

Crisis Thought

Edwin Kent Morris

Dissertation submitted to the faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State
University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
In
Social, Political, Ethical, and Cultural Thought

Francois Debrix, Chair
Timothy W. Luke
Scott G. Nelson
Patricia M. Nickel

September 12, 2016
Blacksburg, VA

Keywords: crisis, crisis thought, politics, media, security

Crisis Thought

Edwin Kent Morris

ABSTRACT

Crisis thought is an idea that gives a name to and accounts for some of the problematics of the sign 'crisis' in political, social, cultural, and economic discourse. Specifically, crisis thought is a discursive formation, a concept used loosely here to refer to an assemblage of signs such as 'anxiety' or 'fear' that evoke or invoke similar, but inaccurate connotations as 'crisis' in political and everyday usage. The general question this study grapples with is why political, social, cultural, and economic 'crises' are often recognized and, yet, are seemingly unrecognized, unaddressed, or accepted as a basic part of political and ordinary life. This study focuses on the mobilization of crisis thought by the 24/7 news media and throughout politics in the United States. Working outside of economic and Marxist traditions of crisis studies, this study focuses on the effects of crisis thought by way of a critical, interpretive, and interdisciplinary approach. There are two goals of this project. The first is to offer some of the linkages between crisis thought, security, and liberalism. The second goal is to examine through various examples and vignettes how, where, and why crisis thought manifests itself in US politics and in ordinary life. Some topics addressed in this study include: news media, infrastructure, police militarization, mass shootings, US electoral politics, and the alleged US politics of crisis. In the final analysis, this study suggests that 24/7 news media and political mobilizations of crisis thought paradoxically help secure the ontological security of subjectivities as linked to securing security and the *logos* of liberalism. This study illuminates a peculiar aspect about liberal capitalist democracies: the (re)production of a myriad of crises and, thus, crisis thought, in order to perpetuate itself.

Crisis Thought

Edwin Kent Morris

GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the effects of crisis thought by way of a critical, interpretive, and interdisciplinary approach. There are two goals of this project. The first is to offer some of the linkages between crisis thought, security, and liberalism. The second goal is to examine through various examples and vignettes how, where, and why crisis thought manifests itself in US politics and in ordinary life. Some topics addressed in this study include: news media, infrastructure, police militarization, mass shootings, and the alleged US politics of crisis. In the final analysis, this study suggests that 24/7 news media and political mobilizations of crisis thought paradoxically help secure the ontological security of subjectivities as linked to securing security and the *logos* of liberalism. This study illuminates a peculiar aspect about liberal capitalist democracies: the (re)production of a myriad of crises and, thus, crisis thought, in order to perpetuate itself.

For Tara and our two cats Hobbes and Locke.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Preliminary research for this project began in mid-2013. However, work on this project did not commence until April 2014. Elements of Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 were published as “You Can’t Spell Crisis Without ISIS: Comments on The Return of Geopolitics,” in *Spectra: The ASPECT Journal*, vol. 4, no. 1 (2015). Drafts of Chapters 1 and 2 were also presented at the International Studies Association (ISA) North and South conferences in Baltimore, MD and Richmond, VA, respectively, in the fall of 2014. Drafts of Chapter 1 and 2 were also presented at the ASPECT conference in Blacksburg, VA in the spring of 2015. A draft of Chapter 5 was presented at the ASPECT conference in Blacksburg, VA in the spring of 2016.

I would like to now, exhaustively, extend my thanks and gratitude to the following family members, friends, colleagues, associates, committee members, institutions, places, and things for their contributions to this study:

My wife Tara and our cats Hobbes and Locke. My father Gus. My departed mother Kay. My 96-year old grandmother, Hilda. My departed grandmother Betty (thank you for the house, it certainly changed everything). My great-grandfather Robert Lee Kent (for inspiration). And the Brown family: Teresa, Randal, and Ashley.

Most gracious thanks go to the members of the Dissertation Committee: Tim, Scott, and Patricia – thank you all for everything you have done during my time at Virginia Tech (VT). The collective impact of each of you on my life is inexplicable. My sincerest and deepest thanks goes to the chair of the Committee, Francois Debrix, and all the work, effort, and advice he provided throughout this difficult process. Thank you, Francois, for being my chair, and for your continued support throughout the ASPECT program.

Thanks are also extended to several past and present faculty members of the Department of Political Science and ASPECT affiliated faculty at VT. Of special note, Professor Edward Weisband – thank you for believing in me all those years ago. My thanks also go out to the following: Hult. Walcott. Brians. Rich. Lavine. Thadani. Saffle. Satterwhite. Ryan. Torres. Special thanks to old and new faculty at the Department of Political Science at Radford University as well: M Hrezo. Waggaman. P Tan. My thanks also go to the staff of the aforementioned departments and programs at VT: Karen, Sybil, Kim, Phoebe, and Tamara – thank you all for your help with the red tape over the years.

Finally, I would like to thank friends old and new who understood when it was time for me to be left alone: Sascha. Tyler. Ryan. Jennifer. Holly. Rikky. Stephanie. Christian. Issac. Katie. Francine. Alec. Mary. Will, Catherine, and Arya. Kristina. Catherine V. Katie and Adam. Abe. Jaeger. Davis and Lyndsey. Amanda and Cole. Nick and Ashley. Jared and Jessica. Cooper and Flo. Bill and Robin. Dave and Sharon. Daniel. And thank you to all the students at Virginia Tech and Radford University over the years for which I have had the privilege to teach and learn from.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 – POLITICS OF CRISIS	1
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Practical and Theoretical Aims	5
Exclusionary Principles	10
Crisis Thought and Tradition	13
II. CRISIS THOUGHT, SECURITY, AND LIBERALISM	16
III. EPISTEMOLOGY AND VISION	27
Chapter Outlines	30
CHAPTER 2 – CRISIS THOUGHT: From Crisis to Crises	32
I. CRISIS ETYMOLOGY: Ambiguities and Appropriations	32
II. GENESIS OF CRISIS THOUGHT	40
III. CRISIS THOUGHT: Language, Formations, and Mobilizations	55
IV. THE OPERATION OF CRISIS THOUGHT	65
CHAPTER 3 – 24/7 NEWS MEDIA: Mobilizations and Simulations	71
I. MEDIA IN THE USA: Codes, Contests, and Confrontations	73
Buckley vs. Vidal	76
CNN and the Virtualization of Politics	79
II. CRITIQUING THE MEDIA: Smartphones and Subjugation	83
CHAPTER 4 – INFRASTRUCTURE: Crisis and Catastrophe	105
I. INFRASTRUCTURE, SECURITY, SUBJECTIVITY	110
II. MOBILIZING THE CRISIS OF INFRASTRUCTURE	119
Cyber-Crises	119
Doomsdays and Disasters	124
Amtrak 2015: Crazy Train or Crisis Train?	128
III. DISCUSSION: CRISIS, COMFORT, AND MOBILITY	133

CHAPTER 5 – LOCKDOWN: Crisis Thought and the US Police State	141
I. CULTURAL MILITARISM AND MASS SHOOTINGS	143
II. MILITARIZATION AND THE PRESENT POLICE STATE	151
Foucault on the Concept of the Police	154
Policing the Colonies and Early-Republic	155
The Rise of Militarized Police and the War on Drugs	158
III. DISCUSSION: CRISIS THOUGHT AND FORGETTING	167
CHAPTER 6 – CONCLUSION: The Province of Crisis Thought	175
BIBLIOGRAPHY	185

CHAPTER ONE – POLITICS OF CRISIS

I. Introduction

Crisis thought¹ is an idea that gives a name to and accounts for some of the problematics of the sign ‘crisis’ in political, social, cultural, and economic discourse.² Taken up in Chapter 2, the two problematics crisis thought accounts for are, first, the relative emptiness of crisis, and second, the paradox of crisis. The first suggests when a crisis claim is made it can be interpreted in multiple ways independent of the agents intentions. The second reflects the impetus of this study: to grapple with the question of why political, social, cultural, and economic ‘crises’ are often recognized and, yet, are seemingly unrecognized.³ At stake in this study is crisis thought’s relation to the conduct, security, and political experience of human subjectivities.⁴ This study seeks to offer a glimpse into, quoting Michel Foucault, how crisis thought fits into current modes “of relating to contemporary reality... a way of thinking and feeling... of acting and behaving... a relation of belonging,” as a kind of ontological security in politics and the ordinary life world.⁵

Reduced considerably, crisis thought can be understood as all crisis discourses in circulation at once. Specifically, crisis thought is a discursive formation (see Chapter 2), a concept used loosely here to refer to an assemblage of signs (or more plainly, ‘words) such as

¹ John Schaar, *Legitimacy in the Modern State* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2000), 334. The phrase (but not the idea) ‘crisis thought’ should be attributed to Schaar in which he

² Timothy W. Luke, *Screens of Power: Ideology, Domination, and Resistance in International Society* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 5. Citing Eco, Luke states a sign means: “everything, that, on the grounds of a previously established social convention, can be taken as something standing for something else.”

³ In this study, ‘unrecognized’ is another way of saying that ‘crises’ often seem unaddressed, normalized, or more importantly, ‘crisis’ taken as an accepted part of political life, or denied altogether by politicians, the 24/7 news media, or subjects.

⁴ Achille Mbembe and Janet Roitman, “Figures of the Subjects in Times of Crisis,” *Public Culture*, no. 7 (1995): 323.

⁵ Michel Foucault, “What is Enlightenment?” in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Vintage Books, 2010), 39.

‘anxiety’ or ‘fear’ that evoke or invoke similar, but inaccurate connotations as ‘crisis’ in political and everyday usage.⁶ Crisis thought is a constellation of signifiers that, together or apart, can be mobilized by subjects, groups, politicians, governments and the 24/7 news media when making ‘crisis’ claims in regards to real or perceived events in political and ordinary life.

Crisis thought is an attempt to express and categorize the normative observation that US culture and civil society has lost sight of what, perhaps, a crisis really is, and that this may be our undoing as we (as in ‘we,’ human subjects) proceed into the future. This study proposes that the distinction between ‘real’ and ‘transient’ crisis does not really matter anymore. Instead of ‘crisis’ signaling to elected officials and everyday people to engage crises of common political and social concern (e.g., crisis of justice, democracy, the environment), these crisis claims are often outnumbered by 24/7 news media and political mobilizations of dubious transient crises. Ultimately, this study suggests that 24/7 news media and political mobilizations of crisis thought help secure human subjectivities ontologically as linked to securing security and the *logos* of liberalism (see below). In short, crisis thought denotes a peculiar aspect of liberal capitalist democracies: the (re)production of a myriad of ‘crises’ and, thus, crisis thought, in order to perpetuate itself.

This study is about making the case for crisis thought. This is done by way of two principal goals taken up throughout the following chapters. The first is to offer some of the linkages between crisis thought, security, and liberalism. The second goal is to examine through various examples and vignettes how, where, and why crisis thought manifests itself in US

⁶ David Howarth, *Discourse* (New York: Open University Press, 2000), 7-8. Howarth states discursive formation: “stresses the way... certain discursive rules enable subjects to produce objects, statements, concepts and strategies, which together constitute discourses.” A discursive formation also describes how “discourses are shaped by social practices and the way they in turn shape social relationships and institutions.”

politics and in ordinary life through a critical, interpretive, and interdisciplinary analysis in order “to open up [the subject of ‘crisis’] to more interpretive and less deterministic approaches.”⁷ By ‘deterministic,’ this study means economic explanations in regards to late modern political, social, and cultural crisis. This study is concerned with the interpretive and subjective meanings of ‘crisis’ in terms of the collective political and social life of US citizens experience in the ordinary (synonymous with everyday life, the humdrum, the mundane, or social life).⁸ Thomas Dumm writes that the ordinary signifies, “the life-world, the everyday, the quotidian, the low, the common, the private, the personal...[it] is what everybody knows. The ordinary gives us a sense of comfort; it allows us to make certain predictions about what will happen...[it] allows us to assume a certain constancy of life. It is reliable.”⁹ This is done under the premise that at “the most concrete level of social life is the day-to-day lived experiences of real ‘social’ individuals. Everyday thoughts, feelings, and actions are more often than not accepted matter-of-factly,” but within a context in which these matters are still often filled “with uncertainty, surprise, real and false hopes and disappointments.”¹⁰

This analysis focuses on the mobilization of crisis thought by the 24/7 news media and in politics and governance in which crisis thought is mobilized, with or without intentionality, and then transposed into the life world. Transpositioning is discussed in Chapter 2, as security is discussed shortly below. Examined in Chapter 3, media is the plural term for medium. Media is any means in which content (e.g., information, knowledge, news, discourses, entertainment and

⁷ James O’Connor, *The Meaning of Crisis: A Theoretical Introduction* (New York: Basil Blackwell, Inc., 1987), 3

⁸ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California, 1984). Everyday life is a concept, which can refer to the ways in which humans think, act, and feel on a daily basis at different times, spaces, and in different ways.

⁹ Thomas Dumm, *A Politics of the Ordinary* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 1.

¹⁰ O’Connor, *The Meaning of Crisis*, 11.

the like) is communicated, presented, or transmitted from producer to consumer.¹¹ Media include: newspapers, radio, television, books, and today the Internet.¹² By 24/7 news media, this study means mass media and telecommunication systems: specifically television, Internet, and notably smartphone technologies. Following Douglas Kellner, the 24/7 news media are defined in this study as an “ever-shifting, evolving, and contested site in which numerous and sometimes contradictory interests, views, agendas, discourses, resistances, objectives, and non-objectives are fought for.”¹³ Additionally, 24/7 news media are sometimes used to refer to ‘24/7 media,’ denoting all kinds of or non-news entertainment or content, such as documentaries, films, TV specials and the like.

‘Mobilization’ in this study means preparing, organizing, or encouraging people or groups to take action, physically or cognitively, to reach an objective or, perhaps, a non-objective. By ‘governance,’ this study means a broader range of concerns and activities by the state and elected (as well as non-elected) officials besides law making, that consists of a multiplicity of practices linked to the security of the state and the political and social conduct of subjectivities. ‘Practices’ are understood here as internal or external procedures of the state and subject, such as rules, policies, laws, actions, habits, rituals, customs, and self-evident assumptions about politics and society. Practices are typically ongoing, never complete, and in need of constant refinement in order to help cultivate particular modalities of political, social, cultural, and economic behavior among subjectivities. By ‘conduct’ (and synonymous here with

¹¹ Paul Hodkinson, *Media, Culture, and Society: An Introduction* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2011), 1-2.

¹² The Internet refers to the interconnected global system of computer networks linked together by various electronic, wireless, and optical technologies. The World Wide Web, however, is really, what most people mean when they say, “I will look something up on the Internet.”

¹³ Douglas Kellner, *Television and the Crisis of Democracy* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990), 16.

‘behavior’), this study means, quoting Foucault, “the way in which one conducts oneself, lets oneself be conducted, is conducted, and finally, in which one behaves as an effect of a form of conduct as the action of conducting or of conduction.”¹⁴

Practical and Theoretical Aims

The practical aims of this study are relevant to United States politics in the present and near future. In particular, discourses on the “US politics of crisis,” or the alleged US domestic ‘crisis environment’ or ‘crisis atmosphere’ – often depicted or exaggerated as a dystopia, apocalyptic political nightmare of violence, death, and decline.¹⁵ Another way of putting the practical aims of this study is expressed in a quote by Robert Walser: “I can’t seem to resist the thought that at present we frequently have opportunity to read about crises and the like. Apparently it is practically a matter of *bon ton* nowadays to find oneself in a crisis of some sort.”¹⁶ Walser’s observation is as timely today in the US as it was in the first half of the 20th century. Instead of signaling a call for action and decision in human things, the ‘crisis’ signifier has become relatively empty in the context of a ‘crisis environment’ (see Chapter 2). This disconcerting state of affairs seems to pose considerable difficulties to mitigate or resolve

¹⁴ Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures At The College de France 1977-1978*, trans. Graham Burchell, ed. by Michel Senellart (New York: Picador, 2007), 193.

¹⁵ See: Paul Waldman, “The NRA’s dystopian vision of America,” *washingtonpost.com*, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/plum-line/wp/2016/07/13/the-nras-dystopian-vision-of-america/> (Accessed August 3, 2016); and Alison McQueen, “The Apocalypse in U.S. Political Thought,” *foreignaffairs.com*, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2016-07-18/apocalypse-us-political-thought> (Accessed August 3, 2016).

¹⁶ Robert Walser, *Microscripts*, trans. Susan Bernofsky (New York: New Directions, 2012), 131.

present-day crises afflicting US society, or for those physically and emotionally wrecked by the “troubles and issues” that appear to make-up the US politics of crisis.¹⁷

The theoretical aims of this study are significant to ongoing conversations regarding ‘crisis’ in the academy, in particular, as taken up by Janet Roitman in her 2014 book *Anti-Crisis*. This study works within the theoretical terrain laid down by Roitman, but diverges from it in many respects, not out of disagreement, but to move towards new possibilities. Roitman’s synthesis of Foucault’s archaeological analysis and Reinhart Koselleck’s conceptual history of crisis should be acknowledged.¹⁸ Roitman is on the right track in seeking “the effects of the claim to crisis” and our “accession to that judgement,” just as this study attempts to do in its own particular way.¹⁹ However, there is perhaps more to the analytical “blind spot” of crisis Roitman brings attention to – i.e., how ‘crisis’ “serves as a primary enabling blind spot for the production of knowledge...crisis is a point of view, or an observation, which itself is not viewed or observed” – than Roitman’s analysis of the 2008 global financial meltdown and housing crisis allows for.²⁰ This ‘blind spot,’ as understood in this study, opens the door to other

¹⁷ C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination* – Fortieth Anniversary Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), 8-9. Mills states: “Troubles...occur within the character of the individual and within the range of [their] immediate relations with others...within the scope of [their] immediate milieu – the social setting that is directly open to [their] personal experience and to some extent [their] willful activity. A trouble is a private matter: values cherished by an individual [seem] to be threatened...Issues have to do with matters that transcend those local environments of the individual and the range of [their] inner life...An issue is a public matter: some value cherished by publics is felt to be threatened...it cannot very well be defined in terms of the immediate and everyday environments of ordinary men. An issue, in fact, often involves a *crisis* in institutional arrangements, and often too, it involves what Marxists call contradictions and antagonisms.”

¹⁸ See: Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and The Discourse on Language* (New York: Vintage Books, 1972); Sara Mills, *Discourse* – Second Edition (New York: Routledge, 2004), 23, and Reinhart Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, trans. Todd Samuel Presner and Others (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002).

¹⁹ Janet Roitman, *Anti-Crisis* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 12.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 13.

interpretations, interrogations, and questions as to what the crisis signifier is doing in narrative constructions and statements; or what ‘crisis’ discursively enables as an analytical point of departure, as well as what crisis thought mobilizations engender among subjectivities. Since the function of crisis in discourse is ‘not viewed or observed’ for Roitman, then, put crudely, what the effects of ‘crisis’ rhetoric are perhaps doing remains anybody’s guess and not limited to Roitman’s analysis.

Additionally, Roitman’s proposition of “anti-crisis” is well taken.²¹ Being ‘anti-’ is an expression of opposition to something, and the problematics of ‘crisis’ easily lend themselves to such frustration. This is also similar to what motivates this study. Thinkers since Aristotle (but also Foucault, Judith Butler, and Jacob Burckhardt, to name a few) have considered ‘crisis’ necessary to an examined political life.²² This study does not challenge this position. Indeed, this study thinks that ‘crisis’ is a perennial concept in politics, but one in which the urgency and meaning of the sign is being lost, in part, due to the inordinate use, quantity, and confusion that comes with the plethora of events described and understood as a ‘crisis’ in political and ordinary life. Politics needs ‘crisis’ in order for us to better understand ourselves, resolve various troubles and issues, and promote matters of common concern. Nonetheless, this is not to say ‘crisis’ is not problematic either. Instead of rejecting ‘crisis,’ this study attempts to resuscitate the urgency of ‘crisis’ in discourse by recasting the locus of concern from ‘crisis’ to crisis thought.

²¹ Ibid, 10. Following the introduction of “anti-crisis” in the text, Roitman states: “crisis is a logical observation that generates meaning in a self-referential system, or a non-locus from which to signify contingency and paradox. And the judgment of crisis is necessarily a post-hoc interrogation: what went wrong? Crisis is posited as an *a priori*; the grounds for knowledge of crisis is neither questioned nor made explicit. And hence contemporary narratives of crisis elude two questions: How can one know crisis in history? And how can one know crisis itself?”

²² Ibid, 35.

Crisis thought is also a response of sorts to what this study calls crisis studies. ‘Crisis studies’ is a phrase used in reference to the fact that ‘crisis’ has become a cottage industry of knowledge production, literature, and media entertainment in the academy and popular culture.²³ Any characterization of the tone of crisis studies (or crisis thought) will necessarily be generalized. Timothy Luke hints at the character of these conversations, writing that:

for nearly two generations over the past four decades, one can look at critics and complainants setting their briefs out for why arrogance, poverty, racism, laziness, corruption, inequality, ignorance, or greed would very soon collapse the American state and society...critics jointly have judged the USA to have the world’s greatest power, while at the same time seeing it as ready to suffer the world’s quickest collapse...the end is, and has been, near for American hegemony for decades.²⁴

Another example is drawn from James Speth who writes, “each...sees the world on a path to some type of collapse, catastrophe, or breakdown...a bright future is still possible if we change our ways in time; others see a new dark ages as the likely outcome.”²⁵

Crisis studies are not limited to the social sciences or economics. Crisis studies extend throughout various disciplines, including engineering, the medical sciences, and environmental studies. Crisis studies in these fields address natural disasters (e.g., hurricanes, blizzards, or famines), sweeping pandemics, epidemics, rising rates of physical, mental, and biological instabilities (i.e., obesity, drug abuse, lack of preventative care, Ebola), as well as critical infrastructure issues (e.g., the vulnerabilities and resiliency of the national electric grid). Crisis studies also denote particular professions, occupations, and undergraduate college majors, including crisis communications: the go-to people for managing crises in public relations. Such

²³ Roitman, *Anti-Crisis*, 3.

²⁴ Timothy W. Luke, “Hyper-power or hype-power? The USA after Kandahar, Karbala, and Katrina,” in *The Geopolitics of American Insecurity: Terror, Power, and Foreign Policy*, ed. Francois Debrix and Mark J. Lacy (New York: Routledge, 2009), 20.

²⁵ James Gustave Speth, *The Bridge at the End of the World: Capitalism, The Environment, and Crossing From Crisis to Sustainability* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 5.

management strategies include controlling the content of press conferences, broadcast interviews, press releases, brochures, safety posters, robocalls, websites, and podcasts.²⁶ Crisis studies are engaged both quantitatively and qualitatively, producing informative and useful data regarding crisis duration, spatial coverage, monetary costs of destructive crises, numbers of casualties, survivors, extenuating circumstances, population shifts, and so on.

Patricia Nickel divides the scope of academic scholarship into two branches that can be applied to the two major types of crisis studies. Crisis studies usually appear as either affirmative or critical, each having a “relationship to the present (ontology), knowledge (epistemology), and governing (power/practice).” Many who mobilize crisis thought from a critical perspective:

generally view the present as something to be changed, whereas affirmative theorists generally view the present as something to be stabilized; critical theorists today generally view knowledge as consisting of contestable statements situated within power relations, whereas affirmative theorists today generally view knowledge as consisting of objective facts derived from detached observation; critical theorists generally view contemporary governing as a complex and powerful relationship among capitalism, knowledge, and ideology, whereas affirmative theorists generally view contemporary governing as a basically democratic expression of individual interests, administered according to legitimate knowledge.²⁷

Both affirmative and critical crisis studies are indispensable to our knowledge of crisis phenomena. However, both kinds of crisis inquiry often take for granted the grounds upon which a knowledge or discourse of crisis is determined, classified, constructed, interpreted and then acted upon or not. The numerous and wide-ranging ‘inflationary usages’ of ‘crisis,’ as Koselleck notes, would seem to suggest that, “we must live in an all-embracing crisis.” However, as

²⁶ Pamela (Ferrante) Walaski, *Risk and Crisis Communications: Methods and Messages* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2011), 3.

²⁷ Patricia Mooney Nickel, *Public Sociology and Civil Society: Governance, Politics, and Power* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2013), 14-15.

Koselleck also points out, “this conclusion attests more to a diffuse manner of speaking than it contributes to the diagnosis of our situation.”²⁸

As proposed in this study, perhaps the invocations of ‘crisis’ contribute to the emergence of crisis thought in the first place. Crisis thought is when society (or in this study, the United States), appears to have accepted ‘crisis’ as a basic part of life; to live, be in, and think of ‘crisis’ at all levels of US politics and society. As a noun, ‘crisis thought’ is what we can call this observation. While studies such as Roitman’s have addressed the perception of a US politics of crisis (which is, perhaps, the case), seeking to understand what the assortment of crisis discourses effectively ‘do,’ this area of study remains open to further analysis. Rather than accepting how US politics and society are in ‘crisis’ (in which the question of ‘crisis’ remains questionable), crisis thought denotes the presence of these discourses that is open for analysis and critique.

Exclusionary Principles

Some self-imposed limits taken up in this study should be addressed early on. These are not so much ‘limitations’ in the methodological sense, but certain aspects regarding how this study is engaged and discussed. In no particular order, first, this analysis is limited to the United States of America, but with suggested generalizability to a variety of political and social science studies.²⁹ Second, this study is not a critique of emergency or crisis management. The point of departure for this study is not ‘crisis’ but crisis thought. The goal is to lay down a foundation for the idea of crisis thought and to better understand how the mobilization of crisis thought by the

²⁸ Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History*, 236.

²⁹ Craig Brians, et al., *Empirical Political Analysis: Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods* (Boston: Longman, 2011), 413.

24/7 news media and in politics is transposed into the ordinary life world effecting subjectivities. Third, this study uses the term subject often in reference to human subjectivities (individually or collectively) under the state. ‘Subject’ accounts for the presence of various power relations on the conduct of the individual or group. Recognizing ourselves as subjects provides the opportunity to tell the truth about ourselves as political and social beings in order to assess politics for what it really might be. In so doing, this study does not dismiss the role of human ‘agency,’ but remains skeptical about it, particularly as related to popular perceptions of what ‘freedom’ and ‘liberty’ are taken up to be in the United States, and especially when acknowledging the presence of disciplinary and biopolitical managerial techniques (see below).

Fourth, this study is not out to claim that any particular ‘crisis’ is greater/less, or more true/false, than another. If a crisis is believed or said to exist by subjects, groups, or governments, then that is all that matters. This is denoted throughout this analysis by reference to the distinction between ‘real’ and ‘transient’ crises. It should be noted that the determination between what constitutes a ‘real’ or ‘transient’ crises is, perhaps, an impossible question to answer. However, this study admits that there are some suspicions; some hunches about what a ‘real’ or ‘transient’ crisis are throughout these pages. For instance, there are real crises occurring in the world. For example, the 2015 Syrian refugee crisis is a turning point for the millions of people fleeing and internally displaced by the horror and destruction of the Syrian Civil War.³⁰ Likewise, the 2015-2016 lead contaminated ‘water crisis’ in Flint, Michigan is a warning about deteriorating infrastructure throughout the US.³¹ Yet, there are also numerous transient crises in circulation. For example, normative claims such as a ‘crisis of character’ or subjective assumptions on political happenings on the part of politicians and pundits not grounded in facts.

³⁰ Karl Vick, “The Great Migration,” *TIME*, vol. 186, no. 15-16 (October 2015).

³¹ Josh Sandburn, “The Toxic Tap,” *TIME*, vol. 187, no. 3 (February 2016).

In this study, these subjective perceptions of ‘crises’ by the individual, group, or government are just as important as ‘real’ crises, since transient crises often become, or are treated as, ‘real’ crises in 24/7 news media representations. Many crises today are often of the transient variety, synonymous here to constructed ‘crises’ brought about by the 24/7 news media or politicians, with or without intentionality, that can be domestic, global, or both.

Finally, and perhaps more importantly, economic crises are outside the scope of this project, although the vicissitudes of liberal capitalism or otherwise, neoliberalism, are implicit throughout. David Harvey writes that neoliberalism, “proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade.”³²

Briefly, Dawson and Schueller provide that:

Neoliberalism, based on a revival of nineteenth-century market fundamentalism, emerged during the Reagan and Thatcher administrations as measures to make the global South ‘consent’ (and therefore accept and work with the hegemony of the United States and, to some extent, Britain) to the imperatives of the so-called free market through institutions controlled by the United States. Presented as common sense and the ultimate good for all, neoliberalism worked through the imperial formula of opening up all markets and combined deregulating all industries, privatizing government concerns, and minimizing social services for citizens.³³

This study works outside of crisis studies by “traditional economists, neo-orthodox Marxists, and neo- and post-Marxist theorists (or otherwise known as market theory, value theory, social theory, and social-psychological theory).”³⁴ However, this study readily admits the influence of post-Marxist social theory evident throughout, suggesting that, “social crisis arise

³² David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 2-3.

³³ Ashley Dawson and Malini Johar Schueller, “Introduction: Rethinking Imperialism Today,” in *Exceptional State: Contemporary U.S. Culture and the New Imperialism*, ed. Ashley Dawson and Malini Johar Schueller (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 9.

³⁴ O’Connor, *The Meaning of Crisis*, 2.

from economic crisis.”³⁵ Instead of Marx, one of the theorists this study heavily relies upon is Foucault, who once stated:

I often quote concepts, texts and phrases from Marx, but without feeling obliged to add the authenticating label of a footnote with a laudatory phrase to accompany the quotation. As long as one does that, one is regarded as someone who knows and reveres Marxist journals. But I quote Marx without saying so, without quotation marks, and because people are incapable of recognizing Marx’s texts, I am thought to be someone who doesn’t quote Marx.³⁶

This study does not dismiss the contributions of economic or Marxist traditions of crisis theory. However, this study seeks to understand the effects of crisis thought as a matter of discourse, not in terms of economics as a matter of dollars and cents, debits or credits, investments, or finance. To be sure, this does not mean excluding economic crisis discourses as they circulate in the ordinary. For instance, how many points the stock market is up or down on a daily, monthly, quarterly, or yearly basis often signals to a variety of subjects and groups the current status of political society as a matter of strength or vibrancy in terms of the economy. Indexes of gross-domestic product (GDP) and unemployment rates are often mobilized as crisis thought to justify the success and continued implementation of policy decisions, and/or to critique those same policies. In this study, capitalism is a crisis, and as such, is held constant throughout the following chapters.

Crisis Thought and Tradition

The discussion of the economic and Marxist tradition of crisis studies raises the question of tradition in this study. At best, this study works in the tradition of critical political theory. More specifically, this study follows in the footsteps of crisis studies in vein of Roitman and

³⁵ Ibid, 9.

³⁶ Michel Foucault, “Prison Talk,” in *Power/Knowledge: Select Interviews & Other Writings, 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Vintage Books, 2010), 52.

Koselleck's studies on the sign 'crisis' in discourse. Understandably, critical political theory is a considerably broad way of placing this analysis within a specific tradition. However, considering crisis thought as a relatively novel idea, perhaps this requires such a broad description, which may best explain where this study fits within conventional notions of a tradition.

Following Wolin, political theory is considered here to be "a tradition of discourse concerned about the present being and well being of collectivities," and this takes the form of "a critical engagement with collective existence and with the political experiences of power to which it gives rise."³⁷ This study is concerned with crisis thought's effects on the present being and well being of collectivities, and attempts to offer a glimpse into how crisis thought relates to political and ordinary life that, perhaps, also characterizes and denotes the *zeitgeist* of the contemporary period in which we are or have been living. Wolin points out, too, that to be 'political' in regards to politics (e.g., taken up by political actors or as citizens engaged with civil society), one must necessarily be critical. By 'critical' or 'critical perspective,' this study means a perspective that, "questions the privileged forms of representation whose dominance has led to the unproblematic acceptance of subjects, objects, acts, and themes, through which the political world is constructed."³⁸ Considering the latter, this study is about questioning the 'unproblematic acceptance' of crisis, which is suggested to play a considerable role in how the world is constructed, perceived, experienced, and acted upon.

Critical theory is a mode of analysis found throughout the social sciences and humanities. Luke describes critical theory as "reflective, reflexive, and ironic, rather than positive, objective,

³⁷ Sheldon S. Wolin, *The Presence of the Past: Essays on the State and the Constitution* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1989), 1.

³⁸ Michael J. Shapiro, "Textualizing Global Politics," in *International/Intertextual Relations: Postmodern Readings of World Politics*, ed. James Der Derian and Michael J. Shapiro (New York: Lexington Books, 1989), 13.

and methodologically formalistic.” The goal of critical theory is to guide “human actions to realize greater emancipation and enlightenment in the lives of people today. By refining people’s thinking abilities and moral sensibilities...is to equip individuals with a new consciousness of what must be done and how to do it...[advancing] human emancipation from the victimization that people impose on themselves from within or...without.”³⁹ For instance, in this study crisis thought is suggested to create various, subtle forms of victimization on subjects as linked to their political subjectivity and ontological security. Taken together, critical political theory fits the objectives of this study and importantly, speaks to the impetus of this study as a whole.

A few words about what crisis thought is not. Crisis thought should not be considered as some kind of *Empire*-esque entity hovering over us.⁴⁰ Crisis thought is better said to circulate through subjects and practices in discourse. Crisis thought is not about the subject, group, or government lapsing into a kind of paralysis, bewilderment, or fear. On the contrary, when mobilized, crisis thought can be productive and effective. By ‘productive,’ this study means crisis thought can elicit or facilitate actions, activities, or ideas. For example, state of emergencies, which enable or mobilize various processes, protocols, orders, and practices. By ‘effect,’ this study means to move a person’s actions, thoughts, or emotions analogous to varied forms of conditioning, disciplining, or management of human subjectivities. This study puts forward that the general effect of crisis thought is not fear, bewilderment, or paralysis. Instead, the effects of crisis thought are more closely associated with normalization, acceptance, denial,

³⁹ Luke, *Screens of Power*, 8-9.

⁴⁰ Stephanie Georgakis, et al., “Between Schmitt and Foucault: An Interview With Dr. Michael Hardt,” *Spectra: The ASPECT Journal*, no. 1, vol. 2 (2012). Transcribed by Edwin Kent Morris. <https://spectrajournal.org/index.php/SPECTRA/article/view/106/114> (Accessed May 2, 2016). This point is derived from a critique made by Kirsch. Although the context of Kirsch’s statement and crisis thought are two different things, the sentiment underlining Kirsch’s criticism of Hardt and Negri’s concept of “empire” is likely to surface when thinking about crisis thought.

or as Marshall McLuhan put it a, “numbness” to things of common political and social concern, such as justice, the environment, social conditions, or warfare.⁴¹ The effect of crisis thought mobilizations are understood as subtle forms of political and social security. It is the question of security and its association with crisis thought we now turn.

II. Crisis Thought, Security, and Liberalism

There should be no quarrel with the assumption that an association between ‘crisis’ and ‘security’ exists, empirically or theoretically, discursively or in practice.⁴² This association is not always linear or correlated. The association between crisis and security can be seen in the orders and hyperbole that often follow the ‘crisis’ referent when used to justify and implement security policies, practices, or procedures. For example, the post-9/11 creation of the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) or the passing of the USA PATRIOT Act by the US Congress in response to the ‘crisis’ of non-state terrorism.⁴³ Already noted above are states of

⁴¹ Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man – Critical Edition* (Berkeley: Gingko Press, 2011), 69. McLuhan states: “We have to numb our central nervous system when it is extended and exposed, or we will die. Thus the age of anxiety and of electric media is also the age of the unconscious and of apathy.”

⁴² Arnold Wolfers, “National Security as an Ambiguous Symbol,” *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 67, no. 4 (December 1952): 487.

⁴³ Gus Martin, *Terrorism and Homeland Security* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2011), 267-272. Martin states: On October 8, 2001, President George W. Bush issued Executive Order 13228, entitled, “Establishing the Office of Homeland Security and the Homeland Security Council.” This Executive Order stated: ‘the functions of the Office of Homeland Security shall be to coordinate the executive branch’s efforts to detect, prepare for, prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from terrorist attacks within the US.’ This initial statement of purpose continues to guide the implementation of the concept of homeland security in relation to counterterrorist policies;” see also: Samuel Kernell, Gary C. Jacobson, and Thad Kousser, *The Logic of American Politics – Fourth Edition* (Washington D.C.: CQ Press, 2009), 229-230. The authors state: “In the fall of 2001, Congress enacted the USA PATRIOT Act, a comprehensive law designed to strengthen the government’s hand in investigating and prosecuting domestic terrorists. Among its nine hundred provisions, the act relaxed constraints on surveillance activities and dismantled a formidable fire-wall separating criminal from national security investigations.”

emergency or states of exception.⁴⁴ In many such cases, judgments with regards to a ‘crisis’ are removed from the political and social sphere of deliberation and moved to a realm of decision outside of legal norms in order to expedite crisis solutions. To be sure, states of emergencies are just one example of crisis thought mobilization. Crisis thought, of course, can be mobilized or associated with security without declaring a state of emergency.

Security is not simply about existential threats to sovereign states and subjects living under them. Instead, security encompasses a wide-range of topics including the politics of food, social identity, health, crime, interstate conflicts, the environment, human error, cyber security, and surveillance.⁴⁵ Security in this study is not dismissive of security as being about “achieving security-from-violence (security from the application of violent power to human bodies).”⁴⁶ In the study of politics the subject of security has predominantly been theorized as “a struggle for power” – power understood traditionally as the ability to control “the minds and actions of other’s.”⁴⁷ However, it would be mistaken to think of power as only this in the 21st century. Power is not simply a top-down process that emanates from a benevolent government down to its citizens. Instead, power circulates around us, is inscribed on us and by us through various institutionalized (and non-institutionalized) power relations. Luke notes that power today “flows

⁴⁴ See: Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003); and Didier Fassin and Mariella Pandolfi, *Contemporary States of Emergency: The Politics of Military and Humanitarian Interventions*, ed. Didier Fassin and Mariella Pandolfi (New York: Zone Books, 2013), 15-16. Fassin and Pandolfi state: “The state of exception constitutes a sort of no-man’s land between public law and political fact, and between the juridical order and life – in other words, a form of globalized biopolitics. The state of exception thus forms the basis for a government that is at once military and humanitarian, resting on a logic of security and a logic of protection, on a law external to and superior to law, rooted as it is in the legitimacy of actions aimed at protecting life.”

⁴⁵ Peter Hough, *Understanding Global Security – 2nd Edition* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 7.

⁴⁶ Daniel H. Deudney, *Bounding Power: Republican Security Theory From the Polis to the Global Village* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 27.

⁴⁷ Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace – Seventh Edition* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2006), 29-30.

more placelessly beneath, behind, between, and beyond boundaries set into space as new senses of artificial location become very fluid or more mobile, defined by shifting connections into the networks of information carrying these flows.”⁴⁸

Security as approached in this study is in debt to Foucault who “historicizes and governmentalizes” security. Dillon and Neal write that, for Foucault, security is “an ensemble of mechanisms by which the biopolitical imperative to make life live” is implemented, as security becomes, ultimately, “an issue dealing with life itself.”⁴⁹ Security, then, can perhaps be understood as the essence of (liberal) politics, the underlining objective of liberalism (see below), intrinsically linked to questions about the logics and *logos* governing present-day liberal capitalist democracies.

There are precedents for this perspective on security as the essence of politics. For example, both Thomas Hobbes and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, although for different reasons, thought it was imperative to escape the state of nature (i.e., the hypothetical time before the state or government) and establish civil society. For Rousseau, human species life could only actualize their potential and understand their true nature by becoming citizens in a society.⁵⁰ The difference between Hobbes and Rousseau, however, is the question of what constitutes the state of nature that human’s are theoretically leaving behind. Rousseau thought of the state of nature as one of freedom and innocence, but importantly also, ignorance and solitude. Rousseau writes: “men reach a point where the obstacles to their preservation in a state of nature prove greater than the strength that each man has to preserve himself in that state. Beyond this point, the

⁴⁸ Timothy W. Luke, “The Discipline of Security Studies and the Codes of Containment: Learning from Kuwait,” *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, vol. 16, no.3 (1991): 319.

⁴⁹ Michael Dillon and Andrew W. Neal, “Introduction” in *Foucault on Politics, Security, and War*, ed. Michael Dillon and Andrew W. Neal (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 12.

⁵⁰ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, trans. Maurice Cranston (New York: Penguin Books, 1968), 28.

primitive condition cannot endure, for then the human race will perish if it does not change its mode of existence.”⁵¹ In stark contrast, much of orthodox political science literature and international relations has largely sided with Hobbes, taking life in the state of nature as a time and condition when “every man is enemy to every man,” as human life exists in a world of “continual fear and danger of violent death, and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.”⁵² In short, for Hobbes, human life without sovereignty, the state, or civil society would exist in crisis.

William Connolly notes this is not necessarily a true assumption on Hobbes’ part, considering that Hobbes is speaking in *Leviathan* to people already living in a civil society, and not one descending back into the state of nature. The urgency and tone of Hobbes’s writing is rather a tactic or a strategy (and, perhaps, one of the earliest forms of crisis thought mobilization) that Connolly refers to as Hobbesian “shock therapy.”⁵³ Such treatment helps subjects “get their priorities straight by teaching them what life would be like without sovereignty. It domesticates by eliciting the vicarious fear of violent death in those who have not had to confront it directly...the fear of death pulls the self together. It induces subjects to accept civil society and it becomes an instrumentality of sovereign control in a civil society already installed.”⁵⁴ Scott Nelson writes this shock therapy is to convince people that what is otherwise completely fictional (i.e., sovereignty, the social contract) is “the unquestionable ground of political experience.”⁵⁵ Louiza Odysseos points out the Hobbesian social covenant is about achieving

⁵¹ Ibid, 59-60.

⁵² Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan (with selected variants from the Latin Edition of 1668)*, ed. Edwin Curley (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc, 1994), 76.

⁵³ William E. Connolly, *Political Theory & Modernity* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 31.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 31.

⁵⁵ Scott G. Nelson, *Sovereignty and the Limits of the Liberal Imagination* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 62.

security through “the discursive creation of the Hobbesian ontology” in the creation of a “dangerous status” of mankind by linking together “danger and [human] subjectivity,” where “danger is grounded in man’s nature.”⁵⁶ Thus, at the core of liberal social contract theory is the goal achieving collective security. In turn, this also illuminates that at the core of liberal theories on the state is a presumed crisis of human relations and a crisis of human nature present prior to entering into civil society. It would appear, then, that the entire liberal project is predicated on achieving security from some kind of ‘crisis.’

Security in this study pertains to, first, the ontological preoccupation with security that defines the modern liberal political project as noted above.⁵⁷ Second, security is a practice that operates at the individual and aggregate level. Security is intimately linked to how we come to know and think about ourselves. Michael Dillon writes that security is like “a package which tells you what you are as it tells you what to die for; which tells you what to love as it tells you what to defend...and which tells you what is right as it tells you what is wrong. Its cognates consequently include individual and collective identity, evil, goodness, and justice.”⁵⁸ Security in this study, then, is about internal and external practices conditioning the subject, engendering particular thoughts, feelings, actions, attitudes, and beliefs: the culmination of becoming, as Francois Debrix might put it, a “socially useful human being.”⁵⁹

Importantly, crisis thought should not be understood as form-of-security or as an activity of securitization in itself. Instead, crisis thought is a means of achieving various kinds of

⁵⁶ Louiza Odysseos, “Dangerous Ontologies: The Ethos of Survival and Ethical Theorizing in International Relations,” *Review of International Studies*, vol. 28, no. 2 (April 2002): 406.

⁵⁷ Mark Neocleous, *Critique of Security* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2008), 13.

⁵⁸ Michael Dillon, *Politics of Security: Towards a Political philosophy of Continental Thought* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 33.

⁵⁹ Francois Debrix, “Language, Nonfoundationalism, International Relations,” in *Language, Agency, and Politics in a Constructed World*, ed. Francois Debrix (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2003), 16.

‘security practices’ such as ‘keeping the peace,’ maintaining social order, having well-behaved citizens and the like. Traditionally understood, securitization is a process that renders subjects, objects, or events as disruptions, threats, or ‘crises’ to the “normal situation,” and therefore must be dealt with, disposed of, or resolved, sometimes by any means necessary.⁶⁰ To securitize means to make some subject, object, or event predictable and thereby controllable by changing the direction, nature, or intentionality of it. To secure something, as Dillon notes, is “to make something it previously was not. The act of securing both invents and changes whatever is so secured.”⁶¹ Crisis thought mobilizations effect subjects in a similar way, however much more subtly, as if they were a whisper, assisting or helping in the activities of “securing security.”⁶² Securing security means securing a particular kind of security, a mode or practice of security, an idea and ideal of security. Securing security ultimately secures liberalism. Crisis thought mobilizations, then, help secure security by reaffirming existing political structures, arrangements, institutions, and practices of political and ordinary life.

The association between ‘crisis’ and ‘security’ does not mean that ‘crisis’ discourses simply produce desires for heightened security practices. Nor does it distinguish crisis thought as a generalized form of fear or insecurity. Instead, crisis thought mobilizations bring into being subjects, objects, practices, and justifications of security (and almost-always accompanied by its opposite, insecurity). In so doing, crisis thought assists in cultivating subjectivities that are, as Robin Cameron notes, “socialized by security.” To be ‘socialized by security’ means two things. First, it means that foreign and national security practices are increasingly “written into aspects

⁶⁰ Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, trans. by George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 13. Schmitt states: “For a legal order to make sense, a normal situation must exist...”

⁶¹ Dillon, *Politics of Security*, 122.

⁶² *Ibid*, 16.

of everyday social relations,” from airport security to biometric scanning devices in schools and public places.⁶³ Socialized by security means, second, to be conditioned by security as a matter of conduct or what Foucault would refer to as disciplinary and biopolitical managerial techniques embedded throughout society with the intention of making politics, ordinary life, and subject behavior predictable, manageable and calculable under the auspices of liberalism. Disciplines include regimentation, hierarchy, examination, alongside procedures and protocols found in a variety of public and private institutions ranging from schools, prisons, hospitals, and the military, which over time have gradually been integrated into everyday life.⁶⁴ Security in this study also entails what Foucault called “biopolitical” strategies that account for the entry of human populations into the calculations of governments and state objectives.⁶⁵ Examples of biopolitics would include: birth and mortality rates, public health, housing, migration, and immigration. Cynthia Weber describes biopolitics as:

a concept that explains how individual’s relationships to society, economics, and governance are constructed and reconstructed within themselves in relation to states and societies so that individuals, too, end up constructing the very orders that construct them...disciplining populations to behave in accordance with...norms of conduct, to individuals becoming self-disciplined once they have internalized the lessons (and power relations) circulated in and by states and societies.⁶⁶

Liberal reason is referred to by several names in the literature: bourgeois, positivist, or instrumental reason, emerging from the Enlightenment of the 17th and 18th centuries. As an historical and intellectual movement, Enlightenment thinkers sought to advance human thought

⁶³ Robin Cameron, *Subjects of Security: Domestic Effects of Foreign Policy in the War on Terror* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 4.

⁶⁴ Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 2010), 128.

⁶⁵ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage Books, 2010), 139-141.

⁶⁶ Cynthia Weber, *International Relations Theory: A Critical Introduction – Third Edition* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 137.

and to free humans from fear, myth, and superstition. As an historical event, the Enlightenment corresponds roughly with to the start of political modernity, the formation of the sovereign state system (Peace of Westphalia in 1648), and the gradual ascendancy of liberal capitalist democracy to the forefront of western politics by the 20th century. Liberalism is conventionally understood as a political theory whereby individuals are conceived as independent, autonomous, rights-bearing agents who are free to choose their own conception of the good life. Liberalism entails the relaxation or removal of the state and divine powers over a person's actions and life pursuits. It is focused on the primacy of human freedom whereby individuals are free to choose how to live their life cognizant of laws and social mores. Tenets of liberalism include natural rights, constitutionalism, and democracy, free and fair elections, human rights, capitalism, free trade, and the separation of church and state. This is not to forget additional civil liberties often included in liberal constitutions, such as freedoms of press, speech, assembly, and religion. However, this study is skeptical of liberalism for reasons explained in the following.

