

THE DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTION OF EPISTEMIC AUTHORITY:
CIA's LEGITIMIZATION OF TORTURE (2001-2008)

A Thesis submitted to the faculty of
San Francisco State University
In partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the Degree

Master of Arts

In

English: Linguistics

by

Helena Laranetto

San Francisco, California

May 2020

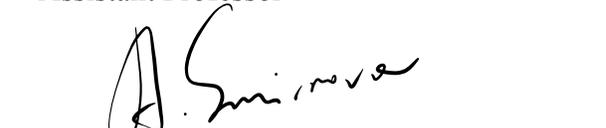
Copyright by
Helena Laranetto
2020

CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL

I certify that I have read *The Discursive Construction of Epistemic Authority: CIA's Legitimization of Torture (2001-2009)* by Helena Laranetto, and that in my opinion this work meets the criteria for approving a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree Master of Arts in English: Linguistics at San Francisco State University.



Jenny Lederer, PhD
Assistant Professor



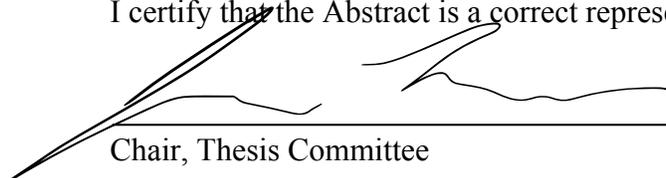
Anastasia Smirnova, PhD
Assistant Professor

THE DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTION OF EPISTEMIC AUTHORITY:
CIA's LEGITIMIZATION OF TORTURE (2001-2008) TITLE OF CULMINATING
EXPERIENCE

Helena Laranetto
San Francisco, California
2020

In this paper I apply critical discourse analysis to describe how CIA legitimizes torture in their response to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence's Study of CIA's Rendition, Detention, and Interrogation Program, (2001-2009). I provide a three-fold analytic frame to account for specific discursive patterns established by the variation of linguistic form in function of local contexts. I found that grammatical constructions such as passivization and nominalization combined with lexical selection create rhetorical polarization to fulfill two important tasks: (a) Establish CIA's credibility as experts in Intel work; b) Disqualify the Committee as apt evaluators of Intelligence. I argue that this inequality relative to knowledge of Intelligence is effectively used to build epistemic authority for the CIA, and ultimately, legitimize their use of torture methods.

I certify that the Abstract is a correct representation of the content of this thesis.



Chair, Thesis Committee

4/2/2020

Date

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Table.....	vi
Chapter 1 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Historical background	4
1.2 Theoretical frame	9
1.3 Methodology	11
1.4 Data analysis and findings	13
1.5 Contribution	15
1.6 Organization of chapters	17
Chapter 2 Critical Discourse Analysis- Main Tenets and Application	20
2.1 Origins and influences	20
2.2 Main frame and assumptions	22
2.3 Discourse production: power, ideology, and common sense	26
2.4 The relation between text and context	29
2.5 Conclusion	31
Chapter 3 Analytic Frame	33
3.1 The data	33
3.2 Levels of analysis	35
3.3 Criteria for data selection	42
3.4 The correlation between context and form	44
3.5 Conclusion	45
Chapter 4 Blame avoidance through grammatical constructions	48
4.1 Key Themes	50
4.2 Conclusion	68

Chapter 5 Polarized Framing in the Representation of the CIA and the Committee	70
5.1 Frame Semantics: Basic Assumptions	71
5.2 Frame of Expertise	74
5.3 Lexical polarization: Establishing unequal footing	78
5.4 Conclusion	86
Chapter 6 The Discursive Construction of Epistemic Authority	87
6.1 Legitimizing torture: Rhetorical effects of language use on message	88
6.2 Blame avoidance through contrastive use of syntactic voice	90
6.3 The function of nominalization in naturalizing torture	93
6.4 The function of concessive relations in building justifications	95
6.5 Lexicon selection in negative representations of the Committee	99
6.6 Competing discourses, identities, and interpretations	101
6.7 Conclusion	105
Chapter 7 The Discursive Construction of Epistemic Authority	107
7.1 Summary of Findings	107
7.2 The Construction of Epistemic Authority in Legitimization Discourse	109
7.3 Relevance of the topic and the contribution of the analysis	112
7.4 Final Remarks	114
References	117
Notes	123

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Organization of the Text – Global and Local Contexts	38
2. Analytic Frame: Context, Grammatical Form, and Rhetorical Function	46
3. Frame of Expertise	75
4. Construction of Epistemic Authority	85
5. Polarized Framing	103
6. Epistemic Inequality	105

Chapter 1

Introduction

When we intentionally make excuses for wrongdoing, we deceive. When the government makes excuses for wrongdoing, they condone them. Persuading others that an atrocity is a righteous and fair act means power to subvert reality and forge truth beyond reason. Philosopher Michel Foucault (1981) warned us about this power of constraining truths when he says that “we must not imagine that the world turns towards us a legible face which we would have only to decipher; the world is not the accomplice to our knowledge; there is no pre-discursive providence which disposes the world in our favor” (p. 67). If, as Foucault suggests, truth is no longer given by what is propositioned to be true about the world, if it has become so dependent on historical contingencies to be only visible in the discourses they bear, then we must be suspicious and vigilant of all that is said to be true by our institutions.

This work is written from a deep sense of unease. It is also written from a sense of anger and disbelief over a lingering fear that we might have witnessed the type of falsity, of wrongdoing credited only to vile regimes. It is, however, true that in an obscure episode of American history, the U.S. government behaved in a fashion as to convince us that it is, indeed, possible to condemn those such regimes all the while becoming one of them. When the dread of 9/11 pushed Americans towards a new era of international terrorism, it also raised some troubling questions regarding the government’s ability to be honest and accountable for the actions that soon would follow. While past administrations have recognized mistakes in supporting authoritarian regimes that committed abuse against their population, other forms of human rights violations are still haunting the minds of many Americans. Most recently, the debate over the legal limits of intelligence agencies has taken center stage as the CIA was denounced by the Senate Committee on Intelligence in 2013 for using gruesome torture methods to interrogate suspects of the 9/11 attack. Notwithstanding political support for CIA’s Detention and

Interrogation Program from some government bodies, CIA's defense of torture methods of interrogation painted a gloomy picture of what might have become of American democracy.

In this work, I give an account of how CIA legitimizes torture in their response to the Senate Committee on Intelligence's *Study on CIA's Rendition, Detention, and Interrogation Program (2001-2009)*. My goal was to describe the ways in which justifications for the use of torture methods by CIA after 9/11 are discursively enacted in their *Comments on the Senate Committee's Report on the CIA's RDI Program*, and the purpose they fulfill in the political context they are presented. To this end, I analyzed the arguments authors present to counter the Committee's allegations that CIA's 'enhanced interrogation techniques' (EITs) did not produce the unique intelligence the agency claimed it would. I argue that CIA's need to legitimize torture to the government, and ultimately, to the public prompted the agency to articulate an identity anchored on professional credibility as opposed to the perceived ineptitude of the Senate Committee on Intelligence as evaluators of Intel work. I found that CIA effectively legitimizes torture through a polarized frame made of positive self-representations as 'expert authority' as opposed to negative representations of the Committee as 'opinionated amateurs' on Intelligence collection.

The main research questions that guided my analysis were: 1) How does CIA legitimize its use of torture to collect intelligence during the RDI program? 2) How are justifications conceptually structured and linguistically operationalized in the text? 3) What pragmatic functions do linguistic forms have in building justificatory arguments?, and 4) Which rhetorical effects do these arguments have on message interpretation? Answers to these questions help to better understand how certain linguistic forms correlate to the conceptual structure of justifications and the role it plays in legitimizing government wrongdoing.

Given the inherent secrecy of intelligence collection, CIA has enjoyed a very unique position in government that enabled them to evade the burden of responsibility in events where it allegedly undermined legal boundaries and subverted the political order of foreign countries. In order to maintain a positive image in its trajectory as an

organization, the CIA has crafted a discourse aligning the agency with the U.S. government self-ascribed role as ‘leaders of the free world and protectors of human rights’. In broader terms, the rejection of a negative role as a human rights violator has prompted CIA to change its institutional identity from secret agency to a professional organization to legitimize some of its actions to the Congress and the public (Connell & Galasinski, 1996). However, during its Detention and Interrogation Program, the agency became the target of harsh accusations and public criticism for its use of water boarding to question detainees at Guantánamo prison and for allegedly violating human rights in American soil. The use of blame avoidance strategies such as deflection and reversal paired up with rationalization of power abuse to legitimize torture help create a favorable public image which not only licenses the agency political approval, but more importantly, it limits accusations of wrongdoing from the government and the media. It is within this broader political context that CIA’s legitimization of torture is analyzed – as a rhetorical repair for wrongdoing to disarm critics, build government consent, and lend institutional legitimacy to human rights violations.

What motivates this analysis is the impact CIA’s use of torture has had on human rights in the U.S., but most notably, the moral and political implications of legitimizing its use by an American agency. In discussing types of political authority, Weber (2004) affirms that every type of authority is founded on some form of legitimization, be it divine power, birth right, or rationalization based on the rule of law. For Habermas (1975), institutional practices are legitimized through ‘validity claims’ underscoring the purposes they fulfill; legitimization takes the form of instrumental rationalizations that infuse a sense of truth to actions that otherwise require social validation. In the debate over what constitutes right or wrong concerning methods for human intelligence collection, the truth is less about the merits or demerits of ‘enhanced techniques of interrogation’ and more over who detains the truth to make that determination. This is exactly what CIA authors accomplish in the text: to establish the truth in terms of credible knowledge of Intel work and the agency as the only authority who detains such knowledge.

As much as government institutions have used legal arguments to legitimize extra-legal actions against groups seen as ‘enemies’ of Western democracy, the moral contradiction inherent to this kind of reasoning is that it is nihilistic in nature, becoming troubling both morally and legally once it settles at State level. Simply put, violating human rights in the name of national security does not and can never constitute a legitimate argument to protect the ‘common good’ of the people because it mines the very foundation upon which democratic ruling stands: the inviolability of the rule of law and the sacrosanctity of the human person. This is the position of human rights advocates from different sectors in government and civil society, and it is the position this author takes on the matter.

The text is analyzed as an instance of a discourse of legitimization in public communication (Van Dijk, 2005; Van Leeuwen, 1996, 2007; Van Leeuwen & Wodak, 1999) theoretically grounded in Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 2010, 2015; Fowler, Hodge, Kress, & Trew, 1979; Fowler, 1991). The analytic framework applied builds on the basic postulates of critical discourse (Van Dijk, 1995, 2001a), which identifies co-occurring patterns of linguistic form and topical contexts running in the text at the micro-level of discourse production. In the next sections, I will give a preview of both theoretical and analytic framework, summarize the relevant findings, and the contribution for future research on this topic. However, before getting into the different parts of the analysis, I will present a brief background of the macro political context which gave rise to this debate, and the motive for CIA to both employ and justify the use of torture techniques.

1.1 Historical background: Bush’s ‘War on Terror’ and CIA’s Detention and Interrogation Program (2001-2009)

September 11 of 2001 changed the way the United States government thought of terrorism as thousands of Americans watched the World Trade Center twin towers collapse after an air attack. Hours earlier, nineteen members of al Qaeda hijacked four commercial planes bound to the west coast and intentionally flew them into the twin

towers at World Trade Center in New York city, the Pentagon Building in Washington D.C., and in an open field in Shanksville in Pennsylvania (A timeline of the U.S.-led war on terror, 2019). On the same day, president George W. Bush signs ‘The USA Patriot Act’ giving intelligence and law enforcement agencies better tools and more latitude to vet individuals suspected of anti-American sympathy or terrorist affiliation. The next day, he signs a military order declaring a national emergency. A few months later, Americans would learn that Osama Bin Laden had led the al Qaeda attacks which resulted in the deaths of 2,977 people from the crashes, and hundreds of others from dust exposure in the years that followed (Santhanam & Epatko, 2018).

On September 20 of 2001, in a speech to the Congress and the nation Bush announces his *War on Terror* saying “Our war on terror begins with al Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated” (President Bush addresses the nation, 2001). On the same day, Bush announces the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, which merged a number of government agencies responsible for border security, in an effort to further detect and prevent future threats and attacks against American targets (September 11 Terror Attacks Fast Facts, 2013). The creation on November 27 of 2002 of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States also came as a response to the generalized fear and the need to gather intelligence and to better equip agencies for future crises. The perspective on what terrorism and counterterrorism would also change dramatically. Up until then, terrorism had been identified mostly with anti-American armed political organizations including paramilitary and terrorist groups, and something far from American land (Smith & Zeigler, 2017). Counterintelligence was mostly directed towards insurgents outside of the U.S., many of whom were associated with leftist ideologies, and consisted of information collection, or military, financial and strategic support to local governments to combat and dismantle them.

The attacks against multiple American targets on that Tuesday morning changed this understanding entirely. The focus shifted from foreign surveillance and intervention onto draconian measures to ensure national security and deter terrorist threats against the U.S. in American territory (Smith & Zeigler, 2017). The latter was identified almost

exclusively as extremist and fundamentalist religious groups hateful of U.S. politics and Western values. Alongside shifts in policy, extremist Islamic groups such as the al Qaeda and the Taliban gained in strength and organization. They targeted the U.S. as a symbol of political power but also as the placeholder of liberal values in the world. In his address to the Congress in the days that followed the attacks, Bush further shifted the focus from a threat to the U.S. to a global threat against democracy, once again reframing the attacks as a polarized conflict between the Western free world and Islamic fundamentalism. “Every nation in every region now has a decision to make,” he would say in a national address. “Either you are with us or you are with the terrorist” (President Bush addresses the nation, 2001). The fear of incumbent attacks against other American targets was far from being far-fetched; it was an eminent reality the White House was not yet ready to face (A timeline of the U.S.-led war on terror, 2019).

