

Syrian Refugees in Canada?
Interpretation and Judgement in the Political Production of Security Threats

by

Jessica Singh
B.A. with Distinction, University of Victoria, 2014

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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

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What are we to understand by the term ‘security’ in international relations? This thesis explores the theoretical foundations of security risks and threats in modern politics.

Taking Thomas Hobbes and Michel Foucault as the paradigmatic theorists of modern political power, this thesis explains security as an inherently contingent and contextual phenomenon, intertwined and embedded in socio-historical discourses. Each of the three chapters explain how security manifests and operates as a type of discourse (discursive formation) under sovereignty, working to achieve particular social, political, and epistemological ends. The practical focus of this project is a case study analysis of the Canadian Liberal Government’s #WelcomeRefugees project, a government assisted resettlement project for displaced victims of the Syrian civil war. Drawing on the example of the case study, this thesis investigates the underlying political, historical, and theoretical conditions which mobilize and inform modern political regimes of security and risk management.

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Dedication

For Anita.

Introduction

This study is inspired by a series of often paradoxical social and political assumptions about security as a substantive ‘thing.’ The purpose of this introductory section is to provide a means for engaging with the arguments proposed in the rest of this study, i.e., a contextual framework and vocabulary for interpreting the issues, events, and phenomena discussed in the next three chapters.

Over the last two decades, security and risk management have been at the center of intellectual and policy debates in international relations.¹ The perceived proliferation of risk in global politics has inspired numerous analyses of the new governance of societies, the role of technology and data in security practices, and the reshaping of sovereign power and modern subjects.² Responding to new local and global realities, several contemporary influential political theorists have alluded to the idea of a twenty-first century “safety state” (Giorgio Agamben 2005; Judith Butler 2004; Jacques Derrida 2003).³ Other scholars have similarly suggested how sovereignty has undergone a series of “spatial displacements and temporal deferrals” in the twenty-first century⁴ and how global politics today is not about the logic of exception or emergency, but rather, a politics in which sovereignty must conform to different forms of risk and uncertainty.⁵

¹ Miguel de Larrinaga & Mark B. Salter, “Cold CASE: A Manifesto for Canadian Critical Security Studies,” *Critical Studies on Security*, 2.1 (2014), 8.

² See Claudia Aradau, Luis Lobo-Guerrero, and Rens Van Munster, “Security, Technologies of Risk, and the Political: Guest Editors' Introduction,” *Security Dialogue*, vol. 39.2 (2008): 147-154.

³ Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception*, Kevin Attell (transl.) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Judith Butler, *Precarious Life*, (New York: Verso, 2004); Jürgen, Habermas, Jacques Derrida, and Giovanna Borradori, *Philosophy in a Time of Terror* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

⁴ Nick Vaughan-Williams, *Europe's Border Crisis: Biopolitical Security and Beyond* (Oxford Univ. Press, 2015), 2.

⁵ RBJ Walker, “Security, Critique, Europe,” *Security Dialogue*, vol. 38, no. 1 (2007), 80.

Drawing on some of this literature, this thesis argues that the management of security in international relations (contemporary political regimes, forms, and practices of security) is intrinsically connected to subjective modes of interpretation and judgement. Evidence drawn from a range of primary and secondary sources helps support this hypothesis. The analysis of security in this study revolves around two central themes: 1) the relationship between sovereignty and uncertainty; and 2) the relationship between sovereignty and knowledge. I am particularly interested in the logic of pre-emptive and risk-based regimes of security in contemporary global politics. As such, I explore the idea that sites of existential threat and danger can not only be identified and known scientifically (predicted with varying degrees of certainty), but further, that these sites can and should be responded to pre-emptively, as if they had already threatened to inflict damage upon and existentially threatened the safety and well-being of the political community. Focusing on concepts of certainty and uncertainty under sovereignty, this study attempts to locate and understand modern security regimes, and processes of securitization, from a Foucauldian perspective of discourse analysis. A case study of the Canadian Liberal Government's response to the Syrian refugee crisis, popularly known as the #WelcomeRefugees policy,⁶ will serve as an example for demonstrating how contemporary political regimes and forms of security are fundamentally *contingent* upon specific socio-historical, political, and cultural discourses of truth and knowledge. This case study provides a politically and socially relevant example of how modern security regimes operate in relation with sovereign power, where security reflects one part of a broader discursive network of power-knowledge relations under sovereignty.

⁶ Government of Canada, "#WelcomeRefugees," web accessed Apr. 27, 2017 at <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/>.

Case study

Existing political representations of the #WelcomeRefugees policy do not tell us how security regimes target and manage certain types of refugee bodies on the basis of presupposed assumptions about risk and threat. What is concealed in these representations is how security constructs identities, by differentiating and categorizing refugee individuals on the basis of visible biological markers, including age, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality. My objective with this case study is to locate and understand the methods, means, and processes used in the Canadian state's categorization of Syrian refugees as either victims or threats. I am particularly interested in the Canadian Government's use of biometric identity management systems as part of its screening and selection process for refugees applying for resettlement in Canada.⁷ Whereas immigration and border control practices have traditionally been limited to documentation checks of migrants (e.g. passport, citizenship cards, photo identity cards), and in some cases, individual screening interviews with border guards, biometric identity management systems are increasingly being used by governments around the world as a means for "high accuracy verification" at the border.⁸ Biometric security screening is the process of collecting and analysing unique biographical and biological data belonging to individuals, and can include fingerprint, retina, iris, voice, and/or facial scanning.⁹ Drawing on the example of biometrics,

⁷ Government of Canada, "Immigration Information Sharing," web accessed Jul. 1, 2016 at <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/media/backgrounders/2012/2012-12-07.asp>. As part of the global response to the Syrian refugee crisis, there is continuing coordination in the collection and exchange of biometric data on Syrian refugees, including between the Canadian Government and the UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and intergovernmental security and surveillance agencies such as INTERPOL, EUROPOL, FRONTEX, and The Five Eyes Program.

⁸ N.K. Ratha et. al., "Big Data approach to biometric-based identity analytics," *IBM Journal of Research and Development*, vol. 59, (2015): DOI:10.1147/JRD.2015.2394514.

⁹ I explain biometric technologies in detail in chapter three.

this case study aims to add to existing discussions in IR about security, risk, and the “reconfiguration” of sovereign power in bureaucratic and technological processes.¹⁰

Method and scope

This study interprets and explains security, not as a fixed or homogenous concept, but rather as a fundamentally contingent and transformative concept, one that “undergoes constant change as new utterances are added to it.”¹¹ The scope of this theoretical project is security in the context of the sovereign state, as understood from a Weberian definition: “A compulsory political organization with a centralized government that maintains a monopoly of the legitimate use of force within a certain territory.”¹² Insofar as I am drawing on examples and theories of security that focus on the political principles of Western liberal-democratic states, whether or not this same model or account would apply to other types of states is beyond the scope of this project. The premise for my analysis in the next three chapters is Michel Foucault’s explanation of the relationship between power and knowledge (discourse-knowledge), in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969). Here, Foucault is interested in exploring the origins and conditions of possibility for modern systems of truth – the diverse ‘disciplines’ of knowledge; “the history of

¹⁰ I explain what I mean by ‘reconfiguration’ in detail in chapter three.

¹¹ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge: Archéologie Du Savoir*. Alan Sheridan (ed.), (London: Tavistock Publications, 1972), 9. An important task of Foucauldian discourse analysis is to demonstrate the underlying relations of power, the ‘discursive means’ through which certain claims, meanings, and truths about reality are established in society. For more on this method, see Holger Stritzel, “Securitization, Power, Intertextuality: Discourse Theory and the Translations of Organized Crime,” *Security Dialogue*, vol. 43, no. 6 (2012): 550-551.

¹² Max Weber, *The Vocation Lectures*, Owen, D. and Strong, B. (eds.) Livingstone, R. (transl.) (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company 2004), 33. I use Weber’s definition of the state because it is for the most part devoid of any normative qualities, i.e. “a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory,” whether that legitimacy derives from charisma, tradition, or law. My purpose in invoking Weber’s thought is to contextualize my discussion of security in this study, around an emblematic definition of modern state sovereignty.

science, the history of philosophy, the history of thought, and the history of literature.”¹³ In Foucault’s understanding, it is history, and not *a priori* objective truths, which produces and organizes knowledge (concepts of truth): history “orders [knowledge], arranges it in levels,” and “distinguishes between what is relevant and what is not” in a given society and historical period.¹⁴ Following Foucault’s concept of discourse and his method of discourse analysis, in the next three chapters I explore how political regimes and formations of security are *discursively constructed* under sovereignty, as opposed to phenomena that are objectively or independently present. Moreover, this study’s specific method of discourse analysis is marked by a focus on the constitutive power of discourses; how discourses produce knowledge in different historical periods and societies, and exclude certain ways of thinking and speaking about truth. This discursive analysis is based in the premise that modern political regimes, processes, and practices of security (in sovereign liberal-democratic states) need to be understood in relation to specific historical and socio-cultural conditions of possibility. Epistemologically, this kind of approach means moving away from objectivist and materialist approaches in IR, towards more “interpretative” modes of analysis.¹⁵ In addition, I use Foucauldian discourse analysis to answer conceptual and practical questions about security in this case study; for example, how do the securitizations of particular types of individuals occur in this case? What are the conditions of possibility for these securitizations? Are these securitizations objectively and empirically supported?

¹³ Foucault, *Archaeology*, 4.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁵ Keith Krause and Michael C. Williams, *Critical Security Studies: Concepts and Strategies*, 49-51. According to Krause and Williams, “interpretative modes of analysis” involve studying the role of ideas (“ideational elements”) in relation to the “historical context within which actors take specific decisions [over security].” I expand on this method in chapter one.

Examining security using a Foucauldian discursive lens is useful for demonstrating how security is not some kind of constant or ‘fixed case’ scenario that can be studied universally and across spectrums. The broader methodology of this study is best defined as “an analytics of government”,¹⁶ a conceptual analysis concerned with the specific mechanisms of security, with its routines and operations in contemporary politics, in contrast to the typical ‘statist’ concerns of orthodox (realist and constructivist) theories of security.¹⁷ In this context, each of the chapters can be read in terms of a Foucauldian discourse analysis. Taken together, they suggest that modern political discourses of security imply:

1. A distinctive way of thinking, relying on definite vocabularies and procedures for the production of truth;
2. Specific ways of acting, intervening and directing, made up of particular types of rationality (expertise and knowledge)
3. Characteristic ways of forming subjects, selves, persons, actors, or agents.¹⁸

Applying this framework to the specific case study examined in this thesis, my goal is to show how political representations of Syrian refugees as ‘security threats’ reflect a distinctive way of thinking about security, “relying on definite vocabularies and procedures for the production of truth.”¹⁹ My specific focus in these chapters is the relationship between power (sovereignty) and knowledge in modern society; that is, how knowledge about security threats and risks is produced and legitimated (accepted as ‘true’/real) in relation to particular socio-historical discourses, or standards of truth. In sum, this study presents security as a complex discursive phenomenon, which appears in sovereign politics in the form of 1) specific *claims to judgement over threat, danger, and insecurity* (subjective decisionism); and 2) *different networks and*

¹⁶ Mitchell Dean, *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society* (London: Sage, 2010), 23.

¹⁷ I explain what I mean by statist and orthodox in chapter one.

¹⁸ Dean, *Governmentality*, 23.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 33.

relations of power and knowledge production (multiple technological and administrative securitizing processes). I do this in the following steps.

Chapter one

I begin by exploring the broader logic of security in contemporary global politics; how security is imagined, discussed, and managed politically as ‘risk management.’ Next, I put risk management into conversation with the case study. The focus for this discussion is securitized representations of the Syrian refugee crisis under the Canadian Liberal Government of Justin Trudeau. Specifically, I introduce two types of problems with representations of security in this policy. The first problem concerns the conflation of security with identity. In particular, I focus on visual representations of terrorists in Western politics and media, and how this results in certain kinds of exclusions in the Liberals’ current resettlement policy. Drawing on the work of Jasbir Puar and others, I suggest that the securitization and exclusion of single male refugees from this policy (as ‘high risk’ individuals) is informed by subjective assumptions of terrorism/terrorist identity. This leads me to introduce the second problem with security in this case study; how political representations of risk/threat are unsupported by objective and empirical evidence. The broader purpose of this discussion is to set up the central issue at stake in the study’s critique of security: the role of subjective interpretation and judgement in political representations of threat.

The second part of the chapter is a literature review of existing frameworks and models of analysis for security in IR. While many positivist IR scholars expected that the quantitative study of security would eventually dominate the entire field, several opposing and non-

traditional approaches emerged in the Cold War era, displacing these previous convictions.²⁰ Over the last two decades in particular, the IR discipline has witnessed a major strategic debate over the concept of security and, as a result, there is no single method or methodology which guides the contemporary IR subfield of security studies.²¹ My purpose with this literature review is to shed light on some of the shortcomings and gaps in empirical-quantitative models of security analysis in IR; specifically, how these models obscure the discursive construction of security threats under sovereignty. To do this, I draw on the work of two influential post structuralist theorists of IR (RBJ Walker and David Campbell) to suggest how security regimes depend on particular pre-existing political, social, and cultural *conditions of possibility*. I conclude chapter one by setting up the specific theoretical problem explored in this study's critique: the contingency of concepts of truth and knowledge under sovereignty.

Chapter two

Continuing the conversation from chapter one, in this chapter I turn to one of the most notable origin stories of the realist school of thought in IR, Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* (1651). I problematize conventional positivist and realist appropriations of Hobbes' work in IR theory. I do this specifically by shifting the focus from human nature, conflict, and anarchy in Hobbes' argument, to epistemological themes; in particular, Hobbes' engagement with questions about the nature and status of knowledge in the state of nature. I interpret and present the problem of the state of nature as a problem of *epistemological uncertainty*. In doing so, I rearticulate

²⁰ Can E. Mutlu & Mark B. Salter, "Commensurability of Research Methods in Critical Security Studies," *Critical Studies on Security*, (2014) 2:3, 353.

²¹ Alan Collins, *Contemporary Security Studies*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2016). This discussion is based on Collins' definition of security studies as an "IR sub-field" comprised of the following theoretical frameworks and approaches: realism, liberalism, social constructivism, peace studies, critical security studies, gender, human security, securitization, and historical materialism.

Hobbes' theory of sovereignty and the social contract as a story about the social and political origins of modern concepts of truth and knowledge; namely, how an authoritative (fixed) account of knowledge/truth is definitively and necessarily secured through the construction of sovereignty (the creation of a sovereign authority). Further, I turn to Hobbes' political theory to suggest the centrality of contingency and uncertainty in the construction of sovereignty. Hobbes' theory helps me demonstrate how existing political and 'expert' claims about security and threat are fundamentally *contingent* upon pre-existing standards of truth and knowledge. In Hobbes' view, these standards are not objective or empirical but rather subjective and personal. This chapter's discussion contributes to the study by shedding light on the specific socio-historical conditions, processes, and modes of authorization which a) enable particular meanings and understandings of security and threat and b) render these meanings authoritative (necessary, true, and 'real').

Chapter three

In chapter three I focus on the different institutional settings through which security and risk management strategies play out in this case study. Specifically, I consider ways of applying Hobbes' political theory, in particular his concept of political judgement, to the case study – in a way that makes sense for poststructuralist ways of thinking about security and sovereignty.²² In the example of biometric screening, computerized technologies operate as mechanisms for measuring and commodifying different sites and forms of uncertainty. The purpose of biometric screening is a fixed account of risk and threat (forms of uncertainty), in a way that corresponds with existing standards for truth and knowledge. Thus, the question I ask in this chapter is, what is at stake in the use of biometrics in the #WelcomeRefugees policy? The example of biometrics

²² For a detailed account of what I mean by post structuralism, see chapter one.

helps explain how political concepts of threat and danger are constructed under various modes of interpretation, prediction, and calculation, which produce (objectify and materialize) these concepts as ‘real.’ This is the idea that, as David Campbell has suggested, “there need not be an action or event to provide the grounds for an interpretation of danger.”²³ My main point in this chapter is to show how politicians are drawing on a set of pre-existing *discourses* about truth and knowledge, and modern science and technology (e.g. the power of ‘big data’) to politically frame certain kinds of refugees as existential threats and risks.

²³ David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 3.

Chapter 1: Causes and Consequences of Security in Canada's Syrian Refugee Resettlement Project

“Danger is not an objective condition. It [sic] is not a thing that exists independently of those to whom it become a threat.” – David Campbell²⁴

This chapter bridges the Syrian refugee crisis with work on security, identity, and risk management in International Relations (IR). The first part of the chapter explores the significance of security and risk management in the Canadian Liberal Government's ongoing response to the Syrian refugee crisis. It seems that a specific narrative of security and vulnerability has been invoked politically, to express the Syrian resettlement project as a fundamentally humanitarian and ethics-based project, when in fact there are very clear exceptions and exclusions within this policy. Drawing on the case study, this chapter's discussion sheds light on the broader theoretical, political, and ethical implications of contemporary security and risk management regimes in global politics. Some of the questions I ask are: who defines the dangerousness of threats and risks? Are threats and risks measurable quantitatively? How do we know that something is threatening? What counts as a threat?

The final part of the chapter is a literature review, in which I introduce the intense conceptual debate over security in the IR discipline. I explain how the concept of security has traditionally been conveyed theoretically, and how it has diversified in the last three decades to include new types of threats, new referent objects and new rationales and normative content.

²⁴ David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign policy and the Politics of Identity* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1992), 1.

§1. Risk Management and The Syrian Refugee Crisis

“Risk and uncertainty are the hallmarks of world politics at the dawn of the twenty-first century.”

– Claudia Aradau and Rens Van Munster²⁵

I begin my analysis with the basic premise that, since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, there has been a continuing “obsessive preoccupation” with risk in global politics.²⁶ In international law, national security is interpreted as the inherent right of sovereign states to “individual or collective self-defence” against a broad range of threats.²⁷ However, as global security concerns and threats have diversified, so too has the scope of the concept of national security.

In *World Risk Society* (1999), sociologist Ulrich Beck introduced the significance of the concept of risk for modern politics and society, specifically, how risk and uncertainty were part of the “master narrative” of the current and historical self-consciousness of modernity.²⁸ In a related work Beck wrote, “What do events as different as Chernobyl, global warming, mad cow disease, the debate about the human genome... financial crisis [and] terrorist attacks have in common? They signify different dimensions and dynamics of world risk society.”²⁹ Taking Beck’s argument seriously, several IR scholars have argued that the concept of security has

²⁵ Claudia Aradau and Rens Van Munster, *Politics of Catastrophe: Genealogies of the Unknown*, (New York: Routledge, 2011), 18.

²⁶ See Ben Muller, “Borders, risks, exclusions,” *Studies in Social Justice* Volume 3, Issue 1, 67-78 (2009) 71.

²⁷ Hitoshi Nasu, “The Expanded Conception of Security and International Law: Challenges to the UN Collective Security System,” *Amsterdam Law Forum*, vol. 3, no. 3 (2011): 15-20. At the present stage of development, international law around security is based in the UN collective security system, and the principle of state sovereignty, as expressed in Article 2(4) of the UN Charter. Within the field of public international law, the concept of security implies one of four political objectives of sovereign states: “national security; international security; human security; and regime security.”

²⁸ Ulrich Beck, *World Risk Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999).

²⁹ Ulrich Beck, “The Terrorist Threat: World Risk Society Revisited,” *Theory, Culture & Society*, 19.4 (2002), 39.

undergone a fundamental transformation in twenty-first century world politics.³⁰ The basic idea of the concept of risk management is that security processes no longer take place within the Cold War paradigm of deterrence and defense, but rather follow a central *logic of pre-emption* (also known as the “precautionary principle”).³¹ Risk management refers to exclusively ‘risk-based’ regimes and forms of security in international relations which are organized in response to the perceived proliferation of fundamentally uncertain sites, locations, and forms of threat; the emergence of “potentially cataclysmic transnational risks”³² and “newly emergent dangers that imperil settled modes of life.”³³

In this thesis, risk management is interpreted and explained as a particular strategy and logic for the management of security in international relations, which works through the rationalization of chance and possibilities; the idea of various “low probability, high consequence” events.³⁴ The significance of risk management for this study is that there is no exact site or location of threat (no discernible referent object of security). That is, the security policies and solutions implemented under risk-management are not in relation to some immediate dangerous object, event, or other phenomenon. Rather, the referent object of security under risk management is uncertainty, i.e. *potential* sites and locations of threat and possible

³⁰ A. Hammerstad and Ingrid Boas, “National Security Risks? Uncertainty, Austerity and Other Logics of Risk in the UK government’s National Security Strategy,” *Cooperation and Conflict*, 50.4 (2015): 475-491. This article identifies three current schools of risk-security analysis in the IR discipline: ‘Risk as governmentality’ and ‘global risk management’ are both drawn from sociology, while the third school, ‘political risk analysis,’ is adapted from economics and business studies. See p. 475-491.

³¹ *Ibid*, 480.

³² Shahar Hameiri, “State Transformation, Territorial Politics and the Management of Transnational Risk,” *International Relations* 25.3 (2011), 381.

³³ Louise Amoore, *The Politics of Possibility: Risk and Security Beyond Probability* (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 2013), 9.

³⁴ As I explain in chapter three, the objective of security under risk management is events which do *not* exist in reality, but which must be discerned and responded to as real possibilities. Further, these types of fundamentally uncertain risks require the pluralization of different experts and expert rationalities (expert knowledge and expert modes of production for knowledge). Under risk management, security operates as a set of heterogeneous and diffuse practices of the identification of ‘threat.’ I will return to this discussion in detail in chapter three.

future catastrophes which have not yet (and may never) occur, but which nevertheless inform present political action. As I explain in chapter three, risk-management regimes operate on the premise that risks and threats can indeed be quantified and calculated (predicted) with various degrees of certainty using the right methods and techniques.³⁵

Risk and the construction of the Syrian refugee crisis as a global security issue

The concept of risk is additionally at the center of ongoing scholarly debates about the influence of security on humanitarian politics, and the idea that refugee policies around the world are becoming “more strict” in the face of an increasing global focus on risk pre-emption and prevention.³⁶ One of the effects of risk-based security for the present Syrian refugee crisis is tighter border controls in Western countries, what one scholar explains as the emergence of a range of “procedural and physical deterrence mechanisms” designed to discourage potential migrants and refugees.³⁷ Speaking to this point, a 2015 study of the human security implications of the Syrian refugee crisis found that the majority of European and North American governments were employing increasingly more securitized policies in their responses to the crisis.³⁸ Other scholars have similarly suggested how since 9/11, immigration policies in North America and Europe have been designed to “keep asylum seekers out,” with security consistently

³⁵ I will return to this discussion in detail in chapter three. My purpose in this current chapter is to introduce the broader social, political, and theoretical implications of the construction of threats under risk management.

³⁶ Ela Gokalp Aras, et al., “The International Migration and Foreign Policy Nexus: The Case of Syrian Refugee Crisis and Turkey,” *Migration Letters* 12.3 (2015): 193.

³⁷ Thomas Gammeltoft-Hansen, “International Refugee Law and Refugee Policy: The Case of Deterrence Policies,” *Journal of Refugee Studies* 27.4 (2014): 574-595.

