Obama and the current president Trump provides much to examine and contemplate. In some ways, it seems that the current administration operates in the ‘spirit’ of trying to appear opposite to those things it perceives as reminiscent of the last administration. It rhetorically seems to seek out power, and in some ways perhaps gain, by playing on perceptions that appeal to a sense of ‘fresh realism’ and a ‘no-nonsense’ approach to solving problems that should have been solved long ago (a populist sentiment). In substance, however, the differences regarding national security approaches are minute, as the overall strategies haven’t evolved too much further beyond those of the past *three*

administrations, nor beyond the seeming unassailable confines that keep the U.S. hemmed into a range of predicaments.

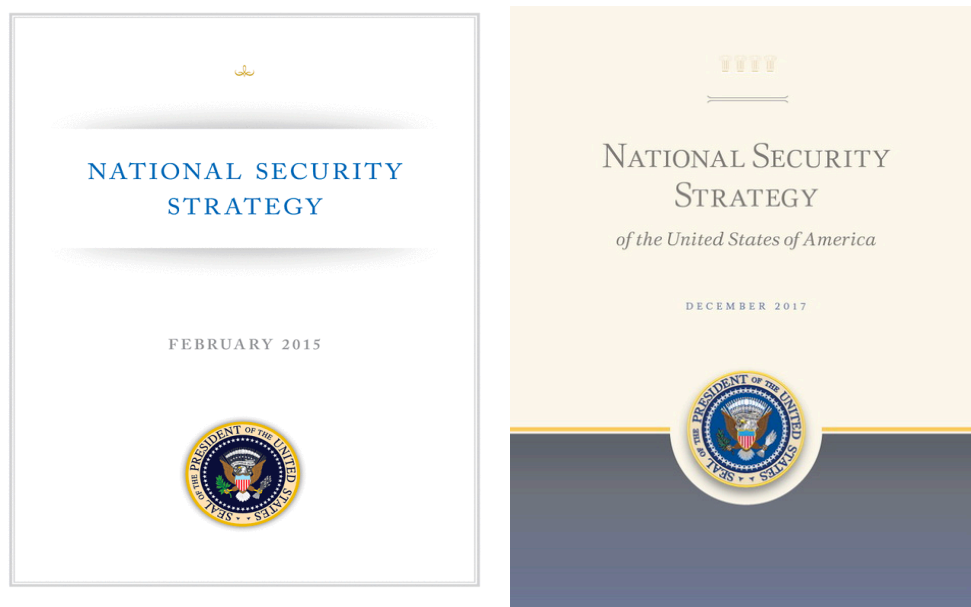
Indeed, Andrew Bacevich offers a prominent voice of experience in this regard and has penned a range of critical pieces that reproach the U.S. security strategies. He points out that despite being the most well-funded and advanced military, few objectives have been achieved while thousands have been killed over the past fifteen years alone (2017a). The chronic insistence on aligning security with military strategies continues leading the U.S. down a path that ends in destructive outcomes (ibid.).

My hypothesis is that each document narrates a specific *vision* of the dangers in the world that most threaten U.S. interests, and chooses to approach these through conventional means in ways that maintain the structures that benefit most. My goal then, in my analysis, is to divide and examine each document into sections and layers that I will examine. It is divided into two sections, and overview and a focused narrative analysis. What I am ultimately examining here is how human security end-goals are established and approached by the general national security strategies posed in each document.

First, I provide an overview of each document and a comparison of security assessments to gain a general sense of the threats, strategies proposed, and major comparisons between each document. This is done by contrasting the general tones and strategies of each NSS. Secondly, I narrow my focus onto 2 paragraphs from each personal statement in order to ‘draw out’ the meaning and gain a sense of the bias and ideology guiding each NSS. Employing, in a general sense, the ‘hermeneutical circle’ discussed in Chapter 4, I will conduct a comparative text analysis and a critical narrative analysis of the text. My goal is to critique and comment on the way that values and assumptions underline each strategy.

I approach each of these documents gently, knowing that they are imperfect artifacts that are limited in their own ways. They are documents that represent ideas and suggestions in terms that are easy to understand and in a tone that imparts a sense of authority and confidence. They are manufactured to provide a certain vision of the U.S. and its role in the world, and what most constitutes the dangers that are assumed to affect citizens and interests. Each section and threat assessment have been carefully chosen and described in such a way that assumes a normative obviousness. For or those paying attention, many of these threats align with how the popular media narrates the dangers of the world. This observation reveals how dangers are not just created by politicians but also reinforced through social and cultural modes of communication. These documents are just a small piece of this larger puzzle, yet they most poignantly represent the political expression and opinion of the U.S. executive branch. These are, in other words, *tall tales of danger and security* as narrated through the voice of the U.S. president.

Figures 1 and 2: 2015 and 2017 U.S. National Security Strategies



Part 1: Overview of the U.S. National Security Strategies

Table 2.1: Overview – Obama NSS 2015

Stats	29 pages, approximately 15,800 words long
Introduction	Emphasizes a “model of American leadership roots in the foundation of... economic and technological strength and the values of the American people” (p. 1) Lead with: Purpose, Strength, Example, with Capable partners, with All instruments of American power, with a Long-term perspective
Chapter 2	‘Security’ focuses on 8 security priorities: Strengthen national defense – Reinforce Homeland Security (both in real terms and the department) – Combat terrorism – Build capacity to prevent conflict – Prevent the spread and use of weapons of mass destruction – Confront climate change – Assure access to shared spaces – Increase global health security
Chapter 3	‘Prosperity’ discusses 5 aspects that promote these goals: Put the U.S. economy to work (increasing employment) – Advance energy security – Lead in science, technology, and innovation – Shape the global economic order – End extreme poverty
Chapter 4	‘Values’ discusses upholding certain value-sets as key to security: Live (U.S.) values – Advance equality – Support emerging democracies – Empower civil society and young leaders – Prevent mass atrocities
Chapter 5	‘International Order’ focuses on five ways to maintain global leadership and hegemony: Advancing “our rebalance to Asia and the Pacific” (p. 24) – Strengthening alliances with Europe – Seeking stability and peace in the Middle East and North Africa – Investing in Africa – Deepening economic and security relations throughout the Americas
Conclusion:	Overall, provides a “vision ... clarifies the purpose and promise of American power...it seeks to defer and defeat any adversary that threatens our national security [and allies] ... it welcomes “the peaceful rise other countries as partners to share the burdens” of peace and prosperity through collaboration with “established and emerging powers to promote shared security and defend our common humanity, even as we compete with them in economic and other realms” (p. 29)

Table 2.2: Overview – Trump NSS 2017

Stats	55 pages, approximately 22,700 words long
Introduction	Emphasizes “an America that is safe, prosperous, and free at home is an America with the strength, confidence, and will to lead abroad.” (p. 1) Lead by Protecting homeland and way of life, Promoting prosperity, Preserving peace through strength, and Advancing American influence
Pillar 1	‘Protect the American People, the Homeland, and the American Way of Life,’ Defend against WMD’s – Combat biothreats and pandemics – Strengthen border and immigration – Defeat jihadist terrorists – Dismantle criminal organizations – Cybersecurity – Build resilience
Pillar 2	‘Promote American Prosperity’ Rejuvenate domestic economy – Promote free, fair, reciprocal economic relationships – Lead in research and technology – Promote national security innovation (weapons) – Energy dominance
Pillar 3	‘Preserve Peace Through Strength’ Competitive Diplomacy – Rebuild Military, Defenses, Nuclear, Space, Cyber, Intel
Pillar 4	‘Advance American Influence’ Encourage aspiring partners – Improve standing in multi-lateral forums (UN, NATO, IMF, WTO) – Champion American values (dignity of individuals, empower “women and youth” (p. 40), reduce human suffering)
Regional Strategy	‘The Strategy in Regional Context’ focuses on six different regions with specific strategy Indo-Pacific – Europe – Middle East – South/Central Asia – Western Hem. – Africa
Conclusion	Overall, provides a “strategic directions for the U.S... guided by principled realism... in acknowledges the central role of power... affirms sovereignty... advancing [U.S.] principles spreads peace and prosperity.” (p. 55)

Discussion of Overviews

There are many similarities between each document in tone, value-assumptions, and overall strategies. Each emphasizes global leadership, prosperity, international order, U.S. influence, and homeland security to be primary elements of a strong security strategy. This train

of thought links domestic wellbeing and tranquility to positive outcomes in overall security goals, and so each stand firmly within the limits of these boundaries. Each NSS establishes the U.S. as the dominant source of global leadership and considers strong homeland security and border control, principal market and economic influence, technology, and sovereignty to be key elements in the overall goals of U.S. global politics.

