STUDENT PAPER

Cocreational Securitization:

Botan's Cocreational Metatheory Goes to Copenhagen

Doran Tucker

George Mason University

Abstract

This paper melds securitization theory into the broader metatheoretical framework of cocreational strategic communication. Securitization theory is best known in international relations and security studies, but its emphasis on speech acts and its social constructivist roots makes it an apt addition to the constellation of cocreational metatheory. The addition of securitization to cocreational strategic communication provides a lens for theorizing about how strategic communication efforts can ascribe issues the meaning of national security– a transition that can legitimize unordinary policy measures and violence. Additionally, incorporating cocreation and securitization may bridge conceptual divisions over whether securitization is a process or an illocutionary act, and may address critiques that securitization views audiences as passive. The proposed 'cocreational securitization' is illustrated with examples from the threat multiplier campaign that sought to increase the U.S. military's engagement with climate change as a security threat. Implications and lines of future inquiry are discussed.

Cocreational Securitization: Botan's Cocreational Metatheory Goes to Copenhagen

From September 2021 to October 2022, the United States (U.S.) Armed Forces released a series of documents concerning climate change and its implications for national security (Department of the Air Force, 2022; Department of the Army, 2022b, 2022a; Department of the Navy, 2022). These publications indicate the attention now given to the topic of climate change by the U.S. Armed Forces. But anthropocentric climate change has not always been recognized as a matter of national security. This paper forwards a theoretical melding of securitization theory with cocreational strategic communication as a framework for understanding how climate became security within the U.S. defense community.

Cocreational strategic communication is, in part, a metatheoretical conceptual framework in which a variety of theories mix and provide insight regarding the relationships between communicators and publics (Botan, 2018). The present work adds securitization theory to that theoretical mélange. Best established in international relations and security studies securitization theory, cocreation, draws on social constructivist roots. Adding securitization to discussions of cocreational strategic communication provides a lens for considering how strategic communication efforts can help determine what issues are matters of national security. Drawing on cocreational strategic communication creates opportunities to consider the possibility that different publics may develop varying interpretive meanings about what counts as security, leading to a situation in which an issue is asymmetrically securitized across publics. The conceptual melding of cocreational strategic communication and securitization is illustrated with examples from the threat-multiplier campaign that sought to increase the U.S. military's engagement with climate change as a security threat.

The following pages first overview and define strategic communication, with an emphasis on the cocreational model of strategic communication. Subsequently the paper discusses securitization, exploring how threats are constructed as matters of national security. Cocreation and securitization are then discussed in conjunction, forwarding an approach termed *cocreational securitization* that melds the two. The paper then illustrates cocreational securitization by discussing the communication efforts that led the U.S. military to securitize climate change. The paper closes by addressing limitations and potential lines of further inquiry.

Strategic Communication

Strategic communication means different things to different people and the first step in conceptually melding strategic communication and securitization requires delineating what is meant by the term strategic communication as it is used in the present work. As Botan (2018) notes, the field of strategic communication has been growing rapidly (also see: Falkheimer & Heide, 2018; Werder et al., 2018).This growth has created ambiguity regarding what the key subfields of strategic communication are and what are the, as Botan describes them, "peripheral subfields" in which strategic communication plays a role but is not the central focus (Botan, 2018, p. 3). It is generally recognized that strategic communication is both a field of practice and a rapidly developing academic discipline (Botan, 2018, p. 5; Falkheimer & Heide, 2018).

Across this growing field there are varied definitions of strategic communication. Despite differing points of emphasis, there are some critical threads that unite strategic communication. At its core strategic communication is the deliberate and planned use of communication. For some, this communication is centrally about achieving the goals of the communicating organization (Hallahan et al., 2007), for others, the emphasis rests on the relationship between the organization and its publics (Botan, 2018).

The distinctions are represented in the undergirding metatheoretical frameworks that guide the study and practice of strategic communication. Botan (2018) suggests a continuum of metatheoretical perspectives that ranges from instrumental to cocreational. Instrumentalist strategic communication adopts an organizationally centered approach. From this perspective the purpose of communication is to achieve the organization's goals, and the audience is a mechanism to do so (Botan, 2018, pg. 44-45). In the middle of this spectrum is an approach described by Botan as the social scientific approach. This perspective centrally entails grounding and implementing strategic communication based on insights from social scientific theory. From a practical perspective, social scientific strategic communication campaigns tend to adopt theories related to how audiences interact with and perceives information (Botan, 2018, p. 45). Often this concern for what the audience thinks only stretches insofar as it allows the communicator to develop messages that more effectively achieve organizational goals. Accordingly, the social scientific approach, while often adopting audience centric means, is largely driven by achieving instrumentalist ends.

