39 Security: The State (of) Being Free From Danger?

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39.1 Introduction

With the demise of the Cold War, policy-makers claimed to recognize a plethora of new security threats – a veritable 'dysplasia' of the global body politic (Manning 2000: 195). In the face of rogue states, loose nukes, international organized crime and global terrorism, among other menaces, government and non-government organizations devoted considerable time and resources to addressing new insecurities. Academics too have tried to rework the concept of security. As David Baldwin wrote in 1997, in the fields of International Relations (IR) and Security Studies, "[r]edefining 'security' has recently become something of a cottage industry" (Baldwin 1997: 5), although the difficulty in defining 'security' had already exercized the minds of scholars over several decades.[1]

This chapter addresses three central issues regarding the conceptualization of security. The first is that different theoretical approaches conceive of 'security' differently, depending on their basic ontological and epistemological commitments. The second and related issue is that different conceptions of security, in turn, entail different understandings of threats, of insecurity, and of the referent objects of security, those entities in need of being secured. We seek in this chapter to illuminate these differences. Third, we address the persistent claim that IR and Security Studies should be "relevant to contemporary [policy] concerns" (Krause/Williams 1996: 40). For each approach we draw out the relationship between academic theorizing of security and policy debates. In particular, we highlight the fact that policy-making and academic discussions are, as Stanley Hoffman (1977) famously argued, always already intimately related.

The first section (39.2) presents the conventional rationalist conceptualization of security, one that predates the end of the Cold War and is prominent in policy discourse. The authority of this vision of security demands that we trace the development of approaches to security from it, despite claims that the post-Cold War era is fundamentally different from those preceding it.

In the second section (39.3), we discuss attempts to broaden and deepen the analysis of security by including a wider array of policy issues under the heading 'security' and expanding its referent objects. We draw attention to the differences, and also the similarities, between these reconceptualizations and the rationalist model.

Finally, we offer a third conceptualization of security as discourse (39.4). In this approach, the construction of *in*security is investigated in more detail, as are the mutual constitution of threats and threatened identities. Throughout, we use the contemporary security threat posed by immigration as an example. We conclude by emphasizing that these academic concerns about conceptualization – themselves already influenced by policy debates – are of central importance to policy-making, and indeed constitutive of security policy.

39.2 Security As Power

The mainstream rationalist approaches[2] dominant in IR and Security Studies are fundamentally state-centric.[3] They treat security, defined in relation to the

1 See, *inter alia,* Wolfers 1962; Krell 1979; Buzan 1983; Ullman 1983; Ayoob 1983/4; Wiberg/Øberg 1984; Varas 1986; Bay 1987; Mathews 1989; Walt 1991; Huysmans 1995.

2 Despite their internecine disputes over issues like relative versus absolute gains and the extent of cooperation under anarchy (e.g. Baldwin 1993a), we include realism, neo-realism and neo-liberal institutionalism under the single rubric 'rationalism' because they share the same substantive and meta-theoretical assumptions (e.g. Keohane 1988; Katzenstein/Keohane/Krasner 1998).

3 States are generally defined in Weberian terms, as administrative organizations issuing binding decisions for a population and territory, and the ultimate repository for the legitimate use of force (e.g. Weber 1947: 156).

state, as intimately related to power, understood primarily, if not exclusively, in military terms. The reason is straightforward. On rationalist accounts, which draw substantively on a realist vision of world politics, the international differs from the domestic primarily in its anarchic character. This anarchy – defined by the sovereignty of the state and the concomitant absence of a supra-state Leviathan – places states in inevitable and perpetual competition, the so-called “security dilemma” (Herz 1951). States are thus always insecure and necessarily concerned with their own survival: “In anarchy,” Kenneth Waltz has stated, “security is the highest end” (Waltz 1979: 126).

The fundamental interest of any state must therefore be to “protect [its] physical, political, and cultural identity against encroachments by other nations” (Morgenthau 1952: 972). ‘High politics’ – the arena of diplomacy and security, war and peace (e.g. Viner 1949) – is thus central for states and “each state must guarantee its own survival since no other will provide its security” (Mearsheimer 1990: 12). Security is conceptualized as an objective state of affairs, ultimately defined by state survival in the face of external threats, and states seek to provide for their security by “maximizing their power relative to other states” (Mearsheimer 1990: 12).[4] Although the threats need not always be military, the response to insecurity is calculated in terms of power, and generally military power. ‘Threats’ are treated as external and objective such that it is a “*fact* that security is being sought against external violence” (Wolfers 1962: 490, emphasis added). Security becomes “nothing but the absence of the evil of insecurity, a negative value so to speak” (Wolfers 1962: 488).