It was against this backdrop of widespread fear of terrorism and political anxiety that CIA high command presented their still premature detention and interrogation program to president Bush (A timeline of the U.S.-led war on terror, 2019). On September 17, Bush signs the Memorandum of Notification (MON), authorizing CIA to use discretionary power to detain and question all individuals they deemed to be high risk to national security (Inspector General, 2004). In February of 2002, Bush signs another Memorandum through which he states that the rights upheld by the Geneva Convention (1949) do not apply to members of al Qaeda, thus giving unrestrained powers to CIA officers to question detainees in any manner desired (Miles, 2016, p. 11). In March of 2002, CIA detains and interrogates the first suspect in plotting the attacks in a facility located near Kabul (Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, 2014). In the same year, the Justice Department determines that ‘enhanced interrogation techniques’ (EITs) are lawful and do not violate any federal anti-torture statute when used against individuals labelled “high value detainees” (Inspector General, 2004, p. 3). In the years that followed, CIA detained other suspects of involvement with 9/11 in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Guantanamo Bay in Cuba (September 11 Terror Attacks Fast Facts, 2019). Enhanced interrogation techniques were integrated into CIA’s methods of human intelligence collection (HUMINT) and were applied to detainees considered to have “actionable

knowledge” about “imminent terrorist threats” and to which non-coercive interrogation techniques were claimed by the agency to be ineffective in producing valuable information (Miles, 2016). Enhanced Interrogation Techniques (EITs) are defined by the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) in their Interrogation Guidelines as lawful forms of questioning that include “physical or psychological pressure beyond Standard Techniques” (Inspector General, 2004, p.30)¹. Among these techniques, the DCI’s guidelines have sanctioned the use of waterboarding, cramped confinements, sleep deprivation, and stress positions (Inspector General, 2004, p.30). The ‘Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment’ (1984) defines “torture” as the infliction of physical or psychological pain or suffering on a person for the purpose of obtaining information or forcing a confession of some act they are suspected of having committed.²

The Rendition, Detention and Interrogation program came to fruition from these initial detentions as part of a global counterterrorism effort undertaken by CIA to dismantle al Qaeda and to deter future strikes in American territory (Smith & Zeigler, 2017). The justification for the adoption of coercive methods of questioning was its effectiveness in producing valuable intelligence otherwise not obtainable albeit CIA’s refusal to take a position on whether the information produced could have been obtained through less coercive means³. Despite this apparent contradiction, CIA reviews indicated that the program, including interrogations of detainees on whom EITs were used, did produce unique intelligence that helped hinder future attacks and capture terrorists. The Senate Committee on Intelligence, on the other hand, disputes this claim in their Report (2014) stating that CIA officers intentionally misrepresented the value of information obtained from using EITs in their communication with various branches of the government as well as the media on more than one occasion (Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, 2014).

Besides reactions from Congress, mainstream media also scrutinized CIA’s Detention and Interrogation Program, specially their use of waterboarding, turning Guantanamo Bay into an icon for human rights violations on American soil. Despite growing public outcry from civil organizations as well as both national and international

media, the program ran during the entire Bush administration until its official shutdown in 2008 (September 11 Terror Attacks Fast Facts). The program comes to an end on January 22 of 2009 when then elected president Barack Obama signs Executive Order 13491, in which he orders CIA to close down detention centers and limit its use of interrogation techniques to those prescribed in the Army Field Manual (Miles, 2016). President Obama also directs CIA to no longer operate detention facilities anywhere, forbidding the use of all enhanced interrogation techniques that are not prescribed in the Army Field Manual against prisoners held in U.S. custody or under the effective control of the United States in any armed conflict (Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, 2014). By the time of its shutdown in January of 2009, the total number of detainees held in clandestine CIA facilities and subjected to enhanced techniques of interrogation was estimated in 120 by the Committee on Intelligence, although the absolute number of detainees remains unknown to this day (Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, 2014, p. 15).

As part of his ‘open government policy’, president Obama commissioned a study to the Senate Committee on Intelligence about the effectiveness of CIA’s enhanced techniques of Interrogation and their overall execution of the program. In 2009, the Committee conducts a study to determine whether CIA’s enhanced interrogation techniques produced valuable intelligence that would have justified its use of coercion over standard interrogation techniques. In 2013, they submitted their 6,700-page classified report to the White House, the Department of Justice and other branches of government, detailing the conduction of the program from its inception in 2001, and documenting the detention and treatment of thirty-five suspects of involvement with al Qaeda and Taliban between 2001 and 2007. For this task, the Committee examined over six million documents released by CIA in the course of three years that included interviews, CIA operational cables, reports, memos, and emails as well as other types of communications⁴. Their key points were CIA’s overall mismanagement of the program, unnecessary use of brutality during interrogations, lack of evidence of its effectiveness, reluctance to oversight by the Senate and Department of Justice, and misrepresentations of the effectiveness of enhanced techniques of interrogation to the government and the

media. In their response to the Committee, CIA found that most of the twenty case studies cited in the Study were solid examples of how effective enhanced interrogation techniques were effective despite initial flaws in their earlier presentations of results. On December 8 of 2014, a 700-page summary of the Committee's Executive Summary was declassified and approved for public release.

1.2 Theoretical Frame: Critical discourse analysis

The overarching theoretical frame applied in this analysis is Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth, CDA) as proposed by its main theoreticians (Fairclough, 2010, 2015; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Fowler, 1996; Hodge & Kress, 1993; Van Dijk, 1993, 2001; Wodak, 2006b; Wodak & Meyer, 2001). Proponents of CDA posit that power abuse, inequality, and injustice are perpetuated by the types of discourse produced by elite groups in society premised on the idea that worldviews are shaped by language choice and use. Rather than a single approach or theory, CDA was born out of the wish of socially engaged linguists to present an alternative research school in discourse analysis that brought elements from critical theory into the linguistic field to interpret texts in their historical and political contexts (Fowler, 1996; Fowler, Hodge, Kress et. al., 1979). This heterogeneity in angles has made CDA a popular discourse school in studies about ideology and power across various genres of discourse. Critical discourse analysts are motivated to uncover different types of ideological domination encoded in the grammar of a language that become entrenched in everyday use and discursive practices. For them, language research can contribute to greater social justice by exposing how power structures and hierarchies are enacted in language practices and perpetuated through hegemonic discourses.

Drawing on qualitative analyses of selected texts that exemplify specific topical discourses, CDA researchers demonstrated how implicit ideological views are linguistically realized through particular grammatical constructions that are interpreted as 'natural' or commonsensical because they are not intuitively apprehensible by readers (Fowler, 1996). Among other features, nominalization and passivization were singled out

as paramount to ideological positioning since one of their syntactic function is to transform processes into pre-existing entities and delete agency. In fact, the notion of agency appears as undoubtedly the most central in discussions about ideological discourse, and much of the work done by CDA scholars aims at exposing how these two linguistic features reflect and assist the reproduction of power relations in society.

From its inception, the productive focus of CDA studies has been qualitative analyses of different discourse genres, with a particular interest in syntactic constructions such as passivization and nominalization (Fairclough, 2015; Hodge & Kress, 1993, Van Dijk 1995, Van Leeuwen, 1995). CDA authors have argued that people who occupy positions of power within institutions such as the media, government, and academia, have played a key role in sustaining hierarchies given the fact that minority groups are represented in discourse in ways that perpetuate their subordination in society. These studies offered important insights into the ways in which prejudices towards different social groups and attitudes towards social actors are shaped into being by the language choice in these institutional contexts.

With respect to legitimization discourses, the specific literature on this topic will be reviewed in the next chapter, and it includes work by Theo van Leeuwen (1995, 2007) on representation of social actors and legitimization (also van Leeuwen & Wodak, 1999), and Teun Van Dijk (2006) and Ruth Wodak (2006a) who describe the relation between linguistic and social practices with respect to how power is intertwined with text, and in particular, the ways in which ideology is encoded in syntax. To these authors will be added Stan Hansson's (2015) analysis of blame avoidance in government communication, where he examines the fallacies and rhetorical strategies used by public officials to mask political wrongdoing.

These two bodies of literature will provide me with an analytic toolbox to examine the ways in which the CIA portrays itself as a provider of intelligence services to the U.S government. Here, I would like to point out that this framework was used to inform my interpretation of the data and not as a pre-determined theory to be tested against the data. Therefore, my analysis departed and was guided by the research questions presented in section one, which means that the recurrent patterns I found in the

text were established and selected to be analyzed not by my own presuppositions about the CIA's discourse of legitimization, but by the consistency with which certain linguistic features occurred in local contexts in the text in comparison to other textual features. Other discourse elements accounted for in this framework were the context in which the text is situated (as a response to a senatorial investigation about wrongdoing), the audience to which the text was produced (members of the Committee and other government branches), and the specific purpose it fulfills (to respond to accusations of arbitrariness), which determined the register and style of the text. My goal was to minimize any bias I might bring to the analysis and remain focused on the recurring patterns of language use in the text that illuminate our understanding of how CIA discursively builds legitimization of torture during Bush's War on Terror.

1.3 Methodology: Data and analytical framework

The data I used in this analysis is CIA's *Comments on the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence's Report on the Rendition, Detention and Interrogation Program* released to the public in December of 2014. It constitutes the CIA's response to the points raised by Committee in their Findings and Conclusions and their Executive Summary and submitted to the Committee and the White House in June of 2013 as a classified document. A redacted version of the *Comments* was approved for release in December of 2014.

The 136-page document was retrieved from the CIA's online database in 2015 along with three other related documents: the SSCI *Study of the CIA's Rendition, Detention and Interrogation Program*, a *Statement from Director Brennan on the SSCI Study on the Former Detention and Interrogation Program*, and the *CIA Fact Sheet Regarding the SSCI Study on the Former Detention and Interrogation Program*, which provides a complete account of the circumstances under which the response was produced. These documents can be found under the 'Recent Reports' section of the CIA's virtual library on their website⁵. The text is organized in four sections: 1) CIA Director Brennan's cover memorandum for Senator Diane Feinstein, chair of the Senate Committee; 2) A summary of CIA's comments with recommended corrective actions; 3)

Comments on each of the Study's twenty conclusions, and 4) Comments on each of the Study's 20 examples of CIA's use of enhanced interrogation techniques. Rather than responding to each one of the Committee's findings and conclusions, CIA authors identified the underlying topics in the Committee's report and grouped them under four key areas or topics: A) unpreparedness of CIA officials to manage the program; B) Arbitrariness and unaccountability of CIA interrogators; C) ineffectiveness of enhanced techniques of interrogation, and D) misrepresentations of the effectiveness of enhanced techniques of interrogation to government and the media. CIA authors address each of these topics through a series of arguments and counterarguments within an alignment axis wherein they either side with the Committee or oppose the Committee in their interpretations of CIA's actions. Their overall attitudinal positioning is reflected in three main argument types: 1) defamations of the Committee as assessors of Intelligence; 2) self-appraisals as assessors of Intelligence; and 3) justifications for wrongdoing they acknowledge.

I maintain the same topical organization of CIA's response to facilitate the integration of different levels of analysis: Topical-contextual, grammatical, and rhetorical (function in discourse). For each one of the key themes identified by CIA authors I give an example passage followed by an analysis of how legitimizing arguments are linguistically constructed. There is a total of six passages from all four sections of CIA's text to exemplify the linguistic forms found to co-occur in the same specific contexts in the text. My selection of example data is partly based on an effort to identify the most illustrative cases of those linguistic patterns that encode representational roles and actions. These representations of actors and actions encoded in the grammar used by authors express the views and attitudes of the CIA authors towards the Senate Committee on Intelligence, their allegations of wrongdoing by CIA, and CIA's reasons for their alleged wrongdoing. A more thorough description of the organization of the data, the levels of the analysis, and the criteria used to select linguistic features and example data is offered in chapter three where I present the general analytic frame created for the analysis.

The patterns described and discussed in this analysis are divided into two types:

grammatical forms and lexical selection. Given the specificity of each linguistic feature, I decided to deal with each of them in two separate chapters to better account for how they occur in relation to the specific topical contexts in the text. A brief introduction of these patterns and some inferences they suggest are presented next.

1.4 Data analysis and findings

The main question I asked when examining CIA's response to the Committee was "How does the variation of linguistic form in function of local context in the text change the readers' interpretation of CIA's actions and justifications for the use of torture?" My goal was to describe the manner in which CIA authors discursively legitimize torture methods by deflecting and reversing blame in their response to the open accusations of the Committee.

At a rhetorical level, I look at how certain blame avoidance strategies are used to foreground CIA's subordination to the law and government relative to alleged misconduct while backgrounding the negative outcome of their actions, and to conversely impugn the Committee's evaluation of such actions. This polarized frame is rhetorically constructed to fulfill two important tasks in CIA's legitimization of torture: (a) establish CIA's superiority as credible evaluators of Intelligence- as knowers of Intel work and reliable sources of this knowledge, and b) disqualify the Senate Committee on Intelligence as credible evaluators of Intelligence. The dispute is less over the facts surrounding CIA's use of torture than it is over the knowledge to accurately interpret those facts. This higher status on matters related to Intel know-how licenses the CIA professional credibility to justify its use of torture to interrogate detainees without the need of moral or legal approval. Torture is thereby legitimized not because it is politically righteous, but strategically rightful.

I found four recurring linguistic features that varied in function of specific contexts in the text: Syntactic voice, nominalizations, concessive clause ordering, and lexical selection. These features were found to consistently co-occur with specific topics or contexts that were either positive or negative in terms of the information they carried.

The Committee's allegations of wrongful action and CIA's justifications for them constitute the negative contexts in which the outcomes of CIA's actions are assessed as producing some negative outcome such as the ill-treatment, injuring or death of detainees, mismanagement of resources and facilities, etc. By contrast, CIA's denial of some of the Committee's allegations coupled with self-appraisals for remedial action and admission of guilt constitute the positive contexts wherein the authors effectively reverse blame and build credit. Whereas linguistic forms were found to vary in function of the local contexts, they do too in function of the communicative tasks they accomplish in justifications. These tasks are determined by the author's intended goal as well as contextual constraints that can be captured in the data by correlating the conceptual structure of justifications with the semantic structure of the linguistic forms that give them their contours.

The first of these patterns I examined was the contrastive use of syntactic voice- the variation in degrees of agentivity in active and passive sentences relative to the types of allegations- the more serious the allegation (e.g. unauthorized techniques, excessive lethal force, etc.), the less agentive CIA's semantic role in the clause. The second was nominalization in the construction of causeless events to omit blame in the allegations presented. Added to these, I also accounted for how modality (deontic and epistemic modals) appears in relation to establishing equal footing between CIA and the Committee. The third pattern was the order of concessive clauses in relation to the strength of allegations, which suggest a shift in focus from negative to positive outcomes in the sentence. The final pattern I examined was the use of evaluative lexis to construct polarized conceptual frames. Thus, legitimization is also enacted in lexis that evoke expert knowledge, scientific objectivity, and professional experience, while de-legitimization is conveyed in language that conjures the frame of lay knowledge, personal bias, and inexperience.

Combined, these grammatical realizations contribute to CIA's effective legitimization of torture through a polarized frame in which the agency emerges as the 'expert authority' and the Senate Committee on Intelligence as the 'opinionated amateur analyst' of Intelligence collection. In this way, the roles of social actors can be interpreted

according to levels of epistemic authority- the control over interpretive resources pertaining knowledge production and knowledge control. Thus, authority defined in terms of control of knowledge production structures power relations by determining which actors can be sources and recipients of knowledge and which actors cannot. CIA's 'discourse of expert authority' serves to ascribe them greater epistemic authority as source of knowledge while it disqualifies the Senate as evaluators of Intel work by challenging their knowledge of intelligence work and their ability to assess CIA's actions accurately.

1.5 Contribution: CDA applied to discourses of intelligence in the USA

Critical discourse analysis has contributed significantly to our understanding of the complex, intertwined relation between discourse, ideology, and power relations. In the course of almost four decades, CDA researchers have produced an overwhelming amount of literature mainly on its theoretical postulates, but also on its application across the social sciences. Their main focus has been representations of social actors and events in the news, in particular, negative representations of immigrants and minorities considered to be a problem for Western societies in the after-War period. Their analyses and discussions have centered heavily on lexical choice, but also grammatical transformations thought to influence how meaning is construed. Of such processes, the most widely studied are nominalization and passivization, discussed from the perspective of agency deletion or obliteration, and what they do to the interpretation of events and social actors. CDA researchers have agreed that the manipulation of agency obscures important aspects of message interpretation such as status, authorship, and responsibility in events.

