The Garrison State Project: Tracking the Growth of Consensus on National Security

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Anecdotal impression: 1

Post-9/11, significant cross-national increase in extent and intrusiveness of national security-related activities

- Surveillance
- Interventionary activites (drone strikes)
- Size of security and/or military agencies

Anecdotal impression: 2

Increasing consensus among political elites for these activities

- Legislation whipped through quickly and repeatedly
- "Casablanca"-style reaction to Snowden-type revelations
- Ratchet effects when is counterreaction

Basic hypotheses

- Long-term tendency in democracies for significant expansion in national security apparatuses
  - Multiple literatures on this, starting with Lasswell's garrison state arguments
  - Two principal causal factors: fear and organizational inertia
- However, because of secrecy, can't observe directly
- So measurement: study via elite consensus
  - Budgetary agreements, year after year
  - Minimal oversight

Overview of the project: 1

- Elite consensus via differential legislative consensus: within a country, compare degree of legislative accord in national security-related debates over time compared with non-national security-related debates over time
- 3 time periods: early CW, late CW, post-9/11

Expected trends over time
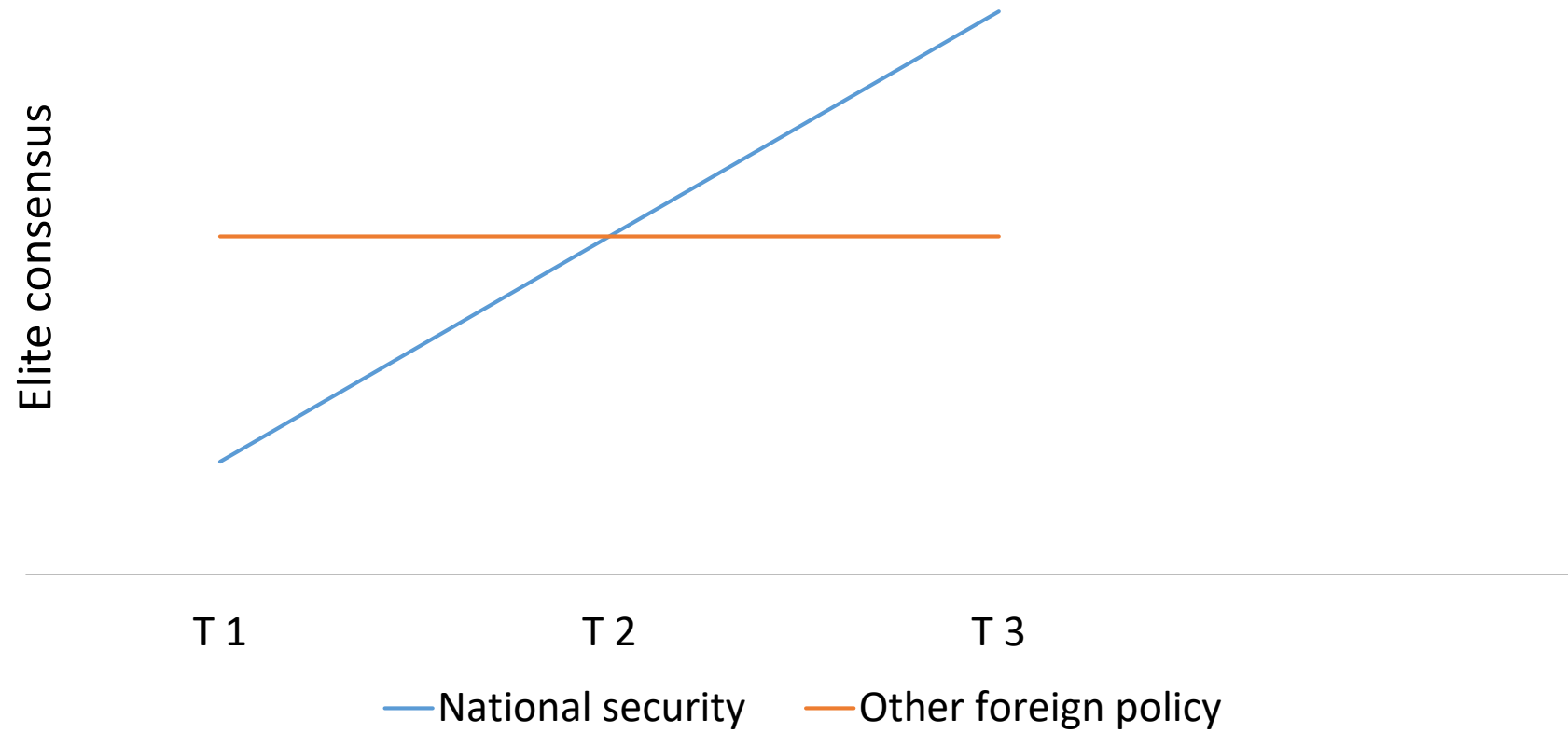
Overview of the project: 2