The next table provides an overview of the defense priorities and primary strategies proposed in each document. The defense priorities include much overlap between each NSS, yet the way they are framed and ranked by order of importance vary. Each NSS places heavy emphasis on the protection of borders and on bolstering military capacities.

Table 2.3: Comparative Overview of Security Assessments

	2015 - Obama	2017 - Trump
Stats	29 pages, approx. 15,800 words	55 pages, approx. 22,700 words
Defense Priorities <i>(By order of mention and merit of inclusion in the document as a primary security concern)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Defense • Homeland Security • Terrorism • Capacity/Prevent Conflict • WMD’s • Climate Change • Shared Spaces • Global Health Security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Borders and Territory • WMD’s • Global Health Security • Immigration • Terrorism • Transnational Crime • Competitive Diplomacy • Economy
Primary Security Strategies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthen national defense <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Military ▪ Police/Border control 2. Confront climate change 3. Assure access to shared space <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cybersecurity 4. Increase global health security 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthen borders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Border control/’wall’ ▪ Reform immigration policy 2. Rebuild military and technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cyber, space, nuclear 3. Competition and Economy 4. Energy dominance

Discussion of Security Assessments

Each NSS poses highly similar threats assessments and strategies to approach them. The major threats consist of terrorism, breaches of homeland security and border control, weapons of mass destruction (WMD's), cybercrime, global health vulnerabilities, and rogue states. The main strategies posed consist of strengthening national defenses (bolster military manpower, funding, and technology), improving homeland defense (border control, immigration reform, policing capacities), and boosting economic and technological capabilities and dominance in order to combat cybercrime and reduce poverty.

The major, crucial difference between 2015 and 2017 is the removal of climate change and environmental security as a priority by the Trump administration. In fact, the 2017 NSS signals a clear shift away from environmental security and climate policy thinking, and inserts 'energy dominance' in its place. This is troubling because it aligns with 'conservative skepticism' regarding climate change and sustainability efforts in a clear political bias that rejects science and localized knowledge of a growing global environmental crisis. This tension alone calls for a critical opening into the deeper reasons behind climate change denial and how the MIC and fossil-fuel industries manipulate political processes through financial and other influence. Drawing out the human in the NSS widens this opening.

For instance, many serious, well-researched assessments name climate change as *the* primary, existential global security concern, while others consider cybersecurity and terrorism to be most prominent (Pew, 2017; SSCI, 2017). Clearly, geo-political, eco-social, cultural, and many other factors influence findings. Recognizably, the U.S. government is distinctive from Human Rights Watch, for example, in both structure, intent, and operation. It is understandable their respective organizational perspectives lead to differing outcomes and ideas concerning how

to address security. Yet, when the ‘core’ values and overall organizational intentions are really assessed, I argue that both refer to similar ideals and notions of a ‘future human experience’ that could be achieved through the actualization of their intent. Both entities allude in their foundational concepts to certain ideals of freedom, justice, and the protection of rights.

These allusions matter because what is deemed most imminent or important by those with the power to do so receives the lion’s share of resources and energy to address. The amount spent by the U.S. to ‘combat terrorism,’ so to speak, is vast, and the efforts have led to dubious results. According to recent U.S. State Department statistics regarding the number of global terrorist attacks annually over the past fifteen years, there has been a 3,100% increase from 346 attacks in 2001 to at least 11,072 in 2016 (DOS, 2016). Domestically in the U.S., the number has risen from 4 attacks in 2001 to 61 in 2016, demonstrating a marked increase in terror attacks since the Global War on Terror began sixteen years ago.

Considering that the current defense budget is nearly \$700 billion, and that the U.S. has spent nearly \$2 trillion so far without a clear sense of achievement or even an end-goal, there is a strong imperative to ask tough questions and challenge the reasonings posed forth across all assessments that influence and impact action (Bacevich, 2017). Since lives are at stake and because the current approach is clearly flawed, a more comprehensive view of security needs to be established and core priorities questioned.

The next table differentiates the national versus human security approaches in each document based on my subjective understanding and consideration of each. For the most part, I, considering that state level efforts protect sovereignty and foreign interests whereas human level efforts strive for environmental protection, global healthcare, poverty reduction, and civil empowerment.

Table 2.4: Primary Approaches to National vs. Human Security End Goals

	2015 - Obama	2017 - Trump
National Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projecting military power • Hunting terrorists • Foreign Internal Defense/Nation-building • Environmental protections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building walls/Stem migration • Military projection • Competition economically and technologically • Punitive towards crime/terror
Human Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Addresses climate change as major security risk ○ Global health concerns ○ End poverty/Advance equality ○ Empower civil society ○ Energy sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dismantle transnational criminal organizations ○ Support biomedical research and response to pandemics ○ Promoting community and personal resilience as security

National vs. Human Security Observations

Each NSS relies strongly on expeditionary military power, enabled through vast intelligence and transnational alliances, to enact its goals. From the outset, this is antithesis to human security and especially to Critical Human Security concepts. There needs to be a great shift in resources towards planning for and practicing *peace*. For example, the U.S. defense spending increased from \$589 billion in 2015 to nearly \$639 billion dollars this year, while the Environmental Protection Agency budget, for example, declined from \$8.2 to \$5.7 billion in 2017 under the Trump budget (Bacevich, 2017a). Obviously, these organizations are vastly different from each other in scope and focus, yet a decline in environmental protection funding in a time of increasingly severe and unpredictable weather and climate occurrences doesn't make sense from any perspective. Unfortunately, the 2018 budget also greatly reduces anti-poverty, health care, and education funding (Sjursen, 2017).

Neither NSS explicitly refers to the term ‘Human Security.’ Each strategy is fairly comprehensive, yet both largely address human security outcomes in a ‘trickle-down’ manner, and consider a strong global economy, homeland security, and advances in technology to be the crucial frameworks that allow for the overall advancement of society and of individuals.

Each NSS alludes to an ‘international order’ in which the U.S. maintains its place as the world leader and major party to all global interests. This order operates according to international laws and treaties, and each NSS stresses the importance of upholding, improving, and advancing the norms of these. Both documents have much more in common than differences, with each assuming the following trajectories:

- Strong U.S.-led global economy = Peace through Financial and Material Strength
- Strong U.S.-led global military presence = Peace through Allied Martial Strength
- Strong domestic and regional security = Peace through Domestic Wellbeing
- Strong American leadership and influence in order to enact U.S. goals and to protect their interests = Peace through Hegemonic World Order

Logic of the National Security Strategy

Both documents assume the following logic: when each of these strategies are actualized, security-at-large will be achieved through the merit of their outcomes on the ground. Each NSS views international laws, human rights, and domestic tranquility as major foundations of national security (in turn leading to human security). It strives to enact peacefulness through hegemonic accordance to a largely capitalistic, democratic vision of society. Each NSS assumes that a strong economy reduces poverty and inequality while preventing conflict and increasing human dignity. While some certainly do advance through total economic gains in the U.S., the problem with this

logic is that it equates total economic growth with individual wellbeing. This is problematic because most of this wealth is being gained by relatively few individuals rather than a greater number of people. This exacerbates inequality, keeps people in poverty, and fails to reign in the predatory and exploitative practices inherent in market capitalism (Mahoney-Norris, 2011).

Both NSS assumes that U.S. leadership helps advance the spread democracy and protection of human rights, which is a direct investment in U.S. interests. In theory this sounds likely, yet the U.S. has a strong history of supporting anti-democratic politics and leaders around the world which actively undermines this intention. Unless the actions reflect these high values, this aspect of the NSS reveals the political manipulation that underlines U.S. foreign policy.

Each NSS assumes that technology is a sort of ‘savior’ that advances wellbeing across all major sectors of industry and development, which increases security in the end. In many ways, technologies of security and health can indeed provide new levels of security and wellbeing, yet there are many associated problems with the manufacturing of technology including pollution, resource exploitation, unfair labor, and unclear long-term effects of processing and manufacturing. Furthermore, many new technologies have a deep psychological and social impact on people, serving as distractions or dangers to healthy interpersonal relations and awareness of larger social impacts (Kronsell, 2014). This can be seen in the sort of growing ‘first-world’ health problems related to sedentary lifestyles, computer addiction, and anxiety disorders.

The national security approach is criticized by my Critical Human Security Framework, which consider it to be a short-tempered, hyper-masculine, instinctually-conditioned response to threat perceptions and posturing for the sake of dominance and defense. It stems from status-quo rather than inclusive, creative thinking. Violence is short-term while peace is long term: parent

response to hearing that kid got hurt by someone, immediate retaliation through violence is short-termed and exceeds CHS thresholds because they result in collateral damage and violence as primary ultimatum.