By looking at grammatical processes, CDA research has offered important insights into the ways in which prejudiced beliefs and attitudes are shaped into being by language use, becoming a constructive ground for interdisciplinary collaboration on various topics related to racism, political domination, power relations, and the like. However, beyond this focus on representational grammar in media discourse, CDA

research has not ventured much in more empirical fields of different genres of discourse. To date, there is a shortage of empirical data and case studies that apply CDA models outside the scope of mass media. Analyses of topical discourse in other genres are still not on par with the volume of work published on similar topics produced by the media. Within the narrower scope of CDA, the traditional focus has been undoubtedly on social inequalities- elite vs. non-elite, working class vs. owners, Western Caucasian vs. colored people, etc.- and its host of negative discursual representations across various news outlets. Regarding this, of particular relevance for my analysis is the work of Stan Hansson (2015) on government talk, who presents an insightful and in-depth analysis of how blame avoidance strategies and over communication are discursively used to spin an issue or cast shadow over acts of wrongdoing in public talk. Hansson also provides a useful analytic frame in which he integrates analysis of rhetorical moves with analysis of linguistic patterns, opening a path for similar research into this genre of discourse that requires the addition of rhetorical structure.

Building on previous research on discourses of legitimization, the current analysis shifts the focus from traditional CDA discussion of media representations in three important ways. Firstly, from social inequality (unequal access to material resources) to epistemic inequality (unequal access to knowledge production), and second, from the media to the government arena wherein competing discourses are produced by actors who have equal power and that remain unfiltered by news editorials and second-hand analyses. Secondly, considering that the bulk of CDA literature has been on case studies from Europe, this analysis extends the application of CDA to institutional discursive practices in the U.S. by examining how political power is linguistically exercised in public talk on Intelligence. Finally, the analysis of the CIA text raises troubling questions regarding the moral authority of the U.S. government in its self-assigned role as ‘leaders of the free world’ in view of its continuous ‘War on Terrorism’. In this respect, the findings shed some light on some of the assumptions and beliefs underlying CIA’s use of torture methods and what it means to U.S. policy for the protection of human rights in national territory.

Contrary to common assumptions, rational justifications or explanations for human rights violations based on the notion of some ‘state of exception’ or ‘state of emergency’ that require extra-legal measures have been a commonplace argument and practice of authoritarian regimes and not democratic states. The basic argument is that ‘exceptional’ threats to national security that cannot be contained by standard legal measures and within democratic institutions demand an ‘exceptional’ or ‘extraordinary’ institutional frame which allows for looser legal constraints and greater discretionary power by state agencies to contain these threats. Hence, a ‘state of exception’ is established that revokes the ‘normal’ democratic institutional framework to give way to other non-democratic mechanisms aimed at protecting the nation against a greater enemy. The danger in resorting to arguments such as this is that it has been used as a moral ground to justify coup d’états that led to a wave of authoritarian regimes in South America in the sixties and seventies, as well as other regions in the world. A close inspection of the types of justifications given by the CIA authors revealed potential interpretations of the CIA’s role as somewhat similar to that of repressive organizations of some of the worst dictatorships in modern history.

1.6 Organization of Chapters

The data and analysis presented in the following chapters will differ greatly in angle and data from the aforementioned body of work applying CDA for the reasons already presented. In some aspects, this work is a departure from traditional critical analysis, which is premised on the idea that prevailing discourses reflect the worldviews of powerful groups, and are produced and diffused from institutions such as academia, the media, government, and the church. The analysis of the patterns identified in the text led me to an interesting diverging point from this postulate inasmuch as the dispute over what is right or wrong regarding intelligence collection is established on equal grounds between actors equally powerful who have equivalent status in government. Thus, the angle from which to conceive of and describe power relations is entirely new.

This thesis comprises a total of seven chapters organized according to the contents

presented in the previous sections of this introduction. The next chapter gives the theoretical frame of critical discourse analysis applied to the data selected. I give a brief account of the origins of critical discourse analysis, its main postulates, and the working concepts used to account for the research questions at hand. Chapter three is a presentation of the analytic model I built to integrate the different layers of analysis as well as to incorporate the basic theoretical precepts laid out previously. I also define important terms used in the analysis and discussion chapters and give a preview of the data examined. Chapters four and five are the data analysis divided into two parts, the first presenting patterns in grammatical processes (syntactic voice, nominalization, concessive clause ordering), and the second dedicated to semantic analysis of the lexicalization patterns of polarized roles drawing on Frame Semantics theory. In the data, however, these linguistic forms occur concurrently according to the specific key themes discussed by authors and the contexts in which they appear in the text. Chapter six is an in-depth discussion of the relevant patterns in language use with special attention given to the communicative task they accomplish in terms of message interpretation. I also probe into some questions regarding epistemic agency and epistemic authority in relation to the dispute over the power to accurately evaluate intelligence collection between the CIA and the Senate Committee on Intelligence. The final chapter is the conclusion with the highlight of important takeaways from the analysis, and new directions for future research into the topic of constructing epistemic authority in government discourse.

A final note, in all that pertains CIA's description of their program, I will refer to 'enhanced techniques of interrogation' as the assigned label given by the CIA to a set of interrogation methods used in their program. In my own analysis and discussion, however, I will refer to them as 'torture methods' because that is exactly what they are. To make this statement and my position clear, waterboarding, sleep deprivation, stress positions are among the hundreds of torture methods described and condemned by international instruments for the protection of human rights as well as human rights organization across the world. I do not, however, mean to discount the complexity of the discussion about such interrogation techniques within the intelligence community or government sphere, but I am simply taking a position on the matter. A fair account on the

various perspectives on the legal use of physical coercion by state agencies grants a serious and deeper discussion of the CIA's program itself, the evaluation of the results they claimed to have obtained, and the political ramifications for national security policies and human rights in the U.S. As I cannot render such analysis neither are these questions within the scope of this research, my focus is on language use alone and not on the merits or demerits of CIA's use of torture from a policy perspective.

Chapter 2

Critical Discourse Analysis- Main Tenets and Application

“Discourse is the place of division between reason and madness, the ground for the exercise of exclusion of those whose words have no currency, no value, no truth.” (Orders of Discourse, Foucault, 1981)

In this chapter, I trace the development of critical discourse analysis (henceforth, CDA), and its conceptual architecture as an overarching theoretical school in discourse analysis. In the subsequent chapters, I situate my analysis within this theoretical frame, particularly, in the literature about legitimization (Van Dijk, 2006; Van Leeuwen, 1995, 2007; Van Leeuwen & Wodak, 1999) and blame avoidance (Hansson, 2015; Weaver, 1986; Wodak, 2006). In the following sections, I will give a brief account of CDA’s origins, its main influences, and the main postulates applied to the data analysis and discussion chapters. Notwithstanding its broad scope and many influences, my goal is to present a general overview of what the prospects of CDA research are to better explain why I chose this frame and how it contributed to the current analysis.

2.1 Origins and Influences

Critical discourse analysis or critical discourse studies (Fairclough, 2015) as practiced by social scientists today is the offspring of a much earlier school in British linguistics known as critical linguistics. In the late 1970’s, a group of socially motivated linguists wanted to offer an alternative school to the formal linguistics propositioned by Chomsky that would incorporate social critique to its core principles (Hodge & Kress, 1993; Fowler, 1996; Wodak, 2006a). Rather than offering an *a*-critical descriptive account of language as a context-free system, critical linguists were interested in probing into the functions of language in social and political contexts to shed light into some of the lingering social issues of Western societies (Hodge & Kress, 1993). Such inspection first came in 1979, when Roger Fowler, Robert Hodge, Gunther Kress and Tony Trew

published *Language and Control*, introducing the basic assumptions of critical discourse analysis that would later be taken up by authors writing on the topic. In the same year, Hodge and Kress published *Language as Ideology* in which they situate linguistics in the intersection between language and the social sciences. Critical linguistics, these authors argued, would enable scientists to understand the ways in which linguistic forms can structure social relations among different groups across contexts (Fowler et. al., 1979, pp. 26 -45; Hodge & Kress, 1993, pp. 1-4). According to Fowler (1991), critical linguistics is functional linguistics in the sense that it is a linguistic tool used to understand social factors (p. 3).

Considered by its practitioners as the cornerstone of CDA, these first two publications were soon followed by other theoretical work focused on the relation between power, ideology, and discourse, which would later comprise the seminal literature in CDA. Of particular importance are Roger Fowler's *Language in the News* (1991), Norman Fairclough's *Language and Power* (2015, first published in 1989) and *Critical Discourse Analysis* (2010, first published in 1992), Teun van Dijk's *Principles of critical discourse analysis* (1993) and *Discourse analysis as ideology analysis* (1987), and Ruth Wodak's *Language, Power, and Ideology* (1989). In these publications, authors look at a wide range of topical discourses across different genres to understand how social representations are mapped onto language use in discourse production. Their focus is mainly on the interplay between grammatical form and speaker roles in highly structured social contexts such as classes, interviews, news stories, so forth. The conclusions drawn from these initial examinations raised some important questions that would later populate the research field of political discourse and discourse analysis in general.

The same questions would also lead to the publication of a series of textbooks and academic articles on the theories and methods used in CDA in the decades that followed. However, aspiring beyond a mere contribution to linguistic theory and methodology, these earlier scholars used this body of work as an interdisciplinary program for the application of CDA by researchers interested in using discourse analysis for social advocacy (Meyer, 2001; Van Dijk, 1993, 2001; Weiss and Wodak, 2003; Wodak, 2001).

As Hodge and Kress (1993) put it, “we had hopes that linguistics could be turned into a socially responsive and responsible discipline” (preface to second edition). Premised on the notion that language use is never neutral and discourse is linguistic behavior surfacing in social context (Fairclough, 2010, p. 10; Fowler, 1991, p. 10; Van Dijk, 2001, p. 357), critical linguistics cross-pollinated in the various social disciplines and became a trend in the nineties and well into the twenty-first century.

In spite of its apparent enclosed theoretical base, much of what is postulated by CDA scholars draw on a concoction of post-Marxist theory (Fairclough, 2015; Van Dijk, 2001), the Frankfurt School of critical theory (Wodak, 2001, 2001a, 2006a), social semiotics (Hodge & Kress, 1993; Van Leeuwen, 1995), and Foucauldian discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2010, 2015; Fairclough & Wodak, 2009). Following a prolific decade of publications, CDA was diffused and gained currency in Europe and Latin America specially, and with time became an umbrella term for what would become the various approaches to the critical study of language in social and political contexts (Fairclough, 2010; Meyer, 2001).

2.2 Main Frame and Assumptions

CDA investigates how power and ideology are interwoven in language use, and in particular how power relations are exercised in everyday discourse (Fowler, Hodge, Kress et. al., 1979; Hodge and Kress, 1993; Fairclough, 2010, 2015; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Van Dijk, 1993, 2001, 2001a; Wodak, 2001). Rather than a self-contained methodology or theory, CDA evolved to become an eclectic approach that draws on social theory (Fairclough, 2010, 2015), a method that relies on rhetoric (Wodak, 2001a), and a critical perspective (Van Dijk, 2001, 2001a) taken by socially engaged academics interested in applying science to promote social justice. For Van Dijk (2001), “CDA is a – critical – perspective on doing scholarship: it is, so to speak, discourse analysis ‘with an attitude’ ” (p. 96). Their explicit position is that discourse analysts should do more than illuminate our understanding of how power relations are reenacted and perpetuated through discursive practices (Fairclough, 2010, p. 61). For them, language research

should be applied to promote greater social justice by raising public awareness of implicit ideological messages conveyed in everyday discourse (Fairclough, 1992, 2010; Van Dijk, 1995, 2001). This wide scope in angles has made CDA an effective analytic frame to investigate how prevailing ideologies are linguistically instantiated in discursive practices (Wodak, 2001, p. 2).

CDA major proponents share some perspectives about language analysis that have become the basic postulates of present day CDA work (Fairclough, 2010; Fairclough & Wodak Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Van Dijk, 2001; Wodak, 2001, 2006a). Firstly, they posit that language use should be treated as a social phenomenon, and therefore, be analyzed in the specific contexts in which it is produced. For Fairclough (2015), “All linguistic phenomena are social phenomena and some social phenomena are linguistic phenomena” (p. 56). This means that the grammar of a language is believed to be never context-free or independent of social variables; instead, the linguistic categories and functions available in the grammar of a language encode social representations of a particular cultural milieu. Fowler and Kress also see language as social-dependent, arguing that instead of a context-free, ‘pure’ linguistic structure as postulated by Chomsky, syntax encodes prevailing worldviews of particular social groups without speakers being cognizant of its ideological underpinnings (Fowler et. al., 1979, pp. 185-190). Consequently, grammatical form is value-laden because the use of one form over another is controlled by participant roles with respect to the expectations set forth for them within pre-existing social hierarchies. “The forms of language in use are *part of*, as well as a *consequence of*, social processes” (Fowler et. al., 1979, p. 26). For example, it is acceptable for teachers to use imperatives to instruct students because they are in a relative position of authority in the class, whereas the same is not true for students, who would be regarded as disrespectful or defiant if they used imperatives to address their teachers. Similarly, the language used by a child to speak to a parent or elderly person, a defendant to speak to a judge, or an employee to speak to their manager has been constrained by the relative position they each have in these particular interactional contexts. With time, these roles as well as the language that accompany them become entrenched in habitual use and seen as ‘neutral’. Thus, linguistic behavior is thought of as

an outcome of social behavior, in which normative constraints define social roles for each person and also establish their position in the social order.

Secondly, CDA scholars assert that post-capitalist societies are structured on unequal social relations, and therefore, all social roles and identities emerging across contexts within institutional settings (family, school, work, church, etc.) are inherently asymmetrical. This asymmetry in the social fabrics of Western societies is seen as the primary source of hegemonic ideologies that express the belief system of powerful groups. They further argue that these prevailing viewpoints are perpetuated via discourses and discursive practices produced and diffused by what Fairclough (2015) calls the ‘bloc institutions’ (pp. 64-70). According to him, these are the macro social institutions that control knowledge production — media, government, academia, public administration, law, religion, education —by setting the boundaries on who and how different types of knowledge (scientific, religious, moral, sociocultural) are transacted. While discourse refers to the content and underlying message carried in talk, discursive practices include the setting, participant roles, and the set of normative constraints that bound talk to context, class, gender, age, as well as a host of other preset social categories within the bloc institutions (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). Van Dijk (1993) also asserts that the general aim of CDA is to study the discursive reproduction of social and political dominance and its effects on historically disadvantaged groups. Holding the belief that worldviews are not only manipulated but also shaped into being by language choice and usage, CDA scholars set out to expose the messages and discursive strategies used by dominant groups to impose their particular ideas on others and consolidate their hegemony in time (Johnstone, 2008, p. 54).

