

DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTION OF POST-9/11 AMERICAN NATIONAL
IDENTITY: UNITED BY "THE ENEMY"

by

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ABSTRACT

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National identity derives from a sense of sameness and cohesion; however, scholars across fields accept the nation as an “imagined community” and that national identity changes. In this thesis, I conduct a Critical Discourse Analysis of political speeches and informal interviews to investigate the post-9/11 discursive construction of American national identity. With a theoretical backing in social constructionism and Norman Fairclough’s articulation of CDA, I focused on lexico-grammatical features and intertextuality and interdiscursivity. Taking head from Ruth Wodak’s study of Austrian national identity, I also analyzed my corpus for constructive strategies of assimilation. Although many discourses contribute to the construction of national identity, the post-9/11 discourse overtly addresses what it means to be American and constructs a stark “other” in the form of terrorism. This study finds that while citizens criticize politics,

their sense of “sameness” becomes most concrete when faced with a threat or opposition in the form of terrorism, or when discussing Muslims not associated with terrorism.

INTRODUCTION

The September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and Flight 93 that crashed in Shanksville, Philadelphia not only initiated the war in Iraq, they prompted a shift in discourse on the subjects of security and Americanism with increased use of the word and concept of “terrorism” in media, politics and public life. As is common at times of war and national crisis, the idea of patriotism and American pride surged in reaction to the unknown but evidently dangerous threat of terrorism. As terrorism has become common terminology, politicians have avoided a concrete definition of the term. The 2001 enactment of the PATRIOT Act expanded the definition of domestic terrorism and the government’s legal ability to monitor U.S. citizens suspected of domestic terrorism. However, various government agencies differ on technicalities of the application of the definition, and when politicians communicate to the public about terrorism they generally over-use the label and avoid specific definitions.

In 2002, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), as directed by George Bush, created the Homeland Security Advisory System which is a simple color coded scale of the terrorist threat to the United States and was meant to serve as a source of information for the public. In 2003, the National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC) was developed as an agency dedicated to countering terrorism. In 2010 DHS introduced the

“If you see something, say something” Campaign, which asks individuals to report “behavior reasonably indicative of criminal activity related to terrorism” (DHS, 2010). In 2011, the DHS developed the National Terrorism Advisory System (NTAS), which is said to “provide the American public with information about credible threats so that they can better protect themselves, their families, and their communities” (Napolitano, 2011). These systems color code terrorism and make identifying and reporting potential terrorist activity (though still ambiguously defined) a civic duty, requiring the citizen to participate in something that may not be accurately understood.

While patriotic war-time rhetoric and anti-terrorism campaigns define America’s discourse post-9/11, we have seen a rise in the number of what the Bush and Obama administrations deem “homegrown extremists” or “domestic terrorists”. More Americans, such as Anwar al-Awlaki, join or support terrorist organizations. In 2009, we saw the Fort Hood Shooting and the New York City bomb plot; Farooque Ahmed was arrested in 2010 for plotting to bomb the Washington, D.C. metro system, and in August 2012 a former military member shot people at a Wisconsin Sikh temple. In 2013, we saw the Boston Marathon bombings, which came close to generating the same surge in American unity and pride that 9/11 did, but also resulted in the surviving bomber on the cover of *Rolling Stone*. There has also been violence indicating that Americans are growing weary of terrorism and the war. Staff Sergeant Robert Bills, a seasoned war veteran, walked off of a base in Afghanistan and killed 16 Afghan civilians in March 2012, and a military member killed four people in a second Fort Hood shooting in 2014.

Since 9/11, Muslim-American terrorism has claimed 37 lives in the United States, out of more than 190,000 murders during this period (Kurzman, 2014). Yet, in 2014, Islamic extremist groups like al-Qaeda remain Americans' top global security concern, higher than climate change or Iran's nuclear program (Pew Research Center, 2014). For reasons not based on logic or statistics, Americans feel their lives are threatened most by an event less likely to kill or harm them than a car accident. And yet, terrorism generally speaking appears commonplace to many, with 75-percent of Americans saying they believe occasional acts of terror will be a part of life in the future, up 10-percent from 2012 and at the same level as 2003 (Pew Research Center, 2013). Perhaps contributing to this apparently irrational concern and a simultaneous acceptance of terrorism.

Many generations experienced 9/11 and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan contribute to the discursive construction of America's national identity, an identity that has been and continues to be reconstructed. The post-9/11 discourse reconstructed America in relation to the partially-tangible notion of terrorism, which many polls suggest and this study further explores. How the heavy presence of a post-9/11 discourse on terrorism in the national American discourse continues to impact the nation's identity will continue to take shape as the millennial generation, often called the 9/11 generation, replaces the baby boomers and generation X.

Twelve years have passed since The War on Terror was declared in reaction to the events on 9/11, which continues under the name Operation Enduring Freedom. The definition of what terrorism is or what a terrorist might be is opaque and changing constantly—a prime example being Edward Snowden's release of NSA classified

documents, which has been called everything from whistle-blowing to espionage and terrorism. Rather than creating an accessible, stable definition, or acknowledging the inability to define terrorism, official discourse has amplified a particular construction of Americanism, re-defining a more accessible term in relation to the inaccessible “enemy”. As the post-9/11 discourse continues to grapple with and redefine the concept of terrorism, the emphasis on what it means to be American has changed as well. The fluid nature of individual and national identity enables populations to change and evolve; this willingness and even desire to renegotiate what it means to be American contributed to the abolition of slavery, the civil rights and women’s suffrage movements, and a number of other positive social, political and cultural developments. To the opposite end, how a nation defines itself may develop and circulate unhealthy, negative and even dangerous ideology; prior to those aforementioned positive social movements, racism and sexism factored into the American identity.

This project explores how the American national identity has changed across official and popular discourses on terrorism as the United States begins to withdraw ground troops from the country’s longest war. Terrorism, both the concept and apparent reality, changed America over the past decade and continues to circulate in identity discourses at official and unofficial levels. Critical discourse analysis provides a multidisciplinary approach to understanding how language reflects and constructs national identity in post-9/11 America. From a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) perspective, I ask the following research questions, not ranked in any particular order, to investigate American national identity post-9/11:

- How are the concepts ‘Americanism’ and ‘terrorism’ discursively constructed in official discourse in the 12 years since 9/11, and in current popular discourse?
- How does the discourse on terrorism construct American national identity?
- What is the connection, similarities and differences, between the official construction of ‘Americanism’ and ‘terrorism’ (and related themes) with the non-official recirculation (or reconstruction) and internalization of the concepts?
- What are the implications of the discourses on terrorism and Americanism for the national American identity?”

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the following section I review two types of studies: first, I review studies that use discourse or critical discourse analysis to examine various post-9/11 discourses; second, I review studies that use discourse or critical discourse analysis to explore the discursive construction of national identity.

Sharing a focus with many others in the field of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the beginning of the war in Iraq, Patricia Dunmire conducts a critical intertextual analysis of the Bush Doctrine, arguing that the administration justified the invasion of Iraq by making the war appear new and a natural response to September 11, 2001; however, the discourse was one of Cold War policy. Dunmire's analysis of key documents (the 2002 National Security Strategy, Defense Policy Guidance for the 1990s, and the UN Charter) sets the stage for future analysis of post-9/11 rhetoric. She proposes that the post-Cold War environment lacked a stable enemy and that "9/11 did not just provide the concrete 'aberrant Other'...needed to fill the threat blank created by the demise of the Soviet Union. It also provided the exigency through which the Administration could simultaneously disjoin the Bush Doctrine from its prior articulations and implement the security goal of the earlier documents...In this way, 9/11 should be understood not as having 'changed everything' but as having contributed to the 'metastability' of US global hegemony by 'excluding discourses and actions that might

subvert its ideologies” (Dunmire, 2009). With a critical lens similar to Dunmire’s, though at a more lexico-grammatical level, David Butt, Annabelle Lukin, and Christian Matthiessen analyze two texts: George Bush’s first post-9/11 speech and a speech by British General Tim Collins. Focusing on the ideational, interpersonal, and the textual aspects of the two speeches, they argue that the two speeches demonstrate the potential power of language to create the ideologies necessary to validate and garner consensus for actions taken by the government post-9/11.

Angelica Nuzzo takes an almost deconstructive approach to the beginning of the post-9/11 aftermath, using Hegel’s dialectic to argue that terrorism, as a concept, followed the war. She uses the theory of dialectic reasoning to assess the idea of cause and effect, as well as “the categories in which the discourse of the so-called war on terrorism is articulated [to] question the rigidity of those categories and of the dualisms that support them” (Nuzzo, 2005). Her argument, though not explicitly, demonstrates the discursive construction of terrorism. Terrorism, according to Nuzzo, would be constructed according to what the war on terrorism needs to be justified. Her conclusion begs the question, to what end does post-9/11 discourse construct “Americanism”?

In a widely cited study, Barbara Biesecker tracks the reconfiguration of political and patriotic subjectivity post-9/11, arguing that our new mode and heightened degree of national allegiance results from a widely disseminated melancholic rhetoric that incites citizens to resign agency to the state. She analyzes Bush’s first speech to Congress after 9/11 and other representative discourse including websites, media coverage, and other

political speeches, identifying three aspects of discourse as having a particular impact on the construction of a melancholic citizen: the “what if” rhetoric, the rhetorical ambiguity of the enemy, and the repetitive circulation of 9/11 imagery, such as a references to planes flying into the Twin Towers.

To a similar end as Biesecker, David Althiede (2004) uses ethnographic content analysis to argue that terrorism was constructed as a result of 9/11. From analysis of news accounts, advertising, as well as political, military, and social action, he draws three conclusions: (1) rhetoric and actualization of fear supported consumption as a meaningful way for audiences to sustain an identity of substance and character; (2) consumption and giving (particularly to victims) were joined symbolically as government and business propaganda emphasized common themes of spending and buying to help the country; (3) the absence of a clear target for reprisals contributed to the construction of broad symbolic enemies and goals, united primarily by rhetorical claims that they simply attacked because they don’t like American democracy and freedom (2004). This suggests Americans were made to negotiate American identity based on their response to the idea and effects of terrorism. He illustrates that terrorism becomes a unifying agent as official and unofficial discourses employ “similar symbols expressing opposition to terrorism [that] promoted communalism by putting the good of the citizenry above any group or individual” (p. 291). Althiede notes that because a discussion of motives and reasons was left out of both media and official post-9/11 discourse, the rationale behind the attacks simply became qualities attributed to the terrorists—generic negative qualities present in

much of the official and unofficial speech in my research. While the enemy the United States has been fighting should have become more tangible as the war continued, I find that discourse in 2012 constructs an even more ambiguous enemy than earlier rhetoric that ties the enemy directly to al-Qaeda.

While these studies provide valuable perspectives and scholarship on post-9/11 discourse, they overwhelmingly focus on rhetoric of the power elite or media. While they explore the discursive notions of terrorism, patriotism, Americanism, fear, and war in authoritative discourse, they effectively ignore popular discourse and whether or not authoritative discourse post-9/11 has been assimilated, reconstructed, or rejected by Americans created by and creating popular discourse. Scholarship within the field of CDA noticeably moved away from topics of Americanism and terrorism as the war comes to an end, creating an absence of studies exploring the long-term impact of such discourses both on society and national identity. I suggest that CDA's scholarship on topics related to post-9/11 America would benefit from inclusion of sociological theories of national identity, as well as studies within the field of CDA that focus on national identity in other nations and contexts. I now review some of these theories and studies to suggest the value of applying the structure of such studies to the topic of post-9/11 discourse and American national identity would have.

Much of the literature specifically focused on national identity developed from theoretical perspectives such as Althusser's subject, controlled and hailed by ideological

apparatuses of the state from the time of birth, and Foucault's slightly more hopeful perspective of the subject, produced by various systems but also able to produce systems. Current definitions of and perspectives on what constitutes national identity enable studies in the field of rhetoric to explore and understand that the relationship between discourse and the public is not a question of an audience simply consuming information, but rather of how discourse shape's public identity.

