

ROUTLEDGE CRITICAL SECURITY STUDIES

Securitization and the Iraq War

The rules of engagement in
world politics

Faye Donnelly



Securitization and the Iraq War

This book critiques the conceptualization of security found in mainstream and critical theoretical debates, and applies this to the empirical case of the 2003 Iraq War.

The Iraq War represents one of the most puzzling, complex, and controversial events in the post-Cold War era. The manner in which the Bush administration finally decided to hold Saddam Hussein accountable through military intervention provoked a worldwide outcry due to the narratives they constructed to justify the “pre-emptive use of force” and “enhanced interrogation techniques.”

Responding to constructivist and post-structuralist scholars’ calls for a turn to discourse, and aligning its argument with critical security studies, particularly the Copenhagen School (CS), this book conceptualizes language as a pivotal mechanism of power. Adopting a Wittgensteinian approach, it moves away from thinking about the nexus between security and language from a single action, or speech act, to a series of actions or interactions. To illustrate this new approach, the author examines two cases in particular: the UN inspectors’ finding that there was no credible evidence that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in early 2003 and the Abu Ghraib scandal in 2004. Both events show that the boundaries and relations between securitized rules and environments are not pre-given but produced in a particular language game.

This book will be of much interest to students of critical security studies, US foreign policy, and IR in general.

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For mom and dad, people I will always look up to

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Acknowledgments

This book is based on my Ph.D. Upgrading from a three-letter to a four-letter word was an exciting if somewhat daunting task. At the point of completing this project there is a definite sense of achievement on the one hand, along with the constant worry about what has been left out on the other. However, writing this book has taught me that the quest for perfection is always imperfect. Something can always be added, improved, rephrased or omitted. With this realization in mind, the arguments advanced in the pages that follow should be approached as both an end as well as a beginning point.

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Introduction

This book is about the relationship between language and security. More specifically, it explores how the language of security constitutes and constrains certain actions both when and after it is spoken and afterwards. Empirically it is argued that the language employed by the Bush administration to justify the Iraq War legitimated certain kinds of practices but not others in the name of security. This process of legitimation, in turn, had serious implications for setting the rules of engagement and play both inside this particular context as well as outside it in other settings.

The ambition to explore these issues requires consideration of two deeper theoretical themes. Our first goal is to open up and reflect upon the linguistic paradox.

How is language a constitutive yet constraining device?

This book sheds light on this question by conceptualizing language as a form of action and interaction. Stepping into the discursive processes highlights language as a site of contestation and thus negotiation. It is inherently linked to how agents make decisions and the language that they employ to communicate and justify their intentions. All of this points to some notion of constitution yet constraint. On the one hand, language enables agents to understand their surroundings, and thus act and interact, whereas on the other it helps to ensure that they can act in accordance with a wider social setting. It is crucial to note that these dialectical processes of communication and interactions are not always harmonious. Arguments about what a word means, what actions are permissible and where the boundaries of a language game begin and end are not always clear cut. An acute awareness of the potential for tensions and ruptures to occur even in the most reified linguistic and social setting brings us to our second theoretical theme, namely to ask.

How is it possible for words to change meanings?

As a social formation, language is never a self-contained or closed whole. Studying language as a transformative process enables explorations into the

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manner in which interrelated sets of meaning not only co-exist but alternate. How does one set of meanings replace, erase and/or alter another? How does the same word, such as security, come to mean different things in different contexts? How does the same word, such as security, come to mean something different at different stages or spheres of contestation within the same context? Do such changes impact on larger intersubjective structures and spheres of action? If so, how? If not, why not?