³⁸ Benedetta Berti, “The Syrian refugee crisis: Regional and human security implications,” *Strategic Assessment* 17.4 (2015): 41-53.

being prioritized by policymakers as much more vital than immigration and refugee protection.³⁹

In the case of the current global refugee crisis, many of these issues have to do with presupposed causal links between organized terrorism and Middle Eastern/Arab and Muslim migrants. For example, the general consensus in the international community is that the Middle East represents represents “significant security challenges.”⁴⁰ Particularly since the events of 9/11 and subsequent ‘wars on terror,’ there has been a dramatic securitization (more precisely, an ethnicization and racialization) of particular identities and bodies. Several scholars have explored how Western media and governments construct an image of the Arab and Muslim migrant as an alien, foreign ‘Other’ and a threat to national security (Judith Butler 2004; Hamid Dabashi 2011; Michael Williams 2003).⁴¹ For example, the idea of “terrorists hiding [in] refugee streams” has been at the forefront of foreign policy discussions and responses to the Syrian refugee crisis.⁴² Although the UN has described the situation in Syria as “one of the most painful humanitarian crises” in history, it has also equally emphasized the terrorist threat in that region.⁴³ Former Secretary-General of the UN, Ban Ki Moon, described the situation in Syria as a “whirlwind” of radicalism and sectarianism challenging global security.⁴⁴ The UN has also repeatedly made

³⁹ Scott D. Watson, *The Securitization of Humanitarian Migration: Digging Moats and Sinking Boats* (London: Routledge, 2009), 1.

⁴⁰ Berti, “The Syrian refugee crisis,” 43.

⁴¹ According to this literature, Western representations of issues and events related to the Middle East frequently involve the criminalization of religious, ethnic, cultural, and ideological identities. See Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London: Verso, 2004); Hamid Dabashi, *Brown Skins, White Masks* (New York: Pluto Press, 2011); Michael Williams, “Words, images, enemies: securitization and international politics,” *International Studies Quarterly*, 47, (2003): 511–32.

⁴² Alex Schmid, “Links between terrorism and migration,” ICCT Research Paper (May 2016). Web accessed Mar. 21, 2017 at <https://www.icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Alex-P.-Schmid-Links-between-Terrorism-and-Migration-1.pdf>.

⁴³ United Nations, “Security Council Unanimously Adopts Resolution 2254, Endorsing Road Map for Peace Process in Syria, Setting Timetable for Talks” (Dec. 18 2015). Web accessed Mar. 21, 2017 at <https://www.un.org/press/en/2015/sc12171.doc.htm>.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

clear the need to exercise extreme vigilance and caution in humanitarian responses to Syria, as part of the global effort to prevent the Islamic State (IS), Al-Qaida, and “associated individuals and groups” from expanding their activities.⁴⁵ In effect, security has become the guiding theme in global political responses and representations of the Syrian refugee crisis.

This leads us to the specific case study examined in this thesis. The Canadian Government is responding to the humanitarian emergency in Syria under the #WelcomeRefugees policy, a complex undertaking requiring the coordination of multiple international organizations as well as several domestic agencies.⁴⁶ Whereas the response to Syria under PM Stephen Harper was much more security focused, the Liberal Government has in contrast focused on a policy that is ‘representative of Canadian national identity’: a “whole of government approach [to] enhance security and stability, provide vital humanitarian assistance, and help partners deliver social services, rebuild infrastructure and good governance.”⁴⁷ Today, Canada is internationally commended for its “clear and very positive commitment” to the crisis,⁴⁸ and since Nov. 4, 2015, a total of 40,081 Syrian refugees have arrived and resettled in Canada.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ United Nations, “Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2253 (2015), Security Council Expands Sanctions Framework to Include Islamic State in Iraq and Levant.” Web accessed Feb. 10, 2017 at <https://www.un.org/press/en/2015/sc12168.doc.htm>.

⁴⁶ Government of Canada, “Health considerations in the Syrian refugee resettlement process in Canada,” (March 17, 2016) *Canadian Communicable Diseases Report*, Vol. 42-S2. Web accessed December 8, 2016 at <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/ccdr-rmtc/16vol42/dr-rm42-s2/ar-02-eng.php>.

⁴⁷ Government of Canada, “Prime Minister sets new course to address crises in Iraq and Syria and impacts on the region” (Feb. 8, 2016). Web accessed Mar. 2, 2016 at <http://pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2016/02/08/prime-minister-sets-new-course-address-crises-iraq-and-syria-and-impacts-region>.

⁴⁸ A.M. McMurdo, “Causes and Consequences of Canada’s Resettlement of Syrian Refugees,” 52 (2016) *Forced Migration Review*, 82-84.

⁴⁹ Government of Canada. “#WelcomeRefugees.” Web accessed April 12, 2017 at <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/index.asp>.

Table 1: Timeline of Canada's Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis

Date	
June 2013	The United Nations (UN) makes its first formal request to Member States to assist in Syrian refugee resettlement.
January 2015	Despite original promises, fewer than 1000 Syrian refugees have arrived in Canada. The Conservatives commit to resettling 10,000 Syrian refugees by 2018, with a specific focus on religious minorities.
March 2015	The Conservatives finally achieve their original promise of resettling 1300 refugees.
June 2015	The Conservatives order an audit of the GAR program for Syrian refugees, citing immediate security concerns. The audit identifies no issues but delays refugee processing for several weeks.
October 2015	Justin Trudeau's Liberal Party wins a majority government and states its plan to resettle 25,000 Syrian refugees in Canada by the end of 2015.
November 2015	Coordinated terror attacks in Paris cast a shadow over the Liberals' original Syrian refugee resettlement plan. The Government states that it will not be able achieve its original target of 25,000 refugees by December, and sets a new target of 10,000.
December 2015	The first government flight of Syrian refugees arrives in Toronto on December 10 th . The Liberals state that they will not meet the reduced target of 10,000. They promise to resettle 25,000 refugees by February.
March 2016	Number of Syrian refugees resettled in Canada reaches over 26,000.
January 2017	Since November 4, 2015, a total of 40, 081 Syrian refugees have been resettled in Canada under the Liberal Government's #WelcomeRefugees initiative.

Source: Government of Canada, “#WelcomeRefugees: Key Figures,” web accessed Jun. 2, 2016, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/milestones.asp>.

Table 2: Syrian Refugee Resettlement Breakdown by Category

Refugee category	Number of refugees
Government-Assisted Refugee	21,876
Blended Visa Office-Referred Refugee	3,931
Privately Sponsored Refugee	14,274
Total	40,081

Source: Government of Canada, “#WelcomeRefugees: Key Figures,” web accessed Jun. 2, 2016, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/milestones.asp>.

Problem 1) Security and identity

The Government has stated that its first priority in this policy is “to protect Canada and the safety and security of Canadians.”⁵⁰ Canada is committed under UN Security Council Resolution 2178 to prevent the recruitment, organization, transport and equipping of foreign terrorist fighters.⁵¹ Likewise, the referent object of ‘security’ in the Liberals’ current resettlement policy is the possibility that some refugees might be ‘terrorists in disguise’ attempting to infiltrate the Canadian state. In this case, risk management operates in the form of health and security screenings designed to identify and prevent dangerous (“high risk”) persons from entering Canadian borders. According to the current policy: “Each Syrian refugee that Canada welcomes will undergo a robust, multi-layered screening,” including thorough “immigration and security interviews by experienced visa officers, identity verification, and health and medical

⁵⁰ Government of Canada, “Counterterrorism Strategy.” Web accessed Apr. 14, 2017 at <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/ntnl-scr/cntr-trrrsm/cntr-trrrsm-strtg-en.aspx>

⁵¹ Government of Canada. *2016 Public Report on the Terrorist Threat to Canada*. Web accessed Nov. 22, 2016 at <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/2016-pblc-rpr-trrrst-thrt/index-en.aspx>

examination.”⁵² Over five hundred Canadian officials have been deployed in UNHCR camps overseas to interview each Syrian refugee and check their identity against Canadian, American, and international databases, but few details have been revealed about the process overall.⁵³

I argue that one of the problems with the Liberal Government’s current policy is the representation of the Syrian refugee crisis as a national security risk/threat and in particular, how this affirms and exacerbates existing fears and anxieties about Middle Eastern and Muslim migrants in Canada. Prior to the conflict, Syria’s ethnic groups consisted of Arabs (ninety percent) and Kurds, Armenians and others (ten percent), and Islam was the dominant religion (Sunni, Alawi, Ismaili, Shia).⁵⁴ These demographics have problematically been conflated with assumptions about ‘religious extremism’ and ‘Islamic fundamentalism’ in Western political representations of the crisis. There is a range of literature concerning how Western representations of Arab and Middle Eastern identities are based on Orientalist depictions of a religion and people as different, strange, and threatening.⁵⁵ Scholars note the popular conflation of Islam in Canada with “the largely non-European racial and ethnic backgrounds of Muslims,” and how policies related to citizenship, immigration, and security disproportionately target Arab

⁵² Government of Canada, “#WelcomeRefugees.”

⁵³ Benjamin Burke, “How Canada and the US Compare on Syrian Refugees,” (Dec. 2, 2015) CBC News. Web accessed March 1, 2017 at <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/syrian-refugees-canada-united-states-comparison-1.3340852>

⁵⁴ Government of Canada, “Population Profile: Syrian Refugees” (2015) Web accessed Jul. 1, 2016 at <http://lifelinesyria.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/EN-Syrian-Population-Profile.pdf>. It should be noted that there are important historical, social, political, and other distinctions between these groups. However, due to the scope of this study these distinctions are not explored here. For an excellent account of modern Syria’s political, ideological, and religious history, see Christian C. Sahner, *Among the Ruins: Syria Past and Present*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

⁵⁵ Due to the scope of this study, a comprehensive review of the relevant literature on this topic is not provided. For more information on this topic, see Jill Walker Rettberg and Radhika Gajjala, “Terrorists Or Cowards: Negative Portrayals of Male Syrian Refugees in Social Media,” *Feminist Media Studies* 16.1 (2016): 178-81.

and Muslim migrants.⁵⁶ In March 2016, PM Trudeau was asked by a news reporter whether he was “concerned about the prospect of a terrorist attack initiated by a Syrian refugee.”⁵⁷ The question exemplifies the presupposed notion amongst some members of the Canadian public, of some necessary intrinsic relationship between Syrian refugees and terrorism, the dominant public perception that, ‘if we let in large numbers of Syrian refugees, then we will have more terrorists to deal with.’ For example, in February 2016, a high-profile Toronto immigration lawyer told CBC News:

I’m pretty concerned...I think the pace at which [the program] is going might be a bit too much, which causes a unique challenge for [Canadians]. When compared to other large groups of refugees, one could easily argue that this group represents a relatively higher-risk demographic.⁵⁸

Similarly, most public opposition to Syrian refugee resettlement in Canada is based in preexisting notions of the prospect of “a terrorist attack initiated by a Syrian refugee.”⁵⁹ A 2016 study of Canadian public opinion on the Syrian refugee crisis found that forty-four percent of Canadians were opposed to the Government’s resettlement project.⁶⁰ Speaking to this point, an independent petition entitled “Stop resettling 25,000 Syrian refugees in Canada” boasts nearly

⁵⁶ Paul Bramadat and Lorne Dawson (eds.) *Religious Radicalization and Securitization in Canada and Beyond*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 9.

⁵⁷ “Trudeau defends Syrian refugee program in '60 Minutes' profile to air Sunday,” (March 3, 2016) CBC News. Web accessed March 1, 2017 at <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/justin-trudeau-60-minutes-syrians-1.3474745>

⁵⁸ Guidy Mamman quoted in “Toronto Lawyer outlines security risks of Syrian refugees to U.S. lawmakers,” (Feb. 5, 2016) CBC News. Web accessed March 1, 2017 at <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/programs/metromorning/toronto-lawyer-outlines-security-risks-of-syrian-refugees-to-u-s-lawmakers-1.3434236>.

⁵⁹ “Trudeau defends Syrian refugee program,” CBC News.

⁶⁰ Angus Reid Institute, “Canadians divided on legacy of Syrian refugee resettlement plan” (Feb. 19, 2016). Web accessed Apr. 14, 2017 at <http://angusreid.org/canada-refugee-resettlement-plan/>.

50,000 signatures from “concerned Canadian citizens.”⁶¹ Directed towards PM Trudeau, the petition states that “the hustle to bring a large number of Syrian people in a short period of time has [the] potential to overlook terrorist...[Canada’s] policy on admitting refugees should be security first, then compassion.”⁶² The resettlement of Syrian refugees in Canada was also a major point of contention in last year’s U.S. presidential election, with then Republican nominee, Donald Trump, calling the Syrian refugee crisis a ‘terrorist Trojan horse’ threatening to disrupt public peace and safety (“the quality of life”) in North America.⁶³ Further, the terrorist attack in Paris in November 2015, in which one of the IS attackers was falsely believed to have made his way to France by posing as a Syrian refugee, is often cited as evidence of refugees’ threatening nature. As Nell Gabial (2016) explains, in the aftermath of the Paris attacks, Muslim and Arab refugees were seen by politicians, government officials, and members of the public in Europe and North America as embodying the threat of global terrorism.⁶⁴ Perhaps the clearest example of this was when, shortly after the attacks, PM Justin Trudeau made amendments to the original Syrian refugee resettlement plan, stating that the Paris attacks had “changed Canadians’ perceptions of security risks.”⁶⁵

Of particular relevance to this study’s analysis is the topic of visual representations of terrorism and terrorists in Western politics and media, specifically, how these representations emphasize certain types of bodies and bodily identities as “negative” and “threatening,” based on

⁶¹ “Stop Resettling 25,000 Syrian Refugees in Canada,” Care2 Petitions. Web accessed Jul. 4, 2016 at <http://www.thepetitionsite.com/790/431/152/stop-settling-25000-syrian-refugees-in-canada/>.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ “Five ways Donald Trump could have an impact on Canada” (Nov. 9, 2016). Toronto Star. Web accessed Apr. 14, 2017 at <https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2016/11/09/five-ways-donald-trump-could-have-an-impact-on-canada.html>.

⁶⁴ Nell Gabiam, “Humanitarianism, Development, and Security in the 21st Century: Lessons from the Syrian Refugee Crisis,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 48, no. 2 (2016): 382.

⁶⁵ “Canada’s new refugee plan,” (Jan. 5, 2017) Globe and Mail. Web accessed Apr. 14, 2017 at <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/canadas-new-refugee-plan-what-we-know-and-dont-know-sofar/article27476421/>.

presupposed assumptions about race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality.⁶⁶ I suggest that the Liberals' current policy, despite its implied claims to the contrary, is based on similar assumptions. In this section I introduce the underlying relations between security and identity in the #WelcomeRefugees policy. I am particularly concerned with the Government's own interpretations of what constitutes victimhood in this policy, at the expense and exclusion of very real forms of suffering. In the example of this case study, conceptualizing and presenting threats in terms of presupposed assumptions of terrorism allows for a *double move* of securitizing and victimizing refugees.

The specific focus for this discussion is the exclusion of single male refugees from resettlement, whose victimhood does *not* fit into the rubric of who or what counts properly as a refugee – i.e. single males will be processed “only if they are accompanied by their parents or identify as LGBT.”⁶⁷ The Government Assisted Refugee (GAR) program for Syrian refugees is presently only open to UNHCR registered refugees, specifically, *complete families, single-women, elderly people, religious minorities, and LGBTI individuals*.⁶⁸ These limitations are presently disguised and legitimized under a language of ‘prioritizing the most vulnerable’: “In an effort to maximize the success in resettlement while minimizing security risks, Canada has asked the UNHCR to prioritize vulnerable refugees.”⁶⁹ Though the Liberal government initially stated that ‘no single male refugees’ would be eligible for resettlement due to security concerns, they

⁶⁶ Rettberg and Gajjala, “Terrorists Or Cowards,” 179.

⁶⁷ “Canada’s new refugee plan,” Globe and Mail.

⁶⁸ Government of Canada. “#WelcomeRefugees.”

⁶⁹ Government of Canada, “Processing overview.” Web accessed Mar. 3, 2017 at http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=1023039&_ga=1.112208194.758898859.1449019518.

later softened their tone by explaining that only certain types of males were ineligible.⁷⁰ The policy's current restriction for single males only applies to heterosexual single (unmarried) males and excludes homosexual men, who fall into the category of "vulnerable refugees who are a lower security risk."⁷¹ In this understanding, victimhood on its own is not enough to be formally recognized and treated as a refugee. Rather, victimhood is only one part of this policy's broader eligibility criteria for asylum and resettlement. The other requirement is that one must be a "low security risk," which in this policy is equated with identity, i.e. being either a) female, b) a husband or wife, or c) a member of the LGBT community.⁷² These restrictions and limitations have prompted some critics to accuse the Liberal Government of being "very discriminatory when it comes to whom they are bringing in" as a refugee.⁷³ For example, there isn't any empirical evidence to suggest that single heterosexual male refugees from Syria are more dangerous or higher risk than other types of refugees (e.g. refugees who are husbands, fathers, LGBT).⁷⁴ Regardless, the Government has provided little explanation and reasoning for its

⁷⁰ Joe Friesen, "Syrian exodus to Canada: One year later, a look at who the refugees are and where they went," (Last updated Jan. 5, 2017) *Globe and Mail*. Web accessed Mar. 21, 2017 at <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/syrian-refugees-in-canada-by-the-numbers/article33120934/>.

⁷¹ Government of Canada. "#WelcomeRefugees."

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Stephanie Levitz, "Does Canada's Refugee Policy Discriminate against Muslims?" (Jan. 15, 2015) CTV News. Web. Accessed May 31, 2016 <http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/does-canada-s-refugee-policy-discriminate-against-syrian-muslims-1.2189947>

⁷⁴ Empirical research on terrorist profiles and identity suggests considerable sociological, psychological, physiological and other variables, thus implying that terrorists are *not* a homogeneous group (i.e. single heterosexual males). For more on this topic, see: Seth J. Schwartz, Curtis S. Dunkel, and Alan S. Waterman, "Terrorism: An Identity Theory Perspective," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 32.6 (2009): 537-559; Gabe Mythen, Sandra Walklate, and Fatima Khan, "I'm a Muslim, but I'm not a Terrorist: Victimization, Risky Identities and the Performance of Safety," *The British Journal of Criminology* 49.6 (2009): 736-754; Cragin Kim, et al. *The dynamic terrorist threat: an assessment of group motivations and capabilities in a changing world* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2004); F. Reinares, "Who are the terrorists? Analyzing changes in sociological profile among members of ETA," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 27.6 (2004): 465-88.

exclusion of single males, other than “security is a key factor.”⁷⁵

These exclusions introduce important ethical questions about security and risk management. For example, young and middle-aged men who have lost their wives, children, or even entire families to the war are automatically deemed ineligible for asylum in Canada. This thesis argues that representations of security and threat in the Liberals’ Syrian refugee resettlement policy are based in presupposed assumptions about terrorist identity in Western politics and media, where representations of terrorism (‘the terrorist threat’) are intrinsically gendered, racialized, and sexualized. Jasbir Puar explores the topic of terrorist identity in detail in *Terrorist Assemblages* (2007), where she introduces the concept of *terrorist masculinities*, “failed and perverse...emasculated bodies [that are] metonymically tied to all sorts of pathologies of the mind and body, [including] incest, madness, and disease.”⁷⁶ Puar’s broader argument concerns how notions of sexuality, race, gender, nation, and ethnicity intertwine, converge, and are reconfigured under contemporary forces of securitization and counterterrorism. For example, Puar explores how certain heteronormative and “homonormative” ideologies are deployed in the US-led war on terror, to distinguish “properly hetero” and “properly homo” U.S. patriots from perversely sexualized and racialized terrorist look-a-like bodies, specifically those of Muslim and Arab males.⁷⁷ Puar’s argument is valuable to this critique, in particular, for demonstrating what kinds of underlying assumptions about security and identity are at play within the restrictions and exclusions of single males in this policy.

⁷⁵ Government of Canada, “Processing overview.”

⁷⁶ Jasbir K. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), xxiii.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, xxiv.

Problem 2) Representations of security unsupported by objective evidence

In addition, this case study raises important questions about the relationship between sovereignty and knowledge. Current research on the global terrorist threat indicates that there is very little, if any, risk to North American states and societies in allowing large numbers of Syrian refugees into their borders. According to The Global Terrorism Database (GTD), the majority of deaths from terrorism do not occur in Western states. Excluding September 11, 2001, terrorist violence accounted for less than one percent of all deaths occurring in Western countries in the last fifteen years, and ‘lone wolf’ attacks accounted for seventy percent of all terrorist deaths in the West.⁷⁸ Further, a number of international security and migration experts suggest that Syrian refugees are much more likely to be victims fleeing war and extremism, and not supporters of violent terrorist groups. As one author explains, “the majority of Syrian refugees fleeing war are not using the opportunity of refugee status to embed themselves as terrorists in the West. The majority are trying to escape barrel bombs, chemical attacks, and barbaric violence, caught between the violence of a dictatorial regime and that carried out by terrorists.”⁷⁹ All of the refugees are victims of violence and abuse and each one of them has have risked their lives in making the dangerous journey across Syria (often cutting through the heart of the conflict) into a UN refugee camp. Each refugee chose to undertake the irrevocable risk of being caught and facing death at the hands of terrorists, actions that echo resilience and bravery, and a willingness to live.⁸⁰ Further, the very act of declaring asylum for individuals fleeing Syria means agreeing to intense surveillance and security processes, something terrorists would not risk. As Scott

⁷⁸ See National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, “Global Terrorism Database 2016.” Web accessed Jun. 29, 2016 at <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd>. Also see Institute for Economics and Peace, *Global Terrorism Index 2014: Measuring and Understanding the Impact of Terrorism* (2014). Web accessed Jun. 29, 2016 at <http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Global-Terrorism-Index-2015.pdf>.

⁷⁹ Anne Speckhard, “Taking in Refugees is not a Risk to National Security,” (Sep. 9 2015) TIME. Web accessed Jun. 13, 2016 at <http://time.com/4024473/taking-in-refugees-is-not-a-risk-to-national-security/>.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

Watson explains, [a terrorist] “couldn't pick a worse way to infiltrate a country than arriving through a refugee camp...we haven't had many cases of people fleeing into camps, then being resettled to undertake terrorist attacks... it's not really a strategic use of resources to have potential fighters sitting in camps for years awaiting resettlement, in the off chance they get resettled.”⁸¹

Thus far, this chapter has explained how representations of security and threat in this case study carry profound political and ethical consequences. Despite Canada's role and reputation in the international community as a “fair, open, and generous”⁸² humanitarian leader, the Liberals' current policy entails that only certain, and not all, refugee bodies may be saved and protected. The broader purpose of this discussion is to shed light on the role of political representation and framing, over and against objective evidence, in contemporary regimes and forms of security in global politics. Based on the evidence presented, this thesis hypothesizes that political representations of security are often the result of particular interpretations and judgements of danger, risk, and threat, as opposed to empirical evidence. In the next part of the chapter, I examine this hypothesis in relation to existing discussions and debates about security in the International Relations (IR) discipline.

§2. Literature Review: Methods of Analysis in International Relations and Security Studies

The subject of security has been at the heart of IR theory for the last half century, and the literature on IR methodology and metatheory offers several competing accounts of how concepts

⁸¹ Scott Watson cited in Jason Proctor, “Syrian refugee screening will be a challenge, but one Canada can meet,” (Nov 17, 2015) CBC News. Web accessed Jun. 6, 2016 at <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/syrian-refugee-screening-will-be-a-challenge-but-one-canada-can-meet-1.3321889>.

⁸² Scott Watson, “Fight them on the beaches: Defending the Humanitarian State,” Canadian Political Science Association (2006). Web accessed Jul. 1, 2016 at <https://cpsa-acsp.ca/papers-2006/Watson.pdf>

such as security should be studied.⁸³ Security studies is generally considered a “sub-discipline” of IR. However, there are several different schools of thought in security studies (e.g. Copenhagen School, C.A.S.E. Collective, Paris School), many of which are diametrically opposed and provide competing visions of how security should be studied and conceptualized.⁸⁴ This second and final part of the chapter is a literature review of important contemporary work on security in the IR discipline.