Ultimately, when it comes to security assessments and the actions stemming from them, *perspectives really matter*. Accounting for different levels of insecurity allows for broader, more nuanced approaches. Viewing security from an extensive range of levels and perspectives contributes to an overall more complete understanding that better informs any effort to reduce insecurity. However, the resources and energy allotted towards addressing different types of security issues are not equal. The ‘facts’ of security depend upon the political nature of their assessment and in the overall orientation towards approaching threats.

A more holistic perspective might lead to more informed and conscious decision-making that addresses various threats more effectively. It seems that the broader the perspective, the more nuanced and comprehensive the approach to security. Understanding threats from each perspective allows the two-pronged approach advocated by human security to actualize. For example, viewing terrorism through both a national security *and* human security lens leads down a rabbit-hole that links poverty to violence and lack of education to extremism, as well as capitalism to inequality and crime to corruption. This kind of nuanced assessment allows the military to better grasp the total situation on the ground and allows human rights organizations to better link root causes to larger global issues. National security needs to include a human security layer of assessment, and human security needs to more clearly articulate the linkages between human vulnerability and larger elements of modernity.

Part 2.: Comparative Narrative Analysis of Personal Statement

Table 2.5: Comparison of Text

	2015 - Obama	2017 - Trump
Focus on Personal Message (Opening and Closing Statements)	<p>2 pages, 1,369 words</p> <p>“Today, the United States is stronger and better positioned to seize the opportunities of a still new century and safeguard our interests against the risks of an insecure world...” (p. iii)</p> <p>“We embrace our exceptional role and responsibilities [and] the choices we make today can mean greater security and prosperity for our Nation for decades to come.” (p. iv)</p>	<p>1½ pages, 681 words</p> <p>“The American people elected me to make America great again. I promised that my Administration would put the safety, interests, and well-being of our citizens first...” (p. i)</p> <p>“We will serve the American people and uphold their right to a government that prioritizes their security, their prosperity, and their interests. This National Security Strategy puts America first.” (p. ii)</p>
Key Terms	<p>Leadership Strength Entrepreneurial Spirit Persistence Prosperity</p>	<p>Prosperity Confidence Peace Through Strength Security Individual Liberty</p>
Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living U.S. values • Advancing equality • Support emerging democracies • Empower civil society, youth leaders • Prevent mass atrocities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rule of law • Democratic style of government • Tolerance • Opportunity for all • Security and Prosperity for American people comes first
Main Perspectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lead in a changing world ○ Empower greater freedom and accountability ○ Peace through democracy and human rights / international law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reclaim U.S. dominance militarily, economically, and technologically ○ Promote prosperity ○ Peace through strength / influence

Discussion of Personal Statements

The major differences in each NSS becomes clearer when assessing the way that ideas are shaped and framed and how these relate to the values underlying them. The 2015 NSS suggests that U.S. leadership is invaluable for global security, yet only with the cooperation of other states, international bodies, and compliance with international laws, norms, and treaties. On the other hand, the ego-driven and populist sentiments that underlay Trump's political worldview come to the forefront in the 2017 NSS, where a pivot towards hegemonic and economic dominance comes into the light as major strategies to maintain order and authority.

Themes that are found in each document include a progressive sense of time that leads to a hopefulness and trust in U.S. values and strategies. Interestingly, Obama mentions the "exceptional role and responsibilities [across the world]" (p. iv) of U.S. hegemony while Trump remarks that he will put "the safety, interests, and well-being of our citizens first," (p. ii) marking two distinct trains of thought that positions the U.S. as the apex of global security, yet all in the reflexive goal of doing so in the name of U.S. security and wellbeing.

This gets to the heart of the matter in each NSS: the tone is benevolent and universal in thought and approach, making sure to mention its concern for how global processes affect the local, yet it always reveals the selfish bias and ignorance of the impacts by the U.S. on others. It fails to reflexively link the historical trajectory of colonial and imperial endeavors to the current security strategies that operate largely through the same mechanisms as these, especially in military and punitive approaches to complex and dynamic realities. It simultaneously calls for adherence to and bolstering of international laws and norms while illegally conducting Overseas Contingency Operations without either congressional approval or oversight and permission by the UN Security Council.

Other important differences between each NSS is the general orientation of their trajectories. The 2015 NSS of the Obama administration is more cooperative, diplomatic, and outwardly concerned in its strategy, relying largely on the idea that global collaboration aligned with legal and economic norms to accomplish its tasks. It regards the prevalence of corruption and criminal enterprises to be primary elements of instability and seeks to empower emerging democracies and prevent mass atrocities as primary strategies.

On the other hand, Trump's 2017 NSS is clearly more selfishly concerned with U.S. interests. Its tone reveals a competitive spirit towards other nations while remaining focused inward towards the domestic sphere. It regards the breaching of border control and flouting of law as the primary sources of danger and recommends curbing migration from specific countries (the 'Muslim ban') and seeks to empower the punitive capacities and military capabilities through technology as primary strategies to curb insecurity. Furthermore, the 2017 NSS reflects the vastly selfish and competition-based worldview of Trump and his advisors versus the more legalistic and philosophical tone of Obama and his advisors.

Focus on Key Phrases in Personal Statement

Each personal statement contains a paragraph that summarizes the most pressing security threats and then offers a paragraph with security solutions meant to address these. I've identified the two paragraphs from each document as being the most specific in their general appraisals of security threats and in their general descriptions of which strategies should be employed to address these dangers. The following key explains how various parts of the text will be compared and contrasted:

- **Words in Bold** represent a key **threat** or **danger** towards the U.S. Security Strategy
- *Words in Italic* represent primary *Strategies* that enable and justify a desired outcome
- Words that are Underlined refer to the desired outcome of the key tool or strategy

NSS 2015 – Obama

“Now, at this pivotal moment, we continue to face serious challenges to our national security, even as we are working to shape the opportunities of tomorrow. **Violent extremism** and an evolving **terrorist threat** raise a persistent risk of attacks on American and our allies. Escalating challenges to **cybersecurity**, **aggression by Russia**, the accelerating impacts of **climate change**, and the outbreak of **infectious diseases** all give rise to anxieties about global security. We must be clear-eyed about these and other challenges and recognize the United States has a unique capability to *mobilize* and *lead* the international community to meet them.” (p. iii)

“Abroad, we are demonstrating that while we will act unilaterally against threats to our core interests, we are stronger when we *mobilize* collective action. That is why we are *leading* international coalitions to confront the acute challenges posed by **aggression**, **terrorism**, and **disease**. We are leading over 60 partners in a global campaign to *degrade* and ultimately *defeat* [ISIL] in Iraq and Syria, including by working to *disrupt* the flow of foreign fighters to those countries, while *keeping pressure* on al-Qa’ida. We are *leading* a global effort to *stop* the deadly spread of the Ebola virus at its source. In lockstep with our European allies, we are *enforcing* tough sanctions on Russia to impose costs and deter future aggression.” (p. iv)

- Poses that strength and safety will be achieved by deterring aggression (of other states or entities) through, again, mobilized cooperation and U.S. leadership, to eradicate the

primary threats of terrorism, aggression (code word for ‘world-order’ threats posed by Russia, China, India, and Iran), and health pandemics.

- Proposes that a process of international mobilization, led by the U.S., will obtain the ‘opportunities of tomorrow’ by eradicating extremism, terrorism, cyberthreats, regime threats, climate change impacts, and potential pandemics.

NSS 2017 – Trump

“The United States faces an extraordinarily dangerous world, filled with a wide range of threats that have intensified in recent years. When I came into office, **rogue regimes** were developing nuclear weapons and missiles to threaten the entire planet. **Radical Islamist terror** groups were flourishing. **Terrorists** had taken control of vast swaths of the Middle East. **Rival powers** were aggressively undermining American interests around the globe. At home, **porous borders** and **unenforced immigration laws** had created a host of vulnerabilities. **Criminal cartels** were bringing **drugs** and danger into our communities. **Unfair trade practices** had weakened our economy and exported our jobs overseas. **Unfair burden-sharing** with our allies and inadequate investment in our own defense had invited danger from those who wish us harm. Too many Americans had **lost trust** in our government, faith in our future, and confidence in our values.”