The existence of these questions has been well established within the discipline of international relations (IR), particularly by those interested in the role of language in the creation and maintenance of social meanings and life (Butler 1997; Campbell 1998; Crawford 2002; Doty 1993, 1996; Fierke 1998, 2002; Hansen 2006; Larsen 1997, 1999; Milliken 1999; Risse 2000). Drawing on and also contributing to this burgeoning literature, this book advances a critical constructivist approach. This theoretical position is in harmony with a Wittgensteinian approach to language, which is unpacked and developed throughout. Adopting this line of inquiry ensures that the focus remains on exploring how meanings are constantly put into use. Although this analytical shift might appear to be minor, it is proposed that it adds greater theoretical depth to understanding the relationship between agency and structure on the one hand and the relationship between words on the other. Highlighting the ways in which different structures of meaning co-exist, compete, conflict and even change depending on how they are woven together add a double layer of complexity to the linguistic paradox. The biggest implication that stands out is that change can come from within as well as from outside the language games available at any given time (Bell 2002).

Theorizing the language of security

In the discipline of International Relations, the nexus between language and security has primarily been examined by scholars who work within the tradition of “Critical Security Studies” and the “Copenhagen School” (Buzan *et al.* 1998) approach. Here, the realist claim that language is cheap, particularly in the realm of security, is seriously undermined. Instead of being inconsequential, the way security is spoken is held as being imperative for understanding how state interests are formulated and executed. This study draws directly on the claim that the language of security is a form of power. Determining what kind of power is at stake is far from clear, however. As we will see, security is an essentially contested concept (Baldwin 1997; Burke 2002; Ciuta 2009; Fierke 2007b; Fierke and Fattah 2009; McDonald and Bellamy 2002; Wilkinson 2007).

Under the broad umbrella of Critical Security Studies we can find alternative accounts of what security means, how it is constructed and how insecurity should be alleviated.

The Copenhagen School acts as our point of entry to explore how speech acts enable certain things to be done when security is spoken. However, this book takes a slightly different approach from the extant securitization framework. The

main aim is to view the language of security not so much as a speech act or utterance, but as part of an ongoing process or language game. While we take the Copenhagen School's claims about security speech acts and securitizing moves having a powerful legitimizing and delegitimizing potential seriously, the central aim is to explore how agents constantly put these meanings into use. The book is thus intended as an analytical inquiry conducted within the broader theoretical framework of the Copenhagen School approach, complemented by the insights of Ludwig Wittgenstein's concept of a language game.

By integrating a Wittgensteinian approach, this book shifts attention away from the speech act as the dominant action towards a larger intersubjective activity that may involve multiple players apart from the speaker and the audience. This complements existing calls to deepen analysis into the "sociological context" and "dramalogical settings" (Balzacq 2005, 2011; Salter 2008). Wittgenstein's idea of a language game also advances these arguments in two ways. First, it illustrates that multiple speech acts may be in play during a securitizing move or thereafter. More importantly, it allows for these different structures of meanings to overlap as well as interlock. This provides a more complex picture of how agents are actually speaking security. Second, a Wittgenstein lens provides a point of departure to exploring how securitized speech acts or language games legitimate certain kinds of rules while rendering others illegitimate. What rules are justified and justifiable in the name of security? What kinds of rules function once exceptional measures are operational? How are these rules put into place and enforced? Examining the constitutive interaction between these different levels raises further questions about the nexus between language, security and international law. Where does responsibility lie? What kind of rights are people entitled to in a process of securitization? Who makes the rules? Focusing awareness on what is permissible in the name of security is crucial to demonstrate that while the language of security gives agency, it also acts as a structure.

Two categories will be used to bring up the distinctiveness of the different multilayers at work, namely the "securitization of democracy" and the "democratization of security." Although these two categories exist in a dialectal relationship, there are important distinctions between them. First, the securitization of democracy points to the idea that democracy can co-exist with and even be embedded in how security is spoken. What happens when this occurs? The inclusion and co-existence of security and democracy has particular ramifications for how we understand what constitutes everyday politics and what constitutes exceptional politics. The second category, the democratization of securitization, raises important questions about how securitization can become normalized or institutionalized over the long term. What happens when this occurs? Arguably, there is a danger that the normalization and institutionalization of the language of security can result in a situation where agents are no longer critically engaging and disagreeing with the way this language is being spoken, but rather are accepting it as a matter of course. While this familiarity is not always problematic and can create the rules of engagement, Wittgenstein forces us to constantly "look and see" how security is being spoken even in the most naturalized,

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securitized, institutionalized environments. The second category, the democratization of security also serves to flag ethical questions about where responsibility and accountability lies when security is being spoken, and thereafter.

