Introduction

JUST SECURITIZATION: RAISON D'ÊTRE AND FEASIBILITY

At 2.20 pm on 22 May 2013, off-duty British Army soldier Drummer Lee Rigby of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers was attacked and brutally murdered in a terrorist attack by two men outside the Royal Artillery Barracks in Woolwich, south-east London. Both men – Michael Adebolajo and Michael Adebowale – were Britons of Nigerian decent, and both were converts to Islam. The perpetrators remained at the scene, leaving no doubt about their intentions, with one of them declaring: 'The only reason we have killed this man today is because Muslims are dying daily by British soldiers. And this British soldier is one. It is an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. By Allah, we swear by the almighty Allah we will never stop fighting you until you leave us alone' (The Muslim Issue Worldwide, 2013). A day after the attack it emerged that both men had been known to British security services for many years, leading to criticism of the services for not preventing the attack, and the latter subsequently faced a Commons enquiry into the matter.

Two weeks later on 6 June 2013 *The Guardian* newspaper together with the *Washington Post* published a number of secret intelligence documents leaked by an American former technical contractor for the United States' National Security Agency (NSA) and former employee of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Edward Snowden. Among other things, the documents revealed the extent of mass surveillance by national intelligence agencies since the onset of the securitization of terrorism. Through the Prism programme, for example, both the United States' National Security Agency (NSA) and its British counterpart the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) have access to millions of emails and live chat conversations held by the world's major internet companies, such as Google, Facebook and Microsoft. The United States and British governments attempted to justify and downplay the extent of surveillance – US President

Barack Obama, for example, said that Prism was both targeted and necessary, and claimed that it had prevented some fifty terror attacks (York, 2013). Nevertheless, Snowden's revelations were met with a huge public outcry in the United States, Europe and elsewhere. The issue stayed for weeks on the top of the news media's agenda, Snowden was hailed by many as a whistle-blower, and civil liberty groups everywhere widely condemned the United States for seeking his extradition. This introduction is not the place to pass a verdict on either the security services' role in not preventing the murder of Lee Rigby, nor on the NSA/GCHQ spy-scandal and whether the means used by governments for counter-terrorism were morally justifiable. Instead, these examples serve to illustrate that although sometimes the general public wants certain issues (here, terrorism) to be securitized (which is to say, rendered a top priority and addressed by extraordinary/exceptional means), the same public (or at least large sections thereof) are also deeply sceptical of securitization (of terrorism). This scepticism is sensible, for there are always dangers associated with securitization. Raising an issue out of normal politics and into the realm of exceptional politics, where it is addressed by extraordinary measures, may, for example, result in the systematic infringement of key rights, the loss of civil liberties, an increase in police powers, 'othering'/alienation of suspect individuals and groups, the use of lethal force, and because the issue itself is removed from democratic decision-making, a reduction of the democratic process. Nevertheless, sometimes the general public – depending on context and circumstances – deems securitization permissible and at times even obligatory. Usually this is in order to seemingly achieve security and thus ensure that, for instance, outrages such as the murder of Lee Rigby cannot be repeated.

Although critical security scholars[1] are traditionally concerned with the negative effects of securitization, they are increasingly open to the suggestion that securitization can sometimes be right, or be put to good ends. Yet we do not have a systematic normative theory that theorizes the circumstances when the move out of normal politics is morally permissible, and what considerations ought to inform the choice of security measures used. The development

[1] While I use this label here to designate those engaged in the academic study of security who do not prioritize the state as the referent object of security, I agree with Nik Hynek and David Chandler (2013) that it technically is a misnomer as the adjective 'critical' signifies emancipatory content which is absent from many approaches standardly grouped under that label (for a different view, see Vuori, 2014: chapter 1). It is, however, custom to refer to those with emancipatory intent with upper case 'Critical' and to everyone else by the lower case 'critical', yet confusingly the lower case subsumes the upper case (see Peoples and Vaughan-Williams, 2015: 30).

of precisely such a theory is this book's overriding rationale. In the process the book addresses the following pressing issues definitive of the conundrum of security and morality. Does morality count in matters of security? Or is it the case that the threat overrides all moral concerns? Can we meaningfully differentiate between entities (including persons) that are worthwhile securing, and those rightfully subject to securitization? Are there restrictions on the kind of harm securitization may cause, or does just cause side-line all other ethical concerns?[2]

I call the theory I advance throughout this book just securitization theory (JST). This theory takes the form of a set of criteria or principles[3] that determine the justness of securitization and desecuritization. The idea of developing a normative theory of securitization from universally applicable criteria is inspired by the just war tradition (JWT), which for centuries has seen scholars develop criteria determining the morality of war. Criteria or principles usually fall into two areas: *jus ad bellum* (just resort to war) and the *jus in bello* (just conduct in war), while many recent accounts also include criteria specifying *jus post bellum* (just peace). As with the just war tradition, competing theories of just securitization made up of distinct sets of criteria, informed by different objectives (e.g. restrict the occurrence of securitization or else utilize the mobilization power inherent to securitization for desirable ends) are thus a possibility. And consequently this book has the potential to pave the way towards a major new area of research in Security Studies: just securitization studies.