Something happened to liberal reason in the 18th and 19th centuries when, as Max Horkheimer notes, reason, “more easily...lends itself to ideological manipulation and to propagation of...the most blatant of lies.”⁶⁷ If the late 18th century was the height of liberal aspirations, then the 19th and 20th centuries could be described figuratively as the ‘hangover’ of liberalism (i.e., societies became so inebriated by the relative improvements, wonders, and potentials of modernity that liberals lost sight of liberalism’s possible pitfalls). Western societies (and specific to this study, the United States) awoke from a stupor to find an assortment of ‘crises’ linked to liberal practices. The expansion and influx of populations, the advancement of science, technology and industrialization, and the implications of increasingly capital-focused

⁶⁷ Max Horkheimer, *Eclipse of Reason* (New York: Continuum, 1947), 17.

societies began to generate concerns regarding the quality of life and the political experience of citizens. Wolin writes that “by midcentury liberals began gingerly to turn greater attention to issues of popular education, the condition of the working classes, social welfare, and the rights of women – that is, to inequalities that appear attributed more to the new society than to the old.” The aspirations of liberals became “tinged by the desperate knowledge that Western societies were being pushed, shaped, and compelled in ways that both fascinated and appalled.”⁶⁸

Kellner thinks that as the Enlightenment was poised against myth, over time, the Enlightenment became a new kind of myth: a mythic faith in doctrines taken for granted as self-evident truths, which allegedly would bring salvation, prosperity, and the good life to all those who put faith into it.⁶⁹ Koselleck describes this mythic faith as characteristically “utopian,” writing that “the Enlightenment itself became Utopian and even hypocritical because...the Enlightenment developed patterns of thought and behavior which, at the latest from 1789 onwards, foundered on the rocks of the concrete political challenges that arose. The Enlightenment succumbed to a Utopian image which, while deceptively propelling it, helped to produce contradictions which could not be resolved.”⁷⁰ For Horkheimer and Adorno, the bourgeois free market perverted the altruistic principles of liberalism. They suggest that the economic liberation brought forth by enlightened liberalism:

⁶⁸ Sheldon S. Wolin, *Tocqueville Between Two Worlds: The Making of a Political and Theoretical Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 14-15.

⁶⁹ Douglas Kellner, *Critical Theory, Marxism, and Modernity* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 90.

⁷⁰ Reinhart Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis: Enlightenment and the Pathogenesis of Modern Society* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1988), 1-2.

went further than its human originators had intended...[what] the market economy [liberalism] unleashed was at once the prevailing form of reason and the power which ruined reason...[it] exposed the totality of the bourgeois order as the horrifying entity which finally engulfed both, the general and the particular, society and the self. With the development of the economic system in which the control of the economic apparatus by private groups creates a division between human beings...and [this] proved to be destructive natural force no longer distinguishable from self-destruction.⁷¹

As approached in this study, the Enlightenment never fulfilled what its proponents claimed it would achieve.⁷² As Dumm puts it, “the Enlightenment is flawed,” and thus, so is liberalism and the rationality derived from it.⁷³

Wolin explains that liberal reason is “irresistible and self evident because the self has nothing to resist with. Selves, so to speak, have been severed from their ‘evidence’, which has been left behind in the context from which they have been abstracted. Freedom has now become interchangeable with necessity. To be free is to obey necessary truths, truths that, like a mathematical proof, demand as a condition of their truthfulness...that they be independent of social or historical context.”⁷⁴ Horkheimer describes liberal reason as “a business-like attitude toward matters of the spirit, a preoccupation with success,” where ‘success’ is largely predetermined by bourgeois (i.e., liberal) notions of property accumulation and wealth.⁷⁵ Nickel affirms these points, writing that liberal rationality “prevents social change through the scientific determination of social laws, resting on authentic proofs, which [are]...used to portray the present as natural,” as the norms of liberal reason “are taken for granted...and thus, not only do

⁷¹ Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1947), 70-71.

⁷² Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis*, 185-186.

⁷³ Thomas L. Dumm, *Democracy and Punishment: Disciplinary Origins of the United States* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 6.

⁷⁴ Sheldon Wolin, *The Presence of the Past: Essays on the State and the Constitution* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 104

⁷⁵ Horkheimer, *Eclipse of Reason*, 49.

we not oppose them, we make personal choices that further embed them in our everyday lives.”⁷⁶ Liberal reason also corresponds to what Foucault called a “regime a truth.”⁷⁷ As Dumm notes, “the Enlightenment...constituted a particular regime of truth.”⁷⁸ As Colin Gordon explains, “if certain knowledge’s of ‘Man’ are able to serve...in the domination of people, this is not so much thanks to their capacity to establish a reign of ideological mystifications as to their ability to define a certain field of empirical truth.”⁷⁹ This ‘field of empirical truth’ defines what we think of as a ‘crisis’ and the same logic applies to ‘security’ (e.g., where is the crisis, when is security best implemented, what is the national interest, why is X, Y, or Z a crisis, how will security resolve it?)

Crisis thought’s association with security is a matter of helping to achieve political, ontological, epistemological, and temporal security of citizen-subjects. In this way, this study of crisis thought is concerned with the political ontology (i.e., the study of being, the basis of reality and knowledge) and axiology (i.e., how subjects come to have, make, and evaluate values, morals, decisions, judgments) of human subjectivities.⁸⁰ Ontology and axiology are the means by which politics and the political become intelligible to the subject, informing and shaping their political subjectivity. For Larry George, political subjectivity is the “collective self-image with which the people of a nation identify the position, status, and role of each subject within that

⁷⁶ Nickel, *Public Sociology and Civil Society*, 17-19.

⁷⁷ Michel Foucault, “Truth and Power,” in *Power / Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Vintage Books, 2010), 131-132. Foucault states: “Each society has its regime of truth, its ‘general politics’ of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true...”

⁷⁸ Dumm, *Democracy and Punishment*, 6.

⁷⁹ Colin Gordon, “Afterward,” in *Power / Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Vintage Books, 2010), 237.

⁸⁰ Alan Collins, *Contemporary Security Studies – Second Edition*, ed. Alan Collins (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 425. Collins states: “Ontology is the study of being...ontology refers to the set of assumptions about the nature of being in the world...”

imagined community, and the sense of commonality engendered by various practices through which that collective self-conception is reproduced.”⁸¹ Political subjectivity is linked to perceptions of state authority and legitimacy, such as the degree to which subjects feel socially responsible, franchised, attentive to matters of civic-duty, or in solidarity with others. Political subjectivity is a fundamental part of ‘real-world’ politics and is significant to political questions regarding justice, governance, security, and everyday life.

This chapter now turns to the question of how this study proceeds in terms of the epistemological perspective underlining these pages, as well as the approach in which crisis thought and related matters are addressed in this study.

III. Epistemology and Vision

Politics has many definitions, most common among them are the activities associated with the governance of a country, state, or other area. Paraphrasing Wolin, politics is a form of activity centering on the quest for competitive advantage between groups, individuals or societies. Politics takes place within a situation of change and relative scarcity in which the pursuit of advantage or power produces consequences of such a magnitude that they affect in significant ways the whole of society or substantial portions of it. Politics, then, is simultaneously a source of conflict, but also an activity that seeks to resolve conflicts and promote readjustment.⁸² This study does not challenge this understanding, but does offer its own perspective on politics, one informed by Foucault (see discussion of security above). Politics appears as an activity focused on the security of human subjectivities whereby the art of

⁸¹ Larry N. George, “American Insecurities and the Ontopolitics of US Pharmacotic Wars,” in *The Geopolitics of American Insecurity: Terror, Power, and Foreign Policy*, ed. Francois Debrix and Mark J. Lacy (New York: Routledge, 2009), 36.

⁸² Sheldon S. Wolin, *Politics and Vision: Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought* – Expanded Edition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 11.

governance constitutes a variety of practices to render human populations, interactions, and political and social life predictable, manageable, and calculable.⁸³

Following R.B.J. Walker, the study of politics is taken as an “expression of an historically specific understanding of the character and location of political life...in which attempts to think otherwise about political possibilities are constrained by categories and assumptions that contemporary political analyses is encouraged to take for granted.”⁸⁴ Walker is referring to particular epistemological certainties in political thought that work as a set of restrictions to the ways politics can or might be studied. This includes the kinds of questions and methods of analysis considered appropriate in political studies that attempt (consciously and unconsciously pursued) to orient and rationalize politics towards a structure or form taken as self-evident and portrayed as natural.⁸⁵ One way these tendencies can be overcome is through an interpretive approach to politics. David Campbell writes that this approach:

is thus both arbitrary and nonarbitrary: arbitrary in that it is one possibility among many, and nonarbitrary in the sense that one can inquire into the historical conditions within which one way of making the world was dominant so that we now have a world that power has convened. The world we so often take for granted as a foundation for knowledge and politics thus came to be, through multiple political practices, related as such to the constitution of various subjectivities as to the intentional action of predetermined subjects.⁸⁶

An interpretive approach must account for current axioms of politics (e.g., sovereignty, globalization, the security dilemma, limits of diplomacy, and so on) but it has the benefit of challenging them to offer normative prospects that might push institutionalized forms of

⁸³ Sheldon S. Wolin, *Democracy Incorporated: Managed Democracy and the Specter of Inverted Totalitarianism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 47.

⁸⁴ R.B.J. Walker, *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 5.

⁸⁵ Richard K. Ashley, “The Poverty of Neorealism,” *International Organization*, vol. 38, no. 2 (Spring 1984): 228.

⁸⁶ David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 17.

knowledge production further and/or extend our understanding of the political world. Such an analysis is only one possible interpretation of political life that is or could be. As Luke puts it, “unless one takes [an] interpretative stance, the strange narratives and bizarre propositions of...liberal reasoning play their usual tricks.”⁸⁷ Crisis thought is simply one possibility among others regarding how ‘crisis’ functions in discourse, put forward here in good faith and in the spirit of the free exchange of ideas.

This study also requires looking at the past, not in the form of history *per se*, but as Foucault put it, a “history of the present.”⁸⁸ This kind of history, Campbell explains, “exhibits an unequivocally contemporary orientation. Beginning with an incitement from the present – an acute manifestation of a ritual of power – this mode of analysis seeks to trace how such rituals of power arose, took shape, gained importance, and effected politics. In short, this mode of analysis asks how certain terms and concepts have historically functioned within discourse.”⁸⁹ This study emphasizes the contemporary orientation of such a ‘history,’ one focused on the relatively recent ‘here and now’ of the last 75 or so years of the US political experience. Crisis thought is the ritual of power in question, and the concern is with how mobilizations of crisis thought effect political life and play a role in the conduct and development of human political subjectivity.

⁸⁷ Timothy W. Luke, “Liberal Society and Cyborg Subjectivity: The Politics of Environments, Bodies, and Nature,” *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, vol. 21 (1996), 1. See also: Hannah Arendt, “Total Domination,” in *The Portable Hannah Arendt*, ed. Peter Baehr (New York: Penguin Books, 2000), 121-122. Arendt states: “there is a great temptation to explain away the intrinsically incredible by means of liberal rationalizations. In each one of us, there lurks such a liberal, wheedling us with the voice of common sense...what common sense and ‘normal people’ refuse to believe is that everything is possible.”

⁸⁸ Foucault, *Discipline & Punish*, 31. See also: Stephen K. White, “Foucault’s Challenge to Critical Theory,” *American Political Science Review*, vol. 80, no. 2 (June 1986), 421.

⁸⁹ Campbell, *Writing Security*, 5-6.

Chapter Outlines

This study consists of six chapters including the Conclusion. What has been left unsaid here will likely be found in the following chapters. The purpose of this chapter has been to discuss how this study approaches crisis thought by introducing in broad strokes what crisis thought is, the focus of this study, potential significance of this study, and the epistemological context in which the chapters and analyses proceed.

Chapter 2 – “Crisis Thought: From Crisis to Crises” develops the idea of crisis thought further. The first half of this chapter discusses the origins of crisis thought, which develops as a particular and peculiar outcome of the etymological and conceptual history of the sign ‘crisis,’ and the exceptional nature of the United States as a liberal capitalist democracy. In so doing, this chapter discusses the linkages between the emergence of crisis thought as post-World War II phenomenon, analogous to the rise of the US national security state in the late 1940’s and early 1950’s. The second half of this chapter explores the nature of crisis thought, the two problematics of crisis that crisis thought accounts for, and how crisis thought operates.

Chapter 3 – “24/7 News Media: Mobilizations and Simulations” explores crisis thought’s relation to the 24/7 news media. This chapter explores the role the 24/7 news media plays in the mobilization, dissemination and (re)production of crisis thought, and offers insights into how crisis thought helps steer the direction of US media into the tabloid presentations that we see today. This chapter also offers of an analysis in regards to what is, perhaps, the rising form in which crisis thought mobilizations take place: the smartphone medium.

Chapter 4 – “Infrastructure: Crisis and Catastrophe” explores crisis thought in regards to claims of a ‘crisis of infrastructure’ in the US. What this chapter proposes is twofold: the lack of a political and social response to the crisis of infrastructure can perhaps be explained by crisis

thought. More importantly, the ‘crisis of infrastructure’ discourse serves a political, social, and economic purpose in terms of securing security and, thus, liberal rationality as linked to infrastructure and the cultivation of subjectivities. Media and political mobilizations of the ‘crisis of infrastructure’ produce a variety of human conducts and practices in the ordinary. The ‘crisis of infrastructure’ is not meant to be resolved because these mobilizations paradoxically secure the rationality that is simultaneously the cause of and the solution to this particular ‘crisis.’

Chapter 5 – “Lockdown: Crisis Thought and the US Police State” explores the differences and interrelations between militarism and militarization of the police in the United States. Cultural militarism in the United States is often times a subtle form of crisis thought mobilization vis-à-vis state and federal government, 24/7 news media, or authoritarian proponents. Police militarization is examined as a site in which crisis thought is mobilized to make various claims about politics, society, and culture. Police militarization and militarism are posited as ‘symptoms’ of the current US politics of crisis as linked to the emergence of crisis thought and the US national security state. As ‘symptoms,’ police militarization and militarism are posited here as political and social ‘responses’ by some subjects in regards to a society, culture, and world that increasingly appear to be in ‘crisis.’

Lastly, Chapter 6 – “Conclusion: The Province of Crisis Thought” offers the tentative conclusions to this study. Without giving too much away, this chapter summarizes the key points and lessons throughout this study, returning the focus back to points made in the preface and first two chapters. This chapter discusses the contributions and findings of this study, primarily in terms of the linkages shared between crisis thought, security, and liberalism. Additionally, this chapter offers one last, brief, analysis discussing crisis thought in relation to the US ‘crisis of democracy,’ particularly in regards to the 24/7 news media role in US electoral politics

CHAPTER TWO – CRISIS THOUGHT: From Crisis to Crises

I. Crisis Etymology: Ambiguities and Appropriations

Crisis goes back to the ancient Greek word *krinō* meaning to separate, choose, cut, decide, judge, measure, quarrel, or to fight. A crisis is essentially about decisions.⁹⁰ Crises for the Greeks was among the most fundamental concepts in their language, one that “registered all the decision situations of inner and outer life, of individual humans and their communities...it was a concept that always posited a temporal dimension,” which in modern terms implies “a theory of time.”⁹¹ Crisis was considered an inevitable part of political and social life in the face of ineradicable change present in all mortal things and affairs.⁹² In Thucydides, for example, crisis implied decisive battles with a definitive outcome determining the course of a war. For Aristotle, crisis pertained to legal processes leading to judgments or legal decisions rendered by courts or a legislature.⁹³ Crisis was associated with the ordering of the civic community and the arrangement of political life and governance. For example, Aristotle took crisis as “a central concept by which justice and the political order could be harmonized through appropriate legal decisions.”⁹⁴

Crisis was also significant in medicine and later theology. The medical meaning of crisis had similar applications to the political one: to render judgment on the status or course of an

⁹⁰ Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History*, 236-247.

⁹¹ Ibid, 237.

⁹² Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 18. Arendt states: “That change presides over all things mortal was...a prevalent mood throughout the last centuries of antiquity...the Greeks were convinced that the changeability, occurring in the realm of mortals in so far as they were mortals, could not be altered because it was ultimately based on the fact that the [the young]...were constantly invading the stability of the status quo...The Roman-feeling of continuity was unknown in Greece...and it was this experience which persuaded Greek philosophers that they need not take the realm of human affairs too seriously...Human affairs changed constantly but never produced anything entirely new...”

⁹³ Thomas O. Sloan, *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 410.

⁹⁴ Reinhart Koselleck, “Crisis”, trans. Michaela Richter *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 67, no. 2 (2006): 359.

illness. For example, a physician judges whether or not a patient can be treated, cured, or will die because of an injury, virus, or infection. The medical application of ‘crisis’ is seen in the metaphor ‘body politic’ in reference to political societies as a coherent system of interrelated functions.⁹⁵ By the 17th and 18th centuries, classical political thinkers used the body politic metaphor in their treatises on founding social covenants. For instance, Thomas Hobbes’ *Leviathan* contains such anatomic-political flourishes as “for what is the heart, but a spring, and the nerves, but so many strings; and the joints, but so many wheels, giving motion to the whole body, such as was intended by the artificer.”⁹⁶ Crisis was also appropriated by the Jewish people and then subsequently, the Christians, as evident in the Old and New Testaments. In theology, crisis takes on another signification: a judgment before God linked to apocalyptic revelation (i.e., *krisis = iudicium*). Christian doctrines, too, stress the Last Judgment concerning the second coming of Jesus Christ, a doctrine that produces, in a way, a perpetual crisis among the faithful as the resurrection of Christ could, potentially, happen at any moment.

From antiquity to the Enlightenment, the legal, theological, and medical usage of ‘crisis’ still contained “discipline-bound, specific meanings.”⁹⁷ However, as Koselleck notes, these meanings “could – in different ways – be incorporated into modern social and political language,” which is what happened by the 18th century when ‘crisis’ is transferred “into national languages,” such as French, English, and German.⁹⁸ Roughly around the turn of the 17th century, German thinker Leibniz uses ‘crisis’ to “diagnose the opportunities and dangers of the Russian empire during the Nordic Wars,” writing: “And Europe is now in a state of change and in a crisis

⁹⁵ Wolin, *Politics and Vision*, 31.

⁹⁶ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan (with selected variants from the Latin Edition of 1668)*, ed. Edwin Curley (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc, 1994), 3.

⁹⁷ Koselleck, “Crisis,” 361.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 361.

such as has not been known since Charlemagne's empire."⁹⁹ With this particular usage of 'crisis' by Leibniz, and through the gradual "English and French usage [of crisis] and its entry into the German language," the crisis concept is expanded into the "spheres of internal and external politics as well as economics."¹⁰⁰

By the late 18th century and early 19th century, crisis comes to possess a privileged status as a philosophy of history: how one narrates history or comes to know 'time' in a particular way.¹⁰¹ This highlights the strong temporal signification of 'crisis.' Antonio Vazquez-Arroyo writes that crisis conjures "the 'pressure of time' and the need for swift action in the face of alarming, potentially calamitous situations."¹⁰² As Peter Redfield puts it, "time, as the saying goes, is of the essence; the one who hesitates is lost. Such connections between moment and activity are familiar technical tropes, even commonplace in the sense that all material engagement involves an immanent present, and action occurs in the now."¹⁰³ 'Crisis' helps establish a linear narrative of human life being propelled forward, providing political, social, temporal, and epistemological coherence shaping and influencing the way history is written, comprehended and judged. In political thought, crisis as a philosophy of history can be seen in the work of Burke, Paine, and Rousseau in reference to the American and French Revolutions of

⁹⁹ Ibid, 363.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 363.

¹⁰¹ See: Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1987), 1-4; and Janet Roitman, "Crisis," *Political Concepts: A Critical Lexicon*, no. 1, [politicalconcepts.org](http://www.politicalconcepts.org), <http://www.politicalconcepts.org/issue1/crisis/> (Accessed September 11, 2015). A philosophy of history regards how history proceeds randomly or is guided by some principle of order (e.g., dialectic, capitalism, war).

¹⁰² Antonio Y. Vazquez-Arroyo, "How Not to Learn From Catastrophe: Habermas, Critical Theory and the 'Catastrophization' of Political Life" *Political Theory*, vol. 41, no. 5 (2013): 747.

¹⁰³ Peter Redfield, "The Verge of Crisis: Doctors Without Borders in Uganda," in *Contemporary States of Emergency: The Politics of Military and Humanitarian Interventions*, ed. Didier Fassin and Mariella Pandolfi (New York: Zone Books, 2010), 187.

the late 1700's.¹⁰⁴ For these thinkers, a 'crisis' is when "the course of history suddenly begins anew, that an entirely new story, a story never known or told before, is about to unfold."¹⁰⁵

Importantly, Koselleck suggests that, from the 1770's onward, 'crisis' becomes the "structural signature of modernity."¹⁰⁶

The discussion above brings to attention the etymological origins of 'crisis': where 'crisis' comes from and what the sign has historically meant. As 'crisis' was incorporated into distinct fields of knowledge and belief in western societies, the sign 'crisis' gradually lost its original, discipline-bound meanings. By the 19th century, 'crisis' was being used essentially as a "catchword." By 'catchword,' this study means a word or popular phrase printed or placed to attract attention. Koselleck writes: 'crisis' "never crystallized into a concept sufficiently clear to be used...in social, economic, or political language, despite – or perhaps because of – its manifold meanings."¹⁰⁷ The appropriation of 'crisis' throughout various disciplines and the increasing use of the term in popular parlance reduced the sign 'crisis' to a relatively empty signifier (a point which this study returns to below). This shift from specific meanings to catchword also signals a shift from 'crisis' (singular, specific) to 'crises' (plural, catchword). What might account for this shift from 'crisis' to 'crises'?

From the late 18th century and throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, political and social thinkers have often suggested 'crises' are the outcome of enlightened modernity (see Chapter 1). The advent of modernity as a distinct epoch is suggested here to explain the shift from 'crisis' to

¹⁰⁴ See: Thomas Paine, *The American Crisis* (New York: Barnes & Nobel, 2010), Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), and Leo Damrosch, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Restless Genius* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005).

¹⁰⁵ Arendt, *On Revolution*, 19.

¹⁰⁶ Koselleck, "Crisis", 372-374.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 367.

‘crises’ because modernity appears to signal the emergence of a multiplicity of ‘crises,’ especially if we take Marshall Berman’s take on the experience of modernity to be one where we find ourselves:

in an environment that promises us adventure, power, joy, growth, transformation of ourselves and the world – and, at the same time, that threatens to destroy everything we have, everything we know, everything we are...modernity can be said to unite all mankind. But it is a paradoxical unity, a unity of disunity: it pours us all into a maelstrom of perpetual disintegration and renewal, of struggle and contradiction, of ambiguity and anguish. To be modern is to be part of a universe in which, as Marx said, “all that is solid melts into air.”¹⁰⁸

As James Berger points out, “modernity has always been preoccupied by a sense of crisis, viewing as immanent, perhaps even longing for, some conclusive catastrophe.”¹⁰⁹ However, thinkers have differed considerably on what aspects of liberal modernity are more culpable than others, highlighting the shift from ‘crisis’ to ‘crises.’ For instance, Critchley notes that thinkers from Marx to Foucault have put forward various theories on modernity “as being in crisis, whether this is expressed as a crisis of faith in a bourgeois-philistine world (in Kierkegaard), a crisis of the European sciences (in Husserl), of the human sciences (in Foucault), of nihilism (in Nietzsche), of the forgetfulness of being (in Heidegger), of bourgeois-capitalist society (in Marx), of the hegemony of instrumental rationality and the domination of nature (in Adorno and Max Horkheimer), or whatever.”¹¹⁰ What this shift from ‘crisis’ to ‘crises’ perhaps suggests is that the singular and plural forms of the crisis concept appear to no longer matter. To say, for example, ‘the US is in crisis’ today is to imply various, interrelated, sometimes distinct and contradictory crises happening or emerging simultaneously or at different times. That is, ‘crisis’

¹⁰⁸ Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Penguin Books, 1982), 15.

¹⁰⁹ James Berger, *After the End: Representations of the Post-Apocalypse* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), xiii.

¹¹⁰ Simon Critchley, *Continental Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 73.

today, as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri note, “is no longer limited and specific but becomes a general omni-crisis,” where ‘crisis’ “takes on an entirely different character.”¹¹¹ For Koselleck, “it is precisely through the multiplicity” of ‘crises’ that may point to the “existence of a real ‘crisis,’ even though it is not yet fully captured in any of the interpretations offered at that moment.”¹¹²

Crisis still describes a time of judgement, difficulty, or danger when important decisions must be made by an individual, group, or state.¹¹³ Crisis signifies three to four kinds of meanings (all of which, except the last, are temporal in nature): 1) a warning of some impending or looming threat; 2) a turning point regarding the linear course of a subject/object or event, 3) a transformative process that is occurring presently or will occur in the future. This study adds to these a suggested fourth definition from Janet Roitman: 4) crisis as a point of departure in which to critique present political and social conditions.

In politics, ‘crisis’ claims are often constructed by the 24/7 news media and politicians to be received as immediate and imperative to justify various political actions, expediency, or realpolitik strategies globally. Crisis claims are typically hyperbolic, efficacious, and intentionally provocative. Crisis is a useful signifier that can be attached to almost any political

¹¹¹ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: Penguin Books, 2004), 8.

¹¹² Koselleck, “Crisis,” 370.

¹¹³ Crisis,” OED Online. June 2014. Oxford University Press.

<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/44539?redirected> (Accessed July 30, 2014). The Oxford English Dictionary entry for crisis includes: “1) the point in the progress of a disease when an important development or change takes place which is decisive of recovery or death; the turning-point of a disease for better or worse; also applied to any marked or sudden variation occurring in the progress of a disease and to the phenomena accompanying it; 2) a vitally important or decisive stage in the progress of anything; a turning point; also, a state of affairs in which a decisive change for better or worse is imminent; now applied especially to times of difficulty, insecurity, and suspense in politics or commerce; 3) a judgment or decision, and 4) or point by which to judge; a criterion, token, sign.”

or social concern, domestically or internationally. Crisis in politics is applied to claims regarding state authority and legitimacy, juridical practices, policymaking, governance, national security, or human subjectivity. Crises in politics are typically used to express that X, Y, or Z will likely have a lasting, permanent impact (for better or for worse, but more often than not, assuming the worst) if the crisis proceeds without intervention by some external or internal force (e.g., mediator, cure, decision-maker, resolution, agreement, equilibrium).

Political Science and International Relations (IR) are replete with formulations of what a ‘crisis’ is. Koselleck considers that a crisis “indicates insecurity, misfortune, and test, and refers to an unknown future whose conditions cannot be sufficiently elucidated.”¹¹⁴ In a reversal from the Greek meaning, Wolin writes that a ‘crisis’ is indicative of a “derangement” in the arrangement of political and social life (i.e., the foundations, constitution or practices of a society); crises are “the result of forces or conditions beyond control...contingent matters...about which men can meaningfully deliberate and choose. These...derangements are the result of certain types of errors or mistakes...in arrangements, in decisions, and in beliefs...often interrelated and combined.”¹¹⁵ Jürgen Habermas thinks of a crisis as a “turning point in a fateful process...of conflicting norms against which the identities of the participants shatter...when the consensual foundations of normative structures are so much impaired that the society becomes anomic.”¹¹⁶ Ashley and Walker write that a crisis is “an agitation and acceleration of social activity such that...[it] transgresses the institutional limitations of a social

¹¹⁴ Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History*, 236.

¹¹⁵ Sheldon S. Wolin, “Political Theory as a Vocation,” *The American Political Science Review*, vol. 63, no. 7 (December 1969): 1080.

¹¹⁶ Jürgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), 2-3.

order.”¹¹⁷ Roitman suggests that ‘crisis’ is an expression of when “normativity is laid bare.” For her, crisis facilitates questions about “the contingent or partial quality of knowledge claims” and challenges those “principles, suppositions, premises, criteria, and logical or causal relations” considered essential to order.¹¹⁸

Late 19th and early 20th century thinker Jacob Burckhardt, presumably, would not dispute the conceptualizations of ‘crisis’ above. However, he also would be more likely to question the situations, events, or moments in which ‘crisis’ is applied. Burckhardt writes: “at various times, civil and religious disputes have filled the air with a lasting and deafening clamor, yet without leading to vital transformations. The political and social foundations of the state were never shaken or even called in question.”¹¹⁹ A crisis, then, is when the foundations of the *status quo* are not simply shaken but radically altered, transformed for the sake of political order, or destroyed all together. For Burckhardt, crisis claims in our time are, perhaps, not what we consider them to be; nor is ‘crisis’ an accurate assessment of various troubles and issues that arise in political and social life. For Burckhardt, what we often consider a ‘crisis’ today is of minor significance in the end. For him, ‘crises’ are indicative that the political system is functioning, more or less, effectively (as no political system, yet, has ever been perfect), as crises should be regarded as a genuine sign of vitality of that system. The Greeks thought the same thing. To put this in perspective, the United States is said to display numerous dysfunctions, disorders, and derangements domestically or related to international politics. Oddly enough (and with few exceptions), most of these ‘crises’ never reach a critical tipping point to produce ‘vital

¹¹⁷ Richard K. Ashley and R.B.J. Walker, “Conclusion: Reading Dissidence/Writing the Discipline: Crisis and the Question of Sovereignty in International Relations,” *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 34, no. 3 Special Issue: Speaking the Language of Exile: Dissidence in International Studies (Sep. 1990): 377-378.

¹¹⁸ Roitman, *Anti-Crisis*, 3-4.

¹¹⁹ Jacob Burckhardt, *Reflections on History* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, Inc. 1979), 223.

transformations' of the state or existing social conditions. To be sure, many 'crises' are likely to be perceived by some individuals and groups as transformative. However, this is beside the point, which is not to dismiss the concerns of the former groups and people arbitrarily, but to convey that Burckhardt thinks a 'crisis' is not a trivial, transient, or minor occurrence, but rather that a 'crisis' is a major event with lasting and sometimes irrevocable repercussions.

Taken together, the above demonstrates the multiple ways of thinking about and applying the crisis signifier to political and ordinary events. This illustrates that while the meaning of 'crisis' may appear self-evident, as with many terms in the political lexicon (e.g., democracy, citizenship, justice, equity, authority, legitimacy, and so on) 'crisis' has become notoriously ambiguous, with distinct variations in meaning and application. This discussion leads us one step closer to crisis thought. As noted above, the origins of crisis thought develop as an outcome of 1) the conceptual history of the sign 'crisis,' and as discussed in the following, 2) the exceptional nature of United States liberal capitalist democracy. When and where does crisis thought emerge and why? These questions are explored in the following section.

II. Genesis of Crisis Thought

Crisis thought emerges in the mid-20th century between the years 1945 and 1947 as a post-World War II phenomenon in the United States. As noted previously, this study focuses on crisis thought in the US. On the one hand, crisis thought is the result of Anglo-Saxon (or English language) appropriations of Greek words and concepts throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. On the other hand, crisis thought is a result of the foundational arrangements of the US liberal capitalist democracy. This section responds to questions in regards to the origins of crisis thought. In so doing, this section offers a brief recitation of US history, and to some extent, global history. This discussion also introduces the historical backdrop this study returns to in

Chapters 3 and 5. None of this should be that surprising or new. This recitation is intentionally brief. This discussion is to illustrate a general pattern that illuminates the history of the alleged politics of crisis in the US and the emergence of crisis thought that accounts for it. To be sure, US history is not all ‘gloom and doom.’ Throughout US history, there have been moments of triumph, success, and glory. Some examples might include the Marshall Plan, averting nuclear holocaust in the Cuban Missile Crisis, or the death of Osama bin Laden in 2011.

Crisis thought emerges in the US because we have never known or experienced political or social decline (if decline is the right word to use). Crisis thought, perhaps, could only develop in a country as exceptional as the United States. Briefly, by ‘exceptional’ this study follows Seymour Lipset who thinks of American exceptionalism as consisting of five broad categories: “liberty, egalitarianism, individualism, populism, and *laissez-faire*.” Crucially, Lipset notes that ‘exceptional’ (as used in this study) is not meant to suggest that, “America is better than other countries or has a superior culture. Rather...it is qualitatively different, that it is an outlier.”¹²⁰ That is, this study uses ‘exceptional’ to note the historical, political, social, cultural, and economic differences of the US from other western societies.

Crisis thought in the US could be said to begin with the obvious: the United States is born from crisis. That is, the American Revolution, as immortalized in the opening of Thomas Paine’s essays collected in *The American Crisis*.¹²¹ From there, one could look at the social covenants of the state, starting with the failed 1781 Articles of Confederation. By the summer of 1787, the US

¹²⁰ Seymour Martin Lipset, *American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996), 18-19.

¹²¹ Paine, *The American Crisis*, 1. Paine states: “these are the times that try men’s souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands by it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph.”

was in the throws of crisis. Pauline Maier writes that the early republic was facing a crisis of “a crippled national government... a people incapable of self government [and] a revolutionary cause on the brink of failure.”¹²² It was to remedy the crisis of authority and legitimacy by amending the Articles the Philadelphia convention in May 1787 originally set out to do. However, the delegates then decided it would be best if the Articles were scrapped altogether and that a new constitution be written.

The failures of the ‘new’ 1787 US Constitution might also be cited as an example of where crisis thought in the US takes root. One could note of the institution of slavery, as well as the inherent vagueness of the document evident by the US Constitution’s brevity. The US Constitution itself could also be said to be a foundation for crisis thought in the US, particularly in regards to present-day crisis claims of a ‘crisis of democracy.’ Charles Beard’s analysis of the US Constitution led him to suggest it is “an economic and antidemocratic document.”¹²³ One of the major issues at hand for the Founders was an “excess of democracy.”¹²⁴ For the Founders, “the country could never attract capital until it became less democratic.”¹²⁵ From the 19th century, one would certainly include the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the various troubles and issues associated with the Gilded Age, including the deplorable social and working conditions created by unbridled capitalism and industrialization. This is not to forget the social movements

¹²² Pauline Maier, *Ratification: The People Debate the Constitution, 1787-1788* (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2010), 11-17.

¹²³ Alan Gibson, *Interpreting the Founding: Guide to the Enduring Debates over the Origins and Foundations of the American Republic – Second Edition, Revised and Expanded* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2009), 10. Gibson elucidates on Beard’s analysis, stating that the 1787 US Constitution “was an economic and antidemocratic document proposed and ratified by holders of personality (merchants, money lenders, manufacturers, capitalists, and financiers) and opposed by holders of realty (nonslaveholding farmers and debtors). . . .”

¹²⁴ Woody Holton, *Unruly Americans and the Origins of the Constitution* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007), 14.

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, 274.

and political events of the early 20th century such as President McKinley's assassination in 1901, the Women's Suffrage movement, the Temperance movement against the ravages of alcohol, and last but not least, World War I.

This recitation would be incomplete without including mention of the end of European colonial empires with the start of World War I. The Russian Revolution in 1917 should also be noted as well. Prior to the 20th century, the US was relatively isolationist in international affairs, US activities relegated to the western hemisphere as embodied in the Monroe Doctrine.¹²⁶ From George Washington's Farewell address and the Pacificus articles of Alexander Hamilton, the US originally had reservations about imperial colonization and conquest.¹²⁷ The Spanish-American War signaled the beginnings of US imperial ambitions, alongside the US annexation of the Philippines in the early 1900's. United States involvement in World War I was brief, from April 1917 when the US entered the war, to Germany's surrender in November 1918.

After World War I, global relations are said to have entered a crisis. E.H. Carr suggested liberal utopianism had blinded western leaders to the precarious state of international relations preceding the events of 1914 that set the stage for the Great War. Carr writes: "the characteristic feature of the crisis of the twenty years between 1919 and 1939 was the abrupt descent from the visionary hopes of the first decade to the grim despair of the second, from a utopia which took little account of reality to a reality from which every element of utopia was rigorously excluded."¹²⁸ In Carr's view, this 'crisis' paved the way for World War II. And it is in the last

¹²⁶ Carl Schmitt, *The Nomos of the Earth: In the International Law of the Jus Publicum Europaeum* (New York: Telos Press Publishing, 2003), 240.

¹²⁷ Hans J. Morgenthau, "The Primacy of the National Interest," *The American Scholar*, vol. 18, no. 2 (Spring 1949): 208-209.

¹²⁸ Edward Hallett Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* (New York: Perennial, 2001), 224.

months of World War II and the post-war years to follow that crisis thought would emerge via the domestic and foreign policy of the United States.

The economic boom-time of the ‘roaring’ 1920’s with the introduction of credit and plethora of new consumer products was abruptly ended by the 1929 stock market crash and the subsequent Great Depression of the 1930’s. The Great Depression ended with the crisis of World War II, which irrevocably changed the United States’ political trajectory domestically and globally for the decades thereafter. The so-called ‘good war’ was followed by the onset of the Cold War between the rival ‘superpowers of the US and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). The Cold War is significant because many of the political and social crises in the US and globally from 1947 to 1991 were often generated, linked to, and inscribed on American life through various practices of foreign and national security policy.¹²⁹

Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) rulings have also been conduits for crisis thought in the US, going back to *Marbury v. Madison* and *Dred Scott v. Sanford*.¹³⁰ The 1954 case *Brown v. Board of Education* and the burgeoning Civil Rights Movement were perceived as a ‘crisis’ by some subjects and politicians. Other crises of the 1950’s included the Korean War, McCarthyism, and generalized anxiety about nuclear war (see below). With the 1960’s there is the Bay of Pigs, the Cuban Missile Crisis, Kennedy’s assassination, the Watts riots, escalation of the Vietnam War, political and social upheaval among members of the Baby-Boomer generation,

¹²⁹ David Campbell, “Global Inscription: How Foreign Policy Constitutes the United States,” *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* no.15 (1990): 280. Campbell states: “The Cold War was a strategy of global inscription that was both extensive and intensive in its disciplinary effects: the great scope of anti-communism as a discourse of danger was matched by its impact on the detail of everyday life in the United States.”

¹³⁰ Robert Strauss, “Worst. President. Ever,” *politico.com*, <http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/09/donald-trump-hillary-clinton-worst-president-james-buchanan-214252> (Accessed September 18, 2016).

and the violence surrounding the 1968 US Democratic Party's National Convention, preceded by the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert Kennedy. By 1968, it would not be a mischaracterization to suggest, as historical and popular culture narratives often do, that 'everything' in the US appeared to be in crisis. While advances were made in the form of civil and voting rights legislation, alongside many pivotal SCOTUS rulings regarding the rights of the individual, unlike the Progressive era at the turn of the century, many of the crises that came to a head in the 1960's have never, really, been resolved. We are still reeling from the troubles, issues, and 'crises' of inequality, race relations, police brutality and numerous others. This also suggests that the perception of the US as a politics of crisis is not new.

The 1970's continued this pattern of crisis with ongoing protests over Vietnam, the beginnings of the War on Drugs, the 1973 oil crisis, Watergate, and economic "stagflation" of the late 70's. Of note is President Jimmy Carter's so-called "malaise speech," (although Carter never used the term 'malaise' in the speech) which attempted to mobilize crisis thought by appealing to America's better angels (i.e., good will, altruism, community). However, it appears that the majority of Americans did not like what they heard. Andrew Bacevich elaborates on the July 15, 1979 speech. President Carter spoke to the country suggesting that, "[America]...was experiencing a 'crisis of confidence'...that strikes at the very heart and soul and spirit of our national will," a crisis threatening "to destroy the social and political fabric of America." Bacevich writes, that "the spreading American crisis of confidence was an outward manifestation of an underlying crisis of values...Carter implied that he was merely voicing concern that his listeners already shared: that average Americans viewed their lives as empty, unsatisfying rituals

of buying and longed for something more meaningful.”¹³¹ US national interests in the Middle East were also shaken by the Iranian Revolution in 1978 with the overthrow of the Shah, and brought to considerable attention with the 1979 Iranian Hostage crisis. That same year as well, détente with the Soviet Union ended, marked by the USSR’s invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. The 1980’s, too, began in ‘crisis,’ with lingering economic woes and President Carter’s unsuccessful diplomatic and military attempts to rescue the 52 American hostages held by Iran (most notably, the failed military rescue mission Operation Eagle Claw). ‘Crises’ continued to emerge: John Lennon gets shot, the attempt on President Reagan’s life in 1981, and Reagan’s own voodoo-economics’ tax cut legislation, and anti-communist rhetoric raising fears once again of nuclear war between the US and USSR.¹³²

Even the end of the Cold War was framed as a ‘crisis.’ Francis Fukuyama wrote of the “end of history” in which competing ideological conflicts as the movers of history were now over with liberal capitalist democracy’s victory of Soviet communism. The last stage or the end of history was liberalism’s ascent as the predominant ideology across the globe. Shortly thereafter, Samuel Huntington claimed an impending “clash of civilizations,” rooted in the geopolitical fault-lines the Cold War had effectively sublimated.¹³³ Yet, there was also a brief resurgence of optimism in global relations in the 1991-1993 period. This was evident in US President George H. W. Bush’s (Bush I) phrase “new world order,” and what scholar Charles Kegley, Jr. called the “neoidealist moment,” a time offering greater prospects for global

¹³¹ Andrew J. Bacevich, *The Limits of Power: The End of American Exceptionalism* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2008), 32-36.

¹³² Other crises in the 1980’s included: Iran-Contra, AIDS, the space-shuttle Challenger explosion, the War on Drugs, Black Monday in 1987, and baby Jessica who fell down a 22-ft well in Texas.

¹³³ See: Francis Fukuyama, “The End of History,” *The National Interest* (Summer 1989); and Samuel Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 72, no. 3 (Summer 1993).

economic prosperity and collective security than the harsh realism of the Cold War.¹³⁴ However, not long after that, it was clear the neoidealist moment was mistaken. Perhaps the realists were right about a bipolar balance of power. With the Cold War over, “the crises of 1914, 1918, 1929, and 1939 all returned along with new economic or ecological problems.”¹³⁵

A 1994 essay by Robert Kaplan published in *The Atlantic* entitled “The Coming Anarchy” highlights this particularly well. Kaplan suggests a looming Malthusian doomsday is approaching, where “environmental scarcity, cultural and racial clashes, geographic destiny, and the transformation of war” will beget a gradual, global unraveling of international order, and a future where it is unclear whether “the United States will survive the next century in exactly its present form.”¹³⁶ Domestic and international crises were numerous throughout the presidency of Bill Clinton. These included the siege on the Branch Dividian compound in Waco, TX in April 1993, the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, the 1996 Atlanta Olympic bombings, the Columbine High School shootings in 1999, fears of world-wide collapse due to Y2K, and the 2000 US presidential election, where US constitutional democracy was put in considerable doubt. ‘Crises’ internationally included the Somalia famine of 1992, the Rwandan refugee crisis of 1994, ethnic cleansing in the Bosnian War from 1992-1995, and the US and allied humanitarian interventions in the Kosovan War in 1999.¹³⁷ The turn of the century continued this pattern of crisis emergence

¹³⁴ See: Charles Kegley, Jr, “The Neoidealist Moment in International Studies? Realist Myths and the New International Realities: ISA Presidential Address March 27, 1993 Acapulco, Mexico,” *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 37, no. 2 (June 1993), and Luke, “The Discipline of Security Studies,” 327.

¹³⁵ Timothy W. Luke and Gearoid O. Tuathail, “On Videocameristics: The Geopolitics of Failed States, the CNN International and (UN) governmentality,” *Review of International Political Economy*, vol. 4, no. 4 (Winter, 1997): 716.

¹³⁶ Robert D. Kaplan, “The Coming Anarchy” *The Atlantic*, (February 1994).

¹³⁷ See: Luke and O. Tuathail, “On Videocameristics,” 711; and Gerard Toal and Carl T. Dahlman, *Bosnia Remade: Ethnic Cleansing and Its Reversal* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

and (re)production. Most notably the events of 9/11 and corresponding Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), alongside growing inequality, a rising rate of mass spree killings (see Chapter 5), and deepening ideological partisanship among the US electorate.

Crisis thought emerges in the 1945-1947 period because it was then the United States recognized “that its vast economic resources, conventional military capabilities, and nuclear monopoly could be used to inscribe a new kind of transnational order.”¹³⁸ On the one hand, the US engaged a new global *nomos* that it had never, really, been part of. Quoting Carl Schmitt, after World War I, the US exhibited “a peculiar mixture of official absence and effective presence” in international relations, and had never engaged the rest of the world as a major player prior to the 20th century outside of the western hemisphere.¹³⁹ On the other hand, crisis thought emerges in accord with Walter Benjamin’s quote that when “the ‘state of emergency’ in which we live is not the exception but the rule.”¹⁴⁰ Put differently, as Donald Pease suggests, “after World War II, America became a state of exception.”¹⁴¹

The state of exception is rooted in the theoretical underpinnings of state sovereignty and, ultimately, in the validity of political authority and legitimacy.¹⁴² In *Political Theology*, Schmitt

¹³⁸ Luke, “The Discipline of Security Studies,” 315.

¹³⁹ Schmitt, *The Nomos of the Earth*, 251.

¹⁴⁰ Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, trans Harry Zohn, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 257.

¹⁴¹ Donald E. Pease, *The New American Exceptionalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 62.

¹⁴² See: Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 19; and Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (New York: Verso, 2004), 61. For Agamben, at issue in the sovereign exception is “the creation and definition of the very space in which the juridical-political order can have validity.” Judith Butler writes, “for Agamben, the state reveals its extra-legal status when it designates a state of exception to the rule of law and thereby withdraws the law selectively from its application. The result is a production of a paralegal universe that goes by the name of law.”

infamously declares that, “Sovereign is he who decides the exception.”¹⁴³ For Schmitt, the exception is “a case of extreme peril, a danger to the existence of the state, or the like.”¹⁴⁴ The sovereign decides what the exception is (i.e., what constitutes a crisis, disorder, or threat). In so doing, the sovereign effectively suspends the state Constitution in order to expedite crisis solutions. However, once the crisis is over for Schmitt, the Constitution and normal situation are to be restored as they once were prior to the crisis. That is to say, an exception is largely synonymous with an emergency or crisis in political and ordinary life. The exception, then, is the result of a crisis.

For Giorgio Agamben, the United States remains in a “permanent state of exception internally.”¹⁴⁵ However, a permanent state of exception is no longer exceptional if it becomes the new normal situation. Mark Neocleous notes that the United States is not exceptional in regards to the heightened level of securitization associated with exceptional or emergency powers of the state in comparison to other countries military and police actions during the second-half of the 20th century. “The real story,” Neocleous writes, “of emergency powers is much less a story of wartime responses, and much more a story of two interrelated processes. First, a broadening of the definition of what constitutes an emergency, taking the notion well beyond military conflicts and crises. And, second, a drastic increase in the scope of emergency powers.” Neocleous reminds us that “the United States has been following the normal route,” although crucially, “new forms of emergency powers to deal with exceptional events” have over time “ended up becoming permanent and normalized.”¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ Schmitt, *Political Theology*, 5.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, 6.

¹⁴⁵ Agamben, *State of Exception*, 87.

¹⁴⁶ Mark Neocleous, “The Problem with Normality: Taking Exception to Permanent Emergency,” *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, vol. 31, no. 2 (Apr-June 2006): 195-200.

The state of exception is understood in this study as the US national security state, speaking to the broadening of state emergency powers, but also to the expanded definitions of what constitutes an emergency or crisis. After 1945, every living thing on planet Earth potentially becomes a target in a global Armageddon of our own making. Both the Holocaust undertaken by the Nazis and the dropping of two atomic bombs by the United States on Japan demonstrated the peaks (but also deplorable lows) of scientific, liberal, instrumental rationality. Liberal reason had finally created the means to systematically destroy distinct populations of people, as well as the capability of wiping off the face of the planet most all forms of species life. Rey Chow writes: “to conceive of the world as a target is to conceive of it as an object to be destroyed.”¹⁴⁷ This, too, should not be surprising. What is Enlightenment’s ‘mastery over nature’ other than the arrogant declaration to devise the means and mechanizations to bend the Earth, move the ground, corrupt the soil, pollute the water, and shape the landscape to fit human desires? Perhaps the ability to destroy the Earth, then, has always been a priority.¹⁴⁸

Domestic and international policy begins to blur with the Cold War. As Campbell notes, “the Cold War needs to be understood as a disciplinary strategy...the articulation of security involved a new writing of the boundaries of American identity.”¹⁴⁹ For the duration of the Cold War, US national security policy was predominantly aimed at containing the Soviet Union’s “expansionist tendencies” that became the touchstone of US foreign policy starting with the Truman Doctrine. George Kennan wrote: “in these circumstances it is clear that the main element of any United States policy towards the Soviet Union must be that of a long term,

¹⁴⁷ Rey Chow, *The Age of the World Target: Self-Referentiality in War, Theory, and Comparative Work* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 31.

¹⁴⁸ Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 31.