The Iraq War: an empirical case study

Although our inquiry is primarily intended as a theoretical investigation, its findings have interesting implications for empirical debates on US foreign policy and security studies. The Iraq War represents one of the most puzzling, complex and controversial events in the post-Cold War era. The manner in which the Bush administration finally decided to hold Saddam Hussein accountable through military intervention provoked a worldwide outcry, severely tarnished the United States' reputation around the world and led to a succession of negative events such as those in Abu Ghraib, whose full implications are yet to be determined.

Invading Iraq on the grounds of pre-emptive self-defense proved particularly contentious. The invasion marked a rare case in recent history when a major power engaged in military action against another country for preventive reasons, although rhetorically justified by the Bush administration as pre-emptive action (Arend 2003; Farer 2003; Franck 2001, 2002; Hammond 2005). In March 2003, the United States and its allies invaded Iraq, and while legal justifications for the invasion were issued, a general consensus emerged that the Bush administration's arguments were legally unpersuasive (Kegley and Raymond 2003; Lobel and Ratner 1999; Thomasson 2003). Yet assertions of illegality did not prevent the invasion. Reflecting on such a situation, it is pertinent to ask how this foreign policy move was made possible. How could the Bush administration make a case for war without sufficient evidence to support their claim of imminent threats? How did security come to occupy the dominant justification for the Iraq War when it was exactly the security of the situation that was itself under strenuous debate? Taking a further step back, why did the Bush administration choose to pursue their interests in the language of security? These matters require further investigation and shall concern us throughout the entire book.

While much ink has been spilled over the US military invasion of Iraq in 2003, this book is not another rehearsal about the causes behind the Iraq War (Boyne 2003; Chandrasekaran 2007; Fawn and Hinnebusch 2006; Kaufmann 2004; Sifry and Cerf 2003). Explanations offered range from oil (Stiglitz 2008), to President Bush carrying out paternal legacies (Pauly and Lansford 2005), the rise of neoconservative hawks (Fukuyama 2006a, 2006b; Mann 2004) among others. While these accounts carry some validity the focus of this book is on portraying the Bush administration's foreign policy ventures in Iraq as a series of criss-crossing language games. Examining the arguments they constructed and implemented to justify the invasion highlights how this particular event was given meaning through the language of security. To those well versed in American foreign policy this is hardly surprising. Security represents a longstanding cornerstone of US initiatives at home and abroad (Cox and Stokes 2008;

Wittkopf *et al.* 2008). What is interesting is to explicate how this particular “language game” both enabled and constrained the Bush administration as they justified their military action in Iraq, and by extension their actions thereafter.

The unilateral argument

Starting at the level of language departs significantly from the conventional wisdom that the Iraq War was a unilateral foreign policy adventure. For many the promulgation of the Bush Doctrine after September 11, 2001 made a special claim to global leadership, one premised on the concept of pre-emptive self-defense (Cox 2004; Gaddis 2002; Heisbourg 2003; Rigstad 2009). The latter strongly implied that America would use any means necessary, including force, to secure itself from any future threats. As Charles Krauthammer remarked, “September 11 demonstrated a new form of American strength” and the “dominance of a single power unlike anything ever seen” (Krauthammer 2002/2003: 6–7). Speaking of America’s position today, Paul Kennedy remarked, “nothing has ever existed like this disparity of power; nothing” (Kennedy 2002).