(p. i)

“We are *rallying* the world against the **rogue regime** in North Korea and *confronting* the danger posed by the **dictatorship in Iran**, which those determined to pursue a **flawed nuclear deal** had neglected. We have *renewed* our friendships in the Middle East and *partnered* with regional leaders to help drive out terrorists and extremists, cut off their financing, and discredit their

wicked ideology. We crushed Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorists on the battlefields of Syria and Iraq and will continue *pursuing* them until they are destroyed. America's allies are now *contributing* more to our common defense, strengthening even our strongest alliances. We have also continued to make clear that the United States will *no longer tolerate* **economic aggression** or **unfair trading practices**.” (p. ii)

- Poses that lost faith in U.S. and global governments rest at the heart of insecurity, assumes that past administrations allowed this to happen through weakness or ineptitude, and that ‘unfair trade practices’ are responsible for power lost and control gained by rogue or terror groups who flout the presume authority of the U.S.
- Proposes that by rallying against and confronting challenges collectively (led by the U.S. of course), rejecting the ‘flawed’ Iran nuclear deal framework, and bolstering trade and economic dominance, security will be achieved.

Discussion of Key Phrases

2015 NSS terms for primary dangers: Violent extremism, terrorist threat, cybersecurity, aggression by Russia, climate change, and infectious diseases (6 major threats alluded to).

2017 NSS terms for primary dangers: Rogue regimes, terrorism, rival powers, porous borders, unenforced immigration, unfair trade/burden-sharing, lost faith in government, and flawed nuclear deal (8 major threats alluded to).

The Obama NSS assumes a primary faith in the institutions and values of the U.S. government, and considers cooperation and technological progression to be key elements in actualizing security goals. His usage of phrases such as “opportunities of tomorrow,” “escalating challenges,” and “accelerating impacts,” (p. i-ii), impart a sense of progression and hopefulness.

He uses the term ‘leadership’ in various ways to organize his central idea that the U.S. is and should be a leader in all these efforts, even if it means being involved in issues far from U.S. soil.

The Trump NSS, in contrast, imparts a sense of broken or corrupt institutions and alliances that have led to the current insecurities he addresses. His sense of urgency is related less to a hopefulness in prevail American values and more to the idea that ‘unfair’ practices and ‘lost trust’ in U.S. values and leadership have led to security risks. He also considers the breach of borders by undocumented people, the economic growth of ‘rival powers,’ and ‘flawed’ deals with ‘dictatorships’ and ‘rogue regimes’ to be primary threats that relate to distrust in public institutions and corruption.

Each statement contains fundamental elements of narrative (beginning, content, conclusion) and the tone they adopt is meant to convince and impart a normative sense of confidence in the assessments and solutions posed. These elements are 1) Sense of Time, 2) Sense of Urgency, 3) Obvious Strategy, and 4) Stipulations. Each element is meant to set the scene, impart a feeling of urgency, present the ‘obvious’ solution, and mark stipulations or disclaimers, giving each strategy a threshold that sets boundaries and controls how implementations are guided. Terms such as ‘pivotal moment,’ ‘extraordinarily dangerous,’ ‘escalating challenges,’ and aggressively undermining’ implant a tone of seriousness, imminence, and caution to them and motivate a distinct feeling of unease, that something needs to be done, and that what they propose is best.

Overall, each personal statement concisely uses these highlighted phrases to establish a normative sense of time, place, and value assumptions that make their security recommendations obvious. By painting a stark reality, adding in a dose of U.S. leadership-based assumptions, and critiquing the mistakes of other efforts or aspects, each NSS does well to utilize the power of

words in a way that makes their strategies seem obvious and well-thought-out. The next table highlights ways that these phrases and words are used to shape a sense of time, urgency, obviousness, and what the stipulations of security are that allow them to be considered.

Table 2.6: *Critical Phrases that Narrate the “Self-Obviousness” of each Strategy*

	2015 - Obama	2017 - Trump
Sense of Time	“Now, at this pivotal moment, we continue to face serious challenges...”	“[the U.S.] faces an extraordinarily dangerous world, filled with... threats that have intensified in recent years”
Sense of Urgency	“Escalating challenges... accelerating impacts... give rise to anxieties about global security...”	“[rogue regimes] threaten the entire planet... aggressively undermining American interests... [creating] a host of vulnerabilities”
Obvious Strategy	“[the U.S.] has a unique capacity to mobilize and lead the international community...”	“Rallying the world... confronting the danger... renewed friendships... partnered with regional leaders...”
Stipulations	“[the U.S.] will act unilaterally against threats to our core interests...”	“[the U.S.] will no longer tolerate... aggression or unfair trading practices...”

The sense of time in each statement seeks to establish a feeling of urgency. With the Obama NSS, he looks forward in time more than Trump, who actually alludes to the past by blaming failures of recent administrations and ‘flawed’ deals as the causes of current insecurities. Obama acknowledges these, yet his tone is more hopeful and forgiving, allowing for the emergence of new ideas and alliances. Trump paints a picture that the world is up in fire, that we can barely think about tomorrow since today poses so many problems. He favors acting *now* in

ways that authoritatively, militarily, and punitively respond to very surface analyses of threats, and seems less concerned with imaging the future than Obama.

The sense of urgency and seriousness implanted goes on to convince the reader of the logic of the strategy, making it hard to think past the solutions in a critical way. Obviously, if there are ‘intensified’ threats, ‘accelerating impacts,’ and ‘a host of vulnerabilities’ to address, the stakes are high indeed already, and call for an emergency use of all available tools. Since the abilities of the military and police are oriented towards quick reactions, overwhelming might, and use of force to curb threats, it seems like the obvious strategy to use these as primary solutions.

Obvious strategies rely on the leadership of the U.S. in both documents. Obama favors cooperation and alliances to reduce conflict and is cautious in the way he phrases this intention. By ‘mobilizing’ and ‘deterring,’ he seeks out cooperation as a security mechanism. Trump also views leadership as essential, yet more selectively and from an obviously more competitive business-like sense of leading. He proposes that ‘renewed friendships’ with regional leaders take precedence over extending vulnerable hands of trust to those he views as competitors, or even worse, as enemies by way of rejecting the values he claims that ‘make America great.’

However, knowing that these kinds of solutions rarely lead towards the kind of security and social outcomes alluded to here make the oozing confidence in each NSS it hard to bite (Newman, 2016). This analysis gets to the core of the problem with security narratives: it’s not that these threats don’t represent truly serious dangers that do need to be urgently addressed, it’s that the solutions posed are don’t really do the job even though they are framed in a way that convinces the reader of their merit.

Table 2.7: Narrative Analysis of Personal Statements

	2015 - Obama	2017 - Trump
Tone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assumes position of Global Leadership • Acknowledges difficulties in enacting prior efforts • Imparts a sense of urgency with a nod towards long-term effects • Acknowledges need for international cooperation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blames past policies on current failures • Blames foreign sovereign powers for current security problems • Acknowledges lack of faith in U.S. leadership • Calls for fair partnerships based on fair treaties and burden-sharing
Storytelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Measured, uses ‘common’ phrases and values to emphasize U.S. unity and global dominance ○ Strives to ‘be inclusive’ of U.S. diversity and range of political beliefs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aims to ‘sound alarm’ of past incompetency and disrespect towards U.S. ○ Strives to ‘reassure’ American people of new leadership style and approach
Fabula (content)	<p>Strives to make American values obvious as measures of security: freedom, democracy, human dignity</p> <p>Imparts sense of ‘ongoing’ and ‘deepening’ of alliances as crucial</p>	<p>Strives to make American power and global hegemony obvious and ‘natural’</p> <p>Imparts sense of ‘renewed’ commitment to ‘fair’ domestic and global alliances and treaties as crucial</p>
Assumed Referents of Security	<p>Links national and global security alliances to individual wellbeing</p> <p>Leadership + Alliances = Security</p> <p>Global Security = Strong Nation</p>	<p>Links strong U.S. military, economy, and homeland to individual wellbeing</p> <p>Economy + Military + Borders = Security</p> <p>Secure Nation = Prosperous Nation</p>

Surface Analysis of Statements

A surface analysis in narrative inquiry seeks to establish a primary ‘sense’ of the tone, intention, and objective of the document. This allows the researcher to gauge and comment on the obvious intentions of the document, which can then be contrasted with a deeper analysis of the meaning behind it (Etherington, 2011). Human Security has much to critique about each NSS and the way they discuss threats and solutions, but to be fair there is actually much to praise in the wording and logic. It’s easy to get caught up in the negative analysis of critical research, especially with a document that is entangled with personal bias. A broad view situates both general strategies and the worldviews underlying them within a modern American framework. This viewpoint genuinely believes in the concepts of freedom, justice, democracy, rule of law, economic competition, and human rights and seeks to remedy genuine problems with these as guiding principles and goals— at least in theory and attitude. The problem lies in actually evaluating how these terms and concepts are actualized in the outcomes of the strategy.