¹⁴⁹ Campbell, *Writing Security*, 153.

patient, but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies.”¹⁵⁰ Containment policy, “speaks to a threat outside of the social body, a threat which therefore has to be isolated, in quarantine, and kept at bay from the domestic; and a second meaning of containment, which speaks to the domestic contents of the social body, a threat internal to the host which must then be neutralized by being contained or domesticated.”¹⁵¹ Cold War containment policy was also analogous to containing, arguably, the ultimate crisis: mutually assured destruction (MAD) in the outbreak of nuclear war, once the Soviets acquired ‘the bomb’ in 1949. Mutually assured destruction, or the new fear of violent death (i.e., violent in the sense of being incinerated, blown apart, effaced from existence, or dying slowly from radioactive fallout, starvation, and the emotionally painful act of watching everyone you know and love die around you) would have numerous effects on political and ordinary life in the US and are considered here to be the earliest mobilizations of crisis thought in the US. For example, Joseph Masco writes that:

the early Cold War state sought to install a specific idea of the bomb in the American imagination through multiple media sources and spectacles, creating a new psychosocial space between the utopian promises of American technoscience and the minute-to-minute threat of thermonuclear incineration. It sought to make contemplating mass death an intimate psychological experience, while simultaneously claiming that nuclear war could be planned for alongside tornados, floods and traffic accidents. Civil defense officials ultimately sought to make nuclear war a space for nation building and thereby bring this new form of death under the control of the state.¹⁵²

Masco’s quote illustrates one early mobilization of crisis thought by the state in regards to the atomic bomb, transposed into the ordinary and political life world through multiple media sources and spectacles. These efforts were to condition American subjects to heed the will of the emerging military-industrial complex – a notorious iron triangle joining the military, Congress,

¹⁵⁰ George Kennan, “The Sources of Soviet Conduct,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 25, no. 4 (July 1947): 575.

¹⁵¹ Campbell, *Writing Security*, 156.

¹⁵² Joseph Masco, *The Theater of Operations: National Security Affect From The Cold War to The War on Terror* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 54-55.

and private weapons manufactures, in an insidious relationship whereby war (i.e., a crisis if there ever was one) can be made into profitable economic endeavor. By 1962 the US and the USSR came as close as they ever had to nuclear annihilation. Graham Allison notes:

The Cuban missile crisis is a seminal event. For thirteen days of October 1962, there was a higher probability that more human lives would end suddenly than ever before in history. Had the worst occurred, the death of 100 million Americans, over 100 million Russians, and millions of Europeans was well would make previous natural calamities and inhumanities appear insignificant. Given the probability of disaster – which President Kennedy estimated as ‘between 1 out of 3 and even’ – our escape seems awesome.¹⁵³

From the 1950’s onward, it appears that ‘crises’ in the blurring of domestic life and international politics were magnified. This is in part due to the rise of mass media communications, particularly television (see Chapter 3). Crisis thought emerges side-by-side with the rise of the US national security state and the cultivation of a particular conduct among US subjects as mobilized in the fight against communism, the USSR, and anything non-capitalist. It is now well known that the domestic and foreign threat presented by the Soviet Union and the spread of communism was greatly exaggerated. Peter Hough writes that, “most do now consider that talk of Communist world revolution was more Soviet rhetoric than reality but the threat was taken seriously and the United States’ response was certainly more than rhetorical.”¹⁵⁴ Debates may persist on the virtue or ethics of crisis thought mobilization. However, the goal here is to simply illustrate the emergence of the phenomenon.

During and after the 1945-1947 period, the US undergoes a qualitative and empirical shift in regards to practicing national security; one seemingly focused less on existential threats and more on the conduct of subjectivities. The linkages between crisis thought and security are illuminated (i.e., the security of the state and subjects as tied to the liberal project of security)

¹⁵³ Graham T. Allison, “Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis,” *The American Political Science Review*, vol. LXII, no. 3 (September 1969): 689.

¹⁵⁴ Hough, *Understanding Global Security*, 28.

with the development of the US national security state. Henry Giroux notes: “the state...radically transformed into a national security state, increasingly put under the sway of the military-corporate-industrial-educational complex. The military logic of fear, surveillance, and control is gradually permeating our schools, universities, streets, media, popular culture, and criminal justice system.”¹⁵⁵ Neocleous defines a national security state as when a state that “identifies security – simultaneously of the people and the state...as the definitive aspect of state power. Security becomes the overriding political interest, the principle above all other principles and underpins interventions across the social realm in the name of the reason of state.”¹⁵⁶

Another way of describing this is to note that the US began to think and act on their insecurities, which further informed the emergence of crisis thought. The passage from the post-WWII years and into the decades thereafter sets the course for crisis thought. Tom Engelhardt offers the following in explaining the (then) future course of crisis thought:

Americans had lived with and within victory culture for so long that no one left its precincts voluntarily...The loss of boundaries beyond which conflict could be projected and of an enemy suitable for defeat in those borderlands meant a collapse of story. The post-Vietnam War years have so far represented only the afterlife of this societal crisis, the playing out of storylessness...after 1975, the basic impulse of America’s political and military leaders (as well as of many other Americans) was not to forge a new relationship to the world but to reconstruct a lost identity of triumph.¹⁵⁷

Could the roots of the present perception of a US politics of crisis be so simple? That we lack a unifying story, or as Lyotard put it, an “incredulity to metanarratives?”¹⁵⁸ Engelhardt is not necessarily saying with ‘storylessness’ that there is not a story to tell (there is, this study has been

¹⁵⁵ Henry A. Giroux, “The Emerging Authoritarianism in the United States: Political Culture under the Bush/Cheney Administration,” *symploke*, vol. 14, no. ½, Discouragement (2006): 124.

¹⁵⁶ Neocleous, *Critique of Security*, 18.

¹⁵⁷ Tom Engelhardt, *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995), 15.

¹⁵⁸ Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1979), xxiii-xxiv.

telling it). Instead, perhaps the problem is what this story is about, what this story might suggest, how this story is turning, and the characterization of the US in that story, one that is not framed in exaggerations about US exceptionalism. It would seem American subjects over the last several decades are not comfortable with this story as presented here, either denying or refusing to believe that the US could be anything but a shining city on a hill for all countries and peoples.

Some of these American subjectivities have become recalcitrant, turning their heads away from the present and from resolving the crises of our times (either because they do not believe them or do not recognize them as such – e.g., the crisis of infrastructure or crisis of police militarization) choosing to put their energies and imaginations to work in constructing a fiction of “America” in their own minds – their own imagined community as Anderson might put it.¹⁵⁹ Indeed, it would seem this illusory ‘America’ has made the experience, acceptance, or rejection of the myriad of crises appear much worse. Similarly, there seems to be a degree of cognitive dissonance occurring among these subjectivities, one that perhaps has been noted by political parties, the 24/7 news media, and private enterprises. It is a dissonance that is profitable by way of cultivating militarism and gun culture (see Chapter 5). It is a dissonance that is also fragile, yet in some respects, socially useful, but not always. It is fragile because it fluctuates with the course of domestic and international political events, and is prone to irrational fears and violence. This dissonance is useful primarily in making many of the lives, political activities, and spending habits of subjects predictable and manageable, which is useful, perhaps, to governments and manufacturers for the purposes of governing and producing commodities, respectively. Perhaps crisis thought has had a hand in provoking these competing claims about the story of America, as well as the heightening sense we are living in a politics of crisis.

¹⁵⁹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* – New Edition (New York: Verso, 2006).

III. Crisis Thought: Language, Formations, and Mobilizations

‘Crisis’ is a relatively empty signifier today and it has been for some time now. Emphasis is placed on *relatively* to express ‘in relation to,’ but a relation that is not comparable to or exact. Relative denotes the adjective ‘empty’ to be commensurate, but not equal to ‘empty’ in the literal sense of the word as signifying a subject, object, or crisis claim as desolate or without substance. In this sense, ‘empty’ conveys that what is often presented to us as a ‘crisis’ is nothing more than a set of exaggerations, and at best, a set of emotional or subjective statements of fact or, perhaps, fiction. Burckhardt speaks to this, writing, “crises in our day are predominantly due to the influence of the press and of commerce...and may therefore either stimulate or stupefy.”¹⁶⁰

The emptiness of crisis expresses that the empirical or theoretical referents of ‘crisis’ are often misconstrued, exaggerated, or simply absent. Whenever ‘crisis’ is spoken, read or received by the subject, group, or government, ‘crisis,’ more often than not, fails to signify what the sign is supposed to convey. What ‘crisis’ signifies is usually lacking in some capacity. What appears to be lacking in ‘crisis’ is a definitive meaning and the urgency that the sign is supposed to convey. Yet, ‘crisis’ still has an affect. The empty signifier ‘crisis’ still achieves a kind of performativity, defined by Debrix as when “language itself is the performance, independent of the agent’s intentions.”¹⁶¹ Crisis thought addresses how ‘crisis’ still signifies ‘something,’ even when the effect is contrary to our expectations. ‘Crisis,’ then, is not meaningless, but appears misunderstood and malleable to various mobilizations and interpretations.

¹⁶⁰ Burckhardt, *Reflections on History*, 251.

¹⁶¹ Debrix, “Language, Nonfoundationalism, International Relations,” 7-12. Debrix elucidates: “performativity – the condition of any object or subject being or appearing as a performance language – denotes the fact that language itself is the performance, independent of the agent’s or the structure’s deeds or intentions.”

‘Emptiness’ can be understood here in the way ‘crisis’ rolls off the tongue in casual conversations. This emptiness is seen in how ‘crisis’ seems to fill in for gaps in our political thinking where a more appropriate noun could be used to describe a particular event, moment, or situation as it emerges, develops, or is used in narrative constructions. The emptiness of ‘crisis’ makes the sign interchangeable or confused with terms like: danger, risk, uncertainty, anxiety, conflict, controversy, antagonism, anomie, fear, panic, disorder, genocide, catastrophe, disaster, apocalypse, insecurity, conspiracy, and common in political texts, war, revolution, exception, emergency, or civil disobedience.¹⁶² With crisis thought, semantics go out the window in the so-called “postmodern” implosion of referentiality.¹⁶³ Terms like those above are easily confused with ‘crisis’ even as their precise meaning is far from signaling a ‘crisis.’ Signs like these circulate together, coalesce around one another, and conflate in the mind of subjects, groups, politicians, pundits, critics and analysts to the point where the distinctions between the terms is lost. Because of these indistinctions, importantly, crisis thought can be mobilized in statements where ‘crisis’ is not present through various codes and signs that invoke or evoke, accurately or inaccurately, ‘crisis,’ eliciting the same sentience (i.e., the ability to perceive or feel things) for the subject as a ‘crisis’ proper.

The emptiness of crisis is also a reflection of the alleged postmodern condition where ‘crisis’ is seemingly everywhere and nowhere. John Scharr speaks to this in the following:

¹⁶² Hannah Arendt, *Crises of the Republic* (Orlando: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1972), 96. Arendt states: “It is my contention that civil disobedients are nothing but the latest form of voluntary association, and that they are thus quite in tune with the oldest traditions of the country.”

¹⁶³ For more on postmodernity, see: Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), Ulrich Beck, Anthony Giddens, and Scott Lash, *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), and Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity* (Malden: Polity Press, 2000).

Ours is said to be a time of crisis, even an Age of Crisis... We have the urban crisis, the race crisis, the energy crisis, and the ecological crisis. The family is said to be in crisis; so too are the schools and the church; so too is the system of criminal justice along with the welfare and health-care systems. Many have described the cultural crisis. Everybody has heard of the crisis of democracy...the political world throws up crises of all descriptions, general and particular, at home and abroad. There is a population crisis and a food crisis...the crisis of authority...the legitimation crisis, and the fiscal crisis of the state...¹⁶⁴

Crisis is everywhere because subjects are constantly bombarded by crisis claims through popular culture, the 24/7 news media, and ideological partisan politics. 'Crisis' is nowhere because for the everyday person's immediate, day to day life is seemingly unaffected by many of the crises said to be happening in the world, independent of whether these crises are real or transient. For example, if the subject lives in a rural area, it is doubtful that an urban crisis is much of a concern. Likewise, if politics were something the subject rarely engages, a crisis of democracy would also seem vague and distant.

Crisis thought accounts for how these distinctions between signifiers are overlooked in news reporting, texts, everyday parlance, and academic writing. Lack of a precise political language plays an important role in the emergence of crisis thought and the development of irrational beliefs among subjects, groups, politicians, and states, contributing to the perception of a US politics of crisis. In the US, the leading contributor to this perception is the 24/7 news media. For example, on September 2, 2014, at 6:30PM EST, NBC Nightly News opened in its usual fashion, covering the beheading of American journalist Steven Sotloff by ISIS. Crisis thought was mobilized when former evening news anchor Brian Williams stated, "over that past Labor Day weekend Americans may have experienced in their conversations and thoughts, the

¹⁶⁴ Schaar, *Legitimacy in the Modern State*, 331.

sensation that, right about now, our world is falling apart.”¹⁶⁵ It is irrelevant Williams did not utter the term ‘crisis.’ The broadcast likely left the casual viewer thinking a turning point is at hand regarding the world ‘falling apart’ (i.e., crisis) if something is not done to mitigate the inferred ‘crisis of ISIS.’¹⁶⁶

Crisis thought also accounts for the paradox of crisis, or as Critchley puts it, when “crisis [is] not recognized.”¹⁶⁷ A paradox is, simply, “a thing contrary to expectation, and which we use colloquially to mean apparent self-contradiction.”¹⁶⁸ The paradox of crisis is when crisis discourses go unrecognized or unaddressed even when documented and experienced by subjects, groups, or governments. Schaar explains the paradox of crisis: “those who are said to be in crisis, or the institutions which are said to be in crisis, do not respond as we might expect them. They go on largely as they had been going on, though perhaps a little more heavily, a little less joyously, with the announcement of each new crisis.”¹⁶⁹ The paradox of crisis is also expressed by Nickel when she writes “transformation seems to be under way, but often it is transformation in vocabulary unaccompanied by transformation in practice.”¹⁷⁰

Take global climate change or, more generally, the ‘crisis of the environment,’ for example. Global climate change is backed by scientific evidence, and yet is a crisis perceived by

¹⁶⁵ Brian Williams, “NBC Evening News With Brian Williams – September 2, 2014,” *nbcnews.com* <http://www.nbcnews.com/nightly-news/nightly-news-brian-williams-full-broadcast-september-2-n686> (Accessed September 3, 2014).

¹⁶⁶ Universal Muslim Association of America (UMAA-Advocacy), *The Crisis in Iraq: An Analysis of I.S.I.L. “The Islamic State of Iraq & The Levant” With U.S. Policy Recommendations in Iraq* (June 2014).

¹⁶⁷ Critchley, *Continental Philosophy*, 73.

¹⁶⁸ Ellen Kennedy, “Emergency and Exception,” *Political Theory*, vol. 39 (2011): 543.

¹⁶⁹ Schaar, *Legitimacy in the Modern State*, 332.

¹⁷⁰ Nickel, *Public Sociology and Civil Society*, 20.

some with skepticism or denial.¹⁷¹ Global climate change portends that the global environment will take a decided turn for the worse with consequences inevitably exacerbating general human antagonism, suffering, and strife.¹⁷² Plenty of activists, non-governmental organizations (NGO's), academics, elected representatives, and everyday people have taken the calling to combat this crisis through books, journal articles, reform efforts, lifestyle changes, and so forth. Yet, industrial, big business, and various lobbyist groups continue to work diligently to ensure that efforts of the former do not come to fruition.¹⁷³ The paradox of crisis is present in the way looming environmental collapse is simultaneously recognized and yet unrecognized. Such is the case when efforts for effective environmental policy at the federal level appear dead on arrival even as the need for decisive collective action appears clear.¹⁷⁴

What remains to be discussed are some details regarding what crisis thought is, what crisis thought is not, and how we might characterize crisis thought. In terms of semantics, crisis thought is primarily a noun. Crisis thought gives a name to and accounts for some of the problematics of the sign 'crisis' in political, social, cultural, and economic discourse. Broadly, crisis thought designates a particular condition or figurative atmosphere of everyday political life referred to here as the 'US politics of crisis,' where the observable reality of 'crisis' in political

¹⁷¹ Atul Gwande, "The Mistrust of Science," *newyorker.com*, <http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-mistrust-of-science> (Accessed June 12, 2016).

¹⁷² Speth, *The Bridge at the End of the World*, 17.

¹⁷³ Timothy W. Luke, *Ecocritique: Contesting the Politics of Nature, Economy, and Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 131. Disconcerting as well is the masses insipid response to the ecological crisis as current methods of recycling and conservation are likely undermining sustainability efforts. Luke states: "very little, if anything, may have actually changed anywhere in the cycle of producing, distributing, consuming, and disposing of the product... the amazing popularity of recycling... also actually might be, at the same time, undercutting its legitimacy."

¹⁷⁴ Alister Doyle, "World Running Out of Time To Stop Global Warming, UN Report" *huffingtonpost.com* http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/04/06/global-warming-un_n_5099769.html (Accessed May 9, 2014).

life is no longer discernable due to the innumerable ‘crises’ said to pervade it. Crisis thought could also be used to qualify particular moments or events. For example, “the family exaggerated the situation, their voices becoming a cacophony of crisis thought.”

Crisis thought takes the form of a discursive formation.¹⁷⁵ Debrix defines discursive formation as the “principle[s] or technique[s] of organization, calculation, arrangement, or redistribution of discourse or language...[that] are interventions, directions, or specifications at the level of discourse...with a view to attaining or realizing certain preferred meanings or representations.”¹⁷⁶ As such, crisis thought is a constellation of signifiers that can be mobilized by subjects, groups, politicians, media outlets, governments and the like, with or without intentionality (i.e., as in the choice to mobilize crisis thought or not), to ‘attain or realize certain preferred meanings or representations.’

For example, the Bush I administration mobilized crisis thought by framing the 1991 Persian Gulf War in familiar discourses and signs associated with World War II.¹⁷⁷ In this mobilization, Saddam Hussein became Adolf Hitler and the Kuwaiti people became the oppressed people of Europe, regardless of the real distinctions in time and space of the conditions, or what was at stake. The stakes of the Gulf War were made to appear as high as they were during WWII in the hearts and minds of the public. By mobilizing crisis thought (i.e., the combined discourses of danger, symbolic tropes, ritual practices, and codes utilizing themes of WWII), the Bush I administration was able to justify and bring into being feelings of solidarity, revived a sense of patriotism in the US, and raised approval ratings for the POTUS.

¹⁷⁵ Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 74. Foucault makes clear that a discursive formation should not be confused with concepts such as ‘science,’ ‘theory,’ or ‘ideology.’

¹⁷⁶ Francois Debrix, *Tabloid Terror: War, Culture, and Geopolitics* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 13.

¹⁷⁷ Luke, “The Discipline of Security Studies,” 328.

Discussed in Chapter 3, political mobilizations of crisis thought are often reinforced by and in conjunction with 24/7 news media mobilizations. That is, political and media mobilizations of crisis thought are important but they are also distinct. Political mobilizations are usually carefully crafted and constructed (which is not to say that media mobilizations are not) coming from a source of authority and power, such as the POTUS, his or her press secretary, the Secretary of State, or a ranking government official. The 24/7 news media reinforce political mobilizations of crisis thought. However, the 24/7 news media also mobilize crisis thought without political or government mobilizations. In many cases, there is not a political ‘crisis’ present, yet the 24/7 news media will present political happenings as a crisis. The corporate media apparatus assists government mobilizations of crisis thought to successfully ‘attain or realize certain preferred meanings or representations.’ This could mean rallying subjects in support for a given war, a particular legislative policy, or a national security objective. However, this is beside the point. In regards to the above example, media mobilizations of crisis thought turn war (i.e., crisis) into ‘infotainment.’ This, in turn, makes war appear ordinary, obsolete, and thus, normalized.

It is crucially important to note what crisis thought is not. First, crisis thought is not present or generated in anything and everything, even as crisis thought denotes how ‘crisis’ is seemingly everywhere and nowhere. Having said this, however, the potential exists for crisis thought to be mobilized and transposed to almost anything that can or could become political under the right set of circumstances (e.g., such as having authority, credibility, celebrity, or the means to make one’s voice heard by large portions of the population). To clarify this, a comparison is in order. Sheldon Wolin and Carl Schmitt concur that most anything in politics today can become political due to the alleged absence of the political. For Wolin, liberal

democracies absent the political demonstrate an anomic condition lacking “a guiding sense of direction,” characterized as “essentially orderless” whereby “religious, familial, and moral restraints [have] all declined in effectiveness” and “human passions [rage] uncontrolled by curbs or bounds.”¹⁷⁸ For Schmitt, absence of the political will lead to, “a political practice of distrust toward all conceivable political forces and forms of state and government,” in addition to “an imperialism based on pure economic power” which, potentially, might “turn into a crusade and into the last war of humanity.”¹⁷⁹ The post-9/11 US domestic and international landscape has seen some of Wolin and Schmitt’s fears come to fruition.¹⁸⁰ Since crisis thought accounts for the sum of all ‘crises’ in circulation, then it would seem that, too, almost anything has the potential to become a conduit or site for the mobilization of crisis thought. The caveat is that while these events and happenings may not be political, as noted above, it is often the 24/7 news media that makes us think these instances are political, confusing these distinctions further.

Second, crisis thought is not simply ‘fear.’ Political and social thought is full of analyses concerned with fear, uncertainty, anxiety, and insecurity. As Chad Lavin remarks, our contemporary cultural landscape “is dominated by warnings to be afraid...[as] fear has come to occupy a central role in our public and private lives.”¹⁸¹ Dumm writes that, “the experience of fear is that of moving from protection to exposure, experiencing the vertigo of uncertainty, not

¹⁷⁸ Wolin, *Politics and Vision*, 357.

¹⁷⁹ Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 70-79.

¹⁸⁰ See: Derek Gregory, *The Colonial Present* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 190; and John Mueller and Mark G. Stewart, “The Terrorism Delusion: America’s Overwrought Response to September 11” *International Security*, vol. 37, no. 1 (Summer 2012). The 16 years and counting of the Global War on Terror (GWOT) has often been criticized as economic imperialism regarding the greater Middle East oil reserves draped in geopolitical and national security concerns.

¹⁸¹ Chad Lavin, “Fear, Radical Democracy, and Ontological Methadone” *Polity*, vol. 38, no. 2 (April 2006): 255.

knowing what threat to well being might lay in wait.”¹⁸² Fear is an unpleasant emotion caused by the belief that someone or something is dangerous, is likely to cause pain or cognitive anguish, or is a threat to the current political and economic order. Fear is associated with numerous other signs like fright, horror, alarm, panic, dread, distress, worry, apprehension, an aversion to something, and commonly, anxiety. Instead of fear, crisis thought is experienced and manifests itself vein of what Brian Massumi describes as “a kind of background radiation saturating existence...it may be expressed as ‘panic’ or ‘hysteria’ or ‘phobia’ or ‘anxiety,’” but need not manifest as any of these characteristics.¹⁸³ Undoubtedly, crisis thought mobilizations can generate feelings of anxiety, fear, and uncertainty. However, it also might not engender these emotions in exactly the same way. The experience of living and perceiving a politics of crisis enveloped by crisis thought will be different for everyone. This corresponds to the way crisis thought is suggested to operate when mobilized, and then subsequently transposed into the life world.

How might we, then, adequately convey the character of crisis thought without recourse to signs like ‘fear,’ ‘anxiety,’ or ‘uncertainty’? Students of politics come to understand that in the study of politics words matter, especially applied to the activities and written or verbal statements of political actors. Indeed, signs, symbols, and texts are, as Debrix points out, “what social reality is made of.”¹⁸⁴ Yet, the study of politics today often seems to lack a language to adequately convey observations, ideas, or experiences in regards to the late modern world. For example, the phrase ‘late modern.’ Briefly, the use of late modern here is not a statement against postmodernism or foundationalism. This study concurs with Luke who suggests that anything

¹⁸² Dumm, *Democracy and Punishment*, 148.

¹⁸³ Brian Massumi, “Everything You Want to Be: Introduction to Fear,” in *The Politics of Everyday Fear*, ed. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 24.

¹⁸⁴ Debrix, “Language, Nonfoundationalism, International Relations,” 12.

claimed to be postmodern “seems to...be just another articulation of what X, Y, and Z were.”¹⁸⁵ Instead, ‘late modern’ follows Stephen White’s understanding of it in the context of having a “late modern ethos.” White writes that, “an individual with such an ethos will take seriously many of the insights that animate postmodernists; but whichever of these insights [one] is moved to embrace, [one] also knows they do not offer any truth that is capable of automatically trumping the foundationalist’s convictions.”¹⁸⁶ From this, one can see the effort that goes into simply defining the terms we use in political analyses. In this way, too, some concepts have yet to be invented or accepted. This is compounded by the fact that political thought is filled with an abundance of terms that often convey distinct significations of their own, depending on their use and context. Perhaps the best that can be offered to the above question of what characterizes crisis thought is that crisis thought strikes at and neutralizes the complex assemblage of an individual’s emotions, thoughts, and experiences at once. The effects of these mobilizations are often a mixture of fear, uncertainty, and anxiety in regards to the ‘crisis’ in question. Unrelated and related thoughts interact with these mobilizations, and confusing or short-circuit subject sentience to crises in political and social life. This does not result in nihilism, but in a political and social numbness to the existence (or non-existence) of ‘crises’ at all. Not fear, then, but normalization and acceptance of the US as a polity of crisis. Recalling Plato’s “Allegory of the Cave,” crisis thought has the effect of making subjects want to ‘stay in the cave,’ so to speak,

¹⁸⁵ Patricia Mooney Nickel, “Timothy W. Luke,” in *North American Critical Theory After Postmodernism: Contemporary Dialogues – Interviews with Ben Agger, Andrew Arato, Robert J. Antonio, Seyla Benhabiv, Craig Calhoun, Nance Fraser, Douglas Kellner, and Timothy W. Luke*, ed. Patricia Mooney Nickel (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 24.

¹⁸⁶ Stephen K. White, *The Ethos of a Late-Modern Citizen* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 3.

and as Plato also pointed out, perhaps willing to kill those professing the truth of an outside (in this case, crises) in order to remain there.¹⁸⁷

The above merits further discussion: how do crisis thought mobilizations work and/or operate? It is to this question that we now turn.

IV. The Operation of Crisis Thought

Crisis thought is “produced, shared, and officially constituted as a...background condition of everyday life.”¹⁸⁸ Crisis thought circulates throughout the political and social life world, embedded in “ordinary affects...in the sense that certain kinds of fear are now coded into social as potentials that can be triggered by small events – fear of the unattended suitcase in the airport, for example – or directly recruited by official statements, such as terrorist alert warnings,” which infiltrate humdrum human practices, from going to work, to going to sleep at night, and those various points in-between.¹⁸⁹ Crisis thought mobilizations effect the “the sentience of a situation” by reorienting how subjects perceive, come to know, and feel things in ordinary life.¹⁹⁰ The ‘situation’ is always variable according to wherever the subject or group might find himself or herself at a given moment. Sentience also applies to the way the subject, group thinks of itself individually, professionally, socially, or politically, and to how the subject or group evaluates who it thinks it is or who they might become; for instance, as a matter of accomplishment, occupation, rituals, hobbies, or habits in relation to others (i.e., friends, family, co-workers, colleagues, technology, infrastructure, animals, material and immaterial ideas and

¹⁸⁷ Plato, *Republic*, trans. C.D.C Reeve (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc. 2004), 208-214.

¹⁸⁸ Masco, *The Theater of Operations*, 18.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 18.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 18. Sentience is the ability to perceive and feel things in the phenomenal world that can be immanent or distant and need not be geographically defined.

practices). The sentence of the situation also applies to how subjects might engage personal health and wellbeing, intimate relationships, rural/urban living, education, income, and so on.

Crisis thought operates through a twofold process of mobilization and transpositioning that most often takes place through or starts with the 24/7 news media and by way of verbal/non-verbal communications between two or more people. The subject is hailed constantly by the 24/7 news media (i.e., advertisements, propaganda, or social media), which today also means being hailed, watched, or observed online and virtually by friends, family, and discourses of all kinds.¹⁹¹ Geographic location (especially in a networked, globalizing world) has no bearing on the effects crisis thought might have on the subject or group. Crisis thought is present in the coding and uncoding of crisis messages or claims where ‘crisis’ comes to signify any number of other connotations and connections than the addressor did or did not intend.

Transposition is the second phase of crisis thought operation. To transpose something means to transfer it to a different place or context, temporally or spatially, imaginary or real. As a verb, to transpose is synonymous to interchange, to exchange, or to switch, to reverse, to invert, to flip, to shift, to relocate, to transplant, to move, or to displace. Transposition denotes when the process of mobilization is over when the subject has received a crisis message, becoming a ‘carrier,’ so to speak, of crisis thought. Through actions that may or may not be taken by the subject, group, or state, crisis thought is transposed to the discursivity of the ordinary via the subject or group’s interactions with the world. For Rosi Braidotti, transposition indicates:

¹⁹¹ Luke, *Screens of Power*, 130. Luke states: “In its concrete forms, as part of advertising, entertainment, the news media, propaganda, or consumer culture, these rationalized images of everyday life coalesce into complex cultural codes. These codes now broadly frame the ‘real time’, the ‘standards of living’ or ‘quality time’ of most consumers. Thus, the ‘spectacle is the present model of socially dominant life. It is the omnipresent affirmation of the choice already made in production and its corollary consumption. The spectacle’s form and content are identically the total justification of the existing system’s conditions and goals.”

an intertextual, cross-boundary or transversal transfer, in the sense of a leap from one code, field or axis into another, not merely in the quantitative mode of plural multiplications, but rather in the qualitative sense of complex multiplicities... a scientific theory that stresses the experience of creative insight in engendering other, alternative ways of knowing... resting on the assumption of a fundamental and necessary unity between subject and object, the theory of transpositions offers a contemplative and creative stance that respects the visible and hidden complexities of the very phenomena it attempts to study... transpositions occur on many levels at once... transposition refers to mobility and cross-referencing between disciplines and discursive levels... the connection between the text and its social and historical context, in the material and discursive sense of the term.¹⁹²

Transposition occurs when the subject or group becomes aware of specific kinds of information, where one thing (e.g., ordinary life event) is made into something else (i.e., a crisis). This might range from watching various kinds of media or simply talking to someone about their troubles in life. For instance, 24/7 news media sensationalism might elicit in some subjects emotional responses such as anger, feelings of helplessness, depression, or perceptions of the world as a crisis. Many of the instances that generate these impressions are not, to be sure, ‘crises.’ They are all, instead, instances of so-called ‘bad news’ or hype. Yet, in a time when crisis is seemingly everywhere and nowhere, ordinary kinds of information (depending on the individual or group) can potentially become conduits for crisis thought mobilization. As ordinary events are the outcome of a multiplicity of interactions, relations, and choices, each moment, interaction, or choice has the potential to become a ‘crisis’ for the subject, group, or state.

The operation of crisis thought is contingent on the context, individuals, or audience that ‘crisis’ claims are directed to. That is, crisis thought may operate when the term ‘crisis’ is not used in statements, as the instance of crisis thought will likely link back to previous crisis thought mobilizations. Not all events, information, or crisis claims will affect subjects in the same way. Whether or not we are affected by crisis thought directly, we can also be affected

¹⁹² Rosi Braidotti, *Transpositions* (Malden: Polity Press, 2006), 5-8.

from time to time by others more susceptible to crisis thought mobilizations. The effects of crisis thought are visible in mundane actions or routines in political and social life. For instance, making sure one has one's cellphone or wallet before travelling, items which, if not accounted for, could potentially become a personal 'crisis' for the subject. In those moments, subjects effectively (re)mobilize crisis thought when the distinction between what is happening to the self and society becomes confused. In the course of the subject's thoughts and conversations with others, these anxieties produce an "atmospheric attunement" analogous to our presumed politics of crisis, whereby present, immediate, and the likelihood of future crises could happen, are happening, or have already happened.¹⁹³

Crisis thought is observed empirically in the aggregate and could be represented through a variety of media representations or polling indexes: congressional approval ratings, voter confidence, the strength of the national economy in addition to other national averages such as obesity, mortality, birth rate, the amount of prescription drugs prescribed, or the happiness index. Crisis thought is often mobilized by the subject in recognizing such figures, and importantly, can inform how these statistics are interpreted and written about.

In the fall of 2014, fears of the Ebola virus, intensified ISIS attacks, an uncertain economy, political gridlock in Congress, and hyper-partisanship around the US mid-term elections were all utilized as crisis thought mobilizations. One *USA Today* headline read: "Polls: High Anxiety, low expectations as election nears." This piece discusses a USA Today/Princeton scientific poll, suggesting that, "as Election Day nears, America is the Land of the Fearful. Voters are rattled by the Ebola virus, braced for years of conflict against the terrorist group Islamic State and still worried about jobs, a nationwide *USA TODAY* Poll finds. Two-thirds say

¹⁹³ Masco, *The Theater of Operations*, 17-19.

the nation faces more challenging problems than usual; one in four call them the biggest problems of their lifetimes. And many lack confidence in the government to address them.”¹⁹⁴ Another 2014 news piece from the *Christian Science Monitor* was entitled: “Land of the free? Not so much. American’s sense of freedom drops, poll finds.” The article focuses on a Gallup poll taken between 2006 and 2013 among an acceptable random sampling of 1,000 people conducted through direct interviews, and suggesting that “seventy-nine percent of US residents are satisfied with their level of freedom, down from 91 percent in 2006... That 12-point drop pushes the United States from among the highest in the world in terms of perceived freedom to 36th place, outside the top quartile of the 120 countries sampled, trailing Paraguay, Rwanda, and the autonomous region of Nagorno-Karabakh.”¹⁹⁵ A Gallup poll from June 2014 also demonstrated the lowest congressional approval rating in US history. The pollsters at Gallup write: “currently, 4% of Americans say they have a great deal of confidence in Congress, and 3% have quite a lot of confidence. About one-third of Americans report having ‘some’ confidence, while half have ‘very little,’ and another 7% volunteer that they have ‘none.’”¹⁹⁶ Lastly, a *Washington Times* article titled “Homeland Insecurity: Americans feel more unsafe than anytime since 9/11, poll finds,” discusses a NBC/*Wall Street Journal* poll indicated that “47 percent of

¹⁹⁴ Susan Paige, “Poll: High anxiety, low expectations as election nears” *usatoday.com*, <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/elections/2014/10/30/usa-today-poll-high-anxiety-low-expectations/18118403/> (Accessed December 20, 2015).

¹⁹⁵ Gram Slattery, “Land of the free? Not so much. American’s sense of freedom drops, poll finds,” *csmonitor.com*, <http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Politics/2014/0701/Land-of-the-free-Not-so-much.-Americans-sense-of-freedom-drops-poll-finds> (Accessed December 20, 2015).

¹⁹⁶ Rebecca Riffkin, “Public Faith in Congress Falls Again, Hit Historic Lows,” *gallup.com*, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/171710/public-faith-congress-falls-again-hits-historic-low.aspx> (Accessed December 20, 2015).

Americans say the country is less safe now than before the 2001 terrorist attacks on New York and Washington.”¹⁹⁷

These news stories circulate among a wide-variety of readership circles, places, and people who, regardless of political party identification or ideology, see these headlines and possibly read these articles. These articles are found in hotel lobbies, airports, waiting areas in offices, and so on. Televisions are also found in many of the same places, from restaurants/bars and convenience stores, and they repeat similar stories as those found in newsprint. Moreover, in the age of social media, these stories appear as ‘posts,’ ‘reposts,’ ‘tweets,’ and ‘retweets’ on platforms like Facebook and Twitter. On Facebook, these articles can appear in a user’s newsfeed several times over if the user happens to be ‘friends’ with people, groups, celebrities, brands, and mainstream or alternative news media outlets. These kinds of stories, headlines, and images are all considered here mobilizations of crisis thought fueling an already-established narrative of the present that serves to keep that narrative afloat (i.e., politics of crisis). It is possible that the content of these news stories are transposed to the ordinary life world, reorienting human subjectivities in their day-to-day, week-to-week, and year-to-year lives. It is of no matter that subjects may not read, believe, or pay attention to the content of these kinds of stories. The presence of these discourses in the humdrum of ordinary aesthetics suggests a steady stream of crisis thought mobilizations produced primarily through the 24/7 news media. It is to the 24/7 news media and crisis thought that this analysis now turns, with the general question being: what is the relationship between the 24/7 news media and crisis thought?

¹⁹⁷ S.A. Miller, “Homeland Insecurity: American’s feel more unsafe than anytime since 9/11, poll finds,” *washingtontimes.com*, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2014/sep/10/america-feel-more-unsafe-anytime-911-ready-militar/> (Accessed December 20, 2015).

CHAPTER THREE – 24/7 NEWS MEDIA: Mobilizations and Simulations

This discussion on the 24/7 news media is not meant to be comprehensive. A more thorough study of politics and the media could take up several volumes of text. This chapter is, in one sense, about what Debrix calls media ideology – “the way contemporary media operate to create and propagate social meaning” in conjunction with or as crisis thought.¹⁹⁸ The 24/7 news media are the predominant site in which crisis thought is mobilized and then subsequently transposed into political and ordinary life. The linkages between 24/7 news media and crisis thought is the extent media providers and media technologies mobilize crisis thought when it comes to reporting so-called ‘current events.’ Crisis thought is mobilized and transposed through media technologies, but importantly too, media content, and is suggested to have an impact on political and social subjectivity.

Before proceeding, a few points need to be made. When speaking of the 24/7 news media, this chapter implies, generally speaking, television and the Internet in the US. However, this chapters analysis focuses on smartphone technology too (see below). Television is just one aspect of a vast global multi-media matrix. More important today is the Internet (i.e., the world-wide web, cyberspace, or the virtual – see Introduction) that has established a global network of relations and changed the nature of knowledge production and retrieval, as well as entertainment and the ability to access it. In relation to both, the smartphone is able to provide both information and media content by way of the Internet. Smartphones have redefined the way media content, information, interpersonal communications, and relationships are shared and conducted, especially among the so-called millennial generation (i.e., anyone born roughly between 1982

¹⁹⁸ Francois Debrix, “Cyberterror and Media-Induced Fears: The Production of Emergency Culture” *Strategies: Journal of Theory, Culture & Politics*, vol. 14, no. 1 (2001): 153.

and 2002, including this writer) and they're aging, usually, Baby-Boomer parents.¹⁹⁹ Further, smartphones have upended particular folkways and mores in ways that have yet to be fully appreciated or documented accurately, as these changes have direct and indirect linkages to politics, media, and human subjectivity. These connections are often noted anytime critics point out how the 'youth of today' appear stuck staring at their smartphones in public, on dates, at family events, movies, concerts, or at home.²⁰⁰

Luke and Gearoid O' Tuathail point out that 24/7 news media "is the most visible tip of a vast elaborate informational apparatus dedicated to, first, providing real-time video and audio reportage from somewhere on the globe to anywhere all the time from around the world, and second, maintaining active twenty-four hour news broadcasts available for constant viewing by local, national, or global audiences."²⁰¹ The relationship between the 24/7 news media and crisis thought is summed up by Murray Edelman, who identifies that, "the spectacle constituted by news reporting continuously constructs and reconstructs social problems, crises, enemies and leaders and so creates a succession of threats and reassurances. These constructed problems and personalities furnish the content of political journalism and the data for historical and analytic political studies."²⁰²

What Edelman is getting at here is that there is no way of knowing what the second half of the 20th century would resemble politically or historically without the influence and images provided by 24/7 news companies like CNN or by the Internet. Politics and the ordinary as we experience it are becoming increasingly virtual and digitized. We are all increasingly dependent

¹⁹⁹ Neil Howe and William Strauss, *Millennial Rising: The Next Great Generation* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000), 41.

²⁰⁰ Joel Stein, "The New Greatest Generation," *TIME*, vol. 181, no. 19 (2013): 28-34.

²⁰¹ Luke and O. Tuathail, "On Videocameralistics," 717.

²⁰² Murray Edelman, *Constructing the Political Spectacle* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), 1.

to some degree on 24/7 media representations, the Internet, and mobile media technologies. This speaks to the power of the 24/7 news media and how mobilizing crisis thought is suggested here to be key to their power, influence, and success.

I. Media in the USA: Codes, Contests, and Confrontations

Media in the US have always been distinct from their European and global counterparts. The major contrast between US media and elsewhere is that, as Kellner notes, US news media “is a business enterprise governed by the dual imperatives of maximizing profit and legitimating the system of capitalist democracy.”²⁰³ Corporate media conglomerates such as Disney, Time Warner, or NewsCorp operate and provide content throughout various media. These transnational corporations are the bedrock of an immense array of wide-ranging information resources and a countless variety of professional, independent journalists, writers, and thinkers often filtered, accessed, or ‘posted’ through social media platforms and websites such as Facebook, Twitter, and the so-called “blogosphere.”²⁰⁴

The origin of American media goes back to the colonial period and to Americans distrust of centralized government authority. This is seen in the First amendment protections of free press and free speech to safeguard (for the most part) public tribunes against oppressive state censorship. Just as they had done prior to the Revolution, US newspapers, pamphlets, and articles were typically mouthpieces of the publisher’s partisan views on politics. This is

²⁰³ Kellner, *Television and the Crisis of Democracy*, 71.

²⁰⁴ Laura Axelrod, “Brad L. Graham coined the term ‘blogosphere’ dies at 41” *al.com*, http://blog.al.com/scenesource/2010/01/brad_l_graham_coined_the.html (Accessed March 24, 2016). A ‘blog’ (short for weblog) is a discussion or informational site published on the World Wide Web consisting of “posts” usually presented in reverse chronological order, where the most recent posts appear first. The blogosphere consists of all blogs and their interconnections. Blogs exist together as a connected community or as a social networking service in which everyday authors can publish their opinions.

demonstrated in the United States most famous contribution to political thought, *The Federalist*, a partisan text to be sure, which was printed as a series of essays in newspapers.²⁰⁵ From its early foundations, then, US citizens have always had a propensity for biased and partisan political news content.²⁰⁶

Industrialization, railroads, and the telegraph (i.e., wire services) transformed American life and in so doing the nature of journalism by enlarging media audiences, but more importantly, changing the scale and speed in which news was reported and received. For example, the Associated Press (AP) was the result of how information could travel faster and farther than ever before.²⁰⁷ The limitations of the telegraph required that messages be as concise and accurate as possible. This sensibility transferred to the quality of journalism by the late 1800's. In 1896, the New York Times was purchased by Adolph Ochs whose intention was to publish a newspaper that was fact based, objective, and non-opinionated. The new face of print journalism elevated the stature of journalists in terms of their skill sets and the procedures of their reporting. In the name of the public interest, US media would serve the common good by objectively covering politics accurately and without prejudice.²⁰⁸

Radio transformed US news media in the early 20th century. Providing forms of entertainment in its heyday from scripted plays, live or recorded music and news, as the arrival

²⁰⁵ Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay, *The Federalist (with Letters of "Brutus")*, ed. Terence Ball (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), xiii-xv.

²⁰⁶ Edward B. Foley, "If Trump Disputes the Election, We Have No Good Way Out," *politico.com*, <http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/09/donald-trump-2016-rigged-election-214304> (Accessed September 30, 2016).

²⁰⁷ McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 340. McLuhan states: "By 1848 the telegraph, then only four years old, compelled several major American newspapers to form a collective organization for newsgathering. This effort become the basis of the Associated Press, which, in turn, sold news services to subscribers."

²⁰⁸ S. Robert Lichter, "The Media," in *Understanding America: The Anatomy of an Exceptional Country*, ed. Peter Schuck and James Q. Wilson (New York: PublicAffairs, 2008), 190.

of radio, as McLuhan once noted, was also the arrival of “a kind of nervous information system.”²⁰⁹ Newspapers had occupied a happy medium between public and private life, but radio signaled a new contest fought between private ownership and the public good. Radio was rapidly and ravidly capitalized on by investors, turning radio and future media like it into relays of consumerism through commercial advertising and promotion.²¹⁰ Proponents of public service broadcasting (PSB) argued that radio and television “should be regarded as crucial resources to be used in a manner that benefits society as a whole.”²¹¹ These contentions led to the establishment of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in 1927 to provide some degree of oversight on what could be presented to the public but also who controlled it.

The introduction of television in 1947 did not make newspapers or radio obsolete. Instead, television complicated the other available media in terms of what other media are used for and how those media could coexist with other media. Television dramatically changed how ‘the news’ is reported, conducted, and perceived in the United States. Television news in its early years was still reliant on newspaper journalists for stories to broadcast. The major TV networks, NBC, CBS, and ABC (but, primarily, the former two) often regurgitated the reports provided by *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and the *Wall Street Journal*. This relationship marks a significant moment in the history of US media. Television created a unified national news network in which New York City and Washington DC (and the journalists who worked and lived in each city) became the source for most political news reporting. Only a handful of companies now provided, if not controlled, US political news coverage. Although not a monopoly as we might conceive of it, whether in business or through control of information, the result was that

²⁰⁹ McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 400.

²¹⁰ *Ibid*, 407-408.

²¹¹ Hodkinson, *Media, Culture, and Society*, 151.

US subjects all shared in basically the same news coverage, stories, and personalities, regardless of network or newspaper. This created a sense of solidarity, trust, and homogeneity in television news reporting.

It is at this juncture that we begin to see the emergence of the 24/7 news media. Television was there to capture, first in black and white and then in radiant Technicolor, the major political and cultural events that transpired throughout the 1960's and 1970's (see Chapter 2). The political, social, cultural, and economic events of the 60's and 70's reoriented the direction the news media would take. In the wake of the 1960's, Robert Lichter notes that, "journalism began to take on a sharper point of view, just as the news agenda shifted toward divisive social conflicts that, to many journalists, seemed to call for taking a stand."²¹² While there is no key moment or event to point to for when this shift occurred, the following section discusses what is, perhaps, the moment in US television news history when the decisive shift seems most noticeable.

Buckley vs. Vidal

Presidential Elections in the US are perhaps the political events in which the modern power of 24/7 news media is on full display.²¹³ Take for example coverage of the Democratic and Republican national conventions. In the early days of television, NBC and CBS would set up some cameras and televise the convention proceedings without much input from what we nowadays call political pundits. Instead, they simply let the cameras roll, interrupted only by commercial advertising.

²¹² Lichter, "The Media," 194.

²¹³ Nelson W. Polsby and Aaron Wildavsky, *Presidential Elections: Strategies and Structures of American Politics* – Twelfth Edition (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2008).

In 1968, ABC News was lagging considerably behind in their news coverage abilities in comparison to rival networks CBS and NBC. ABC's limited expenditures forced the company to streamline its coverage of the national conventions by broadcasting highlights of the conventions in the evening. Having nothing to lose respective to their competitors, ABC decided to try something "unconventional" as ABC promoted it, by inviting two public intellectuals – the conservative William F. Buckley (then editor of the *National Review*) and the liberal Gore Vidal (noted playwright and author) – to debate one another for ten segments corresponding to the GOP convention in Miami, FL and the tumultuous Democrat convention in Chicago, IL. These debates have been recently 'rediscovered' as a convenient (if perhaps a bit reductionist) moment in US media history to mark the threshold when the content, quality, and style of US news media began to devolve into the 24/7 infotainments we know today. Nevertheless, there is some truth to the claim that the Buckley/Vidal debates divided what once was from what would come to be.

For Vidal, Buckley represented an emergent and dangerous trend in American politics that the 1964 Barry Goldwater campaign initiated in opposition to the progressive ideals of the New Deal coalition, Kennedy's 'New Frontier,' and Johnson's 'Great Society.' Vidal thought the shift of the GOP from center-right to far-right extremism was a harbinger of US/western collapse. For Buckley, Vidal epitomized all that the New Left and counterculture of the time in the US represented: the upending of cultural moral values, permissive sexuality, and social decay that threatened the fabric of American society. For instance, Vidal's *The City and the Pillars* (1948) featured openly male homosexual relations. *Myra Breckenridge* (1968) was a social satire of gender roles whose title character was a transsexual. The year 1968 brought to a head both Buckley's and Vidal's perspectives on the political trajectory of the US and of what the US

ought to become and represent internationally as it stood on the precipice of a veritable ‘turning point,’ or so it seemed, in 1968.