I begin by outlining the major theoretical debates over security in IR, including how these debates have traditionally informed (and continue to inform) security as a contentious and problematic concept in IR theory. It should be noted that this discussion is *not* meant to be a complete overview of all major debates in the history of IR. Rather, my specific focus is on a) the dominant IR theories and their underlying positivist epistemologies, and b) how these have been challenged from a range of perspectives in the latter half of the twentieth century. This discussion is intended to foreground and set the tone for my analysis of security in the next two chapters. For the sake of structure and clarity, this literature review is organized around Booth and Erskine’s (2016) definition of the “different branches of IR theory today,” as: constructivism, critical realism, critical theory, English School, feminist theory, green theory, historical sociology, liberalism, Marxism, neoliberal institutionalism, normative theory, postcolonialism, post-structuralism, rational choice theory, and realism (divided into classical and structural/neo-realist strands).⁸⁵

Traditional approaches to security in International Relations

⁸³ Michael Sheehan, *International Security: An Analytical Survey* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2005), 1.

⁸⁴ See David Baldwin, “Security studies and the end of the Cold War,” *World Politics* (1995): 48, 117-41.

⁸⁵ Ken Booth and Toni Erskine (eds.) *International Relations Theory Today, 2nd ed.* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016), 3. Due to the scope of this critique, these approaches are not defined here. Rather, this list is meant to organize the literature review and provide an entry point into the conceptual debate over security in IR.

In *Politics Among Nations* (1948) Hans Morgenthau argued that modern politics is governed by “objective laws that have their roots in human nature.”⁸⁶ Morgenthau has been described as the quintessential positivist IR scholar; he was one of the first modern theorists to posit a social scientific theory of international relations – an analytical framework which could, following the model of the natural sciences, explain certain trends in sovereign politics and “the possible conditions under which one of those trends was most likely to materialize in the future.”⁸⁷

I begin by explaining what I take to be the core theoretical commitments of positivism in IR. The conceptual language of positivism is valuable to this analysis because it encapsulates several objectivist and materialist frames and models of analysis in security studies, where empiricism is a central focus. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines positivism as “a philosophical system recognizing only that which can be scientifically verified or which is capable of logical or mathematical proof, and therefore rejecting metaphysics and theism.”⁸⁸ Positivist IR scholars rely on measurable and observable facts to construct theories and understand political concepts. Positivist theories of IR begin with the basic premise that all authentic knowledge allows verification. These theories are based in an ostensibly “empiricist rejection of value judgements” and instead seek to stress the quantitative aspects of political and social life.⁸⁹ Further, IR positivists believe that non-empirical or “social theories” (e.g. social

⁸⁶ Hans Morgenthau cited in Michael C. Williams, *The Realist Tradition and the Limits of International Relations*, (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2005), 100.

⁸⁷ Williams, *Realist Tradition*, 101.

⁸⁸ “Positivism,” Oxford English Dictionary. Web accessed Feb. 12, 2017 at <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/positivism>

⁸⁹ “International Relations: Theories of IR,” University of Southern California Research Guides. Web accessed Feb. 2, 2017 at <http://libguides.usc.edu/c.php?g=234935&p=1559230>. Though the meaning of the term ‘positivism’ has evolved over the years, these core aspects have remained constant.

constructivist, post-structuralist, critical theory, feminist, historical materialist)⁹⁰ are less reliable and less certain (“less structured and more interpretative”)⁹¹ than theory based in empirical evidence. In effect, positivists use empirical-quantitative models of analysis to theorize and understand complex political concepts, and to draw inferences about reality based on *observable data*. As Sprinz and Wolinsky (2002) explain,

At a high level of generality, the successors of the [IR] positivist tradition who employ case study methods, statistical methods, and formal models share an ‘epistemological logic of inference.’ They all agree on the importance of *testing theories empirically*, generating an inclusive list of alternative explanations and their observable implications, and specifying what evidence might inform or affirm a theory.⁹²

In summary, positivist IR scholars believe that empirical data is necessary and crucial in all aspects of IR theory, for assessing the extent to which the expectations generated by theories correspond to and are consistent with actual social and political realities.

Positivism was a major component of traditional approaches⁹³ to the study of security in IR. For much of the Cold War period, objectivist and materialist models of analysis dominated IR, and theorizing about security was limited to issues of war and peace, the balance of power, arms races, arms control, and disarmament.⁹⁴ A contemporarily relevant example of an objectivist and materialist model of analysis is neorealism (also ‘structural realism’), an approach

⁹⁰ See Booth and Erskine, *International Relations Theory Today*, 3.

⁹¹ Bear F. Braumoeller and Anne E. Sartori, “Empirical-Quantitative Approaches to the Study of International Relations,” 139. Web accessed Feb. 10, 2016 at [http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/polisci/faculty/trachtenberg/syllabi/lists/harvard/moravcsik%20\(sprinz%20wolinsky\).pdf](http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/polisci/faculty/trachtenberg/syllabi/lists/harvard/moravcsik%20(sprinz%20wolinsky).pdf)

⁹² Detlef F. Sprinz and Yael Wolinsky (eds.), *Cases, Numbers, Models: International Relations Research Methods*, (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 2002), 56.

⁹³ Collins, *Security Studies*, 85. This discussion adopts Collins’ (2016) definition of “traditional approaches” in IR and security studies as, “the study of the threat, use, and control of military force... the conditions that make the use of force more likely, the ways that the use of force affects individuals, states, and societies, and the specific policies that states adopt in order to prepare for, prevent, or engage in war.”

⁹⁴ Sheehan, *International Security*, 1. By ‘objectivist’ and ‘materialist’ I am referring to IR theories about security that claim to be quantitative and scientifically based.

which has been extremely influential in studies of security since the 1970s.⁹⁵ Though there are several competing theories within neorealism, those of Kenneth Waltz (1979) and John Mearsheimer (2001) are amongst the most influential in security studies.⁹⁶ In *Theory of International Politics* (1979) Waltz provided his definition of a “good explanation” (good theory) in IR.⁹⁷ Waltz writes that any IR theory must first, “[provide] generalizations that connect two or more kinds of events or phenomena,” and b) “the generalizations (the formulation of general laws), must reveal certain connections and patterns.”⁹⁸ Waltz’s explanation is useful for demonstrating the influence of science as an analytical framework for studies of security in IR; and the idea that security, like other politically and conceptually significant concepts (e.g. sovereignty), has an explicit material character which can be made subject to methodological critique and analysis. In connection with the basic principles of the scientific method, Waltz’s theory emphasizes the systematic observation of variables, extracting information from the observations (“connections and patterns”), and then translating and expressing the observations as “universal laws.”⁹⁹ The parallels between scientific principles and Waltz’s neorealist framework are especially clear when Waltz writes, “What do I mean by explain? I mean explain in these senses: to say why the range of expected outcomes falls within certain limits; to say why

⁹⁵ Collins, *Security Studies*, 18.

⁹⁶ Ibid. Due to the limited scope of this study, a complete account of the different branches of neorealism is not provided.

⁹⁷ Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading: Addison Wesley, 1979), 60.

⁹⁸ Kenneth Waltz quoted in Fred Chernoff, *Explanation and Progress in Security Studies: Bridging Theoretical Divides in International Relations* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014), 69.

⁹⁹ “What is the scientific method?” University of California Riverside. Web accessed Feb. 12, 2017 at http://physics.ucr.edu/~wudka/Physics7/Notes_www/node6.html

patterns of behavior recur; to say why events repeat themselves, including events that none or few of the actors may like.”¹⁰⁰

Critical security studies: narrow versus wideners debate

Efforts to transform the concept of security began in the late 1970s, but gathered strength from the end of the Cold War when they were spurred by the widely held perception that traditional security approaches were “unable” to explain this momentous event in international affairs.¹⁰¹ There is no simple theoretical expression or term in IR which summarizes effectively the novel modes of thinking that emerged in the 1980s and continued well into the 1990s. The end of the Cold War dissolved the classical realist and neorealist structure around which security and sovereignty had traditionally been studied, and several alternative conceptualizations emerged, thus undermining and disrupting the previous “positivist mainstream.”¹⁰² The label ‘critical security studies’ is sometimes used to describe literature in this period. However, this title has been disputed and fought over much more than it has been effectively applied.¹⁰³ Most IR scholars who have been identified as critical fundamentally reject this label and do not believe in the idea of theoretical grand narratives.¹⁰⁴ Other scholars have avoided using the term critical entirely, instead explaining how, in the years before the end of the Cold War several “postmodernist or poststructuralist” approaches emerged as critiques against positivism.¹⁰⁵ For purposes of clarity, this study employs Krause and Williams’ (1997) definition of critical

¹⁰⁰ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 69.

¹⁰¹ Anne Hammerstad, *The Rise and Decline of a Global Security Actor: UNHCR, Refugee Protection, and Security* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 20.

¹⁰² For a detailed account of this literature see M. de Larrinaga and Mark B. Salter, “Cold CASE: a manifesto for Canadian critical security studies,” *Critical Studies on Security*, 2.1 (2014): 1-19.

¹⁰³ Collins, *Security Studies*, 85.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 100.

¹⁰⁵ Sheehan, *International Security*, 133.

security studies as “a broad church encompassing a range of approaches and analyses,” drawing on elements of Marxism, feminism, critical theory, constructivism and post-structuralism.¹⁰⁶

The major theoretical debates of the 1980s emerged in response to the limitations of existing frameworks and models of analysis in IR. Several theorists argued that existing interpretations of concepts such as security and sovereignty were “too narrow” and that these interpretations excluded (“left out”) anything that seemed to contradict established positivist ideas.¹⁰⁷ Scholars like Robert Cox (1981) from international political economy and RBJ Walker (1988) from political theory made several “metatheoretical interventions” to radically problematize the positivist mainstream.¹⁰⁸ Similarly, Ken Booth (1991) argued that traditional approaches to security wrongly privileged the state and the preservation of state regimes at the expense of individuals. For Booth, objectivist and materialist models of analysis were based in an “uncritical assumption that security exists out there, independently of the observer.”¹⁰⁹ In effect, the early 1990s witnessed a series of debates between proponents of traditional approaches and advocates of various “widening projects.”¹¹⁰ Other scholars began exploring the role of culture and cultural variables in international relations and security studies (Robert Keohane 1988; Keohane and Goldstein 1993).¹¹¹ For example, Mark Neocleous (1998) observed how the modern social and political imagination was “dominated by the lexicon of security,”¹¹² and several theorists suggested the crucial role of discourses in international relations, for

¹⁰⁶ Keith Krause and M.C. Williams (eds.), *Critical Security Studies: Concepts and Cases* (Minnesota: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1997), vii-xxi.

¹⁰⁷ For a complete account of the narrow versus wideners debate, see Collins, *Security Studies*, 137-139.

¹⁰⁸ Robert Cox and RBJ Walker cited in de Larrinaga & Salter, “Cold Case,” 1.

¹⁰⁹ Ken Booth, “Security and emancipation,” *Review of International Studies*, 17.4 (1991): 313, 326.

¹¹⁰ Hammerstad, *Rise and Decline of a Global Security Actor*, 20.

¹¹¹ See Jutta Weldes, *States, Communities, and the Production of Danger* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 4.

¹¹² Mark Neocleous, *Critique of Security* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 2.

example, how it is impossible to have a sovereign politics that does not incorporate a discursively articulated narrative of security (RBJ Walker 1997; Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, Jaape de Wilde 1998; Didier Bigo 2002).¹¹³ A current example of this approach is the C.A.S.E. Collective, a diverse network of scholars in Europe who are committed to the emergence of a distinctive European research agenda in the traditionally US-dominated field of security studies.¹¹⁴

Post structuralism and the discursive character of security

This final section is a brief outline of the analytical lens used in this study's critique and conceptualization of security. For positivist and rationalist theorists of IR, non-empirical models of analysis offer limited intellectual contribution to the discipline; they are examples of "a prolix and self-indulgent discourse [d]ivorced from the real world."¹¹⁵ This thesis rejects this view. I argue that the crucial problem with these models is their assumption of security and threat as independent, distinct concepts; the idea that these can be studied and analyzed outside of the political and conceptual system of sovereignty. Part of my critique against materialist and objectivist models of analysis (claims to science and objectivity in IR) is that these do not tell us about the vastly different experiences of human beings under different regimes and representations of security. In short, I argue against policy makers and theorists of security who suggest that security threats and risks can be objectively defined, measured, and predicted, with varying degrees of certainty. In the remainder of this study, I interpret and explain security as a

¹¹³ See Collins, *Security Studies*, 137-66. Also see: RBJ Walker, "The Subject of Security," *Critical Security Studies*, Krause and Williams (eds.), (Minnesota: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1997): 61-82; Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1998); Didier Bigo, "Security and Immigration: Toward a Critique of the Governmentality of Unease," *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 27.1 (2002): 63-92.

¹¹⁴ de Larrinaga and Salter, "Cold Case," 1.

¹¹⁵ Sheehan, *International security*, 133.

fundamentally constructed concept in international relations and sovereign politics, embedded in and produced (‘made real’) through different historical, social, cultural, and political structures.

One way to interpret this study’s analytical approach is as post structuralist. Whereas positivists focus on material forces to theorize and understand security, post structuralism (its multiple variants) emphasizes the importance of history, language, society, culture, identity, and relationships in modern politics and the international system. This type of an analytical approach rejects the idea that there are pre-established, fixed empirical units for measuring abstract political principles and concepts such as sovereignty. In contrast, post structuralist theorists of IR emphasize the importance of discursive structures of power. Post structuralism is interpreted and applied in this study as “a critical attitude or ethos” in IR theory that explores the underlying assumptions and conditions that make certain political realities possible.¹¹⁶ The *OED* describes post structuralism as

A relativist philosophy based on the ideas and works of a number of French scholars working in the 1960s, notably Derrida, Lacan, Foucault, Barthes, and Kristeva, to develop earlier thinking by Hegel, Nietzsche, Husserl, Heidegger, Freud, and Marx. The approach challenges the structuralist notion that there are fixed relationships between signs and meanings, between the signifier and the signified, arguing instead that meaning is contextualized within the individual and highly nuanced. A general trend of post-structuralist method, often termed deconstruction, is to unsettle any allegedly firm, detached, or neutral conclusions on the basis that claims of truth are internal to any particular discourse. In doing so it opens up alternative readings and meanings.¹¹⁷

Post structuralism directly engages the issues explored in this study’s critique, even though it may not always explicitly address them. The crucial value of poststructuralist thought for this

¹¹⁶ David Campbell, “Chapter Twelve: Poststructuralism,” in *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*, Timothy Dunne et al. (eds.), (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2013), 203-229.

¹¹⁷ “Post structuralism,” Oxford English Dictionaries Online, Web accessed Apr. 1, 2017 at <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803100339751>

study's analysis is that it puts into question what "seems natural, obvious, self-evident or universal, in order to show that these things have their history, their reasons for being the way they are, their effects on what follows from them, and that the starting point is not a (natural) given but a (cultural) construct, "usually blind to itself."¹¹⁸ In this view, rationalist and positivist claims to truth, science, and reason are understood, not as simple accounts of the world 'as it is,' but as a set of theoretical and political demarcations of what constitutes reality and knowledge. This study's specific method and analytical approach to security takes insight from two contemporarily influential post structuralist IR theorists: RBJ Walker's *Inside/Outside* (1993) and David Campbell's *Writing Security* (1992).¹¹⁹ Both theorists engage in the critique of normative approaches, and their work is especially valuable for problematizing positivist claims about security as a fixed concept.¹²⁰

In Walker's view, empirical theories of IR are "more interesting as aspects of contemporary world politics that *need to be explained*, than as explanations of contemporary world politics."¹²¹ Walker believes that any analysis of IR must begin with the principle of state

¹¹⁸ Jenny Edkins, *Poststructuralism and International Relations: Bringing the Political Back In* (London: Lynne Rienner, 1999), 74.

¹¹⁹ Each of these theorists has contributed extensively to poststructuralist thinking about IR. For an excellent overview of this literature, see Lene Hansen, "A Case for Seduction? Evaluating the Poststructuralist Conceptualization of Security," *Cooperation and Conflict*, vol. 32, no. 4 (1997): 369-397.

¹²⁰ First, by 'normative' I am referring to any IR theory or approach that does *not* take poststructuralism as its point of departure. Secondly, defining poststructuralism is problematic since it is an a) diverse literature, and b) those drawing on poststructuralist thought generally reject the label. Nevertheless, the theorists whose work I draw on in this study (RBJ Walker and David Campbell) share some basic foundational principles in terms of the arguments that they make. First, they rely on Michel Foucault's notions of power, as articulated in the concepts of discourse, governmentality, archaeology, and genealogy, and secondly, they rely on Jacques Derrida's work on deconstruction and the "mystical foundations of authority." See Jacques Derrida, "Force of Law: The Mystical Foundation of Authority", Mary Quaintance (transl.) and Drucilla Cornell, Michel Rosenfeld & David Gray Carlson (eds.), *Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 3-67.

¹²¹ RBJ Walker cited in Hansen, "A Case for Seduction?," 372.

sovereignty, which has constituted itself historically as “a powerful answer” to important political questions.¹²² Walker writes,

Sovereignty can be understood to be a problem, or rather a massive complexity of problems concerning the authorization of authority. Political theorists know this primarily as the problem of founding, the authorization of a discrimination between before and after that works as the ground on which to authorize all other discriminations.¹²³

Walker’s work is useful to this study’s critique, particularly for demonstrating how sovereignty constructs its own meanings, definitions, and representations of security at the expense of alternative conceptualizations and renderings of this concept. Walker calls for the exploration of security as a complex social and political process, requiring analysis of “the authorization of specific accounts of what security must be,” rather than as a simple given.¹²⁴ For Walker, sovereignty defines itself through the concept of security, by dividing the world into a clear “inside” and a clear “outside.”¹²⁵ The distinction between inside/outside is the distinction between the state (the political community of citizen subjects, comprised of peace, safety, order) and the international (the insecure, dangerous, and chaotic ‘outside’ realm). This distinction is what informs the limits and possibilities of contemporary political realities. In Walker’s words, the distinction between inside/outside “tells us who we are” by pointing to what we are not, and what we must fear.¹²⁶ Because sovereignty is what defines the meaning of security (what it is, who it is for, who or what it is exercised against), an effective analysis of this concept requires an alternative starting point – one that does *not* take sovereignty/the state as *a priori* givens and

¹²² RBJ Walker, *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1993), 11-12.

¹²³ RBJ Walker, *After the Globe/Before the World* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 96.

¹²⁴ RBJ Walker, “Security, Critique, Europe,” *Security Dialogue*, 38.1 (2007), 96.

¹²⁵ Walker, *Inside/Outside*, 11-12.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

instead explores *how* certain authoritative meanings (of security and other concepts), come to be rendered authoritative in the first place.¹²⁷

Whereas Walker's point of departure is his critique of sovereignty and the discourse of IR (the reification of the international states system through IR theory),¹²⁸ Campbell is interested in a case-specific analysis of sovereignty and security. Campbell's *Writing Security* is a study of the production of United States national identity through a discourse of fear. Campbell explains how U.S. foreign policy operates domestically and internationally to "make foreign" and produce dangerous "others," as a part of a broader strategy of nationhood and identity.¹²⁹ For Campbell, concepts of security work together with concepts of national identity, and are meant to tell us "who we are and how we came here."¹³⁰ At the same time however, these narratives are not fixed. Rather, political regimes of security operate by making clear particular differences and distinctions. For Campbell, the meaning of the concept of security (and danger, insecurity, threat) must be secured by "the effective and continual ideological demarcation" of what is true and what is false.¹³¹ More specifically, meanings and representations of security in sovereign politics are based on various 'forms of otherness' that stand in the way of peace and order. By defining 'otherness,' security maintains the identity of the state and its political community. Further, threats, dangers, and insecurities are framed as dangerous not because they necessarily

¹²⁷ This is my premise and point of departure for chapter two.

¹²⁸ Walker argues that state sovereignty and international relations theory have become intertwined (collapsed into one and the same thing) in the IR discipline. In this understanding, sovereignty is the constitutive principle of modern international relations in terms of its normalisation through IR theory. In other words, sovereignty and IR theory are the main constituents of the discourse of international relations. See Walker, *Inside/Outside*.

¹²⁹ Campbell, *WS*, 35-38. This account is intended as a brief outline, and a full account of Campbell's critique is not provided here. To be clear, I am only concerned with the specific aspects of Campbell's argument which speak to and inform the analytical lens used in the next two chapters.

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, 105.

¹³¹ *Ibid*.

undermine the safety of the state and its citizens, but because the state needs a sense of insecurity to maintain itself.¹³²

Campbell's book is useful to this study's analysis, specifically, for demonstrating the role of interpretation and judgment in the production of threat. In Campbell's view, security threats and risks do "not depend on the incidence of objective factors," but rather these depend on specific "modes of representation."¹³³ This critique takes seriously Campbell's argument that, "those events or factors that we identify as dangerous [threatening] come to be ascribed as such only through an interpretation of their various dimensions of dangerousness," and that political interpretations and articulations of threat need not "depend on objective factors for [their] veracity."¹³⁴ Speaking to the fundamental contingency of security regimes, Campbell explains how a security risk/threat is "neither an event nor a general kind of event occurring in reality...but a specific mode of treatment of certain events capable of happening to a group of individuals."¹³⁵ In this understanding, the condition of possibility for concepts of existential danger, threat, and risk in international relations and sovereign politics, is not empirical or objective evidence. Rather, these depend on specific modes of interpretation, which render certain objects, individuals, events, and other phenomena as existentially dangerous. As Campbell writes, the concept of a security threat "bears no essential, necessary, or unproblematic relation to the [phenomenon] from which it is said to derive."¹³⁶

Conclusion

¹³² Ibid, 55.

¹³³ Ibid, 2-3.

¹³⁴ Ibid, 3.

¹³⁵ Ibid, 2.

¹³⁶ Ibid, 2.

“Understanding the concept of security is a fundamentally different kind of intellectual exercise from specifying the conditions under which security may be attained.” – David Baldwin¹³⁷

Thus inspired, this study problematizes existing representations of security and threat in this case study, by exploring the underlying structures and conditions which make these representations possible, and which produce and render them as ‘real.’ Applying Walker’s and Campbell’s arguments, this study builds on the basic premise that security, as a political concept and practice, must be analyzed as a discursive construct, rather than as a direct representation of objectively threatening circumstances (corresponding to actual conditions of threat and danger). Building on Walker’s and Campbell’s arguments of the discursive foundations of sovereignty and security, this study attempts to explain more explicitly the connection between security and modes of interpretation and representation under sovereignty. I am interested in exploring the different types of structures and modes of expertise (expert authority) which construct and produce certain meanings about security, and represent these as truth and knowledge. In the next two chapters I explore relationships between security and knowledge under sovereignty, specifically, how processes of securitization (the identification of threatening objects) depend on authoritative and expert claims to knowledge.¹³⁸

The methodology of analysis used in this study is based on Michel Foucault’s concept of *discourse* and his method of discourse analysis, which centres on the following questions: 1) what is valid knowledge at a certain place and at a certain time? 2) how does this knowledge arise, and how is it maintained? 3) what consequences does it have for the overall shaping and

¹³⁷ David Baldwin, “The Concept of Security,” *Review of International Studies* Vol. 23 (1997): 5-26.

¹³⁸ The specific focus for the next two chapters is the relationship between power and knowledge in modernity (civil society), namely, *how* this relationship informs the management of security in sovereign politics and government. By knowledge, I mean the shared, sociocultural beliefs that are attributed the value of ‘truth’ in different socio-historical contexts.

development of politics, history, and society?¹³⁹ I interpret and present security in this study, as a particular discursive phenomenon which “finds a way of limiting its domain, of defining what it is talking about, of giving it[self] the status of an object.”¹⁴⁰ In doing so, I extend my analysis of security beyond a consideration of objective circumstances and events (empirical evidence), to a consideration of power and representations of truth; specifically, structures of knowledge and modes of interpretation/representation for ‘truth’ under sovereignty (sovereign power).