This rationalist understanding of security, threat, and insecurity rests upon at least two important assumptions. First, it assumes that an independent reality is directly accessible both to state officials and to analysts. The distribution of power can be assessed ‘realistically’ or objectively and, consequently, threats to a state’s security can accurately be recognized. Hence, Morgenthau’s injunction that state officials overcome their “aversion to seeing problems of international politics as they are” (Morgenthau 1951: 7).

Second, this rationalist account posits the existence of certain entities – specifically states – within an environment in which they experience objective threat(s). The nature of states is given and fixed, at least for all practical purposes, and security requires securing states against objective and external threats. These basic assumptions naturalize states and their insecurities, while rendering contingent and problematic their actions and strategies for coping with the insecurities. States and their insecurities are naturalized in the sense that they are treated as unproblematical facts: states thus become the foundational objects that ground security analysis. Rationalist accounts, then, treat states and their insecurities as natural facts while problematizing, and consequently focusing attention onto, the acquisition of security for the state.

On this view, immigration, for example, is represented primarily as a threat to the integrity – the ‘physical, political and cultural identity’ – of the sovereign state. Noticeably, after the events of 11 September 2001, “a number of countries have revisited their asylum systems from a security angle and have in the process tightened procedures and introduced substantial modifications” (Türk 2003: 115). This increase in border control, and the surveillance and enforcement mechanisms such control entails, is premised on a rationalist view of the state and security that sees sovereignty and territoriality as the markers of statehood. Because the state, with its defining territorial borders, is taken as objectively given, border transgresssions are potentially threatening: “The dangers of mobility can be described as vectors of threat: security and crime, political and cultural difference, health and disease” (Salter 2004: 72). Immigration, when considered a security threat, thus requires responses that prioritize controlling borders and monitoring human traffic across them.

On this view, in short, the object of security is the state and threats, and therefore insecurities, are objective, external, and fundamentally related to the use of power, and ultimately force. Security is always fragile and relative to the power of other states. The security problematic of any particular state is to develop policies that minimize objective threats, ultimately to the very survival of the state itself.

39.3 Extending Security: Proliferating Referent Objects and Threats

The rationalist preoccupation with the physical security of the state has of course excited extensive criti-

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4 Military power is not the only relevant form of power, even for rationalists. It is recognized that “what is sometimes termed ‘statecraft’ – arms control, diplomacy, crisis management, for example” (Walt 1991: 213) – can also provide security, and that economic power is necessary for military power. Nonetheless, military threats constitute the ultimate insecurity and military power is the ultimate resort.

cism. Over the last several decades, critics have argued that both the concern with military security and the concentration on the state as the object of security are dangerously and unnecessarily narrow.[5] Alternative conceptions of security abound. Analytically, they highlight two arguments.[6] First, the category of security has been expanded to include threats outside of the traditional arena of 'high politics'. Thus, we have been encouraged to see economic crises, global warming, underdevelopment, epidemics, human trafficking, and so on, as security threats. Second, and as a corollary, the object of security has been extended to include a variety of non-state actors, among them individuals, civil society, the international community, and humanity as a whole. We briefly discuss each of these analytical commitments.

The threats against which the referent object of security can be secured, according to this view, range from conventional 'security' concerns like armed conflict to economic deprivation, environmental disasters, and gender violence. For example, drawing on policy discourses, a 'development/security nexus' has recently been posited.[7] On this view, as World Bank President James Wolfenson noted: "If we want to prevent violent conflict, we need a comprehensive, equitable and inclusive approach to development" (cited in Thomas 2001: 160). Development, conventionally seen as an economic and social problem, and violent conflict, conventionally the security concern, thus become inextricably linked, substantially broadening the traditional notion of 'security'.