In many ways each document presents a fairly developed, comprehensive, and value-driven perspective that plainly and sincerely presents a narrative of worldly dangers that is easy to follow and agree with logically. This worldview also believes that the wellbeing of the human individual is the ultimate goal of security, yet from a national security perspective, obviously. It views the human as a ‘homogenous citizen.’ The NSS is tasked with operating on the national security level, and so the perspective it assumes tends to reflect this vast and serious position. The world is dealing with major dangers and insecurities, and so the strategies proposed account for different kinds of impacts that could affect an entity as large as a nation.

The tone of each NSS assumes U.S. global leadership, acknowledges vast challenges, difficulties of implementing security policies, and lack of faith in both U.S. and global processes,

imparts a sense of urgency, calls for renewed commitments and partnerships, and blames others for the dangers and threats discussed.

Each NSS engages in storytelling by painting the picture, divulging the details, and giving a solution to each topic mentioned. This is done through a method of measured rhetoric that assumes a confidence in the seriousness of the task at hand and a faith in the ability of the U.S government and people to carry out the solutions for their own good.

The fabula of each NSS encompasses very established assumptions of values such as freedom, democracy, liberty, peace, cooperation, and power. The Obama NSS emphasizes the assumption that global cooperation and rule of law are the thresholds from which our foreign policy and security practices must align to and imparts the sense that an ‘ongoing deepening’ of global alliances will allow the U.S. security strategy to prevail. The Trump NSS strives to establish the sense that U.S. leadership is *the* indispensable key to global security and that by aligning with U.S. values as the global hegemon, our own and our allies’ security goals will be achieved as a matter of fact. His use of terms such as ‘renewed’ commitment and ‘fair’ alliances allude to a post-WWII era in which the dominant politics of the U.S. were understood in relation to the aftermath of the conflict.

Both statements assume certain referents of security that allow the logic of their strategies to seem apparent. For Obama, leadership plus alliances lead to security, and global security leads to a strong domestic level of safety and wellbeing. For Trump, he focuses more on securing borders, bolstering the military, and ‘reestablishing’ U.S. economic dominance as primary tools in the strategy, leading to a secure and prosperous nation. The next table examines the human in the heart of each strategy.

Table 2.8: Critical Narrative Analysis of the NSS – Where’s the Human in the Strategy?

	2015 - Obama	2017 - Trump
Value Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. Leadership acts in best interest of world + nation, but makes mistakes to be remedied • Operates in name of transcendent values i.e. freedom, democracy, rule of law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Past poor leadership led to current major security threats, but will now be remedied under Trump • Operates in name of U.S. values that are to be exported and implemented through influence and dominance
Logic of Strategy	Global Military Alliances + Economy + Rule of Law + Human Rights = <i>Social and Individual wellbeing and safety through cooperation</i>	Economy + Military + Technology + Immigration/Border Control = <i>Community and Individual access to security through relative prosperity</i>
Assumed Human Security Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assumes military dominance and rule of law leads to safer society • Assumes economic prosperity and inclusive diversity lead to rights-based, actualized society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assumes border security and domestic economic prosperity leads to safer society • Assumes military might, fair global trade agreements, and respect for sovereignty lead to law-abiding, healthy, tech-savvy society
Critical Analysis	<p>Doesn’t link U.S. military policy to exacerbating and increasing global tensions (especially in the Middle East and Latin America)</p> <p>Fails to self-criticize illegal/dubious interventions (Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Somalia, etc.) as conflict spillover</p> <p>Praises economy and technology yet fails to address inequality / pollution</p> <p>*Fails to link poverty + foreign interventions with crime / terrorism</p>	<p>Quick to criticize past policy and practice yet recommends nearly exact same formula for security strategy</p> <p>‘Trumpism’ is obvious as self-bolstering rather than reassured assessments or creative innovations that remedy critiques</p> <p>Equates economic prosperity with domestic wellbeing but doesn’t mention effects of inequality or corruption</p> <p>*Doesn’t mention Climate Change *Fails to link inequality + immigration</p>

Deep Critical Analysis

A deep critical analysis dives beneath the surface and strives to consider and analyze the meaning behind the words and phrases chosen, as well as the meaning behind what the document poses in its *fabula*. It can do this by focusing on the words themselves (as carefully selected or chosen to impart a sensation or tone), on phrases (strung together in a certain order or fashion to impart a sensation of meaning or intention), and on the overall tense (usage of vocabulary, inclusion of acronyms, slang, culturally significant catch words, or loaded language) (Etherington, 2011; Wibben, 2011). This deep critical analysis focuses mostly on the content and logic of the strategies posed in the NSS and works to relate them to the knowledge I have gained through my study of security policies and their outcomes.

National security strategies often differ from human security concerns because they are expeditionary and militaristic in nature, whereas HS is more compassionate, peaceful, and defensive in nature. This is a crucial difference between national and human security approaches discussed so far. Judging the NSS through a human security or human rights lens alone is just as narrow as how national security too often fails to account for the real causes of the threats to the state that need to be accounted for through their perspective.

Despite the ‘high-mindedness’ and seemingly benevolent tone and intention of the NSS, a simple survey of the impacts of U.S. security strategy makes it hard to bite. The tone of each document makes each security assessment and strategy posed sound ‘obvious’ and clear-eyed. Yet each fail to link the effects and outcomes of the U.S. foreign policy to tumultuous and dubious outcomes that exacerbate the very threats named.

The seemingly ‘paranoid’ shift in perspective towards immigration exemplified by the Trump 2017 NSS might feel like a new downturn towards xenophobic and prejudicial views of

immigration... yet in practice, Obama, the Democrats, and the 'left' have been onboard the anti-migration train for many years. The U.S.-Mexico border has been increasingly militarized over the past decades in the spirit of trying to stop drugs and criminals from crossing. Yet in reality, most drugs and trafficked 'goods' enter the U.S. through shipping ports (Sjursen, 2017). Most of the people crossing the border 'illegally' are often fleeing true horrors, more recently from Central America, where the legacies and impacts of U.S. foreign policy have had direct impacts on the security and wellbeing of people in the region. Further, Central American is becoming a hotspot for Climate Change impacts, further exacerbating already dire social problems including violence and lack of access to basic needs (Mead, 2015).

The NSS operates within a neorealist vision of anarchic world powers vying for leverage yet fails to account for the deep complexities and power differentials that operate and effect world affairs daily on sub-national levels. It fails to reconcile important facts about American militarism wrong awry—

- That the U.S. military is expeditionary rather than defensive and therefore actively aggravating
- That despite possessing the most well-funded and technologically advanced military, it continually fails to accomplish its proposed aims, and despite these failures continues pursuing the status-quo
- That the 'empire' of overseas military bases increases tensions between host populations and regional interests and autonomy
- That the U.S. congress has abdicated their supposedly meticulous ability to debate and discuss any use of force within norms and bounds on international treaties.

- That drones strike ‘assassination’ missions fail to account for civilian casualties, are counter to international laws, rules, and norms, and lack any real congressional or public oversight

The NSS fails to recognize terrorism as a political tactic rather than an actual set of people or places to be engaged with on the battlefield. The GWOT has proven its own self-ignorance in disgusting ways while the term ‘terrorism’ has become a concealed catch-term referring to a demographic perception rather than a label for an action. The different ways that domestic terrorism (especially by white, American males) differs in popular and political perception from international terrorism (brown, Muslim men) highlights the hypocrisy of the ‘Global War’ on something—a tactic often born from the depths of powerlessness, marginalization, ignorance, corruption, and manipulation— that has roots in much deeper socio-cultural-economic and political realities.

Each NSS fails to adequately and self-reflectively address the mistakes made by the U.S. in the pursuit of ‘terrorists’ that have led to mass civilian casualties, infrastructural damage, environmental pollution, geo-political instability, proxy conflicts, conflict spillover, and other impacts from the martial pursuit of security through military means. Iraq and Afghanistan offer two of the most poignant examples of the mass atrocities committed when reactionary, militaristic solutions are considered without a clear understanding or strategy that accounts for actual realities on the ground. My own experiences in Afghanistan opened my eyes to the vast depths of socio-cultural, historical, and political ignorance that inform the military. Now, seventeen years after entering Afghanistan (longer than the Civil War and both World Wars combined (Bacevich, 2017b) to ‘pursue’ terrorism to its source, the results speak for themselves.

Each NSS fails to link the historical forces of colonialism in the U.S. to the imperial expeditionary role that now underlines the security worldview it adopts. Without clearly

connecting the dots between the genocide of indigenous people, the legacy of slavery and oppression, and the deep inequalities and class prejudices in America to the high levels of volatility around the world, the status-quo will continue to rule (Street, 2018).