In the first eight debates, Buckley and Vidal maintained their usual ornate vocabulary, epigrammatic wit, intellectualism, and telegenic appeal, all the while exchanging thinly veiled insults and jabs at one another. The infamous moment came in the ninth debate when Vidal called Buckley “a crypto-Nazi,” prompting Buckley to completely lose his cool patrician demeanor by raising his fist at Vidal calling him a “queer,” stating he would “sock him” in the nose and Vidal “would stay plastered.”²¹⁴ There is a tragic element in watching footage of these debates for how well read Buckley and Vidal presented themselves. It would seem, if only for a brief moment, that US political discourse could have perhaps developed differently. Yet, this possibility was lost because of how successful the Buckley-Vidal debates had been for ABC. NBC and CBS soon followed suit and began offering more subjective political commentary and analysis from both sides of the ‘issues.’ Thus, in a way, the concept of political punditry was born. FOX News *Special Report*, MSNBC’s *Morning Joe*, various CNN programs from *Crossfire* to *Anderson Cooper 360*, HBO’s *Real Time with Bill Maher*, and every weekday night whether on *Hardball with Chris Matthews* or *The Situation Room* with Wolf Blitzer, one can see the linkages to this initial moment.

²¹⁴ See: Jim Holt, “Crypto-Nazi vs. G**damn Queer,” *nymag.com*, <http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2015/07/best-of-enemies-buckley-vidal.html> (Accessed January 3, 2016), Bilge Ebiri, “Best of Enemies is the Saddest Film of the Year,” *vulture.com*, <http://www.vulture.com/2015/08/best-of-enemies-is-the-saddest-film-of-the-year.html> (Accessed January 3, 2016), and the documentary film, *Best of Enemies* directed by Morgan Neville and Robert Gordon – Magnolia Home Entertainment (2015).

CNN and the Virtualization of Politics

The 24/7 news media emerged in the 1980's. The key moment occurred a decade earlier in 1965 when "INTELSAT's first satellite, Early Bird, went into operation over the North Atlantic."²¹⁵ However, it was not until 1981 that 24/7 news coverage could flourish, and cable television (CATV) was the format that would make such coverage a reality.

The presidency of Ronald Reagan was responsible for a variety of deregulations of media in the US, including the 1987 elimination of the FCC's Fairness Doctrine that "mandated that television networks present a diversity of controversial issues of public importance."²¹⁶ With the fairness doctrine out of the picture, the proliferation of hyper-partisan political coverage ensued. The rise of conservative AM talk radio is one example of what resulted from the removal of the Fairness Doctrine. Deregulation also opened the door to various corporate media mergers, producing over the years a handful of transnational multi-media conglomerates that control most of the media market globally. These mergers increased the amount of power in the hands of media corporations in regards to the kinds of media content, framing, portrayal, and representation of political news events. As Luke notes, "the 1980's [were] a time of transition...into a new media-based mode of electoral politics."²¹⁷

Cable television dates back to the first TV sets produced in the late 1940's. CATV began with community antenna television systems in rural areas where television reception was poor. By 1955, there were about 400 such systems with a total of 150,000 subscribers.²¹⁸ By 1966, the FCC formulated restrictions requiring early cable operators in major US cities to obtain formal

²¹⁵ Luke and O'Tuathail, "On Videocameralists," 717.

²¹⁶ Kellner, *Television and the Crisis of Democracy*, 64.

²¹⁷ Luke, "Discourses of Charisma," 129.

²¹⁸ Thomas R. Eisenmann, "Cable TV: From Community Antennas to Wired Cities," *hbs.edu*, <http://hbswk.hbs.edu/item/cable-tv-from-community-antennas-to-wired-cities> (Accessed January 3, 2016).

permission to import channels long distance. For many academics and policy makers, CATV could strengthen television's potential for the social good (as noted above), one that might save television from what President Kennedy's FCC Commissioner Newton Minow called a "vast wasteland" due to the undeniable commercialization of the medium.²¹⁹ Nixon's administration took the first steps in the early 70's toward promoting a series of FCC actions that helped further develop the CATV industry. Additionally, higher than expected construction costs and difficulties in wiring cities slowed the spread of cable from urban centers to rural parts of the country. Nevertheless, by the 1980's, CATV had reached most of the markets that mattered and the time was ripe for the new format to expand into the realm of news coverage.

Cable News Network (CNN) based in Atlanta, GA, launched on Sunday, June 1, 1980 at 5:00pm (EST). The channel expanded at the start of 1982 with a sister network, CNN2, later renamed Headline News (HLN) in 1983. CNN featured a mix of hard news and personality-driven programming such as *Crossfire*, *Moneyline*, and *Larry King Live!*, all of which appeared in the first five years of being on the air. CNN developed many of the tactics, strategies, and techniques in the course of the 80's and 90's that would set the standard for its 24/7 news media competitors, namely FOX News and MSNBC. These 'techniques' grew out of some of the political, social, cultural, and economic events that, to be sure, CNN and other media networks covered and that are today said to define the 1980's. Some of these events include: the coverage of NASA's space shuttle Challenger and its tragic explosion live on television 73 seconds after liftoff; the Iran-Contra scandal, Supreme Court nominee Robert Bork's confirmation proceedings, and the around-the-clock coverage of 18-month old Jessica McClure of Midland, TX who fell down a 22-foot well in late 1987. The rescue operation sparked worldwide attention

²¹⁹ Kellner, *Television and the Crisis of Democracy*, 49.

and some criticism for making a possible tragedy (McClure was successfully rescued) into a media spectacle.²²⁰

CNN's truly watershed moment did not come until the early 1990's with its coverage of the 1991 Gulf War (or Operation Desert Storm), making famous many of CNN's unknown "videocameralists," including Wolf Blitzer, Peter Arnett, and Christiane Amanpour.²²¹ CNN outdid its broadcast rivals by being the only network able to broadcast live from the front lines in Iraq, transmitting images of the US launching its first open air strikes against Saddam Hussein's forces; with the more real than real thrill ride of CNN's audience being virtually on the ground with soldiers, or treated as active, if not passive, consumers of 'war' through their television screens. For the first time Americans could virtually through their TV sets ride into Iraq from the bombs being dropped by American B-52's onto the suburbs of Baghdad. As Debrix recalls, "video cameras were placed on the smart-bombs launched over Iraq to provide an even more vivid testimony of this visual phenomenon of the conflict."²²² CNN's Gulf War coverage would be imitated and expanded by other broadcast and soon-to-be competing cable news networks, producing what I will call here the virtualization of war, whereby warfare is no longer

²²⁰ Englehardt, *The End of Victory Culture*, 292.

²²¹ Luke and O'Tuathail, "On Videocameralists," 713. For Luke and O'Tuathail, 'videocameralist' or 'videocameralism' is "an ascending order of power" which is reminiscent/similar to the "late-eighteenth century doctrine of state management called 'cameralism'." Videocameralist/ism "seeks to describe a global political condition where televisualizations of chaos [crisis/crisis thought] constantly threaten to overwhelm the fixed cultural categories beneath an institutional vision of New World Order. As a result, the practices of regulation and governance provided by international institutions increasingly are force to become exercises in simulation, or projected collective visions qua images of a reality that is absent or not yet present."

²²² Francois Debrix, "Deploying Vision, Simulating Action: The United Nations and Its Visualization Strategies in a New World Order," *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, vol. 21, no. 1 (January-March 1996): 79.

experienced in reality, but instead as Jean Baudrillard put it, as a “media spectacle.”²²³ Thus, coverage of the 1991 Gulf War set the precedent for how events like 9/11 would be portrayed by the 24/7 news media.

The effect on subjectivities regarding this mobilization of war is noted in the literature as desensitizing television viewers, which, in turn, helps cultivate among some subjectivities a non-critical sensibility to warfare (and by ‘critical,’ see Chapter 1). James Der Derian affirms this point, noting, “how new technologies and media of simulation create a fidelity between the representation and the reality of war.”²²⁴ The ‘fidelity’ here pertains to what the camera shows us on screen and how we come to know and think about what is presented. Cameras present only a fraction or a frame of representation that never shows us the full picture of the situation in which recorded footage is filmed. In other words, there is a disconnection between what viewers see on television and the reality of war as it is conducted. This is due to warfare being presented as a spectacle to viewers at home. The virtualization of war obviates for spectators war as an extreme derangement of human relations and a real-life crisis of life and death. Worse, as Dumm points out, televised warfare “disarms opposition by dissolving it...resistance is not crushed by power so much as it is made irrelevant by being made uninteresting.”²²⁵ Turning war into ‘breaking

²²³ Steven Poole, “Jean Baudrillard,” *theguardian.com*, <http://www.theguardian.com/news/2007/mar/07/guardianobituaries.france> (Accessed January 4, 2016). At the time, Baudrillard made the claim that the Gulf War did not happen in articles published by the UK’s *The Guardian* newspaper. Baudrillard was not saying the Gulf War did not happen in a literal sense, but “that the war was conducted as a media spectacle. Rehearsed as a war game or simulation, it was then enacted for the viewing public as a simulation: as a news event, with its paraphernalia of embedded journalists and missile’s-eye-view video cameras, it was a videogame. The real violence was thoroughly overwritten by electronic narrative: by simulation.”

²²⁴ James Der Derian, *Virtuous War: Mapping the Military-Industrial Media-Entertainment Network* – Second Edition (New York: Routledge, 2009), xxxvi.

²²⁵ Thomas Dumm, “Telefear: Watching War News,” in *The Politics of Everyday Fear*, ed. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 314.

news' entertainment makes war appear ordinary, resulting in the normalization and acceptance of war as a 'crisis' as if it were in the same category as other news segments like weather or sports.

The virtualization of war is suggested here to be a result or by-product of the mobilization of crisis thought by the 24/7 news media to, perhaps, garner ratings and produce advertising revenue. Crisis thought is evident in the way warfare is presented to viewers and the subsequent effects of this presentation. At the same time, however, these mobilizations paradoxically heighten awareness of, for instance, the 16 years and counting of the GWOT, that can be further mobilized to meet a variety of objectives or non-objectives. Crisis thought is observed here in terms of the paradox of crisis: many subjects today fail to recognize the crisis that war really is through mediatized spectacle. War as a 'crisis' is obviated and, thus, a normalized and seemingly accepted condition radiating in the background of ordinary life in the US. Crisis thought is observed when opposition to the war tapers out as the population becomes comfortably numb to perpetual wars and thus, perpetual 'crisis.'

II. Critiquing the Media: Smartphones and Subjugation

Rather than thinking of media content as the locus of concern, McLuhan suggests it is how subjects and society receive their information through media that matters. Hence, McLuhan's famous phrase "the medium is the message."²²⁶ Media technology has advanced

²²⁶ McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 19-31. McLuhan states: "This is merely to say that the personal and social consequences of any medium – that is, of any extension of ourselves – results from the new scale that is introduced into our affairs by each extension of ourselves, or by any new technology...the medium...shapes and controls the scale and form of human association and action. The content or uses of such media are as diverse as they are ineffectual in shaping the form of human association. Indeed, it is only too typical that the 'content' of any medium blinds us to the character of the medium."

human capabilities to communicate information on a mass scale, and has inevitably altered our relation to society, politics, and culture, and to others, our selves, and other technologies.²²⁷

McLuhan's thoughts inform the 24/7 news media's relation to crisis thought mobilization: the surreptitious effects, capacities, objectives and non-objectives of crisis thought vis-à-vis the human subject. McLuhan notes, "any medium has the power of imposing its own assumption on the unwary." These 'assumptions' imposed on subjects could be general information, propaganda, ideology, or, in this study, crisis thought, and they "can occur immediately upon contact, as in the first bars of a melody."²²⁸ In short, media technology can dominate, subjugate, influence, or control human behavior without subjects recognizing it:

To behold, use or perceive any extension of ourselves in technological form is necessarily to embrace it. To listen to radio or to read the printed page is to accept these extensions of ourselves into our personal system and to undergo the 'closure' or displacement of perception that follows automatically. It is this continuous embrace of our own technology in daily use that puts us in the Narcissus role of subliminal awareness and numbness in relation to these images of ourselves. By continuously embracing technologies, we relate ourselves to them as servomechanisms. That is why we must, to use them at all, serve these objects, these extensions of ourselves, as gods or minor religions.²²⁹

An example of what McLuhan is getting at above is the smartphone medium. What makes cell phones 'smart' (as opposed to being 'dumb') is that the smartphone is equipped with an advanced mobile operating system that makes it, essentially, a handheld personal computer.

²²⁷ New media do not so much render previous or other mediums obsolete. Rather, new kinds of mediums complicate other kinds of media, which in turn reveals how such 'pairing' or interactions between different mediums obscure media effects. A good example of this is the famous 1960 Kennedy-Nixon debates. For those watching on television, Kennedy appeared to 'win' the debate over Nixon who suffered from some aesthetic complications wrought by early television in regards to his demeanor and appearance (i.e., Nixon was sick and also refused make-up). For those listening to the debate on the radio, Nixon appeared to 'win' the debate over Kennedy who sounded too naïve, young, and inexperienced. In both cases, neither medium rendered the other obsolete, but instead created complications as to which representation of the debate was the correct one – which debate, in other words, was the 'real' or 'right' one.

²²⁸ McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 28.

²²⁹ *Ibid*, 68.

For instance, smartphones are capable of running downloaded applications – or ‘apps’ as they are popularly referred to – as well as having the ability to connect to the World Wide Web. The smartphone can make phone calls, send text messages, and allow the user to check and write emails. However, it also allows the user to access most all the knowledge, information, services, and entertainment the World Wide Web can provide right in the palm of one’s hand. Users can download free or pay for by credit/debit card ‘apps’ that their developers suggest will help users organize their life better. For instance, digital calendars can synchronize schedules from multiple devices; users can connect to cloud computing storage for data access and retrieval, can access games of all varieties during downtime, dictionaries, traffic alerts, social media apps, stock tickers, banking apps, and physical activity trackers to keep track of caloric intake, physical steps, or heart rate. The smartphone has changed the way we pay for goods and services (e.g., Google Wallet and Apple Pay), but also the ability to order goods and services (online through the smartphone), or collect demographic data, and track/locate other people (e.g., GPS and Location Services), or how we connect with friends and family (e.g., apps like Facetime, Skype, texting), how we see and depict the world, how we play online and in real time, and how we make medical decisions.²³⁰

Smartphone capabilities have already changed the political landscape in numerous ways, from campaigning and outreach practices through texting and email retrieval, but also and especially through social media apps (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram). Look no further than the photograph-turned-meme (i.e., a humorous image, video, piece of text, etc., that is copied and spread rapidly by users online) in which former First Lady and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is using her smartphone, presumably emailing or texting information. This meme is also ironic

²³⁰ Michael Scherer, “10 Ways Mobile Technology is Changing Our World,” *TIME*, vol. 180, no. 9 (2012): 24-55

considering her own presidential campaign crisis in 2016 regarding the dubious use of her own personal email server in regards to communicating or transmitting allegedly classified State Department information.²³¹

The smartphone is a revolution in how humans communicate and exchange information, and despite so many suggested conveniences, this study suggests that the smartphone is a site in which crisis thought mobilizations are increasingly prevalent. The smartphone is a conduit for crisis thought on two levels. First, by the smartphone becoming an extension of our selves; and second, through the media content accessed through the smartphone device at an almost instantaneous rate that is mobilized and transposed into political subjectivity and ordinary life.

Betty Nguyen reports that research psychologists are now concerned with “the growing number of people who favor smartphones over face-to-face interaction” and how this increasing trend among smartphone users might be indicative of “a form of addiction.” Dr. Michael Dow, an addiction expert referenced in Nguyen’s piece, notes that “the more connected we are the less [we are] connecting.” Even as smartphone users think they are more connected to friends, family, and associates, studies suggest that a significant amount of smartphone users are becoming more isolated and removed from face-to-face human contact and interaction, which can mean anything from ordinary conversations over a cup of coffee to sexual intercourse.²³² As a matter of addiction, smartphone withdrawal symptoms that have been documented include:

²³¹ Jon E. Dougherty, “Revealed: Hillary Clinton’s private email servers were wide open to hacking from China, Korea, and Germany” *glitch.news*, <http://www.glitch.news/2015-10-13-revealed-hillary-clintons-private-email-servers-were-wide-open-to-hacking-from-china-korea-and-germany.html> (Accessed January 17, 2016).

²³² Karley Sciortino, “Breathless: Mastering the Art of Sexting,” *vogue.com*, <http://www.vogue.com/13260212/breathless-karley-sciortino-sexting/> (Accessed January 1, 2016).

“physical symptoms, such as anxiety, insomnia, and even depression.”²³³ Gary Thayer reports on a joint-study conducted by researchers at the Universities of Missouri, Indiana, and Oklahoma. This study found that smartphone “separation can negatively impact performance on mental tasks,” suggesting an overall increase of dependency on the smartphone medium for some users to function normally in day-to-day life. The report affirmed one of McLuhan’s central points: that the smartphone medium is “capable of becoming an extension of our selves such that when separated, we experience a lessening of ‘self’ and a negative physiological state.”²³⁴

Perhaps the most alarming evidence of a ‘crisis’ via the smartphone is tied to ‘texting while driving.’ Briefly, texting is using a smartphone to send messages in lieu of calling and talking to someone directly. Texting while driving is using a smartphone to send or read content while operating a motor vehicle. Texting while driving is synonymous with what studies have called “distracted driving,” defined as “misallocated attention,” or “any activity that takes a driver’s attention away from the task of driving.”²³⁵ This would include looking at emails, using various apps, or searching for that ‘perfect song’ in the smartphone music library. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) defines distracted driving as “a specific type

²³³ Betty Nguyen, “Phone withdrawal has physical impact: expert,” *cbsnews.com*, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/phone-withdrawal-has-physical-impact-expert/> (Accessed December 30, 2015).

²³⁴ Gary Thayer, “Study: Smartphone addiction withdrawal is physical, mental,” *mobilevillage.com*, <http://www.mobilevillage.com/iphone-smartphone-addiction-stress-study/> (Accessed December 30, 2015).

²³⁵ U.S. Department of Transportation, *Driver Distraction in Commercial Vehicle Operations* (2009), *transportation.gov*, <https://www.transportation.gov/tags/distracted-driving> (Accessed January 21, 2016).

of inattention that occurs when drivers divert their attention way from the driving task to focus on another activity,” including talking to passengers, using GPS, or eating.²³⁶

Virginia Tech’s Transportation Institute (VTTI) received national recognition for their 2009 study on cell phones and distracted driving, finding that “text messaging increased the risk of a safety-critical event, such as a crash or near-crash, by 23 times over a driver who wasn’t distracted.”²³⁷ The same report also noted that, “dialing a cell phone made the risk of crash or near-crash event 2.8 times as high as non-distracted driving; talking or listening to a cell phone made the risk of crash or near-crash event 1.3 times as high as non-distracted driving; reaching for an object such as an electronic device made the risk of crash or near-crash event 1.4 times as high as non-distracted driving.”²³⁸ The FCC reported in 2012 that, “driver distraction was the cause of 18 percent of all fatal crashes – with 3,328 people killed – and crashes resulting in an injury – with 421,000 people wounded.”²³⁹ National, state, and local level policies have been implemented to curb the rate of injuries and fatalities associated with smartphone use through concerted campaigns and advocacy, while 39 US states have outlawed cellphone use while driving altogether.²⁴⁰ As of this writing, some studies suggest that such bans on texting and

²³⁶ Amy Schick, Debbie Ascone, Julie Kang, and Maria Vegaga, *Distraction By Cell Phones and Texting* (2014), *distraction.gov*, <http://www.distraction.gov/stats-research-laws/research.html> (Accessed January 21, 2016).

²³⁷ Mindy Buchanan-King, “Updated Study Shines New Light On Phone Use While Driving,” *vt.edu*, <http://www.vt.edu/spotlight/achievement/2013-07-01-distracted/texting.html> (Accessed January 21, 2016).

²³⁸ Sherri Box, “New data from Virginia Tech Transportation Institute provides insight into cell phone use and driving distraction,” *vt.edu*, <http://www.vtnews.vt.edu/articles/2009/07/2009-571.html> (Accessed January 21, 2016).

²³⁹ Federal Communications Commission, “The Dangers of Texting While Driving,” *fcc.gov*, <https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/dangers-texting-while-driving> (Accessed January 21, 2016).

²⁴⁰ <http://www.textinganddrivingsafety.com/texting-and-driving-stats> (Accessed January 21, 2016).

driving have reduced the number of distracted driving hospitalizations by 7%.²⁴¹ Any reduction in distracted driving fatalities or injuries should be considered an improvement. However, so long as the smartphone medium remains popular, then these incidents will likely continue. Importantly, this ‘crisis’ is about the smartphone medium, not for the content the smartphone user is able to access. This is perfectly in line with McLuhan, as the medium itself is distinct from whatever content it provides.

However, differing from McLuhan, the smartphone is also a medium in which various other media mobilizations of crisis thought are transposed into political and ordinary life. These mobilizations are accessed primarily through the applications smartphone users can download in order to access various kinds of content, from 24/7 news media apps (e.g., the CNN news app) to social media apps. Many such apps allow users under ‘settings’ (within the app or the smartphone itself) to receive so-called ‘notifications’ when not using the smartphone (by ‘not using,’ this study does not mean the smartphone is powered off, but rather dormant or not directly in use). Without unlocking the smartphone through a 4-digit code, fingerprint, or other means, the smartphone user’s screen will light up briefly with small amounts of information. If the user is set up to receive notifications through the CNN app, they will receive short summaries of ‘breaking news’ stories in real time. Notifications can keep the user informed, as it is hoped by the likes of CNN that the user will then proceed to open to the CNN app and read about the story, and along the way may encounter brief advertisements. For example, the subject is out to lunch with his or her smartphone lying on the table dormant. Suddenly, the screen lights up showing a CNN notification that another terrorist attack has occurred. At that moment, perhaps

²⁴¹ Alva O. Ferdinand, Nir Menachemi, Justin L. Blackburn, Bisakha Sen, Leonard Nelson, and Michael Morrisey, “The Impact of Texting Bans on Moter Vehicle Crash – Related Hospitalizations,” *American Journal of Public Health*, vol. 105, no. 5 (May 2015): 859.

the user (if not eating lunch alone) will say to their companion, “hey, there has been a terrorist attack.”

While this may seem trite initially, what is important to consider is the cumulative impact of these notification-as-mobilizations of crisis thought over time. Furthermore, one should consider the instantaneous awareness of such ‘breaking news.’ In the past the so-called ‘political news junkie’ would have to watch 24/7 news media on their TV all the time to be so informed (not to mention read a newspaper). Yet, even for only brief respites, the political news junkie could walk away from the television, change the channel, or cut the TV off. With smartphones, the ability to stay ‘informed’ is potentially always with the smartphone user (so long as there is an Internet or Wi-Fi connection, or just a phone link, and adequate battery power). Smartphone users are potentially connected to mobilizations of crisis thought all the time.

Additionally, there are also social media apps like Facebook and Twitter that also have notification features. Whether or not the user decides to receive such notifications is dependent on the choice of the individual. To be sure, this study does not want to confuse smartphone technology here with social media platforms. However, this study suggests, especially for the millennial generation, the distinction between the smartphone medium and social media applications is likely blurred. Smartphones are becoming the primary device in which subjects access social media. To avoid this confusion, this study is sticking with social media notifications vis-à-vis the smartphone and not the term social media itself.

Twitter provides a good example of social media notifications, as the 140-character limit (i.e., letters, syntax, emojis) or less in so-called ‘tweets’ is similar, in a way, to the brevity of notifications. The smartphone user who ‘follows’ various persons, institutions, or products through Twitter can set their smartphone to receive so-called ‘tweet’ notifications. For instance,

the Brookings Institution (@Brookingsinst) can tweet a brief summary of an analysis they have published, and provide a hyperlink to their website which the user can access through the smartphone. The same could be said for any company, business, individual, or ‘think tank’ one follows. This study suggests that some, and certainly not all, tweet notifications are varied mobilizations of crisis thought: often ‘retweets’ of news stories or reports mobilizing crisis thought. Many tweets are generally informative, useful, if not humorous. Departments of Transportation in various states have Twitter accounts for busy highways and interstates, for instance, @I81VA in Virginia. Notifications can be sent regarding disabled vehicles and traffic back-ups to warn users ahead of time before going out on the road and getting locked-up in such situations. Nonetheless, many 24/7 news media Twitter accounts (e.g., NBC, CNN) are able to reach subjects through various crisis thought mobilizations in the same way as subjects might be through their websites or television through ‘tweet’ notifications. Moreover, the subject never has to touch the smartphone to see them. It is not a matter of a single notification but of the cumulative number of notifications over time and of the content of these notifications.

To reiterate two key points: first, the smartphone medium is a site for crisis thought mobilization illustrated here through concerns about distracted driving and the psychological and physiological effects of using the medium. Second, the smartphone medium allows users access to various other mobilizations of crisis thought by the 24/7 news media. Highlighted here is the use of 24/7 news media apps and smartphone notifications. It will likely be said, of course, that to avoid these pitfalls the smartphone user could simply not set up notifications or download 24/7 news media apps, or turn off the phone. But it is likely these features, this study would wager, that generate the desire to want to purchase and use smartphones in the first place (besides the ability to call, text, or email others).

Critical studies of media sometimes take their cue from Frankfurt School theorists Horkheimer and Adorno's essay on the "culture industry" featured in their book *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Popular media and its corollary popular culture are viewed by Horkheimer and Adorno as the incendiary products of liberal capitalist production that helps the current politics of order perpetuate itself. As they suggest: "the more strongly the culture industry entrenches itself, the more it can do as it chooses with the needs of consumers – producing, controlling, disciplining them; even withdrawing amusement altogether: here, no limits are set to cultural progress. But the tendency is immanent in the principle of entertainment itself, as a principle of bourgeois enlightenment."²⁴² Mass media is an apparatus of the bourgeois class to subjugate the masses through control over the predominant forms of material (and nowadays, immaterial) production in the pursuit of profit. The media dominate subjects by redirecting their time, energy, and focus towards the spectacle, splendor, and sanctity of private property and commodity ownership.²⁴³ The content and the forms of the media reaffirms the logic of the existing *status quo* by instilling in the masses a false consciousness (i.e., petty, vulgar pleasures, narcissism, selfishness, envy, jealousy, self-deception) that hinders people from perceiving the true nature of their political, social, and economic situation.

²⁴² Horkheimer & Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 115. Smartphones are a product made to procure profit, typical of modern 'throwaway' culture with each successive version (e.g., iPhone 5 to iPhone 5s to iPhone 6 and so on) of the medium. The smartphone is also capable of informing their manufactures with all kinds of demographic data (*not* always at the behest of the user) useful for charting the companies latest promotional campaigns so that, essentially, the same basic technology can be repackaged and advertised as better than ever before. To be sure, these upgrades are often improvements over previous capabilities, but for Horkheimer and Adorno nevertheless, it is still the same product.

²⁴³ Emma De Vita, "Proof that we are driven to distraction by social media," *ft.com*, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/4f5d0404-de90-11e4-b9ec-00144feab7de.html#axzz3wQTzkNn1> (Accessed January 5, 2016).

While media and various kinds of media technologies may well serve and improve ordinary life in numerous ways, the opposite is also, perhaps, true as well: we serve media rather than media serve us (as noted by McLuhan above). Returning to the example about smartphones, studies of smartphone use above illustrate this possibility. For Horkheimer and Adorno, the smartphone would be said to be useful in maintaining liberal capitalist democracy. The smartphone and the media content accessible through it all reify existing political and social relations. Horkheimer and Adorno's insights regarding the culture industry and the smartphone as a product of it as linked to the mobilization of crisis thought affirms this point. Enamored by the smartphones capabilities (or as McLuhan might put it, the narcissistic trance of the medium), users become distracted from common causes of concern to such an extent that their virtual lives on Facebook or Instagram become more real than real-world relationships.²⁴⁴ Subjects experience various joys, pleasures, but also anxieties, uncertainties, and various personal and social 'crises' among friends online. Subjects are also exposed to various mobilizations of crisis thought not only through the dangers of the smartphone medium itself (e.g., distracted driving, disconnect from reality) but also through the media content accessible through the smartphone.

Similar to the one ring in Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy (but also dissimilar in that the smartphone is eminently replaceable), the smartphone is a precious, special device, often full of private, valuable information such as phone numbers, addresses, passwords, and photos. The grip of the smartphone among some users is so strong that in the event of forgetting to have the device on their person, the absence of the smartphone may cause a personal, momentary crisis of sorts, causing a real 'turning point' in the mind of the subject. And if the smartphone is lost or stolen, this can cause, perhaps, a financial crisis as well. This might be thought of as a

²⁴⁴ McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 63.

literal ‘extension of man’: leaving home without one’s smartphone would be like leaving home without an arm or leg, or more realistically, prescription eye-glasses or prescribed medication. Forgetting one’s smartphone today is similar to forgetting one’s wallet, purse, or ID and then getting pulled over by a police officer and written up for not having it. The smartphone is, in many respects, a new form of identification that goes deeper into the life of the individual than a driver’s license or identification card ever could. The smartphone can potentially hold all known relative’s and friend’s contacts, photographic evidence of activities and lifestyle, various web searches, and even medical information. Hence, the lengths the FBI took in order to ‘crack’ the encryption and security features of the 2016 San Bernardino killer Syed Rizwan Farook’s iPhone.²⁴⁵ The subject’s dependence on having his or her smartphone within reach might lead some subjects to, for instance, ‘turn the car around’ or take other measures to restore the feeling of security the smartphone provides. This is about the security of connectivity (virtual or otherwise), the security of having one’s most cherished memories and important information all in one place.

The smartphone medium provides security for the individual for the aforementioned reasons but it can be a cause for crisis when without it. The kind of security the smartphone provides is worthwhile and realistic, but is also one built on crisis thought, one that is centered around concerns over life and death. With the smartphone, stranded motorists can call for help and individuals can dial 9-1-1 for emergency medical responders. However, these situations are usually the worst-case scenarios that might happen. More likely, the smartphone is utilized for ordinary, mundane matters, like text messaging miscellaneous items to purchase at the grocery

²⁴⁵ Andy Greenberg, “The FBI Now Says It May Crack That iPhone Without Apple’s Help,” *wired.com*, <https://www.wired.com/2016/03/fbi-now-says-may-crack-iphone-without-apples-help/> (Accessed July 24, 2016).

story, staying connected with family and friends, checking the weather, using a calculator, and so on. This suggests that in various, subtle ways, we change our conduct, behavior, and daily routines around the smartphone. This also links back to being constantly connected and the ability to stay informed about ‘breaking news’ in real time through smartphone media applications and notifications, and to be presumably locatable and available for contact anywhere and at anytime. We serve the smartphone while simultaneously being exposed to various mobilizations of crisis thought.

We also serve the smartphone medium by paying for ‘apps’ that claim to make our lives easier, which is sometimes the case, but sometimes is not. For instance, instead of calling Pizza Hut, one can order a pizza through the Pizza Hut app. We serve the smartphone by paying additional charges to cellular providers like Verizon Wireless for ‘data’ to use many of the ‘smart’ features of the medium where Wi-Fi Internet access is not available, has a weak connection, or if ‘roaming’ internationally. We serve the smartphone medium by incurring additional charges to take care of the smartphone by buying various kinds of protective casings and screen protectors to prevent breaking the device if by chance we accidentally drop it on hard surfaces, which in turn can become another crisis. Users must also keep the smartphone battery adequately charged. This means having to purchase additional adaptors and plug-ins specifically designed for the device for use in the home, office, or car. We also serve the smartphone by keeping its operating system and the apps stored on it regularly updated. All of this is necessary so that the smartphone can ‘live’ for us to use it and in turn be used by it.

We not only serve the media devices we are growing increasingly addicted to, but we also serve the profit margins of the companies that produce and provide them. Each smartphone user effectively works for the smartphone manufacture and service provider to advertise and

promote the smartphone to others. The desire for new media and faster forms of connectivity stems from the production and conditioning of ‘needs’ by the culture industry. Most everyone, perhaps, from time to time is susceptible to flashy or ‘cool’ advertising campaigns that entice would-be consumers to ‘want’ various products. Advertising is not so much about informing consumers that they need or might want a product (media included). Rather, advertising is about convincing people that they will feel better about themselves, that their lives will be better in some way if they purchase and own a given product. For example, Apple advertising has been praised for its simplicity, evoking in the minds of consumers how ‘cool’ Apple products appear to be (even without giving too much information about the product or features of the iPhone itself). This works to convince subjects that, perhaps, if they purchase an iPhone, they too will look and ‘be’ cool.²⁴⁶ In some cases, such as the increasing need of most people under retirement age to have access to the Internet, media become integral to everyday survival. Devices like cell phones and computers become vital necessities for living rather than luxury items, particularly in matters of finding employment, and at the very least, to have a device to call for help in emergency situations. As studies on smartphone use above suggest, you might not actually be able to live normally or attain the so-called ‘good life’ without a smartphone.

Frankfurt School theorist Herbert Marcuse repeats much of the same argument that underlines Horkheimer and Adorno’s critique of the media when Marcus states that: “the products indoctrinate and manipulate; they promote a false consciousness which is immune against its falsehood. And as these beneficial products become available to more individuals in more social classes, the indoctrination they carry ceases to be publicity; it becomes a way of life.

²⁴⁶ Jayson DeMars, “Here’s The Simple Secret to Apple’s Marketing Success,” *forbes.com*, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/jaysondemers/2014/07/08/heres-the-simple-secret-to-apples-marketing-success/#2715e4857a0b3bead51e63ab> (Accessed January 21, 2016).

It is a good way of life – much better than before – and as a good way of life, it militates against qualitative change.”²⁴⁷ Marcuse’s point also shares similarities to McLuhan. For McLuhan, media come in pairs. For example, writing is a medium that contains the medium of speech. This ‘pairing,’ however, can also be thought of differently in terms of Horkheimer and Adorno’s and Marcuse’s analyses. Media indoctrinate and manipulate in-and-of themselves (hence, the medium is the message), and in so doing, they promote other media through commercial advertising. Advertising and promotions for the latest gadget or digital device is illustrative of one medium (typically TV) showcasing other kinds of media to buy (e.g., smartphones, tablets, video games, and the like). In this way, media are often self-serving, projecting images of other media, as well as other media content through themselves.

When media become a way of life, media inscribes on subjects, as McLuhan put it, a feeling of numbness to those without similar kinds of media, or more generally, to anything or anyone outside the purview of the media we gaze upon. Marcuse suggests the same thing when he writes media products appear to millions of users to provide a ‘good way of life, much better than before, militating qualitative change.’ Media help to sustain liberal capitalist democracy, particularly liberal individualism, whereby our own lives increasingly take center-stage over other’s and over society around us (especially in the virtual spaces and representation of ourselves on Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn). The 24/7 news media and media content help secure the *status quo*, even as media are often noted to be purportedly tearing the fabric of American society apart. For example, Jürgen Habermas suggests news media is one contributing factor in the “crisis of the public sphere,” synonymous with long existing claims about a ‘crisis of democracy’ in the US, particularly in terms of how politics is reported and portrayed to the

²⁴⁷ Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), 12.

public, as well as how US subjects think and practice democratic politics.²⁴⁸ To Marcuse, Horkheimer, Adorno, and Habermas the time, focus, and attention given to media news or entertainment by subjects would be better spent thinking about and by acting collectively towards improving their political and social well being. Instead, many of us find ourselves thinking about where we might go next in order to stare at our smartphone screens in the presence of others, open and malleable to 24/7 news media mobilizations of crisis thought in the mundane status updates and notifications of Facebook posts and Twitter feeds.

For Baudrillard, the 24/7 news media is where his “simulations” begin.²⁴⁹ Luke writes that “the practical mediations of generating hyperreality” largely come from the 24/7 news media.²⁵⁰ Simulations are an attempt to “recreate reality according to the codes and discourses generated by the media themselves.”²⁵¹ Simulations have replaced ‘reality’ by creating a hyperreal (see below) experience for the subject, defined by 24/7 news media imagery where political and social events given media coverage are simulacra of those events.²⁵² There are four stages of simulacra for Baudrillard that explain how the hyperreal has, perhaps, overtaken reality. Originally a copy (i.e., the reflection of a basic reality) in the first stage, simulations begin in “masking and perverting the basic reality” that constitutes the second stage of simulacra, which repeats itself until reaching the third and then fourth stages. The third stage “masks the absence

²⁴⁸ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989).

²⁴⁹ Debrix, “Cyberterror and Media-Induced Fears,” 153.

²⁵⁰ Timothy W. Luke, “Power and Politics in Hyperreality: The Critical Project of Jean Baudrillard,” *The Social Science Journal*, vol. 28, no. 3 (1991), 351.

²⁵¹ Francois Debrix, “Jean Baudrillard” in *Critical Theorists and International Relations*; ed. Jenny Edkins and Nick Vaugn-Williams (New York: Routledge, 2009), 57. Debrix states: “There is... a certain objective intentionality to the deployment of the simulacrum, or an attempt at imposing another dominant reality as if it were the only one, the ‘truly real’ one.”

²⁵² Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations* (Massachusetts: Semiotext[e] – The MIT Press, 1983), 4.

of a basic reality” while it “plays at being an appearance.”²⁵³ The fourth stage “bears no relation to any reality whatsoever: it is its own pure simulacrum.” That is, “the whole system...is no longer anything but a gigantic simulacrum – not unreal [but] never again exchanging for what is real, but exchanging in itself, in an uninterrupted circuit without reference or circumference.”²⁵⁴

Baudrillard writes, “simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal.”²⁵⁵

Debrix describes the hypereal below:

In a context of hyperreality (where simulation is the only possible horizon of appearances for both objects and subjects), the symbolic...[has] no choice but to manifest...as simulated realities. Yet, because simulation is precisely about uncertainty and indeterminacy, the challenge itself (the possibility of a return to a so-called genuine reality) may never be distinguishable from the (hyper)reality that emanates from the dominant model or code. Thus, in simulation, the condition of reversibility of the system can never be guaranteed...Simulation is, for Baudrillard, a reflection on reality, or rather what is left of it once meaning, value, and sign systems, codes, models, or media have swallowed it up. For Baudrillard, simulation emerges as an attempt (by media and models) to recreate reality according to the codes generated by the models and media themselves.²⁵⁶

Hyperreality denotes a condition when all forms of referentiality (e.g., stable boundaries, fixed structures, shared consensus, and the like), signs, symbols, and signifiers have imploded and no longer can anyone be sure of what counts as reality, much less as political reality, particularly when played out or represented through 24/7 news media. The alleged postmodern ‘crisis’ that, ostensibly, summarizes the above is understood as no longer having a set of mutually shared narratives that can establish political authority, legitimacy, or truth in the ongoing and gradual breakdown of epistemological knowledge. As Wolin puts it, such stories and narratives “fix certain meanings about matters that are alleged to be fundamental because they pertain to the

²⁵³ Ibid, 11-12.

²⁵⁴ Ibid, 10-11.

²⁵⁵ Ibid, 2.

²⁵⁶ Debrix, “Jean Baudrillard,” 56-57.

identity and flourishing of the whole society...appealing to or constructing their past and connecting that past with present arrangements of power.”²⁵⁷

Life in the hyperreal is one where subjects ability to know and discern what is real, authentic, or true from what is perceived, constructed, or false as provided by 24/7 news media is significantly impaired or relative, at best.²⁵⁸ Luke’s reading of Baudrillard leads him to suggest that perhaps the “traditional notions of causality, perspective and reasoning are undermined completely by the electronic means of information, which efface the difference between cause and effect, ends and means, subject and object, active and passive.”²⁵⁹ Linking back to McLuhan, Luke suggests that perhaps “McLuhan’s formula, the medium is the message, appropriately is the key formula of the era of simulation.” The crisis of the hyperreal, as Luke notes, is that “the masses no longer can act as effective, individual subjects in this new social and political context.”²⁶⁰ This supports a key point in regards to crisis thought: despite the evidence of real crises in politics and society, ‘crises’ remain, in many respects, unrecognized.

Crisis thought perhaps shares similarities to Baudrillard’s third stage of simulation, when simulacra (i.e., what’s left of reality), if anything, or in this case, crisis claims ‘mask the absence of a basic reality’ – crisis ‘plays at being an appearance’ – when many crisis claims are really just mobilizations of crisis thought.²⁶¹ When Baudrillard notes that “it is no longer a question of imitation, nor of reduplication, nor even of parody. It is rather a question of substituting signs of the real for the real itself...which provides all the signs of the real and short-circuits all its

²⁵⁷ Wolin, *The Presence of the Past*, 2.

²⁵⁸ Hence, why it is irrelevant whether a ‘crisis’ is ‘real/transient’ or ‘perceived’ by the subject, group, or state; but also in addition, how crisis thought can be expressed in similar (but not exact) terms as the hyperreal.

²⁵⁹ Luke, “Power and Politics in Hyperreality,” 351.

²⁶⁰ Luke, *Screens of Power*, 35.

²⁶¹ Baudrillard, *Simulations*, 11-12.

vicissitudes,” crisis thought is, possibly, the ‘substitute sign’ filling in for the empty sign of ‘crisis’ that masks the ‘crisis’ of crisis thought.²⁶² Political and social reality is overrun by an endless cycle of crises that the 24/7 news media mobilizes routinely. Crisis thought has similar effects as Baudrillard’s simulations by ‘short-circuiting...all the vicissitudes’ of real and perceived ‘crises’ by subjects, groups, and governments. As reproduced, constructed, and disseminated by the media, crisis thought mobilizations circulate and are then transposed into the ordinary, helping constitute the political and social atmosphere of ordinary life. Through 24/7 media, crisis claims propagate a politics of crisis in which crisis claims and rhetoric overlap, imitate, and exacerbate one another. For Baudrillard, this amounts to simulations becoming simulations of simulations. Likewise, with crisis thought, ‘crises’ become mimetic of new or previous crises – a crisis of crises – or simply crisis thought. Paraphrasing Debrix, the “more real than reality” of crisis thought “obliterates...any distinction between true and false,” or real and transient crises. ‘Crisis’ is rendered malleable by the innumerable number of crisis claims, giving way to crisis thought as a means of securing “a certain reality,” paradoxically secured by the ‘crises’ that are said to threaten and put that political order in question.²⁶³

Taken together, McLuhan’s, Horkheimer and Adorno’s, Marcuse’s, and Baudrillard’s theories are applicable to observations and thinking about the idea of crisis thought. In the US, a handful of media conglomerates are responsible for almost all media content and news reporting that we see, hear, and watch (including mobile and web-based equivalents). Disney, Viacom, Comcast, NewsCorp, Time Warner, and companies like Google, Amazon, and Verizon own roughly 70% of all television, film, and Internet media content. NewsCorp owns FOX News, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the *New York Post*. Disney owns the hearts and minds of the young and

²⁶² Ibid, 4.

²⁶³ Debrix, “Jean Baudrillard,” 57.

old alike, possessing ABC, ESPN, Marvel Studios, and *Star Wars*. Time Warner owns CNN, *TIME* magazine, and HBO.²⁶⁴ When Horkheimer and Adorno write that “sharp distinctions like those between A and B films, or between short stories published in magazines in different price segments, do not so much reflect real differences as assist in the classification, organization, and identification of consumers. Something is provided for everyone so that no one can escape...,” they are not mistaken.²⁶⁵ Horkheimer and Adorno illuminate the illusion of choice with news or other media content. The major network news outlets of CBS, NBC (i.e., Comcast) and ABC (i.e., Disney) will all likely report on the same daily or breaking news story in their morning, evening, and weekend newscasts with little differentiation between them. Media networks, then, will all report and talk about the same news story, although the interviews and discussion between networks will differ slightly. Regardless of ideology, major media networks will usually back the *raison d'état* as judged by US foreign affairs in the 1991 Gulf War, and unanimously beating the war drum for the US post-9/11 Global War on Terror. As Kellner notes, “in general, television tends to reproduce the positions of the dominant hegemonic political forces of the era simply because, in its zeal to win good ratings and big profits, it gravitates toward what it believes is popular. As a consequence, it tends to reinforce and reproduce the dominant ethos, ideology, and policies.”²⁶⁶ Today, this point can perhaps be applied to online media outlets and their mobile equivalents via smartphone applications.

Much of the media content provided to subjects is owned, produced, and directed by a handful of transnational media conglomerates. Media content may differ respectively from company to company: from news programming and sports coverage, to sitcoms and dramas.

²⁶⁴ <http://www.freepress.net/blog/11/11/22/media-consolidation-illusion-choice> (Accessed December 18, 2015).

²⁶⁵ Horkheimer & Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 97.

²⁶⁶ Kellner, *Television and the Crisis of Democracy*, 47-48.

Whatever the information or entertainment might be, they all nonetheless come from the same or similar sources. This raises considerable questions for subjects about the kinds, limits, choices, and possibilities of news content and the interests of the parent company. For politics, especially in liberal capitalist democracies like the US, the question of whether the 24/7 news media can be trusted is beyond the point. This is not to say that the 24/7 news media does not provide ‘real’ stories or information happening in the world. However, some news stories are undoubtedly ‘constructed’ events prolonged and exaggerated to become ‘news’ for however long the public pays attention to them. Nevertheless, what the 24/7 news media decide to show the public is often a matter of choice and carefully crafted framing of news stories.

It is without question that the 24/7 news media plays a significant role in the (re)production, dissemination, and mobilization of crisis thought. As Debrix makes clear, “the production of [crises] in today’s society cannot be dissociated from the role and impact of the media.”²⁶⁷ Luke and O’ Tuathail write that the 24/7 news “conducts its crises all over the world, creating new crises with its televisual (dis)placements of defensible space, vital territory and threatening trends for any remote viewers.”²⁶⁸ Coverage of events or ‘breaking news’ stories touted as a ‘crisis,’ or some other potent and hyperbolic sign within crisis thought formation by the 24/7 news media, are increasingly characterized by what Luke describes as “hype” – “a strategy of media management, spin control or mass marketing to boost public attention and engagement with exaggerated claims. Excessive coverage, extravagant marketing, or extended publicity are the tactics of hype.”²⁶⁹ ‘Hype’ makes particular news stories and events appear more threatening, immediate, and widespread than they really are. Debrix has referred to these

²⁶⁷ Debrix, “Cyberterror and Media-Induced Fears,” 150.

²⁶⁸ Luke and O. Tuathail, “On Videocameralists,” 721.

²⁶⁹ Luke, “Hyper-power or hype-power?” 19.

media practices as the “tabloidization” of political news coverage. Like discourses of danger, tabloid discourses fall under the category of crisis thought. By ‘tabloid discourses,’ Debrix means when “popular fears and emergency responses to perceived dangers become our everyday realities in a highly mediatized society. These discourses...[are] not steered by one master subject or...seek to discover or reveal any one truth...[these] representations about fears, dangers, and insecurities...point to the power of...the media...in an era when appearances are key.”²⁷⁰ The result of the 24/7 news media mobilization of crisis thought for Debrix is a “condition of uncertainty,” which produces a “generalized anxiety...coming from everywhere and nowhere at the same time.”²⁷¹ This ‘generalized anxiety’ however is only one way, one possible effect of crisis thought. But as Debrix points out, too, “the visual (hyper)reality provided by the media,” one concomitant to crisis thought, “is often more securing and comforting for the viewer than his or her everyday experience.”²⁷² Thus, crisis thought does have a kind of a securitizing affect on subjects. The results of such mobilizations in ordinary life appear to be political and social complacency, normalization, and acceptance. Media technology and content provide a kind of ontological security to the user. However, media and media content are also often a source of ‘crises’ and thus of crisis thought.

What follows in the next two chapters are two different mobilizations of crisis thought in which 24/7 news media and entertainment play a considerable role: the ‘crisis of infrastructure’ in the US and the ‘crisis of militarization’ in the US. It is to the ‘crisis of infrastructure’ that we now turn next.

²⁷⁰ Debrix, *Tabloid Terror*, 22-23.

²⁷¹ *Ibid*, 20.

²⁷² Debrix, “Deploying Vision,” 79.

CHAPTER FOUR – INFRASTRUCTURE: Crisis and Catastrophe

This chapter explores the mobilization of crisis thought by the 24/7 media through the ‘crisis of infrastructure’ in the United States. This crisis portends that unless massive investments are made at the state and federal levels, crucial areas of US infrastructure will inevitably fall into ruination, threatening ordinary life, commerce, and US national security. This ‘crisis’ has widely been recognized by experts, some politicians, and advocacy groups. However, this crisis is still, seemingly, unrecognized in many respects by the masses and some politicians.²⁷³

Literature regarding the ‘crisis of infrastructure’ is primarily written in terms of critical infrastructure (CI). Governments consider CI to refer to the assets that are essential to the functioning of a society and economy. Critical infrastructure security is concerned with reducing risks to CI systems and developing resilience in the face of potential infrastructure ‘crises’ – typically existential and cyber-security related threats – as related to interstate highways, airports, railroads, hospitals, dams, the water system, and the electric grid.²⁷⁴ The US National Infrastructure Protection Plan (NIPP) of 2013 defines CI as: “systems and assets, whether physical or virtual, so vital to the United States that their incapacity or destruction of such systems and assets would have a debilitating impact on security, national economic security, national public health or safety, or any combination of those matters.”²⁷⁵ Critical infrastructure consists of the “industries, institutions and distribution networks...that provide a continual flow

²⁷³ <http://www.infrastructurereportcard.org/> (Accessed July 31, 2016).