Further, the chapters of this thesis do not seek to provide a single or authoritative definition or interpretation of security, so much as they invite international relations and security theorists to reflect critically on the ways in which contemporary political regimes and formations of security operate. In the next chapter, I use Thomas Hobbes’ political theory in *Leviathan* to explain the fundamental contingency of existing concepts and political representations of security under sovereignty. This discussion will set the foundation for my main argument in chapter three, which focuses on the use of biometric technologies in the Canadian Government’s ongoing response to the Syrian refugee crisis, namely, how these technologies are employed politically as a means for producing ostensible truth and knowledge about security, risk, and threat in the Syrian refugee crisis.

¹³⁹ This understanding of Foucauldian discourse analysis is based on the explanation of Foucault’s method for his discourse theory, in Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (eds.), *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, 2nd ed. (London: SAGE, 2009), 34-35. In this understanding, Foucauldian discourse analysis aims to identify the various structures of knowledge contained in different *discourses of power* in modernity; to explain “how these knowledges are firmly connected to power relations in power/knowledge complexes.”

¹⁴⁰ M. Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge: Archéologie Du Savoir*. Alan Sheridan (ed.), (London: Tavistock Publications, 1972), 41.

Chapter 2: Judgement, Knowledge, and Truth in Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan*

“Indeed in the controversies between neorealists and neoliberals; structuralists, poststructuralists, and feminists; and rationalists, constructivists, and realists...the adequacy of a Hobbesian vision of international politics provides a common rhetorical and analytic touchstone, much as it has in varying forms for generations.” – Michael Williams¹⁴¹

One way to explain the source of modern political decisions over security– the underlying conditions which make it possible for policy makers to authoritatively determine and define sites of existential risk and threat, is to turn to one of the most influential accounts of the origins of civil society. In this chapter I explain the relationship between sovereignty and knowledge in Hobbes' theory of sovereignty. I use Hobbes' theory to argue sovereignty as the ultimate authority over knowledge and truth in modern (civil) society, and hence the ultimate authority over knowledge about security, insecurity, risk, danger, and threat. This analysis will allow me to explain security as a fundamentally contingent concept under sovereignty, which connects to my broader critique of security in this study; specifically, how political representations of danger, threat, and risk (perceptions of insecurity) are based not in objective conditions (empirical observations), but rather in particular judgements and interpretations of certain phenomena (people, objects, events, and so on), as fundamentally dangerous and threatening. The current discussion will help explain how such representations are possible, and why modern individuals (as citizen-subjects of sovereign states) are obligated to accept these representations (as necessary and 'real'), even if they do not correspond to objective realities.

¹⁴¹ Michael Williams, “Hobbes and International Relations: A Reconsideration,” *International Organization* 50.2 (1996): 213.

In the previous chapter I argued that objectivist and materialist models of security analysis in IR are problematic, because they assume certain uniformities for the concepts of security and sovereignty. These models are premised in an uncritical assumption that danger, risk, and threat are universal (empirically observable) concepts in sovereign politics. Expanding this theme of analysis, in this chapter I ask, do political articulations of security and threat need to satisfy particular empirical (objective) criteria, in order to be seen as legitimate? That is, do political regimes and formations of security have to correspond to tangible, visible and discernible dangers, in order to be viewed as politically necessary?

In this chapter I turn to Hobbes' theory of sovereignty to suggest the central role of interpretation and judgement in sovereign politics. I explain Hobbes' political theory in terms of his concepts of knowledge and judgement; how these concepts converge, intertwine, and unite under sovereignty, and how these connect to a broader underlying theme of uncertainty. The premise for my analysis is that Hobbes's most famous legacy to international relations, the state of nature, is more than just a theory of human beings' natural aggression and antagonism with each other. In IR theory, a Hobbesian approach to analyzing an issue usually means exploring themes of power, conflict, and competition; Hobbes' concept of the state of nature, a condition of the 'war of every man against every man' is "shared by virtually everyone calling himself a realist."¹⁴² Rather, the following analysis speaks to existing ideas in IR about the need for a reconsideration of Hobbes' theory,¹⁴³ specifically, the idea that "the tendency to focus almost exclusively on a few scattered remarks in *Leviathan* and to ignore the rest of Hobbes's grand theory has fostered a fundamentally distorted account" of Hobbes' understanding of

¹⁴² Ibid, 213.

¹⁴³ See RBJ Walker, "Hobbes, Origins, Limits," Gabriella Slomp and R. Prokownik (eds.) *International Political Theory After Hobbes: Analysis, Interpretation and Orientation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 168-188.

sovereignty.¹⁴⁴ Taking these claims seriously, I argue that existing ‘Hobbesian’ conceptions of sovereignty and security in IR fail to appreciate the broader implications of Hobbes’ political theory; specifically, for concepts of truth, morality, and law (political obligation) under sovereignty.¹⁴⁵ Expanding on these issues, in this chapter I explain how Hobbes’ entire political theory is contingent on his understanding of knowledge and truth, as fundamentally uncertain concepts in the state of nature.

§1. The Problem of Knowledge and Truth in the State of Nature

In this section I emphasize the centrality of contingency and uncertainty as core themes in Hobbes’ political philosophy. The current discussion is about Hobbes’ understanding of truth and knowledge in the state of nature, and the significance of this understanding for his account of sovereignty. As I explain below, Hobbes’s motivation is to recast the study of politics as a science that begins from first principles, rather than empirical facts; and yet, Hobbes believes only in the certainty of science as a form of knowledge, and he rejects all other types of knowledge as “metaphors, and senseless and ambiguous words.”¹⁴⁶ Drawing on Hobbes’ epistemological method, I present Hobbes’s theory of sovereignty as a theory about the production of knowledge and truth, which rests on certain logical precepts and maxims about human nature and natural law (morality). I argue that the precondition for truth (‘real’ knowledge) for Hobbes is a universal, standard account of judgment, which I explain as a double

¹⁴⁴ Gabriella Slomp, “The Politics of Motion and the Motion of Politics,” *International Political Theory after Hobbes*, 19.

¹⁴⁵ I suggest that there are some more important concepts to be found in Hobbes’ work, beyond the established assumption in IR of Hobbes as an ‘extreme Realist,’ and the idea that the state of nature thesis somehow suggests how modern politics is always about “pure anarchy,” where law can have no meaning and aggression is justified by the dictates of self-interest. For an excellent account of what a Hobbesian conception in IR entails, see Noel Malcolm, “Hobbes’ Theory of International Relations,” *Aspects of Hobbes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) DOI: 10.1093/0199247145.003.0013.

¹⁴⁶ Thomas Hobbes, ch. V, *Leviathan* (1651), J.C. Gaskin (ed.) (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1998), 32.

concept; judgement as 1) claims to knowledge; and 2) claims to morality.¹⁴⁷ Connecting the concept of judgement to natural law and natural right, I will explain the problem of the state of nature as a problem of knowledge.

Hobbes' epistemological method

Because the distinction between fact and hypothesis is not always clear in Hobbes' argument, *Leviathan* is often misread and misinterpreted. I will foreground the problem of judgement by first explaining Hobbes' method for his political theory. Hobbes' concept of judgement is intrinsically linked to his understanding of knowledge. Knowledge is interpreted and explained in this chapter as the sum of what is known about something; "true, justified belief" and "certain" understanding, as opposed to opinion.¹⁴⁸ Specifically, Hobbes believed that there were only two types of knowledge available to human beings in the world; Hobbes explains these in "The Several Subjects of Knowledge" as "knowledge of fact" (prudence), and "knowledge of the consequence of one affirmation to another" (reason).¹⁴⁹ I will return to these in part two. The purpose of the current discussion is to introduce Hobbes' historical context, his broader intellectual and theoretical motivations for his political philosophy, and how these inform and shape his concept of judgement.

Leviathan was a response to the major social, political, and philosophical debates in seventeenth century England. Hobbes was writing in the midst of the English Civil War, and at the same time as the intellectual and cultural transformations of the Scientific Revolution. At this time, no one had attempted to construct a theory of the origins of civil society as systematically

¹⁴⁷ Due to the scope of this discussion, 'claims to knowledge' and 'claims to morality' are limited only to identifications and interpretations of existential threats (threats to one's life).

¹⁴⁸ "Knowledge," Oxford English Dictionaries Online. Web accessed Feb. 28, 2017 at <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/knowledge>

¹⁴⁹ Hobbes, ch. IX, 54.

as Hobbes.¹⁵⁰ The main questions Hobbes wanted to answer in *Leviathan* were, what [are] the necessary conditions of peace? How is peace established and maintained? What are the conditions of possibility for civil society? Prior to the publication of *Leviathan* in 1651, natural law accounts of human nature and positive law had dominated political thought. The main issue with these theories for Hobbes was that they all began with God (and therefore, ‘Nature’); they claimed that ‘the main and principal laws of nature’ were ordered by God and they were man’s duty and obligation to God.¹⁵¹ In Hobbes’ understanding, the authors of these theories (moral theorists of natural law) had simply used these concepts to elevate their own subjective opinions and present them as universal/theological rules of conduct (valid by nature).¹⁵² Above all, the crucial problem with these theories was that they were not scientific, but merely “opinions disguised as truth;” they did not follow any systematic or logical line of reasoning (i.e. the scientific method).¹⁵³ Responding to conventional standards of moral and political philosophy at the time, and the idea of some pre-existing (divine and natural) standard of moral judgment, Hobbes wrote, “[W]hat the ancient philosophers (Greek) teach us, is nothing more than to express our passions under the plausible name of moral judgements.”¹⁵⁴ As Richard Tuck has explained, Hobbes “quite clearly intended *Leviathan* to be offensive to contemporary,

¹⁵⁰ For an excellent overview of Hobbes’ historical context, see Johann P. Sommerville, *Thomas Hobbes: Political Ideas in Historical Context* (New York: St. Martin’s Press 1992), 33-40.

¹⁵¹ See Sommerville, *Hobbes*, 48-51, 57-73 for an explanation of the conventional position of natural law theory at this time.

¹⁵² The common theme in these theories was a particular understanding of the relationship between human nature and morality, specifically, the idea that there were preexisting, universal ‘laws of nature’ to which all men were (pre)disposed from natural instinct.

¹⁵³ Fukuda Arihiro, *Sovereignty and the sword: Harrington, Hobbes, and Mixed Government in the English Civil Wars* (New York: Clarendon, 1997), 42.

¹⁵⁴ Hobbes quoted in Arihiro, *Sovereignty and the sword*, 42.

particularly Anglican, sensibilities.”¹⁵⁵ Hobbes was heavily influenced by his intellectual contemporaries, particularly scientists and physicists. Like them, he believed only in the validity of mathematical and scientific principles, and conceptual (philosophical) analysis.¹⁵⁶ For Hobbes, science was “the true and only moral philosophy.”¹⁵⁷

Hobbes defined science as the knowledge of causal relations, “either knowledge of the effects following from known causes, or of the possible causes of known effects.”¹⁵⁸ Similarly, Hobbes’ epistemological method has to do with dividing objects into parts (particulars), and connecting and unifying these under a larger phenomenon (applying universality to particularity). His political theory is all about analysis and synthesis – he takes a particular phenomenon (sovereignty/the state) and attempts to understand it by dividing it into its smallest constituent parts (individuals and private judgement), and then rebuilding these parts in the most logical way. As will become clearer in this discussion, Hobbes’ entire argument and each of its related concepts (including the state of nature, natural law, and natural right) are designed to work together to form a philosophical system, based in logical *first principles* rather than subjective (moral) claims.

Current debates: legal positivism and natural law

¹⁵⁵ Richard Tuck, “Hobbes’s life,” in *Hobbes: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Univ. of Oxford Press, 2002) DOI: 10.1093/actrade/9780192802552.001.0001. Tuck further writes that no work had been so “gratuitously offensive to orthodox theology” as *Leviathan*.

¹⁵⁶ See Tuck, *Hobbes*, 104-106. The leading intellectuals of Hobbes’ time believed that knowledge is not attained by appealing to authority, but by employing an appropriately objective method. For Hobbes, the scientific method was important not only in terms of attaining ‘true’ knowledge, but also because it served the practical end of resolving disputes which arose from speculation and subjective interpretation (e.g. moral theories of natural law).

¹⁵⁷ Hobbes, ch. XV, 105.

¹⁵⁸ Hobbes cited in M.M. Goldsmith, *Hobbes’ Science of Politics* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1966), 1.

Though it is customary for scholars to set Hobbes' political philosophy against the backdrop of the intellectual revolutions of the seventeenth century (which swept away teleological accounts of nature as a purposive totality and established in their place mechanistic accounts of nature as a field of motions without purpose and end), the source of Hobbes' theory of sovereignty is a point of intellectual debate and contention.¹⁵⁹ Legal positivism and the natural law theory of positive law are rival theoretical views about the source of morality and political obligation in Hobbes' theory of sovereignty. This debate is over the meaning of 'natural law' and 'natural right,' and how Hobbes uses these concepts to construct the need for a sovereign authority. Whereas legal positivists deny any necessary moral connection between Hobbes' sovereign, and the conditions that validate (authorize) his/her authority over the political (and hence command obligation from subjects), natural law theorists maintain that human beings subject themselves to a sovereign through pre-existing moral obligation or divine command.¹⁶⁰ The two most influential modern theorists to have argued that Hobbes' political philosophy was the result of "moral insights" from Christianity are A.E. Taylor and Howard Warrender.¹⁶¹ In contrast, scholars such as C.B. Macpherson, Gregory Kavka, and Jean Hampton have suggested that "it can be asserted with little argument that [Hobbes] was a legal positivist."¹⁶² In brief, legal positivists believe that the chaotic state of nature is itself the source of sovereignty in Hobbes' argument; it is the site from which law emerges, and the problem against which law is necessary. In contrast to moral theorists, I share the legal positivists' position on Hobbes, that Hobbes'

¹⁵⁹ To be clear, my analysis is only about Hobbes' concept of nature in natural right and natural law, and not his concept of nature in science (the natural sciences, etc.)

¹⁶⁰ Broadly, legal positivism suggests that whether something counts as legal (juridical systems, legislative authority, legal norms, laws, etc.) depends on social facts rather than moral principles/universal laws of nature. I acknowledge the limits of this definition. Due to the scope of this thesis a more complete, comprehensive account of legal positivism and natural law theory is not provided.

¹⁶¹ Mark C. Murphy, "Was Hobbes a Legal Positivist?" *Ethics*, vol. 105, no. 4, (1995): 846-873.

¹⁶² *Ibid*, 847.

theory of sovereignty is not based in any universal or overarching moral concepts (divine/theological basis of ‘natural law’), but is rather a philosophical and logically deductive argument based in the validity of first principles. This premise informs the rest of my analysis in this chapter.

Private judgement

The problem of the limitation of human knowledge occupies a central position in the first twelve chapters of *Leviathan*. In this section, I argue that the crucial reason for why there is conflict in the state of nature is because there is nothing that is universal, obvious, or certain (true *a priori*) but rather, there is only “matter” and “motion;” only “thoughts,” “imagination,” and (flawed) “understanding(s).”¹⁶³ In his account of “The Virtues,” Hobbes explains judgement as that which “does but suggest [to human beings], what circumstances make an action laudable or culpable.”¹⁶⁴ The following is an analysis and close reading of this concept of judgement. In this discussion, private judgement refers collectively to what Hobbes explains as “the passions,” “imagination,” “prudence,” and “sensation” in the first six chapters (Part I: Of Man), and also *understanding*: “the imagination that is raised in man (or any other creature endued with the faculty of imagining) by words or other voluntary signs.”¹⁶⁵

In the first few chapters, Hobbes takes up the task of analyzing the biological and psychological processes through which human beings interpret their external environment. The significance of this account for the rest of Hobbes’ argument hinges on his idea that all knowledge begins with subjective interpretation (of objects, experiences, phenomenon, and so on); here, Hobbes grounds the general epistemological approach of his project. He begins by

¹⁶³ Hobbes, ch. II-III, 10-19.

¹⁶⁴ Hobbes, ch. VIII, 46.

¹⁶⁵ Hobbes, ch. I-VI, 9-42.

suggesting that human beings gain knowledge of the world through experience. For Hobbes, all matter becomes ‘thought or memory, only via the sensory apparatus;’ Hobbes writes, “there is no conception in a man’s mind, which hath not at first, totally, or by parts, been begotten upon the organs of sense.”¹⁶⁶ Hobbes explains sense perception as an individual and personal experience; it is when

external [bodies] or object[s]... presseth the organ proper to each sense. [...] Sensation [is] a fancy, or a representation of an external body’s pressing on [one’s] own body...[his] organs of sense, and travelling through the nerves of [the] body... to produce a reaction.¹⁶⁷

In summary, Hobbes believes that human beings in their natural condition use their senses (sensory experiences) to understand and internalize their external environment. In other words, in the state of nature we use private judgement to produce knowledge for ourselves; through sense perception we are able to transform various objects and experiences into particular “thoughts”, “ideas,” “representations,” and “appearances,” and store these in our minds as “memory.”¹⁶⁸ Hobbes explains this type of knowledge as ‘prudence’ (knowledge acquired through private judgement), “that understanding which is peculiar to man [...] the understanding [of] not only his will, but his conceptions and thoughts;”¹⁶⁹ it is the ‘registration by the senses of some external interaction or experience.’¹⁷⁰

Next, I argue that there are two (interconnected) problems which emerge from human beings’ universal capacity for private judgement in the state of nature. I explain these problems

¹⁶⁶ Hobbes, ch. I, 9.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Hobbes, ch. I, VI, 9-42.

¹⁶⁹ Hobbes, ch. II, 15.

¹⁷⁰ Hobbes, ch. IX, 54.

as 1) the uncertainty of knowledge, and; 2) the uncertainty of moral concepts. The current discussion is about the uncertainty of knowledge.

Problem 1) the uncertainty of knowledge

Hobbes's explanation of private judgement in these first few chapters is not only an account of the nature and sources of knowledge, but it is additionally an account of the relative values of different types of knowledge; why scientific knowledge is better (more valuable and useful) to human beings than prudence. Hobbes' broader argument in the first three chapters ("Of Sense," "Of Imaginations," "Train of Imaginations") is that all knowledge and truth claims are merely the 'classification of thoughts' (private judgements): "every classification of knowledge is based on a classification of the existent."¹⁷¹ Hobbes speaks to this in the third chapter, "Of the Consequence or Train of Imaginations," where he writes: "The present has a being in nature; things past have a being in the memory only; but things to come have no being at all, the future but a fiction of the mind."¹⁷² In this interpretation, all knowledge acquired through reason is a process of "applying the sequels of actions past, to the actions that are present; which with most certainty is done by him that has most experience; but not with certainty enough."¹⁷³

The problem in the state of nature for Hobbes is that it is set up in such a way that no real knowledge can exist there. In Hobbes' words, there is "neither truth nor falsehood,"¹⁷⁴ but only fundamental epistemological uncertainty. In its basic form, all knowledge acquired through

¹⁷¹ Hobbes quoted in Leo Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes: Its Basis and its Genesis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 7.

¹⁷² Hobbes, ch. III, 17.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Hobbes, ch. IV, 23.

reason is knowledge of causes and effects, which we have perceived with our senses; however, neither sensation, memory, nor imagination are properly scientific knowledge (reason), for science requires objectivity.

The first problem with private judgement is an epistemological problem of the uncertainty of knowledge. This also connects to a broader theme of nominalism in Hobbes' theory. Hobbes believes that our ability to reason effectively in the state of nature is always overruled by the subjectivity of our senses. Hobbes alludes to this problem in the "Train of Thoughts," when he writes, "it comes to pass in time that in the imagining of anything, there is no certainty what we shall imagine next; only this is certain, it shall be something that succeeded the same before, at one time or another."¹⁷⁵ Next, I explain the significance of words and meanings in Hobbes' argument, and how a lack of common meanings in the state of nature results in a condition of fundamental uncertainty, the "war of every man against every man."¹⁷⁶

Words and universals

For Hobbes, the only universals we have in the world are names: "There [is] nothing in the world universal but names; for the things named are every one of them individual and singular."¹⁷⁷ The crucial distinction here is that the names we give objects using private judgement (our natural way of understanding and producing knowledge about the world), do not actually represent the objects; to assume this would be fundamentally wrong and in error – "that

¹⁷⁵ Hobbes, ch. III, 16.

¹⁷⁶ Hobbes, ch. XIII, 85.

¹⁷⁷ Hobbes, ch. IV, 22.

is to say, we cannot from experience conclude, that anything is to be called [true or false], nor any proposition universal whatsoever, except it be from remembrance of the use of names imposed arbitrarily by men.”¹⁷⁸ As I explain below, this derives from Hobbes’ belief that private judgment, in the form of subjective understandings and conceptions of objects, does not in any way reflect, or correspond objectively to the actual objects it represents (i.e. words do not actually represent the objects which they describe). Hobbes perceives words, names and titles of objects, not as psycho-physiological entities, but as discursive entities, meanings, and values which comprise one part of a broader system of knowledge.

The functional value of words for Hobbes, is not that they are mnemonic marks for purposes of communication, but rather, words are the precondition for reliable and certain (scientific) knowledge. Words allow us to: a) classify and secure the varieties of names that we give objects, and the varieties of sentences (propositions) that we use to describe these objects to others; b) fixate the meanings of ‘true’ and ‘false,’ as objective properties and c) secure knowledge as science, a system which necessitates that all truth claims follow certain rules and propositions for their validity. For example, Hobbes writes that reason is “nothing but reckoning [adding and subtracting] of the consequences of general names.”¹⁷⁹ In this understanding, all we know via reason is that something must be such, on the assumption that something else is such (e.g. if p, then q). The condition of possibility for this kind of knowledge is prior fixed meanings (definitions and names) for objects, something we do not have in the state of nature and therefore have to create ourselves; “seeing then that truth consist[s] in the right ordering of names in our

¹⁷⁸ Hobbes, *Elements of Law, Natural and Politic: Part I, Human Nature, Part II, De Corpore Politico: with Three Lives*, J.C. Gaskin (ed.), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 34.

¹⁷⁹ Hobbes, ch. V, 28.

affirmations, a man that seek[s] precise truth [needs] to remember what every name he uses stands for, and to place it accordingly.”¹⁸⁰

In this interpretation, part of the reason there is conflict in the state of nature is because of the *particularity* of words and knowledge (claims about truth and fact), and because of the universal pretenses of human beings to make these claims (using private judgement). The difference between science and prudence is that, whereas science is either “true or false,” prudence is neither because it depends on private judgement, “upon the passions and interests of men, which are different and mutable.”¹⁸¹ Therefore, knowledge gained through private judgement is always potentially misleading, precisely because it is contingent on our senses, and our own meanings of words and concepts which we construct based on our individual “appetites, aversions, and passions.”¹⁸² In other words, the particularity of individual judgements and interpretations in the state of nature results in constant disagreement; in the state of nature the meanings of objects, words, names, and concepts are always created “[in] relation to the person that use them,” and the effect of this for knowledge is, “there being nothing simply and absolutely so” (no such thing as ‘fact’), “nor any common rule of good and evil.”¹⁸³ Because of everyone’s equal capacity for private judgement, it is impossible that men in the state of nature have exactly the same understanding “of any one and the same object.”¹⁸⁴ Without common names and meanings for objects, even “the ablest, most attentive, and most practiced men may

¹⁸⁰ Hobbes, ch. IV, 23.

¹⁸¹ Hobbes, ch. XLIII, 467.

¹⁸² Hobbes, ch. III, 26.

¹⁸³ Hobbes, ch. VI, 35.

¹⁸⁴ Hobbes, ch. VI, 35.

deceive themselves, and [infer] false conclusions.”¹⁸⁵ In summary, private judgment inhibits our ability to reason effectively in the state of nature.