Expanding the policy issues encompassed by the category 'security,' in turn, alters the objects of security. As threats – and responses to those threats – are no longer assumed to be primarily military, security is no longer solely the concern of the sovereign state (Bilgin 2003: 203). Instead, it becomes clear that individuals, communities, regions, and sometimes humanity as a whole,[8] have a stake in 'security' and can thus potentially work to achieve it (although their interests may not be compatible). The referent object of security is thus expanded and security becomes a "single continuum ... protected and enhanced by a series of interlocking instruments and policies" (McRae 2001: 22). For instance, 'human security' has recently received considerable attention,[9] "broaden[ing] our view of what is meant by peace and security",[10] notably in the policy discourses of international institutions like the United Nations. As the Final Report of the Commission on Human Security asserts, human security is 'people' rather than state centred (CHS 2003: 2) and designed to "protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedom and human fulfilment. ... It means creating ... systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity" (CHS 2003: 4). Emphasizing the 'human' referent of security highlights the diverse ways in which threats are experienced, again demonstrating that in/security applies to agents larger and smaller than the state.

Immigration provides a further example of the complexity of the category of 'security' and its referent objects. On the one hand, immigration can be seen as a threat to the state, as it is in the rationalist approach. "The first action that governments typically take when faced with a crisis is to close their borders. States seem intent on gaining security by stopping the world from moving" (Bach 2003: 227). On the other hand, however, individuals often choose to cross borders precisely to overcome insecurities, whether physical, economic, or otherwise. For individuals, barriers to immigration can be threatening, a source of insecurity, while immigration itself offers a (possible) road to security. Put simply, political issues affect different objects of security differently. On this view, we thus need to look at "security issues ... from both [or more] sides of the coin" (Türk 2003: 121), broadening the conceptualization of threat and of the referent objects of security.

Reframing as 'security' issues those previously considered under other rubrics reveals the power of the concept of 'security'. Harnessing this power – which traditionally recognizes that it may be necessary to use force or whatever other measures "necessity dictates" (Waltz 1967: 206) – magnifies the severity of problems,

5 Challenges to the rationalist perspective on security vary enormously in their philosophical and methodological approaches. However, they are minimally united in their desire to reconceptualize security by broadening its scope. Examples include Krell 1979; Buzan 1983; Barnet 1988; Matthews 1989; Boutros-Ghali 1992; Kupchan/Kupchan 1995.

6 Many analysts of course make both at once. We separate them out for analytical purposes.

7 Examples include Martinussen 1997; Duffield 2000, 2001; Dewitt/Hernandez 2003.

8 Early examples include Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues 1982; Buzan 1983; Bay 1987; Tickner 1992.

9 See, for example, Thomas 2001; McRae 2001; Paris 2001.

10 Kofi Annan, 1999: "Letters to Future Generations: Towards a Culture of Peace", at: <http://www.unesco.org/opi2/lettres/TextAnglais/AnnanE.html>.

inscribing them with a level of necessity and urgency generally accorded to dire crises, such as war.[11] Thus, articulating immigration as a threat to security enables the imposition of stronger border controls, the exercise of surveillance, and the construction of detention camps, among other measures. As a result, it allows for the violation of civil rights and the expenditure of vast resources. Especially in the face of concerns about transnational 'terrorist networks', popular support for such measures can be gained by linking immigration to terrorist threats that may "endanger the survival of vast numbers of vulnerable people" (Bach 2003: 242). There is thus a clear political motive for expanding the concept of security. Claims to 'security', and particularly 'national security', function to leapfrog policy issues up the political agenda, to facilitate speedy responses, to make resistance more difficult, and to make money flow.

These expanded approaches improve on the rationalist focus on military threats to state security by allowing us to recognize a wider diversity of threats that engender insecurity not just for states but also for individuals and the whole of humanity. Nonetheless, their approach to security remains unaltered in fundamental ways. As with rationalism, states and other objects of security are simply assumed to exist, as do objectively given threats to the security of those objects. The analytical and political task thus remains the same: to make the referent objects more secure in the face of these threats.

39.4 Security As Discourse[12]

The difficulty with the preceding approaches is that objects and events do not in fact present themselves unproblematically to the observer, however 'realistic' he or she may be. Determining what the particular situation confronting a state or other actor is, what, if any, threat to security it faces, and what the 'correct' response might be always requires interpretation. Threats, then, are fundamentally interpretative, not objectively given facts. Immigration, for instance, can be represented as a major threat to the security of a sovereign state, as discussed above. But it can also be represented as a solution to individual insecurities or as a component of the free movement of labour necessary to a successful neoliberal order. All three representations require significant interpretative labour. Rationalist theories and their extensions, assuming as they do that threats are external and objective, cannot explain how a particular situation comes to be understood as a threat to begin with. Understanding security as discourse allows this fundamental question to be addressed. To challenge conventional understandings of security, then, one can focus on *in*security and its discursive production.