Thirdly, CDA main contributors consider critical theory instrumental to describe how ideology is encrypted in language use, proposing that social scientists should conceive of ‘critique’ as an exercise of perpetual reflection of researchers’ own positions in relation to their research topics. Presupposing no such thing as a ‘neutral’ discourse, CDA scholars claim that there is ideological bias inherent to every form of social talk. “Anything that is said or written about the world is articulated from a particular ideological position: language is not a clear window but a refracting, structuring

medium” (Fowler, 1991, p. 10). For Wodak and Meyer (2009), “‘critique’ regularly aims at revealing structures of power and unmasking ideologies” (p. 8). Fairclough (1992) concurs with this view stating that ‘critical’ is the means to unveil the ‘connections and causes that are hidden’ in a text (p. 9). Hence, much unlike their Chomskyan peers, CDA researchers openly assume their political views and positions in relation to their research topics, maintaining the need for constant reflection and self-awareness while engaged in critical analysis of text and talk (Fairclough, 2015; Van Dijk, 2001).

Differently from other sociolinguistic approaches for the study of language and ideology, CDA main frame traces a far more entwined relationship between language use and specific forms of domination. As previously discussed, Fairclough (2015) proposes a dialectical relationship between language and social structure whereby linguistic events are social events insofar as language use is not only determined by unequal social relations but also constitutive of those relations, grounding discourse analysis firmly on post-Marxist theory. Discourse is thus understood as a form of social practice that structures power relations by ascribing participant roles to interlocutors in speech events, constraining who gets to talk, what they can say, and how they can say it (Fairclough, 2015, p. 52). For Van Dijk (2001), discourse can be a tool of domination by powerful groups to restrict access to resources of knowledge and information. He argues that public discourse not only transmits ideas about the world but also assigns values to textual properties making them socially operative (Van Dijk, 2006). The implication of this is that dominant groups control not only topics, but more importantly, structural components of communicative events such as turn-taking, silence, and registers, thereby defining the context in which they take place (Van Dijk, 2001).

Kress (1985) also sees discourse as a socially regulated medium that sets permissions to the contents and participants in interactional situations. For him “discourses are systematically-organized modes of talking which give expression to the meanings and values of an institution” (Kress, 1985, p. 42). More specifically, he maintains that speakers’ language choice is dictated by their membership to a group or social category (Kress, 1985, pp. 6-7). The discourses produced within these bounded networks, he argues, determines the linguistic repertoires and speaking practices of its

members. Along the same lines, Fowler (1991) discusses language as a system of representations about the world comprising the categories, experiences, and the values assigned to them by a speech community. Mapped onto linguistic forms, this valuation is often explicit to speakers and constitute common sense; however, others remain implicit in the semantic and syntactic structure of a language, carrying meaning not consciously weighed by speakers. For Fowler (1991), these implicit meanings become conventionalized ‘ideological functions’ of a language which, despite their implicitness, operationalize ideas and attitudes towards the world (p. 11).

In a similar vein, Wodak (2006a) also views discourse as social practice, asserting that the various social contexts in which they are produced are the stage where ideological manipulation is exercised (also Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). She argues that prevailing ideologies weave through public discourse by conventionalizing particular worldviews in talk saying that “the effects of power and ideology in the production of meaning are obscured and acquire stable and natural forms: they are taken as ‘given’ ” (Wodak 2001, p. 3). Like her peers, Wodak advocates for an interdisciplinary approach to discourse studies to account for the manifold ways in which language is intertwined with social institutions, practices, and power relations.

2.3 Discourse production: power, ideology, and the construction of common sense

Paramount to understand how CDA is applied to topical discourse is the concept of power and ideology with respect to the construction of common sense. Before discussing these, however, it is important to clarify the concept of discourse itself as an object of linguistic inquiry. For CDA scholars, discourse is the general term for any kind of talk generated in different social contexts. Text is one instance of a discourse, in other words, it is the linguistic output of a discursual genre. In this sense, it is the actual instantiation of a discourse produced and mediated by a constellation of shared representations that speakers internalize through socialization (Johnstone, 2008). These shared representations encompass beliefs, ideas, and factual information about the world, and constitute what Fairclough (2015) calls ‘background knowledge’, which is drawn upon

by speakers when producing and interpreting talk (p. 31). Fairclough (2015) refers to this encyclopedic knowledge socially generated, transmitted, and unequally distributed in society as “members’ resources” (p. 155). Functioning as interpretative tools, this knowledge accounts for conflicting ideas among speakers in interactional contexts. Weiss and Wodak (2003) also affirm that “texts are often sites of struggle in that they show traces of differing discourses and ideologies contending and struggling for dominance” (p. 15).

In Foucauldian terms, discourse is conceived of as a system of social control regulating knowledge production but also social relations. The main Foucauldian thesis appropriated by CDA theoreticians is that “(orders) of discourse constitute a system of exclusion reinforced and renewed by institutionalized social practices that will determine how knowledge is valorized, distributed and attributed in society” (Foucault, 1981, p. 54). From this angle, power is treated as a cultural-bound system of constraints that define and impose participant positions to each and every individual across social contexts. In its discursive dimension, power is conceived of as the ability a person or a group has to control discourse genres, topics, and practices via ideology by defining subject positions and conventionalizing them across interactional contexts (Van Dijk, 2001, p. 355). “Power in discourse is about controlling and constraining the contributions of non-powerful participants” (Fairclough, 2010, p. 27). Wodak (2006a) also argues that language itself does not generate power, but it structures power relations because it enables individuals to negotiate identities and mediate conflicts (p.4).

Also central to understand CDA frame is the concept of ideology and its structural dimension in discourse production and interpretation. CDA scholars offer a broader definition of ideology beyond political alignment or partisan affiliation to include the belief systems coexisting in a society, which mold views and behaviors and oftentimes lead to clashes of values. “Ideologies are sets of ideas involved in the ordering of experience, making sense of the world” (Fowler et.al., 1979, p. 81). Fairclough (2015) defines ideology as representations of the world that sustain social and power relations and the institutions in which they operate (p. 32). Hodge and Kress (1993) also embrace a wider definition of ideology “as a systematic body of ideas, organized by a particular

point of view” (p. 6). For Van Dijk (1995) ideologies constitute a system of mental representations that organize sets of beliefs into social attitudes that are enacted in communicative events. He states that “Ideologies feature the basic principles that organize the attitudes towards ideas associated with a given topic or outgroup, which are shared by the members of a group” (1995, p. 115). As such, ideologies are assumptions of the powerful groups that become ingrained in habitual social interaction and taken for granted as ‘common sense’ knowledge (Johnstone, 2008; Kress and Hodge, 1993; Van Dijk, 1995). In CDA literature, this is how the concept of ideology becomes intrinsically linked to the notion of commonsensical knowledge and its discursive construction.

The relation between prevailing ideologies and common sense was first explored by Italian Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci, who describes it as a collection of shared beliefs sustained not through critical reflection, but as pre-existing, self-evident truths internalized through social institutional practices despoiled of any critical reflection (Gramsci, 1971). Common sense is thus operationally defined as the naturalization of particular worldviews through discursive genres and practices that set constraints on participants, content and delivery (Fairclough, 2015; Fowler, 1991, 1996; Hodge and Kress, 1993; Van Leeuwen, 1995; Wodak, 2006a). Fowler (1991) and Fairclough (1992) argue that dominant ideologies find their way to become diffused in society through the representation of particular views and beliefs as ‘natural’ or ‘commonsensical’ because they are not intuitively apprehensible by readers. “Inculcation can be thought of as motivated by a wish to re-create the universality and ‘naturalness’ of the first mechanism under conditions of class domination and division. It attempts to naturalize partial and interested practices to facilitate the exercise and maintenance of power” (Fowler, 1991, p. 99). Hodge and Kress (1993) concur with the pivotal role played by linguistic form in naturalizing hegemonic ideological views and historically perpetuating different forms of domination.

CDA authors go further to assert that these dominant ideologies are also established through unequal discursal roles that have historically consolidated social and racial hierarchies in Western societies (see Foucault, 1981 for an in-depth treatment of discursal constraints). As they become entrenched in society, these discursal roles

structure social relations across all institutions and social settings (Foucault, 1981; Kress, 1985; Fairclough, 2015). Van Dijk (2001) states that “CDA research is often interested in the study of ideologically biased discourses, and the ways these polarize the representation of us (ingroup) and them (outgroups)” (p. 103). In fact, rhetorical polarization has become a common discursive practice mapped out in CDA literature wherein participant roles are analyzed in light of a binding conceptual structure of opposing categories.

2.4 The relation between text and context

A final concept that is key to understand the frame applied in the present analysis is that of context. I discussed in the previous section that text (spoken or written) is an instance or instantiation of a discourse type, which is produced and diffused within a given social context. In broader terms, context is a socially structured situation that pertains some social activity or speech event and is reproduced in the course of interaction until it becomes permanently ingrained in social life. As used here, speech events correspond to prototypical social situations in which participant roles and the goals of communication are pre-determined by the social structures within which they occur. Goodwin and Duranti (1992) define context as a fixed frame within which a speech event takes place that affords participants the means for correct interpretations (p. 3). In Goffmanian terms (Goffman, 1974), a frame is any familiar scene wherein speakers behave in predictable ways and within the boundaries of an interactional situation. Also Gumperz (1982) defines frames or schemas as “a basic socially significant unit that constrains interpretations by channeling inferences” (p. 139).

Fairclough (2010, 2015) and Van Dijk (2003) also incorporate the notion of frame and schemata in their discussion of text and context, calling ‘context models’ the subjective mental representations people construct of their daily experiences through which social views find their way to everyday discourse. For Fairclough (2010), discourses are always interpreted according to the situational context in which they are embedded through a repertoire of schemata. These consist of routinized mental models

that constitute the ‘background knowledge’ speakers draw on when producing and interpreting texts (Fairclough, 2010, p. 31; 2015, p. 57). Van Dijk (2003) claims that speech events are defined not only in terms of their linguistic-normative properties but, more importantly, by the mental or cognitive models that speakers internalize, which allow for subjective interpretations of the same speech event (pp. 108-109). In this abstract sense, context can be understood as an underlying conceptual structure that organizes experience in graspable parts and assigns fixed meanings to events and behaviors. As a tool of text analysis, context can be described as the background social environment against which a focal event or activity takes place and is interpreted.

Fillmore (1976) identifies two types of contexts as the focal point of linguistic analysis: context of an utterance and the social situation wherein it is produced. Van Dijk (2001) concurs with this view defining context as a set of social expectations shared by members of a society that defines roles, statuses, goals, identities, and limits to interlocutors in interactional situations (p. 356). It comprises settings, activities and actions, participants, discursal genres and textual properties, as well as behaviors and outcomes. Control over a context means defining the expectations of participants, that is, the terms by which a communicative event should take place. Van Dijk (2003) argues that the interplay between textual context and social context accounts for “meaning and contextually-controlled variation in text and talk” (p. 112).

Textual context, on the other hand, constitutes the specific topics discussed in an actual text bred within a social domain (e.g. politics, business, science) and conveyed through propositions made of generalizations, specifications, examples, and explanations. General and specific contexts carry the logical relations (causality, conditionality, contrast/comparison, etc.) between the propositions and the particular states of affair in the world they describe, but also the formal properties (lexicalization, word ordering, clause type, etc.) they elicit or require in order to convey the information packaged in the utterances (Van Dijk, 2003, p. 109). They also constrain the types of interpretations available to speakers such that the information selected as foreground is only the one contextually relevant. For Widdowson (1995), “Interpretation is not just a matter of what the sentence means in relation to the code, but also what the author means in relation to

the context” (p. 160). At the level of the text, context controls the selection of linguistic devices and the possible number of inferences speakers can draw of a particular passage. Thus, textual contexts are the productive sites where information is organized, evaluated, and hierarchized by relevance, as well as the means through which social content is codified in linguistic forms, stabilized by pragmatic constraints (registers, styles, repertoires), and preserved by sociolinguistic practices.

For the purpose of the present analysis, I have adopted an instrumental definition of context relative to the task at hand with the goal of facilitating the examination of patterns in the data. Therefore, in the chapters that follow, context will refer not only to the topics and sub-topics appearing in the data, but foremost to the set of normative constraints bounding text to social settings, participant roles, and a host of other pre-defined categories governing social life.

2.5 Conclusion

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has contributed significantly to our understanding of the complex and intertwined relation between discourse, ideology, and power relations. CDA researchers have produced a great deal of literature both on theory and case studies applied to actual linguistic data, shedding light on processes of text production and how these intersect with social variables. Beyond its theoretical support, CDA has also offered some methodological scaffolding for researchers to incorporate an extra layer of rhetorical analysis into their work. With that, discourse analysts have been able to draw important conclusions about language in context from observations of certain linguistic forms that co-occur with particular topics and local contexts across a range of texts and discourse genres. These recurring linguistic patterns that emerge in topical discourses give a clue not only of the speaker’s intentions, but more importantly, of the strategies used to fulfill communicative tasks that require some kind of imposed or unwilling acceptance of interpretations of the message conveyed.

Given its heavy reliance on contextual information, the productive focus of CDA studies has been on qualitative analyses of different discourse types, with a particular

interest in lexical selection and grammatical constructions (Fairclough, 2015; Hodge and Kress, 1993; Van Dijk, 1995; Van Leeuwen, 1995). Among other features, *nominalization* and *passivization* were singled out as paramount to ideological positioning since they manipulate agency. Both processes are described in CDA literature mostly as grammatical devices to *re-encode* experiences by transforming the relation between actions and their protagonists into a single concept (Fowler et.al., 1979). In fact, the notion of agency is central, and CDA scholars have earned a lot of mileage discussing how these two processes reflect and assist the reproduction of power relations in text.

The analysis presented in the following chapters fits into the overarching CDA frame described in this chapter, which allowed me to examine some of the same patterns mentioned above in the data analyzed. In the next chapter, I will present the analytic frame used to parse and organize the data in analyzable units, and I will also provide some background information about the particular context that originated the actual text.

Chapter 3

Analytic Frame

In this chapter, I will present the frame used for the subsequent analysis applying some of the concepts previously introduced. Because this is a qualitative analysis and the data consists of a single text, I will first describe both its structure and organization, and the content relevant for the research questions and working hypothesis. Then, I will discuss the dimensions of discourse in CDA that informed the levels of analysis applied here. These levels are 1) Topical-contextual: the claims and counterclaims presented by authors and the particular passages in which they appear in the text, 2) Linguistic: the forms used in the argumentation and their functions in the specific contexts they appear; and 3) Rhetorical: the strategies and moves set forth by these grammatical forms in the contexts they occur. I will also describe the organization of the text in terms of how it was divided into units of analysis, the criteria for selection of linguistic features and example passages from the data. My goal is to enable the reader to easily understand the way the data was treated in the analysis chapters, and also to give a preview of the content analyzed before its subsequent division into exemplificatory passages.