The cocreational approach decenters the communicating organization, instead making the multiple publics that receive communication the central foci of strategic communication. The cocreational perspective suggests that the pre-existing understandings and opinions of the public are the most important predictors of their future perspectives and as such, are critical information that should inform how communicators prepare, articulate, and execute a campaign (Botan, 2018, p. 48). Moreover, cocreational strategic communication attempts to push past a 'magic bullet' approach that seeks to perfectly tailor for the purpose of achieving the organization's goals. Instead, the cocreational understanding of strategic communication is about how the organization utilizes information about the publics to plan communication efforts that focus on

developing *shared meanings* with publics over the course of an enduring relationship. (Botan, 2018, pg. 8, 48-51). In this way, cocreation places the interests of the publics before those of the organization.

Here it bears noting the distinctions between audience and public that Botan (2018) adopts. Botan (2018) argues that the use of the term audience often implies a certain perspective about the relationship between the organization and those with whom they communicate. Specifically, that audiences represent a shorter-term interaction. An organization communicates with, and even tailors messages for, an audience but these efforts tend to be premised on using that audience to achieve shorter term organizational goals (Botan, 2018, pg. 55-56). The term audience also tends to denote a passivity in the way people interact with information (Botan, 2018, p. 65). Botan (2018) posits that a public is "an interpretive community engaged in an ongoing process of developing a shared understanding of its relationship with a group or organization" (Botan, 2018, p. 59). Botan defines an interpretive community as a group that assigns similar meanings to the words or actions of another (Botan, 2018, p. 60). The use of the term public suggests a more enduring relationship between the organization and those they are communicating with and ascribes the public with agency in how they perceive and interpret an organization's words and actions.

Another key facet of the cocreational perspective on publics is the emphasis on the plural –an organization may seek to communicate with a specific public, but their words and actions are likely going to generate responses across a breadth of different interpretive communities. Furthermore, publics can be segmented into smaller more granular publics (e.g., doctors in the U.S. to doctors at a specific hospital to doctors in a specific ward). Communicating at a more granular level allows for closer tailoring and engagement with a specific interpretive community

but may reduce the communication's alignment with other less focused publics (Botan, 2018, p 66).

Botan (2018) describes strategic communication existing on a continuum from instrumental to cocreational. It is the more cocreational side of this strategic communication continuum that is the focus here. Accordingly, the present work understands strategic communication as a process in which information about publics flows into an organization and is used to plan communications that address aspects of the relationship between the organization and the public and the shared meanings developed. The publics at the center of this relationship are understood to be interpretive communities with changing opinions, composition, and relationships with the organization. It bears noting that following Botan (2018), cocreation is not a theory of strategic communication, rather cocreation is a metatheoretical "set of assumptions, terms, values and goals that provide a single perspective from which to view, understand and interact with the SC [strategic communication] campaigns in the world around us" (Botan, 2018, p. 40). It is also a framework for evaluating and comparing different theories that might be of use for the cocreational strategic communication researcher or practitioner. It is this cocreational metatheoretical perspective that the present work seeks to put securitization theory into conversation with.

Securitization Theory

Securitization theory seeks to explain why it is that some issues become matters of national security while others do not (Balzacq, 2010; Buzan et al., 1998). The theory is premised on the assumption that nothing is inherently a matter of security, rather that security is a socially constructed meaning that can be ascribed to an issue (Buzan et al., 1998). The security 'move' transitions the issue from being a matter of politics –something that is debated and can be

managed using regular political mechanisms – to a security issue that threatens some referent object (e.g., the state, nation, whatever 'needs protecting'). According to securitization theory, when an issue become securitized it is no longer politicized and instead, because of the existential threat, unusual governance options (e.g., violence, authoritarian action, spying, etc.) are legitimated to address the security concern (Buzan et al., 1998).