A key advantage of approaching the morality of security by developing principles of just securitization is that it enables scholars of security, who

[2] Many philosophers use the terms ethics and morality interchangeably, with both simply referring to right and wrong or good or bad. And while some authors (especially outside of philosophy) distinguish between morality and ethics, no accepted definition exists. *The Penguin Dictionary of Philosophy*, points out, for example, that some (notably Hegel, Bernard Williams, Habermas and Rawls) all distinguish between the two, yet have different ideas about what either might mean. In one sense it is possible to argue that this book follows the distinction (if there is one) implied in Rawls's *Theory of Justice*, whereby 'Ethics is concerned with the good life, morality with right conduct' (Mautner, 2000: 367). Thus for the most part just securitization theory is a moral (normative) theory concerned with right conduct. However, given my specification of a just referent object in terms of the satisfaction of basic human needs and the connection between this and human well-being (see Chapter 4) I venture – at least in this context – into the realm of the ethical. Moreover, the branch of philosophy called ethics (also known as moral philosophy) includes both theories of the right and theories of the good. In other words, ethical consideration on security as a concept or a social and political practice involve both, and the interchangeable use of morality and ethics, as practised here, is permissible.

[3] I use the terms criteria and principles interchangeably in this book. A criterion can be defined as 'a principle or standard by which something may be judged or decided' (Soanes, 2000: 255).

almost inevitably have a view on the value of any given securitization they study, to make better-informed normative[4] judgements about their relative worth. It should be noted here that the study of security is no longer the exclusive business of International Relations scholars; instead, security is increasingly of interest to – among others – law scholars, criminologists, anthropologists, geographers and philosophers. The question of the moral value or disvalue of the security policies (implemented into practice or otherwise) they study unites them all, making this book and its just securitization theory useful to the widest possible interdisciplinary scholarly audience.

Beyond that, just securitization theory and other possible theories of just securitization and desecuritization have at least the potential to guide the actions of security practitioners in concrete situations. This is not merely wishful thinking. Now at last the Snowden affair has shown that there is a need on the part of the practitioner community to consider the normative implications of moving out of normal politics and resorting to using security measures, but to do so they need the right kind of tools; tools that theories of just securitization can offer.

Finally, provided that just securitization took off as a research project in its own right and came to inform the language and behaviour of security practitioners, it has the potential to render security practitioners accountable for their decisions and actions. Rendering practitioners of security more fully accountable than they have been hitherto is necessary because securitization affects not simply those individuals security measures are levelled against, but often also the wider population.[5] In the West, for example, where people are relatively secure in so far as they enjoy high levels of both freedom from fear and freedom from want, security measures were felt most acutely in the aftermath of 9/11, when a number of new laws and regulations impinged upon civil liberties. Ten years later, the NSA/GCHQ spy scandal suggested that no end to this was in sight. While it might be the case that, in the words of former British Foreign Secretary William Hague, law-abiding citizens have 'nothing to fear' from surveillance programmes such as Prism (Hague, 2013), such programmes alter a given states of affairs, deprive individuals of some fundamental rights inherent to the democracies they inhabit and perhaps quite justifiably render people afraid that they'll wind up

[4] To be clear, and unless otherwise stated, normativity, in this book, concerns moral rightness and wrongness.

[5] To be sure, even if 'only' aggressors were adversely affected by security policies, moral considerations still matter. Thus the same rules regarding what has to be considered in the resort to and during securitization still apply; the idea of just securitization is not to sanction revenge (cf. Chapter 5, section 5.3).

wrongfully accused and suspected. For proof that this can happen we need but think of the unfortunate Jean Charles de Menezes, the Brazilian electrician, who was wrongly suspected of terrorist activity and simply on his way to work when he was shot dead by armed police in London in 2005. The criminologist Lucia Zedner has summarized the relationship between security and harm aptly in the following metaphor: 'security has all the qualities of a fire engine, replete with clanging bells and flashing lights, whose dash to avert imminent catastrophe brooks no challenge, even if it risks running people down on the way to the fire' (2009: 12).