3.1 The data

The text analyzed is *CIA's Comments on the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence's Report on the Rendition, Detention and Interrogation Program* released to the public in December of 2014. The document was written as a response to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence's *Study of the Central Intelligence Agency's Detention and Interrogation Program*, and was submitted to the Senate Committee and the White House in June of 2013. The full document was unclassified for public release in December of 2014.

The full 136-page document released for public viewing was retrieved from the

CIA's online database in October of 2015 along with three other related documents: the Committee's *Study of the CIA's Rendition, Detention and Interrogation Program*, a *Statement from Director Brennan on the Committee's Study on the Former Detention and Interrogation Program*, and the *CIA Fact Sheet Regarding the Committee's Study on the Former Detention and Interrogation Program*, which provided additional historical information about the circumstances under which the *Comments* was drafted. These documents can be found under the 'Recent Reports' section of the CIA's virtual library on their website.

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence's report (hereinafter referred to as 'the Committee') was the result of a three-year study of CIA's conduct of the RDI program aimed at evaluating the legality and effectiveness of 'enhanced techniques of interrogation' in producing unique intelligence. The Committee presented its conclusions and findings of CIA's use of 'enhanced techniques of interrogation' from thirty-five cases of detainees subjected to these methods. The Committee members reached twenty main findings and conclusions pertaining CIA's overall conduct of the program, officers' interrogation methods, the agency's representations of the results to government and the media, and government oversight of the program. These results point to, among other things, the mishandling of the program by the commanding officers and misrepresentations of the effectiveness of 'enhanced techniques of interrogation' to obtain unique intelligence. Central to the discussion on intelligence collection is the Committee's accusations of the Agency's reluctance to provide access to all information or provide accurate information to the Committee and a number of other Executive Branch agencies, including the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and Department of the Defense.

CIA's *Comments* can be characterized as a counter-response to the Committee's often harsh criticisms of the ways in which CIA officers handled information about detentions and interrogations as well as about detainees. CIA's authors grouped the Committee's findings and conclusions into four key areas to which they directed their responses: A) unpreparedness of CIA officials to manage the program; B) Arbitrariness and unaccountability of CIA interrogators; C) ineffectiveness of 'enhanced techniques of

interrogation’, and D) misrepresentations of the effectiveness of ‘enhanced techniques of interrogation’ to government and the media (Table 1, pp. 41-42). The authors are CIA analysts and managers who worked in the program, but according to CIA “were not involved in any of the decisions during the execution of program”. They responded to each of the Committee’s accusation presented in the twenty conclusions and examples in the Study with a particular focus on those that questioned the value of the information CIA obtained from the use of torture. This is important because it is the basis for Committee’s assertions regarding the veracity of CIA’s representations of the program.

The text is organized in four main parts: 1) a foreword by CIA director John Brennan to the Committee; 2) Comments and recommendations provided by the Committee in their findings and conflated by CIA authors in four key themes; 3) Responses to each of the Committee’s twenty conclusions, and 4) Review of each of the Committee’s twenty examples of the value of the information obtained from ‘enhanced techniques of interrogation’. According to authors, what motivated their response was CIA’s own assessment of their conduction of the program and their interest in offering their version of the events against the Committee’s allegations that the Agency misrepresented the program to the government and the public. It is their public image that is at stake because veracity entails integrity, reliability, professionalism, moral standards, and above all, credibility in the Intelligence community but also society at large.

The analytic frame used in this text was created taking into consideration the main postulates of CDA in respect to discourse data and structure. It also included the different dimensions of discourse production and the levels of discourse analysis which guided the identification of patterns and contexts. In the following sections, these components are presented along with a preview of what is to come in the data and analysis chapters.

3.2 Levels of Analysis

As mentioned in the introductory section, the text was analyzed within a tripartite schema containing the three levels or dimensions of discourse prescribed by CDA: Topical-contextual, linguistic, and rhetorical. Underlying these discursal dimensions lies

a higher level of social information that maps participant roles onto semantic roles in the passages, defines the contents relevant to the discussion, and sets the tone appropriate to the communicative task of the text. This multilayered analytic frame informed my analysis of the whole text as an instance of a particular topical discourse as well as its subsequent division into smaller analyzable units based on the linguistic patterns identified. However, before getting into the organization of linguistic data, I will succinctly outline the three levels of the analysis.

Although both Fairclough (2010, 2015) and Van Dijk (2001) count the social context as a discoursal level per se, I have not included it in my analysis. Instead, I am treating social data the way most discourse analysts do, as the backdrop against which a topical discourse can be analyzed and from which it derives its informational content and social-linguistic contours. My intention is not to dismiss the importance of social context, but to treat it as non-linguistic data. Hence, I am only briefly restating what was already described in the introduction chapter about the historical circumstances which gave rise to CIA's program, and the Agency's need to legitimize the use of torture methods.

In the aftermath of 9/11, George W. Bush launches his 'War on Terrorism' as a counter-offensive against alleged members and supporters of Al-Qaeda, which would later become a central policy in his administration. The White House charged CIA with the task of running an operative to identify, detain, and interrogate suspects as a measure to prevent future attacks in American soil and narrow down on Osama bin Laden's organization. Between 2001 and 2008, the CIA ran its Rendition, Detention, and Interrogation Program with the collaboration of other agencies, among them, the FBI and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI). The objective of the program was to collect information from alleged insiders of Al-Qaeda that would lead to the whereabouts of Bin Laden and deter other terrorist acts. When Obama takes office in 2009, he commissions a study of the program by the Committee to determine whether it was effective in collecting unique intelligence about terrorism. The Committee's report presents a grim picture of CIA's program and its use of 'enhanced interrogation techniques (EITs). This would later become a much-heated debate over what constitutes torture and what does not in intelligence collection⁶.

Against this backdrop of political change and in face of a negative evaluation by the Committee, the CIA produced a response aimed at countering the severe criticisms launched against the agency for its administration of the so-called ‘enhanced interrogation techniques’ of which waterboarding received notorious negative publicity. It was also against this background of political shift towards accountability in the 2000’s that discourses were produced by the media and government about the merits and demerits of torture methods in intelligence collection. These talks constitute the macro or meta discourse about torture by the CIA, which gives the context wherein the selected text is instantiated.

Hence, the first level of analysis is the topic itself, what the discourse is about, born out of the political-historical context, namely, the need for a prompt response from the government to 9/11. The main claim in this discourse was that *enhanced techniques of interrogation produced (or not) intelligence otherwise not obtainable through other methods that was crucial to capture Al-Qaeda terrorists and prevent future terrorist threats*. It was also this main argument that was disputed between the Committee and the CIA, and became the pivotal point in both the Senate’s report and CIA’s counter-response. CIA’s Comments, on the other hand, constitutes a central piece in this ongoing debate because it is the only instance in which the agency justifies its use of torture during the program. Thus, the key argument in the CIA’s response is its overall refutation of the Committee’s claim that *enhance techniques of interrogation did not produce unique intelligence to prevent future terrorist threats*. As mentioned earlier, CIA authors organized their response to the Committee’s allegations according to four key themes, and I maintained the same topical organization in my analysis to facilitate the correlation between contexts, language use, and rhetorical moves.

CIA’s Comments was structured as an argumentative topically organized as a response. Applying Van Dijk’s terminology (2001a), these four key themes constitute the “global topics” or “macro-propositions” in the text and they are the Committee’s main accusations against CIA explicated in the Committee’s report. These global topics are found in the three main sections of CIA’s Comments under which justifications are constructed. Structurally, global topics are the articulating element that give overall

coherence to the discourse by organizing and connecting the various arguments they originate in specific passages. While global topics are situated in macro contexts, local topics are the specific arguments or micro propositions instantiated in local contexts. They constitute the various types of justificatory arguments presented by CIA authors to counterpoint each of the Committee's main accusations (Table 1). These justifications have a few recurrent underlying themes that lead the reader to contrasting interpretations of the Committee's assessment of CIA's program and CIA's own assessment of their program. This contrasting interpretation fit into a polarized frame of both social actors built on positive self-representations and negative other-representations. CIA authors present a series of arguments and counter arguments to build institutional credibility and justify their use of 'enhanced interrogation techniques' in the specific situations singled out in the Committee's report. Their arguments can be grouped into three categories: a) defamatory arguments (negative evaluative claims) to represent the Committee as inept evaluators of Intelligence, b) self-praise or complimentary arguments in their self-representations as evaluators of Intelligence; c) justificatory arguments for their use of torture methods and other forms of wrongdoing.

Table 1 Organization of the Text – Global and Local Contexts

Committee's Claims	CIA's Counterclaims	Rhetorical Moves
Global Themes		
Torture did not produce unique intelligence to prevent future terrorist threats.	Torture did produce unique intelligence to prevent future terrorist threats.	Denial
Local Themes		
A) Mismanagement of the RDI program		
1. CIA was unprepared to run the RDI.	1 CIA had no experience or the necessary human resources. 2 CIA was overwhelmed with high-demand security tasks against terrorist threats.	Blame Shifting

2. CIA did not develop or monitor its initial activities.	3 CIA did not establish centralized task force to oversee the program only initially . 4 CIA did not monitor arbitrary use of force by officers only initially . 5 CIA used unauthorized techniques and excessive force only in a few cases . 6 CIA officers were not held accountable for abuses only initially .	Blame Shifting and Reversal
B) Excessive Use of Force		
3. CIA personnel were not qualified for the tasks they performed.	7 CIA arrested only a few suspects under an incorrect legal interpretation. 8 CIA held only a few detainees longer than needed given the level of secrecy of the program.	Blame Shifting
4. CIA personnel used illegal methods of torture or excessive methods of torture.	9 CIA used unauthorized techniques and excessive force only in a few cases .	Blame Shifting
5. CIA did not hold accountable those interrogators accused of misconduct.	10 CIA officers were not held accountable for abuses only initially .	Blame Shifting
C) Ineffectiveness of ‘Enhanced Techniques of Interrogation’		
6. CIA misrepresented value of information obtained from torture.	11 Torture was an effective coercive method because its use decreased over time. 12 CIA used imprecise language and made errors only in a few of its representations.	Denial
7. Torture did not produce unique intelligence to deter terrorist threats.	13 CIA obtained unique intelligence from detainees that helped to prevent terrorist threats.	Denial
D) Resistance to Oversight and Misrepresentations of Program		
8. CIA misrepresented value of information obtained to government and media.	14 Study offers a disproportionate account of CIA’s misrepresentations	Blame Reversal

9. CIA was insubordinate to oversight by government authorities.	15 CIA did not intentionally resist oversight by government. 16 CIA had to restrict sensitive information to a few members of government.	Denial and Blame Shifting
--	--	---------------------------

The second level of analysis is the linguistic, given by the variation of grammatical forms in function of the local contexts in the text. Of this level, the only mention here is that two of the forms examined – contrastive use of syntactic voicing and nominalization – are those mostly discussed in CDA literature given that they correlate with semantic roles and thus are instrumental to understand degrees of agentivity and the roles conferred to CIA and the Committee in specific contexts. Nominalization is mostly treated in CDA literature as the reduction of a verbal phrase into its head verb, and subsequently into a noun. Such transformation tends to simplify the more complex relations expressed in a clause between events and event participants, turning them into single lexical items (Fowler et.al., 1979). On the other hand, syntactic voicing relates to the position of the Actor-like argument in the sentence, which will determine how agentive an event participant is. While in active voice, the Actor-like subject occupies the canonical subject position at the beginning of the sentence, in a passive construction this same subject is demoted to a prepositional phrase that is either expressed at the end of the sentence or left implicit (Van Valin, 2001, p. 30). This is important when examining representations of social actors because the choice of a more or less agentive role assigned to participants in a discourse reveals attitudes towards them in relation to each other and the topic discussed. Likewise, nominalized verbs also give important insight into overall sentiment towards specific social actors on the assumption that subjects specifically obtained from verbs that encode processes and turned into nouns are devoid of human agency (Fowler et.al., 1979). I will pick up this discussion later in the following analysis chapters.

The other features examined were concessive clauses and polarized lexical framing based on patterns observed in the text, but also the research questions pertaining

the linguistic encoding of justifications. Concessive clauses are *although* adverbial clauses, defined as a subset of contrastive clauses that contain a main claim countered by an adversarial or alternative proposition to the initial one. Counterclaims are packaged in the concessive clauses, and in the data examined they consist of reasons for extraordinary actions, alluding to the notion of an exception to the rule, in this case, to the ordinary or usual course of action. An in-depth description of concessive relations is given in chapter four along with examples from the data to illustrate the patterns found. Finally, lexical selection draws in a polarized conceptual frame therein arguments are constructed. Similar to semantic roles of verbs, lexical items used to characterize the CIA and the Committee as well as their actions fit into this conceptual domain filled with ideas associated with the concept of expertise. Within this frame, CIA authors assign opposing roles to the agency and the Committee based on contrastive representations of competence and, consequently, credibility relative to Intel work. Unequal footing between CIA and the Committee is thereby established from the start of the text. Syntactic constructions and lexical selection will be treated in depth in chapters four and five. For now, a brief introduction to what they are and why they are chosen suffices.

Finally, the third level of analysis is rhetorical, where claims and counterclaims are examined in relation to the key themes presented in the sections of the text. I am particularly interested in examining the rhetorical effects of grammatical realizations on message interpretation, more specifically, how justifications for the use of torture are discursively enacted in the text. In this level, the recurrent arguments are consistently paired up with particular grammatical forms, giving the overall structure of argumentation for the text. I will also discuss the rhetorical strategies or moves, defined as the manner in which an argument is presented in a string of arguments to either strengthen, weaken, or shift the course of an inference for a persuasive goal. My focus is on blame avoidance strategies to show how polarization is rhetorically constructed. This will be discussed in detailed in the chapter six.

Each theme will be presented separately along three example passages that contain the main arguments used by the authors to legitimize the use of torture. An analysis of the four linguistic features discussed previously – syntactic voice,

nominalization, concessive clauses, and lexical selection – will be presented for each example. Each theme constitutes a macro-semantic structure or global context within which arguments are developed and evidence given to legitimize CIA's authority over the Committee. Each passage presented contains one argument that is linguistically structured through contextual use of the four features introduced above. These passages constitute the local contexts in which positive or negative representations of the CIA and the Committee are constructed while the linguistic forms constitute the grammatical instantiations of each one.

3.3 Criteria for the data selection

The selection of a single text in lieu of a specialized corpus for the analysis of this type of discourse was partly to fit the research questions, which required an in-depth inspection of the rhetorical organization of the topic and the linguistic forms it demands. The second and more important reason, however, is the uniqueness of the text itself: CIA's Comments is the first and most open public admission of the use of torture by CIA officers in the United States, and also the first time CIA openly and publicly justifies torture methods to government and the public. For this reason, the *Comments* bears historical significance for the discussion of how torture has been legitimized in government discourse, and it becomes linguistically relevant as a singular instantiation of grammatical and lexical encoding of justificatory arguments. Therefore, the uniqueness of the Comments and the specificities of the research questions called for a qualitative analysis of a type of data that is not exemplificatory, but prototypical of discourses of legitimization as it accounts for a particular event in American history rather than recurrent discursive practices entrenched in American society.