A discourse is a set of capabilities – a set of "sociocultural resources used by people in the construction of meaning about their world and their activities" (Ó Tuathail/Agnew 1992: 192–193) – and a structure of meaning-in-use – "a language or system of representation that has developed socially in order to make and circulate a coherent set of meanings" (Fiske 1987: 14). Discourses, that is, are sets of rules for ordering and relating discursive elements (subjects, objects, their characteristics, tropes, narratives, and so on) in such a way that some meanings rather than others are constituted.[13] Conversely, we have reached the boundaries of a discourse when representations fail to be meaningful, when they seem "unintelligible" or "irrational" (Muppidi 1999: 124–5) from within it.

Understanding security as discourse recognizes that insecurities are discursive constructions rather than natural facts. One way to get at the constructed nature of insecurities is to examine the ways in which insecurities and the objects that suffer from them are mutually constituted. That is, in contrast to approaches that treat the objects of insecurity and their insecurities as given, a discursive approach treats them as inextricably intertwined: insecurity becomes the product of processes of identity construction in which the 'self' and the 'other', or multiple 'others', are constituted.[14] The object of analysis then becomes those states and other referent objects of security and their insecurities generally taken for granted in IR and Se-

11 Wæver's concept of 'securitization' (1995) discusses this idea more comprehensively.

12 This section and the next draw on Weldes/Laffey/Gusterson/Duvall 1999.

13 Relations of constitution differ from causal relations. The process of constitution is definitional: it explains how "a particular phenomenon is that phenomenon and not something else." It delineates the "possibility conditions for the existence of phenomena"; how, within a discourse, some phenomena are possible such that they are defined in that discourse as those phenomena (Majeski/Sylvan 1991: 8).

14 For approaches to the constitution of self and other in a variety of cultural processes, see, *inter alia*, Campbell 1994, 1998a; Connolly 1991; Doty 1993; Drinnon 1990; Greenblatt 1991; Neumann 1996; Spurr 1993; Todorov 1982.

curity Studies. Insecurities and their objects are denaturalized, in particular by demonstrating how both insecurities *and* actors such as states are discursively produced in relation to one another.

A conception of security as discourse assumes that the identities of actors are constructed through acts of representation, or 'discursive practices'. This means that security discourses function to construct the identities of various subjects, for example states and migrants, and to position these subjects in relation to each other. The identities thus constructed in turn function to prescribe some behaviours, while rendering others unthinkable. Identities are therefore central to this conceptualization, as how we think of 'ourselves' is constructed in relation to how we conceive of the 'others' (and vice versa). "The face of the other," as Dutta (2004) argues, is fundamental to our understanding of our own being-in-the-world. These identities, in turn, are part of the condition for action.

It is, of course, perfectly reasonable for some purposes to take the common sense interpretative categories of subjects for granted for analytical purposes. However, if one is interested in going beyond the agent's point of view to examine security as discourse, to examine those discursive practices that are the conditions of possibility for the agent's self-understandings in the first place, then one needs to subject that common sense to critical scrutiny. This common sense is not truth: rather, it is what Stuart Hall has called the "categories of practical consciousness" (Hall 1986: 30). Critical scrutiny seeks to defamiliarize – literally to make strange – common sense understandings and so to make their constructedness apparent. It denaturalizes the putatively given agents, such as states; it denaturalizes the relations among subjects; and it denaturalizes the insecurities faced by those subjects as apparently objective threats.

In the following two sections, we highlight two distinct approaches to the analysis of security as discourse: a critical constructivist approach that focuses on the intersubjective practices of in/security production, and a post-structural approach that emphasizes the performative effects of security discourse.

39.4.1 Critical Constructivism: The Intersubjectivity of In/Security

The claim that insecurities are discursive constructions derives from the recognition of a deceptively simple fact: that people "act towards objects, including other actors, on the basis of the meanings that the objects have for them" (Wendt 1992: 396–7). Critical constructivism assumes that the world is constituted in part through the meaningful practices of social subjects, and that people act on the basis of the meanings that things have for them. These meanings are fundamentally discursive: they are made possible by particular discourses that provide the categories through which the world is understood. Meaning is thus *intersubjective*: it is a social rather than an individual or collective phenomenon. Meaning inheres in the practices and categories through which people engage with the world. Intersubjective meanings constitute the world as we know it and function in it: they tell us "what the world is and how it works, for all practical purposes" (Hall 1988: 44).