²⁷⁴ <http://www.dhs.gov/what-security-and-resilience> (Accessed June 4, 2015). The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) defines resilience as “the ability to prepare for and adapt to changing conditions, and withstand and recover rapidly from disruptions. Resilience includes the ability to withstand and recover from deliberate attacks, accidents, or naturally occurring threats or incidents.”

²⁷⁵ *NIPP 2013: Partnering for Critical Infrastructure Security and Resilience*, http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/NIPP%202013_Partnering%20for%20Critical%20Infrastructure%20Security%20and%20Resilience_508_0.pdf (Accessed June 1, 2015): 9.

of the goods and services essential to a country's defense and economic security and to the health, welfare and safety of its citizens. Five major sectors can...be considered critical: Vital Human Services, Information and Telecommunication, Energy, Banking and Finance, and Physical distribution."²⁷⁶ These major sectors of CI can be represented with the following: generating electricity (e.g., the electric grid, cables, dams, wind and solar power); gas production (e.g., ground pipes and tanks, gas pumps); oil and oil production (e.g., oil pumps, off-shore oil rigs); the water supply (e.g., drinking water, dams, treatment plants, wastewater systems); agricultural production (e.g., irrigation, planning); heating (e.g., oil, natural gas, coal); public health (e.g., hospitals, clinics); transportation systems (e.g., roads, railways, waterways, airports); information technology (e.g., the world wide web, Internet); financial services (e.g., banking); and security services (e.g., police, fire, emergency, military, cyber, and defense apparatuses).

Infrastructure is 'critical' because it is a "large technical system" in which all major infrastructure systems are networked together physically or cybernetically via the Internet. If one part of the system fails, then cascading ripple effects can potentially spread throughout the entire system, therefore causing considerable disruption to ordinary life.²⁷⁷ For example, a failure or attack on the national electric grid could unleash havoc on other CI systems, from mass transit systems, and medical facilities, to global communication systems.²⁷⁸ As Philip Bobbitt explains:

²⁷⁶ Erwann-Michel Kerjan, "New Challenges in Critical Infrastructure: A US Perspective," *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*, vol. 11, no. 3 (September 2003): 134.

²⁷⁷ Matthew Jude Egan, "Anticipating Future Vulnerability: Defining Characteristics of Increasingly Critical Infrastructure-Like Systems," *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*, vol. 15, no.1 (March 2007): 5-6. Importantly, CI is dependent (for now, at least) on human technical skills necessary for the governance, operation, functioning, and monitoring of these systems.

²⁷⁸ Robert J. Lambrechts, "The U.S. Electrical Grid: Surviving Cyber-Terrorism and Solar Flares," *Natural Resources & Environment*, vol. 25, no. 4 Renewable Energy (Spring 2011).

In the space of less than two decades, our basic infrastructures in banking and finance, oil and gas and electric power, telecommunications and transportation, and government services themselves have all undergone a fundamental change. Where once it was only a nuisance if the lights went out in the middle of a banking transaction, it now can mean complete interruption of financial services. Where previously transportation continued whether or not the telephone lines were down, now planes and tankers and air cargo are stalled, sometimes dangerously so, if communications are interdicted or otherwise interrupted. Infrastructures that previously were logically and geographically distinct have become interconnected and radically automated... The nodes that connect these infrastructures, which are critical to their operation; now present far more lucrative targets than the simple bridges and power stations of previous decades. Using the tools of information warfare, attackers could overload telephone lines with special software. They could reroute and disrupt the operations of air traffic control, emergency calls, and shipping and railroad computers.²⁷⁹

The crisis of critical infrastructure in the US is recognized in the ASCE 2013 Report Card for America's Infrastructure. The report gave the United States an overall D+ rating. This grade indicates poor infrastructural quality for all vital CI systems, including energy, transit, levees, and the like. The D+ grade also takes into account "the basis of capacity, condition, funding, future need, operation and maintenance, public safety, resilience, and innovation."²⁸⁰ The report highlights that crumbling infrastructure will make ordinary life from driving or walking down the street, to getting a glass of tap water from the kitchen faucet potentially dangerous engagements if, as the report card suggests, \$3.6 trillion dollars or more are not invested in CI projects by 2020. Again, the crisis of CI is recognized. Yet, as of this writing there is no guarantee that the trillions of dollars necessary to improve the nation's infrastructure are going to materialize by the year 2020. Thus, this crisis remains, too, largely unaddressed.

What are some the reasons why the 'crisis of infrastructure' remains unaddressed?

Former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg once noted that the problem with

²⁷⁹ Philip Bobbitt, *Terror and Consent: The Wars For the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Anchor Books, 2009), 95.

²⁸⁰ <http://www.infrastructurereportcard.org/wp-content/uploads/2013ReportCardforAmericasInfrastructure.pdf> (Accessed June 6, 2015).

infrastructure is that it is not “sexy or glamorous, and it doesn’t make for great headlines, but it is one of the most important issues facing our country. And make no mistake about it, we have an infrastructure crisis.”²⁸¹ Likewise, the ASCE report card notes: “for the most part, the problem is hidden. Most of us do not notice infrastructure until it stops working when a bridge is closed causing us to be late for work, when the lights go out, or when there is no water for your morning shower.”²⁸² John Cromwell and his colleagues concur, stating that:

crisis rhetoric is not misplaced. Professionals in the public works arena have known that when urban infrastructure needs to be replaced because of wear and obsolescence, it is difficult to draw adequate public attention and monetary resources to these needs. This is particularly true in the wider context of reinvestment needs in other sectors (e.g., transportation and health). This worry stems from the fact that infrastructure wears out over time and is invisible to most people.²⁸³

Keeping in mind that CI is distinct from other forms of infrastructure, this chapter proposes that, generally speaking, all infrastructures are ‘critical.’ Quoting Joseph Masco, infrastructure is widened in this analysis to account for “the material structures that support social life,” or in other words, ordinary and everyday life. Infrastructure is not just about critical infrastructure systems such as the electric grid, water distribution, or transportation systems, but also about “the imaginative and effective contexts” that make infrastructure fundamentally linked to the cultivation and security of subjectivities.²⁸⁴ Thus, ‘infrastructure’ in the following is an expression of what this study refers to as ordinary infrastructure (see below). Before engaging with some examples of crisis thought mobilization regarding infrastructure, this study wants to entertain the following point: infrastructure affects subjectivities. This is pertinent to crisis

²⁸¹ Bruce Steely and Rebecca J. Rosen, “The Secret is the System,” *The Wilson Quarterly*, vol. 32, no. 2 (Spring 2008): 47.

²⁸² <http://www.infrastructurereportcard.org/wp-content/uploads/2013ReportCardforAmericasInfrastructure.pdf> (Accessed June 6, 2015).

²⁸³ John E. Cromwell III, Elisa Speranza, and Haydn Reynolds, “The Infrastructure Crisis?” *Journal (American Water Works Association)*, vol. 99, no.4 (April 2007): 110.

²⁸⁴ Masco, *The Theater of Operations*, 28.

thought because it establishes the linkages among crisis thought, infrastructure, security and subjectivity, underscoring the potential of crisis thought to emerge from the confluence of all kinds of infrastructure, the contents of those structures, and the human relations with those structures. As Dumm puts it, “the materials that compose our homes have begun to compose us. They impact on how we choose, the range and quality of our choices, the difficulty of enacting choice itself, the hazardous movement from one terminal to another.”²⁸⁵

What Dumm and this study are referring to in regards to subjectivities above can be thought of as the politics of infrastructure. Critical and ordinary infrastructure creates a space that is political.²⁸⁶ Infrastructure is political because it concerns the arrangement or ordering of time, space, things, and people. The politics of infrastructure is first a matter of determining the physical and terrestrial order of things. This includes official and unofficial designations and classifications of space. Sanctioned spaces are spaces that might be referred to as a ‘technology corridor,’ a ‘historic downtown district,’ or an ‘outlet shopping center.’ Politics is significant to the form infrastructure might take: from where buildings might be located (zoning and permits), or to the structural quality of buildings (codes, yearly inspections), to roads, piping systems, or electrical integration that play a part in how a space is socially and aesthetically constructed (e.g., bushes, plants, flag poles, bike lanes, water fountains, and the like). These choices (designed by a company, architect, urban planner, group of citizens, or a governing body) help determine how space relates to natural surroundings, and what a given structure signifies for those who live, work, and play around them. The politics of CI is seen when major constructions for communities usually rest in the hands of political interests at the local, state, or national levels in

²⁸⁵ Thomas Dumm, *united states* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 144.

²⁸⁶ Henri Lefebvre, “From the City to Urban Society,” in *Implosions / Explosions: Towards a Study of Planetary Urbanization*, ed. Neil Brenner (Berlin: Jovis, 2014), 51.

the US. An example would be whether a small community wants to extend water and sewer utilities to a specified area to promote economic growth and development. In the US, this would be a decision made either by vote, a town council, or in partnership with regional authorities.²⁸⁷

Perhaps more crucially, the politics of infrastructure considers how we think of ourselves in relation to others through the buildings and landscapes that human subjects fabricate. These refer to the rules or laws regarding their construction, acquisition, transfer, or demolition, what those structures produce in relation to others, what these structures are said to signify, and the way in which their arrangement enables or restrains human conduct in time and space. It is these issues that affirm the point that infrastructure is about the material structures that support social life. Infrastructure has affective and effective relations to political and social life. These relations develop and evolve over time, informing human subjectivity and praxis with regards to what subjects expect the ordinary (or normal situation) to be on a day-to-day basis, providing the physical and aesthetic arrangements (i.e., *milieu*) for human politics to take place. These points are discussed further in the following.

I. Infrastructure, Security, and Subjectivity

If critical infrastructure generally refers to the organizational structures and facilities that make up much of alleged modern life (my definition), then secondary forms of infrastructure that human subjects rely on more often, including markets, clinics or schools, ought to be considered just as critical as the structures found in conventional definitions of CI. This study is not suggesting that critical infrastructure should be dismissed as a distinct category, but rather that ordinary infrastructure – defined loosely here as the houses and surrounding grocery stores,

²⁸⁷ The Franklin Newspost, “Deal will give town a new water source,” *thefranklinnewspost.com*, http://www.thefranklinnewspost.com/news/local/deal-will-give-town-a-new-water-source/article_c0bflce6-580a-5e3b-ab34-5298bb768551.html (Accessed July 10, 2015).

pharmacies, fast-food restaurants, big box chain stores, small ‘mom and pop’ businesses, downtown promenades, and the like – are just as important to the development of particular kinds of human conduct and individual feelings of security. This is to say as well that ordinary infrastructure often blurs with critical infrastructure, especially when common forms of infrastructure, for instance, outdoor patios and decks, are said to be in ‘crisis.’

For example, on Sunday, July 5, 2015, at 6:30PM EST, NBC Evening News with Lester Holt opened its broadcast with the headline: “Deck Collapses.” The day before, a Virginia family renting a beachfront condominium on Emerald Isle, NC was in the midst of taking a large family photo when the outdoor deck they were standing on collapsed. Over two-dozen people, including children and elderly people, plunged to the ground as the deck gave way below them. First responders noted that 21 people suffered injuries, with two family members in critical condition. The NBC broadcast contextualized ‘deck collapse’ in terms of the crisis of infrastructure, thereby mobilizing crisis thought in its presentation of this story. NBC reported that in the last ten years or so, 4,600 emergency room visits across the United States have been due to private or commercial deck collapses. The broadcast cited the National American Deck and Railing Association (NADRA), which estimate that 40 million private and 20 million commercial outdoor decks are now in crisis.²⁸⁸

NBC raised the question of ‘what is to be done’ regarding an aging, national infrastructure of all kinds. The narrative NBC crafted is representative of countless Fourth of July celebrations: a big family cookout at the beach or in the confines of a private backyard. Common to these activities (and largely invisible in carrying them out) are the outdoor decks

²⁸⁸ NBC News, “24 Injured, Two Critically, as North Carolina Deck Collapses,” *nbcnews.com*, <http://www.nbcnews.com/nightly-news/video/24-injured--two-critically--as-north-carolina-deck-collapses-477598275548> (Accessed July 6, 2015).

attached to houses, condominiums, and apartments. The message, really, is important for human safety, security, and developing resiliency in order to survive what could be your own home. Additionally, this is also not to take lightly the suffering experienced by the family NBC featured in their report. Nevertheless, the example demonstrates that the crisis of infrastructure extends beyond critical infrastructure systems by definition to ordinary life in the form of private residences, businesses, and public spaces.

National security plans (such as the NIPP) perhaps overlook the significance of ordinary infrastructure in the creation of what Foucault called a *milieu*: the “specific space of security [and] to a series of possible events...in which...one tries to effect, precisely, the population.”²⁸⁹ The *milieu* is the physical, ontological, and artificial terrain created and occupied by human (and non-human) subjects in which political, social, cultural, and economic practices unfold, one that is considerably linked to infrastructure. By ‘artificial terrain,’ I mean, once again, the buildings, streets, roads, sewers, power lines, bridges, harbors, shopping malls, suburbs, telecommunication networks that, ultimately, play a significant part in the development of human political subjectivity and ontological security.

Infrastructure has linkages to the development of political subjectivity: who and what human subjects think, imagine, and practice in relation to the surroundings and structures that constitute the ordinary. William Morish notes, “infrastructure is a mirror that reflects the values, cultural identity, and collective hopes for a better future.”²⁹⁰ David Harvey reminds us that, in the infrastructural marvel of the city, “we individually and collectively make the city through our daily actions and our political, intellectual, and economic engagements...in return, the city

²⁸⁹ Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 20-21.

²⁹⁰ William Morish, “After the Storm: Bebuilding Cities Upon Reflexive Infrastructure,” *Social Research*, vol. 75, no. 3 Disasters: Recipes and Remedies (Fall 2008): 1003.

makes us.”²⁹¹ The linkages between infrastructure and human subjectivity can be demonstrated in a variety of ways. For example, the profession of urban planning, which is considered “a technical and political process concerned with the welfare of people, control of the use of land, design of the urban environment including transportation and communication networks, and protection and enhancement of the natural environment.”²⁹² Emphasis should be placed here on ‘design of the urban environment,’ or more generally to designing the spaces in which humans interact, and thus buildings, structures, roads, sewers, power lines, and the like. Urban planning is concerned with designing environments that not only meet political and economic needs (such as those just mentioned), but also help to cultivate denizens who enjoy their surroundings, and in turn, are affected by those surroundings in terms of happiness, productivity, and well being. Considering this, the infrastructural environment – the surrounding conditions and influences that effect a population in a given area – can be said to have an impact on the development of subjectivities as infrastructure that subjects are surrounded by, grow up around, and develop through (as in literally, ‘growing up’ within houses, schools, malls, and the like) has an effect.²⁹³

Infrastructure is linked to security on two levels. The first level is the aforementioned national security practices noted above. In particular, the importance, methods, procedures, and protocols given to, at least, critical infrastructure as a national security priority. This includes the development of state and subject resiliency through perseverance in overcoming troubles, issues, problems, or persistent threats to a way of life. Protecting and securing infrastructure is a reflection on protecting a way of life. From this, infrastructure security can be linked to the

²⁹¹ David Harvey, “The Right to the City,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, vol. 27.4 (December 2003): 939.

²⁹² <https://mcgill.ca/urbanplanning/planning> (Accessed July 27, 2016).

²⁹³ Michael Hughes, Carolyn J. Kroehler, and James W. Vander Zanden, *Sociology: The Core – 6th edition* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2002), 399.

liberal political project of securing security. Liberalism as a mode of life, and in this case, specifically as part of private property rights, invariably influences the characteristics of infrastructure systems, including what infrastructure is possible, what infrastructure might be, the location of a given structure, limitations regarding infrastructure construction, building and environmental stability, or the level of security assigned to certain kinds of structures. For example, skyscrapers are a response to the costs and limits of property availability in cities, determined by a wide-range of factors, most salient among them being location. This is why buildings in cultural and economic metropolises such as New York City go upward rather than outward due to a lack of available land/space. This is also one reason why these spaces are so inexorably expensive in comparison to other areas where subjects might live and work, but also in terms of the problems and benefits associated with gentrification.²⁹⁴

Furthermore, the above also relates to the connections between infrastructure, liberalism, security, subjectivity, and the natural environment, in terms of the ways we approach and give value to the environment that infrastructure is built on. Property values for homes around recreational areas such as lakes or ski resorts are more expensive than homes in places without these features. The security of various infrastructures is often determined by the climate, space, and topography surrounding a given structure. For example, homes, businesses, and other structures in seismically unstable areas often incorporate during their construction (or as modifications added later) flexible building materials over more rigid ones, such as brick and concrete. Skyscrapers, again, are built with ball bearings, springs, padded cylinders, and the like

²⁹⁴ Megan Willet, “New York City’s first ‘micro apartments’ are coming this spring – here’s what they’ll look like,” *businessinsider.com*, <http://www.businessinsider.com/nyc-micro-apartments-under-construction-2015-2> (Accessed June 26, 2015). This point is also seen in the current trend of micro-apartments for the constant flux of new workers and employees moving to the city.

so they can withstand, or at the very least reduce the loss of human life when an earthquake or other destructive force occurs.

The second level of security returns us to Foucault's milieu (see above) and his perspective on security (see Chapter 1). Infrastructure is tied to the security of human species life, not only in terms of well being (e.g., shelter, warmth, cooling, a place to store and cook food, sleep, procreate and so on) but also through securing human behavior, to render it manageable, predictable, calculable and locatable. For example, such as through fixed geographical coordinates. Global positioning systems or Google maps (a popular smartphone application) exemplify this point: most anywhere the subject might want to go, one can navigate their way there using these technologies. Infrastructure assists in the creation of a nodal-like grid or map in which humans and various species life occupy at the macro and micro-level. At the macro level, one would have regions, states, cities, and the interstates connecting them. At the micro-level, this means permanent addresses, secondary roads, specific neighborhoods, counties, towns, and villages. In this sense, infrastructure is crucial to how we demarcate, compartmentalize, and orient ourselves in the spaces we build. Such a map is often divided by class, income, and corresponding property values that elicit various unofficial distinctions between particular areas. This point can be seen, for example, in the way most US cities are *de facto* mapped by residents and tourists by giving nicknames to distinct parts of cities and counties for easy reference and navigation purposes (e.g., the financial district, a downtown or uptown, the wealthy neighborhood, or the ghetto). Variations of this point would also account for the type, quality, and purpose of infrastructure, ranging from businesses, medical facilities, cafés, art scenes, tourist traps, entertainment venues, clubs, bars, and low-income housing. In this fundamental and literal way, the infrastructural environment in which subjects live, work, and

play is what constitutes the ordinary in many respects and is, perhaps, pivotal to the way subjects perceive the normal situation as a matter of personal security. Infrastructure is ordinary life, in some respects, whereby everyday life is matter of moving from structure to structure, space to space, at least in terms of work, rest, and some forms of recreation. For instance, an ordinary day might consist of leaving home, going to work, and then, perhaps, having dinner at a restaurant afterwards, and then finally returning home. Benjamin Simms affirms this point by noting, “infrastructure participates in social interactions, and more specifically because it plays a key role in structuring space and time of social action, it also shapes our fundamental sense of what is normal, possible, or moral.”²⁹⁵ This is pertinent to crisis thought mobilizations because, as suggested in the Introduction, crisis thought is a question of human ontology, especially when infrastructure or ways of life are perceived or said to be under threat or in ‘crisis.’

For example, much has been said about the economic and infrastructural decline of once thriving cities like Detroit and Flint, MI, both of which have experienced economic ups and downs often tied to the vicissitudes of late modernity: namely deindustrialization gradually taking its toll since the 1970’s with the loss of auto-industry jobs and a reported 25% decline in population in 2011.²⁹⁶ In turn, this has affected Detroit’s tax revenue, which, among other public services, would be allocated to infrastructure maintenance and repair. By December 2013, Michigan Governor Rick Snyder declared a state of emergency when Detroit filed for the largest ever US city bankruptcy, with the city unable to fulfill its obligations in public services or

²⁹⁵ Benjamin Simms, “The Day After the Hurricane: Infrastructure, Order, and the New Orleans Police Department’s Response to Hurricane Katrina,” *Social Studies of Science*, vol. 37, no. 1 (Feb 2007): 112.

²⁹⁶ See: John Wisely and Todd Sprangler, “Moter City population declines 25%” *usatoday.com*, http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/nation/census/2011-03-22-michigan-census_N.htm (Accessed July 31, 2016).

payments to retired city workers.²⁹⁷ Although the economic prospects of Detroit have been improving since 2014 (some observers suggesting, as of 2015, that Detroit is “cool again,” and attracting investors, innovators, and young adventurers),²⁹⁸ the ravages of the population and economic decline over the last half-decade have left a significant mark on the infrastructure and general aesthetics of the city with some estimated 70,000 abandoned or dilapidated buildings.²⁹⁹ The urban decay of Detroit, and likewise Flint, has led these cities to become prominent examples of what is sometimes referred to as “ruin porn” in popular vernacular (other examples would include the ruins of Chernobyl, abandoned amusement parks, and the Holocaust).³⁰⁰ Ruin porn is a recent movement in art photography that takes the decline of cities, buildings, and infrastructure as its subject.

Dora Apel speaks about the linkage between infrastructure, crisis thought, and ruin porn in what she calls “ruin imaginaries,” which for her cultivate “a pervasive cultural pessimism that foresees violent disintegration and collapse – whether through viral pandemics, ecological destruction, warfare, or deindustrialization.”³⁰¹ Ruin imaginaries demonstrate the effects of crisis thought on political subjectivity. For Apel, and as suggested in this study, crisis thought

²⁹⁷ Joseph Lichterman and Bernie Woodall, “In largest-ever U.S. city bankruptcy, cuts coming for Detroit creditors, retirees,” *reuters.com*, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-detroit-bankruptcy-judge-idUSBRE9B20PZ20131203> (Accessed July 31, 2016).

²⁹⁸ Susan Ager, “Tough, Cheap, and Real: Detroit is Cool Again,” *nationalgeographic.com*, <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/taking-back-detroit/see-detroit.html> (Accessed July 31, 2016).

²⁹⁹ Mark Binelli, “How Detroit Became the World Capital of Staring at Abandoned Buildings,” *nytimes.com*, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/11/magazine/how-detroit-became-the-world-capital-of-staring-at-abandoned-old-buildings.html?pagewanted=all> (Accessed July 31, 2016).

³⁰⁰ Siobhan Lyans, “What ‘ruin porn’ tells us about ruins and porn,” *cnn.com*, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/10/12/architecture/what-ruin-porn-tells-us-about-ruins-and-porn/> (Accessed July 31, 2016).

³⁰¹ Dora Apel, “The Ruins of Capitalism” *jacobinmag.com*, <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2015/06/ruin-porn-imagery-photography-detroit/> (Accessed June 6, 2015). This essay is adapted from Apel’s *Beautiful Terrible Ruins: Detroit and the Anxiety of Decline* published in June 2015 by Rutgers University Press.

mobilization via photography, governance, and 24/7 news media stories and images seem to do a combination of two things. First, these mobilizations transpose and generate the ‘pervasive cultural pessimism’ that Apel notes, as this is transposed throughout the political, social and cultural life world throughout the US where “faith in a better future erodes.” Put differently, when we say, hear, or read that ‘Detroit is in crisis,’ this message is transposed to other places and situations that may or may not be in ‘crisis,’ regardless of whether or not that crisis has anything to do with infrastructure. Yet, paradoxically, as Apel points out, too, “the beauty of decay helps us cope with the terror of apocalyptic decline.”³⁰² This ‘coping’ for Apel is argued here to be a kind of ‘security’ practiced by subjectivities to combat varying dissonances in either accepting the US crisis of infrastructure or denying it.

Infrastructural decay is recognized as a crisis throughout US cities and towns, but this has yet to produce a major infrastructure reinvestment plan to curb similarly crumbling infrastructure nationwide. For example, the high profile 2015-2016 lead contaminated ‘water crisis’ in Flint, MI is a warning of deteriorating infrastructure in the US.³⁰³ Yet, in the face of evidence presented by outside researchers, including Professor Marc Edwards and his team of student researchers from Virginia Tech, “skeptical bureaucrats...openly questioned the [Virginia Tech] team’s methods and reputation and denied the existence of a problem even after the team had announced the results.”³⁰⁴ To be sure, the water crisis in Flint received substantial media attention. Yet once the gross negligence of the city officials was given national attention, like all stories in the 24/7 news cycle, the mobilization of crisis thought had served its purpose (i.e., to draw in viewers, ratings), as the story, memory, and the recognition of the crisis of infrastructure

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ Josh Sandburn, “The Toxic Tap” *TIME*, vol. 187, no. 3 (February 2016).

³⁰⁴ Mason Adams and Jesse Tuel, “Fighting For Flint,” *Virginia Tech Magazine*, vol. 36, no.3 (Spring 2016): 42-43.

faded from the 24/7 news media cycle. In short, the mobilization of crisis thought obviated the ‘crisis’ that such mobilization brought to attention in the first place.

II. Mobilizing the Crisis of Infrastructure

Cyber-Crisis

Important to critical infrastructure (CI) security are automated and computerized processes of particular CI systems.³⁰⁵ Critical infrastructure systems are now often connected to cyberspace and therefore networked with other CI systems in order to increase the efficiency between different regions and sectors of CI (e.g., the distribution of electricity or drinking water). While providing a number of conveniences in terms of communicating and relaying information between systems, such integration has made these systems increasingly vulnerable to what is often referred to as cyber-attacks or cyber-terrorism in the field of cyber security. Claire Yorke writes that cyber-attacks are “a universal threat, where no one is exempt. It is equally capable of undermining states and disrupting industry as it is targeting, exploiting or threatening individuals and their well being.” Furthermore, Yorke notes how this particular ‘crisis’ is recognized by policy makers and the military, but remains unrecognized by most of the population, the challenge being “to incorporate ordinary people and civil society into broader policy and communicate the right information, at the right moment, to the wider population.”³⁰⁶

By ‘cyber security,’ this study means an entire industry and profession of computer experts whose jobs are primarily concerned with “the protection of information systems from

³⁰⁵ Hao Li, Gary W. Rosenwald, Juhwan Jung, and Chen-Ching Liu, “Strategic Power Infrastructure Defense,” *Proceedings of the IEEE*, vol. 93, no. 5 (May 2005): 918. <http://www.science.smith.edu/~jcardell/Readings/TRUST%20US/IEEE%20Proc%20May%202005/PwrSys%20Defense.pdf> (Accessed June 5, 2015).

³⁰⁶ Claire Yorke, “Cybersecurity and Society” *The World Today*, vol. 66, no. 12 (December 2010): 19-20.

theft or damage to the hardware, the software, and to the information on them, as well as from disruption or misdirection of the services they provide.”³⁰⁷ Cyber security is aimed at what many observers in this field loosely call cyberwar or cyber warfare where the objective is to repel, prevent, and if necessary, retaliate against ‘cyber-attacks.’ Cyber-attacks are defined by Richard Clarke as “actions by nation-states to penetrate another nation’s computers or networks for the purposes of causing damage or disruption.”³⁰⁸ For example, one can point to the cyber-attack on Sony motion pictures by North Korea or from collective hacktivist organizations such as Anonymous.³⁰⁹ Perhaps most surprising with cyberwar is that the United States is engaged in cyber warfare right now: it is a constant, 24/7 ‘battle’ (if that term is still applicable) and a ‘war’ that defies all the logics of existential warfare as understood. As William Lynn III points out, “traditional Cold War deterrence models of assured retaliation do not apply to cyberspace, where it is difficult and time consuming to identify an attack’s perpetrator. Whereas a missile comes with a return address, a computer virus generally does not.”³¹⁰ However, cyber-attacks are not a monopolized form of violence wielded by the state alone.³¹¹ What makes the potential of cyber-attacks/cyberwar an enduring site of crisis thought mobilization is that, first, as already noted, it

³⁰⁷ Morrie Graser, *Building A Secure Computer System* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1988), 3.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/242363259_Building_a_secure_computer_system (Accessed July 27, 2016)

³⁰⁸ Richard A. Clarke and Robert K. Knake, *Cyberwar: The Next Threat To National Security and What to Do About It* (New York: HarperCollins, 2010), 6.

³⁰⁹ See: Oliver Laughland, “FBI director stands by claim that North Korea was source of Sony cyber-attack,” *theguardian.com*, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/07/fbi-director-north-korea-source-sony-cyber-attack-james-comey> (Accessed July 16, 2015); and <http://mediacommons.futureofthebook.org/tne/pieces/anonymous-lulz-collective-action> (Accessed July 7, 2015).

³¹⁰ William J. Lynn III, “Defending a New Domain: The Pentagon’s Cyberstrategy,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 89, no. 5 (September/October 2010): 99.

³¹¹ Max Weber, “The Profession and Vocation of Politics” in *Political Writings*, ed. Peter Lassmand and Ronald Speirs (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 316.

is perpetual (it is happening as we speak). Second, it is about how cyber-attacks can be carried out by anyone with the expertise and hardware/software capability to do so. The ‘crisis’ of cyber-security was expressed by Director of National Intelligence James Clapper when he stated that, “cyber-attacks [are] the greatest threat [to] US national security,” especially to United States CI systems, which if successfully hit by a cyber-attack “could be significantly disruptive or potentially devastating.”³¹²

Cyber-attacks often come in the form of ‘hacking’ – defined as the use of a computer to gain unauthorized access to data in a system – that can result in the loss or theft of private, personal, and classified information as well as data stored on computer hard drives or the so-called ‘cloud.’³¹³ A successful hack can implant malicious software (malware) that can corrupt a computer system, destroy data, or modify computer programs to varying degrees. In the last several years, there has been an increasing number of hacks on private data in the US, ranging from credit card numbers acquired through sales data collected by companies such as Target, Home Depot, or Staples; to social security numbers and home addresses stolen in hacks on medical insurance companies Anthem and Primera Blue Cross in early 2015.³¹⁴ Cyber-attacks appear to be becoming so numerous that they can be said to have engendered their own kind of crisis thought referred to here as cyber-crises – a specific set of signifiers that concern the potential outcomes of cyber warfare and the resiliency of cyber-defenses. By ‘cyber-crisis’, this study does not mean to take lightly cyber-security concerns. By this point, it should be inferred

³¹² Council on Foreign Relations, “Cyberattack on US Infrastructure” *cfr.org*, <http://www.cfr.org/global/global-conflict-tracker/p32137#!/?marker=2> (Accessed July 9, 2015).

³¹³ Qusay Hassan, “Demystifying Cloud Computing” *The Journal of Defense and Software Engineering* (Jan/Feb 2011): 17.

³¹⁴ Kevin Granville, “9 Recent Cyber-attacks Against Big Business,” *nytimes.com*, http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/02/05/technology/recent-cyberattacks.html?_r=0 (Accessed July 9, 2015).

that cyber-attacks are a potential threat to critical infrastructure systems across the US. However, cyber-crises have become a convenient conduit for the (re)production of crisis thought. Stated differently, perhaps the threat of cyber-attacks is both dangerously real and, yet, is often times exaggerated. There remains a ‘gap’ in relaying important cyber-security information to the public about what is a serious threat to ordinary life and what is not.

An example of a cyber-crisis is the July 8, 2015 incident when United Airlines (UA), followed by the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE), suspended activities due to what each blamed as a ‘glitch’ in their computer systems. Neither UA nor the NYSE claimed these complications were hacking or terrorism related, and no connection between the two incidents has been established as of this writing.³¹⁵ Despite this, the technical difficulties shared by UA and the NYSE were determined by correspondents and media pundits to be a cyber-crisis. This incident is a great example of crisis thought mobilization by the 24/7 news media. Debrix writes that “television and Internet media make cyberterrorism and its fear possible. Both media technologies (instant visual images and swarming digital data) contribute to the creation of cyberterror as the next apocalyptic scenario.”³¹⁶ The 24/7 news media rushed to classify the ‘glitch’ as a crisis even as UA and the NYSE reported they were likely dealing with a technical malfunction, which should be expected when it comes technology.³¹⁷ What might have once been taken as a small price to pay for the conveniences of the digital age has been promoted by

³¹⁵ Gillian Tett, “Prepare For More Cyber-attacks on the US,” *ft.com*, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/7c2384de-2569-11e5-bd83-71cb60e8f08c.html#axzz3fQBPXBQV> (Accessed July 9, 2015).

³¹⁶ Debrix, “Cyberterror and Media-Induced Fears,” 166.

³¹⁷ The question might be raised of how do we know that above incident in question was a minor software glitch. This is what was reported by the NYSE and UA. Given the information available and limitations of this study, there is no way to tell if it was a minor software glitch or a ‘crisis’ of cyber-security, or not. The humdrum quality of this event makes it useful to show how minor and unremarkable occurrences accumulate in the (re)production of crisis discourses.

the 24/7 news media as politically, socially, culturally, and economically threatening to US national security and ordinary life.

The 24/7 news media mobilized crisis thought when word of the ‘glitch’ was first reported in order to fill in the gaps of a story that was otherwise partial and speculative. AJ Vicens, writing for *motherjones.com*, humorously remarked that “when the New York Stock Exchange inexplicably halted trades at about 11:30 Wednesday morning, people around the Twittersphere reacted with their typical restraint, reasoned analysis, and careful double-checking of the facts. Or not.”³¹⁸ The 24/7 news media mobilizations of crisis thought with this incident were rapidly transposed into the ordinary life world through all kinds of media. Most notable, perhaps, was the way the story spread through social media platforms on the Internet. For instance, there were numerous ‘tweets’ through Twitter by political officials, news reporters, self-proclaimed experts, and everyday people. These tweets contained links to reports, thoughts, and comments that were not directed at any singular, unified, or premeditated narrative or objective. The result was the generation of crisis thought for the sake of a slow news day on what was otherwise an unremarkable and largely unremembered day in the summer of 2015, performed at the expense of those stranded airline passengers who were truly affected by the malfunction. Media coverage presented a ‘crisis’ where the empirical referent of the crisis by definition (i.e., a warning, turning point, or process – see Chapter 2), was absent, but nevertheless, exaggerated to some degree the national anxieties, fears, and uncertainties about cyber security. Put crudely, the commotion over this incident was unnecessary, especially when 24/7 news media and all those commenting on the event via social media had no facts to rely on

³¹⁸ AJ Vicens, “The Shocking Truth About Wednesday’s Apocalypse Involving Wall Street, China, ISIS, and United Airlines” *motherjones.com*, <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2015/07/nyse-glitch-hack-china-cia-cyber-isis> (Accessed August 22, 2015).

in making talking points about the event. The cyber-crisis discourses of the UA and NYSE incident, in the form of the discourses produced by the event, represent the empirical reality of crisis thought. From these discourses, crisis thought moves throughout the discursivity of ordinary life by working its way into the reception of messages, texts, Facebook posts/reposts, ‘tweets,’ online news stories, and images on television.

However, crisis thought need not always come from news media mobilizations. It is also mobilized throughout forms of 24/7 media entertainment, as demonstrated in the following analyses.

Doomsdays and Disasters

The cable television network, the History Channel (HC), produces a program called *Engineering Disasters*, which showcases an assortment of infrastructure failures caught on video, ranging from dams bursting due to heavy precipitation, to airplanes falling out the sky.

The synopsis of the episode “Colorado Dam Disaster” gets at what the series is about:

On this episode, a storm of the century takes out nine dams in Colorado, flooding entire towns and leaving thousands stranded. A train carrying hazardous materials derails, releasing toxic vapors throughout a small NJ community. A natural gas line breaks and reduces a neighborhood to ashes and rubble. A cargo jet crashes seconds after take off in Afghanistan. And, a luxury cruise goes from smooth sailing to wrecked on the rocks.³¹⁹

When reading the episode synopsis, it is surprising that it is not dotted with exclamation marks.

The program revels in infrastructure disasters, replaying amateur footage of the incidents repeatedly, while providing scant interviews with witnesses and experts shaking their heads in disbelief that these disasters could have happened in the first place. There is little critique of or praise for the infrastructure systems in question, nor of the existent political, social, cultural, and

³¹⁹ <http://www.history.com/shows/engineering-disasters/episodes> (Accessed June 26, 2015).

economic pressures that often precede infrastructural collapse. *Engineering Disasters* mobilizes the crisis of CI in order to glorify crisis-to-catastrophe situations for entertainment purposes.

The conventional view is that after watching a program like *Engineering Disasters* the viewer would perhaps be more aware of the dangers and potentials of infrastructural collapse. *Engineering Disasters* is likely to induce feelings that such failures are pervasive and that infrastructure is in danger everywhere. This, it might be assumed, would produce cautionary practices by subjects about avoiding passenger trains, airline flights, or carpooling. Crisis thought mobilizations can make danger appear more apparent than it really is. If this were the extent of crisis thought, then it might be safe to assume that the majority of viewers watching *Engineering Disasters* (and this is not to say that a great number of people are watching it) would have greater awareness about deteriorating infrastructure systems. Nevertheless, crisis thought can also be limiting, neutralizing concerns about crisis that helps secure the *status quo*. What is proposed here is that watching *Engineering Disasters* (and similar media entertainment like this one) paradoxically makes it less likely for subjects to take seriously the fact that critical infrastructure systems can and will fail.

After watching *Engineering Disasters*, the viewer might think to himself/herself that the infrastructure crisis will ‘take care of itself’ or that ‘somebody will eventually fix it.’ The viewer understands that there is a crisis of CI. Yet, the ways in which the program and footage are portrayed preclude the seriousness needed by the viewer to accept that there is, perhaps, a crisis of CI. In the first phase of crisis thought operation, the crisis is recognized but neutralized. This does not negate the truth that these crisis-disasters have taken place. In the second phase of transposition, the content of *Engineering Disasters* is transposed to the subject’s own life and surroundings. For instance, the subject may determine that infrastructure maintenance around his

or her present location is evidence that infrastructure nationally is undergoing similar repairs. The viewer is also likely to be, as McLuhan would put it, numbed by the medium, thinking that ‘this is on television’ where the medium overrides the content presented. If not this, then the likelihood and potential of these situations happening in the future for the subject is negated by the shock value adorned to these failures as the framing of the program’s content short-circuits the subject’s ability to, once again, take seriously the crisis of infrastructure as the crisis becomes disassociated with reality. Both the medium and the framing of the program’s content diminish for the viewer the fact that these disasters could happen in the first place.

Similar points are also demonstrated on *Doomsday Preppers* on the National Geographic Channel (NGC). The program profiles individual and group survivalists (i.e., “preppers”) preparing to survive an assortment of potential crises-to-apocalypse scenarios, including the aftermath of nuclear or biological warfare, economic or societal collapse, electromagnetic pulses from the Sun, or random happenings throughout the solar system. The NGC mobilizes crisis thought the same way that the History Channel does in the name of entertainment. Participants on the program are examples of people effectively engrossed in crisis thought in its productive, but extreme, capacity. *Doomsday Preppers* is relevant here because a common theme in many of the episodes is the scenario of critical infrastructure collapse.

Episodes in the series do not always focus on ‘big’ doomsday scenarios, but often on narrow and specific practices that tie into an often militant, survivalist *ethos*. For example, the focus is often on physical, medical, and weapon training, seed banking, fuel storage, living underground, finding food in the wild, and bartering. The so-called rational individual might find that it is easy to dismiss some of the individuals and groups participating in the show as extremely paranoid, perhaps. However, many participants featured on the show view their

prepping activities as a hobby. Indeed, some of the preppers fortitude, creativity, and dedication are to be admired, particularly the sustainable activities featured on some episodes. Furthermore, it is not that these doomsday/crisis scenarios could not happen. It is that these kinds of crisis-to-catastrophe events are highly improbable, at least in the United States. To be sure, natural disasters are always possible: look no further than the 7.8 magnitude earthquake in Nepal that killed over 8,000 people in April 2015.³²⁰

Crisis thought is observed in *Doomsday Preppers* in at least two ways. First, the narratives and images show human subjects and groups organizing and thinking creatively to figure out how to best survive particular crisis scenarios that could happen, but are likely not going to. These crises are not likely to happen because of the security precautions already practiced by the US in the protection of critical infrastructure systems or those practices in development to be implemented in the future. *Doomsday Preppers* showcases a life lived in crisis. Crisis thought works to secure viewers watching *Doomsday Preppers* by rationalizing the viewers non-actions against what appear to be the foolish endeavors by participants on *Preppers*. By rejecting the false promise of security by the state and by taking their security in their own hands, prepper activities might be seen as what Foucault referred to as a form of “counter-conduct.”³²¹ Counter-conducts are practices that develop in part as responses to the rationality

³²⁰ Nikhil Jumar, “This Is The Earthquake We’ve Been Waiting For,” *TIME*, vol. 185, no. 17 (May 2015): 28-33.

³²¹ Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 201-202, 355. Foucault states: “by using the word counter conduct...we can no doubt analyze...the way in which someone actually acts in the very general field of politics in the very general field of power relations; it makes it possible to pick out the dimension or component of counter conduct that may well be found in fact in delinquents, mad people, and patients.” On page 355: “analyze counter-conducts in the modern system of governmentality by saying that what is at stake in the counter conducts that develop in correlation with modern governmentality are the same elements as for that governmentality and that from the middle of the eighteenth century a whole series of counter-conducts have

governing most political, social, cultural, and economic relations among subjects. With *Doomsday Preppers*, participants on the program are demonstrating a conduct that is counter to the rationality regarding national security. Crisis thought leads the viewer to think that the crises these preppers on TV are preparing for is, perhaps, a pointless endeavor. Crisis thought negates for the subject that some of the crises-disasters could happen. By showing the preppers doing what they do, the program makes the viewer feel secure by not doing anything at all. In so doing, crisis thought also helps to reproduce particular practices of ordinary life considered rational and lucrative. Crisis thought tells us to stop worrying about worrying and to go on as we have been going on. This is despite of sporadic ‘boosters’ of crisis rhetoric to not only remind us of dangers, threats, and the need for security, but also make us think and feel like we ‘care’ about crises. Perhaps we do not care about ‘crises’ unless the 24/7 news media says that we should care, and so long as it makes for good headlines.

Amtrak 2015: Crazy Train or Crisis Train?

On May 12, 2015, at 9:23PM, an Amtrak train from Washington DC to New York City derailed and crashed on the Northeast Corridor in the Port Richmond neighborhood of Philadelphia, PA. The Northeast Region No. 188 train was moving at twice the legal speed limit, going at 106 mph in a 50 mph zone. Among the 238 passengers and 5 Amtrak crew aboard the train (including the train’s engineer Brandon Bostian), eight people were killed, 11 critically injured, and over 200 others suffered various mild injuries.³²² Investigation by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) revealed that, as the train entered the four-degree left curve

developed whose essential objective is precisely the rejection of *raison d’état* and its fundamental requirements,”

³²² Greg Botelho and Kevin Conlon, “Amtrak train thought to be going twice as fast as it should have been,” *cnn.com*, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/05/13/us/philadelphia-amtrak-train-derailment> (Accessed July 11, 2015).

of the Frankford Junction, something went amiss. The train should have been slowing down to roughly 80 mph when approaching the curve, and 50 mph once within the curve. Instead, the train accelerated towards the curve at 106 mph when Bostian applied the emergency brakes, reducing the speed of the train to 102 mph at the time of the derailment. Afterwards, Amtrak service for the Northeast Corridor between Washington DC and New York City was suspended (resuming on May 18), as the 200+ passengers were treated at local area hospitals.

The Amtrak derailment brought significant attention to the ‘crisis of infrastructure,’ prompting the 24/7 news media to mobilize crisis thought in their coverage of the event. The 24/7 news media framed the Amtrak derailment in terms of the crisis of CI, including discourses on technology available to prevent such derailments, and ongoing efforts to make infrastructure more resilient to external, internal, cyber, and natural threats.³²³ Crisis thought was also mobilized in the concurrent and competing narratives about the Amtrak derailment, that is, about the way the derailment was discussed by conservative and liberal pundits and commentators.

In the aftermath of the derailment, possible reasons for the accident emerged, including being hit by a projectile,³²⁴ and, of course, the usual culprit: terrorism.³²⁵ Discourses also considered questions of blame and responsibility for the derailment: how and where to assign blame, who or what was responsible for the event? Was it the train? Was it the train conductor? Was it incompetence on the part of Amtrak? This narrative quickly segued into other discourses

³²³ Catherine Shoichet and Ray Sanchez, “Amtrak derailment: Could technology have prevented crash?” *cnn.com*, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/05/13/us/philadelphia-amtrak-crash-positive-train-control/> (Accessed June 1, 2015).

³²⁴ Jarrett Renshaw, “Philadelphia train may have been hit by projectile before wreck,” *reuters.com*, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/05/16/us-usa-train-derailment-idUSKBN0NZ18Z20150516> (Accessed June 11, 2015).

³²⁵ Washington Times Staff, “FBI Rules Out Terrorism in Amtrak Derailment” *washingtontimes.com*, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/may/13/fbi-rules-out-terrorism-amtrak-derailment/> (Accessed June 11, 2015).

imploing one to think about what could be learned from the event. This type of discourse after a crisis is typical and predictable, leading to incremental reforms, or little to no change in regards to the problem or question at hand. A third narrative about the Amtrak incident was the ‘heroism stories’ highlighting the heroic efforts of those involved in the crash, the first responders to help out, and politicians responses to the crash (including Congressman Patrick Murphy who was aboard the No. 188 when it derailed).³²⁶

Within 48 hours, these discourses rapidly shifted to the question of technology, specifically positive train control (PTC): where was the PTC? Did the PTC fail to function? Were the train and the track equipped with PTC? Writing for the *New York Times*, Shear and Mouawad explain: “positive train control refers to a system of software and hardware technology, including radio transponders, antennas, locomotive and track equipment, that communicate real-time information about train speed and location to engineers and train dispatchers.”³²⁷ Once PTC is installed, the train is able to receive information about its location through global positioning technology that can notify the train conductor of the speed limits enforced in a given area. If the train is exceeding that limit, then PTC overrides manual controls to prevent ‘accidents’ such as with the Northeast Region No. 188. Amtrak officials stated that PTC transponders had been implemented on most Amtrak rails well ahead of the deadline of December 2015 set by Congress in 2008, although most were not operational just yet. Federal Communication Commission (FCC) and other Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) officials stated that PTC was only a few months away from being operational, noting the irony that if the

³²⁶ Jana Kasperkevic, Joanna Walters, and Matthew Weaver, “Amtrak Philadelphia train crash: may describes ‘disastrous mess’,” *theguardian.com*, <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/may/13/amtrak-train-crash-investigation-philadelphia> (Accessed June 11, 2015).

³²⁷ Michael D. Shear and Jad Mouawad, “Amtrak Says Shortfalls Delayed Its Safety System,” *nytimes.com*, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/15/us/amtrak-says-it-was-just-months-away-from-installing-safety-system.html?_r=0 (Accessed June 11, 2015).

PTC had been operational, then the derailment would likely have not happened. Amtrak had been in negotiations with the FCC since 2008 to purchase airwaves and antenna locations that would allow the PTC system to be operational. As Shear and Mouawad point out, PTC functionality was “delayed by budgetary shortfalls, technical hurdles and bureaucratic rules.”³²⁸

A more intriguing discourse emerged in the midst of the aforementioned narratives: whether or not the Amtrak derailment should be understood as a crisis of critical infrastructure? If the US government considers national rails critical, then this question might seem settled. Nevertheless, this discourse is an important one because it confronts, indirectly, how the term ‘crisis’ helps to construct narratives and to provide a point of departure for analyses. This discourse questions the effects, effects, and capacities of using the term crisis in terms of critical infrastructure security. On the one hand, Avia Shen wrote a news piece on the derailment entitled “Why You Can’t Talk about the Amtrak Derailment without Talking about Our Infrastructure Crisis.”³²⁹ A similar piece is “Amtrak Derailment Highlights America’s Infrastructure Crisis” by Ellen Brown in which she implores the US to invest in infrastructure maintenance similar to the Chinese.³³⁰ Both articles claim that US infrastructure is in a state of crisis and argue that to resolve it means to increase federal funding for CI across the board.