Problem 2) the uncertainty of moral concepts

As explained, private judgment inhibits our ability to reason effectively in the state of nature. What is called prudence is little more than guesswork; prudence depends on chance, and when we guess correctly, we are not wise according to Hobbes, but merely lucky – prudence is “when the event answer our expectation; yet in its own nature, it is but presumption.”¹⁸⁶ This problem is further supported in the “Ends of Discourse,” where Hobbes writes that judgment is “the last *opinion* in search of the truth of past and future;”¹⁸⁷ that is, for Hobbes, judgement is *nothing but opinion*. This means that in the state of nature, even if our judgments (knowledge/understanding of objects) are inferred from an *ordered and logical chain of thoughts*, the problem of the particularity of private judgement (subjectivity) *still remains*. That is, every single thought and idea in natural reason is always conditional and correlational on a prior *judgement*; thus Hobbes explains, “no man can know by discourse that this or that is, has been, or will be, which is to know absolutely, but only that if this be, that is, if this has been, that has been, if this shall be, that shall be, which is to know conditionally.”¹⁸⁸

The initial problem of private judgement, which I have explained as an epistemological problem of uncertainty, connects to the broader claim that Hobbes is making with respect to the state of nature; how in men’s natural condition, there is *no certainty to anything*, but only

¹⁸⁵ Hobbes, ch. V, 28.

¹⁸⁶ Hobbes, ch. III, 12.

¹⁸⁷ Hobbes, ch. VII, 42.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

fundamental uncertainty and anxiety, where “the future [is] but a fiction of the mind.”¹⁸⁹ Below, I explain how the universality of words, and the particularity of their application, means that there is no common understanding of morality and moral concepts (truth) in the state of nature, and this is what produces a mutual condition of fear and anxiety. I explain this is as the problem of morality in the state of nature, in connection with the principles of natural law and natural right.

Hobbes’ state of nature is a situation of common belonging, where everyone has an equal natural (universal) right over everything, ‘the whole earth’ (the public commons), “even to one another’s body.”¹⁹⁰ Next, I explain how in relation to our obligation and duty to natural law and natural right, in the state of nature we (human beings) are compelled to use private judgment and discover “[the] evidence of truth”¹⁹¹ for ourselves, and this leads to uncertainty, absurdity, and conflict. As Hobbes explains, the problem in the state of nature is not just a problem of present despair (though this is a significant part); it is not that “a man hopes for a more intensive delight, than he has already attained to; or that he cannot be content with a moderate power: but because he cannot assure the power and means to live well, which he hath present, without the acquisition of more.”¹⁹² In short, Hobbes’ concepts of natural law and natural right suggest that every man, by virtue of his biological instincts and innate desire to survive, will ‘fight to the death’ to protect his own life. The fundamental law of nature is to “seek peace” as a “precept or general rule of

¹⁸⁹ Hobbes, ch. III, 12.

¹⁹⁰ Hobbes, ch. XIV, 87.

¹⁹¹ Hobbes, ch. VI “Human Nature” *Elements of Law*.

¹⁹² Hobbes, ch. XI, 66.

reason,” and by which a person is forbidden to do that which would destroy his/her life, directly or indirectly.¹⁹³ The law of nature gives rise to “the right of nature,” which Hobbes explains, “[is] the liberty each man hath to use his own power as he will himself for the preservation of his own nature; that is to say, of his own life.”¹⁹⁴ The law and the right of nature are ultimately concerned with one and the same thing: each person’s natural duty to himself to preserve his own life. In this account, the law of nature demands us to make war with others, if it is necessary to the preservation of our life, and the law of nature leads us to (rationally) seek peace with each other, because we realize that this is the only logical way to preserve our lives (the right of nature simply gives you the right to do the former); since both not defending oneself and not making peace would result in death, both are forbidden by the definition of the law of nature. In sum, Hobbes explains the law of nature and the right of nature as universally valid maxims that guide all human conduct in the natural condition in the state of nature.¹⁹⁵

Private judgement as natural right

One way to interpret our capacity for private judgement in the state of nature is as part of our natural right for self-preservation, and our individual capacity to interpret the natural laws for ourselves. Natural right is a dual concept: it implies a particular end (that all men have an equal right/duty to preserve themselves). What is also implied in this concept is that men have an equal right to use the means necessary to preserve themselves (everyone has a right to self-preservation; therefore, everyone has a right to the means for self-preservation). For example, an important part of survival in the state of nature is eliminating and responding effectively to

¹⁹³ Hobbes, ch. XIV, 86. *Leviathan*. Hobbes writes, “a law of nature, *lex naturalis*, is a precept, or general rule, found out by reason, by which a man is forbidden to do that which is destructive of his life, or taketh away the means of preserving the same, and to omit that by which he thinketh it may be best preserved.”

¹⁹⁴ Hobbes, ch. XIV, 86.

¹⁹⁵ See Hobbes, ch. XIII-XV.

threats (dangerous people, objects, circumstances, and so on), and this depends on our prior understanding (judgement) of certain things as threatening.¹⁹⁶ The problem, however, is that everyone's judgements of danger are different; that is, there is no such thing as a common or universal concept of 'threat.' For example, Hobbes explains natural right as, "doing anything which, in [one's] own judgement and reason, he conceive[s] [the] aptest means thereunto" for preserving his own life.¹⁹⁷ Because of private judgement, our concepts of danger and threat are always subjective, and cannot be seen as reliable for Hobbes; these constitute 'prudence,' 'prudentia,' and 'providence,' rather than knowledge in any kind of universal (objective) sense. Most importantly, knowledge in the state of nature is fundamentally utility-driven – it is purposeful, rather than reasonable or reliable. The fundamental reason we seek knowledge in the state of nature is, as Hobbes says, to find out "what we can do with it when we have it,"¹⁹⁸ in other words, we seek knowledge in the hopes that we may somehow apply it in a way that reduces or betters our otherwise perilous condition.

Therefore, according to Hobbes we need a fixed, or *universal* account of judgement for two reasons. First, to secure the meaning of words and hence create the possibility for knowledge (for "all men by nature reason alike and well, when they have [clear] principles"¹⁹⁹). Secondly, to secure a common account of morality; without this, we continue to "give [multiple] names to one and the same thing from the difference of [our] own passions,"²⁰⁰ and this results in only absurdity, uncertainty, and unnecessary death at the hands of others.

¹⁹⁶ Indeed, anticipation is the best form of self defense. By anticipating (knowing and understanding) the threat beforehand, I am able to prepare for it in advance and hence increase my chances of survival.

¹⁹⁷ Hobbes, ch. XIV, 86.

¹⁹⁸ Hobbes, ch. III, 17.

¹⁹⁹ Hobbes, ch. V, 31.

²⁰⁰ Hobbes, ch. XI, 69.

§2. Sovereignty as Public Judgement

The argument as developed thus far can be summarized as the idea that, Hobbes' concept of the state of nature is not just grounded in an understanding of 'human nature' (human beings as naturally antagonistic, self-interested), but it is also based in fundamental questions about the nature of truth and knowledge. In this reading, the problem of the state of nature is the problem of the absence of absolute truth and knowledge. Conflict results because human beings have no natural way of agreeing on anything (i.e. the names and meanings of different objects, concepts and so on); the partiality of human judgement breeds controversy.

Beyond the idea that private judgement leads to disagreements and conflict over names, (knowledge) private judgement is additionally problematic because it limits the possibility for any common interpretation of natural law and natural right (morality), and this is what leads to conflict. I argue that for Hobbes, all moral values are entirely artificial and are created through the social contract, 'by covenant' and 'by institution.' Because the state of nature is a place where no one is in a position to universally decide what is good and what is bad, threatening or not threatening to human life, *anyone* can decide this for themselves.²⁰¹ In this understanding, morality is always-already connected to private judgement; because there is no standard account of judgement in the state of nature, it follows then that there can be no common understanding of what is right (just) and what is wrong (unjust). This means that to secure peace there needs to be someone to secure the meanings and definitions of moral concepts; that is, we need a sovereign to create meanings for concepts such as equity and justice, and to secure these meanings as

²⁰¹ This means that if I judge that killing you is a necessary move to protect my own life, then I have a right to kill you. However, if someone else was in my position they might judge the matter differently, and say that killing in this case is 'wrong', i.e. not morally justified.

“moral virtues” (universally binding).²⁰² For Hobbes, without an authority to secure the meanings of concepts, there can be “neither commonwealth...nor contract, nor peace, no more than amongst lions, bears, and wolves.”²⁰³

As explained, the law and right of nature obliges men to use their private judgement to best preserve themselves; it is therefore in their natural right to create their own meanings for threat, danger, right/wrong, good/bad, just/unjust, in the state of nature. It is in essence this openness, this dependence solely upon the will of the individual agent, that makes private judgement problematic for Hobbes. In the state of nature, “where all men are equal, and judges of the justness of their own fears,”²⁰⁴ all violence is legitimate under the fundamental *right* of individuals to judge what is necessary/required for their self-preservation, and this is universally commanded by natural law.

In this section I argue that one of the most important examples for why sovereign judgment is needed, is for the interpretation of natural law. “All laws,” Hobbes writes, “written and unwritten, have need of interpretation.”²⁰⁵ In speaking about the laws and by whom and how they are to be applied in civil society, Hobbes writes, “That law can never be against reason, [lawyers] agree [...] but the doubt is of whose reason it is that shall be received for the law. It is not meant of any private reason; for then there would be [contradiction].”²⁰⁶ In another passage, Hobbes writes, “Words are wise men’s counters, they do but reckon by them: but they are the money of fools.”²⁰⁷ As alluded to above, for Hobbes, true knowledge of anything, including natural law, has two preconditions: the philosophical/scientific method (reasoning through cause

²⁰² Hobbes, ch. XXVI, 106.

²⁰³ Hobbes, ch. IV, 20.

²⁰⁴ Hobbes, ch. XIV, 91.

²⁰⁵ Hobbes, ch. XXVI, 183.

²⁰⁶ Hobbes, ch. XXVI, 183.

²⁰⁷ Hobbes, ch. IV, 24.

and effect), which depends on fixed names for objects (definitions and meanings that can be ordered into causal chains).

Reason must be cultivated by a sovereign

Hobbes' general idea is that men in a state of nature will come to see, via their capacity to independently judge what is necessary for their self-preservation, that the law of nature obliges them to renounce their right of private judgement. In Hobbes' view, no human being could rationally deny to other human beings the natural right to do their best to preserve their own lives and to judge what actions such preservation required; the right of nature takes precedence over all other relations, obligations, and circumstances in which persons may find themselves; that is, the fact that individuals in their natural condition judge differently, is enough to show that there is an inherent uncertainty to their condition, and "it is a simple conclusion to draw that they should all find some single source of opinion."²⁰⁸ Because there is no such thing as objective truth in the world, no pre-existing names or meanings of objects, moral concepts, and so on, we thus create and authorize a common authority (a sovereign) to create these meanings for us; for "[men] want that art of words by which some men can represent to others that which is good in the likeness of evil, and evil in the likeness of good."²⁰⁹ The law and right of nature leads men to come together and secure (universalize) knowledge and judgement in a common authority. In short, the absence of good alternatives in the state of nature makes it rational for people who are deeply suspicious about each other to enter into agreements with one another.

Sovereignty as moral and political obligation

²⁰⁸ Tuck, *Hobbes*, 65.

²⁰⁹ Hobbes, ch. XVII, 113.

Hobbes' sovereign is thus the representative, both the *interpreter* and the *enforcer*, of natural law; "for the legislator is he [by whose] authority the laws continue to be laws" in society (universal and binding).²¹⁰ Hobbes speaks to the connection between natural law and civil law (morality and sovereignty), when he writes, "the law of nature and the civil law contain each other, and are of equal extent [...] for the laws of nature are not properly laws, but qualities [universal maxims] that dispose men to peace and to obedience."²¹¹ Here, Hobbes can be read as suggesting that civil law (sovereignty) is effectively natural law (morality); that civil and natural law are not different kinds, but different parts of law, "whereof one part (written) is called civil, the other (unwritten), natural."²¹² Therefore, the social contract constructs the sovereign as an Artificial Person, "[one] whose words or actions are considered [as] representing the words or actions of [other] men, or of any other thing to whom they are attributed."²¹³ In Hobbes' terms, the unity of the multitude of subjects, and their collective agreement for a common authority "makes [their] person one."²¹⁴ This means that the sovereign's words or actions are therefore 'owned' (representative of) the words or actions (judgements) of the people who agreed to the social contract; in doing so, they "submit their wills, every one to his will, and their judgements, to his judgement."²¹⁵

Applying this discussion to this study's specific critique, for Hobbes, authoritative judgment [over threat(s)] is needed to secure peace, and to prevent men from killing each other carelessly. By limiting men's natural capacity for judgement over existential threats, the

²¹⁰ Hobbes, ch. XXVI, 177.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Hobbes, ch. XVI, 106.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Hobbes, ch. XVII, 114.

sovereign is able to secure life in the state. Most importantly for this discussion, sovereignty for Hobbes is not only the capacity to enforce natural laws, but also the authority to determine *when* and *how* (in which specific instances and cases) the laws apply. One of the examples in which Hobbes suggests this is when he writes, “laws are of no power...without a sword in the hands of a man, or men, to cause those laws to be put in execution.”²¹⁶ In a different passage Hobbes writes, “and covenants without the sword, are but words and of no strength to secure a man at all.”²¹⁷ What we can take from these passages is that sovereignty is a matter of the sovereign’s own private judgement, where the civil laws are not always enough to ensure order. Rather, a sovereign must additionally have a ‘sword’ (absolute and exclusive authority) to interpret and apply the laws as he judges necessary. Because different people have different interpretations and judgements, unanimity is needed, and the only way to achieve this is by leaving the capacity over judgement to the “artificial man of the commonwealth.”²¹⁸ For this reason, Hobbes writes, “subjection, command, right and power are accidents not of powers but of *persons*.”²¹⁹ Here, Hobbes can be read as emphasizing that it is not powers in the form of say, pre-existing or transcendental laws, rules, norms, or institutions that command and determine politics, but that rather it is persons who have the power of the ‘sword’ who command these things. By putting a sovereign in charge of the meanings of right and wrong, justice and injustice, knowledge and morality become equally ascertainable by individuals.²²⁰ For this reason, Hobbes writes that civil law “is to every subject, those rules, which the commonwealth hath commanded him, by word,

²¹⁶ Hobbes, ch. XXI, 141.

²¹⁷ Hobbes, ch. XVII, 111.

²¹⁸ Hobbes, ch. XXVI, 162.

²¹⁹ Hobbes, ch. XXXII, 384.

²²⁰ Moreover, this interpretation goes against the natural law theorists mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, who assume God as the source of sovereign power. In contrast, it is argued here that truth is artificially and contractually created for Hobbes.

writing, or other sufficient sign of the will, to make use of, for the distinction of right, and wrong; that is to say, of what is contrary, and what is not contrary to the rule.”²²¹ What follows from this definition is that sovereignty is the common standard for all knowledge (truth and morality) in the civil state:

There being nothing simply and absolutely so [good and evil]; nor any common rule of good and evil, to be taken from the nature of the objects themselves, but from the person of the man (where there is no commonwealth) or (in a commonwealth) from the person that represents it; or from an arbitrator or judge, whom men disagreeing shall by consent set up, and make his sentence the rule thereof.²²²

The reason sovereignty (public judgment) is needed is nothing else but “to limit the natural liberty of men [...] in such manner as [to] join together against a common enemy” (violent death at the hands of others).²²³ Therefore, the laws of nature are not changed or restricted by sovereignty, only the natural right of private judgement is.

Obedience to a sovereign is obedience to his judgement

Based on this connection between judgement and morality, sovereignty is therefore also the absolute authority over the judgement of dangers and risks, the authority to decide on what is, and what is not, existentially threatening to individual members of the political community of citizen subjects. I use this final section to answer the question asked at the beginning of this chapter, do sovereign judgements (identifications and representations) of threat need to reflect the external circumstances in order to be seen as politically valid and legitimate by subjects? In

²²¹ Hobbes, ch. XXVI, 176.

²²² Hobbes, ch. VI, 35.

²²³ Hobbes, ch. XXVI, 178.

other words, do political articulations of insecurity, danger, and risk need to be objectively verifiable in order to command obligation from subjects?

Based on this chapter's analysis, I take Hobbes to suggest that expressions and articulations of danger and threat in sovereign politics *need not* depend on the incidence of objective factors for their legitimacy and/or authority. Rather, Hobbes' concept of public judgement emphasizes the fundamental interpretative capacity of sovereign power. If we accept that the problem of the state of nature is in essence, the problem of epistemological uncertainty and private judgment, then the validity of all political (sovereign) judgement comes from the fact that it is emanating from an authoritative person whose reason the community has consented to obey. The sovereign is an artificial person who assumes the status of actual persons via the subjects whom it represents. Further, in the chapter, "Of Civil Laws," Hobbes writes, "therefore it is not that juris prudentia, or wisdom of subordinate judges, but the reason of [the sovereign], and his command, that makes law."²²⁴ In an earlier chapter, Hobbes writes, "it is true that they that have sovereign power may commit iniquity; but not injustice or injury in the proper signification."²²⁵ In this account, the sovereign's actions cannot rightfully be called unjust by his subjects; for the law is what creates morality in the first place, and he "that carryeth [the power over life and death] is sovereign, and everyone besides, his *subject*."²²⁶ The necessary validity of political judgement is additionally explained in Hobbes' concept of "command" – it is where an individual either does, or does not do something, "without expecting other reason than the will of him that says it."²²⁷ It is assumed that whatever the sovereign commands in the civil state will ultimately be of benefit to subjects. In other words, we trust that the sovereign will act in

²²⁴ Hobbes, ch. XXVI, 179.

²²⁵ Hobbes, ch XVIII, 118.

²²⁶ Hobbes, ch. XVII, 114.

²²⁷ Hobbes, ch. XXV, 169.

accordance with natural law and our natural right to preserve our own life. Further, although it is expected that the sovereign will exercise rational judgement in all political matters, it is not a guarantee because the sovereign does not have any prior obligation to his subjects or to civil law. Rather, he is outside the social contract, in that the contract (covenants) are only between subjects themselves, and not between subjects and the sovereign.

The significance of the sovereign's capacity over judgement in terms of this study's broader critique is that, although one might hypothetically 'disagree' with the sovereign's judgement over political matters, he is nevertheless obligated to accept them. For to not accept the sovereign's judgement in favor of one's own (private) judgment is to break the social contract, and tantamount to a return to the state of nature (i.e. where everyone's judgement is equally valid). For this reason, Hobbes writes,

As men, for the attaining of peace and conservation of themselves thereby, have made an artificial man, which we call a commonwealth; so also have they made artificial chains, called civil laws, which they themselves, by mutual covenants, have fastened at one end to the lips of that man, or assembly, to whom they have given the sovereign power, and at the other to their own ears.²²⁸

Here, Hobbes provides perhaps the clearest definition of the significance of sovereign judgement in the civil state: law and command are produced 'at "the lips" of the sovereign' and are received at the "ears" of subjects, without question. Whereas the sovereign is the one who declares what truth is, the subjects are the ones who receive and accept these declarations, and thus bring truth into being as common knowledge (as they would their own private judgements). This means that, no matter what a law's content, no matter how 'unjust' it may seem, if it has been commanded

²²⁸ Hobbes, ch. XXI, 141.

by the sovereign, then and only then is it law. Therefore “the definition of injustice,” Hobbes writes, is “no other than the not performance of a covenant.”²²⁹

Conclusion

The purpose of my analysis in this chapter has been to address the broader perspective of what is at stake in the construction of sovereignty. What is most valuable in Hobbes’ argument is his general framing of the state of nature as a realm of conflicting subjectivities. The problem in the state of nature is precisely that individual judgments of threat are (more or less) equally valid/invalid. Hobbes’ answer to this is that we need to prop up one person’s judgment as ‘sovereign;’ law and order – peace, requires authoritative judgement. Sovereignty, as common, universal account of judgement, is the authoritative interpretation of natural law and natural right. The reason we authorize a sovereign to make this interpretation for us is because: 1) there are multiple and competing claims about truth/morality in the state of nature, and this creates a situation of fundamental uncertainty, and; 2) we know that we cannot agree on any concept of truth ourselves, and so we authorize a sovereign to define what truth is, and this, in effect, is what creates moral values in society (definitions of right and wrong, justice and injustice, good and bad). The sovereign is the only person who retains his/her capacity for private judgement in the civil state, and all other judgements are exchanged and universalized under sovereign judgement. This is not to say that sovereign judgement is ‘universal’ in essence, nor that it is seen as universal by subjects (abstract, impartial), but rather that it is accepted as something we must treat as universal, despite its necessarily arbitrary character.

I use Hobbes’ theory of sovereignty in this study for three reasons. First, I use Hobbes to explain the uncertainty of knowledge, why there can be no such thing as a properly objective

²²⁹ Hobbes, ch. XV, 95.

account (or objective analysis) of security, without a prior concept of *what* security is/means politically (a sovereign to secure the meaning of words and moral concepts). According to Hobbes, we assign a sovereign to overcome the problem of competing claims about truth and knowledge in the state of nature. It is the task of the sovereign power to reduce the uncertainty and anxiety that is felt in the state of nature, to a point where it is possible for human beings to live orderly and predictable lives, without the constant fear of death. Therefore, according to Hobbes, political regimes of security are based in authorization. They are produced as responses to sites of insecurity, which are themselves based in the sovereign's personal judgement of threat. In sum, Hobbes' dictum is that it is *authority* and not truth that make the laws.

Secondly, Hobbes helps explain our fundamental obligation, as citizen-subjects of the sovereign state, to obey all political decisions that are made on our behalf, including decisions over security, danger, threat, and risk. As explained, sovereignty has its authority and force "from the will of the commonwealth," and because we are the "authors" of the sovereign, we are *obliged* to do whatever is commanded by the sovereign: "a man [is] obliged to do what he is commanded, [when] he [has] covenanted to obey."²³⁰ In this understanding, all sovereign judgements, (e.g. decisions over security and threat) are "commands," and not simply of "any man to any man, but only of him whose command is addressed to one formerly obliged to obey him."²³¹ I emphasize here that the sovereign's actions are valid because persons formally "authorize" a sovereign to represent their actions. What this authorship means in Hobbes' understanding is that the public acts of sovereigns count as private acts of persons. All of the sovereign's acts will count as valid acts of the state if and only if the sovereign has been authorized to perform them by each and every member of the multitude.

²³⁰ Hobbes, ch. XXV, 169.

²³¹ Hobbes, ch. XXVI, 175.

Lastly, this interpretation of Hobbes' argument suggests that articulations of threat or insecurity in sovereign politics are always reducible to authoritative interpretation (sovereign judgement). Since the individuals and persons who must execute laws, define the meaning of words, or apply concepts have their own particular, limited, contingent sets of experiences that they use these words and laws to refer to – their judgments necessarily differ from each other, and reflect particular experiences just as much as any common, shared, or rational definition of a word or legal concept. This means that sovereign judgments of security threats, given that they do not merely express a rational consequence but also the past contingent sensory experiences of an embodied person, are in fact judgments embedded in particular situations and experiences. Speaking to this, Hobbes writes that authority in the state “belongs therefore to him that hath the sovereign power to be judge, or constitute all judges of opinions and doctrines, as a thing necessary to peace; thereby to prevent discord and civil war.”²³² This is to suggest that judgement over political matters, which can range from anything such as a security decision to an interpretation of existing law, is not up for debate or subject to any kind of ‘proof’ for its validity, notwithstanding its inescapable subjectivity.

²³² Hobbes, ch. XVIII, 119.