Despite the wealth of information obtained from in-depth analyses of self-contained, single texts such as the one presented here, qualitative approaches have a number of shortcomings. The first relates to the quality of the data itself since there are many redacted passages from the original version. This poses a technical challenge in ensuring consistency in the patterns found since the text is not presented in its totality.

However, considering the length of the document, I am hopeful that the number of passages that were kept intact allowed me to confirm patterns in the use of rhetorical mechanisms and linguistic devices that were consistent with the intended message. The second shortcoming is the impossibility to generalize the results beyond the text itself. Strictly speaking, a larger corpus of CIA documents would be required in order to extend the interpretations of this particular text to all other instances of the same discourse along its history. This means that no categorical affirmation can be provided about CIA's legitimization discourse beyond the scope of the present analysis and the text examined.

In regards to the selection of linguistic features, two main criteria were applied: 1) those that have been historically examined in CDA literature, most notably, nominalization and passivization; and 2) their co-occurrence with particular local contexts. Hence, it is possible to affirm that the selection of features is "twice context-bound" as Van Dijk puts it (2001, p. 106). Firstly, it is bound by the main thesis and the research questions it aims at answering, and secondly, by the variation of particular linguistic forms in function of local contexts. Thus, linguistic form and context constitute the dependent and independent variables, respectively, and their consistent co-occurrence in the text establishes a reliable discourse pattern to be investigated.

While the selection of discourse patterns posed no challenges, the selection and organization of analyzable units became a methodological conundrum altogether. Assuming that qualitative analysis of any genre or instance of discourse is analysis of language used in context, the problem of demarcating a 'chunk' or analyzable portion that contained all the textual properties relevant to the genre and information relevant to the topic became a central piece for methodological consideration. Added to that an extra level of analysis that included the rhetorical structure layered into this specific text, the challenge reached a different magnitude. Rather than finding passages where form and meaning are clearly distinguishable by topical shifts, there is linguistic form, context, and topical argumentation intertwined and packaged into a continuous single thread running through the text. Finding the endpoints in this thread where some discontinuity of all three elements would allow for a clear-cut breakdown of the text pointed at the rhetorical structure as the best possible parameter for an integrated analysis. Thus, the

counterclaims nested under each of the four key themes offered a clearer and more consistent perimeter, and for this reason were taken as units of analysis. Besides allowing for consistency in the parsing of the text, they enabled me to observe the repetition of language use within similar contexts across a broad range of arguments. Needless to say, whichever the appropriate unit for analysis is, it must be maintained systematically for patterns to be reliably established, and example passages to truthfully reflect those patterns and not become isolated examples that fit the theory or validate the hypothesis.

Finally, with respect to the selection of the passages to illustrate the patterns, three criteria were applied: 1) those containing most of the features selected, 2) those exemplifying each of the counterclaims presented, and 3) those that more directly addressed the use of torture methods and other themes identified as relevant for the discussion. In order to preserve the integrity of each counterclaim, example passages were chosen that vary in length although they average ten to fifteen lines each.

3.4 The correlation between context and form

As mentioned before, discourse structures are argued to be contextually variable in that they are the result of the functions of the text and not of the formal requirements of a particular set of structural or pragmatic properties of the text. The question, then, of which discourse structures can vary as a function of which contexts is contingent on the specific power relation among discursal participants being investigated (Van Dijk, 2001, p. 99). Given the fact that CIA Comments is a counter-response to the Committee's overall negative assessment of the program, it can be assumed that the dispute over expert authority is what determines the type of lexical items and the grammatical constructions they populate, in the representation of both actors in the text, in particular, in passages where admission of guilt is granted. It also accounts for the pattern of concessive sentences in respect to their position in the development of an argument.

Since the linguistic form of any text fits the communicative purposes its author seeks to accomplish, in the case of CIA authors the purpose was to legitimize the use of torture by officers and preserve institutional credibility. If the purpose of the text is

legitimization, what determines the use of certain linguistic forms as well as the structure of argumentation is the need to construct justifications to account for the alleged wrongdoing and build credit in contexts where blame reversal is rhetorically viable. In the case of justifications, arguments are rationalizations of the type ‘the means justify the ends’ for the purpose of obtaining validation or approval for acts of wrongdoing (Van Leeuwen, 2007; Weber, 1947). An important note is the difference between *justification* and *legitimization* as I use in the analysis. Whereas justifications can take many forms based on the expected outcomes – definitions and explanations to rationalize wrongdoing, and predictions to assign utilitarian value to a wrongdoing – the concept of legitimization is strictly tied to some form of authority, in this case, the legal authority founded on the rule of law (Habermas, 1975; Weber, 2004). It can be said that legitimization is some form of justification by an authority, and while anyone can justify wrongful actions, only institutions can legitimize them. In terms of what is being analyzed in the data, I am establishing the claims presented by CIA authors as the justifications constructed in the course of their counter-argumentation. Therefore, I will refer to justification more often as the action of presenting propositions aimed at rationalizing or morally validating a wrongful action, and legitimization as the higher status conferred upon them by CIA’s legal authority to employ coercion even when it extrapolates constitutional limits.

Table 2 contains the tripartite analytic frame I used to represent the different dimensions of discourse that shows how form, context and function are intertwined in the textual structure. It also gives a summary of the key themes and the counterclaims they originate. This frame not only guided my examination of the data at all three levels, but also informed the organization of the patterns from all three levels into an integrated analysis of the text.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented the general frame used for the analysis of the CIA’s text. It draws on the main postulates of CDA pertaining the handling of discourse structures in relation to the local contexts of a text. I also laid out the definitions and

concepts used in the analysis that enabled me to capture the correlation between language form and local topical contexts. Very much like other qualitative analysis of discourse genres, the manner of identifying patterns is not by measuring the frequency of the variables under inspection in the data, but by establishing their co-occurrence under the same conditions throughout the text. In what it differs from conventional discourse analysis is the addition of the rhetorical structure unearthed from the text and integrated into the analysis. This extra level or dimension of discourse into the analysis is by far the single most important distinction in CDA methodology given the fact it treats the propositional contents of a discourse, that is, the actual things that are said, as an object of analysis and an equally important variable to consider when drawing conclusions.

Next, I present the data and the analysis divided up in two separate chapters for the sake of organization. In chapter four, I focus on grammatical constructions and chapter five is dedicated to the description of the lexical patterns that populate these constructions.

Table 2 Analytic Frame: Context, Grammatical Form, and Rhetorical Function

Grammatical Form	Context (Key themes)			Rhetorical Function (Blame Avoidance)
	CIA's Positive Self-Representation	Committee's Negative Representation		
	Negative Context (Allegations)	Positive Context (Admission of guilt and regrets)	Negative Context (Allegations)	
Passive vs. Active Voice	1. Mismanagement of the program	Justifications: Lack of guidance and time, pressure, etc.	Unbalanced accounts: Intentional omission of efforts to correct flaws	Shift focus and deflect blame

	2. Excessive use of force	Admission of guilt and/or correction Justification: Only alternative	Exaggerated accounts: Inaccuracy due to bias, ill intentions	Deflect and reverse blame, build credit
	3. Inefficiency of enhanced techniques of interrogation	Denial of allegations (Point of Contention)	Inaccurate accounts due to incompetence (insufficient expertise on Intel work)	Shift focus and reverse blame
Nominalization and agentless NPs	4. Misrepresentation of the program and results	Denial of allegations (Point of Contention)	Biased and inaccurate accounts in assigning responsibility to actors.	Shift focus and represent events as natural causes
Concessive Clauses	2. Excessive use of force 3. Inefficiency	Admission of guilt and/or correction Justification: Only alternative		Shift inference and enhance positive outcomes
Polarized Lexis	All allegations			Contrast positive and negative representations

Chapter 4

Blame avoidance through grammatical constructions

In this chapter I examine the most common blame avoidance strategies found in the CIA's response to the Committee's accusations. In particular, I look at how blame avoidance is operationalized into four recurring linguistic forms that vary in function of the local contexts in the text. I will demonstrate how these strategies are effectively used to foreground CIA's subordination to the law and government against actions of alleged misconduct and at the same time background the negative consequences of such actions. In doing so, the authors accomplish two important tasks in the construction of discursive legitimacy: (a) establish CIA's professional credibility as expert authority in Intelligence, and b) discredit the Committee as a reliable source of knowledge about Intelligence.

The four linguistic patterns that I found to vary in function of the local contexts were syntactic voice, nominalization, concessive clauses, and polarized semantic frames. Of these four, I will only discuss the first three here and take up semantic frames in chapter five since polarized lexis constitutes a robust pattern that requires separate treatment. The local contexts that appear in the text are defined according to three parameters: 1) Global and local themes, which are the Committee's four accusations against CIA's use of torture and CIA's specific counterclaims for each one; 2) Blame avoidance strategies that include, but are not limited to denial, reversal, shifting, and credit building (Hansen, 2015); and, 3) Contextual valence (Polanyi & Zaenen, 2006) or sentiment- overall positivity or negativity encoded in the language used in CIA's counterclaims. The Committee's four main accusations and CIA's set of justifications for each one constitute negative contexts in which the outcomes of CIA's actions are represented as negative, whereas CIA's denial of claims and credit-building constitute the positive contexts of the text. Negative contexts are marked by an overall use of negative language and blame avoidance strategies that reassign the blame for negative outcomes to other actors or reverse the blame by attacking the opponent on some ground. Positive contexts on the other hand, convey positive attitudes and positions regarding the

outcomes of the use of torture reflected in positive language and rhetorical moves that deny accusations or build CIA's credit for some action initially presented as negative. In his discussion about semantic agency, Van Dijk (1995) points to the ways in which "responsibility for positive and negative acts is expressed in different syntactic forms" (pp. 24-25). He observes that while active voice amplifies negative acts assigned to out-groups and positive acts of in-groups by focusing on their agency, the opposite is true for passive constructions and nominalizations which downplay the agency of in-groups in negative actions (Van Dijk, 1995, 24).

The first pattern I examined was syntactic voice- the variation in degrees of agentivity in active and passive sentences (Semantic Roles) in relation to types of allegations- the more serious the allegation (e.g. unauthorized techniques, excessive lethal force, etc.), the less agentive CIA's semantic role in the clause. The second was nominalization- the relation between *de*-agentilized subjects (those specifically denoting processes that were obtained from verbal phrases) and types of allegations- the more serious the allegation, the greater the number of non-agentive subjects. Whereas nominalization refers to nouns obtained from verbs that express processes, passivization is the demotion of the more-Actor like argument from its canonical subject position to a non-term either omitted or expressed as the object in a prepositional phrase at the end of the sentence (Van Valin, 2001). The third pattern was modality- how deontic and epistemic modals establish equal or unequal footing between CIA and Senate. Deontic modals are those that express ideas related to duty, obligation, permission, or prohibition while epistemic modals express the degree of certainty within which a speaker positions himself in relation to his proposition regarding its truthfulness (Bybee & Fleischman, 1995). The fourth was the order of concessive clauses in relation to the strength of allegations- how types of concessive relations alter the perception of truth of claims (Lambrecht, 1994). The use of evaluative lexicon to construct polarized conceptual frames will be dealt with in detail in the next chapter.

This chapter is organized in five sections, an introduction and four specific sections that discuss each of the four key themes introduced in chapter three (Table 1, pp.45-46). For each section, two example passages from the text are provided illustrating

the grammatical patterns analyzed. CIA authors present a series of counter-claims to build credibility and justify their use of ‘enhanced interrogation techniques of interrogation’ (referred by this author as torture methods in the remainder of the analysis) in relation to the accusations made in the Committee’s report. CIA’s counter-claims are grouped into three categories: a) Defamations to represent the Committee as inept intelligence evaluators, b) Self-appraisals in their self-representations as intelligence experts; c) Justifications for their use of torture methods. The first section is an overall analysis of the main claim by the Committee that CIA’s use of torture methods were ineffective in producing unique intelligence followed by CIA’s counterclaim denying it. In the remainder four parts, I look at a series of counterclaims for each of the specific accusations. I close with a summary of the main analysis for the linguistic patterns examined for each key theme.

4.1 Key Themes

4.1.1 Accusation A – Initial mismanagement of the RDI Program

The first of the four main accusations (themes) addressed by the authors is CIA’s initial mismanagement of the RDI program due to their general unpreparedness to manage and monitor their initial activities. To this first accusation, CIA authors admit to being unprepared as the result of inexperience, lack of specific skills, scarcity of resources, and high security demands at the time the program was launched. Their justification is thereby constructed through an explanation for their initial unpreparedness that shifts the cause from potential misconduct and wrong decisions by CIA managers to external factors such as lack of resources, adequate training and time for an effective execution of the program. By directing the focus to resources instead of decisions or abilities, the authors deflect blame since external factors and circumstances are understood to be out of one’s control.

Three recurrent grammatical patterns are observed in this section: 1) The use of passive voice and nominalizations in negative contexts where the authors need to account for wrongdoing, and 2) Concessive clauses to present justifications for the wrongdoing.

Below is a breakdown of accusation A according to claims and counter-claims, the latter being the substance of CIA's justifications.

4.1.1.1 Accusation A

“CIA was unprepared to conduct an RDI effort and inadequately developed and monitored its initial activities.” (CIA's Comments, p. 7)

Claim 1: CIA was unprepared to run the RDI

Counter 1a: CIA had no experience or the necessary human resources

Counter 1b: CIA was overwhelmed with high-demand security tasks against terrorist threats

Claim 2: CIA did not develop or monitor its initial activities

Counter 2a: CIA did not establish centralized task force to oversee the program only initially

Counter 2b: CIA did not monitor arbitrary use of force by officers only initially

Counter 2c: CIA used unauthorized techniques and excessive force only in a few cases.

Counter 2d: CIA officers were not held accountable for abuses only initially.

CIA authors overall argument against the Committee's first accusation is that CIA mismanaged the program only during its initial phase, but soon became aware of their mistakes and made the necessary changes to meet the requirements of the program. In their response, the authors argue that the Committee's account are exaggerated and intentionally misinformed given their inability to accurately diagnose initial shortcomings as well as acknowledge CIA's eventual correction of their flaws.

In this first example passage, the authors acknowledge that the agency was not prepared to manage the program during its initial phase due to a series of technical and time constraints, all of which prevented their managers from properly overseeing detention and the work of interrogators. They argue, however, that once their initial activities were scrutinized by internal and external audits, these mistakes could be identified and addressed. We observe the use of nominalization and agentless NPs as

subjects of the sentences to redirect the attention from the officers involved in mistaken actions to the constraints identified as responsible for these mistakes.