What is particularly interesting about these unilateralist argument is that America is depicted as being unbound (Daadler and Lindsay 2005; Newhouse 2003; Riely 2005–2006). Focusing on the unrivalled material powers and resources available to the Bush administration lends itself to the assumption that they could pursue their interests without encountering any serious impediments. Their ability to launch “Operation Iraqi Freedom” without the support of a second UN Security Council Resolution, and in the face of enormous national and international condemnation, strengthens the suggestion that the Bush administration was unrestricted in the pursuit of their own self-interests. This line of argument echoes Thucydides famous claim that, “right, as the world goes, is only in question between equals in power, while the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must” (Thucydides 1993: 290).

The unilateral position makes it difficult to show that the Bush administration’s power was constrained, particularly by language. Assuming that America went it alone or acted unilaterally to invade Iraq renders the language used by the Bush administration to justify their decision to go to war inconsequential. At best, their justifications can be interpreted as “cheap talk” and at worst they can be seen as cases of deliberate deceit and hypocrisy (Hancock 2010; Krasner 1999). While the aforementioned carry considerable validity, they are nevertheless too narrow to capture the processes that ultimately created the space in which the Bush administration could employ military actions against Iraq. It overlooks how this situation came to be understood as the grounds for war. Here the power of language becomes plain to see. Had a different discursive label been used, such as attack, a different sphere of action would have been created, one requiring a different set of rules and practices. As Neta Crawford reminds us, “persuasion is not about brute force, but argumentation” (2002: 11).

Accounts of unilateralism are overly deterministic on a second level; they tend to assume that the Bush administration’s foreign policy was set to a

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particular course. Within these accounts, the war with Iraq is portrayed as an inevitable outgrowth of September 11, 2001: one caused the other. Throughout this book it also becomes apparent that many discrepancies exist between the Bush administration's plans and the reality that actually unfolded at a plethora of points in the build-up and execution of the Iraq War. For instance, no direct connection existed between Iraq and the events of September 11, 2001, as material evidence later verified. Instead, a narrative had to be built in order to establish this link. Rather than putting these constructions down to strategic recalculation, it is necessary to explore how America, the world's sole superpower, was enabled but also constrained by the language they used to justify the Iraq War.

Several critical veins of IR scholarship have provided useful entry points to show that neither the US war on terror nor the Iraq War were inevitable (Croft 2006, Holland 2009, 2012; R. Jackson 2005, Krebs and Lobasz 2007; McDonald 2005; Silberstein 2002). Through their analysis it is possible to see how, in the weeks and months after September 11, 2001, language played a powerful role in constructing the US war on terror as a common-sense assumption. According to Stuart Croft (2006: 17) what is at stake here is "an examination of the production of meaning in a crisis, of the cultural production of a discourse and the cultural reproduction that followed." This book seeks to advance this literature by providing a nuanced way to examine not only how the Bush administration's security strategies were constructed as a war on terror, but also to explore how their language game of security transformed as it was put into practice. The goal is to excavate how the language employed by the administration helped constitute the boundaries of what was permissible and possible at different stages of the security policy pursued by the administration in the Iraq context. Adopting this viewpoint helps to trace the evolution of their security discourse from September 11, 2001 and how the Bush administration employed this narrative to speak security in two other episodes, or what are termed "defining moments," during the Iraq War.

"Defining moments"

The two defining moments examined in this book are, first, when no WMD were found in Iraq in early 2003, and second, when the Abu Ghraib photos were released in April 2004. Individually, both incidents represent sites of contestation when the Bush administration's definition of security was severely challenged to a point where it might collapse. Examining these two junctures is important because it highlights that the Bush administration was forced not only to defend their security policies but also to redefine how they spoke security to fit the new context. Taken together, the defining moments aptly illustrate that agents cannot simply dismiss earlier justifications they gave for a particular course of action. As the cases are unpacked it becomes apparent that the subtle ways in which the Bush administration rebuilt or re-securitized their arguments for invading Iraq impacted on how they could respond to events in a meaningful way.