On the other hand, there was an opposition piece on the conservative website freedomoutpost.com which attempted to disassociate the Amtrak derailment from the crisis of critical infrastructure. Written by the ‘Common Constitutionalist,’ the blog post “Amtrak

³²⁸ Ibid.

³²⁹ Avia Shen, “Why You Can’t Talk About the Amtrak Derailment Without Talking About Our Infrastructure Crisis,” *thinkprogress.org*, <http://thinkprogress.org/economy/2015/05/13/3658146/amtrak-deadly-derailment/> (Accessed June 11, 2015).

³³⁰ Ellen Brown, “Amtrak Derailment Highlights America’s Infrastructure Crisis,” *econmatters.com*, <http://www.econmatters.com/2015/05/amtrak-derailment-highlights-america.html> (Accessed June 26, 2015).

Derailment is Just Another Good Crisis” asks: how is the Amtrak derailment constitutive of a crisis of CI? The freedomoutpost piece suggests that, perhaps, we are becoming more aware of what interpreting an event as a crisis can produce, particularly given how common it is for, seemingly, every kind of disaster to be framed as a ‘crisis’ when perhaps, there is no crisis present.³³¹ This same article also demonstrates a level of caution with using the term ‘crisis’ arbitrarily. To be sure, the freedomoutpost piece dissolves into recalcitrant conservative dogma by attempting to justify the US House of Representatives vote not to increase Amtrak funding which, by sheer coincidence, passed in the House the day after the Amtrak derailment.³³² It should be stressed that the discourse between the two pieces above is not about partisan politics in the US; nor is this suggesting that Republicans are less likely to mobilize crisis thought than Democrats or vice-versa. Members of both political parties are equally implicated in utilizing crisis thought in order to garner attention to particular issues and solicit votes.

Thus, mobilizing crisis thought is not simply a trick of 24/7 news media sensationalism, but a political tool or tactic as well. Mobilizing crisis thought with the Amtrak derailment was productive in terms of the quantity of articles, news pieces, and media coverage given to them. Simply put, framing an event with the help of crisis thought gives the 24/7 news media something to talk about. The limiting effects of crisis thought are seen in the fact that the Amtrak

³³¹ Common Constitutionalist, “Amtrak Derailment Just Another Good Crisis,” *freedomoutpost.com*, <http://freedomoutpost.com/2015/05/amtrak-derailment-is-just-another-good-crisis/> (Accessed June 26, 2015).

³³² Heather Caygle, “House panel votes to cut Amtrak budget hours after deadly crash,” *politico.com*, <http://www.politico.com/story/2015/05/amtrak-budget-house-panel-crash-117904.html> (Accessed June 11, 2015). The day after the derailment the US House Appropriations Committee voted to cut \$260 million dollars from Amtrak’s \$1.36 billion budget for fiscal year 2016. For some time now, Amtrak has been starved of the funds required to keep up with increasing demand by the public; in particular, the Northeast Corridor where the derailment occurred is in need of extensive repairs, expected to require \$4.3 billion in fiscal year 2019, while federal funding is expected to dwindle to \$872 million.

derailment failed to bring the crisis of infrastructure to the forefront of a much larger national debate or ‘conversation’ about infrastructure in the US. This is unusual, given the intense scrutiny the Obama administration faced over the National Security Agency (NSA) ‘leaks’ by ‘whistle-blower’ Edward Snowden regarding sweeping global surveillance of private communications (e.g., cellphones, emails, Internet searches) through such NSA programs as PRISM and XKeyscore.³³³ To be sure, these ‘revelations’ should have been unsurprising to anyone familiar with the USA PATRIOT Act of 2001 that permitted these invasive surveillance practices. However, much like the politicians who passed that egregious bill undercutting fundamental US civil liberties, most of the public at the time, it is presumed, failed to read the 900-page document as well.³³⁴

III. Discussion: Crisis, Comfort, and Mobility

The ‘crisis of infrastructure’ is not meant to be resolved and this is so for at least two reasons: first, the crisis of infrastructure serves a political, social, and economic purpose as it is mobilized to rally support for politicians at the local, state, and federal levels; and it helps garner network ratings for 24/7 news media networks. In so doing, infrastructure issues are reduced to ‘talking points’ for politicians and cable news pundits rather than being dealt with as the serious national security concern that it is. Infrastructure becomes a site that politicians and the 24/7 news media can always rely on to get votes or base campaign platforms on, and a basis from which to make attacks on political opponents in matters of funding or failing to meet promises to constituents. The crisis of infrastructure provides, perhaps, a near unlimited source of crisis

³³³ Glen Greenwald and Ewen Macaskill “NSA Prism Program taps in to user data of Apple, Google and others” *theguardian.com*, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/jun/06/us-tech-giants-nsa-data> (Accessed June 10th, 2013).

³³⁴ Kernell, et al., *The Logic of American Politics*, 229-230.

rhetoric that can be mobilized to produce votes or ratings for tabloid politic fodder. An example of this is the Alaska “bridge to nowhere” project, a \$398 million dollar infrastructure project advocated by Alaska Senator Ted Stevens and House member Don Young that was never constructed. Former Governor of Alaska, Sarah Palin, put an end to the project before her Vice-Presidential nomination in 2008, as it had become a “nationwide symbol of federal pork-barrel spending.”³³⁵

Second, it would appear that the crisis of infrastructure is not meant to be resolved because these mobilizations, paradoxically, secure liberal rationality that is both a significant factor (besides the ravages of time or deterioration) contributing to this ‘crisis.’ Yet, it is also, at the same time, the solution to this particular ‘crisis.’ The logics of liberal capitalism conflict with the objectives of the state to protect populations and secure itself as an entity. The logics of capital dictate the state to, quoting Wendy Brown, “construct and construe itself in market terms, as well as develop policies and promulgate a political culture that figures citizens exhaustively as rational economic actors in every sphere of life,” which often leads to questionable cuts in federal funding for infrastructure improvement projects.³³⁶ That is to say, often the reason why there is a ‘crisis of infrastructure’ to be mobilized in the first place is the lack of capital allocated by the US federal government to fund large-scale infrastructural repair projects. The general trend in US politics under the neoliberal regime has been to defer funding infrastructure

³³⁵ The Associated Press, “Alaska: End Sought for Bridge to Nowhere,” *nytimes.com*, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/22/us/22brfs-ENDSOUGHTFOR_BRF.html?_r=0 (Accessed August 2, 2016).

³³⁶ See: Wendy Brown, “American Nightmare: Neoliberalism, Neoconservatism, and De-Democratization,” *Political Theory* 34, no. 6 (2006): 694; and Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the College de France 1978-1979*, trans. Graham Burchell, ed. Michel Sennellar (New York: Picador, 2008), 116. Foucault writes the state comes to adopt “the free market as the organizing and regulating principle” of itself, at the cost of the state losing autonomy, the state now “under the supervision of the market rather than a market supervised by the state.”

maintenance to some unspecified time in the future,³³⁷ even while, for instance, the US continues to fund billions of dollars into foreign wars and defense spending.³³⁸

It appears that the crisis of infrastructure is ‘just another crisis’ and thus another object of crisis thought, circulating in political, social, cultural, and economic discourses. This is also why crisis thought helps to explain the lack of a concerted political and social response to the ‘crisis of infrastructure.’ This is problematic because when individuals, groups, or experts express or make statements in regards to the ‘crisis of infrastructure,’ this ‘crisis’ perhaps, is obviated to the addressees that hear it. The ability to discern real crisis claims from largely perceived or constructed ‘crises’ is important to the common good, the greater community, society, the state, and to private enterprises and public institutions alike. The lead contaminated water of Flint, MI mentioned above is a good example of this, and yet, as noted above, elected officials attempted to deny the reality of the situation for reasons that go back to economic practices of liberalism. The same could be said for the Republican dominated US House of Representatives cutting funding to Amtrak the day after the derailment of Northeast Region No. 188. Taking a hard stance on principles is not always good politics, especially when considering how crucial infrastructure is as a matter of life and death. Failure to begin mitigating a crisis of this magnitude at the federal level, or perhaps worse, taking some paradoxical ‘comfort’ in the ruination of once thriving cities such as Detroit is a perturbing trend, and, perhaps, illustrates the reality of crisis thought.

Joseph Masco claims that in the post-9/11 political landscape critical infrastructure has become a national security imperative, trumping to some extent the disciplinary and biopolitical

³³⁷ Stealy and Rosen, “The Secret is the System,” 48.

³³⁸ Dan Froomkin, “US Military Spending Still Up 45% Over Pre-9/11 Levels; More Than Next 7 Countries Combined,” *firstlook.org*, <https://firstlook.org/theintercept/2015/04/20/u-s-military-still-spending-45-911-much-next-7-top-spending-countries-combined/> (Accessed July 9, 2015).

strategies of state security put forward by Foucault (see Chapter 1).³³⁹ Masco writes:

“counterterror constitutes a significant shift from the kind of state security that Michel Foucault theorized as the basis for the modern era. The new focus on creating a resilient critical infrastructure immune to disruption circumvents an older form of the security state... Under the current logics of counterterror, it is now a national infrastructure (made up of experts, technologies, capabilities) that is essential to the security state, not its citizens.”³⁴⁰

In order for vital system security to take precedence over subjects as Masco claims, the disciplinary and biopolitical strategies of state security that help conduct human subjectivities, particularly in contributing to the development of skill sets for securing infrastructure systems, still need to be present. In this sense, disciplines and biopolitical practices have not disappeared, but they have, perhaps, been reoriented. As Foucault may have suggested, while these mechanisms and strategies are constantly practiced by individuals, once they have become internalized, they become routine as individuals become self-disciplined. We are witnessing the emergence of a new focus in the way states are thinking about and implementing critical and ordinary infrastructure security. This alleged new focus on infrastructure security is a response to the number of crisis-to-catastrophe situations such as Hurricane Katrina in 2005, the 2007 I-35W bridge collapse in Minneapolis, the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2010, the ongoing threat of cyber-attacks on CI, and the problem of human error when it comes to all forms of critical and ordinary infrastructure.

³³⁹ Masco, *The Theater of Operations*, 30.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 30.

Starting roughly with the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) after the Cold War, the scope of national security practices in war and defense is advancing into a new digital era.³⁴¹ In terms of infrastructure, we are gradually relinquishing control of critical infrastructure security to the networked integration of the systems themselves where the human role in this process is making sure that these systems are, generally speaking, operating as they should. This is where disciplinary and biopolitical practices are being reoriented to: the service of automated security systems and various forms of national security and defense that could be called the digitization of security.³⁴² This would include the US National Security Agency's (NSA) massive, panoptic surveillance capabilities (cited above) and drone warfare, with critical and ordinary infrastructure security included.³⁴³ The new age of national security is one defined by networked integration, autonomy, and soon enough, artificial intelligence. We are already witnessing the early stages of this new age when considering the potential threat of cyber-attacks on networked infrastructure.

Zygmunt Bauman et al., affirm the above digitization of security by asserting that the traditional understandings of national security as tied to the reason of the state are now better understood instead as the “digitized reason of the state performed by a heterogeneous complex of professionals, of sensitive information hybridizing public and private affairs.”³⁴⁴ Information is the key term here, and perhaps today, the key concept for all national security practices, with infrastructure security, once again, included. Just as the gathering of national security intelligence information is international in scale, critical infrastructure systems operate, transmit,

³⁴¹ Der Derian, *Virtuous War*, 146. Der Derian notes, “as dependency on networked technologies increases...one cannot help wonder if something fundamentally human is being lost.”

³⁴² Zygmunt Bauman, Didier Bigo, Paulo Esteves, Elspeth Guild, Vivienne Jabri, David Lyon, and R.B.J Walker, “After Snowden: Rethinking the Impact of Surveillance,” *International Political Sociology*, no. 8 (2014):128

³⁴³ Derek Gregory, “From a View to a Kill: Drones and Late Modern War,” *Theory, Culture, and Society*, vol. 28 (2011).

³⁴⁴ Bauman, et al., “After Snowden,” 126.

and relay information digitally across the continental US. Thus, the national security of networked infrastructure systems is trumping to some extent that of state subjects, as practices of security are gradually being reoriented toward the functioning and betterment of CI systems.

What might this new digital age of security look like in relation to the ordinary life world in the future? For example, the Smart Grid, defined by the US Department of Energy as the future of the US national electric grid:

built from the bottom up to handle the groundswell of digital and computerized equipment and technology dependent on it—and one that can automate and manage the increasing complexity and needs of electricity in the 21st Century. In short, the digital technology that allows for two-way communication between the utility and its customers, and the sensing along the transmission lines is what makes the grid smart. Like the Internet, the Smart Grid will consist of controls, computers, automation, and new technologies and equipment working together, but in this case, these technologies will work with the electrical grid to respond digitally to our quickly changing electric demand. The benefits associated with the Smart Grid include: more efficient transmission of electricity, quicker restoration of electricity after power disturbances, reduced operations and management costs for utilities (and ultimately lower power costs for consumers), reduced peak demand (which will also help lower electricity rates), increased integration of large-scale renewable energy systems, better integration of customer-owner power generation systems, including renewable energy systems, and improved security.³⁴⁵

The smart grid will function with the so-called ‘smart home,’ which will allow, “all of the emerging Smart Grid technologies to function together is the interactive relationship between the grid operators, utilities, and you. Computerized controls in your home and appliances can be set up to respond to signals from your energy provider to minimize their energy use at times when the power grid is under stress from high demand, or even to shift some of their power use to times when power is available at a lower cost.”³⁴⁶

Fully integrated and largely autonomous infrastructure systems, it is said, will provide better, more efficient ways of distributing and managing energy. Such ‘smart’ systems can easily

³⁴⁵ https://www.smartgrid.gov/the_smart_grid/smart_grid.html (Accessed August 1, 2016).

³⁴⁶ https://www.smartgrid.gov/the_smart_grid/smart_home.html (Accessed August 1, 2016).

be applied to water allocation and mass transit systems too. An example of the latter can be seen with the Google Car or other self-driving automobiles.³⁴⁷ The website for the project suggests that self-driving cars “matter” because “aging or visually impaired loved ones wouldn't have to give up their independence. Time spent commuting could be time spent doing what you want to do. Deaths from traffic accidents—over 1.2 million worldwide every year—could be reduced dramatically, especially since 94% of accidents in the U.S. involve human error.”³⁴⁸ In one sense, it is not mass transit infrastructure in the form of highways and interstates that is the problem. The impetus for the Google Car, as well as all autonomous digital systems, is human error. It is the human element that needs to be removed in order to achieve security in the future.

These new digital security practices invoke a number of potential ‘crises’ all their own, and thus, crisis thought too. As we improve the security and resiliency of critical and ordinary infrastructure, there will be considerable doubt about what is lost, what is gained, and perhaps more pertinently, how the unexpected will inevitably arise in regards to security. For instance, the smart grid and the smart home have yet to be fully realized. And while the smart energy grid is a good idea, perhaps crucial to human relations with the environment in the future, further integration – especially if tied to the smart home – could be even more devastating if the smart grid is successfully cyber-attacked or obliterated entirely. As for the smart home, many new homes and appliances are said to be ready for smart grid integration. However, it remains to be seen if older homeowners will be willing or financially able to replace older models of thermostats or appliances, like refrigerators that are energy smart and efficient. Finally, the

³⁴⁷ John Markoff, “Google Cars Drive Themselves, in Traffic” *nytimes.com*, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/10/science/10google.html?_r=2 (Accessed August 1, 2016).

³⁴⁸ <https://www.google.com/selfdrivingcar/> (Accessed August 1, 2016).

Google Car has experienced several crashes,³⁴⁹ as automated cars still have several limitations, including the unknowns that inclement weather presents to the self-driving car, particularly as recent tests have shown the car does poorly in unmapped areas, such as road construction sites or police traffic stops.³⁵⁰ The lesson is that both critical and ordinary infrastructure will likely remain an enduring site of crisis thought mobilization into the future as they continue a gradual, but inevitable evolution into the digital age. This will entail life altering innovations and changes that will be met with fear, uncertainty, and resistance and will likely be conduits for various mobilizations of crisis thought.

The following chapter provides another illustration of 24/7 news media mobilization of crisis thought, focusing on the ‘crisis of militarization,’ or more specifically, the ‘crisis of police militarization’ in the United States. It is to the ‘crisis of militarization’ that we now turn next.

³⁴⁹ Charlie Osborne, “Google’s autonomous car injuries: Blame the human” *zdnet.com*, <http://www.zdnet.com/article/googles-autonomous-car-injuries-blame-the-human/> (Accessed August 1, 2016); and Vishal Mathur, “Google Autonomous Car Experiences Another Crash,” *govtech.com*, <http://www.govtech.com/transportation/Google-Autonomous-Car-Experiences-Another-Crash.html> (Accessed August 1, 2016).

³⁵⁰ Lee Gomes, “Hidden Obstacles for Google’s Self-Driving Car,” *technologyreview.com*, <https://www.technologyreview.com/s/530276/hidden-obstacles-for-googles-self-driving-cars/> (Accessed August 1, 2016).

CHAPTER FIVE – LOCKDOWN: Crisis Thought and the US Police State

This chapter explores the differences and interrelations between militarism and militarization in the United States. Specifically, this discussion entails what this study refers to as cultural militarism and indirect police militarization, the latter being understood as when “police agencies and police officers take on more and more characteristics of the army.”³⁵¹ Cultural militarism in the United States is often times a subtle form of crisis thought mobilization vis-à-vis state and federal government, 24/7 news media, or proponents of the practice itself. Police militarization is examined as a site in which crisis thought is mobilized to make various claims about politics, society, and culture. Additionally, police militarization and militarism are posited as symptoms of the current US politics of crisis as linked to the emergence of crisis thought and the US national security state (see Chapter 2). By ‘symptom’, this study means a particular feature of political and social life that is, perhaps, indicative of crisis thought. As ‘symptoms,’ police militarization and militarism are posited here as political and social ‘responses’ by some subjects in regards to a society, culture, and world that increasingly appear to be in ‘crisis.’ Examining militarization and militarism helps to tighten the linkages between crisis thought and the US national security state.³⁵² Indeed, the US national security state and the ‘police state’ are

³⁵¹ Radley Balko, *Rise of the Warrior Cop: The Militarization of America’s Police Forces* (New York: Public Affairs, 2014), 35. Balko distinguishes between two forms of police militarization, one being indirect militarization. The other form is *direct* militarization, or “the use of the standing military for domestic policing.”

³⁵² Henry A. Giroux, “Barack Obama and the Resurgent Specter of Authoritarianism,” *JAC*, vol. 31, no. ¾ (2011): 417. Giroux states: “There is no sense of how authoritarianism in its soft and hard forms can manifest itself as anything other than horrible images of concentration camps, goose-stepping storm troopers, rigid modes of censorship, and through chilling spectacles of extremist government repression and violence. That is, there is no sense of how new modes of authoritarian ideology, policy, values, and social relations might manifest themselves in degrees and gradations so as to create the conditions for a distinctly undemocratic and increasingly cruel and oppressive order.”

similar to one another.³⁵³ John Whitehead denotes a police state as a state governed by way of “by bureaucracy, secrecy, perpetual wars, a nation of suspects, militarization, surveillance, widespread police presences, and a citizenry with little recourse against police actions. In this regard the signs of an emerging police state are all around us.”³⁵⁴

Like ‘crisis,’ the term ‘police’ is tossed around a lot these days in 24/7 news reports and political stump speeches, suggesting that the taken-for-granted nature of the ‘police’ needs to be interrogated further. For practical purposes, however, this chapter maintains the assumption that liberal societies, inasmuch as the logic of private property relations holds, demands that there be policing to protect citizen-bodies and their property from potential violence inflicted by other human bodies and/or Mother Nature. This chapter assumes that justice is virtuous in itself and that a society attempting to practice justice must necessarily have some kind of policing to make justice possible. Even Plato saw the need for “guardians” in the utopia of Kallipolis in the event of domestic insurrection or external aggression.³⁵⁵

These pages are unapologetically polemical about militarized police. This does not mean that it rejects the idea of the ‘police,’ but instead it targets their paramilitary configurations (i.e., someone or something fighting on behalf of the state or as part of a group that is not as rigidly hierarchical as a regular army). In being critical of the police (see Chapter 1), this chapter does not condone any of the alleged activities that have warranted the extreme measures taken by militarized and ordinary police forces. One is not condoning petty theft or marijuana possession even when thinking these transgressions of the law should not become a potential death sentence

³⁵³ Tom Englehardt, “The American Lockdown State, *thenation.com*, <https://www.thenation.com/article/american-lockdown-state/> (Accessed August 17, 2016).

³⁵⁴ John Whitehead, *A Government of Wolves: The Emerging American Police State* (New York: SelectBooks, Inc, 2013), 4

³⁵⁵ Plato, *Republic*, 52-53.

by fiat from police power. There are more serious and violent crimes being committed in the US where police departments could be more socially useful than when compared to the former infractions.³⁵⁶ Deploying militarized police, if they should exist to begin with, should be relatively rare and take place only under the direst of circumstances. Unfortunately, the opposite prevails when “local police, dressed in jackboots, helmets, and shields and wielding batons, pepper spray, stun guns, and assault rifles – have increasingly come to resemble occupying forces” in American life.³⁵⁷

I. Cultural Militarism and Mass Shootings

Militarism and militarization are distinct concepts. Anything these days can be militarized, for example, armed infant carriages.³⁵⁸ Peter Kraska and Victor Kappeler define militarism as “a set of beliefs and values that stress the use of force and domination as appropriate means to solve problems and gain political power, while glorifying the tools to accomplish this – military power, hardware, and technology.”³⁵⁹ Militarism is not confined to the realm of security/defense, police forces, the military, or private security contractors. Instead,

³⁵⁶ Matt Agorist, “Despite Ever-Expanding Police State Measures, Cops Worse than Ever at Solving Crimes,” *thefreethoughtproject.com*, <http://thefreethoughtproject.com/extensive-police-state-cops-worse-solving-crimes-why/> (Accessed August 17, 2016). This point is evident in the following. Agorist states: “in the United States, the murder clearance rate [clearance rates are used as a measure of crimes solved by the police] in 1965 was more than 90 percent. Since the inception of the war on drugs, the murder clearance rate has plummeted to an average of less than 65 percent per year.”

³⁵⁷ Whitehead, *A Government of Wolves*, 56.

³⁵⁸ Meghan Young, “Armed Infant Carriages” *trendhunter.com*, <http://www.trendhunter.com/trends/tactical-baby-strollers> (Accessed March 14, 2016). Young writes: “A parent never knows when he or she will have to protect their precious baby from an attack, and that is why these Tactical Baby Strollers are great to have on hand.” Additionally, “If you are someone who likes to carry objects in military-like style, then the unique Tactical Baby Stroller is the perfect solution.”

³⁵⁹ Peter B. Kraska and Victor E. Kappeler, “Militarizing American Police: The Rise and Normalization of Paramilitary Units,” *Social Problems*, vol. 44, no. 1 (February 1997): 1.

militarism is presented as an ethos (i.e., spirit) that circulates throughout political and social life in America as well as elsewhere. An *ethos* is generally defined as a characteristic or a prevalent tone of sentiment of a people or in a community. Following White, an ethos is also “animated by a given set of ontological ‘figures.’ A constellation of such figures sustains an ethos in the sense of prefiguring its cognitive perspective, moral bearing, and aesthetic-effective sensibility...an ethos provides us with an orientation or disposition, toward everyday life and the ethical and political problems we encounter there.”³⁶⁰ In this study, militarism as an ethos does not characterize all of US culture, but a small portion of it. The ethos of militarism does not characterize the disposition of all active frontline and reserve military personnel (some 2,112,300 million in 2016) or the 21.8 million veterans in the US as of 2014. In comparison to the US population of 324,430,854 million people and counting in 2016, that is only about 13.6% of the population that have some formal military experience and training.³⁶¹ One does not need to have served or be a veteran of the US armed forces to display characteristics of militarism. These ‘ontological figures of militarism’ need not have any association with the military at all.

An individual’s propensity toward militarism is dependent on a variety of factors, including parenting, socio-economic status, environment, and education. Militarism is socially observed among those who socially and culturally demonstrate strong tendencies of hyper-masculinity, authoritarianism, and blind patriotism, sometimes accompanied by a general thirst for power, authority, or respect. The general stereotypes of militant people are white males who desire power and respect in a society in which, as white males, they are becoming less and less

³⁶⁰ White, *The Ethos of a Late Modern Citizen*, 4.

³⁶¹ See: http://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.asp?country_id=united-states-of-america (Accessed August 17, 2016), and <http://www.census.gov/newsroom/facts-for-features/2015/cb15-ff23.html> (Accessed August 17, 2016)

aggrandized. Such attributes are also signs of insecurities: either in recognizing these shifts or with something more personal. Militarism is suggested here to help develop protective psychosocial ‘armor’ for these subjects to feel secure in a world constantly in flux (i.e., politics of crisis). Some, but certainly not all, police officers are suggested here to possess some of the above tendencies.

As Patrick Regan points out, “it is society itself that creates, advocates, and perpetuates” militarism.³⁶² The ethos of militarism appears through various cultural codes that inform the political and social development of some subjectivities. For example, Militarism appears throughout US culture in television, movies, video games, advertisements, children’s toys, and magazines on guns and survivalist culture. Male children and adolescents are encouraged to play with toy guns, be captivated by the heroics of soldiers on screen, and become immersed in some of the most popular video games that are often virtual simulations of military combat training and campaigning. For example, the popular *Call of Duty* video game franchise for the Sony PlayStation and Microsoft Xbox consoles. United States subjects are exposed and conditioned by militarism from an early age and throughout their lives. There is not a single major sporting event where militarism is not present, whether it is troops at the game or the aggressive, hard-hitting tackles most prominently on display in American football. An example of this is late NFL Arizona Cardinals linebacker Pat Tillman, who represents the congruence between militarism, US culture, and militarization.³⁶³ Tillman might have been the ultimate citizen-soldier – a real American hero. Tillman represented for many an ‘American dream’ – tough, big, disciplined,

³⁶² Patrick M. Regan, “War Toys, War Movies, and the Militarization of the United States, 1900-85,” *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 31, no. 1 (February 1994): 46.

³⁶³ Josh Weinfus, “Cardinals Unveil Pat Tillman Memorial on 9/11 Anniversary,” *espn.com*, http://espn.go.com/nfl/story/_/id/13633607/arizona-cardinals-unveil-pat-tillman-memorial-14th-anniversary-9-11-attacks (Accessed February 10, 2016).

and physically able to play American pro-football for a living. However, Tillman gave up his NFL career after heeding the call after 9/11 to join the US military. In April 2004, Tillman was tragically killed by so-called ‘friendly fire’ due to confusion on part of his fellow soldiers about gunfire mistakenly identified as the enemy’s.

Militarism is so deeply embedded in the US cultural imaginary that it appears in the most mundane aspects of ordinary life. For example, former Virginia Tech English professor Steven Salaita published a controversial piece on made available through the website salon.com about cultural militarism, suggesting that it promotes “unthinking patriotism” as evoked in the slogan ‘Support Our Troops.’ Salaita writes: “such troop worship is trite and tiresome, but that’s not its primary danger. A nation that continuously publicizes appeals to ‘support our troops’ is explicitly asking its citizens not to think. It is the ideal slogan for suppressing the practice of democracy, presented to us in the guise of democratic preservation.”³⁶⁴ As Salaita recognizes, cultural militarism has a tendency of barring critical thought, as the casual reinforcement of militarism goes without question. ‘Support our Troops’ comes about when there is a presumed need for military troops, when it is said by the US government or 24/7 news media that there is some existential threat to national security domestically or abroad: a crisis in other words. Proponents of the slogan are unable to detach themselves from the self-evident nature of the phrase. In so doing, they do not see the subtle mobilization of crisis thought that, perhaps, ‘Support Our Troops’ really is. What ‘Support Our Troops’ really means is support the war, support this security, support this government, support this rationality (the *logos* of liberalism),

³⁶⁴ Steven Salaita, “No thanks: Stop Saying “Support Our Troops,” *salon.com*, http://www.salon.com/2013/08/25/no_thanks_i_wont_support_the_troops/ (Accessed February 10, 2016).

and support the cultural diffusion of militarism and militarization. In short, ‘Support Our Troops’ is militarism with a smiley face.

‘Support Our Troops’ reinforces a pervasive, but latent cultural militarism in the US. ‘Support Our Troops’ is also a subtle mobilization of crisis thought by the US government, military, 24/7 news media, and other ontological figures of cultural militarism. The message ‘Support Our Troops’ is transposed every time the phrase is evoked or read, ranging from political speeches, ceremonies, sporting events, or holiday TV specials, but in ordinary places like the grocery store, the gas station, Wal-Mart, Target, or at family gatherings. The phrase permeates into general mannerisms and sentiments that circulate within everyday discourse. Crisis thought is supported in the way ‘Support Our Troops’ rolls off the tongue, how ‘Support Our Troops’ becomes a normalized, accepted aspect of US life. Nationalism, patriotism, security, and crisis blur into one another in the phrase, short-circuiting the subject’s ability to think otherwise about what one is supporting the troops for and why. ‘Support Our Troops’ from the outset leaves no alternative because it does not give the everyday person a choice. It is ‘Support Our Troops,’ not ‘will you support the troops?’ Crisis thought is evident when ‘Support Our Troops’ becomes a widely accepted feature of political and ordinary life, similar to practices of tying a yellow-ribbon around a tree. When the phrase becomes routine or accepted, it becomes similar to the type of thing store managers tell employees to say to every customer as a matter of store policy, much like saying ‘thank you, come again.’

American culture has long glorified violence in entertainment and celebrated military service and culture publicly.³⁶⁵ Crisis thought mobilizations in governance, in 24/7 news media

³⁶⁵ Henry A. Giroux, “Violence, USA: The Warfare State and the Hardening of Everyday Life,” *monthlyreview.org*, <http://monthlyreview.org/2013/05/01/violence-usa/> (Accessed August 17, 2016).

and entertainment, and by the police exacerbate this culture of violence, militarism, and the above characteristics associated with it. This is especially so as these mobilizations are a source of distress when these mobilizations evoke the idea that the state, the economy, morals, values, the body, the self, or the world is in ‘crisis.’ Crisis thought as received by the subject and transposed into the ordinary affirming the necessity of the aforementioned traits of militarism above as ideologically and socially useful to ‘defend’ or ‘protect’ one’s values, the self, the family, or the state, particularly from ‘crises’ that are seemingly everywhere and nowhere.

Perhaps the most visible sign of militarism run amok is the rise in mass shootings in the US in the last 10 or so years. While no broadly accepted definition yet exists, mass shootings are understood here as incidents involving multiple victims of gun violence. For Jim Fisher, an association exists between militarism, militarized police, and mass shootings. Fisher writes: militarized police are “no longer a backup, last-resort law enforcement measure,” and police departments have dramatically “incorporated SWAT-like methods and a militaristic philosophy into routine patrol duty, order maintenance, and crowd control,” the ethos of militarism and militarized police is, perhaps, socially condoning “the recent history of American spree killings.”³⁶⁶

Militarism is a key aspect of gun culture in the US and is often inferred in contemporary debates about mass shootings and gun control laws. Examples of mass shootings include the Virginia Tech (VT) Massacre in Blacksburg, VA in 2007 and the Sandy Hook Elementary school shooting in Newtown, CT in 2012.³⁶⁷ In the case of Virginia Tech, on April 16, 2007,

³⁶⁶ Jim Fisher, *SWAT Madness and the Militarization of the American Police: A National Dilemma* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010), 4-5.

³⁶⁷ Sam Stein and Sam Wilkes, “Progress on Gun Control Seemed Inevitable After Sandy Hook, But Apparently that was Wrong,” *huffingtonpost.com*

Seung-Hui Cho, a senior international student from South Korea majoring in English, set out on a calculated rampage killing that ended in the death of 32 people and the wounding of 17 others before Cho committed suicide, in two separate attacks over the span of two hours. Mass shootings are nothing new. They have occurred globally throughout the 20th century. However, this does not negate the fact that mass shootings have significantly increased in the US in the early 21st century.³⁶⁸ Mass shootings and violent crime are not the same. Violent crime (including ‘gun violence’) has dropped significantly since the 1990’s.³⁶⁹ After the VT massacre, the “United States entered a new period in which mass shootings are occurring more frequently.”³⁷⁰ The rise in mass shootings suggests that there is a particular derangement in the political, social, cultural, and economic arrangements of ordinary life. Mass shootings and the inability to mitigate them is a feature of a politics and ordinary life enveloped by crisis thought.

Mass shootings can be mobilized as talking points for politicians and can be political fodder for 24/7 news media networks. Mobilizing crisis thought in the form of mass shootings helps fuel flows of money to pro-gun political groups and propagates ‘the cause’ of gun proponents against progressive reform to mitigate the crisis of mass shootings. Because of

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/12/11/newtown-politics_n_4427513.html (Accessed July 14, 2014).

³⁶⁸ For example: Breivik in Norway, 2011 – see: Lee Feran, “Mass Murderer Smirks at 21-Year Prison Sentence” *abcnews.com*, <http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/norway-shooter-anders-breivik-smiles-21-year-prison/story?id=17072142>; and Charon in Quebec, Canada – see: CBC News, “Gatineau police ID 1 of 2 men dead in daycare shooting,” *cbcnews.com*, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/gatineau-police-id-1-of-2-men-dead-in-daycare-shooting-1.1301868> (all accessed on August, 26, 2014).

³⁶⁹ Max Ehrenfreund, “We’ve had a massive decline in gun violence in the United States,” *washingtonpost.com*, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2015/12/03/weve-had-a-massive-decline-in-gun-violence-in-the-united-states-heres-why/> (Accessed February 7, 2016).

³⁷⁰ Amy P. Cohen, Deborah Azrael and Matthew Miller, “Rate of Mass Shootings Has Tripled Since 2011, Harvard Research Shows,” *motherjones.com*, <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2014/10/mass-shootings-increasing-harvard-research> (Accessed February 7, 2016).

deficiencies in US representative democracy, the issue of mass shootings “may never reach [a] tenable solution.”³⁷¹ This is because the ‘crisis of mass shootings’ or the ‘crisis of gun control,’ perhaps, gives US political parties, interest groups, and lobbyists a wedge issue through which to differentiate themselves from one another. The ‘crisis of mass shootings’ gives the state, people, groups, agencies, departments, and law firms something to do. American politics creates a situation in which a crisis of mass shootings and gun culture is essentially built into the political system. For instance, a love for guns is considered by some as American as apple pie. Gun rights lobbying firms and firearm manufacturers capitalize on these issues through propaganda and by cultivating a kind of subjectivity that thinks reasonable gun control legislation will inevitably lead to the abolition of firearms. This, too, of course, will leave a defenseless US-citizenry up against an always already tyrannical federal government.³⁷² These fears are irrational for no other reason than the US Supreme Court has confirmed that “the Second Amendment guarantees an individual's right to own a gun for self-defense” as of *District of Columbia v. Heller* in 2008.³⁷³ Luke offers, perhaps, the most sensible conclusion for the time being regarding mass shootings linked to militarism and the US inability to resolve it:

³⁷¹ Carl Schmitt, *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy*, trans. by Ellen Kennedy (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1988), xix. From the Introduction by Ellen Kennedy.

³⁷² National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF), “Firearms and Ammunition Industry Economic Impact Report 2013,” *nssf.org*, <http://www.nssf.org/Impact/> (Accessed August 26, 2014). The NSSF website states: “During difficult economic times and high unemployment rates nationally, our industry has grown and created over 25,600 new, well-paying jobs over the past two years. Our industry is proud to be one of the bright spots in this economy.”

³⁷³ Robert Barnes, “Justices Reject D.C. Ban On Handgun Ownership,” *washingtonpost.com*, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/06/26/AR2008062600615.html> (Accessed August 26, 2014). Barnes states that SCOTUS, for the first time in history, confirmed “the Second Amendment guarantees an individual's right to own a gun for self-defense.”

It appears in too many ways that the prevailing wisdom of the NRA has gradually come to define the lessons of [Newtown, VT massacres] for many Americans: Resonating through decades of TV crime dramas, epic western films, and international cinema conventions...The unspoken, but openly signaled, subtext...is that the “good guy” also must have a really good gun, which could include a no-nonsense paramilitary home defense shotgun or an assault-style semi automatic rifle that would stop the bad guy dead in his tracks...such “rampage guns,” like the Glock 19 [are] “the weapon of choice for good and bad guys.” Such sloganeering is regrettable, but its common circulation is open recognition that there are deeply knotted rhetorical traditions rooted in...America’s “right to rebel,” which underpins the...deeply normalized acceptance of deadly gun violence.³⁷⁴

II. Militarization and the Present Police State

The word ‘police’ originates from the Latin *politia*, which is derived from the word *politeia*, both rooted in the Greek term *polis* (city-state). ‘Police’ has always been a referent for some kind of management, regulation, or administrative function in the polis, city, or state and applied to the community or population. As Peter Andreas and Richard Price note, it was not until the Enlightenment that one starts to see “a distinction between the military and police...[and] the withdrawal of the military from direct participation in the internal affairs of the state.”³⁷⁵ The ‘police’ in the United States finds its origins in a variety of sources: the English tradition of common law, the American colonial experience, the United States’ own exceptional character, and the United States’ national security concerns.³⁷⁶

Militarization is “the implementation of...militarism. It is the process of arming, organizing, planning, training for, threatening, and sometimes implementing violent conflict. To militarize means adopting and applying the central elements of the military model to an

³⁷⁴ Timothy W. Luke, “Gunplay and Governmentality: Sovereignty, Subjectivity, and Shootings in the United States,” in *Gun Violence and Public Life*, ed. Ben Agger and Timothy W. Luke (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2014), 4.

³⁷⁵ Peter Andreas and Richard Price, “From War Fighting to Crime Fighting: Transforming the American National Security State,” *International Studies Review*, vol. 3, no. 3 (2001): 34.

³⁷⁶ Balko, *Rise of the Warrior Cop*, 6

organization or particular situation.”³⁷⁷ Stephen Hill and Randall Berger think of militarization as when “armed forces of the state...have both military capabilities and police powers.”³⁷⁸

Catherine Lutz writes that militarization is “a discursive process that works gradually throughout a given time and space to change, shift, or cultivate societal beliefs and values that condones and normalizes the use of force, violence, and advanced weaponry where such force and weapons were not used before.”³⁷⁹ The police in the United States are a clear example of indirect militarization, seen in the form of Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT), Emergency Response Teams (ERT), and Special Patrol Groups (SPG), alongside regular police squads, all of which today bear the marks of paramilitary police units (PPU’s).

Notable incidents where PPU’s have been deployed include, the Ruby Ridge and Waco raid disasters of the early-90’s; the Oklahoma City Bombing in 1995, the 1999 anti-globalization protest in Seattle, anti-war demonstrations in 2003-2004, numerous school shootings, the 2011 Occupy Wall Street protests, the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing, Ferguson, Missouri in 2014, and Baltimore, Maryland in 2015. However, these are all the big attention headline-grabbing events. More important to note are all the ordinary incidents involving private subjects who have been brutalized, terrorized, and totally dominated with the outcome of social and economic ruination or incarceration. Instruments of militarized policing today include: battle-dress uniforms (BDU’s), stun guns, flash-bang grenades, tasers, tear gas, assault rifles, ballistic

³⁷⁷ Peter Kraska, “Militarization and Policing – Its Relevance to 21st Century Police,” *Policing*, vol 1, no. 4 (December 2007): 503.

³⁷⁸ Stephen Hill and Randall Berger, “A Paramilitary Policing Juggernaut,” *Social Justice*, vol. 36, no. 1 – Policing Protest and Youth (2009): 26.

³⁷⁹ Catherine Lutz, “Making War at Home in the United States: Militarization and the Current Crisis,” *American Anthropologist*, vol. 104, no. 3 (September 2003): 723.

shields, armored personal carriers (APC's), and battering rams.³⁸⁰ Tactics of militarized policing include dynamic-entries and no-knock raids (i.e., busting into private homes unannounced with no warning or 'knock') that have increased dramatically from roughly 3,000 in the 1980's to some 50,000 no-knock raids per year. No-knock raids are typically accompanied by an inordinate amount of ammunition firing, destruction of property, the violent death of countless cats and dogs, as well as the death of alleged suspects, family members, or innocent bystanders. Today 75-80% of PPU and SWAT team callouts are for carrying out mere search warrants for what are often minor offenses and allegations.³⁸¹

The militarization of police departments in the US is a political, social, and cultural response to crisis thought. As noted in previous chapters, since the 1950's, the US has appeared to be presented by the 24/7 news media as increasingly threatened by a number of 'crises.' These points are nothing new, and have been evident in the US since the turn of the 19th century. Nonetheless, these real, perceived, or constructed 'crises' evoking and invoking potential domestic threats perhaps help to justify the continued necessity of PPU's and, likewise, the growth and reach of the US national security state. Crisis thought is present when subjects are encouraged to think, experience, and live a life thinking that, "accidents, disasters, and attacks can happen at any moment of the day."³⁸² Discourses of danger like these (which are part and parcel of crisis thought) are "extensive and intensive in [their] disciplinary effects" throughout political and social life.³⁸³ As the US politics of crisis strengthens the drive of the US national

³⁸⁰ American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), *War Comes Home: The Excessive Militarization of American Policing* (PDF), *aclu.org*, <https://www.aclu.org/feature/war-comes-home?redirect=war-comes-home-excessive-militarization-american-policing> (Accessed March 15, 2016).

³⁸¹ Whitehead, *A Government of Wolves*, 63.

³⁸² Masco, *The Theater of Operations*, 17-19.

³⁸³ Campbell, "Global Inscription," 280.

security state, then, as Masco rightly observes, “an effective recruitment to constant crisis” is a key factor in this ongoing process.³⁸⁴

Foucault on the Concept of the Police

Foucault’s genealogy of the police in Europe from the 16th century to the 18th century makes for some intriguing reading. Foucault discusses the origins and linkages between the *raison d’état* (i.e., reason of the state) and police power. The police are a corollary to the “art of government” (i.e., liberalism) that emerges during the Enlightenment.³⁸⁵ In the 17th century, ‘police’ refers to particular measures and instruments employed by the state in the “calculations...that will make it possible to establish a mobile, yet stable and controllable relationship between the state’s internal order and the development of its forces.”³⁸⁶ At the center of this police-state relation are statistics, indexes, and the census. To ‘police’ was to implement techniques to understand “the populations, the army, the natural resources, the production, the commerce, and the monetary circulation.”³⁸⁷

Modern policing appears in France in the mid-to-late 1600’s. However, it does not fully emerge throughout the West until the 18th century, with ‘police’ meaning to control and be responsible for human activity.³⁸⁸ To be ‘responsible’ in this sense is not just control over physical activities or over the production of things, but rather “the set of regulations, constraints,

³⁸⁴ Masco, *The Theater of Operations*, 13.

³⁸⁵ Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 278.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 313-314. Foucault states that: the police will “ensure the state’s splendor,” meaning “both the visible beauty of the order and the brilliant radiating manifestation of a force. Police therefore is in actual fact the state’s splendor as visible order and manifest force.” The definition of the police in the course of the seventeenth century “is the set of laws and regulations that concern the interior of a state and which endeavor to strengthen and increase the power of [the] state and make good use of its forces.”

³⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 314-315.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 322.

and limits, or the facilities and encouragements that will allow the circulation of men and things” to proceed harmoniously throughout the state.³⁸⁹ Foucault compares modern police power to “a permanent *coup d'état*” – the police as a managerial technique of the state is to intervene, regulate, and promote the *status quo*. Foucault states:

Police intervene in a regulatory manner... We are in a world of indefinite regulation, of permanent, continually renewed, and increasingly detailed regulation, but always regulation, always in that kind of form that, if not judicial, is nevertheless juridical: the form of the law or at least of laws as it functions in a mobile, permanent, and entailed way in the regulation. Although it is completely different from the judicial institution, police employs instruments and modes of action that, morphologically if you like, are not radically different from those of justice... We are in the world of the regulation, the world of discipline.³⁹⁰

Foucault illuminates that to ‘police’ is synonymous with eliminating ‘disorder’ internal to a society.³⁹¹ To ‘police’ is as much about maintaining order as it is about correcting and thus, conducting human behavior in line with the needs of the state and the economy. As Campbell puts it, Foucault shows that “the police’s true objective is man.”³⁹² This is not just about what people ‘do,’ but also about what people are: who we are and what we might be as individuals, as subjectivities.

Policing the Colonies and Early Republic

Radley Balko notes that the police in the United States began not in the form of a noun, but as a verb, meaning to watch over or monitor public health and safety. Enforcement of community laws in the colonial period was the duty of every citizen and as such was informal and communal. Transgressions were disciplined through social stigmatization and forms of

³⁸⁹ Ibid, 325.

³⁹⁰ Ibid, 340.

³⁹¹ Ibid, 354.

³⁹² Campbell, *Writing Security*, 201.

public/private shaming.³⁹³ The first form of public policing was the “watch system” or hired volunteers, “whose primary duty was to warn of impending danger.”³⁹⁴ The colonies also appointed sheriffs and constables, but these jobs were largely administrative in nature, including the tasks of issuing subpoenas, collecting taxes, and dealing with public drunkenness.³⁹⁵

Militarized policing was among the grievances the colonists addressed against King George III. Balko writes, “it was the deployment of British soldiers...strictly for the purpose of enforcing the law that set long-smoldering hostilities aflame. Using general warrants, British troops were allowed to enter private homes, confiscate what they found, and often keep the bounty for themselves...it was the...positioning of soldiers trained for warfare on city streets, among the civilian populace, and using them to enforce laws and maintain order that enraged colonists.”³⁹⁶ The Founding Father’s reservations about standing military armies and the potential for police corruption were present in the debates surrounding the 1787 US Constitution.³⁹⁷ For example, Alexander Hamilton in *The Federalist* signals one such misgiving. Hamilton writes that “the violent destruction of life and property incident to war – the continual effort and alarm attendant on a state of continual danger, will compel nations the most attached

³⁹³ Balko, *Rise of the Warrior Cop*, xi.

³⁹⁴ Gary Potter, *The History of Policing in the United States*, (PDF), *plsonline.eku.edu*, <http://plsonline.eku.edu/insidelook/history-policing-united-states-part-1> (Accessed February 18, 2016).

³⁹⁵ Throughout the 18th to early 20th century, it was common for working men and families to begin drinking alcoholic beverages, such a cider, with breakfast, and throughout the regular working day with lunch and dinner. Drinking mildly intoxicating beverages was healthier than consuming water from rivers, streams, or standing water due to contamination. For a time, severe intoxication was limited to those who truly drank beers, wines, and ciders in excess. With the abundant crops of corn, wheat, and barley, Americans began distilling spirits, or hard liquor such as whiskey, and that is when the problem of drunkenness began to spiral in a public ‘crisis’ domestic violence, physical dependency, loss of regular work, and so on.

³⁹⁶ Balko, *Rise of the Warrior Cop*, 14.

³⁹⁷ Richard Labunski, *James Madison and the Struggle for the Bill of Rights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 256.

to liberty, to resort for repose and security, to institutions, which have a tendency to destroy their civil and political rights. To become more safe they, at length, become willing to run the risk of being less free.”³⁹⁸ However, the Founders also understood that for their new government to work effectively it would need a military and police apparatus to defend the state externally and enforce federal law internally as events prior to 1787 made clear (for instance, Shay’s Rebellion in late 1786).³⁹⁹ The need for police power also highlights the problems associated with too much democracy, as discussed in Chapter 2. Police power was necessary to suppress democratic practices that the US claimed to champion, while in reality, it worked hard to temper, moderate, and manage the voluntary associations of people.

For roughly the first half of the 19th century, US police remained largely informal. Military troops were rarely used for routine law enforcement. The first police department was established in the city of Boston in 1838. By the 1880’s, all major US cities had centralized police departments, as the outcome of changes brought about by shifts in populations, a changing relationship to space and time, and the unbridled power of capitalism. It was about the emergence of real and transient political and social crises, or “large, defiant crowds...riots in the Northern US, and the threat of slave insurrections in the South” that began in American cities of the 1830’s that led to the establishment of centralized police forces. In short, “the police are a

³⁹⁸ Hamilton, Madison, and Jay, *The Federalist*, 31.