According to this view, identities – both of self and of others – and in/securities, rather than being given, emerge out of a process of representation through which individuals – whether state officials or internet surfers – describe to themselves and others the world in which they live. These representations define, and so constitute, the world. They populate it with subjects, endow them with interests, and define the relations among them. In so doing, they create insecurities, threats to the identities, and thus the interests, of these socially constructed subjects.

Of course, discourses abound and the world is represented in different, and often competing, ways. This means that any representation can potentially be contested and so must actively be reproduced. Meanings, in other words, are neither static nor final; rather, they are always in process and always provisional. The contemporary 'immigration crisis' in the United Kingdom (UK), for instance – like its many predecessors[15] – is constituted as a problem in a security discourse that constructs the British national community in opposition to 'bogus asylum seekers' and 'economic migrants' as well as to immigrant communities that fail to adapt to and adopt a 'British' way of life.[16] The production of in/securities thus requires considerable discursive work, as can be seen in the lively debates over what counts as 'Britishness' and whether 'native', white Britons could actually pass the Britishness test required of those seeking UK citizenship.[17] Dominant discourses – relentlessly construct-

15 See Winder's (2004) interesting history of immigration into the territories now called 'Britain'.

16 Gerri Peev: "Test Ignites Questions of Britishness", in: *The Scotsman*, 1 November 2005; at: <http://news.scotsman.com/topics.cfm?tid=16&id=2176262005>; "Test of Britishness for Immigrants", CNN.com, 31 October 2005; at: <http://edition.cnn.com/2005/WORLD/europe/10/31/uk.citizen.test. reut/>.

ing immigration as a national security threat, for instance – must constantly reproduce themselves to answer challenges to their identification of threats worthy of a claim to 'security'. Contesting discourses, in turn, attempt to rearticulate in/securities in ways that challenge the dominant representations – for example, by constructing immigration as providing a necessary economic resource in the face of declining population growth.[18]

Constructions of in/security provide both conditions of and limits on possibility. They make it possible to act in the world while simultaneously defining the "horizon of the taken-for-granted" (Hall 1988: 44) that marks the boundaries of common sense. Such constructions become common sense when they have successfully defined their relationship to reality as one of correspondence. That is, they are successful to the extent that they are treated as if they transparently reflect 'the real world'. In this way discursive constructions are naturalized, and both their constructed nature and their particular discursive origins are obscured. The creation of common sense is thus "the moment of extreme ideological closure" (Hall 1985: 105). By authoritatively defining 'the real', dominant representations of in/security (try to) remove from critical analysis and political debate what are in fact particular, interested constructions. Within the UK immigration crisis discourse, for example, it is not possible intelligibly to argue that refugees and asylum seekers should be viewed as an economic, social or cultural asset. On the other hand, it is possible, indeed common sensible, to argue that they need to prove 'Britishness'.

A corollary of this argument is that discourses are sites of social power. Some discourses are powerful because they are located in powerful institutions. All else being equal, representations by state officials have prima facie plausibility as these officials are constituted as speaking for the state, and ultimately for 'us'. Such representations are regarded as legitimate not because they are accurate, but because they emanate from the institutional power matrix that is the state. In their representations of in/security, for example, state officials can claim access to information produced by the state and denied to most outsiders. They also have privileged access to the media to disseminate their representations (e.g. Herman/Chomsky 1989). And, crucially, their representations have constitutional legitimacy, especially in the construction of insecurity. After all, 'national security' is quintessentially the business of the state and the identification of insecurities is a task understood rightly to belong to its officials (e.g. Weldes 1999: 11–12). Dominant discourses, especially those of the state, thus become and remain dominant in part because of the power relations sustaining them.

A critical constructivist approach to security as discourse highlights the intersubjective nature of knowledge claims, the importance of discursive practices, and their construction of the state and other objects of security and their respective in/securities. It denaturalizes those representations taken for granted in conventional approaches, and draws attention to the institutional relations of power that sustain some representations over others.