The first defining moment under investigation is when the main justification for the US invasion was challenged by the lack of credible evidence that Iraq possessed WMD in early 2003. Clearly this represents a period of acute crisis for the Bush administration since their decision to invade Iraq was premised on Saddam Hussein possessing WMD. The findings of the United Nations (UN) inspectors firmly refuted this line of argument. They also raised serious questions concerning the manner in which the architects of the intervention had built their case for war. The fact that the Bush administration could still speak security in a meaningful way begs further investigation. Why did their language of security not simply collapse? How did they rebuild their original justifications?

A close examination of the Bush administration's response at the first defining moment reveals that the language of security alone did not legitimate the Iraq War. Security was certainly not abandoned as a core rationale for the intervention. Nevertheless, at the defining moment the Bush administration rebuilt their arguments by placing a greater emphasis on the democratic components of America's mission in Iraq. This is not to assert that neither the President nor his team never mentioned democracy post-September 11, 2001, or throughout its global "war on terror" campaign. Themes of delivering humanitarian aid and liberating innocent Iraqi civilians were clearly present in the run-up to the war, particularly as part of their policy of regime change (Roth 2006). The Bush administration also greatly raised the visibility of the democracy issue by rooting the war on terrorism in a global "freedom agenda" immediately after September 11, 2001 (Carothers 2007). As President Bush declared, "freedom and fear were at war" (Bush 2001: September 20). Taking this line Jonathan Monten (2005: 112) claims

the promotion of democracy is central to the George W. Bush administration's prosecution of both the war on terrorism and its overall grand strategy, in which it is assumed that U.S. political and security interests are advanced by the spread of liberal political institutions and values abroad.

While this observation is correct, alongside his claims that "the current US strategy falls squarely within the mainstream of American diplomatic traditions" (Monten 2005: 113; also see Boyle 2008), this book approaches the issue from a different angle. Making a more robust theoretical argument, it suggests that this shift altered the contours of their initial justifications for the Iraq War.

The manner in which the Bush administration redefined their justifications for the Iraq War has been underplayed in the hype about the lack of material evidence and the fact that the invasion could still proceed without it. Alternatively, their recourse to democracy is taken as cheap talk to hide ulterior motives and an escape clause to retain legitimacy when their original arguments were nullified (Russett 2005). However, treating this linguistic shift as insignificant window-dressing cloaks exactly what was being undertaken in the name of security. More specifically, it overlooks what kind of war they were fighting and on what grounds. Analyzing the competing and alternating meaning structures contained

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within their language game of security places the focus on not just how they justified the war but also how their justifications altered when they were put into use.

The second defining moment concerns the Abu Ghraib abuses in 2004. Here again we find that the Bush administration's language of security is extremely challenged by the allegations that their "enhanced interrogation techniques" legitimated the use of systemic abuse and were tantamount to torture. However, unlike the first defining moment, when their security narrative survived and adapted when it was challenged, Abu Ghraib signifies the evolution to a different context. Turning to this incident, we find that when the Bush administration tried to invoke the language of security, it failed to have the intended legitimacy they anticipated. At this point a glaring gap emerged between the rules of engagement and the rules of play underpinning their language game. Going further, this book will illustrate how the relationship between security and democracy changed from being conciliatory at the first defining moment when no WMD were found, to being extremely contentious in the case of Abu Ghraib. Indeed, the uneasy interrelationship between these speech acts is one of the most significant and underlying themes across the cases. The discrepancies that arise between how the Bush administration's language of security performed at the two defining moments reaffirms that language is never complete, and thus is always susceptible to change.