³⁹⁹ Joseph R. Conlin, *The American Past: A Survey of American History – Third Edition* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1990), 166. Daniel Shay was a Revolutionary War veteran destitute due to debts accrued in the war. After the political system of Massachusetts failed him in addressing the problem, Shay raised “as many as 2000 armed men” and marched on Boston. When the Governor of Massachusetts asked the Continental Congress to raise troops in order to quell the insurrection, the Articles of Confederation prevented Congress from doing so.

response to crowds, not to crime.”⁴⁰⁰ In major US cities, power over such decisions rested with the capitalist class who exerted the most influence in deciding what disorder constitutes, primarily when faced with strikes over working conditions and over wages paid in the manufactures. The bourgeois class demanded the development of bureaucratic policing institutions to protect and safeguard private capitalist interests.

Early US police forces also had no professional training and police beatings of suspects and criminals were common. Further, they lacked a distinct hierarchy, set duties, or chain of command. These deficiencies made early police forces open to the influence of party politics. At the end of the 19th century, the police were appendages of big political machines and party bosses which were often intimately related to organized crime.⁴⁰¹ Gary Potter writes: “police were, at least de facto, acting as the enforcement arm of organized crime in virtually every big city.”⁴⁰² Police had little effect on crime, failed to promote justice, were pawns of party bosses, and did little to make citizen-subjects feel any more secure than they did without them. From their inception, then, US police forces, perhaps, have always been problematic and contradictory to what they claim themselves to be.

The Rise of Militarized Police and the War on Drugs

The rise of militarized police has been a matter of choices dating back to the end of the Progressive era in the 1920’s. Militarization was a choice by police departments at the local, state, and federal levels. Militarization was the result of choices by politicians and public

⁴⁰⁰ David Whitehouse, “Origins of the Police,” *wordpress.com*, <https://worxintheory.wordpress.com/2014/12/07/origins-of-the-police/> (Accessed February 21, 2016).

⁴⁰¹ E.E. Schattschneider, *Party Government* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2002), 172.

⁴⁰² Potter, *The History of Policing in the United States* (PDF)

officials to exploit the ‘crises’ of the times for their own political purposes. By the 1920’s, fears of communism, the Volstead Act, Jim Crow, and the development of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) under the guiding hand of J. Edgar Hoover all played salient parts in the early development of a militarized police. This section takes up where police militarization begins to come into its own in the late-40’s and 1950’s. Cold War foreign policy had inscribed on the American populace a particular mode of behavior, one more fearful and conformist. The threat of thermonuclear incineration coupled with the fears purportedly posed by the spread of communism infiltrated the discursivity of ordinary domestic life. These ‘crises’ established “the foundation for competing ideas of national community, producing both resistance to and the normalization of a militarized society.”⁴⁰³

In the late 1950’s, the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) began rendering a number of landmark decisions that established limits to police power and strengthened substantive due process for alleged suspects.⁴⁰⁴ Some of these cases included *Miller v. United States* (1958), *Mapp v. Ohio* (1961), *Gideon v. Wainwright* (1964) *Ker v. California* (1964), and *Miranda v. Arizona* (1966). While most of these rulings were triumphs for civil libertarians, these rulings also incited their own real and perceived ‘crisis’ among conservatives beginning a “generation-long anticrime backlash that countered [the SCOTUS decisions] with policies that gave police more power, more discretion, and more authority to use more force.”⁴⁰⁵

In the summer of 1965, California Highway Patrol (CHP) officer Lee Minikus pulled over 27 year old African American Marquette Frye for drunk driving. After Frye’s mother, Rena, arrived on the scene and embarrassed Frye, the interactions between him and Minikus went from

⁴⁰³ Masco, *The Theater of Operations*, 54-56.

⁴⁰⁴ Edward Keynes, *Liberty, Property, and Privacy: Toward a Jurisprudence of Substantive Due Process* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996).

⁴⁰⁵ Balko, *Rise of the Warrior Cop*, 56.

bad to worse, beginning with Marquette resisting arrest.⁴⁰⁶ Enter the Watts Riots, which spread roughly 46 miles outside the relatively small confines of the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles. Under the command of the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), 13,500 California National Guard troops were dispatched to quell the riots. With Watts, police and military power were no longer distinguishable from another. By the time the riots were over, \$40 million dollars worth of damage had taken place, over 1,000 people were injured, and 34 people had died.⁴⁰⁷ Television coverage of the event broadcasted images of Los Angeles burning to living rooms across the country. This initiated the perception throughout white middle-class America of a rising epidemic of crime in the mid-to-late 1960's with crime, of course, perceived as being largely committed by blacks, minorities, communist sympathizers, anti-war demonstrators, or counterculture radicals.⁴⁰⁸

In 1966, an Austin, TX man, Charles Whitman, shot his mother in the head. He returned home and then stabbed his wife to death. Whitman then packed a number of foodstuffs, some shotguns, rifles, and bullets, then headed to the University of Texas campus clock tower. Around 11:50am, Whitman, a trained sniper, indiscriminately opened fire on the surrounding people below the clock tower. Over the course of 90 minutes, Whitman killed thirteen people and injured over thirty others, before police officers finally bypassed the barricade he had erected.⁴⁰⁹ The University of Texas massacre heightened the concerns Watts had already raised among citizens and police departments, generating a demand for the new type of military style police squad being put together in LA.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid, 51.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid, 52.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid, 53.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid, 57-58.

The domestic and foreign policies of President Lyndon Johnson's administration also generated several real and perceived crises of their own. Determined to contain the spread of communism in Vietnam, Johnson escalated the Vietnam War and the military draft, sparking protest and social dissent across the country by much of America's youth. Johnson's tough rhetoric regarding the so-called war on poverty and war on crime as part of his Great Society initiatives appeared contradictory with his foreign policy goals in Vietnam. In the mid-to-late 1960's, college campuses became hot beds for anti-war demonstrations and radical political and social ideals, most notably represented by the New Left and the Free-Speech and the Anti-War movements, which were often grouped erroneously with the counterculture. Steven Hayward writes, "the hippies and the 'counterculture' they represented were more dismaying to middle-class parents than the antiwar movement and the New Left, and though the number of hippies...[was] comparatively small as a proportion of young people...their visibility and aggrandizement by the media heightened middle class anxiety that America was coming apart."⁴¹⁰

Disorder surrounded the Democratic National Convention (DNC) held in Chicago on August 26-29, 1968. Various youth-oriented movements such as the Yippies, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), and anti-war movements had planned a rally coinciding with the convention. Demonstrators, activists, and party members descended on Chicago and were met by 23,000 national guards and police officers surrounding the convention and placed throughout the city. On August 28, at a legally held rally of about 10,000 people in Grant Park, an unknown demonstrator lowered the American flag in protest of the war. The police broke through the crowd and began beating the protestors as the crowd threw food, rocks, and concrete at the

⁴¹⁰ Steven F. Hayward, *The Age of Reagan: The Fall of the Old Liberal Order 1964-1980* (New York: Prima Publishing, 2001), 147-148.

police. This set off the brutality that followed into the evening, as protestors fled the park and spread out into the streets of Chicago. Facing chants of “hell no, we won’t go” and “the whole world is watching,” the police deployed military like force on protestors and bystanders alike. The American people were watching, too: the TV news networks switched between the violence in the streets and coverage of speeches at the DNC.

Richard Nixon was the first politician to mobilize crisis thought effectively in modern American politics. Nixon’s campaign message of ‘law and order’ would resonate with the so-called “silent majority” of predominantly white and moderately conservative voters. These ordinary, everyday people felt that they’re imagined community was being swept away by the political, social, and cultural upheavals of the times. The Nixon administration was able to successfully link in the minds of the silent majority drugs (namely marijuana) to almost every ‘crisis’ circulating in US society at the time, such as crime, race, the counterculture, or anything remotely left-wing, anti-war, or problematic. In so doing, Nixon was able to claim victories on his campaign promises. However, the ‘correlation’ of these distinct ‘crises’ with drug use did not imply causation of any kind. These linkages were unsubstantiated, inasmuch as these linkages were gross simplifications. For instance, there was no evidence that drug use, namely marijuana, was causing rising crime rates throughout the country. As Campbell notes, the foundations for what would later be dubbed the ‘War on Drugs’ that begin in the Nixon years, “are at best contestable and at worst spurious...it seems more than reasonable to suggest that there is a logic at work in the interpretation of drugs as a social danger that exceeds the factors most often cited as rationales.”⁴¹¹

⁴¹¹ Campbell, *Writing Security*, 178.

The foundations of America's drug war began "on or about May 26, 1971, when President Nixon told his chief of staff, 'I want a goddamn strong statement on marijuana...I mean one on marijuana that just tears the ass out of them.'"⁴¹² To be sure, the US had perceived drugs as a threat since the early 1900's, but this was primarily in terms of the international and economic impact of illegal narcotics sales such as opium, heroin, and cocaine, demonstrated by the Harrison Act of 1914, which criminalized narcotics consumption.⁴¹³ Nixon's presidency laid the groundwork for tough-on-crime policies that would be reinvigorated by President Reagan in the 1980's and that President Clinton would continue in the 1990's. More so than any other policy initiative, it is the War on Drugs that can be singled out as being responsible for the rise in militarized police. Whitehead writes: "reputedly a response to crime and poverty in inner cities and suburbia, [the War on Drugs] has been the driving force behind the militarization of the police, at all levels, over the past 40 years."⁴¹⁴

Former governor of California and Hollywood actor Ronald Reagan defeated incumbent President Jimmy Carter in the 1980 US general election. Reagan's campaign mobilized crisis thought to win the White House, particularly by pinning contemporary crises of the day such as economic stagflation and the Iranian Hostage Crisis on the perceived weakness and incompetence of the Carter administration. The Reagan administration made the War on Drugs into the kind of 'real' war Nixon might have only dreamed of a decade earlier, and thus began one of the most alarming and disastrous failures of federal, state, and local policy-making ever encountered in American history, ruining thousands of American lives and producing the highest

⁴¹² James Higdon, "Congress's Summer Fling With Marijuana: How Congress turned on the DEA and embraced weed" *politico.com*, http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2015/07/dea-marijuana-120674.html?hp=t2_r#.Vbr6JbcSNPQ (Accessed July 31, 2015).

⁴¹³ Campbell, *Writing Security*, 173.

⁴¹⁴ Whitehead, *A Government of Wolves*, 71.

prison incarceration rate in the world, particularly among black, minority, and the urban poor. After Reagan, there was little to stand in the way of police militarization throughout the US.

The Reagan administration pushed through Congress the 1981 Military Cooperation with Law Enforcement Act (MCLE), which would augment police power with military technology, for instance, by using radar systems to detect drug smugglers or locate hidden patches of marijuana. The MCLE encouraged “the Pentagon to go further and give local, state, and federal police access to military intelligence and research...opening up access to military bases and equipment, and explicitly authorized the military to train civilian police in the use of military equipment. The law essentially permitted the military to work with drug cops on all aspects of drug interdiction short of making arrests and conducting searches.”⁴¹⁵ Under the MCLE, “the military could now sell assault rifles, handguns, flash bang grenades, tear-gas dispensers, armored vehicles, and even helicopters to law enforcement agencies. Across the country, federal, state, and local SWAT teams – equipped with helmets, combat boots, goggles, and flack jackets – would be trained on military bases by elite special forces personnel.”⁴¹⁶ The Reagan administration also utilized civil asset forfeiture laws. Reagan’s Department of Justice (DOJ) introduced a new kind of asset forfeiture called ‘substitute assets.’ Prosecutors could estimate the amount of money being made by a suspect in the illegal trade of drugs, and then proceed to confiscate a portion of the suspect’s property equal to that estimation. These powers were expanded further in 1984, allowing any department of local, state, or federal government involved in drug cases to be able to receive monetary shares of the property when auctioned off to the public. This created an insidious incentive by police departments to find any reason to use asset forfeiture because of the potential revenue that could be obtained from it.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid, 145.

⁴¹⁶ Fisher, *SWAT Madness and the Militarization of the American Police*, 11-12.

On April 8, 1986, President Reagan signed into law the National Security Decision Directive 221 (NSDD), which turned drugs into a national security crisis. To be sure, Nixon, Ford and Carter declared drugs a similar ‘threat.’ However, Reagan made it into official crisis, evident in what the NSDD put into effect. Cocaine, heroin, and marijuana became the equivalent of an enemy combatant or a WMD.⁴¹⁷ The NSDD helped expedite the process whereby municipal police forces across the country would, by the 1990’s, become militarized as the government could now subsidize large sums of federal cash to police departments in the name of the War on Drugs. This money went into the establishment and funding of SWAT teams, military gear, and to pay police officers overtime for doing extra drug investigations. Since the incentive to profit was there, police departments would now inevitably “devote more time, personnel, and aggression to drug policing and less to investigating murders, rapes, and robberies.”⁴¹⁸

Fisher writes: “by 1990, every state police agency and half the country’s sheriffs offices (about 1,500 agencies) had SWAT units. Thirty eight percent of the nations police departments were also SWAT team-ready. Five years later, in cities with populations of more than 50,000 – about 7,000 municipalities – 90 percent of the police departments were deploying SWAT teams.”⁴¹⁹ Since 1997, “more than 17,000 [police] agencies have taken advantage of the federal government’s 1033 Program, acquiring \$2.6 billion dollar’s worth of weapons and equipment, and demand is only getting higher. In fact, a record –setting half billion dollar’s worth of military equipment flowed from the US Department of Defense (DOD) to local police in 2011, with

⁴¹⁷ Campbell, *Writing Security*, 172.

⁴¹⁸ Balko, *Rise of the Warrior Cop*, 147.

⁴¹⁹ Fisher, *SWAT Madness and the Militarization of the American Police*, 13.

another \$400 million worth of equipment reaching local police by May 2012.”⁴²⁰ The 1033 program is part of the obscure Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) overseen by the DOD and has contributed significantly to police militarization in the US. Matthew Harwood writes: “the amount of military hardware transferred through the program has grown astronomically over the years.” In 1990, the Pentagon “gave \$1 million worth of equipment.” By 2013, “that number had jumped to nearly \$450 million.” Since 1990, the 1033 program has “shipped off more than \$4.3 billion worth of materiel to state and local cops.”⁴²¹

The implications of the above policies appeared throughout the course of the 1990’s, including the 1992 Rodney King riots in Los Angeles and the 1999 wresting of 5 year-old Elian Gonzalez from his cousin’s home in Miami.⁴²² The event of 9/11 established the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), which in some respects, might be understood as the last great push to cement militarized policing and the US national security state, blurring military and police powers like never before.⁴²³ The DHS continues to fund as much as \$34 billion in grants “to police agencies to buy military-style equipment. This money has gone to purchase drones, tactical vests, bomb-disarming robots, tanks and more.”⁴²⁴ With the threat of terrorism now allegedly omni-present, crisis thought mobilizations by the 24/7 news media and the US

⁴²⁰ Whitehead, *A Government of Wolves*, 58.

⁴²¹ Matthew Harwood, “How Did America's Police Get So Militarized?” *motherjones.com*, <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2014/08/america-police-military-swat-ferguson-westcott-tampa> (Accessed March 15, 2016).

⁴²² Balko, *Rise of the Warrior Cop*, 204. The decision to send Gonzalez back to Cuba was based on threatening statements made by Elian’s cousin Marisleysis Gonzalez. Thus, the US Justice Department sent “a 130-member Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) team to take custody of the boy, headed by a heavily armed, eight-member INS SWAT team. The resulting raid produced an iconic, Pulitzer Prize-winning photo...in which an INS agent points a semi-automatic weapon at the crying, terrified boy...”

⁴²³ Whitehead, *A Government of Wolves*, 61.

⁴²⁴ Alex Kane, “11 Shocking Facts About America’s Militarized Police Forces,” *alternet.org*, <http://www.alternet.org/civil-liberties/11-shocking-facts-about-americas-militarized-police-forces> (Accessed March 15, 2016).

government have ultimately been successful in conditioning the American masses that PPU and SWAT teams in ordinary and routine police work are absolutely imperative in securing security.

III. Discussion: Crisis Thought and Forgetting

In the early morning of March 3, 1991, African-American Rodney Glenn King III and two passengers were pursued by the CHP and officers of the LAPD for speeding. The pursuit lasted about 8 miles when King was forced to stop his 1987 Hyundai Excel when police cars blocked his car in a neighborhood just off the freeway.⁴²⁵ King's car was soon surrounded by 21 LAPD officers, 4 CHP officers, and 2 Los Angeles Unified School District Officers. Even a police helicopter was sent to the scene.⁴²⁶ The LAPD reported that King:

responded slowly or not at all to commands to lie down and place his hands above his head. He smiled and danced a little pitter-patter, waving to the helicopter; he threw a kiss and wiggled his butt at a female officer who had ordered him, at gunpoint, to lie down; finally, he heaved four male officers off his back who tried to handcuff him and seemed to shrug it off when police stunned him with a Taser. King's behavior so alarmed the arresting officers that they mistakenly assumed he was on PCP. A second Taser dart fired...failed to incapacitate the 6-foot, 3-inch, 225-pound King...as King lay hogtied on the ground...[he] laughed and cursed into the chilly night air. "Fuck you!" he screamed. "Fuck you!"⁴²⁷

Jacobs provides that, "in full view of all present, King was severely beaten by three white LAPD officers as a sergeant and the remaining 17 officers looked on."⁴²⁸ Solomon and Solomon note

⁴²⁵ Seth Mydans, Richard W. Stevenson, and Timothy Egan, "Seven Minutes In Los Angeles - A special report," *nytimes.com*, <http://www.nytimes.com/1991/03/18/us/seven-minutes-los-angeles-special-report-videotaped-beating-officers-puts-full.html> (Accessed February 6, 2016).

⁴²⁶ William L. Solomon and William S. Solomon, "Images of Rebellion: News Coverage of Rodney King," *Race, Gender & Class*, vol. 11, no. 1 – Race, Gender, Class and the 1992 LA Riots (2004): 25.

⁴²⁷ David Whitman, "The Untold Story of the LA Riot" *usnews.com*, <http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/1993/05/23/the-untold-story-of-the-la-riot> (Accessed February 6, 2016).

⁴²⁸ Ronald N. Jacobs, "Civil Society and Crisis: Culture, Discourse, and the Rodney King Beating," *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 101, no. 5 (March 1996): 1239.

that, “King was kicked at least seven times, shot four times with an electric Taser gun of 50,000 volts, and struck 56 times with nightsticks. He then was handcuffed, hogtied, and then dragged, face down, to the side of the street. King sustained nine skull fractures, a shattered eyes socket and cheekbone, a broken leg, a concussion, injuries to both knees, and nerve damage that left his face partially paralyzed, as well as kidney damage and permanent brain damage.”⁴²⁹

A nearby resident videotaped (if not mobilized crisis thought) about 8 minutes of King’s beating from his apartment complex and sold the tape to a local television station for \$500 dollars. As Sigelman et al. note, “for weeks afterward, the beating received saturation coverage in the news media,”⁴³⁰ as the recorded footage “was broadcast thousands of times, [and] provoked a public crisis over police brutality and racism.”⁴³¹ In April 1992, all four officers were acquitted by a predominantly white jury of using excessive force on King. South Central Los Angeles then erupts into chaos. The governor of California declared a state of emergency. To the viewer at home, as Bernard-Donals notes, coverage of the riots depicted Los Angeles as “a kind of racial war zone.”⁴³² Over five days, portions of LA burned, leaving more than 50 people dead, and more than 2,000 injured. The rioting destroyed or damaged over 1,000 buildings in the LA area, with damages over \$1 billion. More than 9,800 California National Guard troops were

⁴²⁹ Solomon and Solomon, “Images of Rebellion,” 25.

⁴³⁰ Lee Sigelman, Susan Welch, Timothy Bledsoe, and Michael Combs, “Police Brutality and Public Perceptions of Racial Discrimination: A Tale of Two Beatings” *Political Research Quarterly*, vol. 50, no. 4 (December 1997): 777.

⁴³¹ Jacobs, “Civil Society and Crisis,” 1239. Italics added for emphasis.

⁴³² Michael Bernard-Donals, “The Rodney King Verdict, the New York Times, and the Normalization of the Los Angeles Riots: Or, What Antifoundationalists Can’t Do” *Cultural Critique*, no. 27 (Spring 1994): 66

dispatched to restore order. Nearly 12,000 people were arrested, although not all the arrests were directly related to the rioting.⁴³³

Twenty-two years later on Saturday August 9, 2014, around 12:00pm, 18-year-old Michael Brown and his friend Dorian Johnson were walking down the middle of Canfield Drive in Ferguson, Missouri, when Daren Wilson, a white male police officer of the Ferguson Police Department (FDP), first encountered the young men.⁴³⁴ National Public Radio (NPR) reported Johnson's side of the story: "Wilson stopped Brown and Johnson because they were walking in the middle of the street. Officer Wilson told the two men to get on the sidewalk, and after driving off, backed up again. There was a confrontation between Brown and Wilson while Wilson was still in his vehicle. Shots were fired. Brown and Johnson ran. Wilson went after them. Brown turned around; more shots were fired. There was a pause. Then more shots were fired. Brown collapsed and died."⁴³⁵

The US Department of Justice memorandum *Regarding The Criminal Investigation Into The Shooting Death of Michael Brown* generally follows Johnson initial reports of what happened.⁴³⁶ When Wilson sighted Brown and Johnson, he told them to get off the street and onto the sidewalk. When Brown and Johnson did not comply with his order, Wilson backed up his FDP issued Chevrolet-Tahoe SUV parking it at an angle, and thereby blocking both eastbound and westbound traffic lanes, stopping Brown and Johnson in their tracks. Wilson

⁴³³ CNN Library, "Los Angeles Riots Fast Facts," *cnn.com*, <http://www.cnn.com/2013/09/18/us/los-angeles-riots-fast-facts/> (Accessed February 8, 2016).

⁴³⁴ David Von Drehle and Alex Altman, "The Tragedy of Ferguson" *TIME*, vol. 184, no. 8 (2014): 25.

⁴³⁵ Eyder Peralta, "Ferguson Documents: What Michael Brown's Friend Saw," *npr.org*, <http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2014/11/26/366827836/ferguson-documents-what-michael-browns-friend-saw> (Accessed February 6, 2016).

⁴³⁶ However, Brown and Johnson had just come from Ferguson Market and Liquor where Brown was reported (and later confirmed) to have stolen several packages of cigarillos.

struggled with Brown for a few moments, before Wilson fired his weapon striking one of Brown's hands. Brown and Johnson then ran about 180 feet away from the SUV (verified by the bloodstains on the pavement) and Wilson pursued them on foot. Brown then turned around to face Wilson, and claiming self-defense (i.e., fearing serious injury or death), officer Wilson fired several gunshots that put Brown down once and for all. Twelve shots were fired, eight of which successfully hit their target. The fatal blow came from a shot to the apex of Brown's head around 12:02pm. Brown was unarmed.⁴³⁷

Following the candlelit vigil for Brown on August 10, violence erupted in Ferguson. A state of emergency was declared by the Missouri governor as protests over the course of a week led to the vandalism of private property, the burning of vehicles, and the looting of businesses.⁴³⁸ In response to the protests-turned-riots, the FDP implemented curfews and dispatched 110 officers in militarized riot gear to keep the peace and send the message that order will be maintained. The instruments implemented on the populous included K-9 units, armored vehicles, and military grade rifles.⁴³⁹ Ferguson came to resemble a domestic war zone. It was not just the protesters and people of Ferguson that felt the law of the instrument, but reporters and innocent bystanders as well. Greenwald reports how two reporters were arrested simply for covering the event "while working from a McDonald's in Ferguson. The arrests were arbitrary and abusive,

⁴³⁷ United States Department of Justice, *Memorandum: Department of Justice Report Regarding the Criminal Investigation Into the Shooting Death of Michael Brown by Ferguson, Missouri Police Officer Daren Wilson* (March 4, 2015), 6-8. Eyewitness accounts claim that Brown was surrendering and then shot by Wilson. However, the DOJ report does not confirm that Brown raised his "hands up" as a sign of surrender, which became a popular symbol of solidarity across the US in protest of Brown's death and excessive police force.

⁴³⁸ Alan Blinder and Mitch Smith, "State of Emergency in Ferguson is Lifted as Protests Ease" *nytimes.com*, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/15/us/state-of-emergency-in-ferguson-is-lifted-as-protests-ease.html?_r=0 (Accessed February 8, 2016).

⁴³⁹ Thomas Gibbons-Neff, "Veterans see deeply flawed police response in Ferguson," *washingtonpost.com*, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2014/08/14/military-veterans-see-deeply-flawed-police-response-in-ferguson/> (Accessed February 6, 2016).

and received substantial attention — only because of their prominent platforms, not, as they both quickly pointed out upon being released, because there was anything unusual about this police behavior.”⁴⁴⁰

On April 12, 2015, twenty-five year old African-American Freddie Gray was arrested by the Baltimore Police Department (BPD) for allegedly possessing an illegal switchblade. As David Drehle describes, “Gray...entered a police van handcuffed and conscious on April 12 and came out less than an hour later comatose, with his spinal cord nearly severed.”⁴⁴¹ David Graham writes that, upon leaving the van, Gray “was unable to breathe or talk...Gray died Sunday [April 19] from spinal cord injuries.”⁴⁴² Protests began on April 18 while Gray was still in a coma.⁴⁴³ The civil disorder in Baltimore that followed between April 25-April 27, 2015 looked a lot like Ferguson. A state of emergency was declared by the Maryland governor, curfews were decreed, and the police brought out their military grade BDU’s, assault rifles, tear gas, flash grenades, and APC police ‘tanks.’ Once again, an American city was turned into a proverbial war zone.

Media coverage of Baltimore and Ferguson blurred the distinctions between the political crisis and an internal crisis of security. In the case of Baltimore, much of the 24/7 news media coverage focused on how the state of Maryland, the City of Baltimore, and the Obama administration would manage these political crises. The narrative portrayed how each would carry out a political balancing act of juggling two spinning plates. On the one hand, each level of

⁴⁴⁰ Glenn Greenwald, “The Militarization of U.S. Police: Finally Dragged Into the Light by the Horrors of Ferguson,” *theintercept.com*, <https://theintercept.com/2014/08/14/militarization-u-s-police-dragged-light-horrors-ferguson/> (Accessed March 15, 2016).

⁴⁴¹ David Von Drehle, “The Roots Of A Riot” *TIME*, vol. 185, no.17 (May 2015): 36.

⁴⁴² David A Graham, “The Mysterious Death of Freddie Gray” *theatlantic.com*, <http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/04/the-mysterious-death-of-freddie-gray/391119/> (Accessed February 6, 2016).

⁴⁴³ Justin Fenton, “Hundreds at Baltimore police station protest over man’s injuries during arrest,” *baltimoresun.com*, www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/bs-md-shooting-20150418-story.html (Accessed February 6, 2016).

government was obligated to show support for the law and police officers, but on the other hand, each was acutely aware of the decades long injustices and systemic racism at the root of the protests.⁴⁴⁴ The footage of the events on the ground resembled that of cliché; we had seen this movie before.

The 24/7 news media mobilization of crisis thought obscured the derangements (i.e., crisis) of systemic racism and income inequality at the heart of the protests. Multiple messages and codes were received and absorbed by the viewer and subsequently transposed into the ordinary life world. For instance, President Obama called these incidents of mostly unarmed, and mostly innocent, people being gunned down by police officers a “slow-rolling crisis” in America.⁴⁴⁵ Unfortunately, calling something a ‘crisis’ today seems to only have the effect of instilling what Jenny Edkins calls “forgetting,” which “is essential because for ‘politics’ to take place, the way in which the current political structures came into being must be overlooked,” and among those ‘structures’ in the US include militarized police forces.⁴⁴⁶ None of these incidents should be that surprising to Americans. President Obama’s speech said as much: “I think we, as a country, have to do some soul-searching. This is not new. It’s been going on for decades.”⁴⁴⁷ What has been going on for decades is the following: first, the persistent and interrelated political, social, cultural, and economic ‘crises’ in the Ferguson and Baltimore cases that are recognized and yet unrecognized; and second, militarized police that has been transposed so rapidly into society over the years that the ‘crisis of the police’ is bypassed, and no longer seems

⁴⁴⁴ Gary Pieters, “The Changing, Militarized Policing Shatters Public Trust and Confidence,” *huffingtonpost.com*, <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/gary-pieters/the-changing-militarized-b-5697105.html> (Accessed March 15, 2016).

⁴⁴⁵ Drehle, “The Roots Of A Riot,” 36.

⁴⁴⁶ Jenny Edkins, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 229.

⁴⁴⁷ Drehle, “The Roots Of A Riot,” 37-38.

strange or out of place, but becomes absolutely justified. In other words, we have gotten used to militarized police. The continued occurrence of such events is also, perhaps, indicative of the fact that the political system generates crises so that it can function effectively, illustrating how neither of these ‘crises’ never reach a critical mass or ever become truly threatening to the current *status quo*.

Crisis thought obscures the fact that PPU’s do not effectively end the ‘crises’ as seen in Ferguson and Baltimore. They may quell the immediate crisis at hand, but militarized police only further provokes the animosity and antagonism present in such situations. As Whitehead notes, “the mere presence of SWAT units has actually injected a level of danger and violence into police-citizen interactions that was not present when these interactions were handled by traditional civilian officers.”⁴⁴⁸ Spontaneous human action coordinated by some shared goal or loose affiliation finds itself incapable of addressing truth to power when the local police force has the same hardware and uses the same techniques as the US military.⁴⁴⁹ If this is the case, then what good is the constitutional right to assembly? Especially when it is ‘crowds’ of people that are viewed as constituting a ‘disorder’ to be eliminated by the police. What other methods are available for the subaltern to speak besides violence? For Fanon, “violence alone...provides the key for the masses to decipher social reality. Without this struggle, without this praxis, there is nothing but a carnival parade and a lot of hot air.”⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁴⁸ Whitehead, *A Government of Wolves*, 65.

⁴⁴⁹ Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Orlando: Harcourt, Inc 1968), 456. Arendt states: “any spontaneously given friendship, is from the standpoint of totalitarian domination just as dangerous as open hostility, precisely because spontaneity as such, with its incalculability, is the greatest of all obstacles to total domination over man.”

⁴⁵⁰ Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 96. In some respects, one might think of the ongoing racial/cop crisis in the terms Fanon uses as between the colonizer and the colonized: African American communities remain in

The ‘hot air’ Fanon talks about are the kind of rhetorics and political activities that crisis thought mobilizations facilitate when, for instance, disorders like systemic racism and inequality are recognized and yet unaddressed and in turn, these issues are marginalized or ignored by political or media representations. These troubles and issues remain a ‘crisis,’ which liberal reason assures subjects will ‘one day’ be resolved, or at least will play at the appearance of being resolved in the eyes of some. Crisis thought tricks our common sense by signaling that once a crisis like Watts, South Central LA, Ferguson, or Baltimore happens, then (of course) there will be political, social, and cultural change. There is a choice: to mobilize, or not to mobilize, crisis thought. A better alternative might be to initiate a time of substantive national discussion and deliberation; perhaps one held in every community, one that people might want to talk about. Instead, ‘crises’ like Ferguson and Baltimore reappear once more. The current outcome appears to be a cultural acceptance, a settling, and importantly, a forgetting of these ‘crises.’ Thus, it should not be surprising to anyone when the next unarmed black man is shot by a white cop, protests turn into riots, or mass shootings are met with the same recalcitrant dogma so that the cycle of violence and disorder repeats and so that the system can secure itself, again. It is this line of thinking that now brings us to the Conclusion of this study.

“negritude” as Fanon might put it, when the national culture whitewashes a more disturbing past of race relations in the US.

CHAPTER SIX – CONCLUSION: The Province of Crisis Thought

What has been offered in this study is not a theory, nor a political or a social fact. At best, this analysis has provided what is considered, ostensibly, a category, but also an interpretation and observation of United States politics, that is put forward here in good faith and in the spirit of the free exchange of ideas. Through these imperfect chapters that comprise this short treatise, this study has fulfilled what it initially set out to do: to offer some of the linkages between crisis thought, security, and liberalism, and to examine through various examples and vignettes crisis thought in political and social life.

The contributions of this study are this: crisis thought accounts for the subject of ‘crisis’ in human politics and knowledge. Crisis thought does not reject ‘crisis,’ but opens ‘crisis’ up and expands it. Instead of thinking about, if at all, the crisis in front of you, for example, crisis thought suggests that thinking and uttering ‘crisis’ is part of a much larger web of interrelated (and sometimes disconnected) crises. Additionally, crisis thought is an idea that is generalizable to the social sciences and humanities. This study represents one possible form of the kind of unique and imaginative analyses interdisciplinary research can provide. Crisis thought makes us question what compels us to speak, write, and think about crises as a point of departure in analyses or as a critique of the present-day political order. Finally, crisis thought also raises the questions about how one can know crisis in history and how one can know crisis itself.⁴⁵¹

Crisis thought is a discursive formation, a constellation of signifiers that can be mobilized by subjects, groups, politicians, media outlets, governments and the like, with or without intentionality, to attain or realize certain preferred meanings or none at all. Crisis thought designates a particular condition: the everyday US ‘politics of crisis,’ one where real ‘crises’ in

⁴⁵¹ Roitman, *Anti-Crisis*, 10.

political and social life are no longer discernable due to the numerous transient ‘crises’ said to pervade it. Every ‘crisis’ hits at once. Every ‘crisis’ stands in for another ‘crisis.’ Hence, why one way of thinking about crisis thought is all crisis discourses in circulation.

Crisis thought mobilizations by the 24/7 news media, groups, politicians, and governments supplement liberal reason by helping to cultivate, and thus secure, what Richard Ashley describes as, “interpretations of conduct...[that] constitute ‘modern subjects,’ effect the self-evident truths of modern experience, and enable and dispose...subjects to the further replication and circulation of the practices themselves.”⁴⁵² These practices, broadly speaking, are taken up by individuals, groups, the 24/7 news media, governments, or private entities. For instance, the way crises are often overlooked, ignored, and unaddressed; or the ways ‘crisis’ is approached from a set of conditions that designate a tolerable threshold that a society can, put crudely, put up with.

Nowhere has this study suggested that human societies can be rid of crises. ‘Crisis’ is a perennial concept in politics and we need it in order for us to better know ourselves and improve society. However, ‘crisis’ in late modernity does not appear to achieve this goal anymore. Crisis is not meaningless, but relatively empty. Crisis still signifies something, but what crisis signifies now often appears to be the determination of what the 24/7 news media and politicians want subjects to think is or is not a crisis. Often times, the ‘crises’ that seem to matter most to the public barely resemble a crisis at all. Instead of news coverage being given to crises of common political and social concern (e.g., crisis of justice, democracy, the environment), the 24/7 news media tends to mobilize an assortment of questionable and dubious transient crises, where the

⁴⁵² Richard K. Ashley, “Living on the Border Lines: Man, Poststructuralism, and War,” in *International/Intertextual Relations: Postmodern Readings of World Politics*, ed. James Der Derian and Michael J. Shapiro (New York: Lexington Books, 1989), 260-261.

distinction between the former and so-called ‘real’ crises is seemingly lost. It often appears that US electoral politics, culture, and media revel in the derangements and contradictions present in US society, helping to amplify and heighten them, but not to resolve them. In so doing, 24/7 news media and US politics, paradoxically, help secure a precarious ontological security as linked to the goal of securing security and the *logos* of liberalism.

Whatever politics is taken to be, how it is fixed, determined, arranged in its foundations, or in other words, secured, is crucially linked to the predominant form of reason that informs how and why these choices are determined. That predominant form of reason in the US is liberalism.⁴⁵³ This is why liberalism is pertinent to crisis thought, political subjectivity, security and questions of truth in the study of politics.⁴⁵⁴ Although not new, it bears reminding to young and old readers alike that the thing we most often take for granted (i.e., liberalism) is also likely the source of our malaise. Crisis thought illuminates a peculiar aspect of liberal capitalist democracies: the continuous (re)production of crises. Liberal societies like the US produce crises in order to reify the rationality that drives them. Liberalism needs ‘crises’ in order to legitimate itself as “the form of rationality presented as dominant and endowed with the status of the one-and-only reason.”⁴⁵⁵ This is done in order to maintain the self-evident assumption that no alternative mode of life can offer the same amount of relative freedom, prosperity, or happiness as liberalism. Without crises, liberalism would be hard pressed to justify a *modus vivendi* that has failed to produce equality, the social good or human emancipation from various forms of

⁴⁵³ Dillon, *Politics of Security*, 18-19.

⁴⁵⁴ Roitman, *Anti-Crisis*, 10. *Truth* is a matter of wisdom, knowledge, and experience, but also documented facts, events, and discourse. ‘Truth,’ however, refers to taken for granted assumptions often regarded as *truth*. This would apply to how, as Roitman notes, “the grounds for knowledge of crisis are neither questioned or made explicit,” which in turn make “certain questions...possible, while others are foreclosed.”

⁴⁵⁵ Michel Foucault, “Structuralism and Post-Structuralism,” in *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, ed. James D Faubion (New York: The New Press, 1998), 441.

subjugation and domination. Liberalism must work to deny in the minds of human subjects the contradictions and crises produced by liberal capitalist democracy.

Eric Cazdyn notes: “crises are built right into many systems themselves; systems are structured so that crises will occur, strengthening and reproducing the systems themselves.”⁴⁵⁶ By ‘system’ (or systems), this study means the political and social arrangements, the mode of life we all share in, or the overarching superstructure we subjects are engaged in. That system or mode of life is matter of, to quote Foucault, “relating to contemporary reality...a way of thinking and feeling...of acting and behaving...a relation of belonging” in terms of politics and the ordinary life world.⁴⁵⁷ Systems would also refer to the infrastructural, communicational, networked, or legal systems that are fundamental to the workings of everyday life, as seen in Chapter 4. Hill and Berger likewise note: “the state must give itself something to do. The state socially and discursively constructs threats...as the state can no longer guarantee the well-being of freedom and security for mass loyalty, it preserves its political authority through the juridification, policing, and active enforcement of citizenship obligations.”⁴⁵⁸ Liberalism produces crises in order to have subjects, objects, behaviors, activities, and practices to secure, thereby securing the security of liberalism by generating the perception of a US politics of crisis.

This may not be surprisingly new. Karl Marx and Fredrich Engels made similar observations in *The Communist Manifesto* writing of liberal capitalism’s inevitable ‘boom-and-bust’ cycles. These “commercial crises that by their periodical return put on trial, each time more

⁴⁵⁶ Eric Cazdyn, “Disaster, Crisis, Revolution,” *South Atlantic Quarterly*, vol. 106, no. 4 (Fall 2007): 649. Italics added for emphasis.

⁴⁵⁷ Foucault, “What is Enlightenment?” 39.

⁴⁵⁸ Hill and Berger, “A Paramilitary Policing Juggernaut,” 28.

threateningly, the existence of the entire bourgeois society.”⁴⁵⁹ Why do these crises periodically return? These crises return because the modes of production have become “too powerful” for the conditions that sustain liberal property and social relations. As these modes of production overcome the ‘conditions’ or limits set forth by the state, “they bring disorder into the whole of bourgeois society, [endangering] the existence of bourgeois property.” To maintain their predominance and avert political and economic collapse (i.e., justifying existing working conditions by convincing the proletariat that capitalism produces ‘freedom,’ ‘liberty,’ ‘equity’ and the like), the bourgeois class can continuously engage in the “enforced destruction of a mass of productive forces” (e.g., shut down factories, lay off workers, cut back hours, outsource jobs, reduce stock dividends). The bourgeois then attempt to expand markets and facilities of production across the globe “by the conquest of new markets and by the more thorough exploitation of the old ones.” Thus, the bourgeois class recognizes the crises of their own making and, yet, paves “the way for more extensive and...destructive crises...by diminishing the means whereby crises are prevented.”⁴⁶⁰

Similar to what Marx and Engels note above, crisis thought helps liberal reason appear unproblematic by averting subject, group, and government attention away from the numerous ‘crises’ liberalism produces while appearing to keep a number of political and social troubles and issues (i.e., crises) at a tolerable level. For instance, when a crisis fails to reach a critical threshold, it will have been because of the virtues of liberal reason that mitigated or prevented X, Y, or Z crisis. When a crisis does reach critical mass, such as an environmental catastrophe or an economic meltdown, it will have been liberal reason, too, that salvaged, combatted, or

⁴⁵⁹ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto and Other Writings* (New York: Barnes and Noble Classics, 2005), 13.

⁴⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 13.

strengthened the resiliency of the nation and helped those affected by the crisis. Thus, the linkages between crisis thought, security, and liberalism may be summed up in the following: *it no longer matters if there is a 'crisis' of X, Y, or Z happening or emerging, so long as there are 'crises' in circulation.* Concerns for what a 'crisis' is, or why it is a 'crisis,' no longer appear to inform or educate citizen-subjects or governments to take action or implement policies to attenuate a 'crisis.' Instead, mobilizations of crisis thought function as a kind of managerial technique of the US political system that helps keep the US ship of state afloat, operating as a kind of subtle, low dosage or intravenous 'booster' to keep everyone on their toes, so to speak, through incessant media and political mobilizations of 'crisis.'

Nearing the end of this analysis, this study would like to put crisis thought in the context of late modern US politics, specifically in terms of the linkages between crisis thought and the 24/7 news media, which illustrates the US 'crisis of democracy' particularly well. Democratic ideals are not at the forefront of transnational media corporations objectives. Cable news television is not produced, really, to inform the public about politics, but rather to procure a profit through advertising revenue. This is not to say the 24/7 news media does not provide a useful, perhaps, crucial service to the public, but the efficacy behind it has nothing to do with the social good or 'democracy.' What 'democracy' is in the US is a by-product of the exchanges between the 24/7 news media and citizen-subjects. The 24/7 news media functions as the "surrogate electorate," a self-appointed intermediary, gatekeeper, and filter of political news that "works face to face with politicians in the nation's videoplaces and the viewing public must participate more remotely through the activities of this surrogate electronic electorate."⁴⁶¹ This is nothing new, but simply points out the way the media, the government, and US citizens fulfill

⁴⁶¹ Luke, *Screens of Power*, 142.

what are considered to be the obligations of democracy, but are only feigning the appearance of one. The 24/7 news media streamlines democratic activities as the *de facto* ‘face of the nation,’ as the programs, personalities, and representations of politics the 24/7 news media provides become the thoughts, opinions, and perspectives of the American electorate.

Democracy in America has never implied a politically virtuous citizenry. That is, a citizenry well versed in politics and one well suited to the responsibilities a truly democratic society demands. It was precisely this point that generated skepticism about democracy by classical political thinkers from antiquity to modernity. If one recalls Socrates’ discussion of ‘democracy’ in Book VIII of Plato’s *Republic*, then these reservations can be easily understood. Democracy is not only second to the last on the list of political constitutions provided (i.e., democracy is the best of the worst), but the origins of democracy are violent in the extreme (i.e., the poor kill and replace the offices of the former oligarchy). The value most cherished in a democratic society is freedom – generally taken to mean freedom from arbitrary restraints and the ability to pursue one’s individual interests. However, freedom also means having the freedom of doing nothing at all, politically or otherwise.⁴⁶² For Socrates, it is precisely the ‘freedom’ in a democracy that leads to a democratic society’s unraveling. Without capable or competent people, political societies as we know them would fall apart.

The US is not a democratic society. Instead, the US is a liberal capitalist democracy, one closely resembling that of an oligarchy, flirting with democratic principles in the form of ‘representation,’ and one beholden to different set of masters than the people.⁴⁶³ Carl Boggs

⁴⁶² Plato, *Republic*, 251-262.

⁴⁶³ Martin Giles and Benjamin I. Page, “Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens,” forthcoming in *Perspectives on Politics* (Fall 2014); Bryce Covert, “The Government Listens to Lobbyists and The Wealthy, Not You and Me,”

writes that democracy in America today “increasingly [is]...the domain of corporate and governmental elites whose overriding ambition is to perpetuate their own quasi-oligarchical status. The decay of politics...means that most people have lost faith in any level of government to serve common interests.”⁴⁶⁴ Piccone reiterates the key point:

representative democracy falls prey to private interests able to finance and indirectly control the political system... Without a competent citizenry able and willing to hold its representatives accountable, the latter become accountable only to those private interests that support them. What is especially problematic with this system is that, far from being self-correcting, it tends to increase the distance between representatives and those allegedly being represented, resulting in an ever more undemocratic... regime.⁴⁶⁵

The United States is, at best, what Wolin calls a “managed democracy,” with built-in mechanisms in constitutional design, policy, and law to curb and manage the pitfalls that might come with popular democracy (e.g., the notorious Electoral College, inane voting laws today). Wolin writes that a “managed democracy is centered on containing electoral politics: it is... democracy systematized.”⁴⁶⁶ At stake “is the control of public space and the power to depict, to discourage and intimidate, and ultimately to filter what is happening and being expressed.”⁴⁶⁷

The key point to make with the above in regards to crisis thought is this: 24/7 news media mobilizations of crisis thought help manage a democracy and a population, thereby securing a particular type of individual through the power to depict ‘what is happening’ and ‘what is being expressed.’ Crisis thought helps cultivate a political subject who is, more or less, comfortable with the *status quo*, mostly confident in political institutions, and inscribed with the impression

thinkprogress.org <http://thinkprogress.org/economy/2014/04/12/3426152/wealthy-lobbyists-policy/> (Accessed July 21, 2014).

⁴⁶⁴ Carl Boggs, “Social Crisis and Political Decay: The Contemporary American Malaise” *New Political Science*, vol. 20, no. 3 (1998): 304.

⁴⁶⁵ Paul Piccone, *Confronting the Crisis: Writings of Paul Piccone*, ed. Gary Ulmen (New York: Telos Press Publishing, 2008), xxiii. From the Introduction by Gary Ulmen.

⁴⁶⁶ Wolin, *Democracy Inc.*, 47

⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 216.

that, through the 24/7 news media, he or she can be connected to the larger political body of the nation. To be clear, human subjects are not pawns of the 24/7 news media, as if we have no individual agency, will power, or self-control over our actions. Instead, US citizen-subjects are in a state of co-dependency with them. We choose to use, watch, and access 24/7 news media because it is instilled in us as Americans to be ‘informed’ of current political, social, cultural, and economic events as a matter of civic duty.⁴⁶⁸ Democratic citizens need the press and/or media to stay informed about politics, or at least, so we might think. Although tempting, this study is not willing to suggest that the 24/7 news media decide US elections. Despite the obstacles present in a managed democracy, the people’s votes do count. What is the case, however, is that money does decide most elections (e.g., money for TV, radio, and online advertisements, campaign rallies, campaign signs, posters, and money to pay staff) for public offices in the US.⁴⁶⁹ Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, the 24/7 news media determines the political narrative for an election year, which is pivotal for a candidate’s success. For example, such narratives would consider ‘who won the debate,’ or how will a political ‘gaffe’ effect a candidates poll numbers?

In the final analysis, this study suggests that crisis thought plays a crucial role in late modern US electoral politics. In some respects, US political elections (especially presidential general elections) appear increasingly built on crisis thought mobilizations whereby feelings of fear, uncertainty, and anxiety are mixed with hope, optimism, and opportunity as projected from

⁴⁶⁸ See: Bonnie Honig, *Emergency Politics: Paradox, Law, Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), xvi; and Wolin, *Tocqueville Between Two Worlds*, 59. For Honig, the paradox of democracy is when “power must rest with the people but the people are never so fully who they need to be (unified, democratic) that they can be counted upon to exercise their power democratically.”