- Multiple countries (chosen on basis of secondary drivers of growth of national security-related apparatuses): UK, F, FRG, J, NZ, CH, US

- Coding of speeches to capture agreement in reasoning
  - 20-60 speeches per debate (around 1600 speeches)
  - Initial filtering: paraphrasing, then summarizing
  - Hand-coding for reasons and reasoning chains

Reasoning and reasoning chains

- Argument: "A because of B" (regardless of rationale, or facts, or logic)
- Reason: vote for (or against) the bill because of X
- Reasoning chain: X because of Y

An example, 1: paraphrasing & summarizing

- As a matter of fact, the hon. and gallant Member was wrong. Conscription has not been apart of the Conservative policy for 40 years. It has never figured in our programme. With regard to the argument of the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Montgomery that if it was not in our programme or speeches or policy it was in our heart of hearts, I would reply: Is not that rather a dangerous argument to put forward? It is, of course, an easy line to take. If one's opponent does not say things to prove one's case it is open to one to say that a certain view is still held by him in his heart of hearts. It is, of course, an argument that several people can use. It would be quite possible, although I would not dream of saying so, to say that "in their heart of hearts" the Liberal Party really believe that conscription is necessary. I should have just as much evidence to give in support of that, as there is in support of the charge which the right hon. and learned Gentleman has brought against us. But it has not been our programme for 40 years. It is not something which we have looked forward to, something we have worked for, or something that we welcome.

- 5 As a matter of fact, Mr. Wigg was wrong. Conscription has not been a Conservative policy for 40 years and it has never figured in our program. Regarding the argument made by the Member for Montgomery that if it wasn't in our policies it was in our hearts, I'd say that was a dangerous argument. It's easy to make. If your opponent doesn't say what you want, you can always say he believes it in his heart of hearts. Several people can use this argument. Even though I'd never dream of doing this, it's possible to say the Liberal Party really believes conscription is necessary. I have just as much evidence for that as what Mr. Wigg charged us with. But it hasn't been in our program for 40 years. It's not something we have looked forward to, worked for, or welcome.

- *The Conservative Party has not supported conscription for 40 years, and those who claim this are trying to make us look like villains.*

An example, 2: reasons and chains

Par 05 The Conservative Party has not supported conscription for 40 years, and those who claim this are trying to make us look like villains.

- Reason 105:
  - Conscription is NOT a fundamentally Conservative idea
  - Connector: O (vote for the bill because opponents are smearing us)
- Reason 14:
  - Conservatives are not bad guys
  - Connector: O (vote for the bill because opponents are smearing us)
- Reason 121:
  - Opponents are playing politics
  - Connector: O (vote for the bill because opponents are bad)
- Chain: Claim-O-121-O-105

Technical

- Coding is bottom-up: varying degrees of granularity

- Because a lot depends on overall point, need to interpolate and can't rely on words having same meaning (thus: no automation)

- Intricacy of chains: vote yes because of A and A because of B not same as vote yes because of B and B because of A (e.g., difference between argument about the facts vs motives)

Determining similarity

- Across-side and within-side

- Do by pairs of speeches

- Look for same reasons and same chains in the two speeches

- Weight matched reasons and matched chains by centrality to speech

- Index relative to number of reasons/chains

An example, 3: overlaps

German rearmament debate 1952:

PRO (Germany should rearm because…)

01 Soviet Union is expansionist.

02 Soviet Union is threatening Germany.

05 We need to learn from the past.

Chain: 02 – 01

CON (Germany should not rearm because…)

03 Rearmament requires new elections.

04 The people no longer trust the government on the issue of rearmament.

05 We need to learn from the past.

Chain: 03 – 04

OVERLAP: Reason 05 We need to learn from the past.

Preliminary results (T1)

	Within sides		Across sides
	PRO	CON	
UK (54 speeches)	0.073	0.086	0.015
Germany (46 speeches)	0.088	0.103	0.018
Japan (13 speeches)	0.146	0.233	0.062