This base understanding of securitization has developed into two main schools of thought – the Copenhagen school and sociological tradition (Balzacq, 2010; Balzacq et al., 2016; Côté, 2016). In both the Copenhagen and sociological approach to securitization there are four central components. A securitizing actor, a threat, a referent object, and finally the audience (Balzacq, 2010; Balzacq et al., 2016; Buzan et al., 1998). In the Copenhagen conceptualization the actor makes a speech act – declaring an issue a matter of security – which either securitizes or does not securitize the issue. If the audience assents, the speech act is transformative and the issue becomes a matter of security moving it out of the context of regular politics and giving the government extraordinary power to address the issue even to the extent of breaking normative rules (for instance around violence) in the name of preserving security (Buzan et al., 1998; Floyd, 2010). Here the emphasis is on the binary distinction between securitized and not and the way that becoming securitized changes how society relates to the issue. This emphasis in the Copenhagen approach is derived from the theoretical linkage with speech act theory and the notion that security, like a promise, is an illocutionary act in which the performance of speech 'does something' (Austin, 1975; Balzacq et al., 2016; Buzan et al., 1998). In the case of securitization, the 'something' is transitioning the issue from the political to the securitized. It bears note that an issue can be desecuritized in the same way that it is securitized, thus shifting back from the context of security into the realm of the political.

The sociological securitization tradition critiques the Copenhagen approach along several fronts, but especially based on the Copenhagen school's focus on securitization as an illocutionary speech act (Balzacq, 2005, 2010; Balzacq et al., 2016; Côté, 2016; McDonald, 2008). For scholars of the sociological school, the transition from politicized to securitized is a process that occurs over time and they argue that the Copenhagen approach's dual claims that securitization is both an event and intersubjective are at odds with one another (Balzacq, 2010). Accordingly, the sociological approach tends to understand securitization as a process as opposed to a singular speech act or event (Balzacq, 2010; Balzacq et al., 2016; McDonald, 2008).

A related critique has been that securitization research, from both schools but the Copenhagen approach in particular, has not adequately addressed the nature of audience (Côté, 2016; McDonald, 2008). As Côté notes:

> In much of the theoretical work, it is as if securitization is happening to the audience, whereby the latter is caught between the power of the securitizing actor and the influence of contextual circumstances rather than participating in the process. This creates a perception of securitization as a linear, straightforward event, in which securitizing actors speak at (or act towards) the audience rather than engage with the audience (Côté, 2016, p. 551).

Some scholarship attempts to integrate the audience more fully into securitization by recognizing different audience categories (e.g., politicians, military officials, 'the public'). This approach is exemplified by Roe's (2008) analysis of the different audiences at play in the United Kingdom (parliamentarians and the public) during Tony Blair's attempt at securitization in the lead up to the Iraq War.

Securitization theory has also been critiqued for its lack of engagement with gender (see: Hansen, 2000), Eurocentrism (see: Wilkinson, 2007), and racism (Howell & Richter-Montpetit, 2020). The Copenhagen school has been particularly vulnerable to these critiques because of the theoretical position that does not ascribe a positive or negative moral valiance to the act of securitization (Buzan et al., 1998). Thus, the theory has at times been seen as value neutral in the face of fomenting anti-immigrant sentiments, nationalism and populist identities (see: Moses, 2021). It is with these critiques in mind that the present work turns to considering how securitization fits with cocreational strategic communication.

Cocreational Securitization

By placing securitization theory into the context of a cocreational metatheory this paper argues for a cocreational turn in securitization. This section describes cocreational securitization's key breaks with traditional securitization, namely the focus on interpretive publics as opposed to passive audiences. In some respects, cocreational securitization adopts many of the critiques levied by the sociological school of securitization towards the Copenhagen school. However, by emphasizing that there are potentially numerous publics interpreting simultaneously there is the possibility that these publics may develop different meaning with some publics securitizing an issue, while others do not. This in turn suggests that the speech act that is central to the Copenhagen approach is not irrelevant. Rather cocreational securitization, suggests that the securitizing speech act is not uttered by the securitizing actor, but by the public and that the extraordinary measures described by Buzan and colleagues (1998) are actually achieved when a critical mass of publics (mass being representative of the publics' relative power in society) recognize an issue as security. This section elaborates on each of these notions

in turn before closing by considering cocreational securitization from a strategic communication perspective.