The potentially wide-ranging negative consequences of securitization mean that its moral permissibility is already in everyone's interest. In an ideal world, for example, a critical mass of the general public would hold their governments accountable for the employment and nature of securitization in any given situation, in the same way as parts of the voting public now routinely question the morality and necessity of warfare. Indeed, while just war theories have sometimes been abused by warmongering politicians to shine a positive light on their dubious activities, the just war tradition has had precisely this positive effect. In liberal democracies, especially as regards the 2003 Iraq war, ideas inherent to the just war tradition inform public debate and the general public was able to hold decision-makers accountable for going to war (Walzer, 2002: 930). The ultimate aim of wider just securitization studies/research must be that just securitization becomes the standard against which decisions and actions are made and informed, while simultaneously equipping the general public with the tools to hold security practitioners accountable, thus making positive change possible.

While few scholars would object to the *desirability* of the latter, many, in particular critical security scholars, will object to working with the just war tradition in order to devise a theory of just securitization. Some will do so because they question the authority of the just war tradition, others will question the possibility of comparing war with securitization, and others still will point to meta-theoretical differences between just war theory,[6] with its focus on real threats, and securitization theory, with its focus on threat construction. Given this, it is necessary to spell out clearly my reasons for working with the JWT here.

As soon as one thinks of normative criteria in connection with security, one cannot ignore the JWT. In a recent edited book on *Ethical Security Studies*, contributor Helen Dexter reminds us that for some security scholars (here

[6] I agree with Helen Frowe (2016: 4), contra Alex Bellamy (2006), that there is no difference between the just war tradition and just war theory, and use the two interchangeably.

Stephen Walt), 'the main focus of security studies is the phenomenon of war', consequently 'the ethics of security are easy to identify and can be summed up in three small words: Just War Theory' (Dexter, 2016: 174). While in practice security has moved on from war, and considering that scholars no longer study real or perceived security threats only if they (are likely to) lead to war,[7] Dexter's point still serves to remind us that when it comes to thinking ethically about security (albeit in the limited guise of war), we do have an established body of theory. In my view we cannot ignore the JWT for thinking about the justice of securitization, because although the instruments of war and securitization are distinct concepts, they are similar insofar as both involve extraordinary measures[8] (e.g. large-scale killing and maiming of people, including as collateral damage in war, and the systematic infringement of civil liberties, the violation of fundamental rights and due process, the increase in police powers and even the use of (comparatively small-scale) lethal force in the name of security), not only in order to secure a referent object but problematically to further often dubious political agendas.

Often securitization and war are also sequentially connected, with war the extraordinary measure evoked in the name of security (Wilhelmsen, 2016). Jef Huysmans (2014: 39) argues: 'National security does more than asserting a point in time when decisions will affect the survival of the political order. It mobilises an imaginary of war and enemies to make the struggle for survival concrete and acute.' Moreover, war's changed nature (i.e. away from its Clausewitzian form) blurs the lines between war and securitization; the United States Department of Defense's use of targeted killing via unmanned drones is a case in point. This changed nature of war has meant that Michael Walzer, perhaps the most influential just war theorist ever, (2006 [1977], xv) has argued for the inclusion of *jus ad vim* within the just war tradition, i.e. 'a theory of the just and unjust uses of force' *outside war*.[9] And already some just war scholars are working on issues very close to Security Studies with their interest in 'forcible alternatives to war', including targeted killing, humanitarian rescue missions or international policing missions (Dill, 2016).[10] For the

[7] Migration or environmental degradation, for example are of interest not only because of their potential to lead to violent conflict, but also because of the potential threat they pose to human security, political security or economic security.

[8] Notably this depends on the definition of securitization – see Chapter 2, section 2.2 – but it is true of the definition of securitization utilized in this book.

[9] Frowe 2016 refers to this as justice before force, whereby force refers to kinetic force.

[10] A 2017 book on *Soft War: The Ethics of Unarmed Conflict* identifies – among other unarmed conflicts/tactics – cyber warfare, media warfare, economic sanctions and 'lawfare' as applicable domains for just war theory. Soft war is different from securitization chiefly for two reasons: first, because it deals with agent-intended threats only, and second, because only

purposes of this project it is therefore vital to be clear on the differences between war and securitization; notably just securitization theory does not seek to rival the just war tradition. Although securitization may entail the use of lethal force, the abiding difference between war and securitization (apart from scale) is that unlike in war,[11] killing is *not* a necessary feature of securitization, but merely – and far from always – one aspect of it. In short, while I hold that securitization and war are similar, and therefore that the just war tradition can serve as a useful guide for thinking about criteria of just securitization, just securitization theory does not intent to deal with situations of war, whereby the working definition of war includes those grey areas of the *jus ad vim* (notably drone warfare).