Each NSS over-evaluates the actual threat of terrorist attacks while failing to contemplate what actually kills people in mass numbers each year: gun violence, car accidents, heart disease, and drug overdose. This is where human security concepts need to insert themselves and expand the concern of national security to what is actually causing the most harm to Americans. Further, a critical human security perspective links the forces behind the gun culture, the cult of oil and automobiles, and how the War on Drugs has failed to reduce drug abuse while actually allowing the increase of illicit markets (Arte, 2016).

A critical human security analysis critiques the foundational social mythologies and assumptions that guide these phenomena by shouting out how the gun industry and their investors profit from destruction; that we already possess ‘renewable’ technologies that reduce the need for oil (and all that comes with its pursuit); and that people use drugs not due to shoddy moral or ethical reasons but because the deep inequalities, disempowerment, lack of hope or health, and other pains give good reason to want to find some kind of escape or excitement.

The NSS is intimately linked with the military-industrial-complex and is guided by the market logic that equates more arms + armies + technologies of death = security and peace. The reality is that the U.S. economy and the very foundations of the modern world order are intimately linked to the industries that profit from death and destruction. Thousands of people are employed in these industries and all their peripheries, and powerful investors are those that control how they evolve and interact with emerging realities. Both NSS assumes military-economic-legal precedence as the measures of might and power without accounting for all the

other crucial civil society and non-state actors and procedures that enable global processes to occur— much of them in peaceful and cooperative ways.

Each NSS differs in perspective according to their respective political vantage point. When these are compared and contrasted, new avenues for multi-level approaches emerge because it is easier to see how various approaches provide overlapping measure of security efforts. Foundational human security concepts such as freedom from want, freedom from fear, and freedom from indignity can and should inform each level of security, including national security, by making it a national security priority to uphold human rights— especially during military action. This *must* be viewed as the primary lens from which to evaluate military responses in the planning and execution phases. Any other perspective leads to furthering violence and inequality.

While the ranking of threats differs between the reports, they overlap on many levels and are in some ways reciprocal, meaning that insecurity on the opposite end of each approach (national vs. human) reciprocates the insecurity, rippling through society. Yet there are obviously very different ways of assessing threats and where they stem from. Highlighting these different perspectives enables a critical pause and allows a reconsideration of the meaning behind them.

Threat rankings reflect the position and perspective of those doing the assessment. For instance, the NSS is tasked with providing national security strategies to combat threats on that level, whereas the UN, for example, focuses on upholding and promoting individual human rights and what impacts these. Necessarily, these perspectives will assess the greatest threats in relation to their responsibilities and imperatives, and they will lead to different approaches.

Various levels of bias, ideology, and political influence impact assessments of what constitutes the greatest security threat. The NSS is incentivized to view security through a

militarized lens because that is their orientation and imperative towards addressing threats. They are the tools at hand and at the whim of the political landscape, which reflects certain ideologies. Political realities influence practices and determine how these tools are used and, importantly, restrained. Human rights organizations and development interests, on the other hand, reveal other biases, perhaps by considering human and environmental insecurity as primary and grave security risks demanding the same level of interest and investment as national security.

Ultimately, elements of bias and ideology need to be examined because they are not all equal in outcomes. Those viewpoints and approaches that best account for human and environmental rights are often those that take the longer, deeper view, especially those that view positive social transformation and the upholding transcendent values and fundamental rights as the key to practicing truly effective security.

Power differentials play a huge role in risk assessment when it comes to developing a security strategy. The scope of security for an individual extends from themselves to their surrounding environment, and the general goal is safety and wellbeing. In contrast, for the NSS the scope of security extends much further in space and time and the end goals are different. The reports then differ in scope and end-goal, and so do the lenses through which insecurity is calculated and linked to larger phenomena. In other words, assessments will vary in relation to the starting position and scope of responsibility.

Enacting 'peace' is long-term, requires much more nuanced and complex assessments to comprehend all the variety of deep causes of insecurity and the proper responses, yet needs to be actually operational within confines of a real social boundaries i.e. the political. Aligning with human security values a CHS approach in terms of broadness and precision is challenging for national security approaches because they are linked to more short-term and militarized solutions

that ‘stop-gap’ the problem rather than directly addressing the root causes. While CHS operates more consciously as an emancipatory practice in terms of seeking to alleviate unnecessary, human-caused suffering as a result of political will, this level of deeper analysis is difficult to operationalize because the terminology remains vague.

The strategies posed in the NSS enable a relative level of security as a matter of standard operating procedure through the dominant means available, rather than as an ideal or theory to be pondered. Yet, an initial way to integrate the theoretical contributions of CHS to dominant security perspectives is by acknowledging what is at stake politically, and to challenge the assumptions of security narratives as simply natural or normative.

What the National Security-dominant perspectives miss: Climate change exacerbates and transcends all other insecurities in scope and impact yet receives much less attention than what is called for by the most acute and comprehensive assessments. These strategies do not explicitly link poverty and social inequality to the larger forces of insecurity— yet I am also aware that this is not their intention. They rely on international economic treaties, competitive diplomacy, and mostly realist notions of maintaining the ‘world order’ as the primary keys to reducing insecurity yet miss many of the root causes.

What the Human Security-dominant perspectives miss: Human rights and human security violations are related to larger corruption of the international political and economic hegemonies that guide the overall ‘security’ strategies. By not complying with or enforcing established international laws, state actors make it hard to enact true human security principles. These strategies need to address this link and provide suggestions on how to bolster accountability.

Why Words Matter (and How They Don't)

What this critical narrative analysis and application of the CHSF has demonstrated is that, while likely well-intentioned and high-minded, each NSS largely fails to analyze global threats comprehensively or pose strategies that disrupt many of the destructive practices that enable insecurity. By relying upon traditional military solutions to address complex problems, each NSS fails to account for the ongoing lived experiences and feedback stemming from nearly two decades at 'war with terror.' What the CHS framework demonstrates is that the NSS fails on many fronts regarding the Critical Humanistic and Critical Humanitarian principles that reject violence, despite many fancy words that would suggest a human concern.

Furthermore, each NSS entrusts deeper social change to occur through economic systems that are exploitative and within the boundaries of hegemonic policies and practices that perpetuate inequality. Each pay plenty of lip service to the truly grand values that supposedly underline the total political and social orientations, yet again a simple survey of the deeply historical and pervasive social inequities in the U.S. cast doubt upon the ability for the U.S. to promote positive change in other places amidst such imbalance at home. In the NSS, words matter—yet they get away with murder by appealing to high-minded values without real critical analysis guiding them.

For example, military action is often taken in the name of collective security, yet there are many collateral impacts that undermine the guiding values of the military endeavor. Bombing hospitals, shooting civilians, motivating terrorists, losing troops, and destroying infrastructure are all ongoing results of current national security practices. These are all, of course, considered to be rare breaches of otherwise lawful or at least 'proper' conduct. Yet to those that are impacted violently by these security practices, it does not matter, nor should it. These are violations of

human rights and international humanitarian law, period. There has to be an invigorated inquiry into policies that put peace first and foremost. Otherwise, the entire security projects fail from the get go in the contingencies they pose so readily. I suggest we start by invigorating a new governmental entity that works to enable peace as hard as we work to enable warfighting— as some have said, a ‘department of peace.’

A Critical Human Security Framework approach needs to go beyond ‘just’ courageously and consciously working to dissect and examine the depths of global interconnectedness and the fallacies of ‘the modern liberal faith in the neoliberal state institution as the primary protector and guardian of human rights and wellbeing.’ It needs to understand itself as *a political agent* that is capable of ‘doing’ something too as a primary motivator (Wibben, 2016). A critical approach regards the “de-essentializing and deconstructing prevailing claims about security” as crucial in helping to construct and erect new understandings and practices of security (Newman, 2010, p. 86). This can be done by writing stories that are more *honest* and nuanced rather than stories that obscure the reality, offer empty rhetoric, or worse— operate as propaganda to coerce and manipulate people who rely on them to understand broad, important things.

Finally, CHS implements a *constructivist* angle that views social reality as a creation of the human mind and considers narrative to be an act of manufacturing that actively shapes how people experience and view reality. By shedding light on the power of narratives in shaping these realities, CHS can ‘grade’ them on their objective verifiability, their quality of perception, and in their potential actionable outcomes if implemented into practice. It does this to move beyond the vagueness and trepidations posed by Critical Human Security scholars and seeks to operationalize CHS concepts into narrative inquiry. While I have yet to develop this framework and theoretical guideline further in this thesis, the following table provides an idea of how each

document analysis can be applied to the CHSF in order to evaluate it and to pinpoint openings into important aspects of each strategy document.