First cocreational securitization reconceptualizes the addressee of securitization, moving from a passive – instrumentalist – audience to recognizing the agency of publics as interpretive communities (Botan, 2018, p. 59). In this way the present work joins in previous critiques of securitization that have called for a more complex view of audience that recognizes the agency of these public (Côté, 2016). Cocreational securitization maintains the core notion of securitization – that what is security is not a matter of predetermination, but rather a socially constructed intersubjective meaning. However, it adopts a cocreational understanding of publics as interpretive communities. Cocreational securitization thus recognizes that there are many and varied publics that will develop independent meanings and may, or may not, accept a matter as security. This creates the potential for an issue to be securitized asymmetrically across publics. This potential for asymmetric securitization might at first glance seem to be entirely at odds with the traditional Copenhagen School understanding of what it means for an issue to be securitized – that is, to have left the domain of the political and gained extraordinary features (Buzan et al., 1998). However, his is not necessarily the case, because cocreational securitization does not attempt to argue against the Copenhagen school's notion that securitization fundamentally changes the meaning ascribed to a topic, rather it seeks to recognize that meanings are not universally shared across the breadth of publics in a society.

Indeed, it may be that cocreational securitization can serve as a bridge between the sociological and the Copenhagen perspectives on securitization. As outlined above one of the key differences between the Copenhagen approach and the sociological school of securitization is the conceptualization of the securitizing move as a speech act or as a process. Adopting a

cocreational view of securitization may create the possibility to understand securitization as both a process, and a more singular act. It is a process because cocreation between an organization/securitizing actor and a public often occurs over time as the relationship evolves and meanings are made. However, at the point that a public ascribes to a matter the significance of a security threat it becomes securitized. In this sense it is not the securitizing actor that voices the speech act, instead it is the specific public that has interpreted, and now says, an issue is security.

In a break with the Copenhagen approach, cocreational securitization suggests that issues are securitized public by public. The present perspective does not argue against the Copenhagen school's notion that once a topic has been securitized it leaves the traditional politicized realm and gains urgency and legitimizes transgressions of rules. Instead, a cocreational approach to securitization takes the 'audience' of the Copenhagen school and recognizes that it is not a singular passive entity, but rather a set of segmented publics that create their own meanings. Thus, the traditional Copenhagen understanding of securitization as an existential threat that demands urgent response outside of normal political mechanisms is possible in cocreational securitization – it simply represents an instance when a broad public, or more likely, many different publics, arrive at the same general meaning at the same general time.

Moreover, cocreational securitization highlights the potentially uneven effect of achieving securitization in publics that may have greater or lesser ability to implement policies. For example, certain publics (e.g., legislators or the military) may have greater capacity to implement security policies rapidly. If these influential audiences perceive that an issue represents a critical threat to the preservation of the referent (the state, nation, etc.), they may have a more immediate effect on the implementation of security measures. Roe, (2008) discusses

how securitization was achieved among British Parliamentarians allowing Tony Blair to support America's 2003 Invasion of Iraq, even while securitization of this issue had not been fully recognized by the British Public. Similarly Balzacq (2010) notes that a sufficiently influential audience needs to recognize an issue as a matter of security for it to move from the politicized to the securitized. In thinking about how different publics may securitize an issue at different rates it also bears considering that some publics may have greater and lesser ability to rapidly implement security policies. As Roe (2008) suggests, this asymmetry in securitization can create longer term issues, in that, securitization across a breadth of publics is needed to maintain support for the securitized policies over time. The varying levels of influence of each public is an important consideration for strategic communicators. Cocreational securitization recognizes that not all publics have equal influence and so strategic communicators may target specific publics because of the social influence they have.

In some respects, asymmetric securitization creates a middle ground between the Copenhagen and sociological approaches to securitization by allowing for both binary (securitized or not) and process understandings of securitization. Cocreational securitization is a process because meaning making by a public is an interpretive process. Cocreational securitization is binary in that once a public has securitized an issue it is a matter of security for that public. At another level it is also a process because as different publics securitize an issue there is the possibility for a time when only a portion of the publics have securitized the issue and this portion of publics does not collectively have the critical mass of power in society to require the adoption of a society wide understanding of the issue as securitized.

Thus far this discussion has focused on cocreational securitization in relation to how it diverges from existing perspectives on securitization. In part, this is because the cocreational

metatheory described by Botan (2018) provides a lens for evaluating theory and is open to including various theories as they pertain to interacting with publics. In this sense the present work sees securitization theory fitting into cocreation not as a theory about how publics make meaning or as a perspective on what factors contribute to the meaning's publics develop. Instead cocreational securitization provides a theoretical perspective on what the result of strategic communication might be. It highlights the gravity of strategic communication in the way that it can be used by organizations to engage publics and cocreate meanings that securitize. Approaching securitization from a cocreational strategic communication metatheoretical lens also creates the conceptual opportunity to consider how other factors, like media attention for example, influence the meaning making of publics. Some scholarship in security studies considers the role of counter-securitizing narrative (e.g., Baysal, 2020), and it follows that strategic communication might also be used to desecuritize an issue. Indeed, there might simultaneously be communication efforts to securitize and desecuritize a given issue as organization work to inform the meanings developed by publics.