Michael McGee (1975) proposed a definition of "the people"—often vaguely used in political discourse and theory—to supersede what he identified as the two common perspectives of "the people" in rhetorical scholarship: either an objective literal extension of the individual "person" or a mass of gullible and illogical individuals. McGee's definition of "the people" aims to expand the field of rhetoric's understanding of audience. In effect, his proposed definition taps into social and philosophical underpinning that suggests "the people" can also be understood as a collective identity. Expanding Ernest Bormann's (1972) earlier suggestion that "the people" may simply be a linguistic construct or tool used to manipulate an audience, McGee defines "the people" as "an essential rhetorical fiction with both a 'social' and an 'objective' reality" (p. 240), going on to qualify objective by saying that "the only human reality is that of the individual; groups, whether as small as a Sunday school class or as big as a whole society, are infused with an artificial identity" (p. 242). Generally agreeing with McGee, research focused on the discursive construction of national identity often asks how and by what means an entity, such as the government, constructs an artificial identity within a

public and to what end. McGee outlines four phases within the process of individuals forming a collective or national identity, which can be found separately within a society or as part of the larger “collectivization process” (p. 243). In first phase, characterized by latent and complete ideology, people have collective ideas but do not identify with them or others who have similar ideas. During the second phase “advocates” of a particular cause or idea restructure these latent ideologies so that “visions of the collective life [are] dangled before individuals in hope of creating” a collective (p. 243). A third phase emerges when individuals begin to respond to a particular rhetoric or discourse collectively, forsaking some degree of individuality to participate in a collective identity. Finally, disassociation from the group, marked by rhetoric hostile toward the collective, defines the fourth stage. Arguably, national identity studies within the field of discourse analysis focus on one or more of these phases.

CDA studies concerned with identity focus, conceptually, on the language of McGee’s second and, to a lesser extent, third phase. I focus on the second and third stages because, as I show in my analysis, the discursive construction of American identity post-9/11 progressed beyond the first stage of total ideology and still inhabits the third phase. As my study focuses on the second phase through analysis of official rhetoric, rhetoric of those dangling “visions of the collective”, and the third phase through interviewing and analyzing language of individuals, representative of the collective, I will review the similarities and differences of similar research to mine.

Rejecting a separation between nationalism (as intolerant, xenophobic, hostile) and patriotism (tolerant, civic) often accepted in social sciences, Susan Candor (2000) pursues the possibility that rhetoric of civic duty and unifying national values often conceal national policies ranging from exclusionary to blatantly racist. The study focused on data collected from 170 interviews with English people conducted over the course of two years. Ultimately, “English respondents tended routinely to treat talk about ‘this country’ as a normatively accountable matter-of-prejudice...apparent from the ways in which they oriented to the interviewer’s questions, and also from the content and the organizational features of their accounts more generally” (p. 181). Speakers showed significant hesitation and discomfort when talking about what might make England unique or different due to an apparent perception that to talk about “this country” could be perceived as prejudiced, rather than patriotic. Candor found that many respondents referenced highly clichéd national images (in her case, tea-drinking, bowler-hat wearing, monarchy-loving), thereby avoiding accountability for an opinion or to explicitly ironize the topic (p.186). Interviewees in my study, when asked explicitly about America, also adopted this characteristic; however they displayed no other reservations about expressing patriotism or associating explicitly with America. Candor spends a good deal of the conclusion asking, but not exactly answering, to what extent banal references to national identity, such as “we” and “here” intentionally reference political entities and identities, as well as whether such terms associate a speaker with a particular national identity more or less than other more obvious language features. This article provides interesting interpretations of how individuals belonging to a particular nation can

perceive expressions of national identity and pride as prejudice. Candor's insights into prejudice help frame how this study understands expressions of American identity and American perceptions of Middle Eastern identity, as well as how the two relate post-9/11.

Jennifer Clary-Lemon (2010) conducted 15 oral-history interviews with individuals from the Irish Association of Manitoba, analyzing content and linguistic-constructive strategies of assimilation and dissimulation to examine how national and immigrant identities are discursively constructed through oral history. She specifically focuses on the construction of immigrant identity through narrative, that is, "roles that individuals construct and inhabit through narrative in order to form a coherent story of individual and group membership...which assumes that one narrates, or stories, a coherent self that has the capacity to change" (p. 8). Although I did not conduct interview with the intention of eliciting oral histories, participants often defaulted to narrative when discussing the events of September 11, 2001. Clary-Lemon's analysis of narratives, particularly with attention to pronouns suggestive of assimilation and dissimulation, and the linguistic construction of place, provides direction to my analysis of the unexpected use of narrative in my research. Referencing Stuart Hall in her discussion of immigrant identity, she inserts the significance of cultural identity into the discussion of national identity as an element intimately tied to national identity, but also as a point of difference, drawing attention to the role of the Other, of difference, in the discursive construction of national and cultural identity, which relies on sameness (p. 9).

Prompted by issues of immigration and integration in Europe's 21st century political landscape, Wodak et al. (1999) take Austria as a case study for linguistic discursive strategies used to construct nations and national identities. Using a discourse-historical approach to uncover discursive strategies of dissimilation (construction of national differences) and assimilation (construction of national sameness), they suggest that Austrians feel an increased need and desire to define their national identity in response to globalization and, more specifically, Austria's entrance into the European Union (p. 152). In addition to these constructive strategies, Wodak et al. suggest strategies of perpetuation, transformation and destruction shape the discursive construction of a particular national identity. Perpetuation strategies attempt to continue a message, while justification and "legitimation", as subsets of a perpetuation, defend or preserve controversial narratives of the nation. Transformation strategies discursively change the meaning of an established component of national identity. Destructive strategies directly challenge and seek to delegitimize current definitions or understandings of the nation and national identity (Wodak, 1999). The framework of the study stands out from other studies of identity construction that I've discussed and within the field at large because, unlike studies focused exclusively on interview data, Wodak et al. include political speeches, newspaper articles, and propaganda leading up to Austria's referendum on becoming an EU member. The effect is a comprehensive look at the discursive construction of national identity at all levels of society and across various discourses of power. Although they use a discourse-historical approach, I adopt their framework conceptually when designing my study and analyzing the data. First, I analyze

samples of rhetoric from politicians. Second, I collect samples of popular rhetoric through interviews. Third, strategies of assimilation and difference factor into my analysis of how each discourse constructs the definition of American national identity, and how construction of terrorism as difference influences American “sameness”. To understand how national identity changes, we have to look at from where and how it originates, as well as its reception and reconstruction within the public. Identity is intimately tied to power, which means power sources must be included in a holistic analysis.

Benedict Anderson’s (1991) definition of a nation as “an imagined political community - and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (p. 49) emphasizes the social and rhetorical construction of the nation and national identity, and thereby underlies the assumptions of the studies discussed here, explicitly so in the case of Wodak et al., including my own. Anderson traces the role of language in the development of national consciousness back to the steady increase of print and sale of books and pamphlets in particular languages. In conjunction with monarchs in Europe using certain languages for administration (English in England, French in France, etc.) and to consolidate their bureaucracies, certain languages, albeit not intentionally, began to define the people and nations that used them. According to Anderson, printed language formed the foundation for national consciousness in three ways: first, printed language created a method and means for exchange that was more accessible than Latin and more permanent than spoken vernacular; second, information that was printed and sold in a

particular language gave a sense of permanence to language, which created a sense of antiquity central to the idea of nationhood; third, printing in certain languages created “languages-of-power” as they overcame colloquial dialects (see Anderson, 55-57). This suggests that language contributed to the construction of nations as “imagined communities” and that that such a construction is a historical and continuous process. Thus, discourse and rhetoric should be studied as a site of the construction, preservation and reconstruction of national identity. Maintaining that all communities, no matter how large or small, are imagined, Anderson says, “Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined” (p. 49). This overlaps with the intent of CDA and discourse analysis, particularly from a social constructionist perspective, to understand what a discourse creates, but not to unearth a particular truth behind the discourse – no reality or truth hides beneath discourse. However, exploring the language of the discourse of national identity illuminates the style of nation and community a particular discourse attempts to create and leads the critical discourse analyst to ask why, and to what end?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

My theoretical approach begins with five tenets of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), as both theory and method, outlined by Jorgensen and Phillips (2002):

- 1) The character of social and cultural processes and structures is partly linguistic-discursive and CDA aims to shed light on the linguistic-discursive dimensions of social and cultural phenomena and processes of change.
- 2) Discourse is a form of social practice, which both constitutes the social world and is constituted by other social practices. Discourse, as social practice, is in a dialectical relationship with other social dimensions. Discourse reflects social structures in addition to shaping and reshaping them.
- 3) Language use should be empirically analyzed within its social context via concrete, linguistic textual analysis of language use in social interaction.
- 4) Discourse functions ideologically. As such, CDA research focuses on both the discursive practices which construct representations of the world, social subjects and social relations, and the role of these discursive practices in furthering interests of particular social groups. CDA's criticality comes from its aim to reveal the role of discursive practice in the social world.

- 5) CDA is politically committed to social change through uncovering the role of discursive practice in the maintenance of unequal power relations, with the overall goal of harnessing the results of CDA for social change.

While these tenets are held in common, a number of different approaches within CDA exist largely due to differing opinions about methodology and theoretical understandings of discourse. Before discussing my particular use of CDA in this paper, I first explain how ideology, only briefly mentioned in the above tenets, factors into my understanding of CDA as a theory and method, and into this paper as one that deals with discourses of power and the construction of identity. According to Wodak and Meyer (2001), CDA focuses on the type of ideology comprised of “hidden and latent type of everyday beliefs, which often appear disguised as conceptual metaphors and analogies, thus attracting linguists’ attention” because CDA holds the perspective that “dominant ideologies appear as ‘neutral’, holding on to assumptions that stay largely unchallenged” (p. 7). For the purpose of this study, I understand the United States government and its representatives as an authoritative source that informs the public on what it technically and ideologically means to be American. Thus, through analyzing various post-9/11 discourses, I intend to explain some of the assumptions about American identity put forth by the government as neutral or taken for granted knowledge, as well as to understand the extent to which the public assimilated such propositions. I do not question to antagonize or because I view America in a negative light. Rather, I critically question in the sense that CDA intends: “to produce and convey critical knowledge that enables human beings

to emancipate themselves from forms of domination through self-reflection” (p. 7). If this paper even begins to unearth latent ideological elements of the post-9/11 discourse, potential consequences, and provoke a dialogue, it will have achieved a purpose aligned with CDA.

Moving from ideology to the technicalities of discourse, my theoretical perspective takes direction from Norman Fairclough’s lexico-grammatical and interdiscursive methodology, discussed more in the paper’s methods section, and his theoretical understanding of discourse. “Fairclough applies the concept of discourse in three different ways. In the most abstract sense, discourse refers to language use as social practice... Secondly... as the kind of language used within a specific field, such as political or scientific discourse. And thirdly... as a count noun (a discourse, the discourse, the discourses, discourses) referring to a way of speaking which gives meaning to experiences from a particular perspective” such as a feminist or Marxist, (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 66-67). Specifically, discourse according to Fairclough (1992) includes spoken and written language, nonverbal communication such as facial expressions, and visual images such as photographs. Conceptually, discourse refers to a certain perspective on one or all of these various forms (p. 38). I agree with Fairclough’s understanding and use of discourse and use the term with the same intent throughout this paper.