Case selection

One might ask why these defining moments were chosen and not others. The answer is that gaining insight into how the Bush administration spoke security to justify the Iraq War, and how this language game was transformed, requires extensive awareness of the defining moments in question. To contextualize how security was spoken to justify the Iraq War, an extensive discourse analysis of the Bush administration's foreign policy language is provided here for the six-month time period preceding and following September 11, the Iraq War and the Abu Ghraib scandal. Discourse analysis is a tool of critique to, "illustrate how ... textual and social processes are intrinsically connected and to describe, in specific contexts, the implications of this connection for the way that we think and act in the contemporary world" (George 1994: 191). Those well versed in discourse analysis will be aware there are several different, albeit related, types of discourse analysis (Hansen 2006; Milliken 1999). The goal here is not to find one perfect fit so much as to provide a methodological tool to critically evaluate the Bush administration's language of security in a systematic way and pick up nuances that may otherwise have gone unnoticed.

The analyses incorporated in this research are concentrated in very limited time frames. It is of course possible to extend the time frame of our inquiry to earlier and later periods given that the way in which security is spoken does not simply begin or end at one point in time. However, the attacks on September 11, 2001 and the Abu Ghraib abuses are useful starting and concluding points for

this inquiry. Taking this view allows for a concentrated focus on the evolution and transformation of the Bush administration's language game of security in greater breadth. Taking this broader analytical view also brings the transformative dimensions into sharper relief. Focusing extensively on the Bush administration's language at one particular point would prevent the larger language game from becoming visible.

The sources drawn upon in conducting this discourse analysis are multifaceted. Primarily there is a focus on the public speeches and official statements of the Bush administration. It is impossible to cite all the speeches studied, but what are presented are key samples which capture the core lines of argument that the Bush administration made in response to the events of September 11, 2001 and the two defining moments. To reflect what Lene Hansen (2006) refers to as intertextuality, attempts are made to demonstrate that neither things nor meanings stand in isolation, but only in reference to others. Consequently, the official documents which were accessed have been supplemented with extensive research of secondary sources, including newspapers, media coverage, official Congressional reports obtained from the Library of Congress, along with the transcripts of the 20 interviews conducted on a research trip to Washington DC in 2004.

Disclaimers

Within this book the Bush administration is discussed in broad terms. This categorization is problematic insofar as it treats this government as a unitary actor, omitting the factions within this government over the Iraq War. While these rivalries are worthy of closer inspection (Woodward 2002, 2004, 2006, 2009), they are not dealt with here. To compensate for any generalization of the Bush administration, reference is made to several members of the administration and the government rather than focusing solely on the President. Second, because the greatest concern is with how the Bush administration justified the Iraq War through a language game of security, the rise of the neoconservatives and the larger genealogy of American foreign policy history are backgrounded. This choice was made in order to provide a deeper exploration of how security was spoken to justify the war, and more importantly, how this language adapted and transformed when it was put into use. While the Bush administration's definition of security discussed here likely involves elements of individual mindsets, the main concern is not whether this group of actors were cynical, self-deceived or morally unreflective. In order to establish that language both constitutes and constrains, it is necessary and sufficient to demonstrate that the Bush administration's language of security enabled and constrained them in important ways.

This book claims that the Bush administration invoked international law to justify the Iraq War. However, providing an in-depth account of the legalistic clauses and propositions the Bush administration reworked is beyond the scope and specialization of this work. Nonetheless, there is a need to reflect more substantively on the interrelations between language, security and international law.

Structure

The last note is on the structure of the book. The central aim of the argument is to envision a new way of thinking about how security is being spoken in principle and in practice. To bring these issues together in a consistent fashion, a more integrated framework has been employed which weaves the theory and empirical together in each chapter. The case studies will, in each part, serve to show how those theoretical claims can be applied to security contexts. It is recognized that presenting the argument in this way is not a conventional approach. However, it also does not invalidate the original contribution this book might make to the further understanding of how security is being spoken in principle or in practice. Indeed, it is expected that by serving as the illustration of theoretical concepts and empirical data, this framework will shed some light on the evolution and adaptation of a language game of security in both domains. Moreover, the empirical discussions will not be the mere application of the theory. Instead, as the theoretical concepts are unpacked, they will highlight important tensions created in and by the language employed by the Bush administration to justify the Iraq War.