Chapter 3: Sovereignty and Knowledge: The Explanatory and Predictive Power of Biometrics

This thesis attempts to explore how political representations of danger, threat, and risk under sovereignty are based, not in objective conditions (empirical observations), but rather, in subjective interpretations of certain people, objects, events, and phenomenon, as fundamentally threatening. The purpose of this current chapter is to explain how this works today. This chapter's focus is the Canadian Government's use of biometric authentication technology as part of its screening and selection process for Syrian refugees. Specifically, I ask, under what conditions does the technoscientific apparatus of biometrics come to be recognized and employed politically, as an expert source of knowledge about security risks and threats? I believe this case study provides a unique example of contemporary forms of political judgement, and the relationship between sovereignty and knowledge-production, namely, how sovereignty responds to uncertainty in contemporary times through the diffusion of judgement within bureaucratic networks and processes. This chapter contributes to the broader critique of security in this thesis by showing how discourses of science and technology correlate with, and inform, contemporary modes of political judgement. Biometric screening, the automated use of biological (physiological) or behavioral characteristics to determine or verify identity, is a core component in the Canadian Liberal Government's response to the Syrian refugee crisis.²³³ Biometrics is an example of the merging of technology and science under risk management, the "division of labor between humans and computers,"²³⁴ to produce pre-emptive knowledge about threat. Here,

²³³ Government of Canada, "Biometrics and Government," Publication No. 06-30-E (Ottawa: Parliamentary Information and Research Service, 2010). Web accessed Jan. 11, 2017 at <http://www.lop.parl.gc.ca/content/lop/researchpublications/06-30-e.htm#a1>

²³⁴ C. Aradau and Tobias Blanke, "The (Big) Data-security assemblage: Knowledge and critique," *Big Data & Society* 2.2 (July–December 2015), 5.

political judgement, understood as the *authoritative interpretation and identification of sites of threat* (Hobbes), is embedded in technoscientific modes of knowledge production, specifically, the belief in technology, automation, and data-driven science as reliable sources of truth in contemporary times.²³⁵

This chapter's discussion is divided into three parts. The first and second parts of the chapter discuss the a) values, and b) limitations of Hobbes' concepts of sovereignty and political judgement, for explaining contemporary regimes and forms of security. The implicit theme in this discussion (and which guides the entire chapter) is the techniques of authorization for modern forms of knowledge. In part three, I extend this discussion and conduct a close analysis of risk management and security processes in the Liberal Government's resettlement policy for Syrian refugees.

Hobbes' contribution: themes of fundamental contingency, anxiety, and uncertainty

Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* offers a compelling story of the origins and foundations of modern politics and sovereignty. In the last chapter, I tried to show that at the root of Hobbes's thought is a profound sense of anxiety over uncertainty, and how his entire theory of sovereignty is contingent upon this uncertainty, specifically, the uncertainty of knowledge and of political origins in the absence of sovereignty. Hobbes' political theory, in this interpretation, is about the creation of peace through constructed knowledge and truth. Sovereignty provides human beings the possibility of making sense out of a fundamentally senseless world. The basic aim of this chapter, then, is to take up the provocation with which I ended the last chapter - sovereignty as a

²³⁵ In this study, 'technoscience' is employed as a term to explain the convergence of science with technology in contemporary modes of risk management. Technoscience is interpreted and explained here as an epistemic approach within science, "a type of science that is done in a technological milieu and that is technology-driven." For information about technoscience as a concept, see Karen Kastenhofer and Astrid Schwarz, "Probing Technoscience." *Poiesis & Praxis*, 8.2 (2011): 61-65.

response and solution to the problem of uncertainty. The specific purpose of this chapter's analysis of security is to show the unfolding of sovereignty's response to uncertainty.²³⁶

Hobbes's main contribution to this thesis is his account of the uncertainty of knowledge in the state of nature. In this study's interpretation of *Leviathan*, Hobbes' main purpose with his political theory was to show how the problem of uncertainty is resolved, specifically, how peace is secured under a common and universal account of judgement. The problem of uncertainty in the state of nature is explained in this thesis as an epistemological problem. In this reading, one of the fundamental purposes of sovereignty is to apply 'knowability' (certainty) to sites and locations of uncertainty.²³⁷ In addition to securing the meanings of words, it is expected that the sovereign will exercise rational judgement to interpret existential risks and threats, and reduce uncertainty to the extent that a peaceful, ordered, and predictable way of life is possible. In the social contract, the decision over what is existentially threatening (threatening to one's own life) is transferred from the private realm to the public realm of the sovereign, and the concept of an existential threat is retheorized to encompass threats to the well-being of an entire political

²³⁶ A central point of my analysis in this chapter is the relationship between knowledge, political regimes, and forms of security. The specific focus of this discussion is the role of discourses of science and technology, in the management of security in this case study, namely, how scientific knowledge informs existing interpretations and representations of threat and risk in the Liberal Government's resettlement program for Syrian refugees. Applying Hobbes' concept of political (sovereign) judgement to the case study, the focus for this discussion is 'security knowledge', understood as the authoritative interpretation and representation of sites of existential danger, threat, and risk under sovereignty.

²³⁷ Hobbes tells a story about the artificial fabrication of certainty through sovereignty as public judgement. As explained, for Hobbes the world is fundamentally uncertain, and without sovereignty there can be no such thing as certainty. Rather, certainty is *artificially created* through the social contract. According to Hobbes, the sovereign is the only person(s) who retains his/her capacity for private judgement in the civil state, and all other judgements are exchanged and universalized under sovereign judgement. Reason is secured under public judgement and it is the closest thing human beings have in terms of certainty about anything. That is, knowledge based in rules and laws is more certain than knowledge without any structure at all, and can hence be used to make inferences and predictions about what might, or might not occur in the future. Thus for Hobbes, the crucial value of political judgement was that it applied a sense of predictability to the world.

community.²³⁸

It is argued here that, despite changes in the structure of sovereign states since Hobbes' historical context (e.g. liberal-democratic, and not authoritarian government),²³⁹ the underlying impulse of sovereignty is still the same. That is, one of the basic objectives of sovereign power is to respond to the problem of uncertainty that undermines human beings' desire for a peaceful, predictable, and ordered way of life. The key point that is being continued from the last chapter into this chapter's analysis of security, is the problem of uncertainty and the necessity of political judgment, namely, Hobbes' framing of sovereignty (political judgment) as a necessary response to an epistemological problem of uncertainty. Though beyond the scope of this study's critique, I agree with RBJ Walker's excellent illustration of Hobbes' concept of sovereignty, as a particular "spatiotemporal order" within which relations between modern human beings might be envisaged.²⁴⁰ For Walker, Hobbes's sovereignty is about creating understanding and order out of nothing. It implies a process of applying universal categories and distinctions (universality) onto what is, by nature, a world made up of infinite particularities and possibilities, which exceed the scope of human understanding. Therefore, sovereignty operates by creating arbitrary divides, distinctions, boundaries, and limits (categories) in the world. In doing so, it organizes a world "within which universal truths may be possible," as a solution to the state of nature where truths are inconceivable.²⁴¹

²³⁸ In order to extend life in the political community, and prevent life that is "nasty, brutish, and short," there needs to be a sovereign authority to decide what kinds of life are dangerous and threatening to the lives of citizens.

²³⁹ I recognize that there are numerous current examples of authoritarian governments. By 'changes in the structure of sovereign states,' I am only referring to particular states in modern international relations (i.e. liberal democratic nation states, such as Canada).

²⁴⁰ See RBJ Walker, "Hobbes, Origins, Limits," R. Prokornik and G. Slomp (eds.) *International Political Theory after Hobbes* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 182-183.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

I argue that one way in which the significance of Hobbes' work on sovereignty is contemporarily exemplified is in risk-based political regimes of security, specifically, risk management as a contemporary example of how sovereignty (political judgement) responds to the problem of uncertainty.²⁴² According to Hobbes, articulations of threat or insecurity in sovereign politics are always reducible to independent, authoritative interpretation (sovereign judgement). That is, through the social contract, the sovereign is authorized to take whatever course of action he deems necessary to ensure the "peace and common defense"²⁴³ of the political community. Similarly, the security decision under risk management is a sovereign decision, taken in the face of a perceived radical uncertainty, where the purpose of the security decision is to somehow manage and control the site of uncertainty. With Hobbes' concept of political judgement in mind, the key point to be noted in the logic of risk management is interpretation, namely, the authoritative interpretation of uncertainty – a perceived potential site of existential risk and danger, which has no ontological presence outside of authoritative (sovereign) judgement, but is nevertheless 'made real' and constructed into a security problem through particular modes of knowledge production. Under risk management, the referent object of security is the indefinite and potentially catastrophic future, which security regimes attempt to control through pre-emptive intervention in the present.²⁴⁴

In the next section, I present two issues which exceed the rubric of Hobbes' political theory and his concept of judgement. I explain these issues as 1) the shift from sovereignty to

²⁴² By risk management, I am referring specifically to the "much greater use of new surveillance and information technologies [and] reliance on private sector collaboration" in global security practices in the last two decades. See Benjamin J. Muller, "Risking it all at the Biometric Border: Mobility, Limits, and the Persistence of Securitisation," *Geopolitics*, 16.1 (2011), 97.

²⁴³ Thomas Hobbes, ch. XVII, *Leviathan* (1651), J.C.A. Gaskin, ed. (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1998).

²⁴⁴ It should be emphasized that my focus in this study is *not* on the temporal dimensions of risk management/forms of uncertainty in contemporary global politics. My focus is only on the epistemological dimensions of risk management (in relation to this specific case study).

governmentality, and 2) the shift from sovereign judgement to discourses of knowledge. I turn to Michel Foucault's work on governmentality and discourses as a means for explaining how sovereign power operates in a contemporary political context. Specifically, I use Foucault's work to supplement and extend, rather than replace, the validity of Hobbes' political theory. In discussing these issues, my intention is not to prioritize one type of shift over the other. Rather, my explanation is guided by, and limited to, the broader question that is explored in this thesis, namely, the underlying conditions for the authoritative interpretation and representation of risk and threat in this case study.

§1. The Shift from Sovereignty to Governmentality: Progressions in the Spatial Architecture of Sovereign Power

The first limitation of Hobbes' theory for investigating the present is that Hobbes' account of sovereignty is historically specific. That is, Hobbes is describing a model of institutional organization which is increasingly obsolete. Hobbes' totalitarian/authoritarian vision of sovereignty (universal and unquestionable authority), is premised upon his belief that the alternative to having a sovereign in charge is an anarchic realm of violence and uncertainty. As explained, for Hobbes, the absence of sovereign power is by necessity the absence of law and order (peace and morality). However, this absolutist model of sovereignty is outdated in the face of basic liberal democratic principles of government, and much else. The current discussion focuses on changes in the disposition of sovereign power in modernity (historical developments in the spatial architecture of sovereign power). My specific focus is on the shift from a Hobbesian conception of sovereignty (sovereignty as universally encapsulated and totalized

in one body), to the diffusion of sovereign power throughout the social field.²⁴⁵ This is not intended to be a comprehensive account of the vast political transformations that characterize modernity, but rather a brief sketch of the shift from sovereignty to governmentality under modern liberal democratic forms of government.

I use Foucault's concept of governmentality to supplement the shortcomings of Hobbes' political theory for explaining contemporary forms of knowledge production under sovereignty.²⁴⁶ In particular, the concept of governmentality is useful for bridging the historical gap between Hobbes' political theory and contemporary modes of sovereign politics/government (since a comprehensive historical account of the progression of sovereignty is beyond the scope of this study's critique). My purpose in using this concept is to explain how certain aspects of sovereignty continue over time (sovereignty as a response to uncertainty), at the same time as particular transformations and shifts (changes in the structures and modes of production for knowledge) occur.²⁴⁷ As will become clearer in part three, a more nuanced account of sovereignty is needed in order to explain the current structures, institutions, and practices through which authoritative concepts of truth/knowledge are constructed and rendered authoritative. The example of risk management problematizes Hobbes' concept of judgement. For here, the interpretation and identification of threat is *not* reducible to sovereign judgement or

²⁴⁵ Dr. Simon Glezos, in discussion with the author, March 31, 2017. Moreover, it should be noted that the shift towards governmentality that I describe below is not identical with the emergence of liberal democratic states. That is, governmentality is not the same thing as liberal modes of politics and government, in that non-liberal states can still have governmental processes, and likewise, liberal democratic states can have elements that conflict with Hobbes' account of sovereignty, albeit in ways that are not reducible to the shift towards governmentality.

²⁴⁶ Above all, I use this concept to answer the question asked at the beginning of this chapter – how, and *why* certain meanings of threat/risk come to be constructed and represented politically as 'real.' To be clear, my purpose in using the concept of governmentality is *only* to explain how knowledge is produced in contemporary times. My intention is to explain developments in the *structures through which knowledge is produced, and under what conditions certain meanings come to be rendered 'true'* (treated as facts/knowledge) in modern society.

²⁴⁷ See Judith Butler, "Indefinite Detention," *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (New York: Verso, 2003), 50-11.

an ‘exceptional’ decision.²⁴⁸ In the example of biometrics, risk management is about responding to specific sites and locations of uncertainty, through the dispersion and diffusion of political judgement in technoscientific modes of knowledge production. I will return to this point later.

Evolution towards governmentality

Historically, the evolution towards governmentality was accompanied by the ‘democratization of sovereignty,’ namely, the diffusion and dispersion of sovereign power amongst “the people.”²⁴⁹ For Foucault, “the establishment of the great territorial, administrative, and colonial states” in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries signals the shift to governmentality with a “peculiar intensity.”²⁵⁰ Focusing on these historically specific developments in the structure of sovereignty, Foucault writes that modern modes of inquiry for sovereignty must go “behind the institution...to discover in a wider and more overall perspective what we can broadly call a technology of power.”²⁵¹

One of Foucault’s crucial contributions to political thought is his idea that modern power/sovereignty is neither oppressive, nor coercive. In Foucault’s understanding, modern versions of sovereignty are not a matter of “the domination of one individual over others, one group over others,” rather, “[sovereign] power must be analyzed as something that circulates...as something that functions only when it is part of a chain...power is exercised through

²⁴⁸ By exceptional I am referring to the German political theorist, Carl Schmitt’s interpretation and extension of Hobbes’ political theory, and his idea of sovereignty as embodied in the authority to decide the exception, the moment when ordinary law must be suspended. Hobbes and Schmitt both emphasize the decisionary and interpretative (absolutist) power of the sovereign as a *person*, albeit in different terms and historical contexts. See Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology*, George Schwab (transl.), (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985).

²⁴⁹ Michel Foucault cited in Charlotte Epstein, “Guilty Bodies, Productive Bodies, Destructive Bodies: Crossing the Biometric Borders,” *International Political Sociology*, 1.2 (2007), 161.

²⁵⁰ Michel Foucault, “Governmentality,” Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, & Peter Miller (eds.), *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, (Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), 87-88.

²⁵¹ Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-1978*, Michel Senellart (ed.) and Graham Burchell (transl.), (New York: Picador, 2007), 117.

networks.”²⁵² Foucault explains the relationship between politics (sovereignty) and power through his concept of governmentality. Part of Foucault’s goal with this concept is the displacement of the centrality of sovereignty from political analysis. In Foucault’s view, modern politics and government is located not at the level of the state and sovereignty, but in the disparate operations of *power* that mediate how society functions. For Foucault, “government is very clearly distinguished from sovereignty,” in that “government [is] much more than reigning or ruling.”²⁵³ In this understanding, the object of analysis for political power should not be “sovereignty in its one edifice, but the multiple subjugations that take place and function within the social body.”²⁵⁴ In contrast to Hobbes’ concept of judgement, Foucault believes that “power can no longer be analyzed emanating from individuals, since what appears to be personal is the result of *impersonal* technologies of power.”²⁵⁵ Politics here does not principally consist of the relation between a sovereign and his subjects (domination), but rather the diverse practices of discipline and management that work across various social and political institutions (e.g. religious, medical, educational, military), specifically, practices that produce political order through processes of routinization and normalization (power in terms of a “structure of actions”²⁵⁶).

At the same time, however, governmentality does not necessarily negate the Hobbesian conception of sovereignty: “we should not see things as the replacement of a society of sovereignty by a society of discipline, and then of a society of disciplines by a society, say, of

²⁵² Michel Foucault, *Society must be Defended: Lectures at the Collège De France, 1975-76*. David Macey (transl.), (New York: Picador, 2003), 29.

²⁵³ Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 76.

²⁵⁴ Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, 27.

²⁵⁵ Mika Ojakangas, “Sovereign and Plebs: Michel Foucault Meets Carl Schmitt.” *Telos* 119: (2001), 35.

²⁵⁶ Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, Colin Gordon (ed.), (Brighton: Harvester, 1980), 121.

government.”²⁵⁷ Rather, it is argued here that the kind of sovereignty described by Hobbes is embodied within and transformed under governmental practices.²⁵⁸ Although Foucault tends to talk about a shift *from* sovereignty *to* governmentality, other thinkers who have extended Foucault’s work tend to talk about the changing status of sovereignty. My interpretation of governmentality is based on Judith Butler’s explanation and extension of the concept, specifically, Butler’s analysis of sovereignty as a tactic of governmentality. In her chapter “Indefinite Detention” in *Precarious Life*, Butler attempts to rethink the relation between sovereignty and governmentality under ‘exceptional’ circumstances. Butler takes seriously Foucault’s contention that, in political theory ‘we need to cut off the king’s head’ and abandon a unitary theory of power, in favor of a more diffused (bureaucratically dispersed and concealed) form of power. Butler explains the “resurgence of sovereignty in the midst of governmentality.”²⁵⁹ In short, Butler contends for a concept of power (an extension of Foucault’s concept of governmentality) based in the *convergence* of governmentality and sovereignty:

Precisely because our historical situation is marked by governmentality, and this implies, to a certain degree, a loss of sovereignty, that loss is compensated through the resurgence of sovereignty within the field of governmentality [...] the resurrected sovereignty is thus not the sovereignty of unified power under the conditions of legitimacy, the form of power that guarantees the representative status of political institutions.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁷ Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 107.

²⁵⁸ Though there are particular structural shifts and transformations in terms of how sovereign power operates (i.e. as a diffused, dispersed, and concealed set of social and political practices, versus the complete subjugation of individuals under one person who is sovereign), these shifts do not constitute any kind of essential change in terms of the ontological essence of power. Regardless of the actual forms and frames through which sovereignty exerts influence, it is still power in the sense that is a hierarchical relation of subordination, bearing on and limiting individuals’ freedom.

²⁵⁹ Butler, *Precarious Life*, 56, 50-101. Specifically, Butler believes that Foucault’s portrayal of power needs to be revised in order to account for the relationship between sovereignty and governmentality that characterizes American anti-terrorism policies after 9/11. Butler’s discussion is also applicable to Canadian anti-terrorism efforts where security decisions are *not* always reducible to sovereignty (understood as a single sovereign authority), but are rather happening in multiple ways and at multiple places. I explain this in detail in the final part of the chapter.

²⁶⁰ Butler, *Precarious Life*, 56.

Butler's main argument is that modern power relies on both sovereignty and governmentality for its tactics. In this understanding, sovereignty represents one part of a complex governmental system ("the apparatus of governmentality"²⁶¹). Power is circulated and distributed within a governmental field in which sovereign authority is a crucial component.

§2. The Shift from Sovereign Judgement to Discourses of Science: From Sovereign Judgement to Technoscientific Judgement

The second issue with Hobbes' theory for investigating the present is that the ways in which sovereignty responds to uncertainty have changed. Importantly, Hobbes' focus for his theory was not on the actual empirical processes through which sovereignty is constituted and knowledge is created. Rather, Hobbes' purpose is to tell a hypothetical, albeit plausible story, of the origins and ends of modern (civil) society. Because Hobbes is interested in explaining a very specific form of uncertainty (the uncertainty of everything in the state of nature), Hobbes' theory of sovereignty does not consider ways of responding to different kinds of uncertainties. Rather, Hobbes' main point is that uncertainty exists, and for this reason sovereignty is needed.²⁶²

This brings us to the second limitation with Hobbes' political theory: the epistemological limits of the concept of political judgement. Whereas Hobbes' solution to uncertainty was putting *one* sovereign authority in charge over everything (to fix the meanings of knowledge and truth), today, there are certain criteria and conditions which must be met in order for there to be authoritative renderings of these concepts. Various historical and intellectual advancements in

²⁶¹ Ibid, 52.

²⁶² While Hobbes then goes on to provide a historically situated account of the details of political decision making, in this study I am only interested in the more general argument he makes about the nature and necessity of political judgement. In this interpretation, the primary benefit or achievement of sovereignty is the authorization of a specific structural and institutional account of political possibilities and necessities.

knowledge, namely, developments in the methods, techniques, and apparatuses used in the production of reliable ('true') knowledge render Hobbes' concept of judgment outdated.

This discussion relies on Foucault's explanation of the relationship between discourse-knowledge in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, as a means for explaining how modern concepts of truth and knowledge have developed and expanded beyond subjective forms of judgment. The purpose of this section is to provide a conceptual background, and insight, into the role of discourses of science in modern forms of knowledge. The following discussion is not meant to be a genealogy of science, technology, or the pursuit of objective truth/knowledge in modern society. It is instead intended to help bridge the gap between Hobbes' concept of judgement, and contemporary modes of judgement under risk management.²⁶³

Power-discourse-knowledge

In short, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* is an attempt to lay out an alternative account of the history of knowledge production in modernity, one in which *a priori* truth concepts are historical without being reducible to the empirical level of science. The specific focus for this discussion is Foucault's concept of *discourse-knowledge*, the relationship between power and knowledge in modern forms of politics and government. This concept typifies the belief that one of the ways in which sovereign power circulates in modernity, is through systems of knowledge. Foucault's concept of discourse is profoundly complex and a full account is beyond the scope of this study's critique. My purpose in using this concept is to explain the origins and preconditions for existing forms of knowledge and methods of knowledge production, specifically, how what counts as knowledge and truth at any given time can be traced back to particular material

²⁶³ This discussion will help set the context for my main argument in part three, specifically how, in the case of biometric security screening, the authority over knowledge shifts from being embodied in a sovereign person (Hobbes), to being diffused in various bureaucratic and administrative processes.

conditions of possibility, namely, different social and political structures and practices (relations of power) which necessarily underlie the production of truth in each historical period.

“Knowledge,” Foucault tells us, is about “displacements and transformations” of concepts, rather than any kind of linear, trans historical continuity.²⁶⁴ In other words, what is considered knowledge in one historical period, does not transfer over into another historical period. This is because knowledge is intrinsically connected to power relations (discourses).²⁶⁵ Discourse is interpreted and explained in this chapter as ‘a certain “way of speaking” and thinking’ about truth.²⁶⁶ Discourses function as systems of exclusion, in that they define what can be imagined, thought about, and spoken about in society. In Foucault’s understanding, discourses define the limits of *all* concepts of truth and knowledge; they are the overarching “system that governs the appearance of statements” in each socio-historical period.²⁶⁷

Scientific knowledge

Foucault explains the relationship between discourse-knowledge as a dual phenomenon, in which discourses not only limit and constrain the production of knowledge, but, at the same time, enable ‘new’ knowledge. This relationship is expanded in Foucault’s concept of *discursive practices*, historically and culturally specific sets of rules for organizing and producing different forms of knowledge. The current discussion focuses on Foucault’s explanation that, “whenever one can describe, between a number of statements... a system of dispersion, whenever, between

²⁶⁴ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge: Archéologie Du Savoir*, Alan Sheridan (ed.), (London: Tavistock Publications, 1972), 4-5.

²⁶⁵ Ibid, 4-6.

²⁶⁶ Ibid, 192-193.

²⁶⁷ Ibid, 129.

objects, types of statement, concepts, or thematic choices, one can define a regularity (an order, correlations, positions and functionings, transformations), we will say...that we are dealing with a *discursive formation*.”²⁶⁸

Science/scientific knowledge is a notable example of a discursive formation in modern society, and a significant part of Foucault’s analysis in *Archaeology* is devoted to this topic. For example, Foucault explains that, “knowledge is that of which one can speak in a discursive practice...the domain constituted by the different objects that will or will not acquire a scientific status.”²⁶⁹

According to Foucault, with the Scientific Revolution science ‘set itself as the ultimate standard of truth and form of rational thought,’ in modernity, to the extent that, for any claim to acquire value as ‘truth,’ it had to be based in the rigorous objective and empirical criteria of the scientific method.²⁷⁰ Part of Foucault’s critique is that scientific knowledge is not, by necessity, any more true than other forms of knowledge. Rather, the purpose of Foucault’s archaeological analysis is to problematize the entire notion of truth, by locating it within the field of power. In this understanding, all concepts of truth and knowledge in modernity are historically, socially, and culturally constructed by power relations. These concepts are produced not only through empirical observation and experimentation, but through multiple other “elements” and “set[s] of practices” of power, which work together (converge and overlap with each other) to assign particular meanings to various objects, events, and other phenomena.²⁷¹ In summary, discourses are one part of a broader system of power relations in modern society, which govern how individuals think, behave, and interact (e.g. the discourse of science). In this understanding, the

²⁶⁸ Ibid, 38.