Furthermore, I agree with the premise of his three-dimensional framework that language use consists of a textual dimension (speech, written or visual), a discursive practice, and a social practice (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002). However, his suggested analysis of the

later dimension is based on the premise that some degree of social interaction occurs outside of discourse and therefore cannot be understood through analysis of discourse. For example, Fairclough (1992) says, “not all interaction is discursive – people can interact for instance by tidying a house together” (p. 38). Physical actions and interactions may lie outside of discourse in their physicality, but I disagree with Fairclough’s argument that these physical elements should be understood by a form of analysis other than discourse analysis. If a black man and a Caucasian man were cleaning a room, for example, discourses on race, gender, and masculinity, among others would influence their physical interactions and actions. Thus I see discourse analysis as the extent to which we can understand the discursive influence on both material and immaterial aspects of the world. Elements may exist outside of discourse, but they are not known outside of discourse.

Fairclough’s concepts of intertextuality and interdiscursivity, further discussed in the methods section, also direct my understanding of discourse and following analysis. Intertextuality means the presence of particular words and phrases from one speech or text in different speech or text, bringing the connotations of one text into another, either explicitly in the form of a quote or implicitly. Interdiscursivity means the presence of one or more discourses in a different discourse. For example, if a speech on the values of America included a section that said Americans reduce their carbon footprint, an interdiscursive analysis may reveal that a discourse on American values included a pro-climate change environmental discourse. Fairclough’s theoretical underpinning for these

two concepts derives from Bakhtin's understanding of genres as "a general category of language...the language used in a particular form of activity...characterised by a particular thematic content, a particular style and a particular compositional structure" (Bakhtin, 1986 via Fairclough, 1992). The fact that multiple genres control and present themselves in discourse(s), according to Bakhtin, suggests that a theory and study of discourse and language must include intertextual and interdiscursive analysis.

My adherence to social constructionism best explains the extent to which I differ with Fairclough's view that some aspects of the social cannot be understood through discourse. Constructionists view knowledge and truth as created, not discovered, by the mind (Schwandt, 2003) and support the view that realism and social constructionism are compatible. One can believe that concepts are constructed rather than discovered yet maintain that they correspond to something real in the world, a notion consistent with Berger and Luckmann's (1991) idea that reality, while socially defined, refers to the subjective experience of everyday life rather than to the objective reality of the natural world. If knowledge isn't derived from the objective nature of the world and from human nature, where does it come from? Social constructionists say people construct it between them, through daily interactions, which is why social interactions, but particularly language, are considered illustrations of what a public's reality may be (Burr, 1995) and why I turn to discourse to understand change within the American national identity post-9/11.

Burr's (1995) four tenets of social constructionism, as follows, inform my understanding and application of critical discourse analysis as a theory and method able to understand the construction of identity through an analysis of discourse and discursive practice.

- 1) "Our knowledge of the world should not be treated as objective truth. Reality is only accessible to us through categories, so our knowledge and representations of the world are not reflections of the reality 'out there', but rather are products of our ways of categorising the world, or, in discursive analytical terms, products of discourse" (p. 3).
- 2) "the ways in which we understand and represent the world are historically and culturally specific and contingent [meaning] our worldviews and our identities could have been different, and they can change over time...Discourse is a form of social action that plays a part in producing the social world – including knowledge, identities and social relations – and thereby in maintaining specific social patterns. This view is anti-essentialist: that the social world is constructed socially and discursively implies that its character is not pre-given or determined by external conditions, and that people do not possess a set of fixed and authentic characteristics or essences" (p. 3).
- 3) "Knowledge is created [and maintained] through social interaction [and processes] in which we construct common truths and compete about what is true and false" (p. 4).

- 4) “Different social understandings of the world lead to different social actions, and therefore the social construction of knowledge and truth has social consequences” (p. 3).

For the purpose of this study, tenet two suggests, first, that without the post-9/11 discourse or with a different’ post-9/11 discourse, the American national identity could have been different, and second, that no essential quality of American national identity existed prior to the change in discourse – only a different discursive construction. Tenet four implies that consequences exist for how the discourse has caused Americans to understand individually and collectively what it means to be American. This paper doesn’t debate whether or not planes flew into the Twin Towers and Pentagon killing thousands. Rather, my analysis examines the extent to which language makes possible the construction of thoughts and concepts about American national identity through post-9/11 discourses of Americanism and terrorism. Burr (1995) says that within social constructionism language is not an unproblematic means of transmitting thoughts and feelings, but in fact makes thought possible by constructing concepts. Language predates concepts and provides a means of structuring experiences in and creation of the world. Understanding language as a collective and agreed upon method of communication means analysis at the lexico-grammatical level enables and understanding of what has been collectively agreed upon, what has been collectively constructed as social reality and forms a basis for social behavior and action. Additionally, a social constructionist perspective suggests that while American identity is collectively constructed and agreed

upon, individuals can collectively change the discourse and thereby what constitutes the American national identity.

In the context of this paper, Mikhail Bakhtin's (1981) notion of authoritative discourse and internally persuasive discourse best explains the influence of power on societal and individual discourse. "It happens more frequently that an individual's becoming, an ideological process, is characterized precisely by a sharp gap between these two categories: in one, the authoritative word (religious, political, moral, the word of a father, of adults and of teachers, etc.) that does not know internal persuasiveness, in the other internally persuasive word that is denied all privilege, backed up by no authority at all, and is frequently not even acknowledged in society...the struggle and dialogic interrelationship of these categories of ideological discourse are what usually determine the history of an individual ideological consciousness" (p. 342). This means that our internal discourse, our internal sense of self, often finds itself under the influence of the authoritative word and discourse. In an effort to define and process the events of 9/11 to the public, the United States government initiated and continues an authoritative discourse on terrorism, comprised of definitions of America and American qualities, as well as definitions of terrorism and qualities of terrorists. I aim to begin understanding the discursive construction of such concepts in authoritative discourse, as well as the extent to which this discourse has been assimilated into public discourse and internal discourse, in this paper.

METHOD SECTION

For the critical discourse analyst, the methodological starting point lies in the claim of structuralist and poststructuralist linguistic philosophy: reality only acquires meaning through discourse. Language, then, shapes and reshapes identity, social relationships, and experiences of both the individual and collective. The focus of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) lies in between the two poles: abstract discourse, which understands discourse as never fixed and functioning at the societal level, and popular discourse found in everyday speech, where discursive psychology is focused (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002). Norman Fairclough's approach to CDA aims to examine both common and abstract forms of discourse by proposing a process of articulation comprised of discursive and non-discursive components, thereby suggesting that everything can't be analyzed through discourse analysis exclusively (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999). I agree with Fairclough insofar that I accept there are material and social practices that cannot be entirely or appropriately examined through discourse. However, I attribute more to discourse and less to social practice than Fairclough does and therefore collected and analyze my data from a stance where the majority of what constitutes American identity post-9/11 can be found in discourse. As will be discussed in the analysis portion of the methods section, my perspective of society as being more comprised of discourse than Fairclough's perspective leads me to withhold an in depth analysis of social

practice—the third dimension of Fairclough’s three dimensional framework for CDA. Nevertheless, I agree with Fairclough’s approach to analyzing text and speech to which I adhere in my methodology. Throughout this section I will address the criteria used for collection, reduction and analysis separately.

Data Collection

First, my choice of CDA as a method to understand post-9/11 identity is rooted in my subscription to a fundamental tenet of CDA and social constructionism: language is both constituted and constitutive of the social world and that identity is therefore something that can be understood by examining language use and practices. The first criterion for collecting data was based on my agreement with Fairclough’s (1992) notion of interdiscursivity, meaning “the shifting articulation of different discourses, genres and voices in interactions and texts,” (p. 46). Thus, interdiscursive “analysis critically mediates the connections between language and social context, and facilitates more satisfactory bridging of the gap between texts and contexts” (p. 195). Because I am studying 1) the evolution of official discourse post-9/11 over the course of 12 years and 2) the extent to which that discourse has influenced popular discourse and thereby American identity, using one or two speeches from each year post-9/11 allows for a richer understanding of how interdiscursivity within post-9/11 rhetoric has or hasn’t changed. It allows me to identify potential patterns over an extended period of time, as well as the extent to which those features are evident in popular discourse. “The intertextual [and interdiscursive] properties of a text [and discourse] are realized in its

linguistic features” (p. 195), which means that interdiscursive analysis leads to additional linguistic analysis with particular attention given to discourses, genres, narratives, etc.

While Fairclough did focus on discourses in printed text such as pamphlets and newspapers, he also analyzed transcribed speeches and dialogue, often referring to those forms of language also as text. As Fairclough (1992) says, “The first texts were of course written, but the texts of contemporary mediated interaction and quasi-interaction are also spoken (radio), televisual (so combinations of speech and image and sound effect), or electronic (for example, email). Even ‘written’ texts are increasingly multisemiotic, not only combining written language with visual images (photographs, diagrams, etc.) but also treating the written language itself as a visual surface which is often intricately worked. The term ‘text’ is not ideal for this diverse set of forms because it still powerfully suggests written language, but we shall use it nevertheless in the absence of any better alternative” (p. 46). Thus, when referring to the interviews and speeches I refer to the transcripts technically and the “text” theoretically as Fairclough explains it. By referring to the transcripts as texts I am not making light of the fact that both sets of data were initially spoken, as opposed to written. I intentionally chose spoken examples of official rhetoric, as opposed to newspaper articles or other text, for several reasons. First, televised speeches are more likely to reach a wider audience than subscription-required print sources. Second, because I chose to collect unofficial rhetoric samples through speech interviews, I wanted to maintain speech as the style of language in order to avoid differences that may occur between text and speech.

I collected two bodies of text; the first was representative samples of official rhetoric and the second was representative samples of unofficial rhetoric. By “official rhetoric” I mean rhetoric generated by individuals who speak from positions of power and authority within the American government and military. I excluded individuals who might be policy or subject matter experts in academia, think tanks, the private sector, etc. because they do not have authority or powers over the American people. Since 9/11 there have been two presidents—George W. Bush (2002-2008) and Barack H. Obama (2009-present)—who, by the nature of their role as the elected representative of the United States of America, are both powerful and authoritative. In addition to the two presidents, I chose members of their administrations, other politicians, and senior military members as other representatives of official rhetoric. To maximize the likelihood that rhetoric from these individuals was heard by the general public, I selected speeches, interviews or news conferences that were televised. Furthermore, while these individuals spoke on various topics ranging from health care to energy, I chose speeches that specifically addressed terrorism or a terrorist event. By selecting speeches that focus on terrorism I am disregarding other forms of rhetoric; thus, it is important to say that I am not claiming the entire discourse of U.S. politics, the military, or a particular president is limited to the discourse of terrorism and Americanism. Separate discourses on issues such as environmental policy and healthcare exist and are worth examining, but here I analyze the discourses on terrorism and American identity.

Thus when searching for texts, three criteria were used: a well-known speaker representing either the military or administration in an official capacity; a focus on

terrorism; and a televised delivery in the United States between September 11, 2001 and January 1, 2014. Additionally, a minimum of one speech per year for the past 12 years was used.