A chapter overview

[Chapter 1](#) acts as a foundational overview of the theoretical and methodological frameworks developed throughout this book. Here the suitability of critical constructivism for examining the role of language as a form of power is presented. Taking this line serves three functions. First, it challenges the idea that talk is cheap. Second it provides a middle ground between conventional constructivism and post-structuralism. Finally, a critical constructivist account offers a new theoretical lens for thinking about the Iraq War. Rather than assuming that this foreign policy was an inevitable outcome of September 11, 2001 or a unilateral pursuit through this prism, the Iraq War becomes a social construction. The discourse analysis of the Bush administration's justifications for the Iraq War is longest in this chapter. This is necessary to contextualize how they moved within and also altered their language game of security after September 11, 2001 in order to legitimize their actions in a different theatre of war. In short, it establishes the rules of engagement and play.

[Chapter 2](#) outlines the Copenhagen School's securitization framework as a starting point to explore the relationship between language and security. The strength of securitization is that it portrays security as a performative speech act rather than a zero-sum game. From there the chapter engages with the current debates taking place within securitization studies to illuminate the ways in which original framework is being criticized and improved. Building on this literature, the chapter explores how multiple and overlapping speech acts and moves can be incorporated in a securitization framework. The second aim is to provide a critical understanding of the different kinds of rules that exist when security is spoken. The final section of [Chapter 2](#) examines the strengths and weaknesses of

conceptualizing the Bush administration's justifications for the Iraq War through a securitization framework. As shown, while illuminating important aspects of how the Bush administration spoke security to undertake their securitizing moves, the Copenhagen School's framework runs into difficult terrain when it comes to analyzing the defining moment in question.

Chapter 3 introduces the work of Ludwig Wittgenstein and directs our analysis away from a speech act towards the larger process of a game. It is argued that his emphasis on "meaning in use" allows greater possibility for various language games to overlap, criss-cross and even change. This kind of analysis acts as a nuanced way to integrate Balzacq's observation that, "securitization exists in a field of struggles" (2011: 15). The second major advantage of adopting a Wittgensteinian outlook is that it draws our attention to the rules of engagement and play in a way that securitization does not. This is done in three ways. First, the idea of meaning in use complicating the nexus that the Copenhagen School draws between politicization and securitization, on the one hand, and securitization and desecuritization on the other. The implication that language games can overlap suggests that rules from one language game to the next can co-exist side by side. Second, a language game sheds light on how rules are not only followed or broken, but also made and redefined, even subtly, through processes of interaction. The distinction that Wittgenstein draws between "obeying rules blindly" and "acts of interpretation" will be fleshed out to trace the evolution of legitimating and delegitimizing processes in everyday as well as exceptional circumstances. The empirical section of this chapter undertakes a fresh examination of "the defining moment." Adopting a language games approach brings a greater level of the significance to the redefinitions that occurred at this juncture. A Wittgensteinian lens also sheds light on the competing yet co-constitutive language games that the Bush administration drew on during the Iraq War.

The analysis in **Chapter 4** moves from the justifications of the Iraq War to analyze how these meaning were put into use. Here the analysis is devoted to unpacking how the Bush administration's language game played out in light of the Abu Ghraib scandal. The second "defining moment" is distinct as it constructs linkages between the way in which the Bush administration were enabled and constrained when they spoke security when no WMD were found and when the Abu Ghraib scandal broke. Drawing on the second case study reveals that even the smallest redefinitions can turn out to be highly significant. As shown, their overall language game of security affected how they could respond to the abuses in an intelligible way and provided a crucial contextual background against how this particular episode was understood.

The conclusion returns to the questions raised at the beginning of the book, namely how language can act as a constitutive as well as a constraining device and how the meaning of words can change through the process of interaction. Adopting this outlook enables us to think more seriously not only about the potentiality of speaking about security, but also its limits. With this remit in mind we shall begin our investigation into the multifarious processes and relationships underpinning the social construction of the language of security.

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