The just war tradition has been criticized for a vast number of reasons, above all else for being pro-war. Patricia Owens (2010: 310–311), for example, argues that just war thinkers 'wish to imagine the decision to go to war as an *ethical* choice in itself. In some circumstances, war is *the right thing to do*.' While it is true that especially after the end of the Cold War, a new world order allowed for the inclusion of humanitarian intervention as just cause, historically the goal of the just war tradition has not been the 'elimination of injustice' (Rengger, 2013: 9) but instead 'to restrain both the incidence and the destructiveness of warfare' (Orend, 2006: 31).[12] In more detail: 'Just war theory seeks to minimize *the reasons* for which it is permissible to fight, and seeks to retain and limit *the means* with which communities may fight. Just war theory is *not* pro-war. It is, rather, a doctrine deeply aware of war's frightful dangers and brutal inhumanities' (ibid.: 31 emphases in original). As such, the objective of many just war theorists is actually close to that of many scholars concerned with the ethics of security, as many such scholars are against

threats whose impact on civilian human needs is comparable to kinetic war are considered (cf. Wolfendale, 2017: 20–22).

[11] A widely accepted definition of war is that advanced by the Uppsala Conflict Data programme that defines wars as armed conflict with 1,000 battle death per year. While I accept that such exact thresholds come with problems of their own (notably, wars can result mainly in the large-scale destruction of infrastructure and still be largely bloodless: Steinhoff, 2009; Lazar, 2017), I am not sure it is helpful to redefine war so that it can include unarmed conflict (Soft War). After all, it is a boon for just war theorists that – unlike with securitization – their subject of study is well understood and (reasonably well) defined. Note, I do not wish to suggest that just war theory does not have something useful to say about unarmed conflict; but merely that the term war should be reserved for something else.

[12] Cian O'Driscoll notes that theories of the just war adapt and change in light of empirical developments (2008a: 109–114). If he is correct, then we can assume that the problematic aftermath of recent interventions in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya is likely to shape future accounts of the just war towards a renewed focus on 'the limitation of the destructiveness of war' (Rengger, 2013: 8).

securitization and in favour of democratic decision-making/politicization, a quality said to be lost once an issue is securitized (cf. Chapter 1).

Be that as it may, this still leaves the question of why we can take some of the ideas of how war ought ideally to be restrained (most just war theorists have homed in on some basic ideas concerning just cause, right intention and proportionality) as authoritative? This is important also because as Cian O'Driscoll and Anthony Lang (2013: 8) note, the issue that the authority of the tradition is rarely addressed by just war theorists, but simply assumed. This is controversial because the just war theory emerged in the context of Christian religion, and although contemporary versions have little to do with that heritage, the tradition has a heavy Western focus and as such some regard it as legitimizing certain forms of government and delegitimizing others. According to O'Driscoll and Lang, two arguments in particular justify the authority of the just war tradition. First, is 'the rich historical lineage' argument, which holds that the just war tradition is an exercise in 'communal learning ... It embodies and conveys, from one generation to the next, the wisdom of the ages, the sum of experimental knowledge as it bears on the use of military force' (ibid.: 8). In support of this argument, consider that there is general consensus on what sort of principles matter for the justice of war (cf. O'Driscoll, 2008a: 112), and that even if one or other principle is not explicitly stated by one theorist, the reasons for the omission are generally thoroughly discussed. This general consensus, in my view, not only renders disparate theories of the just war a tradition, it also gives authority to this same tradition as it is unlikely that the countless scholars who have worked within the tradition have been unable to identify at least broadly what matters for the morality of war.[13]

The second source of authority for the tradition, argue O'Driscoll and Lang (ibid.: 8), is its practical usage; that is to say, whether it has had an impact on the policymaking world. Although the just war tradition has been abused by some policymakers to further dubious ends, its principles have come to inform the training of military personal, it has penetrated the discourse of relevant politicians, and it informs specific policies. In summary, we can say that the just war tradition is authoritative for thinking and talking about the ethics of the use of force both because of its historical lineage and because of its usage in practice.

Different theorists of the just war have developed a number of basic ideas informing all just war theories (concerning, for example, just cause, right

[13] This intersubjective element ought also to appeal to securitization scholars.

intention and proportionality)[14] into elaborate lists of criteria governing all eventualities of war and now even the just ending of war.[15] In my view, given the similarities of war and securitization as both forms of exceptional politics and political instruments, and considering further that – for me at least[16] – just securitization is about restricting the occurrence and destructiveness of securitization, the criteria of the just war tradition cannot be ignored; instead they can serve as a valuable starting point for developing criteria of just securitization, at least until we have competing theories of just securitization against which criteria can be revised, refined and developed.