The following texts represent official discourse:

- President George W. Bush, President's Address from Cabinet Room following Cabinet Meeting, 12 September 2001
- President George W. Bush, State of the Union Address, 29 January 2002
- President George W. Bush, Press Conference, 30 July 2003
- President George W. Bush, Second Inaugural Address, 20 January 2005
- Condoleezza Rice, Opening Statement to the 9/11 Commission, 8 April 2004
- President George W. Bush, Address to the Nation 5 Year After 9/11, 11 September 2006
- Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee, 7 February 2006
- General Ricardo Sanchez, Military Reporters and Editors Forum Luncheon Address, 12 October 2007
- Senator John McCain, Address at the Virginia Military Institute, 11 April 2007
- President George W. Bush, Remarks on the War on Terror at the Miller Center, 19 March 2008
- Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano, Assistant to the President for Counterterrorism and Homeland Security John Brennan, Press Secretary Robert Gibbs, Press Briefing, 7 January 2010

- Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano, Common Threat, Collective Response: Protecting Against Terrorist Attacks in a Networked World, 29 July 2009
- President Barack Obama, Address to the Nation on the End of Operation Iraqi Freedom, 31 August 2010
- President Barack Obama, On the Death of Osama bin Laden, 2 May 2011
- Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism John Brennan, “Strengthening our Security by Adhering to our Values and Laws” at Harvard, 16 September 2011
- Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, Speech at U.S. Forces-Iraq End of Mission Ceremony, 15 December 2011
- Governor and Republican Presidential Nominee Mitt Romney, Foreign Policy Speech, 8 October 2012
- Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Testimony before the Senate on the Benghazi Embassy Attack, 23 January 2013
- President Barack Obama, Address on Drones and Terrorism at the National Defense University, 23 May 2013

The body of unofficial rhetoric consisted of interview transcripts. Interviewees included colleagues, classmates, and acquaintances of myself (the interviewer) through the two groups. The two controlled factors were age and United States citizenship; interviewees were at least age 12 at the time of September 11, 2001 and are United States

citizens. I solicited participation by email or face-to-face communication and conducted the interviews in the interviewees' choice of a public library, public coffee shop, or private office of the participant. As the sole interviewer, I interviewed a total of 12, six women and six men. As the only controlled factors were age and citizenship, race, ethnicity, religion, and sexuality were not controlled or recorded. Questions were designed to elicit opinions on the general topics of Americanism and terrorism, as well as focus the conversation specifically on the events of September 11, 2001. Each interview consisted of the following questions, with no follow-up questions:

- 1) What, in your opinion, does it mean to be American?
- 2) What, in your opinion, is the definition of terrorism?
- 3) What, in your opinion, does it mean to be a terrorist?
- 4) Could you explain how you reacted to the events on September 11, 2001?
- 5) In your opinion, what was the motivation behind the September 11, 2001 attacks?
- 6) How, if at all, have your thoughts and feelings about America changed since September 11, 2001?
- 7) What have you learned about the Middle East since September 11, 2001?
- 8) How safe do you think the United States is from another attack like September 11, 2001?

To determine whether verbal face-to-face interviews or an online fill-in-the-blank survey should be used, I conducted case studies of each method with four participants,

two interviewees and two survey-takers. The online surveys generated short responses of one or two sentences to each question. In contrast, the interviews generated several sentences and a natural, less organized response. Thus, I selected interviews, first, because they generated more content. Second, rather than, for example, analyze books written about terrorism by academics or analyze comments on terrorism-related news articles, the interview captures natural language used by average citizens lacking an agenda, expertise or controlled answer at the time of the interview. Third, speaking is more inclusive than writing, allowing for participants with weaker writing skills feel less self-conscious or uncomfortable providing their answers. Finally, I chose interviews because I wanted to control the context of the environment in which the interviewee thought about and responded to the questions. By mediating the context, I was able to prevent the influence of many factors present during and online survey taken in an environment of the participants choosing.

While looking at the language 12 years after 9/11 cannot demonstrate gradual changes over the course of the past 12 years, it will demonstrate what the ultimate effects have been, as well as the present state of American national identity. Burr (1995) says that from a social constructionist perspective language is not an unproblematic means of transmitting thoughts and feelings, but in fact makes thought possible by constructing concepts. In other words, it is language that makes thoughts and concepts possible and not the other way around. Language predates concepts and provides a means of structuring the way the world is experienced and created. Language is collective, an agreed upon method of communication, so to understand what has been established in the

language is to understand what has been collectively constructed as social reality and a component of the basis for social behaviors and actions.

Lexico-grammatical and interdiscursive analysis of official speeches and interview transcripts answers my first research question: “How are the concepts of ‘Americanism’ and ‘terrorism’ discursively constructed in official discourse in the 12 years since 9/11, and in current popular discourse?” Furthermore, the selection of speeches and focus of several interview questions directly related to terrorism elicits probes the discourse on terrorism specifically, answering my second research question: “How does the discourse on terrorism construction American national identity?”

Data Reduction

The principles by which I reduced the data to words, phrases, and data representative of the whole stem from Fairclough’s three functions of discourse, drawing on Michael Halliday’s multifunctional approach to language: an identity function, a ‘relational’ function and an ‘ideational’ function (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002). Thus, discourse contributes to the construction of individual and social identities, social relations, and systems of knowledge and meaning. The extent to which the construction of identities, relations, and systems is within discourse is I point where I differ with Fairclough, which I explain further in the analysis section, but I agree that these are the three functions of discourse. Thus, I apply Fairclough’s functions to my question of post-9/11 identity by focusing first on identity in the data specifically, then on the social relations constructed in the data, and finally on the systems of knowledge and meaning

constructed within the data. Fairclough would suggest that much of these constructions occur outside of discourse and therefore could not but understood by discourse analysis alone, however, this is where we disagree and therefore in my analysis I am looking to the texts for each of Fairclough's three functions in their entirety.

I reduced data representative of official discourse based on whether or not the speech contributed to the discourse of terrorism post-9/11. My driving question, how the post-9/11 discourse on terrorism has discursively constructed American identity, ties American identity to the discourse on terrorism. One could analyze the construction of American identity within, for example, an environmental discourse or capitalist discourse, and may find different constructions of American identity. As such, my selections of speeches representative of official discourse specifically address or refer to terrorism either as the primary subject or a subtopic. Of the 12 interviews, meant to represent unofficial discourse, I analyzed all of the data, focusing on specific text and grammatical features detailed in the analysis sections.

I am not suggesting a particular construction of American identity post-9/11, nor a motivation or strategy behind the discursive construction of terrorism and Americanism. Rather, my analysis asks if such a construction exists, and if so, how. Thus, there is no confirming or disconfirming data; all data is analyzed for patterns and characteristics that will be discussed henceforth.

Data Analysis

Fairclough's (1992) articulation of the "focus of CDA as contributing to the long-standing commitment of SFL to specifying, via analysis of the dialectic of system and instance, the openness to each other of social and semiotic systems" (p. 146) informs my method for data analysis as one that analyzes the linguistic features and interdiscursive features to understand the social implications of the relationship between the two. Unlike Fairclough's three-dimensional framework, I do not attempt an explicit sociological analysis because, while I acknowledge certain aspects of the world lie outside of discourse, my perspective on identity formation and change lies closer to theorists and discourse analysts such as Laclau and Mouffe and their theoretical backing in Lacan. Like Laclau and Mouffe, I approach my data with the understanding that identity, conceptually, means "identification with a subject position in a discursive structure; always relationally organized... contrasted with something that it is not; changeable... according to those discourses of which it forms part" (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002: 43). Falling toward Lacan and Mouffe on the social constructionist spectrum, I understand language itself as constructive of the social world and thereby collective identity.

My research probes the discursive construction of American identity in two phases: first, lexicogrammar (i.e. grammar plus vocabulary) analysis, and second, interdiscursive analysis. Interdiscursive analysis occurs, to an extent, within the analysis of each corpus – official and unofficial discourse. However, I analyze the discourse of American national identity across these two samples, which enables a richer

interdiscursive understanding. Because I ask “What is the connection, similarities and differences, between the official construction of ‘Americanism’ and ‘terrorism’ (and related themes) with the non-official recirculation (or reconstruction) and internalization of the concepts?” I analyze the data samples of both official and unofficial rhetoric for the same features, looking for similarities and differences to understand the connection between the official construction of American identity and the unofficial interpretation and construction of the same identity.

I conduct my lexicogrammatical analysis in line with Fairclough’s (1999) interpretation of the concept, as derived from Halliday’s systemic functional linguistics. Lexicogrammar forms at the intersection of macro-functions of language – the ideational, interpersonal, and textual—and corresponding micro-functions, or grammatical systems, of transitivity, mood and modality, and information. “Every clause...is seen as grammatically constituted simultaneously as semiotic production (textual function) which constructs the world (ideational function) while enacting social relations between its producers and others who inhabit that world (relational function)” (p. 140). Thus the construction, reconstruction and deconstruction of what constitutes the social world takes shape at the grammatical level of language.

Using the Microsoft OneNote program, I tagged all instances in the samples of official rhetoric that specifically refer to “terrorism”, “terrorist(s)”, “American”, “America”, and “Americanism”. I also tagged sentences and paragraphs where other words were used in place of the aforementioned, such as “we”, “they”, “our”, and “us”

(more on those features in the analysis). I then extracted those sentences or paragraphs (when one or more of the words repeated) and placed them collectively in an excel spreadsheets, organized with each speech in a column and each text feature in a row. The specific features I looked for include the following: verb transitivity (including who/what is the subject and object); nominalization and passive voice; metaphor; modality; naming/labeling; inclusive/exclusive “we”; indeterminate “they”; pronouns; and declarative (statement) and imperative (command or request) sentences. These features provide insight into how events and social relationships are perceived by the discourse and thereby discursively construct particular identities and realities. When multiple features occurred in a single clause, I categorized the clause according to which feature was most prominent, rather than duplicate the clause on the spreadsheet.

Because the interview questions targeted opinions about American identity and terrorism, I analyzed each interview in its entirety, rather than extracting specific clauses. Rather than focus on the lexicogrammatical features in the same detail as the analysis of the speeches, I used a combination of Wodak et.al’s “constructive strategies” (1999) and Clary-lemon’s (2010) understanding of narrative as an assimilation strategy to further analyze the construction of national identity in the interviews. I focused less on the lexicogrammatical as an analytic tool for interview data because constructive and narrative strategies allow for a broader analysis, which I found necessary when looking at the casual speech used in interviews opposed to the stylized and intentional speech of the official sample. Wodak et al. analyze the discourses of Austrian national identity for

constructive strategies, as well as strategies of perpetuation, transformation and destruction because the study focused on Austrian national identity at a time of transition within Austria. My research aims to understand the discursive construction of American national identity within the post-9/11 discourse of terrorism and therefore modifies Wodak's technique to focus exclusively on constructive strategies, which work within a discourse to explicitly build a national identity.

Discursive practices in which discourses are mixed in conventional ways are indications of, and work towards, the stability of the dominant order of discourse and thereby the dominant social order (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). First, my discursive analysis examines how concepts are produced in official rhetoric and how citizens consume those concepts (via interviews). By examining production in texts over the past 12 years, a discursive analysis investigates the stability or changeability of the relations between the different discourses of terrorism and Americanism within an order of discourse and between different orders of discourse (interdiscursivity). This involves identifying references to the past, semantic similarities and differences, and themes related to terrorism, Americanism and identity in each speech and interview, as well as collectively.

An analysis of social practice, Fairclough's suggested third frame of CDA, comes from the interview process and analysis by asking how common discourse reflects the broader discourse of the United States demonstrated by the 20 speeches. While

Fairclough's three-dimensional framework implies three different levels of analysis, by focusing on the lexico-grammatical text features as well as the broader discourses in official speeches and unofficial interviews, two methods that provide insight into production and consumption of discourse, I aim for a synthesis of each dimension. Through analysis of official speeches and unofficial interviews, the relationship between discursive constructions of identity officially and colloquially manifests. This understanding allows me to propose answers to my final research question, "What are the implications of the discourses on terrorism and Americanism for the national American identity?"

Context

In addition and related to assumptions connected to my theoretical backing in social constructionism and CDA, several other assumptions inform the context of the study. I will briefly outline these assumptions and then elaborate on the context of the data collection.

- 1) I assume that nations are what Benedict Anderson (1983) termed "imagined political communities". Being comprised of individuals, most of who never interact, nations are shared memories and beliefs often delineated through media and, more significantly, government representatives, laws, and institutions.
- 2) Second, I assume that national identities are social and thus discursively, by means of language and other semiotic systems, constructed, circulated and

transformed. The idea of a specific national community becomes reality through the institutionalization and internalization of discourses (Wodak, 1999).