²⁶⁹ Ibid, 182.

²⁷⁰ Michel Foucault, “Subject and Power,” *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 8 No. 4 (1982), 781.

²⁷¹ Foucault, *Archaeology*, 182.

‘discourse of science’ is interpreted as one of the “effects of power, which are linked with knowledge, competence, and qualification.”²⁷²

Sovereignty, risk management, and the problem of uncertainty

Thus far, this chapter has argued that the logic of risk management security regimes shares the same underlying impulse of Hobbes’ theory of sovereignty, and his concept of political judgement. However, what is additionally at stake in risk management regimes of security is the relationship between sovereignty and knowledge. That is, implicit within the logic of risk management is an underlying narrative about the validity of science, and mechanical objectivity in producing reliable knowledge about uncertainty.

Foucault’s concept of discourse-knowledge is useful to this study for three reasons. First, Foucault shows us how concepts of truth in modernity are inherently connected to discourses of power (sovereignty). That is, risk management regimes operate as part of the broader logic of sovereignty, under the assumption that sites of uncertainty can indeed be controlled, if they are subject to the appropriate techniques and methods for producing reliable knowledge. As I explain in part three with the example of this case study, risk management regimes respond to the problem of uncertainty by empowering existing discourses of science and technology, thus transferring sovereign decisional subjectivity *away* from the sovereign person/persons, to the quantitative-empirical realm of ‘big data.’ In the case of risk-management, security is not just about the sovereign decision. Rather, the logic of risk management is about the dispersion of political judgement in technoscientific modes of knowledge production. Therefore, while Hobbes’ concepts of sovereignty and political judgement are useful for explaining the underlying logic of risk management security regimes, these concepts are problematic in terms of explaining

²⁷² Foucault, “Subject and Power,” 781.

how certain concepts of risk and threat are constructed within these regimes. The logic of risk management is not so much about preventing, deterring, or withholding threats, as it is about preempting threats, by making probabilistic judgements of them. This process requires, a) a specific method (using science and mathematical principles to speculate probability), and b) specific apparatuses and equipment (using computerized technology and programs to translate vast, complex sets of information into condensed sets of data).

Second, and connected to the above point, Foucault's explanation of the relationship between power-knowledge reaffirms the necessarily interpretative basis of knowledge that Hobbes was alluding to with his concept of political judgment. In this sense, Foucault might be read as expanding, and providing a more detailed and context-specific account of how political judgement operates in relation to discourses of science and empiricism. Foucault links the presupposed objective notion of truth, to the explicitly political notion of discourse. In doing so, Foucault is able to show how "truth isn't outside power, or deprived of power."²⁷³ Rather, under sovereignty, truth has an explicitly political function, and "is produced by virtue of multiple constraints."²⁷⁴

Lastly, Foucault helps set the foundation for my main argument below, which is that biometrics is accepted as a presumed 'expert' form of knowledge about security and risk in this case study. In the next section, I intend to show how security knowledge, the authoritative interpretation of threats, is based in certain continuities, namely, pre-existing discourses of legitimation for truth and knowledge. Applying Foucault's concept of discourse-knowledge, it follows that political representations and descriptions of security under sovereignty (authoritative interpretations of risk and threat) are necessarily ordered and ordained, by "the present stage of

²⁷³ Michel Foucault, "The Political Function of the Intellectual," *Radical Philosophy*, no. 17 (1977), 13.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

knowledge.”²⁷⁵ That is, just like any form/system of knowledge in modernity, knowledge about security is *contingent* upon specific socio-historical discourses.

§3. Case Study Analysis: Governmentality, Discourse, and Biometrics

“Every day we must operate with the knowledge that our enemies are changing based on how we change. That is why science and technology is key to winning this new kind of war.” – Tom Ridge, US Secretary of Homeland Security²⁷⁶

This final part of the chapter is a discursive analysis of security and risk management processes in the case study. The focus for this discussion is the use of biometric authentication technology in the current screening and selection process for Syrian refugees. The purpose of this analysis is to show how biometric systems contribute to an attempted sense of certainty in contemporary times, in relation to a) the underlying logic of sovereignty (Hobbes); and b) discourses of science/scientificity (Foucault). I argue that what is at stake in the use of biometrics technologies in this program is the relationship between sovereignty and knowledge (power-discourse), where the authority over the meaning and definition of ‘threat’ is embodied, not in a sovereign person(s), but in pre-existing discourses of science and technology.

The significance of biometrics in terms of this study’s broader critique of security is the convergence of subjective interpretative judgement, with ostensibly objective scientific judgement; that is, biometrics makes the necessarily *interpretative* judgement of threats under sovereignty coincide with current objective/scientific norms and standards for truth and knowledge. Drawing on Foucault’s concept of power-knowledge, I explain biometrics as part of

²⁷⁵ Foucault, *Archaeology*, 4-5.

²⁷⁶ Tom Ridge, US Secretary of Homeland Security cited in Louise Amoore and M. de Goede, “Governance, Risk and Dataveillance in the War on Terror,” *Crime, Law & Social Change*, 43 (2005), 149.

a broader discourse of technology and science (a “discourse claiming scientific status”)²⁷⁷ which “defines a limited space of communication”²⁷⁸ about security, risk, and threat, in such a way that other possibilities of imagining and interpreting these concepts are concealed and obscured.²⁷⁹ I argue that, because of established social, cultural, and political norms in Canada regarding human rights and non-discrimination, pre-existing racialized and gendered assumptions about individuals as ‘threats’ (e.g. single males as potential terrorists) cannot be explicitly politically stated. Rather, there is a need to articulate these assumptions in a way that coincides with, and reproduces, existing standards of truth for knowledge. As I explain below, biometric security systems are ways of producing definitive (certain) knowledge about security, threat, and risk in contemporary global politics, through the calculative inscription, interpretation, and subjectification of bodies.

Development of ‘big data’ solutions post-9/11

I begin my analysis with a brief outline of the concept of the ‘biometric border,’ also known as the “e-border” and the “smart border.”²⁸⁰ Following the 9/11 attacks, security practices in the U.S. and Canada ‘transformed overnight,’ with the Bush Administration creating

²⁷⁷ Michel Foucault, *Lectures at the Collège De France: Lectures on the Will to Know*, Graham Burchell (ed.). (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 2.

²⁷⁸ Foucault, *Archaeology*, 126.

²⁷⁹ There is a range of literature speaking to the relation between security and discourses of science. For example, scholars such as, Benjamin Muller and Michael Dillon have analyzed how scientific discourses “contribute to altered formations of political subjectivity” within security regimes. This chapter’s argument draws on this literature. However, this discussion is not meant to be a genealogy of science or technology in political regimes and formations of security. Rather, it is intended to set the context for my analysis of biometrics as a source of expert knowledge about threat. For a detailed account of risk management and scientific discourses, see Benjamin J. Muller, “Securing the Political Imagination: Popular Culture, the Security Dispositif and the Biometric State,” *Security Dialogue*, 39.2 (2008): 199-220, For more information on the logic of risk management security regimes and discourses of science, see: Louise Amoore, “Biometric Borders: Governing Mobilities in the War on Terror,” *Political Geography* 25 (2006): 336-35; Didier Bigo “Detention of Foreigners, States of Exception, and the Social Practices of Control of the Banopticon,” in P. K. Rajaram & C. Gundy-Warr (eds.) *Borderscapes: Hidden Geographies and Politics at Territory’s Edge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007): 3-33.

²⁸⁰ Louise Amoore, *The Politics of Possibility: Risk and Security Beyond Probability* (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 2013), 48.

the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and the Canadian Government following the American lead and creating the equivalent body in Canada, the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA).²⁸¹ Further, government interest in computerized security applications increased dramatically, with the U.S. Government and Canadian Government awarding several multibillion dollar contracts to private technology companies, including risk assessment firms and big data companies.²⁸² In 2004, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security launched the country's first "comprehensive border protection system" under the U.S.-VISIT Program (now known as the Office of Biometric Identity Management),²⁸³ and the move quickly inspired similar initiatives in Canada. In 2006 the Conservative Government officially incorporated biometrics into the mandate of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration (CIC).²⁸⁴ Further, since 2012, there has been an arrangement in place between Canada and the U.S. regarding data sharing on immigrants (the Smart Border Agreement), and the Canadian Government is additionally taking steps to greatly expand data-sharing with other allies, including Britain, Australia, and New Zealand.²⁸⁵

The deployment and exchange of electronic personal data is a key feature of global humanitarian responses to the Syrian refugee crisis, and is considered by policymakers as a "high

²⁸¹ For more information see U.S. Government, "Department of Homeland Security: Our Mission," web accessed Jan. 11, 2017 at <https://www.dhs.gov/our-mission>, and; Government of Canada, "CBSA: Who we are," web accessed Jan. 11, 2017 at <http://www.cbsa.gc.ca/agency-agence/who-qui-eng.html>.

²⁸² Amoores, *Politics of Possibility*, 4.

²⁸³ Manas Baveja, and Lawrence M. Wein, "An Effective Two-Finger, Two-Stage Biometric Strategy for the US-VISIT Program," *Operations Research*, 57.5 (2009): 1068-1081.

²⁸⁴ Government of Canada, "Use of biometrics in Canada," web accessed December 16, 2016 at <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/biometrics-use.asp>. Currently, Canadian and US authorities are able to query each other's visa database for conducting risk assessments.

²⁸⁵ See Government of Canada, "Canada and the United States: Joint counter-terrorism initiatives," web accessed Jan. 11, 2017 at http://www.lop.parl.gc.ca/content/lop/researchpublications/prb0834_10-e.htm

accuracy” means for identifying terrorists and preventing their movement across borders.²⁸⁶ The information collected through biometrics helps contribute to a global “economy of big data,” which policy makers use to develop anticipatory knowledge of future terrorist attacks.²⁸⁷ The Canadian Government currently collects biometrics from all Syrian refugees applying for asylum and resettlement in Canada: “Each Syrian refugee that Canada welcomes will undergo a robust, multi-layered screening,” including through “immigration and security interviews by experienced visa officers, identity verification, and health and medical examination.”²⁸⁸ It is argued here that one of the crucial reasons for why biometrics is used in this policy, is because an *objective* standard of truth about security is needed, specifically, to secure basic liberal democratic principles of government. For example, the protection of individual freedoms and rights, which would be threatened under an all-powerful, authoritarian sovereign with the ultimate authority over everything (Hobbes). For the Canadian Government to make arbitrary claims about all Middle Eastern/Syrian males as terrorists or potential terrorists would be socially, politically, and ideologically unacceptable. On its own, this double standard policy of dividing refugees into ‘risk groups,’ would constitute a clear discrimination of equality rights, which are at the core of Canada’s Charter for Rights and Freedoms, which states: “Everyone is entitled to the same benefits provided by laws or government policies...regardless of personal characteristics such as race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age...sexual orientation [or] marital status.”²⁸⁹ Therefore, there must be some underlying objective, value-free

²⁸⁶ Amoores, “Biometric borders,” 341.

²⁸⁷ Aradau and Blanke, “The (Big) Data-security assemblage,” 5.

²⁸⁸ Government of Canada. “#WelcomeRefugees Five-Phase Plan.” Web accessed Mar. 21, 2017 at <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/overview.asp>

²⁸⁹ Government of Canada, “Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.” Web accessed Mar. 22, 2017 at <http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/just/06.html#er>

basis for the Canadian Government to rightfully exclude all heterosexual single male refugees from its resettlement program, without the charge of discrimination.²⁹⁰

Biometrics and objective knowledge

Etymologically, biometrics is literally “the measurement of life” (biometry).²⁹¹ Biometric surveillance systems verify or ‘recognize’ a person based on physiological characteristics, such as fingerprints, hand and facial features, and iris patterns, as well as behavioral characteristics, including “how a person signs his name, types, or even walks.”²⁹² The biometric information collected from a person can also include photographs, DNA, voice recordings, and “other aspects of human physiology, chemistry, and behavior.”²⁹³ According to the Canadian Government,

Any human physiological or behavioral characteristic can qualify as a ‘biometric’ [as] long as it satisfies the following requirements: universality - each person should have the characteristic; distinctiveness - any two persons should be sufficiently different in terms of the characteristic; permanence - the characteristic should be sufficiently invariable over a period of time; and collectability - the characteristic should be quantitatively measurable.²⁹⁴

There are two primary reasons for why biometric systems appeal to governments and immigration authorities. First, because of their (perceived) high accuracy in verifying/recognizing individuals, and second, because of their ability to collect and analyze information from multiple global databases at once.²⁹⁵ The purpose of biometric security screenings in this program is to translate various types of uncertainties about individuals, for example, vague or unclear information about an individual’s identity, into hardened facts. A

²⁹⁰ See chapter one for a detailed account of this policy.

²⁹¹ Epstein, “Guilty Bodies,” 152.

²⁹² John R. Vacca, *Biometric Technologies and Verification Systems*, (Burlington: Butterworth-Heinemann, 2007), 3.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, 11-12.

²⁹⁴ Government of Canada, “Biometrics and Government.”

²⁹⁵ I explain what I mean by ‘perceived’ later in the discussion.

biometric system is a “pattern-recognition system,” which typically operates in one of two modes: *verification* and *identification*.²⁹⁶ ‘Verification’ is when a newly captured biometric sample (identifier) is compared against a previously registered or ‘enrolled’ biometric sample of the *same* person.²⁹⁷ The purpose of this process is to verify a person’s claimed identity, by checking it against their own previously enrolled information. This process is known as “one-to-one matching.”²⁹⁸ In contrast, ‘identification’ is a process of “one-to-many matching.”²⁹⁹ Here, a person’s collected biometric information is checked against the entire “enrolled population,” a central database (or set of databases), consisting of every single biometric of every single person whose information was ever scanned.³⁰⁰ In Canadian border security and immigration processes, biometric systems operate in identification mode (“one-to-many”), where Immigration officers from the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) and Immigration and Citizenship Canada (CIC) use the collected data to screen individuals against global ‘watch lists.’³⁰¹

Specifically, biometrics systems contribute to security processes by breaking up individual human bodies into a set of measurable ‘risk factors.’ This is done by separating individuals into two groups: ‘high risk’ (“questionable”) subjects or ‘low risk’ (“trusted”) subjects.³⁰² There are two factors which determine a person’s risk level. First, the *type* and the *amount* (quality and quantity) of biometric data provided, and second, their “matching score”, a statistical calculation of the similarity between the input biometric data and what is represented

²⁹⁶ A.K. Jain, et al., “Biometric recognition: security and privacy concerns,” *IEEE Security & Privacy Magazine*, vol. 99, no. 2. (2003) DOI:10.1109/MSECP.2003.1193209.

²⁹⁷ Vacca, *Biometric Technologies*, 11.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 12-13.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 11-12.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid*.

³⁰¹ Government of Canada, “Biometrics and Government.”

³⁰² Epstein, “Guilty bodies,” 153.

in the wider database.³⁰³ Whereas the retina and iris are considered “one of the most reliable” biometrics for precise identity verification, other types of identifiers are not as accurate, including fingerprints, facial recognition, and voice.³⁰⁴ Thus, the type of biometric collected from a person tells the system how intimately the body of a person can be known. From the computer’s perspective, the person who provides a retina biometric is seen as more certain, and therefore ‘less risky’, than the person who does not or cannot provide the same kind of information.³⁰⁵ Beyond this, there a number of other aspects which flag a person as high risk, including identity mismatches (e.g. forged documents/data; the person isn’t who they say they are), criminal convictions, health issues, and all issues related to intelligence and law enforcement.³⁰⁶

Biometrics and human subjectivity

The significance of biometrics for this chapter’s discussion of knowledge, is the shift from human judgement (human subjectivity) to objective judgement in the identification of threat. Prior to the advent of computerized screening, immigration authorities in Canada were trained to make decisions about individuals using their own subjective personal judgment. For example, in addition to checking passports and other important identity documents, authorities would make an ‘informed decision’ about an individual’s claim based on that person’s overall appearance, behavior, interview responses, and other qualities used to examine his/her

³⁰³ See Jain et al., “An Introduction to Biometric Recognition.” Further, the higher the matching score, the more certain the system is.

³⁰⁴ Epstein, “Guilty bodies,” 153.

³⁰⁵ Amoores, “Biometric borders,” 343. Further, as Amoores explains, individuals who are not able to provide high quality biometrics such as iris and retina, are subject to “more invasive” screening processes, with the “degree of surveillance intensified” considerably. In other words, they require more screening because they are ‘less knowable’ and less certain than their counterparts.

³⁰⁶ Government of Canada, “Processing overview,” web accessed Mar. 3, 2017 at http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=1023039&_ga=1.112208194.758898859.1449019518.

credibility.³⁰⁷ The problem with these kinds of decisions, however, is that they are not objectively certain and are prone to natural human errors, for example, cognitive biases. Further, when asked about the reasons for why biometrics is needed in the current resettlement policy, CBSA officials have stated the need to “keep pace with emerging security vulnerabilities,” and the need to “protect Canadians from increasingly complex safety and security threats.”³⁰⁸ According to advocates of biometric technologies, the main benefit of this system in terms of security is that human judgment, which is subjective and uncertain (not reliable), is replaced with scientific certainty. Speaking to this, the Canadian Government has asserted that “biometric data collected from persons applying for refugee resettlement to Canada will allow visa officers to establish identities...and *make sound decisions*.”³⁰⁹ Implicit in these types of claims is an understanding of biometric systems as more reliable than human judgment. As one expert has explained, these technologies “are assumed to provide a complete picture of who someone is,” sometimes even leaving people having to “dispute their own identity.”³¹⁰ The entire screening and decision-making process under biometrics has little to zero human involvement: first, a sensor takes an observation of the biometric characteristic. Next, the system translates the observation mathematically to produce a “biometric signature.”³¹¹ Finally, the computer inputs the data into an algorithm and compares it with existing information in a central database.³¹² In this way, the algorithms not only filter what can be seen by immigration authorities, but they also

³⁰⁷ See Ninette Kelley and Michael J. Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic: A History of Canadian Immigration Policy* (University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 2000) DOI:10.3138/9781442681682.

³⁰⁸ “Cyberattack on Biometric Data Poses Security Risks at Border, Documents Warn,” (Sept. 15, 2016) *Toronto Star*. Web accessed Mar. 21, 2017 at <https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2016/09/15/cyberattack-on-biometric-data-poses-security-risks-at-border-documents-warn.html>

³⁰⁹ Government of Canada, “Processing overview.”

³¹⁰ Anonymous expert cited in Amoore, “Biometric Borders,” 340.

³¹¹ Government of Canada, “Biometrics and Government,” 1-2.

³¹² *Ibid*.

decide the appropriate courses of political action. For example, in some cases, immigration and border officers will willingly override their own judgements because they think that the computer “must ‘see something’ that they do not.”³¹³

Fallibility and limits

As explained, biometric systems are employed by governments under the presumption that they apply certainty to otherwise uncertain bodies (e.g. foreign travelers, migrants, refugees). These systems operate by making bodies ‘objectively knowable’ to governments and authorities, so that these authorities can make more informed, more precise, and thus more certain decisions over security. Further, in contrast to traditional government-issued identity documents, it is “significantly more difficult” to copy, share, or reproduce biometrics.³¹⁴ That is, unlike a passport, birth certificate, or driver’s license, which can be reproduced with the proper skills and equipment, biometrics simply *cannot* be lost, stolen, or forgotten, because they are physically and biologically attached to a person’s body. As former Prime Minister Stephen Harper put it, “you can fake your name, you can fake your documents, but you cannot fake your fingerprints.”³¹⁵

However, biometric recognition technologies are not a perfect solution to security, and they are not immune from making errors. According to some experts, the effectiveness of

³¹³ Michael Dillon and Andrew W. Neal (eds.), *Foucault on Politics, Security and War*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 194.

³¹⁴ Jain et al., “An Introduction to Biometric Recognition.”

³¹⁵ “Ottawa expands biometric screening for travelers to Canada,” (Jun. 4, 2015), *The Star*, web accessed Jan. 1, 2017 at <https://www.thestar.com/news/immigration/2015/06/04/stephen-harper-announces-more-money-for-csis-spy-agency.html>.

biometry is “highly overrated,” especially by politicians and policy makers.³¹⁶ Most biometric authentication systems are prone to two types of technical errors: 1) mistaking biometric measurements from two different persons to be from the *same* person (false match); 2) mistaking two biometric measurements from the same person to be from two *different* persons (false nonmatch).³¹⁷ As explained, face identification has ‘considerably poor accuracy’³¹⁸ compared with other types of biometric identifiers, and this could result in the individual being misidentified. In another case, the system could make mistakes about a person due to imperfect conditions during the screening process. These can include environmental conditions, such as “temperature, humidity, lighting, and noise,” as well as the physical condition of the person’s body being scanned, for example, major changes to a person’s body (such as pregnancy, puberty, weight loss/gain, and surgical operations), and new marks on the body (cuts, pimples, bruises, scars).³¹⁹ These types of errors have considerable implications for the meaning and definition of threat. In all of the above scenarios, there is the possibility of the system falsely identifying a person as someone else (e.g. a convicted criminal or suspected terrorist). As Stalder and Lyon explain,

Suppose the system is 99.99 percent accurate. This means that if someone is a terrorist suspect, there is a 99.99 percent chance that the software indicates “terrorist: positive.” If someone is *not* a terrorist, there is a 99.99 percent chance that the software indicates “terrorist: negative.” Assuming that one in ten million people who pass through the checkpoint, on average, is a terrorist suspect, the

³¹⁶ Kristrún Gunnarsdóttir, “The Fifth Freedom and the Burden of Executive Power,” in Ana Delgado (ed.) *Technoscience and Citizenship: Ethics and Governance in the Digital Society*. (Springer Ebooks: 2016), 24. DOI:10.1007/978-3-319-32414-2.

³¹⁷ Jain et al., “An Introduction to Biometric Recognition.”

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*

system will generate *1,000 false alarms for every one real terrorist*.³²⁰

In the case of Syrian refugees, a false match could have dire consequences. It could mean that a person is permanently denied protection and asylum in another country, a devastating outcome for victims who were relying on resettlement to improve their lives.³²¹

What is at stake in the production of knowledge vis-à-vis biometrics?

Drawing on the above, I argue that there are two important issues at stake in the use of biometrics in this policy. The first issue concerns the internal aspects of biometric systems, specifically, the systems' vulnerability to technical errors. Secondly, even *if* these technical issues were resolved (i.e. the system was shown to be one hundred percent accurate in its identification/verification of individuals), the knowledge produced under biometrics is fundamentally contingent, in that it is premised on pre-existing assumptions that are not themselves objectively neutral. This case study is a good example for demonstrating the construction of security threats under sovereignty, specifically, how sovereignty frames and represents particular objects, events, people, and other phenomena as existentially and objectively threatening ('real' forms of danger, true by necessity), in subjective ways. In this case study, security knowledge is constructed and produced through 1) technoscientific discourses, and 2) authoritative sovereign judgement.

³²⁰ Felix Stalder and David Lyon, "Electronic identity cards and social classification," *Surveillance as Social Sorting: Privacy, Risk, and Digital Discrimination*, David Lyon (ed.), (London: Routledge, 2003), 84.

³²¹ Jain et al., "An Introduction to Biometric Recognition." The reason for this is that biometrics are not easy to revoke. If a person's biometric is ever mismatched, or even compromised (stolen by someone else to forge their identity), it stays that way in the system forever. For instance, "with a credit card, the bank can issue the owner a new card with a new number. But a [person] has only a limited number of biometrics, one face, 10 fingers, and so on."