⁴⁶⁹ James W. Ceaser, et al., *Epic Journey: The 2008 Elections and American Politics* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009), 191-194.

political campaigns through media outlets to subjects, embodied in commercial campaign advertising, the candidate's charisma, or their rhetoric. In this respect, would-be voters, independents, and self-identified Democrats and Republicans in the US today now appear to base their votes no longer on the 'issues' or ideological adherence, *but on how they weigh which 'crises' are more significant than others*. To put it differently, which political campaign mobilizes crisis thought most effectively? Then, on Election Day, we get to see not only which presidential candidate surpasses the 270 electoral college votes to win the White House, but which 'crises' will become the focus of the next four to eight years. What happens to the experience of politics by subjectivities, the quality or virtue in being an informed civic-minded citizen, when significant issues are thrown by the wayside and politics is reduced to a whole lot of crisis thought? This study suggests the answer can easily be found by looking at your favorite cable news network or smartphone news feed.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adams, Mason and Jesse Tuel. "Fighting For Flint," *Virginia Tech Magazine*, vol. 36, no.3 (Spring 2016).
- Agamben, Giorgio. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.
- Agamben, Giorgio. *State of Exception*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.
- Ager, Susan. "Tough, Cheap, and Real: Detroit is Cool Again," *nationalgeographic.com*, <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/taking-back-detroit/see-detroit.html>. Accessed July 31, 2016.
- Agorist, Matt. "Despite Ever-Expanding Police State Measures, Cops Worse than Ever at Solving Crimes," *thefreethoughtproject.com*, <http://thefreethoughtproject.com/extensive-police-state-cops-worse-solving-crimes-why/>. Accessed August 17, 2016.
- Allison, Graham T. "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis," *The American Political Science Review*, vol. LXII, no. 3. (September 1969).
- American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), War Comes Home: The Excessive Militarization of American Policing (PDF), *aclu.org*, <https://www.aclu.org/feature/war-comes-home?redirect=war-comes-home-excessive-militarization-american-policing>. Accessed March 15, 2016.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities – New Edition*. New York: Verso, 2006.
- Andreas, Peter and Richard Price. "From War Fighting to Crime Fighting: Transforming the American National Security State," *International Studies Review*, vol. 3, no. 3 (2001): 31-52.
- Apel, Dora. "The Ruins of Capitalism" *jacobinmag.com*, <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2015/06/ruin-porn-imagery-photography-detroit/>. Accessed June 6, 2015.
- Arendt, Hannah. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Orlando: Harcourt, Inc., 1968.
- _____. *Crises of the Republic*. Orlando: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1972.
- _____. *The Portable Hannah Arendt*, ed. Peter Baehr. New York: Penguin Books, 2000.
- _____. *On Revolution*. New York: Penguin Books, 2006.
- Ashley, Richard K. "The Poverty of Neorealism," *International Organization*, vol. 38, no. 2 (Spring 1984): 225-286.

- Ashley, Richard K. "Living on the Border Lines: Man, Poststructuralism, and War," in *International/Intertextual Relations: Postmodern Readings of World Politics*, ed. James Der Derian and Michael J. Shapiro. New York: Lexington Books, 1989.
- Ashley, Richard K. and R.B.J. Walker. "Conclusion: Reading Dissidence/Writing the Discipline: Crisis and the Question of Sovereignty in International Relations," *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 34, no. 3 Special Issue: Speaking the Language of Exile: Dissidence in International Studies. (Sep. 1990): 367-416.
- Associated Press, "Alaska: End Sought for Bridge to Nowhere," nytimes.com, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/22/us/22brfs-ENDSOUGHTFOR_BR.html?_r=0. Accessed August 2, 2016.
- Axelrod, Laura. "Brad L. Graham coined the term 'blogosphere' dies at 41" al.com, http://blog.al.com/scenesource/2010/01/brad_l_graham_coined_the.html. Accessed March 24, 2016.
- Bacevich, Andrew J. *The Limits of Power: The End of American Exceptionalism*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2008.
- Balko, Radley. *Rise of the Warrior Cop: The Militarization of America's Police Forces*. New York: Public Affairs, 2014.
- Barnes, Robert. "Justices Reject D.C. Ban On Handgun Ownership," washingtonpost.com, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/06/26/AR2008062600615.html>. Accessed August 26, 2014.
- Baudrillard, Jean. *Simulations*. Massachusetts: Semiotext[e] – The MIT Press, 1983.
- Bauman, Zygmunt. *Liquid Modernity*. Malden: Polity Press, 2000.
- Bauman, Zygmunt, Didier Bigo, Paulo Esteves, Elspeth Guild, Vivienne Jabri, David Lyon, and R.B.J. Walker. "After Snowden: Rethinking the Impact of Surveillance," *International Political Sociology*, no. 8, (2014): 121-144.
- Beck, Ulrich, Antohny Giddens and Scott Lash. *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994.
- Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, trans Harry Zohn, ed. Hannah Arendt. New York: Schocken Books, 1968.
- Berger, James. *After the End: Representations of the Post-Apocalypse*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.
- Berman, Marshall. *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity*. New York: Penguin Books, 1982.

- Bernard-Donals, Michael. "The Rodney King Verdict, the New York Times, and the Normalization of the Los Angeles Riots: Or, What Antifoundationalists Can't Do" *Cultural Critique*, no. 27 (Spring 1994): 61-87.
- Binelli, Mark. "How Detroit Became the World Capital of Staring at Abandoned Buildings," nytimes.com, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/11/magazine/how-detroit-became-the-world-capital-of-staring-at-abandoned-old-buildings.html?pagewanted=all>. Accessed July 31, 2016.
- Blinder, Alan and Mitch Smith. "State of Emergency in Ferguson is Lifted as Protests Ease" nytimes.com, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/15/us/state-of-emergency-in-ferguson-is-lifted-as-protests-ease.html?_r=0. Accessed February 8, 2016.
- Bobbitt, Philip. *Terror and Consent: The Wars For the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Anchor Books, 2009.
- Boggs, Carl. "Social Crisis and Political Decay: The Contemporary American Malaise" *New Political Science*, vol. 20, no. 3. (1998): 301-322.
- Botelho, Greg and Kevin Conlon. "Amtrak train thought to be going twice as fast as it should have been," cnn.com, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/05/13/us/philadelphia-amtrak-train-derailment>. Accessed July 11, 2015.
- Box, Sherri. "New data from Virginia Tech Transportation Institute provides insight into cell phone use and driving distraction," vt.edu, <http://www.vtnews.vt.edu/articles/2009/07/2009-571.html>. Accessed January 21, 2016.
- Braidotti, Rosi. *Transpositions*. Malden: Polity Press, 2006.
- Brians, Craig, Jarol B. Manheim, Richard C. Rich, and Lars Willnat, *Empirical Political Analysis: Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods*. Boston: Longman, 2011.
- Brown, Ellen. "Amtrak Derailment Highlights America's Infrastructure Crisis," econmatters.com, <http://www.econmatters.com/2015/05/amtrak-derailment-highlights-americas.html>. Accessed June 26, 2015.
- Brown, Wendy. "American Nightmare: Neoliberalism, Neoconservatism, and De-Democratization," *Political Theory* 34, no. 6 (2006): 690-714.
- Buchanan-King, Mary. "Updated Study Shines New Light On Phone Use While Driving," vt.edu, <http://www.vt.edu/spotlight/achievement/2013-07-01-distracted/texting.html>. Accessed January 21, 2016.
- Burckhardt, Jacob. *Reflections on History*. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, Inc. 1979.
- Burke, Edmund. *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

- Butler, Judith. *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. New York: Verso, 2004.
- CBC News, "Gatineau police ID 1 of 2 men dead in daycare shooting," cbcnews.com, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/gatineau-police-id-1-of-2-men-dead-in-daycare-shooting-1.1301868>. Accessed on August, 26, 2014.
- CNN Library, "Los Angeles Riots Fast Facts," cnn.com, <http://www.cnn.com/2013/09/18/us/los-angeles-riots-fast-facts/>. Accessed February 8, 2016.
- Cameron, Robin. *Subjects of Security: Domestic Effects of Foreign Policy in the War on Terror*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.
- Campbell, David. "Global Inscription: How Foreign Policy Constitutes the United States," *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* no.15. (1990): 263-286.
- Campbell, David. *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.
- Carr, Edward Hallett. *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations*. New York: Perennial, 2001.
- Caygle, Heather. "House panel votes to cut Amtrak budget hours after deadly crash," politico.com, <http://www.politico.com/story/2015/05/amtrak-budget-house-panel-crash-117904.html>. Accessed June 11, 2015.
- Cazdyn, Eric. "Disaster, Crisis, Revolution," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, vol. 106, no. 4 (Fall 2007): 647-662.
- Ceaser, James W, Andrew W. Busch, and John J. Pitney, Jr. *Epic Journey: The 2008 Elections and American Politics*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009.
- Certeau, Michel de. *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall. Berkeley: University of California, 1984.
- Chow, Rey. *The Age of the World Target: Self-Referentiality in War, Theory, and Comparative Work*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.
- Clarke, Richard A. and Robert K. Knake. *Cyberwar: The Next Threat To National Security and What to Do About It*. New York: HarperCollins, 2010.
- Cohen, Amy P, Deborah Azrael, and Matthew Miller. "Rate of Mass Shootings Has Tripled Since 2011, Harvard Research Shows," motherjones.com, <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2014/10/mass-shootings-increasing-harvard-research>. Accessed February 7, 2016.

Collins, Alan. *Contemporary Security Studies* – Second Edition, ed. Alan Collins. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Common Constitutionalist, “Amtrak Derailment Just Another Good Crisis,” freedomoutpost.com, <http://freedomoutpost.com/2015/05/amtrak-derailment-is-just-another-good-crisis/>. Accessed June 26, 2015.

Conlin, Joseph R. *The American Past: A Survey of American History* – Third Edition. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1990.

Connolly, William E. *Political Theory & Modernity*. New York: Basil Blackwell, 1988.

Covert, Bryce. “The Government Listens to Lobbyists and The Wealthy, Not You and Me,” thinkprogress.org <http://thinkprogress.org/economy/2014/04/12/3426152/wealthy-lobbyists-policy/>. Accessed July 21, 2014.

Council on Foreign Relations, “Cyberattack on US Infrastructure” cfr.org, <http://www.cfr.org/global/global-conflict-tracker/p32137#!/?marker=2>. Accessed July 9, 2015.

Critchley, Simon. *Continental Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Cromwell III, John E., Elisa Speranza, and Hayden Reynolds. “The Infrastructure Crisis?” *Journal (American Water Works Association)*, vol. 99, no.4 (April 2007): 109-115.

Damrosch, Leo. *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Restless Genius*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005.

Dawson, Ashley and Malini Johar Schuller. “Introduction: Rethinking Imperialism Today,” in *Exceptional State: Contemporary U.S. Culture and the New Imperialism*, ed. Ashley Dawson and Malini Johar Schueller. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.

De Vita, Emma. “Proof that we are driven to distraction by social media,” ft.com, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/4f5d0404-de90-11e4-b9ec-00144feab7de.html#axzz3wQTzkNn1>. Accessed January 5, 2016.

Debrix, Francois. “Deploying Vision, Simulating Action: The United Nations and Its Visualization Strategies in a New World Order,” *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, vol. 21, no. 1. (January-March 1996): 67-92.

_____. “Cyberterror and Media-Induced Fears: The Production of Emergency Culture” *Strategies: Journal of Theory, Culture & Politics*, vol. 14, no. 1. (2001):149-168.

_____. “Language, Nonfoundationalism, International Relations,” in *Language, Agency, and Politics in a Constructed World*, ed. Francois Debrix. Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2003.

- _____. *Tabloid Terror: War, Culture, and Geopolitics*. New York: Routledge, 2008.
- _____. “Jean Baudrillard” in *Critical Theorists and International Relations*; ed. Jenny Edkins and Nick Vaugn-Williams. New York: Routledge, 2009.
- DeMars, Jayson. “Here’s The Simple Secret to Apple’s Marketing Success,” forbes.com, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/jaysondemers/2014/07/08/heres-the-simple-secret-to-apples-marketing-success/#2715e4857a0b3bead51e63ab>. Accessed January 21, 2016.
- Der Derian, James. *Virtuous War: Mapping the Military-Industrial Media-Entertainment Network* – Second Edition. New York: Routledge, 2009.
- Deudney, Daniel H. *Bounding Power: Republican Security Theory From the Polis to the Global Village*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007.
- Dillon, Michael. *Politics of Security: Towards a Political philosophy of Continental Thought*. New York: Routledge, 1996.
- Dillon, Michael and Andrew W. Neal. “Introduction” in *Foucault on Politics, Security, and War*, ed. Michael Dillon and Andrew W. Neal. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
- Dougherty, Joe E. “Revealed: Hillary Clinton’s private email servers were wide open to hacking from China, Korea, and Germany” glitch.news, <http://www.glitch.news/2015-10-13-revealed-hillary-clintons-private-email-servers-were-wide-open-to-hacking-from-china-korea-and-germany.html>. Accessed January 17, 2016.
- Doyle, Alister. “World Running Out of Time To Stop Global Warming, UN Report” huffingtonpost.com http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/04/06/global-warming-un_n_5099769.html. Accessed May 9, 2014.
- Drehle, David Von and Alex Altman. “The Tragedy of Ferguson,” TIME, vol. 184, no. 8 (2014).
- Drehle, David Von. “The Roots Of A Riot,” TIME, vol. 185, no.17. (May 2015).
- Dumm, Thomas L. *Democracy and Punishment: Disciplinary Origins of the United States*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1987.
- _____. “Telefear: Watching War News,” in *The Politics of Everyday Fear*, ed. Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.
- _____. *united states*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994.
- _____. *A Politics of the Ordinary*. New York: New York University Press, 1999.

Ebiri, Bilge. "Best of Enemies is the Saddest Film of the Year," vulture.com, <http://www.vulture.com/2015/08/best-of-enemies-is-the-saddest-film-of-the-year.html>. Accessed January 3, 2016.

Edelman, Murray. *Constructing the Political Spectacle*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988.

Edkins, Jenny. *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Egan, Matthew Jude. "Anticipating Future Vulnerability: Defining Characteristics of Increasingly Critical Infrastructure-Like Systems," *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*, vol. 15, no.1. (March 2007): 4-17.

Ehrenfreund, Max. "We've had a massive decline in gun violence in the United States," washingtonpost.com, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2015/12/03/weve-had-a-massive-decline-in-gun-violence-in-the-united-states-heres-why/>. Accessed February 7, 2016.

Eisenmann, Thomas R. "Cable TV: From Community Antennas to Wired Cities," hbs.edu, <http://hbswk.hbs.edu/item/cable-tv-from-community-antennas-to-wired-cities>. Accessed January 3, 2016.

Engelhardt, Tom. *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995.

Engelhardt, Tom. "The American Lockdown State, thenation.com, <https://www.thenation.com/article/american-lockdown-state/>. Accessed August 17, 2016.

Fanon, Franz. *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox. New York: Grove Press, 1963.

Fassin, Didier and Mariella Pandolfi. *Contemporary States of Emergency: The Politics of Military and Humanitarian Interventions*, ed. Didier Fassin and Mariella Pandolfi. New York: Zone Books, 2013.

Federal Communications Commission, "The Dangers of Texting While Driving," fcc.gov, <https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/dangers-texting-while-driving>. Accessed January 21, 2016.

Fenton, Justin. "Hundreds at Baltimore police station protest over man's injuries during arrest," baltimoresun.com, www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/bs-md-shooting-20150418-story.html. Accessed February 6, 2016.

Feran, Lee. "Mass Murderer Smirks at 21-Year Prison Sentence" abcnews.com, <http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/norway-shooter-anders-breivik-smiles-21-year-prison/story?id=17072142>. Accessed August, 26, 2014.

Ferdinand, Alva, Nir Menachemi, Justin L. Blackburn, Bisakha Sen, Leonard Nelson, and Michael Morrissey. "The Impact of Texting Bans on Motor Vehicle Crash – Related Hospitalizations," *American Journal of Public Health*, vol. 105, no. 5. (May 2015): 859-865.

Fisher, Jim. *SWAT Madness and the Militarization of the American Police: A National Dilemma*. Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010.

Foley, Edward B. "If Trump Disputes the Election, We Have No Good Way Out," politico.com, <http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/09/donald-trump-2016-rigged-election-214304> Accessed September 30, 2016.

Foucault, Michel. "Structuralism and Post-Structuralism," in *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, ed. James D Faubion. New York: The New Press, 1998.

_____. *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures At The College de France 1977-1978*, trans. Graham Burchell, ed. by Michel Senellart. New York: Picador, 2007.

_____. *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the College de France 1978-1979*, trans. Graham Burchell, ed. Michel Sennellar. New York: Picador, 2008.

_____. *The Archaeology of Knowledge and The Discourse on Language*. New York: Vintage Books, 2010.

_____. *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Vintage Books, 2010.

_____. *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction*. New York: Vintage Books, 2010.

_____. "Prison Talk" and "Truth and Power" in *Power / Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon. New York: Vintage Books, 2010.

_____. "What is Enlightenment?" in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow. New York: Vintage Books, 2010.

Franklin Newpost, "Deal will give town a new water source," thefranklinnewpost.com, http://www.thefranklinnewpost.com/news/local/deal-will-give-town-a-new-water-source/article_c0bflce6-580a-5e3b-ab34-5298bb768551.html. Accessed July 10, 2015.

Froomkin, Dan. "US Military Spending Still Up 45% Over Pre-9/11 Levels; More Than Next 7 Countries Combined," firstlook.org, <https://firstlook.org/theintercept/2015/04/20/u-s-military-still-spending-45-911-much-next-7-top-spending-countries-combined/>. Accessed July 9, 2015.

Fukuyma, Francis. "The End of History," *The National Interest*. (Summer 1989).

- Georgakis, Stephanie, Jordan Hill, Robert Kirsch, and Edwin Kent Morris. "Between Schmitt and Foucault: An Interview With Dr. Michael Hardt," *Spectra: The ASPECT Journal*, no. 1, vol. 2 (2012). <https://spectrajournal.org/index.php/SPECTRA/article/view/106/114>. Accessed May 2, 2016.
- George, Larry N. "American Insecurities and the Ontopolitics of US Pharmacotic Wars," in *The Geopolitics of American Insecurity: Terror, Power, and Foreign Policy*, ed. Francois Debrix and Mark J. Lacy. New York: Routledge, 2009.
- Gibbons-Neff, Thomas. "Veterans see deeply flawed police response in Ferguson," [washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2014/08/14/military-veterans-see-deeply-flawed-police-response-in-ferguson/>. Accessed February 6, 2016.
- Gibson, Alan. *Interpreting the Founding: Guide to the Enduring Debates over the Origins and Foundations of the American Republic – Second Edition, Revised and Expanded*. Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2009.
- Giroux, Henry A. "The Emerging Authoritarianism in the United States: Political Culture under the Bush/Cheney Administration," *symploke*, vol. 14, no. ½, Discouragement (2006): 98-151.
- Giroux, Henry A. "Barack Obama and the Resurgent Specter of Authoritarianism," *JAC*, vol. 31, no. ¾. (2011): 415-440.
- Giroux, Henry A. "Violence, USA: The Warfare State and the Hardening of Everyday Life," monthlyreview.org, <http://monthlyreview.org/2013/05/01/violence-usa/>. Accessed August 17, 2016.
- Gomes, Lee. "Hidden Obstacles for Google's Self-Driving Car," [technologyreview.com](http://www.technologyreview.com), <https://www.technologyreview.com/s/530276/hidden-obstacles-for-googles-self-driving-cars/>. Accessed August 1, 2016.
- Gordon, Colin. "Afterward," in *Power / Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon. New York: Vintage Books, 2010.
- Graham, David A. "The Mysterious Death of Freddie Gray" [theatlantic.com](http://www.theatlantic.com), <http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/04/the-mysterious-death-of-freddie-gray/391119/>. Accessed February 6, 2016.
- Granville, Kevin. "9 Recent Cyber-attacks Against Big Business," [nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com), http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/02/05/technology/recent-cyberattacks.html?_r=0. Accessed July 9, 2015.
- Graser, Morrie. *Building A Secure Computer System*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1988.

Greenberg, Andy. "The FBI Now Says It May Crack That iPhone Without Apple's Help," wired.com, <https://www.wired.com/2016/03/fbi-now-says-may-crack-iphone-without-apples-help/>. Accessed July 24, 2016.

Greenwald, Glenn and Ewen Macaskill. "NSA Prism Program taps in to user data of Apple, Google and others" theguardian.com, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/jun/06/us-tech-giants-nsa-data>. Accessed June 10, 2013.

Greenwald, Glenn. "The Militarization of U.S. Police: Finally Dragged Into the Light by the Horrors of Ferguson," theintercept.com, <https://theintercept.com/2014/08/14/militarization-u-s-police-dragged-light-horrors-ferguson/>. Accessed March 15, 2016.

Gregory, Derek. *The Colonial Present*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004.

Gregory, Derek. "From a View to a Kill: Drones and Late Modern War," *Theory, Culture, and Society*, vol. 28, no. 7-8 (2011):188-215.

Gwande, Atul. "The Mistrust of Science," newyorker.com, <http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-mistrust-of-science>. Accessed June 12, 2016.

Habermas, Jürgen. *Legitimation Crisis*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1973.

Habermas, Jürgen. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989.

Hamilton, Alexander, James Madison, and John Jay. *The Federalist (with Letters of "Brutus")*, ed. Terence Ball Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Hardt, Michael and Antonio Negri. *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*. New York: Penguin Books, 2004.

Harvey, David. "The Right to the City," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, vol. 27.4 (December 2003): 939-941.

Harvey, David. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Harwood, Matthew. "How Did America's Police Get So Militarized?" motherjones.com, <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2014/08/america-police-military-swat-ferguson-westcott-tampa> (Accessed March 15, 2016).

Hassan, Qusay. "Demystifying Cloud Computing" *The Journal of Defense and Software Engineering*. (Jan/Feb 2011): 16-21.

Hayward, Steven F. *The Age of Reagan: The Fall of the Old Liberal Order 1964-1980*. New York: Prima Publishing, 2001.

- Higdon, James. "Congress's Summer Fling With Marijuana: How Congress turned on the DEA and embraced weed" politico.com, http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2015/07/dea-marijuana-120674.html?hp=t2_r#.Vbr6JbcSNPQ (Accessed July 31, 2015).
- Hill, Stephen and Randall Berger. "A Paramilitary Policing Juggernaut," *Social Justice*, vol. 36, no. 1 – Policing Protest and Youth (2009): 25-40.
- Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan (with selected variants from the Latin Edition of 1668)*, ed. Edwin Curley (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc, 1994).
- Hodkinson, Paul. *Media, Culture, and Society: An Introduction*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2011.
- Holt, Jim. "Crypto-Nazi vs. G**damn Queer," nymag.com, <http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2015/07/best-of-enemies-buckley-vidal.html>. Accessed January 3, 2016.
- Holton, Woody. *Unruly Americans and the Origins of the Constitution*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2007.
- Honig, Bonnie. *Emergency Politics: Paradox, Law, Democracy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009.
- Horkheimer, Max. *Eclipse of Reason*. New York: Continuum, 1947.
- Horkheimer, Max and Theodor W. Adorno. *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, trans. Edmund Jephcott. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1947.
- Howarth, David. *Discourse*. New York: Open University Press, 2000.
- Howe, Neil and William Strauss. *Millennial Rising: The Next Great Generation*. New York: Vintage Books, 2000.
- Hough, Peter. *Understanding Global Security – Second Edition*. New York: Routledge, 2008.
- Hughes, Michael, Carolyn J. Kroehler, and James W. Vander Zanden. *Sociology: The Core – Sixth Edition*. Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2002.
- Huntington, Samuel. "The Clash of Civilizations," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 72, no. 3. Summer 1993.
- Jacobs, Ronald N. "Civil Society and Crisis: Culture, Discourse, and the Rodney King Beating," *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 101, no. 5 (March 1996): 1238-1272.
- Jameson, Fredric. *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1991.

- Jumar, Nikhil. "This Is The Earthquake We've Been Waiting For," *TIME*, vol. 185, no. 17. May 2015.
- Kane, Alex. "11 Shocking Facts About America's Militarized Police Forces," <http://www.alternet.org/civil-liberties/11-shocking-facts-about-americas-militarized-police-forces>. Accessed March 15, 2016.
- Kaplan, Robert D. "The Coming Anarchy," *The Atlantic*, (February 1994).
- Kasperkevic, Jana, Joanna Walters, and Matthew Weaver. "Amtrak Philadelphia train crash: may describes 'disastrous mess'," [theguardian.com, http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/may/13/amtrak-train-crash-investigation-philadelphia](http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/may/13/amtrak-train-crash-investigation-philadelphia). Accessed June 11, 2015.
- Kegley, Jr., Charles. "The Neoidealist Moment in International Studies? Realist Myths and the New International Realities: ISA Presidential Address March 27, 1993 Acapulco, Mexico," *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 37, no. 2 (June 1993): 131-146.
- Kellner, Douglas. *Critical Theory, Marxism, and Modernity*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989.
- Kellner, Douglas. *Television and the Crisis of Democracy*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1990.
- Kennan, George. "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 25, no. 4. (July 1947): 567-582.
- Kennedy, Ellen. "Emergency and Exception," *Political Theory*, vol. 39, no. 4 (2011): 535-550.
- Kernell, Samuel, Gary C. Jacobson, and Thad Kousser, Thad. *The Logic of American Politics – Fourth Edition* Washington D.C.: CQ Press, 2009.
- Keynes, Edward. *Liberty, Property, and Privacy: Toward a Jurisprudence of Substantive Due Process*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996.
- Koselleck, Reinhart. *Critique and Crisis: Enlightenment and the Pathogenesis of Modern Society*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1988.
- Koselleck, Reinhart. *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, trans. Todd Samuel Presner and Others (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002).
- Koselleck, Reinhart. "Crisis", trans. Michaela Richter. *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 67, no. 2 (2006): 357-400.
- Kraska, Peter B. and Victor E. Kappeler. "Militarizing American Police: The Rise and Normalization of Paramilitary Units," *Social Problems*, vol. 44, no. 1 (February 1997): 1-18.

- Kraska, Peter. "Military and Policing – Its Relevance to 21st Century Police," *Policing*, vol 1, no. 4 (December 2007): 501-513.
- Labunski, Richard. *James Madison and the Struggle for the Bill of Rights*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Lambrechts, Robert J. "The U.S. Electrical Grid: Surviving Cyber-Terrorism and Solar Flares," *Natural Resources & Environment*, vol. 25, no. 4 Renewable Energy (Spring 2011): 42-45.
- Lavin, Chad. "Fear, Radical Democracy, and Ontological Methadone," *Polity*, vol. 38, no. 2. (April 2006): 254-275.
- Laughland, Oliver. "FBI director stands by claim that North Korea was source of Sony cyber-attack," *theguardian.com*, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/07/fbi-director-north-korea-source-sony-cyber-attack-james-comey> (Accessed July 16, 2015).
- Lefebvre, Henri. "From the City to Urban Society," in *Implosions / Explosions: Towards a Study of Planetary Urbanization*, ed. Neil Brenner. Berlin: Jovis, 2014.
- Li, Hao, Gary W. Rosenwald, Juhwan Jung, and Chen-Ching Liu. "Strategic Power Infrastructure Defense," *Proceedings of the IEEE*, vol. 93, no. 5 (May 2005): 918-933.
- Lichter, S. Robert. "The Media," in *Understanding America: The Anatomy of an Exceptional Country*, ed. Peter Schuck and James Q. Wilson. New York: PublicAffairs, 2008.
- Lichterman, Joseph and Bernie Woodall. "In largest-ever U.S. city bankruptcy, cuts coming for Detroit creditors, retirees," *reuters.com*, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-detroit-bankruptcy-judge-idUSBRE9B20PZ20131203> (Accessed July 31, 2016).
- Lipset, Seymour Martin. *American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996.
- Luke, Timothy W. *Screens of Power: Ideology, Domination, and Resistance in International Society*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1990.
- _____. "The Discipline of Security Studies and the Codes of Containment: Learning from Kuwait," *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, vol. 16, no.3 (1991): 315-344.
- _____. "Power and Politics in Hyperreality: The Critical Project of Jean Baudrillard," *The Social Science Journal*, vol. 28, no. 3 (1991): 347-367.
- _____. "Liberal Society and Cyborg Subjectivity: The Politics of Environments, Bodies, and Nature," *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, vol. 21 (1996): 1-30.

- _____ and Gearoid O. Tuathail. "On Videocameralistics: The Geopolitics of Failed States, the CNN International and (UN) governmentality," *Review of International Political Economy*, vol. 4, no. 4 (Winter, 1997):709-733.
- _____ *Ecocritique: Contesting the Politics of Nature, Economy, and Culture*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.
- _____ "Hyper-power or hype-power? The USA after Kandahar, Karbala, and Katrina," in *The Geopolitics of American Insecurity: Terror, Power, and Foreign Policy*, ed. Francois Debrix and Mark J. Lacy. New York: Routledge, 2009.
- _____ "Gunplay and Governmentality: Sovereignty, Subjectivity, and Shootings in the United States," in *Gun Violence and Public Life*, ed. Ben Agger and Timothy W. Luke. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2014.
- Lutz, Catherine. "Making War at Home in the United States: Militarization and the Current Crisis," *American Anthropologist*, vol. 104, no. 3 (September 2003): 723-735.
- Lyans, Siobhan. "What 'ruin porn' tells us about ruins and porn," [cnn.com, http://www.cnn.com/2015/10/12/architecture/what-ruin-porn-tells-us-about-ruins-and-porn/](http://www.cnn.com/2015/10/12/architecture/what-ruin-porn-tells-us-about-ruins-and-porn/). Accessed July 31, 2016.
- Lynn III, William J. "Defending a New Domain: The Pentagon's Cyberstrategy," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 89, no. 5 (September/October 2010): 97-108.
- Lyotard, Jean Francois. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1979.
- Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engles. *The Communist Manifesto and Other Writings*. New York: Barnes and Noble Classics, 2005.
- Masco, Joseph. *The Theater of Operations: National Security Affect From The Cold War to The War on Terror*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014.
- Maier, Pauline. *Ratification: The People Debate the Constitution, 1787-1788*. New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2010.
- Marcuse, Herbert. *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1964.
- Markoff, John. "Google Cars Drive Themselves, in Traffic" [nytimes.com, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/10/science/10google.html?_r=2](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/10/science/10google.html?_r=2). Accessed August 1, 2016.
- Martin, Gus. *Terrorism and Homeland Security*. Los Angeles: Sage, 2011.

- Massumi, Brian. "Everything You Want to Be: Introduction to Fear," in *The Politics of Everyday Fear*, ed. Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.
- Mathur, Vishal. "Google Autonomous Car Experiences Another Crash," govtech.com, <http://www.govtech.com/transportation/Google-Autonomous-Car-Experiences-Another-Crash.html>. Accessed August 1, 2016.
- Mbembe, Achille and Janet Roitman. "Figures of the Subjects in Times of Crisis," *Public Culture*, no. 7 (1995): 323-352.
- McLuhan, Marshall. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man – Critical Edition* (Berkeley: Gingko Press, 2011).
- McQueen, Alison. "The Apocalypse in U.S. Political Thought," foreignaffairs.com, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2016-07-18/apocalypse-us-political-thought>. Accessed August 3, 2016.
- Michel-Kerjan, Erwann. "New Challenges in Critical Infrastructure: A US Perspective," *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*, vol. 11, no. 3 (September 2003): 132-141.
- Miller, S.A. "Homeland Insecurity: American's feel more unsafe than anytime since 9/11, poll finds," washingtontimes.com, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2014/sep/10/america-feel-more-unsafe-anytime-911-ready-militar/> (Accessed December 20, 2015).
- Mills, C. Wright. *The Sociological Imagination – Fortieth Anniversary Edition*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1959.
- Mills, Sara. *Discourse – Second Edition*. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Morish, William. "After the Storm: Bebuilding Cities Upon Reflexive Infrastructure," *Social Research*, vol. 75, no. 3 Disasters: Recipes and Remedies (Fall 2008): 993-1014.
- Morgenthau, Hans J. "The Primacy of the National Interest," *The American Scholar*, vol. 18, no. 2 (Spring 1949): 207-212.
- Morgenthau, Hans J. *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace – Seventh Edition*. Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2006.
- Mouffe, Chantal. *On The Political* (New York: Routledge, 2005).
- Mueller, Josh and Mark G. Stewart. "The Terrorism Delusion: America's Overwrought Response to September 11" *International Security*, vol. 37, no. 1 (Summer 2012): 81-110.

Mydans, Seth, Richard W. Stevenson, and Timothy Egan. "Seven Minutes In Los Angeles - A special report," nytimes.com, <http://www.nytimes.com/1991/03/18/us/seven-minutes-los-angeles-special-report-videotaped-beating-officers-puts-full.html>. Accessed February 6, 2016.

National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF). "Firearms and Ammunition Industry Economic Impact Report 2013," nssf.org, <http://www.nssf.org/Impact/>. Accessed August 26, 2014.

NBC News. "NBC Evening News With Brian Williams – September 2, 2014," nbcnews.com <http://www.nbcnews.com/nightly-news/nightly-news-brian-williams-full-broadcast-september-2-n686>. Accessed September 3, 2014.

NBC News, "24 Injured, Two Critically, as North Carolina Deck Collapses," nbcnews.com, <http://www.nbcnews.com/nightly-news/video/24-injured--two-critically--as-north-carolina-deck-collapses-477598275548>. Accessed July 6, 2015.

Nelson, Scott G. *Sovereignty and the Limits of the Liberal Imagination* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

Neocleous, Mark. "The Problem with Normality: Taking Exception to Permanent Emergency," *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, vol. 31, no. 2 (Apr-June 2006): 191-213.

Neocleous, Mark. *Critique of Security*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008.

Nguyen, Betty. "Phone withdrawal has physical impact: expert," cbsnews.com, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/phone-withdrawal-has-physical-impact-expert/>. Accessed December 30, 2015.

Nickel, Patricia Mooney. "Timothy W. Luke," in *North American Critical Theory After Postmodernism: Contemporary Dialogues – Interviews with Ben Agger, Andrew Arato, Robert J. Antonio, Seyla Benhabiv, Craig Calhoun, Nance Fraser, Douglas Kellner, and Timothy W. Luke*, ed. Patricia Mooney Nickel. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

Nickel, Patricia Mooney. *Public Sociology and Civil Society: Governance, Politics, and Power*. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2013.

NIPP 2013: Partnering for Critical Infrastructure Security and Resilience, http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/NIPP%202013_Partnering%20for%20Critical%20Infrastructure%20Security%20and%20Resilience_508_0.pdf. Accessed June 1, 2015.

O'Connor, James. *The Meaning of Crisis: A Theoretical Introduction*. New York: Basil Blackwell, Inc., 1987.

OED Online. "Crisis." June 2014. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/44539?redirected>. Accessed July 30, 2014.

- Odysseos, Louiza. "Dangerous Ontologies: The Ethos of Survival and Ethical Theorizing in International Relations," *Review of International Studies*, vol. 28, no. 2 (April 2002): 403-418.
- Osborne, Charlie. "Google's autonomous car injuries: Blame the human" [zdnet.com](http://www.zdnet.com/article/googles-autonomous-car-injuries-blame-the-human/), <http://www.zdnet.com/article/googles-autonomous-car-injuries-blame-the-human/>. Accessed August 1, 2016.
- Paige, Susan. "Poll: High anxiety, low expectations as election nears" [usatoday.com](http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/elections/2014/10/30/usa-today-poll-high-anxiety-low-expectations/18118403/), <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/elections/2014/10/30/usa-today-poll-high-anxiety-low-expectations/18118403/>. Accessed December 20, 2015.
- Peralta, Eyder. "Ferguson Documents: What Michael Brown's Friend Saw," [npr.org](http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2014/11/26/366827836/ferguson-documents-what-michael-browns-friend-saw), <http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2014/11/26/366827836/ferguson-documents-what-michael-browns-friend-saw>. Accessed February 6, 2016.
- Plato, *Republic*, trans. C.D.C Reeve. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc. 2004.
- Paine, Thomas. *The American Crisis*. New York: Barnes & Nobel, 2010.
- Pease, Donald E. *The New American Exceptionalism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009.
- Piccone, Paul. *Confronting the Crisis: Writings of Paul Piccone*, ed. Gary Ulmen. New York: Telos Press Publishing, 2008.
- Pieters, Gary. "The Changing, Militarized Policing Shatters Public Trust and Confidence," [huffingtonpost.com](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/gary-pieters/the-changing-militarized-b_5697105.html), http://www.huffingtonpost.com/gary-pieters/the-changing-militarized-b_5697105.html. Accessed March 15, 2016.
- Polsby, Nelson W. and Aaron Wildavsky. *Presidential Elections: Strategies and Structures of American Politics* – Twelfth Edition. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2008.
- Poole, Steven. "Jean Baudrillard," [theguardian.com](http://www.theguardian.com/news/2007/mar/07/guardianobituaries.france), <http://www.theguardian.com/news/2007/mar/07/guardianobituaries.france>. Accessed January 4, 2016.
- Potter, Gary. The History of Policing in the United States, (PDF), [plsonline.eku.edu](http://plsonline.eku.edu/insideloook/history-policing-united-states-part-1), <http://plsonline.eku.edu/insideloook/history-policing-united-states-part-1>. Accessed February 18, 2016.
- Redfield, Peter. "The Verge of Crisis: Doctors Without Borders in Uganda," in *Contemporary States of Emergency: The Politics of Military and Humanitarian Interventions*, ed. Didier Fassin and Mariella Pandolfi. New York: Zone Books, 2010.

Regan, Patrick M. "War Toys, War Movies, and the Militarization of the United States, 1900-85," *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 31, no. 1 (February 1994): 45-58.

Renshaw, Jarett. "Philadelphia train may have been hit by projectile before wreck," reuters.com, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/05/16/us-usa-train-derailment-idUSKBN0NZ18Z20150516>. Accessed June 11, 2015).

Riffkin, Rebecca. "Public Faith in Congress Falls Again, Hit Historic Lows," gallup.com, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/171710/public-faith-congress-falls-again-hits-historic-low.aspx>. Accessed December 20, 2015.

Roitman, Janet. *Anti-Crisis*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014.

Roitman, Janet. "Crisis," *Political Concepts: A Critical Lexicon*, no. 1, politicalconcepts.org, <http://www.politicalconcepts.org/issue1/crisis/>. Accessed September 11, 2015.

Salaita, Steven. "No thanks: Stop Saying "Support Our Troops," salon.com, http://www.salon.com/2013/08/25/no_thanks_i_wont_support_the_troops/. Accessed February 10, 2016.

Sandburn, Josh. "The Toxic Tap" TIME, vol. 187, no. 3. February 2016.

Schattschneider, E.E. *Party Government*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2002.

Schaar, John. *Legitimacy in the Modern State*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2000.

Scherer, Michael. "10 Ways Mobile Technology is Changing Our World," TIME, vol. 180, no. 9 (2012).

Schick, Amy, Debbie Ascone, Julie Kang, and Maria Vegaga. *Distraction By Cell Phones and Texting*, distraction.gov, <http://www.distraction.gov/stats-research-laws/research.html>. Accessed January 21, 2016.

Schmitt, Carl. *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy*, trans. by Ellen Kennedy. Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1988.

_____. *The Nomos of the Earth: In the International Law of the Jus Publicum Europaeum*. New York: Telos Press Publishing, 2003.

_____. *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, trans. by George Schwab. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.

_____. *The Concept of the Political*, trans. by George Schwab. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

- Sciortino, Karley. "Breathless: Mastering the Art of Sexting," vogue.com, <http://www.vogue.com/13260212/breathless-karley-sciortino-sexting/>. Accessed January 1, 2016.
- Shapiro, Michael J. "Textualizing Global Politics," in *International/Intertextual Relations: Postmodern Readings of World Politics*, ed. James Der Derian and Michael J. Shapiro. New York: Lexington Books, 1989.
- Shear, Michale D. and Jad Mouawad. "Amtrak Says Shortfalls Delayed Its Safety System," nytimes.com, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/15/us/amtrak-says-it-was-just-months-away-from-installing-safety-system.html?_r=0. Accessed June 11, 2015.
- Shoichet, Catherine and Ray Sanchez. "Amtrak derailment: Could technology have prevented crash?" cnn.com, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/05/13/us/philadelphia-amtrak-crash-positive-train-control/>. Accessed June 1, 2015.
- Shen, Avia. "Why You Can't Talk About the Amtrak Derailment Without Talking About Our Infrastructure Crisis," thinkprogress.org, <http://thinkprogress.org/economy/2015/05/13/3658146/amtrak-deadly-derailment/>. Accessed June 11, 2015.
- Sigelman, Lee, Susan Welch, Timothy Bledsoe, and Michael Combs. "Police Brutality and Public Perceptions of Racial Discrimination: A Tale of Two Beatings," *Political Research Quarterly*, vol. 50, no. 4 (December 1997): 777-791.
- Simms, Benjamin. "The Day After the Hurricane: Infrastructure, Order, and the New Orleans Police Department's Response to Hurricane Katrina," *Social Studies of Science*, vol. 37, no. 1 (Feb 2007): 111-118.
- Slattery, Gram. "Land of the free? Not so much. American's sense of freedom drops, poll finds," csmonitor.com, <http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Politics/2014/0701/Land-of-the-free-Not-so-much.-Americans-sense-of-freedom-drops-poll-finds>. Accessed December 20, 2015.
- Sloan, Thomas O. *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Solomon, William L. and William S. Solomon. "Images of Rebellion: News Coverage of Rodney King," *Race, Gender & Class*, vol. 11, no. 1 – Race, Gender, Class and the 1992 LA Riots (2004): 23-38.
- Speth, James Gustave. *The Bridge at the End of the World: Capitalism, The Environment, and Crossing From Crisis to Sustainability*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.
- Strauss, Robert. "Worst. President. Ever," politico.com, <http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/09/donald-trump-hillary-clinton-worst-president-james-buchanan-214252>. Accessed September 18, 2016.

Steely, Bruce and Rebecca J. Rosen. "The Secret is the System," *The Wilson Quarterly*, vol. 32, no. 2 (Spring 2008): 47-58.

Stein, Joel. "The New Greatest Generation," *TIME*, vol. 181, no. 19 (2013).

Stein, Sam and Sam Wilkes. "Progress on Gun Control Seemed Inevitable After Sandy Hook, But Apparently that was Wrong," [huffingtonpost.com](http://www.huffingtonpost.com)
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/12/11/newtown-politics_n_4427513.html. Accessed July 14, 2014.

Tett, Gillian. "Prepare For More Cyber-attacks on the US," [ft.com](http://www.ft.com),
<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/7c2384de-2569-11e5-bd83-71cb60e8f08c.html#axzz3fQBPXBQV>. Accessed July 9, 2015.

Thayer, Gary. "Study: Smartphone addiction withdrawal is physical, mental," [mobilevillage.com](http://www.mobilevillage.com), <http://www.mobilevillage.com/iphone-smartphone-addiction-stress-study/>. Accessed December 30, 2015.

Toal, Gerard and Carl T. Dahlman. *Bosnia Remade: Ethnic Cleansing and Its Reversal*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Universal Muslim Association of America (UMAA-Advocacy), *The Crisis in Iraq: An Analysis of I.S.I.L. "The Islamic State of Iraq & The Levant" With U.S. Policy Recommendations in Iraq* (June 2014).

U.S. Department of Transportation, *Driver Distraction in Commercial Vehicle Operations* (2009), [transportation.gov](http://www.transportation.gov), <https://www.transportation.gov/tags/distracted-driving> (Accessed January 21, 2016).

United States Department of Justice, Memorandum: *Department of Justice Report Regarding the Criminal Investigation Into the Shooting Death of Michael Brown by Ferguson, Missouri Police Officer Daren Wilson* (March 4, 2015).

Vazquez-Arroyo, Antonio Y. "How Not to Learn From Catastrophe: Habermas, Critical Theory and the 'Catastrophization' of Political Life," *Political Theory*, vol. 41, no. 5 (2013): 738-765.

Vicens, AJ. "The Shocking Truth About Wednesday's Apocalypse Involving Wall Street, China, ISIS, and United Airlines" [motherjones.com](http://www.motherjones.com),
<http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2015/07/nyse-glitch-hack-china-cia-cyber-isis>. Accessed August 22, 2015.

Vick, Karl. "The Great Migration," *TIME*, vol. 186, no. 15-16 (October 2015).

Walaski, Pamela Ferrante. *Risk and Crisis Communications: Methods and Messages*. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2011.

- Waldman, Paul. "The NRA's dystopian vision of America," [washingtonpost.com, https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/plum-line/wp/2016/07/13/the-nras-dystopian-vision-of-america/](https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/plum-line/wp/2016/07/13/the-nras-dystopian-vision-of-america/). Accessed August 3, 2016.
- Walker, R.B.J. *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- Walser, Robert. *Microscripts*, trans. Susan Bernofsky. New York: New Directions, 2012.
- Washington Times Staff, "FBI Rules Out Terrorism in Amtrak Derailment" [washingtontimes.com, http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/may/13/fbi-rules-out-terrorism-amtrak-derailment/](http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/may/13/fbi-rules-out-terrorism-amtrak-derailment/). Accessed June 11, 2015.
- Weber, Cynthia. *International Relations Theory: A Critical Introduction – Third Edition*. New York: Routledge, 2001.
- Weber, Max. "The Profession and Vocation of Politics" in *Political Writings*, ed. Peter Lassmand and Ronald Speirs. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Weinfus, Josh. "Cardinals Unveil Pat Tillman Memorial on 9/11 Anniversary," [espn.com, http://espn.go.com/nfl/story/_/id/13633607/arizona-cardinals-unveil-pat-tillman-memorial-14th-anniversary-9-11-attacks](http://espn.go.com/nfl/story/_/id/13633607/arizona-cardinals-unveil-pat-tillman-memorial-14th-anniversary-9-11-attacks). Accessed February 10, 2016.
- Wilson, Jason. "For as long as it takes: Native American protestors defy North Dakota pipeline construction," [theguardian.com, https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/aug/18/north-dakota-access-pipeline-protesters-indigenous-site](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/aug/18/north-dakota-access-pipeline-protesters-indigenous-site). Accessed August 23, 2016.
- White, Hayden. *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1987.
- White, Stephen K. "Foucault's Challenge to Critical Theory," *American Political Science Review*, vol. 80, no. 2 (June 1986): 419-432.
- White, Stephen K. *The Ethos of a Late-Modern Citizen*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009.
- Whitehead, John. *A Government of Wolves: The Emerging American Police State*. New York: SelectBooks, Inc, 2013.
- Whitehouse, David. "Origins of the Police," [wordpress.com, https://worxintheory.wordpress.com/2014/12/07/origins-of-the-police/](https://worxintheory.wordpress.com/2014/12/07/origins-of-the-police/). Accessed February 21, 2016.
- Whitman, David. "The Untold Story of the LA Riot" [usnews.com, http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/1993/05/23/the-untold-story-of-the-la-riot](http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/1993/05/23/the-untold-story-of-the-la-riot). Accessed February 6, 2016.

Willet, Megan. "New York City's first 'micro apartments' are coming this spring – here's what they'll look like," *businessinsider.com*, <http://www.businessinsider.com/nyc-micro-apartments-under-construction-2015-2>. Accessed June 26, 2015.

Wisely, John and Todd Sprangler. "Moter City population declines 25%" *usatoday.com*, http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/nation/census/2011-03-22-michigan-census_N.htm. Accessed July 31, 2016.

Wolfers, Arnold. "National Security as an Ambiguous Symbol," *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 67, no. 4 (December 1952): 482-502.

Wolin, Sheldon S. "Political Theory as a Vocation," *The American Political Science Review*, vol. 63, no. 7. (December 1969).

_____. *The Presence of the Past: Essays on the State and the Constitution*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989.

_____. *Tocqueville Between Two Worlds: The Making of a Political and Theoretical Life*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.

_____. *Politics and Vision: Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought – Expanded Edition*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004.

_____. *Democracy Incorporated: Managed Democracy and the Specter of Inverted Totalitarianism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008.

Yorke, Clarie. "Cybersecurity and Society," *The World Today*, vol. 66, no. 12. (December 2010): 19-21.

Young, Meghan. "Armed Infant Carriages" *trendhunter.com*, <http://www.trendhunter.com/trends/tactical-baby-strollers>. Accessed March 14, 2016.

Websites Without a Direct Author

<http://www.textinganddrivingsafety.com/texting-and-driving-stats>. Accessed January 21, 2016.

<http://www.freepress.net/blog/11/11/22/media-consolidation-illusion-choice>. Accessed December 18, 2015.

<http://www.infrastructurereportcard.org/>. Accessed July 31, 2016.

<http://www.dhs.gov/what-security-and-resilience>. Accessed June 4, 2015.

<http://www.infrastructurereportcard.org/wp-content/uploads/2013ReportCardforAmericasInfrastructure.pdf>. Accessed June 6, 2015.

<https://mcgill.ca/urbanplanning/planning>. Accessed July 27, 2016.

<http://mediacommons.futureofthebook.org/tne/pieces/anonymous-lulz-collective-action>. Accessed July 7, 2015.

<http://www.history.com/shows/engineering-disasters/episodes>. Accessed June 26, 2015.

https://www.smartgrid.gov/the_smart_grid/smart_grid.html. Accessed August 1, 2016.

https://www.smartgrid.gov/the_smart_grid/smart_home.html. Accessed August 1, 2016.

<https://www.google.com/selfdrivingcar/>. Accessed August 1, 2016.

http://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.asp?country_id=united-states-of-america. Accessed August 1, 2016.