- 3) The discursive construction of nations and national identities always runs hand in hand with the construction of difference. At the collective level, both the construction of sameness and the construction of difference violate pluralistic and democratic variety and multiplicity by homogenizing the collective identity as well as what lies outside it (Stuart Hall, 1996).
- 4) National identities are dynamic, fragile and fluid. Different identities are discursively constructed according to context, that is, the situational setting and topic of the discursive act. However, I do assume that there are certain relations between identity as constructed authority figures and unofficial discourse about national identities (Wodak, 1999).

The abundant details of context require me to focus on the few I perceive as most influential on data collection and analysis, which inherently is a decision produced by context of my personal bias. First, the research takes place 12 years after September 11, 2001, in the same year that troops are expected to withdraw from Afghanistan and one year after the Boston marathon bombings. This means I'm analyzing not the slow development of identity and opinions over time, but the culmination of changes after 12 years.

As the researcher and only interviewer, I am an English-speaking United States citizen who was 11 years old at the time of September 11, 2001, which confines me within the discourses that I investigate. Additionally, my employment by the federal government brings me closer to the source of my investigation and a feature that may rouse suspicion of my objectivity in others. However, my employment doesn't make me more or less favorable to politics. Rather, it increases my awareness and enables me to collect and analyze data with greater sensitivity to potential bias and subjectivity. Additionally, seven of the 12 interviewees are employees of the federal government and all 12 live in Maryland, Virginia or Washington, D.C., although only four grew-up in the area. While over half of the interviewees work for the federal government, there was no marked difference between their word or topic choice from those of the non-federal employees that would indicate their employment created a notable bias or perspective. If any single factor influenced the perspective of the interviewees, it was their close geographic proximity to the events of September 11, 2001.

Aware of my place within the discourses I examine, I maintain a focused distance from my taken-for-granted perspectives by relying on the theoretical underpinning of social constructionism and both the theoretical and methodological aspects of CDA. I do not aim to prove or disprove a particular view, nor do I claim to discern what people really mean when they speak. I do not attempt to uncover a particular truth or objective reality. Rather, in keeping with the spirit of CDA, I explore patterns and lexicogrammatical features within representative selections of discursively constructed reality to identify potential consequences.

ANALYSIS OF SPEECHES

This section focuses on features present consistently throughout the entire corpus, thereby creating a whole narrative, or features that were consistent and changed at a particular time, such as with a new president and administration. These features primarily include naming and labeling, pronouns and the inclusive “we”, metaphor, and whole-for-part personification of America.

The “terrorist” label

Looking at the vocabulary used to label terrorists and Americans, several features were consistent across the entire corpus of speeches. The term “terrorist” is itself a label created in each speech and across the 12 years represented by the corpus. In the early years of the Bush administration, while the term “terrorist” was used, terrorists were labeled as the “enemy”, a term used interchangeably with “terrorist”. Other labels used interchangeably with “terrorist” include “extremist”, “violent extremist” and “jihadist”. The speakers label terrorists with a duality, being both cowardly and almost defeated, while simultaneously constantly plotting and expanding. The following are examples:

“Terrorists who once occupied Afghanistan now occupy cells at Guantanamo Bay. And terrorist leaders who urged followers to sacrifice their lives are running

for their own.” Shortly after, he says, “So long as training camps operate, so long as nations harbor terrorists, freedom is at risk” (George Bush, 2nd inaugural address).

“And today, this enemy, though under constant pressure and on the defensive, still intends to bring its cult of murder and suicide to our shores, and our cities -- and to those of our closest allies as well” (Rumsfeld, Statement before the SASC).

Around 2005, specific groups are named and labeled as “terrorists”, particularly al-Qaeda, more frequently. However, the characteristics used to define and label these groups are the same as those initially used to label the more generic “terrorists”. Specific terrorist groups, when named, continue to be constructed ambiguously as a continuous threat and on the way to defeat.

“As we speak, al Qaeda continues to plot against us, and its leadership remains anchored in the border regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan” Obama, Address on the end of the Iraq War 2010).

“Today, the core of al Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan is on the path to defeat. Their remaining operatives spend more time thinking about their own safety than plotting against us... They’ve not carried out a successful attack on our homeland since 9/11. Instead, what we’ve seen is the emergence of various al

Qaeda affiliates...And while none of AQAP's efforts approach the scale of 9/11, they have continued to plot acts of terror, like the attempt to blow up an airplane on Christmas Day in 2009" (Obama, NDU, 2013).

"What we're seeing now are people who have migrated back to other parts of the world where they came from primarily who are in effect affiliates, part of the jihadist syndicate. Some of them like al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb use that name, others use different names. But the fact is they are terrorists. They are extremists...So although there has been the decimation of core al-Qaeda in the Afghanistan, Pakistan region, we do have to contend with the want-to-bes and the affiliates going forward" (Clinton, Benghazi testimony, 2013).

Although specific terrorist groups continued to be defined in the manner of the Bush administration's vague "enemy", the naming of specific groups, when coupled with the naming of specific individuals as "terrorists" creates a face of terrorism and makes the threat seem tangible. Speakers, on behalf of America or the administration, consistently name specific terrorists to demonstrate tangible successes. The following are examples:

"We put al Qaeda on the run, and killed or captured most of those who planned the 9/11 attacks, including the man believed to be the mastermind, Khalid Sheik Mohammed" (G.W. 9/11 5 year anniversary).

“Tonight, I can report to the American people and to the world that the United States has conducted an operation that killed Osama bin Laden, the leader of al Qaeda, and a terrorist who’s responsible for the murder of thousands of innocent men, women, and children” (Obama, Death of Osama bin Laden, 2011).

“In the past two years alone, we have successfully interrogated several terrorism suspects who were taken into law enforcement custody and prosecuted, including Faisal Shahzad, Najibullah Zazi, David Headley, and many others” (Brennan, Harvard, 2011).

Similarly, regimes and countries are named in association with terrorists and terrorist groups, making the threat of terrorism seem larger, and a more significant and concrete threat. During the Bush administration, terrorists were strongly associated with Saddam Hussein’s regime, “the Taliban”, in Iraq. As the war progressed, while Saddam is mentioned until as late as 2013, other countries are mentioned more frequently, particularly Iran, Pakistan, Yemen, and Libya.

Terrorists and the “good Muslims”

The terrorist label is separated from “most Muslims”, which becomes an entirely different label used throughout the entire corpus. The label of the “good Muslim” or “most Muslims” aligns the majority of the Middle East with “American values”

(discussed shortly), justifying the United States' intervention as one intended to help a population that Americans can empathize with. Examples of this are the following:

“With our help, the people of the Middle East are now stepping forward to claim their freedom” (GW, 9/11 5 year anniversary).

“The vast majority of Muslims do not share the violent ideology of al-Qaeda. They have children and families they care about. They hope for a better future for themselves and their countries. They do not want the extremists to win,” (Rumsfeld, Statement before the SASC, 2006).

“So we're helping the people of Iraq establish a democracy in the heart of the Middle East. A free Iraq will fight terrorists instead of harboring them. A free Iraq will be an example for others of the power of liberty to change the societies and to displace despair with hope. By spreading the hope of liberty in the Middle East, we will help free societies take root. And when they do, freedom will yield the peace that we all desire” (G.W. at the miller center, 2008).

“And the best way to prevent violent extremism inspired by violent jihadists is to work with the Muslim American community -- which has consistently rejected terrorism ...And these partnerships can only work when we recognize that Muslims are a fundamental part of the American family. In fact, the success of

American Muslims and our determination to guard against any encroachments on their civil liberties is the ultimate rebuke to those who say that we're at war with Islam" (Obama, NDU, 2013).

The relationship between the “terrorist” and “American” labels

Terrorists and specific terrorist groups are labeled as being in direct opposition to freedom, a label critical to the construction of terrorists in direct opposition to America and the labeling of American values. By constructing terrorists in direct opposition to American values, the speakers by default suggest the nature of American values and position their discourse to explicitly label the American value unquestioned. This explicit juxtaposition of American values and terrorism has the effect of pitting anyone who questions stated American values and actions as aligning with the constructed label of “terrorists”. The following are examples of the juxtaposition of attributes associated with the terrorist label and America:

“This is an enemy that thinks its harbors are safe, but they won't be safe forever. This enemy attacked not just our people but all freedom-loving people everywhere in the world” (G.W. second inaugural address).

“Where terrorists offer injustice, disorder and destruction, the United States and its allies stand for freedom, fairness, equality, hope, and opportunity” (Brennan, Harvard, 2011).

“Bin Laden was not a Muslim leader; he was a mass murderer of Muslims.

Indeed, al Qaeda has slaughtered scores of Muslims in many countries, including our own. So his demise should be welcomed by all who believe in peace and human dignity” (Obama, Osama bin Laden’s death, 2011).

“When America is absent, especially from unstable environments, there are consequences. Extremism takes root, our interests suffer, and our security at home is threatened” (Clinton, Benghazi testimony. 2013).

The excerpts above from Bush’s Second Inaugural Address and Obama’s Address to the Nation on Osama bin Laden’s death are noteworthy because they make the dichotomy explicit. Bush suggests that “all freedom-loving people” were attacked on 9/11, meaning that if you don’t feel attacked you don’t love freedom. Similarly, Obama’s remarks suggest that if you don’t welcome the “demise” of Osama bin Laden, by default you do not believe in peace and human dignity.

The “American” label and metaphor of the soldier

Speakers define the “American” label explicitly throughout the corpus, such as in the following examples:

“Witnessed something distinctly American: ordinary citizens rising to the occasion, and responding with extraordinary acts of courage” (G.W., 9/11 5 year anniversary).

“This is what makes America exceptional: It is not just the character of our country — it is the record of our accomplishments. America has a proud history of strong, confident, principled global leadership — a history that has been written by patriots of both parties. That is America at its best,” (Romney, VMI, 2012).

However, metaphor features far more prominently as a tool to construct American identity. Speakers often create brief vignettes about a particular individual or family, presented as metaphors for American values and patriotism. Military troops feature prominently as the subjects of these vignettes, which effectively portrays the soldier as the embodiment of American values and identity. While these vignettes often end on a positive note, when a speaker tells a story of a soldier who dies, the act is described as an honor and ultimate sacrifice for America. The following are two of many examples:

“I think of Lauren Manning, the 9/11 survivor who had severe burns over 80 percent of her body, who said, ‘That’s my reality. I put a Band-Aid on it, literally, and I move on.’ I think of the New Yorkers who filled Times Square the day after an attempted car bomb as if nothing had happened. I think of the proud Pakistani

parents who, after their daughter was invited to the White House, wrote to us, ‘We have raised an American Muslim daughter to dream big and never give up because it does pay off.’ I think of all the wounded warriors rebuilding their lives, and helping other vets to find jobs. I think of the runner planning to do the 2014 Boston Marathon, who said, ‘Next year, you’re going to have more people than ever. Determination is not something to be messed with.’ That’s who the American people are -- determined, and not to be messed with. And now we need a strategy and a politics that reflects this resilient spirit. Our victory against terrorism won’t be measured in a surrender ceremony at a battleship, or a statue being pulled to the ground. Victory will be measured in parents taking their kids to school; immigrants coming to our shores; fans taking in a ballgame; a veteran starting a business; a bustling city street; a citizen shouting her concerns at a President” (Obama, NDU, 2013).

“In closing, I'd like to bring to your attention the gallantry and patriotism of one American who served with distinction in Iraq, a Navy SEAL, who refuses to quit his mission and let the country he loves so well suffer the terrible harm our defeat would entail. Just a few days ago, Petty Officer First Class Mark Robbins' unit was ambushed outside Baghdad. During the ensuing firefight, he spotted an insurgent with an RPG, and immediately stepped out from cover and exposed himself to enemy fire to take out the terrorists before he could fire. He saved the lives of his comrades, but was gravely wounded as he did so. He was shot in the

eye by another insurgent with an AK-47. The bullet exited the back of his head about three inches behind his ear. He was initially knocked unconscious but came to, continued to fight and then, despite the severity of his wound, walked to the evacuation helicopter. He was eventually taken to Landstuhl military hospital in Germany” (McCain, VMI, 2007).