Here it is imperative to return to the critique of securitization and how it has been tied to fomenting nationalism. Identity is a profound topic that can unite publics. It is more than just a referent point to be defended – as is argued by Bozan and colleagues (1998) – identity also may represent an interpretive community that can be mobilized to 'protect themselves.' This raises a critical point of ethical concern from a cocreational strategic communication perspective. As Botan (2018) makes clear, engaging in ethical communicating is a cornerstone of cocreation. If it is accepted that some variation of securitization theory can exist within the cocreational metatheory, then it is imperative for cocreational communicators to consider the implications of their communications. Other critiques of securitization suggest that the implicit assumptions of

securitization are premised on a 'white' security against a racialized insecurity –that the speech act that securitizes is always made vis-à-vis a racialized threat (Howell & Richter-Montpetit, 2020). A cocreational approach to securitization may allow for a greater breadth of potentially more inclusive understandings of what security means. At the same time, cocreation offers, like security studies more broadly, an analytical tool for understanding how fear, aspects of identity, and other factors may be used to foment animosity and hatred. In short, cocreational securitization can be used both ethically and unethically.

Threat Multiplier Campaign and the Securitization of Climate Change

Securitization theory has achieved prominence in part because of its aptness for describing the rise of non-traditional security issues, particularly in the post-Cold War era. Among these non-traditional security topics is the way that the environment has been securitized. The environment is one of the original sectors of potential securitization included in the typology described by Buzan and colleagues (1998) and has been the central focus of a wide body of scholarship within securitization. Among the works that have discussed environmental securitization is Floyd's (2010) *Security and the Environment: Securitization and US Environmental Security Policy*. Floyd (2010) takes on the dual tasks of critiquing and reformulating classical Copenhagen securitization and describing the securitization and desecuritization of the environment in the U.S. For Floyd (2010) this cycle of securitization and desecuritization aligns with the change in administration between Bill Clinton and George Bush and focuses on environmental security concerns broadly.

In alignment with this traditional focus on environmental securitization, it seems appropriate to consider cocreational securitization in the context of a case of a strategic communication campaign that sought to securitize climate change. The threat multiplier

campaign was an effort by a handful of U.S. security experts – many with backgrounds in the

military or as civilian defense employees – to raise the profile of climate change as a national

security issue within the U.S. military. As will be described in greater detail through the

following paragraphs, the practitioners of the threat multiplier campaign used information about

a public to plan and execute the campaign. That campaign, while focused on making climate

change a security issue, worked to do so by building and maintaining long-term relationships and

shared meanings with the public of focus.

  The practitioners of the campaign drew on their extensive knowledge of the military to

guide the strategic choices of the campaign. For example, in the U.S. climate change is a

politically partisan issue (Leiserowitz et al., 2021; McCright & Dunlap, 2011) and the military

seeks to be a non-partisan organization. This desire to remain out of politics was seen by the

practitioners as an existing belief held by the target public that would make securitizing climate

change more difficult. To counter this existing belief, the practitioners adopted a strategy that

appealed to the military's primary purpose of fighting and winning wars (see: Department of

Defense, n.d.).

  A key example of how the campaign did this is the 2007 Center for Naval Analysis

(CNA), report, *National Security and the Threat of Climate Change* (CNA, 2007). This report

describes climate change as a threat multiplier –a military term that denotes something that

makes other issues worse– and details the varied impacts that climate change was already having

and was expected to have on U.S. military operations and readiness (CNA, 2007). The CNA

(2007) report articulates climate change in the context of traditional security issues like how

quickly the military can deploy troops, how well those troops are trained, and are the bases those

soldiers live on safe. This framing pervaded the reports and personal communications that were

the backbone of the threat multiplier campaign (Climate and Security Advisory Group, 2019; CNA, 2007; Conley & Melino, 2016; Elizabeth Rosenberg et al., 2014; Fetzek et al., 2016; Werrell & Femia, 2013).