Table 2.9: Critical Humanitarian Security Framework and the NSS

	NSS 2015	NSS 2017
Insecuritization	Violence profits: Reliance on Military and Defense strategies that correspond to MIC and economic factors. Incentivizes militaristic solutions. Illegal use of force.	Violence profits: Reliance on MIC, intelligence (surveillance), and policing as key while bolstering arms trade. Illegal use of force.
Best Outcomes	Restricts wellbeing due to reliance on MIC, economic hegemony, status-quo diplomacy. Fails to link social inequalities to larger state projects.	Restricts due to bolstered MIC, economic hegemony, and status-quo U.S. leadership strategies. Fails to link climate change with energy dominance and migration to conflict.
Worst Impact	Clear potential for civilian and collateral damage in primary military use of force, drones, arms trade, supporting corrupt foreign leaders.	Clear potential for civilian and collateral damage in military use of force, criminalizing migrants, increasing economic inequality.
Time-Scale	Unclear time-frames and vague notion of future goals, links economic security to quarterly profits and corporate power. Fails to provide clear scale for meeting strategy goals.	Unclear time-frames and vague notion of future goals, links economic security to quarterly profits and corporate power. Fails to provide clear scale for meeting strategy goals
Political Light	Closed, <i>du jour</i> politics and partisanship restrict reform and bolsters ‘double-downing’ on ideology and partisan infighting.	Closed, at will of <i>du jour</i> politics and partisanship, while inserting populist sentiment and factual ignorance to bolster partisan claims and efforts.

Chapter 6

Conclusion and Vision

Calling out Deficiencies

Ultimately, each NSS was mostly similar in overall tone and intention, and the strategies really haven't changed over the course of the two terms they represent. The overall U.S. focus on military strength and prioritizing competition above or at least equal to intentional cooperation is troubling, and I wish there was more of a mention of the ill effects these have had on U.S and global society. Yet, I am also not naïve about the realities which have shown only a very slight tendency for real paradigmatic change to occur on such a high level of governance, especially in this age of such disinformation and general ignorance about global affairs in the U.S.— and especially when the structure is so ingrained and profitable in so many ways for such powerful interests. The status quo is the predictable median in society that gently guides the hand of history and rarely heeds the alarm bells of critique— until doing so is incentivized, it seems.

Applying Critical Human Security concepts to the National Security Strategy is easy in theory and difficult in practice, simply because the institutions and processes through which security practices are developed and enabled are highly bureaucratic and deeply embedded in power relations and differentials that are robustly defended and protected against by interests who wouldn't benefit from this approach. The foundations of modern, capitalistic society are too embedded with the industries of destruction to allow such an overhaul without a fight.

As many other critical scholars have pointed out, there needs to be more than theorizing— there needs to be a fundamental change within security practices overall. This process certainly needs to be energized by the work of critical scholarship, yet “content (policy and practice) needs to happen... [because] the broader security narratives remain largely

constant” (Wibben, personal communication, May 3, 2018). In other words, policy changes need to ensure that practices reflect the laws and norms that have been established to protect people. From a critical scholars point-of-view, this process is begun by challenging the very logic and assumptions inherent to the dominant security paradigms that have been so deeply embedded in nearly all sectors of society and industry.

In reality, governments are filled with humans, most of whom have extremely limited and highly compartmentalized roles and limits to their power. To make matters worse, the figurehead in the U.S. that many look to for answers or reassurance (unconsciously conditioned) is surrounded by so many salacious controversies and incompetency’s that many efforts to effect positive change are hampered by the ‘stupidity of the total situation’ (my words). Still, with this in mind, it is the task of all those and anyone who has an interest or imperative to examine, evaluate, critically consider, and imagine new ways of being and doing security in ways that account for the modern complexities and nuances of life.

Security Policy Insights and Policy Proposals

A Critical Human Security approach, in my personal and professional regard, suggests the following as crucial insights and proposals for refining the U.S. and global approach to security on all levels:

Policymakers and practitioners need to incorporate and include a much broader, deeper, and way more nuanced framework in security assessments at all levels, implement integral approaches to state security (especially the military and diplomatic arms of government), and refocus the entire trajectory of security towards reducing daily human insecurities and abiding by legal agreements (especially those protecting human and civil rights).

Differing perspectives towards security matter in assessments because security is a key issue facing leaders at all levels of society now, from schools and shopping malls fearing mass shooters to internet users and online bankers who are at risk of cyber-fraud and identity theft. Our security approaches and practices affect outcomes on real people, so any practice that may cause collateral harm or contribute to insecurity in another realm needs to be evaluated. With this said, I'm also very cautious about recommending that more 'things' be labeled as security concerns, since as discussed, this tends to throw it into the securitization process that inevitably bolsters military and policing resolutions to problems.

Words and their assumptions about security need to matter because they are what narrate certain visions of reality that help convince people about how to think about and feel towards certain phenomena. This is a very generalized assessment and an obvious statement, but it is meant to illuminate how this reality is playing out currently in world affairs. Many leaders and those in power are demonstrating a lack of respect for many of the landmark treaties and international agreements that evolved in response to very dire experiences of world war.

Upholding human rights and the Geneva conventions should become the absolute guiding centerpiece of the American and international military code-of-conduct, fully accountable to international laws with automatic consequences upon their breach. Updating human rights and humanitarian law is an ongoing process that needs to continually seek feedback and develop creative solutions in real-time.

CHS suggests for politicians and security narratives to 'start meaning what you say and start doing what your values really require.' The U.S. and allies cannot claim moral superiority when a regular outcome of their security strategy leads to collateral damage, civilian casualties, and other human rights abuses.

Those who enact the military strategies and those who are confronted by the gun barrels of the U.S. military both pay a huge personal toll that was not linked to national security or mentioned by either president in their remarks. Having a standing army that is intimately connected to the Military-Industrial-Complex means that this will be a *go-to* often and with much gusto. This needs to be deeply questioned, and ways to *de*-incentivize violence need to be engaged by scholars and practitioners on all levels.

A Critical Human Security Framework Rejects Militarism

CHS strongly critiques the fact that in the U.S., the military machine relies on the voluntary participation of servicemembers, many of whom join because of the robust socio-cultural influences of militarism in society and because of socio-economic reasons (enlisting is often the best overall employment opportunity for many and has traditionally been a tool of class exploitation). Yet, the strong effects of militarism on a personal level coupled with dubious expeditionary outcomes of recent U.S. military operations have led to a Pandora's box of problems (and well-defined insecurities) that receive very little public attention or interest:

- High rates of Post-Traumatic Stress, which may lead to a chronic disorder (PTSD), all of which often lead to negative personal, interpersonal, and social outcomes.
- Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), a major defining characteristic of the wounds received by many combat troops that often compound other health effects. The impersonal, random, and violently severe consequences of improvised explosive devices, land mine strikes, recoilless rifles, and other large or crew-served attacks lead to sensations of helplessness and powerlessness against the 'invisible' enemy— and deep scars.

- Moral injury, characterized by guilt and shame for participation in violent actions committed against people and places, which causes extreme dissonance between internal, personal values and the external outcomes of the events. This is especially poignant for self-reflective troops when they return to their home culture. Coming home from an ‘emergency situation’ overseas only to realize the depths of problems that exist in U.S. society is extremely demoralizing and leads to deep disillusionment.
- Transition Stress, which is being increasingly recognized as a behavioral health issue. This relates to the challenges of reintegrating veterans into a society that devalues much of the skills and conditioning they learned at a young age, fails to ritualistically or symbolically ‘welcome them home,’ and plays lip service to the true sacrifices they made. Transition from the military back into society (a society with tons of serious problems and inequalities) is especially difficult when the battles fought seem to have actually led to less global security and dubious levels of accomplishment. Self-reflective veterans are left feeling used and abused with no tangible markers in society to positively reflect the sacrifices given.
- Broken bodies and disheartened spirits, further bogging down an already troubled Veterans Administration.

Furthermore, I’ve observed an interesting reflexive social response in the U.S. (perhaps overly-careful after Vietnam to respect the troops and their sacrifices minus the strong political condemnation) that has some ways emerged into a ‘culture of trauma’ that in some ways valorizes being a ‘victim’ of combat stress. To be sure, I am 100% for the amazing attention, research, and effort to address PTSD and other factors over the past few decades and am thrilled that psychology is in some ways becoming mainstreamed into popular consciousness. Yet, I also

see a lot of smokescreens across society, whereby ‘supporting the troops’ has taken precedence over ‘opposing illegal wars.’