Example (1) (pp.2-3)

1 *“In particular, we agree that the agency was unprepared to initiate an RDI effort. CIA did*
 2 *not have a cadre of trained interrogators, particularly with adequate foreign language*
 3 *skills. Moreover, the Agency faced this challenge at a time when it was overwhelmed by the*
 4 *other aspects of its worldwide response to the threat of more mass casualty attacks. This*
 5 *lack of preparation and competencies resulted in significant lapses in the Agency's*
 6 *ability to develop and monitor its initial detention and interrogation activities. These*
 7 *initial lapses, most of which were corrected by 2003 and have been the subject of multiple*
 8 *internal and external investigations, were the result of a failure of management at*
 9 *multiple levels, albeit at a time when CIA management was stretched to the limit as the*
 10 *CIA led the U.S government's counterterrorism response to the 9/11 attacks against the*
 11 *Homeland.”*

In (1) the authors represent CIA's unpreparedness as a given circumstance or condition rather than a consequence by “descriptivizing” an action, that is, by turning a dynamic process encoded in a verb (‘to prepare’) into descriptive content expressed by a predicative adjective (‘to be unprepared’). According to Van Leeuwen (2007), descriptive content decreases agentivity because attributes express properties (qualities or states) of participants that are more or less permanent, and thus independent of volition. While in an active sentence CIA would have an agentive role (‘CIA didn't prepare for or initiated the RDI efforts’) being explicitly assigned the responsibility for its actions, in a copular construction the agency is demoted to the role of Carrier of a property (*CIA was unprepared*) who is the subject of forces of circumstances (Laffut, 2006, p.158). Describing the circumstances under which the CIA initiated the RDI program instead of the actions partaken obfuscates the intention that otherwise would have been expressed in an action verb, breaking any implied causal link between CIA's misdeeds and its poor performance. Therefore, if predicate adjectives downplay the actor's responsibility, CIA's neglect to prepare itself for the task at hand is represented in terms of a lack of the

necessary conditions to initiate the program, which presupposes less control by the agent. CIA's initial flaws are thereby construed as the result of deficiencies rather than poor decision-making.

The same idea of lack of control over external circumstances is conveyed in the next line (1-2) in which CIA has the role of Possessor who lacks resources (*the cadre of trained interrogators*) to run the RDI effectively. By saying what CIA 'had or did not have' the focus is drawn again to the set of necessary conditions for CIA to perform its task instead of the actions required to create those necessary conditions or attain those resources. Possession, in this sense, also conveys a state of permanence as opposed to action which encodes dynamic processes of actors. The inference is that CIA should have received or be given trained interrogators by someone else and not that the agency should be the one to train the interrogators in the first place. Assigning responsibility to this negative condition would require identifying who is responsible for preparing the agency and training interrogators with foreign language skills, which would yield a sentence like 'so-and-so didn't provide CIA with a cadre of trained interrogators', or alternatively 'CIA didn't train interrogators with foreign language skills' if we assume the agency is the one responsible for gathering its own resources. In another predicate adjective, CIA has the role of Experiencer in (3) *it was overwhelmed by the other aspects of its worldwide response to the threat of more mass casualty attacks*, which reinforces the idea that its unpreparedness is the result of uncontrollable external forces, and therefore, inevitable and unintentional. This reinforces our understanding of the CIA as a passive actor, a 'sufferer' who experiences negative states and finds itself unwillingly immersed in a negative situation beyond its control (Van Dijk, 2006, p. 373). Contrastively, in the same sentence, CIA is the Agent in (3) *CIA faced this challenge* which leads to a positive inference about CIA's good intention because the choice of the verbal phrase *to face* entails volition. If the authors had kept the same constructions we would have the alternative phrases 'CIA had this challenge' or 'CIA was challenged' wherein CIA would still be a Possessor of a negative quality or an Experiencer of a negative state. This change from previous non-agentive roles (Possessor and Experiencer) in negative contexts, where CIA does not have resources and is overcome by negative external

factors, to an agentive role (Agent) in positive context, in which CIA deals with challenges, signals to an overall positive self-representation through manipulation of degrees of agentivity encoded in these semantic roles⁷. Van Leeuwen (2007) explains that nominalizations or ‘process nouns’ objectify actions, adding purpose or legitimation to the representations as they can establish causal links between two actions.

In the sequence, we find another set of agentless NPs in (5-6) which further conveys the idea that CIA’s lack of control over its situation is the result of forces of circumstances. In (5) two non-agentive nouns - *this lack of preparation* (CIA’s lack of preparation or unpreparedness) and *competencies* and *significant lapses in the Agency’s ability*- represent CIA’s inability to prepare itself as a natural occurrence, independent of human action (Fowler et.al., 1979; Johnstone, 2008; Van Leeuwen, 1995, pp. 18-19). The unexpressed agent-argument of the first NP constructs the event as causeless (‘whose lack of preparation and what/who caused it?’) while CIA’s Possessor role in the second PosP obscures CIA as the causative Agent even more since it is the dependent NP with *the ability* as head noun. A clearer causal chain would require a more agentive role yielding the alternative ‘resulted in CIA being unable to’ where ‘lapses’ does not seem to add any new meaning to the sentence. So, our understanding of the causal relation here is shifted from ‘CIA did not prepare (itself) so it wasn’t able to develop and monitor activities’ to ‘the unpreparedness caused the inability to develop and monitor activities’. The unpreparedness thus gains more salience in the readers’ mind than the CIA because the event is devoid of cause. Noteworthy is also the choice of the hypernyms (*lack of preparation* and *competencies*) that offer too broad and vague a description of CIA’s mistakes since they do not spell out what kind of tasks involved this preparation and the specific competencies being considered. In the sequence, another lexical NP in (8) *a failure of management at multiple levels* omits the object of the nominalized action ‘to fail’ thus preventing readers to know what exactly CIA failed at doing. This omission of the central piece of information in the sentence- the object of the failure- further decreases CIA’s agentivity by creating syntactic distance between CIA as the actor who fails and the object of its failure.

Finally, we find the same pattern of contrastive use of voice in two clauses in (9-10) in which CIA is represented as a Patient in a negative context and then as an Agent in a positive context. In the first clause, *CIA was stretched*, it is a Patient in a passive construction that evokes the idea of inevitability and subjugation (*stretched* by what or whom?) as whatever or whoever stretched CIA had the power to do so. In the second active clause CIA is the Agent in *CIA led the U.S government's counterterrorism response*, who despite difficulties plays a key role in protecting the country against terrorism. The lexical choice of *lead* strengthens the representation of CIA as key player since it is semantically associated with the notions of command, power, superiority, and higher status. Looking at the entire construction, we find that the subordinating conjunction *as* in (9) leads to an understanding of the CIA operating overcapacity as the result of its counterterrorism response to protect the country. The key element in the interpretation of this sentence, however, is the contrast established by the use of passive and active to present a negative and positive situation because it brings the focus to a positive outcome that is inferred from the order in which the events are presented. To put it simply, CIA's lapses in its initial execution of the program are inferred to be caused, and at the same time to be overridden, by a greater endeavor to guide the government in actions against terrorism.

In this example passage, CIA's representation of its initial mistakes as *challenges* posed by a series of given circumstances- lack of resources (trained personnel and competencies) and counterterrorist endeavors (overwhelming for CIA)- creates a 'positive' frame in which CIA is, on the one hand, the victim of grim circumstances instead of the actor responsible for the decisions that created these circumstances, and on the other hand, the savior of democracy who is tasked with national security. The causal chain established is that CIA's leading role in national security puts a strain in the agency that prevents them from managing the RDI program properly, leading to the inference that despite challenges CIA played a positive role against terrorism. If the shortcomings are caused by an imperative of national security then it is morally justified. The choice of representing the actions of participants as a fact (by making them nouns) instead of actions (as verbs) creates the impression that actors do not have a choice or the control of the situation (Johnstone, 56). In turn, this change in focus forces an understanding of the

mismanagement as being the inevitable loss of control and not the result of human incompetence (Fairclough, 2015, p. 124)

Finally, CIA reverses blame by shifting focus from actions to time frame: unpreparedness was only in the first few months. Given all the challenges CIA faced, they brought the agency up to speed to amend initial mistakes and meet demands. Readers are led to believe that it is the Committee's exaggerated and unbalanced assessment of CIA's initial mistakes that presents a generalized negative account of CIA's conduction of the RDI.

4.1.2 Accusation B – Arbitrary Use of Force

The second accusation is CIA's arbitrary use of force and unaccountability of officers. The authors first admit to poor decisions leading to illegal detentions, arbitrary use of force, and unaccountability of officers, claiming they were partly the result of the great level of secrecy involved in the program. On the other hand, CIA deflects allegations of their excessive use of force by shifting attention from action to the number of instances: The use of unauthorized or excessive torture techniques was exceptional and not systematic as claimed by the Committee. Also, authors argue that the Committee offers a biased and inaccurate account of CIA's use of torture to present a negative image of the agency as lacking in transparency and moral standards. Regarding the allegation of unaccountability of officers accused of misconduct, CIA presents a critical self-assessment that mirrors a technical performance review instead of the purported evaluation of the merits of the program.

The same grammatical patterns are observed in this section: The use of passive voice and nominalizations in negative contexts where the authors need to account for CIA's wrongdoings, and concessive clauses to justify them. Below is the breakdown of accusation B with claims and counter-claims, the latter being the substance of CIA's justifications.

4.1.2.1 Accusation B

“The program was poorly managed and executed. Unqualified officers and contractors imposed brutal conditions, often used unapproved interrogation techniques, used approved techniques excessively, and were rarely held accountable.”

- Claim 3: CIA mismanaged the program
- Claim 4: CIA personnel were not qualified for the tasks they performed
- Claim 5: CIA personnel used illegal methods of torture or excessive methods of torture
- Counter 5a: CIA held only a few detainees longer than needed given the level of secrecy of the program.
- Counter 5b: CIA used unauthorized techniques and excessive force only in a few cases.
- Claim 6: CIA did not hold accountable those interrogators accused of misconduct
- Claim 6a: CIA officers were not held accountable for abuses only initially.

In the example passage below, the authors account for CIA’s use of water dousing during interrogations, denying the Committee’s claim of misuse by offering an explanation of the steps and precautions taken to ensure its proper application. Among other things, they argue that water dousing was later incorporated to the list of enhanced techniques presenting a disclaimer of responsibility in regards to its legitimacy as a coercive method. We observe the contrastive use of voicing in CIA’s positive self-representation and negative representation of the Committed coupled with a concessive clause to justify its use.

Example (2) (p.55)

- 1 **The Study asserts** that CIA Headquarters provided no guidance on the use of water
- 2 dousing until 2004. **This is incorrect.** In fact, **CIA Headquarters provided guidance**
- 3 via cable traffic on water dousing as early as March 2003 and the technique was also
- 4 part of OMS' draft guidelines dated September 2003. **It was considered** the most
- 5 coercive of the standard techniques in use until early 2004, when **allegations made**
- 6 **by Mustafa al-Hawsawi** were reported to OIG and investigated. At that time, given the

7 risk that **the technique could be misused**, it was added to the list of enhanced techniques
 8 **While it is reasonable to question** the propriety of employing water dousing with cold
 9 water at the --- facility at which Gui Rahman died, likely due to hypothermia, it is
 10 important to note that **the technique was employed** after the first few months at --- in
 11 rooms heated to a minimum of 65 degrees in order to prevent possible harm.

In lines (1-4) the Committee has the role of Agent in an active sentence in which it claims CIA did not train officers to use water dousing in its first few years. Even though the Committee is positively represented in a Cognizant role given the choice of the strong reporting verb *assert* to make an authoritative claim, it soon loses this status through a direct denial in (2) *this is incorrect* that falsifies the statement by refuting its truth-conditions ('The CIA did provide guidance on the use of water dousing'). In the sequence (2-3), CIA also has the role of Agent in an active sentence that counters the Committee's claim by detailing the way in which guidance was provided, also by justifying its use as a technique approved by the Office of Medical Services. Both the Committee and CIA have an equal degree of power encoded in the verbs used, but the Committee appears in a negative context in which it makes a false statement about water dosing while the CIA appears in a positive context where it emerges as accurate and righteous in both the information it presents and the actions it partakes. We see how this contrastive use of passive and active voice contributes to representational polarization and re-attribution of blame.

Similar to nominalization in the previous example, we find four passive constructions in the remainder of this passage that leave agency and responsibility implicit and bring the focus of attention to the actions (Van Dijk, 2001, p. 359; Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 82). In (4-5) we do not exactly know who *considers* water dousing to be the most coercive method, and also in (5-6) the identity of the participant against whom the *allegations were made* is unexpressed. Likewise, in lines 7 and 10 a deleted Agent, the unknown user of water dousing, serves to dissociate CIA officers from the negative consequences of their use of torture by distancing the referent from the agent (Myhill, 2001, p. 165). Thus, the identity of the misuser is not revealed which leaves

attributions of causality and responsibility unclear (Fairclough, 2015, p. 140). Hodge and Kress (1993) note that in some cases passives can be seen as ‘ideologically motivated models of causality’ since the deletion of agency creates an impersonal voice that comes across as objective and unquestionable (pp. 52-53).

In a final sequence in line 8-11, the recognition of the risks of water dousing as a method of interrogation gives way to an explanation about its safe use in heated rooms that has a mitigating effect on the reader. This illustrates a recurrent pattern of concessive clauses used in the construction of justifications in the CIA’s response that consists of the initial recognition of wrongdoing followed by the denial of the same through rationally constructed arguments. These are either explanations for the wrongdoing or positive results obtained from the wrong action. Unlike contrastive relations, concession entails the acknowledgement of an initial claim (one of the Committee’s accusations) followed by a counter-claim in the main clause in which the authors deny what was previously stated and offer a positive outcome to an otherwise negative event. In this example, the claim that heated rooms prevent hypothermia takes precedence over the harm caused by the application of water dousing in detainees. This change in inferential pattern happens for two reasons. Firstly, it has been argued that pre-posed concessive clauses strategically background information by revealing them from the beginning so readers know that the main idea will constitute a contrast (Rudolph, 1996, pp. 48-52). Secondly, initial conceding moves tend to weaken the perceived truthfulness of the initial claim because the speaker’s focus is on new information given at the end of the sentence (Mizuno, 2008; Ota, 2015). Therefore, the negative assumption that ‘water dousing is torture’ given by our world knowledge of torture methods is overridden by an alternative point of view that heated rooms were used to prevent harm. This contradiction given by the ordering of the clauses not only redirects the reader’s focus from the negative ideas associated with water dousing, but it also draws the attention to a positive outcome, namely the prevention of hypothermia. Also important is to notice that concession is associated with the idea of exception to the rule, understood as the most expected inference given by a presupposition. If an exception is made to a rule, and this exception is claimed to be necessary to some purpose, then no rule is perceived as broken. Thus,

our understanding that under normal circumstances water dousing harms people is overshadowed by the idea that heat prevents hypothermia, deceptively leading readers to believe that this is the only negative effect of water dousing.

Besides explanations followed by positive outcomes, CIA's justifications also comprise regrets for wrongdoing and promises. Together these justifications are used as rhetorical attacks against the Committee to disarm and disengage its members from further criticism. In this way, pre-posed concessive clauses serve to mitigate the effect of a negative fact, thus fulfilling an important role in the construction of legitimization.