The military did not immediately respond to the efforts of the threat multiplier campaign and, as Floyd (2010) found for an earlier time period, military engagement with climate change ebbed and flowed in relation to the political leadership in government (Tucker, 2020). Despite this, the net effect for the period between 2007 and 2022 was a significant increase in military engagement with climate change as a national security threat. This is perhaps best evidenced by the recent release of Departments of Defense, Army, Navy, and Airforce strategy documents that detail how the U.S. military understands, and is working to respond to, the threat posed by climate change (Department of Defense, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c; Department of the Air Force, 2022; Department of the Army, 2022a; Department of the Navy, 2022). It bears noting that concurrent to the military's increasing focus on climate change there were society wide increases in attention to, and belief in, climate change (Leiserowitz et al., 2022). So it may be that factors other than the threat multiplier campaign contributed to the changing meaning made by the military in this period. Importantly though, the ways that the military has discussed climate change's security implications closely mirror the reports crafted by the threat multiplier campaign and in a November 3, 2022 public webinar, officials from the Army, Navy, and Air Force all credited practitioners of the threat multiplier campaign as thought leaders and trail blazers on climate and security (Center for Climate and Security, personal communication, November 3, 2022).

Discussion

From a cocreational securitization perspective there are several noteworthy points to the threat multiplier campaign. First, it represents the general concept being suggested – a group using strategic communication to make an issue a matter of national security. Second, it suggests that securitization can be targeted to a specific public, in the case of the threat multiplier campaign, the military. It also highlights that the process of meaning making extends over time – the practitioners of the threat multiplier campaign built (or leveraged existing) personal and institutional relationships with the military public they were communicating with. Most particularly, the moment that climate is most clearly securitized is not with the outset of the campaign, nor with any of its key publications, but rather at its conclusion when the military released a set of key reports and Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin proclaimed that climate change represents an "existential threat" to the U.S. (Department of Defense, 2021c).

The present work argues that if, as the Copenhagen school contends, an illocutionary speech act moves an issue from the politicalized to securitized (Buzan et al., 1998) it is not a speech act articulated by practitioners, (of the threat multiplier campaign for instance). Rather the securitization is uttered by the public. In the case described above the military which has developed the meaning that climate change is a matter of security. The example of the threat multiplier campaign also highlights how different publics have different power to push for securitization of an issue and move it out of the traditional notions of politics. The military has securitized the issue of climate change, in the aforementioned webinar, officials from each of the service branches indicated their efforts related to climate and security issues would be maintained regardless of changing political control in Washington (Center for Climate and Security, personal communication, November 3, 2022). This perspective is also evinced by the

release, or forthcoming release, of implementation plans that accompany the strategy documents, earmarking funds, setting measurable goals, and designating responsible units (Department of the Army, 2022a; Center for Climate and Security, personal communication, November 3, 2022).

Another factor that the threat multiplier campaign, and the securitization of the climate change by the military also seems to demonstrate is the concept of asymmetric securitization. In the wake of the release of the recent strategy documents there has been a surge in news reports, blog posts, and commentary from both the political left and right, on how the military's focus on climate change is misguided or entirely wrong and dangerous (Daurelle & Carliner, 2022; Spoehr, 2022; Wilkie, 2022). This suggests that while the public in the military has securitized climate, there are other publics that are not inclined to consider climate change a security threat. This creates an asymmetric level of securitization across American society. Future research should explore the potential that periods of asymmetric securitization like this may lead to increased political strife and potentially to crisis and scandal. As discussed by Dezenhall (2022) crisis can assail even seemingly robust institutions like large corporations, renowned public figures, and government entities (Dezenhall, 2022). Especially in cases when asymmetric securitization leads to significant operational, or planning and operations changes, as it has with the U.S. military in the case of climate change, there is the potential that differing or opposing views may lead to public backlash and scandal. Accordingly, future research should more fully explore these risks and actions to mitigate issues arising from asymmetric securitization.

The present work has engaged in a cursory overview of one example of cocreational securitization. Future research should attempt to apply the tenants of cocreational securitization suggested here to other situations and examples. Doing so will further test the concept and potentially highlight other facets of how securitization fits into cocreational metatheory. In

addition, efforts should be made to understand how strategic communication can contribute to desecuritizing an issue and how strategic communication might be applied proactively to securitization and desecuritization to redefine security with an eye towards greater engagement with diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism (Howell & Richter-Montpetit, 2020). Another line of inquiry could explore the implications of multiple groups working simultaneously to securitize or desecuritize an issue and how multiple and potentially countervailing communication efforts effect publics' meaning making.