Americans are busy feeling guilty about Vietnam and shaking the hands of young men and women while thanking them for their service to strongly question why the military is waging global violence in the first place. They’ve been conditioned to accept the military as a natural extension of modern society that serves its task in the imperative of global safety, and for understandable reasons too, as ‘warfare’ is a living artifact that has served to unite a people and weave the threads together in the histories taught in classrooms around the world. War mythologies and representations of the ‘gloriously wounded warrior’ are perpetuated in popular media, especially in Hollywood caricatures of veterans, and the militaristic mythology that glorifies the ‘sacrifice’ of combatants on ‘the holy field of battle.’

While nothing new in human culture, this effectively directs attention away from the condemnation of politicians, policies, or practices that perpetuate war and instead shifts the concern towards a ‘veteran as victim of tough circumstances’ narrative, as though these situations were inevitable. Rather than directing blame towards the Bush and Obama administrations for their clear violations of international and humanitarian laws, for example, there is a tendency to blame the Iranians, the Russians, the ‘terrorists,’ the ‘insurgents,’ or the ‘Taliban’ for the pains and struggles that combat veterans deal with.

I say all of this out of experience, as a combat veteran who was wounded in battle and decorated for actions, and who understands the ridiculous futility of armed conflict as an effective tool to enact any real, long term security strategy, since it leaves behind nothing but losers and victims all around. I’ve seen both sides of the fence: the before-war and after-war perspectives towards life. Speaking from the heart, the realities of war are so idiotic, horrifying,

and disgusting that I cannot truthfully endorse any security strategy that enacts offensive violence as a primary tool to reduce insecurities.

Let me make my opinion clear: the U.S. government and their flawed strategies are responsible for placing these young men and women into situations that are designed to fail from the beginning. Without a clear objective, strategic understanding of geo-socio-political realities, or genuine ability to counter an ideology by offering a moral and ethical resolution, the U.S. has effectively broken the spirits and sacrificed the lives of citizens, allies, and many others by pursuing extremely brutish, narrow, boring, status-quo solutions to complex problems that are really best tackled by *addressing the root causes of the problems*. And this is what Critical Security Studies and Critical Human Security strives to do.

Finally, and most importantly, all of this leads to the fact that the worlds, stories, and grand narratives of security need to be *self-reflective, aligned with an intersectional and critical spirit of inquiry, and willing to creatively reimagine what security really means* to the people inhabiting Earth today. Humans need better stories, that tell the difficult facts and pose painful truths, and ask questions of people in places that rarely get to be heard. We need to inject a clear impetus of humanitarian compassion and a willingness to be vulnerable in the name of peace rather than posing in a false cloak of strength that divides and dictates.

There needs to be a reckoning with the political pandering and partisanship that skews values into a perverted ideology that bolsters violence, and instead energize a renewed sense of the political that aligns with truthfulness, clarity, and empirical knowledge. In 1928, the world agreed that war was so dire it needed to be outlawed. In 1948, the world proudly recognized the inherent value of the human being and enacted a new paradigm that protected the rights necessary to succeed as a social animal in a social world. In 2018, there are clearly many things

that seem opposed to these landmark events, yet I remain hopeful. The energy and intellect of those I meet from all walks of life inspire me and remind me of the deeply complex and beautiful task it is to live well and be a friend to those around me. Nevertheless, the humanitarian notion remains strongly resisted by powerful forces and structures that need to be opened and injected with creative and revolutionary vigor.

Ideas for Further Research

There needs to be a moral revolution, led by a world people's assembly, enacting a radical departure away from status-quo politics and helping to constitutionally implement explicit human rights values into law and practice. This kind of moral revolution includes and intentionally integrates deep input from the logic that Critical Human Security brings to the security 'conversation.'

The media-military-prison-industrial-complex, the banking and finance industry, and the petroleum industry all need to be reconciled with a thorough examination of their deep impacts on the health and wellbeing of global humanity via rigorous scientific and ethical analysis.

The U.S. military budget, manpower levels, and global footprint need to be considerably examined for negative impacts, eventually reduced, reoriented towards defense and emergency response priorities rather than expeditionary, and integrated into a total human-focused security strategy that promotes the transcendent peace and upholding of human rights and humanitarian law as the basic threshold for all security practices.

International treaties and agreements that deal with human rights and international and humanitarian law need to be mainstreamed, ratified, integrated, and implemented into domestic

and diplomatic practice, and most importantly continually reevaluated and holistically improved using feedback data leading to creative, progressive new solutions and crucial perspectives.

Feminist security theory and intersectional approaches to security analysis need to be mainstreamed and more clearly operationalized for use in policy and strategy development across all major sectors of society.

Within Critical Security Studies, there needs to be more cross-cultural and alternative research being made on the subjective experiences and ideas of security that can inform the dominant narratives. It would also be useful to study comparative security policies and practices around the world, and on all levels. There are many ingenious and insightful ideas that are already integrated into practices by people everywhere, and these would do well to bolster the bottom-up human security approach.

Conclusion

What I have done within the narrow limits and broad tone of this thesis is link the fundamental psychological and social striving towards group security with the words and concepts that narrate and guide the powerful interests in the modern world that practice security. I demonstrated that the tendency towards safety in numbers led to society and civilization, and that through the courses of history various ways of thinking about and ‘doing’ security have evolved and led to many of the major characteristics of modern life.

I’ve emphasized how concepts of ‘security’ are not only natural and instinctual responses to a dangerous reality but also socially constructed perspectives communicated through narratives and stories that paint the world in a certain light with the intent to shape people’s minds about what constitutes danger and how to approach it. I’ve shown how these narratives of

security are biased and influenced by factors other than clear, empirical evidence for their claims, and instead are in many ways manipulative, narrow, short-sighted, unenlightened, or stubbornly partisan. I then explained how the impact of this societal phenomenon leads to a ‘mis-assessment’ of danger and insecurity, and in the flawed pursuit of addressing them new insecurities are created while pervasive vulnerabilities experienced by everyday people around the world are overlooked.

Linking this theory of narrative to a critical analysis of the varied perspectives in security assessments, and to the very words and assumptions utilized by the U.S. national security strategy to make its case for its strategies, I’ve found that these strategies largely fail to account for the deep, historical, hidden, and utterly complicated ‘human’ aspects of society and how they need to be addressed in order to really enact the lofty goals and values proposed so boldly over the past many decades. I’ve addressed some of these discrepancies with an early development of a Critical Human Security Framework approach that seeks to dissect, critique, and pose new ways of looking at the concept of ‘security’ in relation to the policy outcome and impacts they have in reality. This undertaking is theoretical rather than operational, yet it remains that these musings might hopefully serve to broaden a scholarly conversation within Critical Security Studies on the topic as a whole.

Undoubtedly, this thesis has helped me fulfill my own need to better understand the conundrums that I see in the world. My personal biases certainly play a role in how I choose to view and analyze these documents and interpret most things, especially the political. I can almost hear the voices of each respective president narrating each document, and I can see how my own preconceptions influence my reactions towards them. Yet, in the spirit of critical inquiry, I’ve reflected on these limitations and sought to reduce their influence on the clarity with which I

have assessed each document. Overall, I have much empathy for humanity and the vastness of subjectivity and experiences throughout time and space. Understanding the real limitations that prevent humans from seeing into the future, learn from the past, and make the best decisions in the present necessitates offering an olive branch of grace towards our strange species and our weird ways.

And that is what gets to my real point. I believe it will take a future generation to adopt and enact a true human security-based approach into their society as a matter-of-fact only when the values that underlie human security are mainstreamed into society as a whole. It will take a definitive shift across all sectors of society, and we will have to find some way to incentivize the opposite of greed, corruption, and violence. I understand that it is easy find compassion for people in the theoretical and the abstract, and that real life is messy and cruel. It's easy to be a humanitarian from a distance. Yet, what Critical Security scholars and others need to examine is how these theories can be actually integrated and operationalized within the structures of society, so they are better able to protect the grander aims of Humanitarian Security. This is where curiosity and creativity need to meet and discover new ways to being and doing 'security.'

Ultimately, there will need to be a reckoning with the darkest, most vile aspects stemming from the ills of modern society, yet what has gotten humans to this point is incredible enough to feel a sense of hope that the better sides of our full capacity come to light and ignite a human revolution of *love*. I'm not afraid to suggest such a thing. And how to incorporate love into national defense and military conduct? Start building upon the foundation and set a beacon now, so the future generation will have something to stand on and gather light from. We now need to be those ancestors they will look back on and feel proud about and thank us for calling out the bull-crap in those stories we told each other.

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