The proactive American

During the Bush administration, Americans were generally portrayed as patriotic and united, but in need of protection by the government, law enforcement and military. With the creation of the Department of Homeland Security at the beginning of the Obama administration, discourse reconstructs Americans as participants in the “counterterrorism strategy” and a necessary element of its success. This construction makes looking for and identifying terrorists and threats the duty of every good American. This discourse of the policing or active citizen is expansive and worth studying in more depth than in this paper. The DHS “If you see something, say something” campaign, “neighborhood watch” campaign, and various tools for citizens to identify and report suspicions, as well as guidelines to which constitutions “suspicious” comprises a complex and separate discourse that contributes to the discourse on national identity. The following examples show this construction of the American citizen:

“And as government works to better secure our homeland, America will continue to depend on the eyes and ears of alert citizens” (G.W., 2002).

“Three years ago, it was an attentive store clerk who told authorities about men trying to duplicate extremist DVDs. This led federal agents to eventually round up a plot to kill American soldiers at the Fort Dix army base here in New Jersey, in New Jersey. Just last month...a passenger saw two employees exchange a bag at the Philadelphia airport that had not been properly screened. That passenger's vigilance ultimately stopped a gun from getting onto the plane” (Napolitano, 2009).

“There are four layers, and the place we start is the work of engaging the American people in our collective effort...For too long we've treated the public as a liability to be protected rather than an asset in our nation's collective security. And this approach, unfortunately, has allowed confusion, anxiety, and fear to linger” (Napolitano, 2009).

“We face a networked enemy. We must meet it with a networked response. The job of securing our nation against the threat of terrorism is a large one, and it may never be totally completed, but we have a much larger chance at success if we strengthen our own networks by enlisting the talents and energies of Americans” (Napolitano, 2009).

“And when we suffer tragedies overseas, as we have, the number of Americans applying to the Foreign Service actually increases. That tells us everything we need to know about what kind of patriots I'm talking about. They do ask what they can do for their country and America is stronger for it” (Clinton, Benghazi testimony, 2013).

The legalities of Americanism and terrorism

The discourse on terrorism and American values shifts from one of war and good vs. evil common during the Bush administration to one of right and wrong, marked in the Obama administration, by incorporating a legal discourse. The legal discourse makes a number of assumptions, chiefly that terrorism operates within the confines of laws – laws associated with American values—and that terrorists can also be considered criminals. Effectively, then, terrorism becomes something controllable with laws. Terrorism becomes a part of the American legal system, a system heightened within the discourse of terrorism to an idealized level of American values. This legal discourse appears to have been incorporated into the general discourses of terrorism and American national identity when the existence and closure of the Guantanamo Bay detention facility became a public and political topic of debate. Note the following examples:

“As the President has said many times, we are at war with al-Qa’ida. In an indisputable act of aggression, al-Qa’ida attacked our nation and killed nearly 3,000 innocent people. And as we were reminded just last weekend, al-Qa’ida

seeks to attack us again. Our ongoing armed conflict with al-Qa'ida stems from our right—recognized under international law—to self-defense” (Brennan, Harvard, 2011).

“As a people, as a nation, we cannot—and we must not—succumb to the temptation to set aside our laws and our values when we face threats to our security, including and especially from groups as depraved as al-Qa'ida. We're better than that. We're better than them. We're Americans,” (Brennan, Harvard, 2011).

“This is not only a terrorist syndicate, it is a criminal enterprise” (Clinton, Benghazi testimony, 2013).

“We were attacked on 9/11. Within a week, Congress overwhelmingly authorized the use of force. Under domestic law, and international law, the United States is at war with al Qaeda, the Taliban, and their associated forces. We are at war with an organization that right now would kill as many Americans as they could if we did not stop them first. So this is a just war -- a war waged proportionally, in last resort, and in self-defense.” (Obama, NDU, 2013).

“When that judge sentenced Mr. Reid, the shoe bomber, he went on to point to the American flag that flew in the courtroom. “That flag,” he said, “will fly there

long after this is all forgotten. That flag still stands for freedom,” (Obama, NDU, 2013).

Pronouns, the inclusive “we” and whole-for-part labels

Three features combine to create the qualities and attributes of American identity and delineate who’s included: the possessive pronoun “our”, the inclusive “we”, and whole-for-part use of “America” and “the United States”. The pronoun “we”, used frequently in each speech, overwhelmingly refers to all Americans. When “we” excluded the American public it referred to the administration or government at large with the purpose of saying what the government should or will do for the public. Speakers used first person pronouns rarely, but with the effect of brining the speaker closer to the public in a show of empathy or camaraderie. The second person pronoun “you”, used even less often, in the context of these speeches (addresses to the American public), created the effect of the speaker referring to each individual American and every American simultaneously. The most commonly used pronoun was the possessive “our”, which, when used in conjunction with the inclusive “we” and whole-for-part “American” label, gave possession of the object to the entire American public. Interestingly, when the speaker discusses “soldiers” or “troops” they are almost always the object of the possessive “our” – objectifying them as a possession of the entire American public. The following examples demonstrate the relationship between “we” and “our”, as well as how the discourse uses “we” and “our” to make the troops a possession of all Americans:

“We meet today -- again -- as a nation engaged in what will be a “long war” -- a conflict that has put our military on a path of near continuous change for the past five years” (Rumsfeld, SASC, 2007).

“We all respect the sacrifices made by our soldiers. We all mourn the losses they have suffered in this war. But let us honor them by doing all we can to ensure their sacrifices were not made in vain. Let us show an appropriate humility by recognizing that so little is asked of us compared to the burdens we imposed on them, and let us show just a small, but significant measure of their courage, resolve and patriotism by putting our country's interests before every personal or political consideration” (McCain, VMI, 2007).

As “we” and “our” work to include the public in the elite discourse, the whole-for-part use and personification of “America” and “the United States” further incorporates the entire public into actions that, in actuality, a small section of the government, unusually politicians or military, actually carry out. This feature takes the discursive construction of American identity further than defining and labeling “Americans” to giving that identity the agency to act. Speakers utilize this feature rampantly and continuously throughout the entire corpus. The following examples represent a few of many uses of the whole-for-part feature:

“America is going forward, and as we do so, we must remain keenly aware of the threats to our country” (G.W. 2001).

“Our message to them is clear: No matter how long it takes, America will find you, and we will bring you to justice” (G.W. 9/11 anniversary)

“America has sent her soldiers off to war and they must be supported at all costs until we achieve victory or until our political leaders decide to bring them home” (Sanchez, 2007).

“The United States will be there to stand with the Iraqi people as they navigate those challenges to build a stronger and more prosperous nation” (Panetta, 2011).

“Tonight, I can report to the American people and to the world that the United States has conducted an operation that killed Osama bin Laden, the leader of al Qaeda, and a terrorist who’s responsible for the murder of thousands of innocent men, women, and children” (Obama, 2011)

“The torch America carries is one of decency and hope. It is not America’s torch alone. But it is America’s duty – and honor – to hold it high enough that all the world can see its light” (Romney, 2012).

“America does not take strikes when we have the ability to capture individual terrorists; our preference is always to detain, interrogate, and prosecute. America cannot take strikes wherever we choose; our actions are bound by consultations with partners, and respect for state sovereignty,” (Obama, 2013).

Intertextuality, interdiscursivity and historical positioning

References to historical texts, quotes from historical figures, and specific references to the current historical landscape feature prominently throughout the corpus. The selection of texts and historical figures referenced suggest the intended construction of post-9/11 America needs a particular understanding of America during previous wars and challenging times, embedding post-9/11 America within a certain historical context. Over the course of the past 12 years, 9/11 and the war are referred to in their historical context, giving the impression that they are over and have taken their place in history. Pearl Harbor, the fall of the Berlin wall, World Wars One and Two, and especially the Cold War are events and times in history that 9/11 and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are compared to, also suggesting a similarity to American then and now. Presidents Kennedy, Eisenhower and Lincoln, General Marshall, Winston Churchill, and James Madison are all quoted commenting on America or one of the aforementioned historical events. The post-9/11 discourses thereby evokes multiple historical discourses of war and tragedy, as well as the triumph over such events by virtue of distinct American qualities. Incorporating these discourses makes post-9/11 American appear to be both a part of history and a unique moment in history. The below examples show the historical intertextual and interdiscursive nature of the post-9/11 discourse:

“This is the broader definition of liberty that motivated the Homestead Act, the Social Security Act, and the G.I. Bill of Rights” (G.W. 2nd Inaugural)

“The rulers of outlaw regimes can know that we still believe as Abraham Lincoln did: Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves; and, under the rule of a just God, cannot long retain it” (G.W. 2nd Inaugural Address)

“Despite the sinking of the Lusitania in 1915 and continued German harassment of American shipping, the United States did not enter the First World War until two years later. Despite Nazi Germany's repeated violations of the Versailles Treaty and provocations throughout the mid-1930s, the Western democracies did not take action until 1939. The U.S. government did not act against the growing threat from Imperial Japan until it became all too evident at Pearl Harbor. And, tragically, for all the language of war spoken before September 11th, this country simply was not on war footing” (Rice, 2004).

“I am reminded of what President Eisenhower once said about another long struggle -- the Cold War -- comments that seem to have resonance today. ‘We face a hostile ideology -- global in scope. . . ruthless in purpose, and insidious in method. . . to meet it successfully we must carry forward steadily, surely, and without complaint the burdens of a prolonged and complex struggle -- with liberty the stake’” (Rumsfeld, SASC, 2007).

“As I said, we will use all lawful tools at our disposal, and that includes authorities under the renewed Patriot Act” (Brennan, Harvard, 2011).

“Sir Winston Churchill once said of George Marshall: ‘He ... always fought victoriously against defeatism, discouragement, and disillusion.’ That is the role our friends want America to play again. And it is the role we must play” (Romney, 2012).

“From the Civil War to our struggle against fascism, on through the long twilight struggle of the Cold War, battlefields have changed and technology has evolved. But our commitment to constitutional principles has weathered every war, and every war has come to an end,” (Obama, NDU, 2013).

Within the larger historical context created by the above references, the discourse constructs post-9/11 America as a nation defined in response to 9/11 and by the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Additionally, the frequent personification of “history” in a way similar to “America” removes a degree of responsibility for the wars from the United States by suggesting the historical necessity of America’s actions. Note the following examples:

“History has called America and our allies to action, and it is both our responsibility and our privilege to fight freedom's fight” (G.W. 2002 state of the union).

“Winning this war will require the determined efforts of a unified country, and we must put aside our differences and work together to meet the test that history has given us. We will defeat our enemies. We will protect our people. And we will lead the 21st century into a shining age of human liberty” (G.W., 9/11 anniversary).

“Through this remarkable chapter in the history of the United States and Iraq, we have met our responsibility. Now, it’s time to turn the page” (Obama, 2010).

“And long after the current messengers of hate have faded from the world’s memory, alongside the brutal despots, and deranged madmen, and ruthless demagogues who litter history -- the flag of the United States will still wave from small-town cemeteries to national monuments, to distant outposts abroad. And that flag will still stand for freedom” (Obama, NDU, 2013).

“Our systematic effort to dismantle terrorist organizations must continue. But this war, like all wars, must end. That’s what history advises. That’s what our democracy demands” (Obama, 2013).