First, this case study's example of biometric screening demonstrates how a particular technoscientific discourse is legitimized to produce knowledge – knowledge which is *contingent* but is nevertheless treated as objective and certain. Under biometrics, the uncertainty (risk) of the terrorist threat is made more certain by bringing it into a zone of calculation and manageability. Here, the human body is understood and responded to as a physical indicator of risk and threat. As Louise Amoore has explained, the broader allure of biometrics in the war on terror derives from the human body being seen as “an indisputable anchor to which data can be safely secured.”³²² Thus, through biometrics risk becomes materially and tangibly present, and Syrian refugees become framed and understood as ‘real’ security threats. However, a Foucauldian discursive understanding of knowledge/science suggests that, all knowledge, regardless of the specific methods and techniques used in its production (e.g. technology), is ultimately contingent. This problematizes existing assumptions of biometric, and other types of automated surveillance/security technologies used in risk management, as objectively certain and neutral modes of knowledge production. Rather, what this interpretation tells us is that even if these systems could operate at a perfect, one hundred percent accuracy rate, the knowledge produced is not rendered any ‘more certain’ than what it would be without them. This is because the basic method and principles of the underlying *discourse* of science still apply. The only difference is the architecture through which scientific knowledge is produced (i.e. computerized technology replaces the human component in knowledge production). In other words, the production of security knowledge under biometrics is simply a continuity of the socio-historical discourse of science, but a break with the traditional architecture used throughout history to produce scientific knowledge (i.e. the human agent in science is replaced with technology).

³²² Amoore, “Biometric Borders,” 342.

Further, the focus on the objectivity/scientificity of biometrics in this policy, has important consequences in terms of how security threats are represented and understood politically. I argue that one reason for why biometrics are employed in this policy is to conceal practices of discrimination of refugees. That is, biometrics obscures subjective decisions over security – in this case, the identity-based discriminations of single-male refugees, by emphasizing the authority of technology and science in producing reliable knowledge.³²³ Here, the interpretation of risk and threat happens not through subjective sovereign judgement, but at multiple levels and through multiple processes, which are based in certain methodological rules and principles. What is obscured however, is that the individuals being screened under biometrics are an already securitized group. Implicit within the process of biometric security screening, is the pre-existing categorical suspicion of an entire group as high risk, which in effect provides a reasonable cause for the mandatory screening of individuals (as potential security threats/risks) within this group. For example, Citizenship and Immigration Canada’s website on biometrics states that, “If you are a citizen of one of these [specific] countries... you will [need] to give your biometrics to Canada to confirm your identity.”³²⁴ In other words, the requirement for giving biometrics does not apply to all migrants/refugees coming in to Canada. Rather, only *some* types of migrants have to give biometrics, and Syrian refugees are included in this list.³²⁵ Thus, the objective of biometrics is simply to identify the ‘highest risk’ persons from a general population of relatively risky individuals. However, certain types of individuals (heterosexual

³²³ My main argument is that the use of biometrics in this program helps further legitimate the notion of ‘low risk’ and ‘high risk’ refugees, categorizations which are actually subjectively based. However with biometrics, it is understood that these are *scientifically verified* categories.

³²⁴ Government of Canada, “Do I Need to Give Biometrics?” Web accessed Apr. 7, 2017 at <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/helpcentre/answer.asp?qnum=716&top=19>

³²⁵ It is beyond the scope of this study to provide a complete of list of countries included under the mandatory biometric requirement. For more information, see Government of Canada, “Find out if you need to give biometrics.” Web accessed Apr. 4, 2017 at <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/biometrics.asp>

single males) are already excluded from the policy as the most risky. In other words, these individuals do not need to be screened via biometrics because it is already accepted and known that they are a security threat.³²⁶ According to Citizenship and Immigration Canada, “The risk that refugees who presented a security risk would seek entry into Canada, or terrorist groups would seek to infiltrate the Syrian refugee initiative, was mitigated through the development of a multi-agency, multilayer security screening process,” which included “the verification of biometrics against Canadian criminal, immigration, and refugee databanks.”³²⁷ In this way, by emphasizing the accuracy, as well as the necessary objectivity and neutrality of biometric technologies, policy makers are drawing attention *away* from the subjective and discriminatory aspects of this policy (i.e. identity-based exclusions of heterosexual single males), towards a particular kind of representation of security and risk management, where the selection of refugees is necessarily objective and scientifically based.³²⁸

³²⁶ It should also be noted that my focus in this study is not on *why* certain types of Arab and Muslim migrants/refugees are represented as threatening by policy makers (e.g. single males), but rather, I am interested in *how* these representations come to be constructed under a broader domain of sovereignty and power. It is argued here that the use of biometrics in this program draws on a long tradition of cultural stereotypes and deeply hostile representations and depictions of Islam and Muslims in Western politics and media. As I explained in chapter one, since the events of 9/11 Muslim and Arab identities have been politically constructed in North America and Europe as threats to national security, in that people who looked a certain way or had a name which reflected a Muslim or Middle Eastern background became subject to a general “climate of suspicion.” There are a number of compelling arguments to explain why only single Arab/Muslim males have been excluded and categorized in this program as threats/risks – whether it be on lines of Western perceptions of the Middle East, as Edward Said and Hamid Dabashi have argued through the concept of Orientalism, or gender and sexual differences, as Jasbir Puar has argued. For more information on this topic, see chapter one.

³²⁷ Government of Canada, “Syrian Refugees Horizontal Initiative.” Web accessed Apr. 7, 2017 at <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/dpr/2016/04.asp>

³²⁸ This study argues that the exclusion of single males from this policy is made possible under the authoritative capacity of sovereignty, to *arbitrarily interpret and decide* what counts rightfully as a security threat. The exclusion of an entire segment of the Syrian refugee population (single males) without empirical cause, is illustrative of the interpretative and authoritative capacity of sovereignty. Thus, by employing biometric technologies policy makers are empowering the discourse of technoscience (technology as a reliable source for knowledge) and simultaneously, concealing practices of the discrimination against certain types of refugees, which is based not in objective or empirical evidence, but rather in subjective assumptions and judgements about ‘terrorist identity.’ For an explanation of ‘terrorist identity,’ see chapter one.

Conclusion

This chapter is an engagement with the underlying foundations and structures of contemporary forms of knowledge, through a Foucauldian lens of discourse analysis. I began by discussing the relationship between Hobbes' concept of sovereignty and contemporary risk management regimes of security. I located the logic of risk management within a Hobbesian conception of sovereignty, specifically, risk management as a reactionary response to the same fundamental problem of uncertainty presented in Hobbes' theory of sovereignty. Next, I turned to Foucault's account of discourse-knowledge to explain the conditions underpinning modern forms of knowledge. For Foucault, these conditions are socio-historical, and cannot simply be reduced to empirical causes and effects (in Hobbes' case, the concept of private judgement). The progression of knowledge can be seen, for example, when we consider the fact that in Hobbes' political theory, the individual human body is the ultimate source of knowledge. However, this is not how knowledge is acquired or produced today.

This chapter's discursive analysis presents biometrics as an example of the relationship between sovereignty and knowledge in contemporary times, where biometrics is authorized as an expert source of knowledge about threat and risk. The authority of biometrics (as an expert source of knowledge), relies on a particular underlying *logic of sovereignty*, which concerns the management and control of sites of uncertainty and ambiguity. However, biometrics exemplifies a more fluid and ubiquitous form of sovereign power than the one described by Hobbes. In the example of this case study, sovereign judgement is diffused and dispersed within a broader discourse of technoscience. Drawing on Foucault's concept of discourse-knowledge, I explained biometrics as a process in which pre-existing normative frameworks for knowledge (standards of truth) are linked together, to produce an authoritative definition of risk and threat, a definition

“which is taken to be a criterion of truth” about security.³²⁹ Biometric technologies are presented in this case as an infallible and scientific means for determining truths about threat. As one expert explains, “the rise of biometric identification technologies was accompanied by industry and governmental assertions that biometric identification produces the ‘truth of identity,’ a truth that can neither be distorted nor concealed.”³³⁰

This discussion contributes to the broader critique of security in this case study, by showing how biometric security technologies *obscure* pre-existing racialized and gendered assumptions about Syrian refugees, by appealing to discourse of technoscience, namely, claims about the validity of science and mechanical objectivity in producing reliable knowledge. Under biometrics, risk acquires a material status through computerized codes and algorithms. Within this process, an authoritative definition of risk is produced, *not* through the observation of any actual criminal person, or dangerous activity, but through the categorization and classification of a person’s perceived ‘risk properties.’ What is at stake in risk management techniques such as biometrics, is not the negation of sovereignty, but rather the structural diffusion and spatial reorganization of sovereign power (judgement) in technological apparatuses. Indeed these processes demonstrate how security regimes operate today, in unique spatial, institutional, temporal and bodily ways, and which are distinct from the traditional ‘logic of sovereignty’ associated with Hobbes and classical realism.

In conclusion, the purpose of this analysis has not been to explain the technological and practical ways in which biometric systems operate, but rather, to show the continuity of the basic

³²⁹ Michel Foucault, *The Government of Self and Others: Lectures at the Collège De France 1982–1983*, Frédéric Gros, François Ewald, Alessandro Fontana (transl.), (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) DOI:10.1057/9780230274730. See Foucault’s explanation of the archaeological method of analysis for modern systems of knowledge.

³³⁰ Shoshana Magnet, *When Biometrics Fail: Gender, Race, and the Technology of Identity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 67.

function of sovereignty, and the continuity of the discursive foundations of knowledge in modernity. In the example of biometric security screening, the interpretation and the identification of threat (uncertainty) is an automated process, where human subjectivity is ostensibly replaced by mechanical objectivity. In this case, security is a multidimensional and multilevel process, working to enable and restrict the movement of human beings across borders, and at the same time operating as a boundary-maintenance process to preserve the sovereign territorial rights of Canada.

Conclusion

“The claim to know authoritatively and the claim to have political authority have much in common.” – RBJ Walker³³¹

This thesis has attempted to demonstrate security (regimes, processes, and practices of security in international relations) as a specific historical, social, and political condition, rather than an objective or material ‘thing.’ In this understanding, concepts of security in international relations are inseparable from a specific socio-political and socio-cultural context. The central claim and attitude underlying this thesis is that, it is only by engaging with the concept of sovereignty, through critique, that we can begin to understand how modern security regimes operate. This study rejects positivists’ idea that proper IR scholarship must privilege specific (empirical) epistemological and methodological criteria of enquiry. Rather, I have attempted to highlight some of the shortcomings and gaps within these models, specifically, how this very logic and way of thinking/imagining the world has a complex social, cultural, and ideological history. This involves not only the authorization of a specific type of politics (sovereignty) but also, the authorization of a specific account of truth as part of the broader epistemological discourse of science. Proponents of positivism and strictly empirical-quantitative models of analysis in IR ignore, or fail to recognize, the extent to which modern concepts of truth and knowledge were constructed politically as responses to various forms of uncertainty, for example, as RBJ Walker has explained,

as attempts to make sense of a historically specific account of the relation between knower and known...as consequence[s] of [the Scientific Revolution] and the radical distinction between subject and object effected by Galileo, Descartes, and the other

³³¹ Walker, *After the Globe*, 102.

founding fathers of explicitly modern traditions of science and philosophy.³³²

Drawing on these issues, in this thesis I used a Hobbesian and Foucauldian account of sovereignty and the relation between power-knowledge, to understand how contemporary policies, practices, and regimes of security operate. I have made three specific points in this thesis to problematize the concept of security in international relations (i.e. political and conceptual representations of security as ‘real.’) First, I have tried to show the non-objective and non-empirical nature of security threats under sovereignty (chapter one). Second, I have tried to show the subjectivity of truth and knowledge under sovereign power (chapter two). Third, I have tried to show the relationship between sovereignty and uncertainty (chapter three). I used the case study of the Canadian Liberal Government’s #WelcomeRefugees policy to help connect and demonstrate these claims in a practical and current political context.

Chapter one

I began by exploring questions about security relevant to the case study, specifically, how security appears within the Canadian Liberal Government’s #WelcomeRefugees policy, and what kinds of specific political and theoretical problems emerge as a result. I critiqued objectivist and materialist (‘levels of analysis’) approaches in the IR discipline on the grounds that these reflect uncritical ontological assumptions about security and sovereignty. I suggested that a contemporary approach to security in IR needs to be informed by intellectual caution, and an awareness of the different social, political, and historical contingencies of important concepts such as sovereignty. In this study’s example of the #WelcomeRefugees policy, we can see how imagination trumps evidence in political representations of security/threat. For example, the most

³³² Ibid, 102-103.

recent terrorist attack in Canada was when on January 29, 2017, a lone gunman opened fire at a Quebec City mosque, leaving six people dead and eight others critically injured.³³³ Prior to this, the last terrorist attacks occurred in October 2014, consisting of two separate incidents in which lone-actors individually organized and implemented deadly attacks on Canadian Forces members.³³⁴ The common theme in each of these attacks was that they were carried out, not by Middle Eastern/Arab (likely heterosexual) males who had somehow ‘fooled’ Canadian intelligence and immigration authorities and entered Canada legally by posing as migrants/refugees. Rather, all three attacks were carried out by lone gunmen, all of whom were Canadian citizens of Caucasian-descent. As one CBC columnist recently wrote, “[the] simple truth is Canada’s mass shooters are usually white and Canadian-born.”³³⁵ Despite the lack of empirical evidence however, the idea of dark skinned male “violent extremists” entering Canada from abroad remains pertinent in Canadian policy and public discourses around the Syrian refugee crisis.³³⁶

In addition to the above, objectivist and materialist models of security analysis do *not* tell us about the vastly different experiences of human beings under different regimes of security in sovereign politics. The use of biometric surveillance technologies in the current program

³³³ “Canadian terrorist incidents: a timeline” (Jan. 30, 2017), Global News. Web accessed May 8, 2017 at <http://globalnews.ca/news/3213312/canada-terrorist-incidents/>.

³³⁴ Ibid. The first attack happened in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu on October 20, 2014, where two Canadian Forces members were hit by Martin Couture-Rouleau, in what is known the ‘2014 Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu ramming attack.’ The second attack was when on Oct. 22, 2014, Michael Zehaf-Bibeau opened fire at Parliament Hill. Zehaf-Bibeau fatally shot a Canadian soldier at the National War Memorial and then attempted to enter the Parliament Buildings.

³³⁵ Neil Macdonald, “Simple truth is Canada’s mass shooters are usually white and Canadian-born” (Jan. 30, 2017) CBC News, web accessed May 9, 2017 at <http://www.cbc.ca/news/opinion/canadian-mass-murders-1.3958772>.

³³⁶ Government of Canada, “2016 Public Report on the Terrorist Threat.” Web accessed May 8, 2017 at <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/2016-pblc-rpr-trrrst-thrt/index-en.aspx#s3>. The Canadian Government has stated that “the principal terrorist threat to Canada [is] that posed by violent extremists,” and that the current terrorist threat environment is “dominated” by individuals and organized groups with roots in the Middle East.

necessitates that all Syrian refugees applying for asylum in Canada possess physical bodies that can be digitally scanned and processed into a computer as data. That is, their self-represented identity (e.g. stated name, date of birth, background) and documents which support that identity (birth certificate, passport, identification cards, etc.) are not enough, and refugee applicants must additionally possess bodies that can be translated into a biometric signature and known algorithmically. Thus, while the stated objective of biometric security screenings is to expose various ‘existential threats’ that might be overlooked in humanitarian efforts, these regimes also produce a conviction that refugeeness and victimhood are statuses to be recognized and conferred scientifically. In this case, the status of refugee is not intrinsic or pre-existing, but rather, it must be assessed and endowed digitally by a computer. Here, victimhood is a matter of technological interpretation and confirmation, and it is not simply there because of where a person comes from or what he or she has been through.

Chapter two

Next, I turned to Hobbes’ theory of sovereignty to show the different underlying conditions and contingencies which inform modern political regimes, practices, and concepts of security. I used Hobbes’ political theory to explain the artificial construction of security threats under sovereignty. What is presented in my reading of Hobbes is a refusal to merely isolate and extract the most intellectually influential components in his argument, specifically, his concepts of human nature, violence, and competition in the state of nature. Rather, I focused on the concept of judgement to explain Hobbes’ sovereignty as one response (the most rational) to multiple problems of uncertainty that confront human beings in their natural condition. I suggested that sovereignty for Hobbes is the political creation and mobilization of certainty in response to a situation of psychological anxiety and uncertainty in the state of nature. Due to the

scope of my critique, I focused only on epistemological problems of uncertainty in Hobbes' argument. In brief, I presented the problem of the state of nature as the problem of the absence of truth and knowledge. Because there is no common account of truth/knowledge in the state of nature, all words and concepts are fundamentally uncertain, including concepts of danger, risk, security, and threat.

In sum, what follows from this reading of Hobbes is that modern concepts of knowledge and truth depend on *specific forms of authorization* under sovereignty. Further, these authorizations are neither natural nor universal, but are nevertheless understood and applied – politically, socially, culturally, and historically, as universal and necessary. That is, sovereignty not only tells us what truth is, but more accurately, “*how* it is supposed to be;”³³⁷ that is, under what methods truth must be created, and by what standards it must be defined. In this regard, I agree with RBJ Walker's idea that one of the main reasons sovereignty is needed for Hobbes, is to define “very specific ways of drawing the line” in everyday social and political realities (e.g. to define what counts as truth, and what does not).³³⁸ In relation to this, my central point in chapter two was that the representation of uncertainty under sovereignty serves as a mythical justification of sovereign power. For example, in this study's example of risk management, sovereignty justifies itself by constructing and responding to invisible ‘future’ sites of risk and threat. Sovereignty justifies and necessitates itself by a) identifying sites of existential danger and threat (forms of insecurity/uncertainty), and b) by responding to these uncertainties as necessary. At the same time, however, whether the problem of uncertainty that Hobbes refers to is ontologically real or not, is not explained here. My suggestion that Hobbes' sovereignty is a response to uncertainty is based in the logical validity of Hobbes' premises for his argument.

³³⁷ Walker, *After the Globe*, 101.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*

With this in mind, it is either the case that Hobbes merely uses an already existing form of uncertainty/insecurity to justify sovereignty (the problem of uncertainty as ontologically real), or that he simply creates a problem of uncertainty as a hypothetical justification of sovereignty.³³⁹

Chapter three

Following this, in chapter three, I explained how the problem of uncertainty that Hobbes was trying to respond to with his theory of sovereignty is still politically relevant. I critiqued Hobbes' way of dealing with the problem of uncertainty, on the grounds that his model is historically specific and outdated in today's political context. I suggested that, whereas Hobbes' political theory is about the origins of sovereignty, risk management techniques such as biometrics are an example of the unfolding of sovereignty's response to uncertainty. In the context of this case study, the uncertainty (risk) being responded to is the sheer unpredictability of a future terrorist attack. The possibility of a terrorist entering Canada as a refugee serves to disrupt the illusion of certainty that sovereignty provides, namely, the illusion of a predictable and controlled future. Further, Foucault's work on discourses helped me explain how biometrics and other modes of authorization for knowledge become naturalized and universalized, in historically and culturally specific forms. Applying Foucault's concept of discourse-knowledge to the specific case study, in this chapter I tried to show how turning particular racial, ethnic, and sexual identities into a 'security issue' requires the mobilization of certain processes, techniques, and technologies for knowledge production. With Hobbes' political theory in mind, under biometrics, human subjectivity and judgement are replaced by technology and automated processes. Specifically, I explained how the technology of biometrics provides policy makers

³³⁹ For an excellent critique of this issue in Hobbes' argument, see Will Kujala, et al. *Origins and Openings: Modernity, Time, and Finitude in Hobbes' Political Science* (Victoria, BC: University of Victoria, 2016).

with a visible and discernable (tangible) background from which claims about security and risk can be authoritatively produced, represented, and discussed.

Implications for future research

This study's specific analysis of security and risk management suggests that, beyond the various referent objects and targets of security regimes, it is additionally important to pay attention to the underlying conditions and processes which make these regimes possible. In conclusion, this thesis does not seek to provide a single or authoritative definition or interpretation of security, as much as I would wish to invite international relations and security studies scholars to investigate, and reflect critically upon, the underlying conditions and processes which enable modern security regimes. Specifically, I have attempted to show how security regimes operate politically and epistemically, to construct certain meanings about various objects, events, and phenomena as 'threatening.' In addition, I have tried to show how Hobbes' theory of sovereignty (specifically, his concept of judgement) and Foucault's concepts of discourse and power-knowledge can be employed together, and used to challenge existing empirical-quantitative models of security analysis in IR. In each of the chapters I explained security in relation to sovereign power, as a type of discourse ('discursive formation') that works to achieve particular historical, social, and political outcomes in modernity. Drawing on the example of biometrics in this case study, I have tried to show how security operates as an interlocking system of knowledge, representations, and administrative practices, that interprets, imagines, directs, and represents different identities and bodies in culturally, socially, and politically specific ways.

Some of the themes that I touched upon in this analysis but did not explicitly explore include, relationships between sovereignty and temporal forms of uncertainty, relationships

between politics and surveillance, and questions about biopolitics and the management and control of biological life under sovereign power. On this note, this study can be used to expand and support existing debates in the IR discipline, regarding the status and nature of sovereignty under new risk management security regimes. In particular, this analysis speaks to the work of scholars such as Nick Vaughan-Williams (2011) and Didier Bigo (2006), and their idea that risk management problematizes the logic of ‘inside/outside’ traditionally informing the modern political imagination.³⁴⁰ According to Bigo, global policing today operates via a “field of professionals” for the management of uncertainty/insecurity (“unease”).³⁴¹ This field is made up of various security and surveillance ‘experts’ who cooperate transnationally, to manage and maintain security regimes through interconnected networks of technology and data. Similarly, IR scholars such as Ben Muller (2009) and Louise Amoore (2013) have suggested the significance of the different institutional and technological settings through which contemporary security practices play out, and what this means for traditional understandings of sovereignty in IR.³⁴² Adding to these discussions, RBJ Walker (2006) has argued that security regimes and practices of securitization today are “a continual mode of action,” made possible by “bureaucratic machinery...quite as easily as by grand sovereigns.”³⁴³ In the example of biometrics, for instance, we see the assessment of risk and the securitization of migrant bodies happen *away* from the actual physical geographical border of the state, something which calls for closer analysis of the spaces, boundaries, and extents of sovereign power today.

³⁴⁰ Nick Vaughan-Williams, “We are Not Animals! Humanitarian Border Security and Zoopolitical Spaces in Europe,” *Political Geography*, vol. 45 (2015) DOI:10.1016/j.polgeo.2014.09.009; Didier Bigo, “Globalized (in)Security: The Field and the Ban-opticon,” in Didier Bigo & Anastassia Tsoukala (eds.), *Illiberal Practices in Liberal Regimes* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2006): 5-49.

³⁴¹ Bigo, “Globalized (in)Security,” 6.

³⁴² Benjamin Muller, “Borders, Risks, Exclusions,” *Studies in Social Justice* 3.1 (2009): 67-78; Louise Amoore, *The Politics of Possibility: Risk and Security Beyond Probability* (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 2013).

³⁴³ Walker, “Lines of Insecurity: International, Imperial, Exceptional,” *Security Dialogue*, vol. 37, no. 1 (2006): 80

In conclusion, the purpose of my analysis has been to highlight the different discursive conditions and practices that constitute specific threats as threats. Based on the arguments presented, this thesis interprets security as a specific historical, social, cultural, and political condition, rather than an objective condition that pre-exists politics and/or conceptual interpretation. In this understanding, the condition of possibility for modern security regimes, namely, responses to security risks and threats in global politics, is not actual objective or empirical circumstances (identifiable instances of existential danger/threat), but rather, specific authoritative claims about uncertainty/insecurity.

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