39.4.2 Post-Structuralism: States Performing Security, Security Performing States

Post-structuralist security theorizing is largely compatible with the analytical approach explored in the previous section, but explicitly highlights the performance of "the social or symbolic order and the subject" (Edkins 2002: 71) as "[n]either subjects nor social order *exists* at a particular point in time. Both are only ever in a process of becoming" (Edkins 2002: 71). Where the previous critical constructivist approach highlights the intersubjectivity of in/security, a post-structural approach interrogates the ways in which these in/securities, and responses to them, are performative of particular configurations of political identity. As Butler explains, "performativity must be understood not as a singular or deliberate 'act', but, rather, as the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names" (Butler 1993: 2; 1999). In the study of security, the discursive power of the concept 'security' is integral to this understanding. That is, the 'reiterative and citational practice' of an elected government declaring something – such as immigration – a 'security threat' enables certain political processes and policies, as described above. This act "is a performative one which brings a contemporary configuration of sovereignty into being" (Butler 2004: 61) and, in doing so, pro-

17 Ben Russell: "Introducing the Government's 'Britishness' Test: Only Foreigners Need Pass. Natives Can Bask in Ignorance", in: *The Independent Online Edition*, 16 November 2005; at: < http://news.independent.co.uk/uk/politics/article323790.ece>.

18 UK Home Office: "UK Population Project", 18 December 2003; at: <http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/en/home/news/archive/2003/december/uk_population_project.html>.

duces the effect of the state – or the institution or network performing the security policy.

On this view, states, acting as unitary authoritative entities, perform violence, but violences, in the name of security, also perform states.[19] In contrast to Steven Walt's charge – levelled against post-structural approaches to IR and Security Studies – that "issues of war and peace are too important for the field to be diverted into a prolix and self-indulgent discourse that is divorced from the real world" (Walt 1991: 223), post-structuralist analysis of in/security in fact problematizes the ways in which 'the real world' comes to be recognized as such, and argues that "security … is first and foremost a performative discourse constitutive of political order" (Campbell 1998a: 199). This approach investigates the ways in which discourses of security reproduce narratives of identity and ontology – a sense of being in the world – and, in the discipline of IR, explores the performance not only of sovereign states as bounded territorial entities, but also of international institutions and the 'international community'. The (re)production of these identities is often violent, through policies that permit acts of physical violence, or through the discursive violence of marginalization. For example, while security policies that govern immigration might not endorse or permit acts of physical violence directly and explicitly, the construction in popular discourse of the migrant vis-à-vis the inhabitant of the host state may permit the inhabitant to think of the migrant as an outsider, as different, as fundamentally *less than* her/himself. This is a form of discursive violence that creates the conditions of possibility for physical violence, as the hate crimes directed against non-Caucasian's in the UK and US immediately after 11 September 2001 demonstrate.[20]

Krause and Williams (1997: 51–52) argue that "the question of violence in its direct and brutal form cannot be avoided in security studies." According to this view, violence encompasses not just acts of interstate war, but also instances of civil conflict and oppressive practices within and between states, as well as the legal structures, policy practice and the research that guides them. Problematizing discourse on 'security threats' illustrates not only the ways in which the notion of a coherent agential 'state' is one that requires constant reproduction, but also the ways in which violence extends beyond the 'direct and brutal' to the discursive formations that enable certain actions to be undertaken in the name of security and proscribe other responses. A post-structural approach allows one to investigate the ways in which these acts of violence articulated through discourses of security function to posit the existence of states as boundaries of the domestic realm, to (re)produce state identity, to (re)affirm security as the concern of states, and to (re)produce sovereignty as the organizational matrix of the 'international' system.[21]

For example, in August 2005, ten "foreign nationals" were detained pending deportation by the UK immigration service.[22] The news report identified one of the individuals as a "radical Jordanian cleric" and all ten were represented by the Home Secretary as "pos[ing] a threat to national security" (ibid.). The actions, the media representations of the actions, and the policies that allowed for those actions to be considered a reasonable, 'thinkable' way to proceed, are instances of the UK performing its identity – as a sovereign state that is concerned about national security and willing to detain foreign nationals "without charge" as they are deemed as a threat to that security – and also specific components of the state performing their role in the securitization of immigration.

This post-structural approach "rests on the assumption that representations of the world make a difference and that there is no natural or neutral arbiter of a true representation" (Huysmans 2002: 50). Violences and threats, as much as states and in/security, are interpreted through the practices that enable individuals to make sense of their social locations and identities. Primarily, this approach displays "a preference for emphasizing a theorization of the power-knowledge nexus" which conceives of all knowledge as intrinsically related to power and power as productive of certain types of knowledge (e.g. Foucault

19 Examples of this approach include Campbell 1998a; Butler 2004; Ling/Agathangelou 2004; Shepherd 2006.

20 Kevin Anderson: "US Muslims Suffer Backlash", in: BBC News, 19 November 2002; at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/2488829.stm>; Islamic Human Rights Commission, 2002: "The Hidden Victims of September 11: The Backlash Against Muslims in the UK"; at: <http://www.ihrc.org.uk/file/report02sep06backlash. pdf>.