9/11 and America’s collective memory

9/11 is named and used as a uniting memory belonging to the nation collectively. It represents an idyllic display of patriotism and unity. Discourse focused on the events of

9/11 constructs the event as a strong collective memory despite the fact that the actual events affected a small portion of the country. In addition to the inclusive “we” and possessive “our” when talking about details of the events, 9/11 figures in the discourse as a historical marker for the collective – one version of American existed pre-9/11, and a different version post-9/11. Considering most Americans did not witness the event, talking about the details as if all Americans witnessed them and participated enables those who weren’t there to share the experience. In some instances, speakers refer to the time immediately after 9/11 with nostalgia for a time when the country was united. The following examples illustrate the role of 9/11 as a collective memory:

“On 9/11, our nation saw the face of evil” (G.W. 9/11 5 year anniversary).

“For America, 9/11 was more than a tragedy -- it changed the way we look at the world” (G.W. 9/11 5 year anniversary).

“On September 11, 2001, in our time of grief, the American people came together. We offered our neighbors a hand, and we offered the wounded our blood. We reaffirmed our ties to each other, and our love of community and country. On that day, no matter where we came from, what God we prayed to, or what race or ethnicity we were, we were united as one American family.”
(Obama, 2011).

“So what this range of threats shows is that while the shock and pain and images of 9/11 stay with us, the terror threat is even more decentralized, networked and adapted than on 9/11. The terrorists in Mumbai, for example, made use of GPS devices, satellite phones, mapping websites, like Google Earth, and even live cable TV” (Napolitano, 2009).

“In the early days after 9/11, our country was united in a single purpose: to find the terrorists bent on our destruction and eliminate the threat they posed to us” (McCain, 2007).

“The images of 9/11 are seared into our national memory -- hijacked planes cutting through a cloudless September sky; the Twin Towers collapsing to the ground; black smoke billowing up from the Pentagon; the wreckage of Flight 93 in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, where the actions of heroic citizens saved even more heartbreak and destruction. And yet we know that the worst images are those that were unseen to the world. The empty seat at the dinner table. Children who were forced to grow up without their mother or their father. Parents who would never know the feeling of their child’s embrace. Nearly 3,000 citizens taken from us, leaving a gaping hole in our hearts” (Obama, 2011).

The presentation of these speeches contributes to the collective significance of the text features. With the exception of Hilary Clinton’s Benghazi testimony and General

Sanchez's speech, the speeches fall into the genre of political speech. Given the publicity of Clinton's testimony and Sanchez's speech, as well as the public profile of both figures, political constraints likely factor into the discourse. Two significant factors of the political genre contribute to the discursive construction of American national identity in the post-9/11 official discourse. First, the speakers represent the government or military in an official capacity, speaking from a position of authority regardless of the topic. Second, with a broad audience, generally the entire American public, information does not go into detail. Rather, speakers address topics at the surface-level, enabling sweeping generalizations in a forum that makes generalizations appear natural. These genre characteristics position speakers as sources of authority on the subjects of terrorism and America while enabling them to speak on behalf of Americans.

The analysis of official post-9/11 rhetoric over the past 12 years reveals a number of factors in the discursive construct of post-9/11 America. With the insertion of terrorism and the terrorist label into the discourse on American national identity, an American label was reconstructed in opposition to what government officials defined as terrorists. In addition to naming and labeling strategies, two additional features assisted this construction of national identity: the metaphor of the soldier, which present the American soldier both as an extension of the nation as a whole and as the ideal American; and the reconstruction of Americans from fearful and in need of protection, as in the Bush administration, to proactively looking for terrorists in their communities as a part of America's counterterrorism strategy. The insertion of legal discourse into the post-9/11

discourse appears to legitimize the government's understanding of terrorism and America's collective opposition to terrorism according to the rule of law, which the discourse associates with American values. Following the line of reason within the legal discourse, if an American questions the legalities of the treatment or prosecution of terrorists, they question American values. Possessive pronouns, inclusive "we", and whole-for-part use of "America" prove powerful in creating a collective identity with the power to act and emote collectively. The discourse constructs 9/11 as a collective American memory, imbuing people not directly influenced by the events with memories, sentiments and sensations making 9/11 an event that marked and remembered much like the assassination of John F. Kennedy. The historicizing of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, both within a selected context of American history and as the historical calling of America in the 21st century, legitimizes the wars while propagating American exceptionalism.

ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS

In responses to the first interview question, “What, in your opinion, does it mean to be an American?” three themes emerged: citizenship, relevance of America’s history, and use of standard phrases and buzzwords.

Citizenship was the most commonly cited criteria for defining an American; however, only two interviewees cited citizenship as the only criteria. Interviewees suggested citizenship as the most basic criteria, expanding the definition of American with common definitions associated with America in popular culture and official or political rhetoric, including the speeches analyzed in this study. Interviewees emphasized the importance of freedom to choose an individual life path and the government, through democratic elections, as both a right and desire of Americans. While interviewees explained the nature of “freedom”, they often indicated their awareness of using a standard definition by rolling their eyes before continuing, using their fingers to make air quotes, or saying, “you know” or another qualifying phrase. The response below demonstrates this awareness:

“I don’t know, the right to choose your own path, I’d say. There’s endless possibilities and you kind of define who you are by the path you choose. Freedom is the easiest answer” (Interview 11).

The history of America, beginning with the diversity of colonies, factored into the current definition of Americans. Interviewees who mentioned history and immigration suggested that immigrants to America must accept and understand America’s history. The below examples illustrates the presence of citizenship, qualification of the standard “freedom” phrase, and the importance of history:

“First and foremost you need to be a citizen of the United States. You have to buy in, in order to even want to be a citizen you need to buy in to the whole American philosophy and concept and dream, democracy and freedom and all that. So I think that certainly is engrained in the definition of what an American is, you know? You got to look at the 200 years plus of history and say that’s part of being an American so. Even though, you know, me coming from an immigrant family, you know, you still have to buy into those ideals whether ugly or not ugly, but, you know what I’m saying?” (Interview 9).

None of the interviewees mentioned a shared culture or multiple cultures, whether religion, holidays, politically, etc. when defining “American”.

The constructive plural

The use of “we” and “our” as well as expressions about unity and acting together in reference to the nation contribute to the construction of a “we-group” and corresponding national identity (Wodak, 1999). Largely absent from the responses to the interview question directly asking about American identity or the “we-group”, these linguistic acts characterize the responses to questions that raise the connections between terrorism and America. The following excerpts show responses to the interview question “In your opinion, what was the motivation behind the September 11th attacks?” First and foremost, the use of “we” and “our” in connection with “America” and “Americans” demonstrate a “we-group” inclusive of Americans and exclusive of everyone else, an exclusion provoked by the presence of terrorists and specifically terrorists responsible for the attacks on September 1, 2001. Additionally, the interviewees mention a common American culture or Christian religion as a reason for terrorists to attack the United States or for others to dislike America. These features identified as common to America in the discourse on terrorism are noticeably absent from the first question when interviewees discussed American identity exclusively.

“Uh, in my opinion I believe that Osama bin Laden is a tool bag and that he wanted to kill a bunch of Americans and get national recognition for his terrorist cell, al-Qaeda, and he was pretty successful at it. So I’m sure that his strategy and motivation behind it was to get rid of the quote unquote infidels because we don’t believe the same things as him and we’re fighting against everything that he

believes in. So for him killing that many Americans was probably a sign of his power” (Interview 3).

“They wanted to, aside from just being terrorists, they wanted to specifically hurt America to shake us so that we would stop pursuing the things that make us American. Of course they had their religious ideals or their ideology from the groups they belong to and the things they already prescribe to but more than that to make a statement saying “look what we can do to these people” and to attempt to break us” (Interview 5).

“I think, you know, intolerance by these al-Qaeda fighters against Americans and I know they say we’re repressing them because of money and whatnot, or we’re keeping them down economically, but I don’t know, I just think its total intolerance of a Christian nation from these non-Christian people” (Interview 8).

“Uhm, obviously it’s religious people that don’t believe what we do and have been taught that we are bad or wrong and that we need to be punished or destroyed, so, um, I want to say ignorance, maybe, but that’s not really, they don’t think they’re ignorant and maybe they are right. I mean, who’s to say? Maybe intolerance, especially religious and cultural intolerance” (Interview 1).

Emotional attachment to America

When asked “How, if at all, have your thoughts or feelings about America changed since September 11, 2001?” interviewees again used “we”, “our” and “us” to construct an American “we-group”. Additionally, open pride and emotional attachment to America as a nation characterize the majority of interviews.

“It hasn’t changed but it’s made me value the US a bit more. So, I don’t know, just seeing how these innocent people died and how all of these families lost a relative or whatever, it just makes me value being an American even more, I mean, I love my country so, so much, more than anything, and it was devastating to see what happened and even these other bombs in Boston in April” (Interview 6).

“I still think, despite Obama, America is the best nation on this earth and if anything I love our nation more, although I’m disgusted where it’s going politically” (Interview 8).

“It really hasn’t. I always loved America” (Interview 4).

In conjunction with the emotive expressions towards America, the responses to the aforementioned question incorporate explicit references to American patriotism as a value and a preference to America over other countries. Note the excerpts below:

“Well, besides growing up and learning more about our civilization, not too much has changed. I did like how everyone kind of united as a nation when all that happened. I saw a lot more American flags after that point. Maybe I didn’t see more but I realized there were more. I realized patriotism on a higher degree than I had noticed before” (Interview 11).

“I appreciate being an American more but I also, I know no place is perfect and every place has it’s quirks but I definitely, I like to live here versus other places. That’s not to say I don’t like other countries, like England or whatever, but I think it’s very cemented, the ideology that I subscribe to in my family and those ideals are important in the American sense of patriotism, you know, that kind of thing” (Interview 5).

“Personally, I think America stepped it up and honestly I wanted to go get the people who done wrong and I don’t think that’s a bad thing. I think it’s a good thing and I mean a lot of people banded together and took a common stance and a common interest. A lot of people enlisted, reenlisted and I think patriotism kind of went through the roof” (Interview 7).

The narrative of 9/11

The use of narrative “allows for the replacement of self-as-narrator with another character (self-as-other)” (Clary-Lemon, 2010). When asked how they reacted to the

events on September 11, 2001, interviewees generally replied in two ways: either they narrated the events of that day as they experienced them in great detail, or they said they couldn't comprehend the event because they didn't feel directly affected. The narratives expressed emotions of fear, surprise, disbelief and sadness, and some interviewees who were in high school on 9/11 said they couldn't comprehend the significance of the event until years later. The combination of these narratives with other references to 9/11 suggests that for many interviewees 9/11 marked a moment in their development, as well as a pivotal moment for the nation. In the following example, interviewee 2 narrates the details of the day:

“I was extremely shocked. I was in 10th grade; none of our classrooms had cable television. It was all being re-networked so we barely had internet. It was on the radio. There was an announcement made over the PA system that there had been an attack in Washington and New York and instantly I thought a terrorist attack, maybe a shooting or something like that. I was just shocked to hear that something so massive could happen. The first announcement was really vague that there had been an attack, so I thought maybe a lone wolf shooter or I guess, technically, by my definition that would still be a terrorist if they were attacking a political institution of the United States, but more of a crazed gunman type of thing is what I first thought. I was thinking back to the, there was an attack in 1998 on the Capitol Building, a shooting where someone I think killed two capitol police officers” (Interview 2).

When asked how safe the United States is from an attack like 9/11, the same interviewee discussed 9/11 as a historically influential moment:

“The fact that [9/11] was such an out of the blue game changing event means that there will definitely be another type of something that we can’t anticipate, or can’t forecast that’s so out of the realm of what we’ve seen before... Everyone compares it to Pearl Harbor. That happened, so I think that we’re safer than we were then but to be able to forecast something that’s a game changing event is pretty much impossible. It’s going to change your paradigm, change everything about it” (Interview 2).

Another interviewee connects the event to personal experience by interpreting the event through the significance of a dream the night before September 11, 2001?