Conclusion

The present work has forwarded a conceptual melding of two distinct literatures. Given its theoretical descent from speech act theory, it is fitting that this work attempts to place securitization theory in the context of a communication metatheoretical framework. In many respects this has required little conceptual change to Botan's (2018) notions of cocreational strategic communication, rather it has simply highlighted a way that strategic communication can play a central role in the making of security threats in society. The notion of cocreational securitization offers a more radical departure from the existing interpretations of securitization. However, this cocreational perspective on securitization, while echoing sociological critiques of the Copenhagen school, may in fact create a bridge between the two. Transitioning the articulator of the speech act from the securitizing actor to the public, offers a conceptual link that allows both the Copenhagen school's emphasis on event and the sociological approaches focus on process to coexist. Similarly, the notion of asymmetric securitization provides a frame to further explore the implications of achieving securitization asymmetrically and the potential ways that securitized and non-securitized publics interact.

References

Austin, J. L. (1975). *How to do things with words* (2d ed.). Clarendon Press.

Balzacq, T. (2005). The three faces of securitization: political agency, audience and context.

    European Journal of International Relations, *11*(2), 171–201.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066105052960.

Balzacq, T. (2010). *Securitization theory: how security problems emerge and dissolve*. Taylor &

    Francis Group. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/gmu/detail.action?docID=574521.

Balzacq, T., Léonard, S., & Ruzicka, J. (2016). 'Securitization' revisited: theory and cases.

    International Relations, 30(4), 494–531. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117815596590.

Baysal, B. (2020). 20 Years of securitization: strengths, limitations and a new dual framework.

    Uluslararası İlişkiler / International Relations, 17(67), 3–20.

Botan, C. H. (2018). *Strategic communication theory and practice: the cocreational model*. John

    Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Buzan, B., Wæver, O., & de Wilde, J. (1998). *Security: a new framework for analysis*. Lynne

    Rienner Publishers,. https://doi.org/10.1515/9781685853808.

Climate and Security Advisory Group. (2019). *A climate security plan for America: a*

    presidential plan for combating the security risks of climate change. Center for Climate

    and Security. https://climateandsecurity.files.wordpress.com/2019/09/a-climate-security-

    plan-for-america_2019_9_24-1.pdf.

CNA. (2007). *National security and the threat of climate change*. CNA.

    https://www.cna.org/archive/CNA_Files/pdf/national%20security%20and%20the%20thr

    eat%20of%20climate%20change.pdf.

Conley, H. A., & Melino, M. (2016). *An Arctic redesign: recommendations to rejuvenate the*

    Arctic Council. Center for Strategic & International Studies, Washington DC.

Côté, A. (2016). Agents without agency: assessing the role of the audience in securitization

    theory. *Security Dialogue, 47*(6), 541–558. https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010616672150.

Daurelle, B., & Carliner, S. (2022, June 22). You can't "green" the military (you have to fight it).

    Left Voice. https://www.leftvoice.org/you-cant-green-the-military-you-have-to-fight-it/.

Department of Defense. (n.d.). *Our story*. U.S. Department of Defense. Retrieved November 11,

    2022, from https://www.defense.gov/About/.

Department of Defense. (2021a). *Statement by secretary of defense Lloyd J. Austin III on the*

    Department of Defense climate change adaptation plan. U.S. Department of Defense.

    https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/2803761/statement-by-

    secretary-of-defense-lloyd-j-austin-iii-on-the-department-of-

    defen/https%3A%2F%2Fwww.defense.gov%2FNews%2FReleases%2FRelease%2FArtic

    le%2F2803761%2Fstatement-by-secretary-of-defense-lloyd-j-austin-iii-on-the-

    department-of-defen%2F.

Department of Defense. (2021b). Department of Defense 2021 Climate Adaptation Plan.

    Department of Defense. https://www.sustainability.gov/pdfs/dod-2021-cap.pdf.

Department of Defense. (2021c). Climate Risk Analysis.

Department of the Air Force. (2022). *Climate action plan* Department of the Air Force.

    https://www.safie.hq.af.mil/Portals/78/documents/Climate/DAF%20Climate%20Action%

    20Plan%20-%20FINAL%20Oct%202022.pdf?ver=DlO9-iuR2jejlLhQ_5YKxw%3d%3d.

Department of the Army. (2022a). *Army climate strategy implementation plan FY23-FY27*.

    Department of the Army.

https://www.army.mil/e2/downloads/rv7/about/2022_Army_Climate_Strategy_Implementation_Plan_FY23-FY27.pdf.

Department of the Army. (2022). *Army climate strategy*. Department of the Army.

https://www.army.mil/e2/downloads/rv7/about/2022_army_climate_strategy.pdf.