While this explains why I draw on the JWT, I have not yet explained why this theory can be combined with securitization theory. This is important, especially seeing that there is a meta-theoretical divide between the JWT and securitization theory concerning the relevance of real threats. Securitization theory was initially proposed by Ole Wæver in 1995[17] and then developed by him and others as part of the Copenhagen School in the seminal *Security: A New Framework For Analysis* (SANFFA) in 1998.[18] Securitization theory holds that security threats do not simply exist 'out there', but rather that security is a highly political process with issues turned into security threats through a sequence of events usually involving a securitizing actor, a securitizing speech act/securitizing move (whereby a securitizing actor declares a particular referent object threatened in its existence unless urgent action is taken immeditely), the audience (which has to 'accept' the speech act, albeit unwillingly), and the enacting of extraordinary measures and thus the breaking of established rules in order to deal with a (perceived) threat.

[14] As McMahan (2012) observes, these principles coincide 'closely with the law as codified in the United Nations Charter and the Geneva Conventions'.

[15] I am keen not to overstate the case for consensus. Thus while just war scholars agree on many of the same principles, their relevance is weighted differently.

[16] Theories of just securitization could also focus on the circumstances when securitization is morally obligatory, in the same way as some just war scholars focus on using the tool of war to bring about a better world, notably those scholars who focus on just humanitarian intervention (Pattison, 2010; Fabre, 2012:178ff.).

[17] In a published format; in unpublished works, the idea goes back to at least 1989.

[18] In a 2012 review of my 2010 book *Security and the Environment* I was criticized by Copenhagen School member Jaap de Wilde for conflating Wæver and the Copenhagen School and seemingly attributing Wæver's views to the Copenhagen School. Although I have taken care to be clear on who I mean in this book, Wæver is the authoritative voice on securitization theory within the school; his earlier work on securitization theory informs all parts of SANFFA. In other words, he should be able to speak for the school when it comes to meaning, interpretation and application of the original variant of the theory.

Securitization has been heavily debated in the scholarly community. Among other things much discussion has focused on the issue of whether securitization is satisfied simply by audience acceptance of the securitizing move, or whether it has to involve extraordinary measures (Balzacq, Léonard and Ruzicka, 2015). All securitization scholars accept, however, that security threats are socially and politically constructed, or in other words that: 'Security issues are made security issues by acts of securitization' (Buzan et al., 1998: 204). This has allowed scholars to recognize what Jef Huysmans calls 'the political force of security' whereby '[s]ecurity is a practice not of responding to enemies and fear but of creating them' (2014: 3). An exclusive focus on the constructedness of security means, however, that securitization scholars tend to ignore whether or not the threats that inform securitization are real or otherwise. And as Thierry Balzacq argues, this has had the disadvantage of securitization scholars overlooking the fact that securitizing moves that refer to 'brute threats' are more likely to succeed because, 'to win an audience, security statements must, usually, be related to an external reality' (2011b: 13). Balzacq's observation is important in the context of this book as it goes some way towards paving the way for the inclusion of objective existential threats into securitization analysis. As I will argue in this book, real threats are important for the purposes of just securitization theory as only these may constitute a just reason[19] for securitization.

The Copenhagen School's refusal to 'peek behind [threat construction] to decide whether it is really a threat' (Buzan et al., 1998: 204) and the just war tradition's insistence on real threats as just causes, appear to suggest insurmountable differences at the meta-theoretical level between the two theories. Importantly, however, the Copenhagen School's unwillingness to, as they put it, 'peek behind' threat construction, does not stem from a *denial* that real threats exist (after all Wæver (2011: 472) recognizes that 'lots of real threats exist'),[20] but from the belief that the study of threat construction is ultimately more fruitful than pondering the presence of real threats (Buzan and Hansen, 2009: 213; Buzan et al., 1998: 204). Beyond this, the decision not to try and examine whether security threats refer to real threats is also – at least in part – driven by a strong normative conviction. Thus by focusing on the political force of security as opposed to whether or not threats are real, Wæver and the Copenhagen School

[19] As argued in Chapter 3, the just reason is part of the just cause, the other part is the just referent object dealt with in Chapter 4.

[20] As Balzacq, Léonard and Ruzicka (2015, 26–27) observe, 'securitization theory is agnostic as to reality of threats' – but not, I might add, atheistic.