“I remember exactly where I was on September 11th. I was in English class. I was 14. It was my freshman year in high school and it was really weird because that night, well, I usually don’t dream often but I had a very vivid dream the night before and it’s something I’ll always remember. I had a dream of the Virgin Mary crying tears of blood and I remember when that happened it kind of freaked me out. I was like, “what does that mean?” so when I found out what happened, luckily I didn’t have any parents or anything working at the pentagon or the world

trade center but it freaked me out and it was very sad to see those images on TV of people jumping from the building and so many people were killed. It was terrible, but it did have a profound impact. It's something I'll always remember. Sometimes my memories aren't so clear but that will always be clear. I'll always remember where I was" (Interview 6).

When asked if his thoughts or feelings about America changed after 9/11, an interviewee who said the actual event didn't personally affect discussed how the changes in the world that resulted from 9/11 influenced his development from adolescence to adulthood. He said:

"Well so the question is kind of wrapped up in my growing as an adult so it's kind of hard to disassociate what it is to kind of become an adult at the same time there is this big change going on, but I think the event itself did probably produce some kind of soul searching, you know, what does it mean to be an American or a patriot as opposed to a terrorist?" (Interviewee 10).

Soldiers and first responders

Although the military and soldiers did not feature as prominently in the interviews as in the speeches, none of the interviewees criticized the military or troops. Rather, they identified members of the military positively and suggested that serving in the military is an ultimate display of patriotism. Interviewees identified public support for the military

following 9/11 as one of the positive effects of an event otherwise interpreted negatively. The following examples illustrate the raising of military above the average American citizen based on their representation of patriotism:

"A lot of people before [9/11] I don't feel like really supported the military or people, fire fighters and first responders and I think that afterwards the initial outpouring of support helped not just financially for things that were getting stood up, like scholarship funds and things like that, but overall it kind of brought them together for maybe a short period of time" (Interview 3).

"Well I'm, obviously having served in the military, and I'm not trying to put myself higher than anyone, but that already shows a level of sacrifice and a level of maybe dedication to the country, and I'm not saying I'm any better, I'm not, but I'm just saying that I chose to serve. I'm here in government choosing to serve. I could certainly be in the private sector and probably making more money with less stress... Never before at sporting events did people stand up and cheer for the military. You know, never before was there an outpouring for the troops that went to Iraq and Afghanistan and even the first responders too, and deservedly so, they're heroes. So I was glad to see American recognize and rally around the armed forces and first responders. I was glad to see that patriotism there" (Interview 9).

"I mean a lot of people banded together and took a common stance and a common interest. A lot of people enlisted, reenlisted and I think patriotism kind of went through the roof" (Interview 7).

Criticisms

Although none of the interviewees exhibited negative sentiments towards America conceptually, some of them, particularly interviewees 10 and 12, vocalized criticism of the American government. They continued to use plural first person pronouns in conjunction with "America" while criticizing the government and government actions. When discussing how his view of America changed post-9/11, interviewee 12 responded:

"Probably if nothing else I have more of a respect for other people and why they, why they're so opinionated about the United States and why they dislike our government so much, why they dislike our military and why they dislike the way we abuse the power we have in the world. More of an understanding of just the fact that we, how unbelievably hypocritical our government is, well, obviously now in terms of it domestically but also just everything we do abroad is just really hypocritical" (Interview 12).

Use of the indeterminate "they", not referencing terrorists, Middle Easterners or any other specific group, creates a buffer between the interviewee and the criticism, suggesting a hesitation to personally associate with the criticism.

When asked how safe America is from another attack like 9/11, responses focused on criticism of other Americans and fear of attacks originating from within the United States, rather than from al-Qaeda and similar groups. The shift in focus from international terrorism to domestic violence present in the interviews also characterized a shift in focus to domestic violence as the Obama administration replaced the Bush administration.

The below examples characterize Americans as preferring convenience to security:

“I think each one makes you a little more safe but I think the more people complain about like checking bags at airports and body scanning, I think it’s going to decrease security and decrease awareness and then opens us back up for other attacks. Security is not about what is easy for you, what’s convenient. I think people are going to get on the convenience and that’s going to open us back up for another attack” (Interview 7).

“Probably not safe. Because of the security practices we have now and how Americans are typically more worried about convenience and speed when they’re doing things and they’re not as concerned about security, so going through security and things like that. Initially when they were installing and implementing the body scan machines there was an initial outcry of “that’s not right” and “you’re infringing on my civil liberties by x-raying me and seeing me without my clothes on,” which to me, it doesn’t really matter. They really don’t care and

they're not even in the same room as you so they don't actually get to see your face but and so I think people are more concerned with that than they are with their actual safety and it's going to take another attack to wake up you know the American population" (Interview 3).

In response to the same question, interviewees said that another terrorist attack was inevitable; however, interviewees who brought up domestic violence said it outweighs the threat of external violence. While that does not translate exactly as criticism of the American public, the sentiment suggests the belief that within the American public the interviewees identify with exist Americans who do not fit into the "we-group". The following excerpts represent the attitude towards international and domestic threats characteristic of all interviewees:

"I don't know. I would think, I would think from large scale attacks we're a lot safer than we were prior but on the other hand, hearing what we've heard about the NSA, at what cost are we much safer? I think we're safer, I think we have to be worried now about like, in my opinion it's lone shooters and what not. That seems to be our big problem, just these one or two people who are shooting up a bunch of other people in malls and schools but large scale terrorist attacks, I don't think there's going to be one any time soon, but what do I know" (Interview 8).

“I don’t think we’re safe at all. I mean, I think the bombings in Boston show that it won’t be, maybe, you know an al-Qaeda franchise style attack but it’ll be a homegrown terrorist attack. I think it’s bound to happen. And al-Qaeda hasn’t stopped trying either. I mean, they’ve got branches that are still trying. I mean look what happened in Libya. Even though that’s not the home land it’s American property. I don’t think we’re safe at all so I think it’s just a matter of time until there’s another attack on American soil. It might be similar to Boston where it’s homegrown terrorism, you know, we’re not safe at all” (Interview 9).

“Most of it is probably domestic. Obviously, all the attacks since September 11th have been domestic acts of terrorism and most of them have not been acts of terror in the sense of jihad, it’s just been like oh, I’m pissed off, my life sucks, I’m going to kill a bunch of people for no apparent reason. I have no fear of getting killed in a terrorist attack by anyone practicing Islam or for any other reason” (Interview 12).

Interviews show an awareness of buzzwords such as “freedom” and “patriotic” associated with Americans, however interviewees don’t present an alternative understanding of a national identity – no mentioned of shared culture or beliefs. Responses that directly address “what it means to be an American” lack the use of inclusive plural first person pronouns that characterize constructive strategies to form a “we-group”. This linguistic

strategy, however, became apparent when interviewees discussed “others”, whether terrorists, Middle Easterners, or an indeterminate other marked by use of the indeterminate “they”. However, when asked about future threats, interviewees revealed criticisms towards Americans and expressed relative certainty that future attacks would come domestically from an American – consistent with the shifting emphasis from international terrorists to homegrown-extremists characteristic of the transition from the Bush administration to Obama administration. References to a common American history and specific historical events suggest interviewees feel united by a common past but not a common future.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

This study presents only a small sample of popular discourse on the topic. However, it demonstrates the necessity of including popular discourse from everyday life in addition to official and elite discourse when studying national identity. The expansive nature of national identity presents challenges to research aiming to understand its discursive construction at any particular time, but the presence of terrorism in America's national discourse will likely continue. While I did not have the time or resources to conduct a larger study, a more in depth study would yield constructive insights to post-9/11 America, particularly the millennial generation.

The primary purpose of this study was to gain insight into the influence of a discourse on terrorism in the post-9/11 construction of American national identity. Using a critical discourse analytic method heavily influenced by social constructionism, I aimed to understand this particular discourse through Fairclough's three levels of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA): lexicogrammatically, intertextually and interdiscursively, and as a sociocultural context.

My lexicogrammatical analysis, informed by Wodak et al.'s (1999) study and Fairclough (1992), draws the conclusion that the inclusive "we", plural pronouns, and personification of whole-for-part use of "America" and "the United States" act as strong linguistic constructive strategies of sameness. Use of the inclusive "we" and plural

pronouns feature in both official authoritative discourse and unofficial discourse. However, during the interviews participants increased the employment of these constructive strategies when talking about terrorism and the Middle East, versus when talking exclusively about America and Americans. My intertextual and interdiscursive analysis suggests a historicizing of 9/11 and the proceeding wars, constructed through specific references to the historical significance of those events, as well as through references to historical quotes by individuals such as Abraham Lincoln, texts such as the constitution, and events such as Pearl Harbor. These factors indicate that Americans feel most American when confronted with the idea of something un-American. Otherwise, there appears to be minimal cohesion or sense of a collective American identity; many interviewees reinforced vague labels and stereotypes of Americanism used in official discourse, while others, though fewer, emphasized citizenship. A cultural association with the nation, which contributes to the formation of a nation's identity, was absent from both official and unofficial discourses.

Thus, while this study understands national identity as dynamic and fluid, it also suggests that the discursive construction of identity is reactive to other elements of discourse. In official discourse, the images of 9/11 construct America's historical significance. Similarly, in unofficial discourse, 9/11 marks a developmental moment or a shift in worldview. Both perspectives suggest America's national identity feels most tangible in the wake of tragedy or confrontation. To the extent that America's national identity post-9/11 depends on confrontation from a distinctly non-American "other" there exists a dichotomy between notions of terrorism and Americanism. Applying Wodak and

Meyer's assertion that the latent and dominant ideologies CDA seeks often appear in metaphors and analogies, the metaphors used throughout the sample of official discourse to provide examples of Americanism exclusively depict the patriot showing courage in the face of danger, often in the form of terrorism. The discourse constructs this particular version of an American as both the ideal and the norm. The exclusive and excessive use of this metaphor begs the question, what represents the ideal American when there isn't an enemy to confront? The lexicogrammatical features and interdiscursivity within and across official and unofficial discourses constructs a superficial American identity dependent on the presence of the terrorist "other", which indicates a relationship between how official discourse constructs national identity and how popular discourse reconstructs it. While popular discourse often criticizes blatant political discourse, that critical lens does not turn toward the essence and identity of America.

The social implications of a nation that feels united in the face of an "other" but otherwise shares a minimal sense of commonality may include the construction of a reality hostile or fearful towards outsiders, while also constructing a cohesive American identity only as deep as that fear. The social constructionist perspective that a particular social understanding of the world leads to different social actions suggests the possibility that the discursive reconstruction of America's national identity post-9/11 incites particular actions and behaviors. Americans now live in a nation where, from 2008 to 2010, the percentage of Americans who believe President Obama is a Muslim not only increased from 12 percent to 18 percent, but those who believe he is a Muslim

overwhelmingly disapprove of his job performance (Pew Research Center, 2010). Congress, a body elected by Americans to represent their interests, votes and behaves polarized to such an extent that it appears they represent entirely different populations. While they all, at least in theory, represent Americans, the fact that when asked about value topics such as social and economic issues and government, the average difference between Republicans and Democrats stands at 18-percent, almost double the difference from surveys before 2002 (Pew Research Center, 2013), draws attention to the deep division in American ideologies and the collective sense of national identity. Since 1982, the ideological middle of Congress (determined by voting record), decreased from 75 percent to .7 percent (Cilliza, 2014). These divisions comprise America's reality, a reality that language and the use of language in daily interactions both reflects and constructs. While many discourses contribute to the construction of America's national identity, this study has shown that an unstable construction of American identity in a post-9/11 discourse of "us" vs. "them" in authoritative official discourse influences popular discourse's post-9/11 limited ability to construct sameness outside the bounds of patriotism. As the millennial generation, which grew up shrouded in a post-9/11 ideology that inherently mistrusts "the other", continues to become adults and leaders in an increasingly polarized country, the extent to which more than a decade dominated by a discourse of war influences the nation's identity will continue to be a topic in need of attention because America's identity will continue to change.

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