Department of the Navy. (2022). *Climate action 2030*. Department of the Navy.

https://www.navy.mil/Portals/1/Documents/Department%20of%20the%20Navy%20Climate%20Action%202030.pdf.

Dezenhall, E. (2022). *Glass jaw*. Twelve.

Elizabeth Rosenberg, David Titley, & Alexander Wiker. (2014). Arctic 2015 and beyond a strategy for U.S. leadership in the High North. *Center for a New American Security*. https://s3.amazonaws.com/files.cnas.org/documents/CNAS_ArcticHighNorth_policybrief_RosenbergTitleyWiker.pdf?mtime=20160906080459.

Falkheimer, J., & Heide, M. (2018). *Strategic communication: an introduction*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315621555.

Fetzek, S., Femia, F., & Werrell, C. (2016). Military expert panel report: sea level rise and the military's mission. *Center for Climate and Security*. https://climateandsecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/center-for-climate-and-security_military-expert-panel-report2.pdf.

Floyd, R. (2010). *Security and the environment: securitisation theory and US environmental security policy*. Cambridge University Press. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/gmu/detail.action?docID=515860.

Hallahan, K., Holtzhausen, D., van Ruler, B., Verčič, D., & Sriramesh, K. (2007). Defining

strategic communication. *International Journal of Strategic Communication, 1*(1), 3–35.

https://doi.org/10.1080/15531180701285244.

Hansen, L. (2000). The little mermaid's silent security dilemma and the absence of gender in the

Copenhagen School. *Millennium, 29*(2), 285–306.

https://doi.org/10.1177/03058298000290020501.

Howell, A., & Richter-Montpetit, M. (2020). Is securitization theory racist? Civilizationism,

methodological whiteness, and antiblack thought in the Copenhagen School. *Security

Dialogue, 51*(1), 3–22. https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010619862921.

Leiserowitz, A., Maibach, E., Rosenthal, S., Kotcher, J., Carman, J., Neyens, L., Goldberg, M.,

Lacroix, K., & Marlon, J. (2021). *Politics & global garming, September 2021*. Yale

University and George Mason University. https://climatecommunication.yale.edu/wp-

content/uploads/2021/10/politics-global-warming-september-2021b.pdf.

Leiserowitz, A., Maibach, E., Rosenthal, S., Kotcher, J., Carman, J., Neyens, L., Myers, T.,

Goldberg, M., Campbell, E., Lacroix, K., & Marlon, J. (2022). *Climate change in the

American mind, April 2022*. Yale University and George Mason University. New Haven,

CT: Yale Program on Climate Change Communication.

https://climatecommunication.yale.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/climate-change-

american-mind-april-2022.pdf.

McCright, A. M., & Dunlap, R. E. (2011). The politicization of climate change and polarization

in the American public's views of global warming, 2001–2010. *The Sociological

Quarterly*. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1533-8525.2011.01198.x.

McDonald, M. (2008). Securitization and the construction of security. *European Journal of International Relations, 14*(4), 563–587. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066108097553.

Moses, A. D. (2021). *The problems of genocide: permanent security and the language of transgression*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316217306.

Roe, P. (2008). Actor, audience(s) and emergency measures: securitization and the UK's decision to invade Iraq. *Security Dialogue, 39*(6), 615–635. https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010608098212.

Spoehr, T. (2022, September 30). *The rise of wokeness in the military*. The Heritage Foundation. https://www.heritage.org/defense/commentary/the-rise-wokeness-the-military.

Tucker, D. A. (2020). *Words and action: assessing western military approaches to the security implications of climate change* [Unpublished master's paper]. The Pennsylvania State University.

Werder, K. P., Nothhaft, H., Verčič, D., & Zerfass, A. (2018). Strategic communication as an emerging interdisciplinary paradigm. *International Journal of Strategic Communication, 12*(4), 333–351. https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118X.2018.1494181.

Werrell, C. E., & Femia, F. (Eds.). (2013). *The Arab spring and climate change*. The Center for Climate and Security. https://climateandsecurity.files.wordpress.com/2018/07/the-arab-spring-and-climate-change_2013_02.pdf.

Wilkie, R. (2022, November 14). Biden's Pentagon misses the target again. *The Washington Times*. https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/nov/14/bidens-pentagon-misses-target-again/.

Wilkinson, C. (2007). The Copenhagen School on tour in Kyrgyzstan: is securitization theory

    useable outside Europe? *Security Dialogue, 38*(1), 5–25.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010607075964.