21 As mentioned above, this notion draws heavily on Butler's theorizing of gender as performative. Butler sees gender as the organizational matrix that orders the emergence of the subject "within and as the matrix of gender relations themselves" (Butler 1993: 7), just as this perspective sees security discourses as ordering the identity framework of sovereignty. Both regulatory ideals – gender and sovereignty – are premised on a system of binary logic that this approach seeks to problematize.

22 "'Threats to UK Security' Detained", in: BBC News, 8 August 2005; at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/uk/4141000.stm>.

1980). For Security Studies, "it has the advantage that the research slides directly into the key area of the governing work of security utterances" (Huysmans 2002: 60). That is, in light of the dominance of a rationalist vision of security in contemporary policy discourse, and the ways in which this dominance functions to reproduce a discursive link between security and priority in the representation of policy issues, theorizing security as performative and investigating the identities being performed at any given moment draws attention to the types of knowledge that are (re)produced and the practices of power immanent in the processes of (re)production.

By interrogating representations of security and threat, post-structuralist security analysis problematizes the notion that security maps directly onto a predetermined understanding of the state (of) being free from danger. Policies pursued in the name of 'security' and the threats to which these policies purport to respond are performative of a particular socio-political order and the identities of the subjects and objects within that order.

39.5 Conclusion

Throughout this chapter we have indicated ways in which security policies not only impact on the lives of individuals everywhere, but also function to construct the lived experiences of those individuals and limit the conditions of possibility of their lives. We have emphasized the ways in which policy discourses about in/security resonate closely with very conventional conceptualizations of security and that these links serve to prescribe certain policy responses and proscribe others. At the same time, we have drawn attention to the ways in which the political process of securitization produces resources that can be used to implement the policy responses that are implicated in the performance of a particular configuration of political identity.

An expressly critical analysis of security will, minimally, challenge the naturalized assumptions of the rationalist representations of the world, and its extensions. A critical analysis of security refuses to take the world as it finds it, "with the prevailing social and power relationships and the institutions into which they are organized, as the given framework for action," nor does it see as its general aim "to make those relationships and institutions work smoothly by dealing effectively with particular sources of trouble" (Cox 1986: 208).

A critical theory, in contrast, allows us to disturb "comfortable" understandings of the world, thus opening up the possibility that we can "make the world anew" (Gusterson 1993: 8). Reconceptualizing security as discourse not only attempts to contest privileged constructions of the world but also attempts to re-imagine the world. As Jennifer Milliken (1999: 244) argues, "[c]oncretizing other possibilities is surely the best way to enable people to imagine how their being-in-the-world is not only changeable, but perhaps, ought to be changed."

These are not simply academic concerns without significance in 'the real world'. It matters deeply for a host of social relations whether one is more afraid of, say, bombs owned by the United States and based in Britain, or the possibility that a 'transnational terrorist network' might get hold of a bomb. It matters for everyone whether immigration is represented as a threat to security, a necessary source of cheap and willing labour, or the exercise of a human right to freedom of movement. Furthermore, conceptualizing security as discourse draws attention to the politics of representation, and pays critical attention to the ways in which 'we' as subjects are positioned, and can enjoy privilege, through their practice.

A discursive approach to security assumes that one's legitimacy as a knowing subject is constructed through discursive practices that privilege some forms of being over others. In the context of 'security', because of the concrete social power of the concept, these considerations are particularly important. As Simon Dalby (1997: 19–20) comments, "seen in these critical terms, the whole political preoccupation with security is less a matter of a pre-given political reality and more a matter of the social construction of political orders." The example of immigration has been used to illustrate the various ways in which it can be represented, and the impact of the different conceptions of security on its representation as a policy issue. In the context of claims that, since 11 September 2001, we live in a world that has somehow fundamentally changed, immigration and the connotations of border control, mechanisms of surveillance, and the violence that accompanies it are of particular relevance. Problematizing immigration – problematizing *security* – entails the recognition that there are no easy answers, that even "falsely obvious" (Barthes 1972: 11) answers need to be challenged. As security scholars, we must take this challenge seriously.