4.1.3 Accusation C: Misrepresentation of the value of the intelligence obtained

The third key accusation in the response is CIA's misrepresentation to the government and the Intelligence Community of the value of the information obtained by the use of torture methods. The authors directly deny the Committee's allegation that 'enhanced interrogation techniques' were ineffective in producing unique intelligence, arguing that the information they obtained was crucial to prevent future terrorist plots. This is probably where CIA authors diverge mostly from the Committee's conclusions, especially in relation to their views on the Committee's ability to assess intelligence collection. Their main claim is that the Committee lacks sufficient know-how of Intel work to adequately assess whether the information obtained from torture was crucial to disrupt plots and prevent future attacks in American soil, and most importantly, whether this information could have been obtained by other means. They also argue that this lack of expert knowledge accounts for what the authors consider to be the Committee's biased and imprecise account of CIA's use of 'enhanced interrogation techniques'.

Albeit adversarial, this position still relies on rhetorically constructed rationalization of negative actions, mainly because this is the most contentious of all four accusations, thus requiring a compelling argument. As seen in the previous example, concession plays an important role in building justifications since its conceptual structure includes the notion of conceding to others' viewpoints but also reclaiming one's own. Below is a third passage that exemplifies how concessive clauses function as blame

avoidance strategy by downplaying CIA's wrongdoing and redirecting the focus to a positive outcome at the end of the sentence.

4.1.3.1 Accusation C

“Contrary to CIA representations, the program failed to produce intelligence that was otherwise unavailable and that enabled CIA to disrupt plots, capture terrorists, or save lives.”

Claim 7 (implicit): CIA misrepresented the value of information obtained from torture

Claim 8: Torture did not produce unique intelligence to deter terrorist plots

Counter 8a: The program produced unique intelligence that helped to disrupt terrorist plots

The main argument in this passage is that despite the inexistence of a formal and proper assessment of the use of torture methods, CIA officers were constantly scrutinizing the effectiveness of the techniques they applied as well as the quality of the information obtained. The authors also make a clear point of their efforts to use the least coercion possible, leaving implicit the idea of officers' concern with the well-being of detainees. We find another example of concessive clause that has the same effect of backgrounding negative context and foregrounding positive outcome. In addition to concession, epistemic and deontic modals also plays a key role in the construction of justificatory arguments and constitute a recurrent pattern found in the text. While deontic modals and expressions convey regrets about misdeeds (e.g. *what **could have been** done better, those misrepresentations never **should have** happened*) which can be interpreted as admission of guilt or acknowledgement of wrongdoing, epistemic expressions encode degrees of uncertainty that provide authors with an alternative way to counter allegations they cannot refute or contrast (*perhaps the single biggest mistake was CIA's failure, we believe that CIA leaders erred*). In this sense, modality contributes to positive self-representations by offering 'a way out' of allegations that cannot be easily countered by explanations or positive outcomes, thus ensuring overall coherence in the authors' stance in relation to their counter argumentation.

Example (3) (p. 49)

1 *Although no systematic, comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of various techniques*
 2 *was performed, as it should have been, officers involved in the program did regularly make*
 3 *such assessments on an ad hoc basis in an effort to achieve the best results with the least*
 4 *coercion. Officers concluded that various enhanced techniques were effective based on their*
 5 *own "before and after" observations. A number of officers, having witnessed detainees'*
 6 *initial demeanor, believed that they would not have succumbed to less coercive approaches,*
 7 *at least not in time for their information to be operationally useful.*

In this passage, the authors account for the lack of ongoing assessment of the effectiveness of various interrogation techniques, arguing that some form of informal valuation encoded in the use of *ad hoc basis* was conducted by the officers who applied them. The same structure of justification is found in (1-4) where the authors first acknowledge the wrongdoing and then deny it by offering an alternative interpretation. The concessive clause in (1-2) accusing CIA of not conducting a systematic assessment of the effectiveness of coercive methods is deemphasized by the main clause in (2-4) which foregrounds the officers' efforts to use less coercion during interrogations. Their flaw is thereby justified by the claim that some alternative form of informal assessment was in place that demonstrated the effectiveness of such methods, and although it was not based on a devised plan, it reflected the good intentions of officers to minimize the harmful effects of torture. This is important because the assumption implicit in the accusation that 'torture (various techniques) might have been used unnecessarily' is what sets the expectation of the need for an ongoing assessment of its use in the first place. This presupposition is challenged by the claim that some form of evaluation of coerciveness took place anyway, which lays a counter assumption that 'torture methods were indeed necessary'. Thus, it is the degree of force applied in each torture technique that needs assessing and not the use of torture itself. So, we see that even when an explanation is expected but not afforded, another 'rhetorical way out' is constructed, which in this case yields a positive result (Mizuko, 2008; Polanyi and Zaenen, 2006; Rudolph, 1996, pp. 48-52).

Also relevant in this passage is the use of deontic modality in *as it should have been* to express regret about the lack of formal assessment of the program. This move serves to avoid de-legitimization and at the same time to build moral credit since CIA does not deny its fault, but instead ponders its ability to adequately assess the effectiveness of torture techniques. Considering that regret entails admission of guilt and is closely associated with the notions of self-awareness, conscience, and humility, expressions of explicit regrets can be seen as also expressing higher moral stance. Such open recognition of guilt contributes to CIA's positive self-representation as a responsible actor willing to repent and improve its conduct. Additionally, the authors further deflect blame by shifting attention from the substance of the proposition, the immorality of torture, to the practical value or benefit of its use to extract intelligence.

In the sequence, in line 5 the *before and after observations* constitutes a typical 'the- means-justify-the-ends' type of rationalization as it presents the officers' uncorroborated observations as the burden of proof in support of torture. The underlying assumption is that detainees did not produce the information desired when lenient methods were applied, but later recanted their statements after being subjected to torture. Such claim is nonetheless weakened in the next sentence by an epistemic expression in *a number of officers believed that they (detainees) would not have succumbed* which conveys a degree of uncertainty about what is stated, that is, the effectiveness of coercion to force detainees to talk. Even though an epistemic expression *officers believed that they (detainees) would not have succumbed* weakens the previous claim by conveying a degree of uncertainty in relation to what was stated, it does not invalidate the overall argument that torture played a crucial role in 'producing intelligence that was otherwise unavailable'. On the contrary, a biased conclusion is offered that takes the value of torture for granted based on the logic that it is probably true that *officers believed detainees would not have succumbed to less coercive approaches* because 'detainees would not have succumbed to less coercive approaches', which rules out any other possibility that would have led to a different inference. In other words, one reaches a certain conclusion based on the belief of one's assumptions instead of the knowledge of

the facts, that is, without having all the necessary facts. Here, an invalid argument can still be sound.

Drawing on both passages exemplifying the function of concession in justification, I want to stress that while pre-posed concessive clauses do not change truth conditions of propositions, the order in which the information is packaged in the sentence affects the perception of the truth conditions, or the truthfulness of the message. In this last example, the focus on the information emphasized in the main clause by contrast legitimizes the use of torture methods during the interrogation.

4.1.4 Accusation D: Resistance to Oversight and Misrepresentations of the Program

The fourth and last accusation by the Committee is CIA's resistance to government oversight and misrepresentations of the program to the government and the media. This is the accusation most strongly denied by the authors who accuse the Study of presenting a biased and imprecise account of CIA's actions. One of the Committee's main claim is that CIA intentionally misinformed government authorities about detention conditions, the conduction of interrogations, and the level of accuracy of the information obtained from the use of torture such that officials could not properly assess the results obtained from coercive methods. The other claim is that CIA refused to provide information about specific aspects of the program to members of the Committee during Congressional hearings and impeded visits to its detention centers. To these claims, the authors counter argue that CIA misrepresented the effectiveness of 'enhanced techniques of interrogation' to the government and the media only on a few occasions, charging the Committee with presenting an exaggerated account of these cases. As to the second claim, the authors strongly refute any of the Committee's examples of CIA commanders intentionally obstructing or objecting external oversight of their activities in detention centers. The main counter argument here is the sensitive nature of the information being collected which required the Executive to further restrict access to the program of non-CIA personnel and other branch officials. It is the White House, the authors argue, who set this restriction with the expectation of preventing highly sensitive information to leak

to dangerous groups. Moreover, the authors insist that CIA officers made every effort to inform the Congress of the program as well as of the value of the information obtained from their ‘enhanced techniques of interrogation’. Below is a breakdown of accusation D by SSCI’s claims and CIA’s counter-claims, the latter being the substance of CIA’s justifications.

4.1.4.1 Accusation D

“CIA resisted internal and external oversight, and it misrepresented the program to Congress, the Executive Branch, and the media.”

Claim 9: CIA misrepresented the value of information obtained to government and media

Counter 9a: The Study offers a disproportionate account of CIA’s misrepresentations

Claim 10: CIA was insubordinate to oversight government authorities

Counter 10a: CIA did not intentionally resist oversight by government

Counter 10b: CIA had to restrict sensitive information to a few members of government

The main counter claim in this last passage is the Committee’s unbalanced and imprecise accounts of CIA’s resistance to Congressional oversight, which the authors first deny as being the result of deliberate and continuous ill-intention by the agency, but leave implicit that in few cases it might have been the result of insufficient documentation. The authors address the accusation in a polarized frame wherein the Committee is represented as an incompetent assessor of intelligence and the CIA as possessing institutional integrity. While the Committee's assessment is characterized as biased and inaccurate along the lines of a 'conspiracy theory', the CIA’s self-representation is anchored in moral superiority and professional credibility as experts in Intel work. In this passage the use of modality and evaluative lexis have an important function in the construction of legitimacy as it magnifies this discursively constructed opposition between the Committee and the CIA as assessors of Intelligence.

Example (4) (pp. 21-22)

1 *We cannot vouch* for every individual statement that was made over the years of the
 2 program, and **we acknowledge** that some of those statements were wrong. **But the image**
 3 **portrayed in the Study** of an organization that-on an institutional scale-**intentionally misled**
 4 **and routinely resisted** oversight from the White House, the Congress, the Department of
 5 Justice, and its own OIG simply **does not comport with the record**. Many of the Study's
 6 **charges** that CIA misrepresented are based on **the authors' flawed analysis** of the value of
 7 the intelligence obtained from detainees. But whether the Committee accepts their
 8 assessment or ours, **we still must question a report that impugns the integrity of so many**
 9 **CIA officers** when **it implies-** as it does clearly throughout the conclusions- that the
 10 Agency's assessments were willfully misrepresented in a calculated effort to manipulate.

In this passage, the authors openly criticize the Committee for presenting a biased, unfair and inaccurate assessment of CIA's stance regarding oversight and reporting. To CIA authors, the Committee characterizes the agency as actively avoiding or interfering with oversight by the Congress and the Executive, and also withholding information from the public and government on a regular basis. As a response, the authors present a negative representation of the Committee by disqualifying its authors as competent and truthful assessors of the program. This disqualification adds to a previous passage, in which CIA authors characterize the Committee's report as a conspiracy theory, which is the strongest form of delegitimization since it reduces the opponent's knowledge to speculation motivated by uncorroborated suspicions. In the first sentence (1-2) the authors present a disclaimer wherein they recognize that some of CIA's representations of the program to government and the media were false, but at the same time acknowledging their inability to produce a precise number of all such instances in the deontic modal phrase *we cannot vouch for every individual statement*. Interestingly, however, this initial disclaimer is soon followed by a contrastive clause which strongly denies intentional misrepresentation of the program. In lines 2-3, *the image portrayed in the Study* is suggestive of imprecision and subjectivity since a portrait is a type of painting, which evokes the idea of a subjective, impressionistic view of reality rather than an objective depiction of the external world. By association, the same way an artist can change the shapes, colors or dimensions of his work as he pleases, the Committee authors

can also manipulate the presentation of facts about the program as they see fit. This negative representation of the Committee's account as biased and imprecise is sharply contrasted with CIA's positive self-representation as providers of factual-based accounts in the VP *does not comport with the record* (3-4). This also diverges from their initial disclaimer by the absence of some modal expression of possibility, but also by the lexical choice of *record*, which alludes to the idea of a pre-existing, impersonal, and unbiased context-free account of reality.

Other lexical choices in the passage that reinforce a contrastive positive self-representation and negative other representation, serves to reverse blame. In line 6, the choice of *charges* in *Many of the Study's charges* evokes the frame of crime wherein the CIA construes itself as either a 'suspect', 'perpetrator', or 'defendant'⁸ while the Committee is implicitly assigned the role of 'investigator', 'authority', or 'judge' tasked with presenting the accusations and building a case against the agency. In the sequence, however, the choice of *flawed analysis* to characterize the Committee's work implies that these charges are uncorroborated by facts because *flaw* conjures up the idea of inaccuracy, error, and incompetence. The inference is that if charges are not corroborated by facts they are false, which makes the Committee an unreliable source of Intelligence.

In line 8, CIA represents itself as invested with moral authority and committed to the truth given by the strong modal of obligation in *we must question a report* that can be interpreted as the authors' attempt to gain moral weight to counteract the severity of the allegations. In the sequence, *impugns the integrity* expresses such a strong moral attack on the CIA because questioning the moral integrity of officers constitutes the most serious accusation against an Intelligence Agency. Finally in line 10, the VP *willfully misrepresented in a calculated effort to manipulate* highlights the underlying sense of injustice by authors towards the Committee in their perceived wrongful accusations. Oppositional stance-building serves as rhetorical ground for CIA authors to dispute the truth over government oversight of the program.

In this last passage, the choice of strong evaluative lexis to criticize the Committee's accusations convey not only a sense of injustice felt by the authors, but moreover, of moral superiority over the Committee. Such negative language used to

describe the Committee's assessment functions as a strategy to reverse blame by means of redirecting the focus towards the Committee's biased assessment of CIA's conduct instead of the reasons that would justify such conduct. This leads to one possible inference that CIA is not the perpetrator of unlawful actions, but the victim of injustice committed by the Committee's unbalanced account of the facts surrounding CIA's conduct during the RDI program.

4.2 Conclusion

In this chapter, I described some of the ways in which justifications are linguistically constructed via passivization of actions that carry negative connotation and nominalized forms of verbs also charged with negative semantic structure. Negativity in these passages is given by the local contexts in which CIA is responsible for some wrongdoing. Authors have the choice to either obscure causality or justify the act through rationalization of actions. In the first case, weaker agentive roles (Experiencer, Cognizer, Possessor) also weaken the perception of blame because the causal relation is shifted from an Agent's willful choice to external circumstances or other actors. This transformation lends itself to shift blame or redirect blame from the actors to the actions, or from the entities responsible for some event to the events themselves or their outcomes. In like manner, nominalized verb phrases also contribute to the overall understanding of CIA as not responsible for the acts of which it is accused, by means of obliterating agency entirely and redirecting the focus to the events. These are constructed as agentless and naturally occurring, the result of external factors out of one's control. In the case of justifications, once again the examples illustrate how the attention is redirected from a negative presupposition to a positive outcome due to the conceptual structure of concessive relations. Although I did not provide enough cases from the passages presented, modality is yet another important feature that adds to the self-representation of CIA as a victim of malicious accusations, a remorseful defender of national security, and an avid assessor of intelligence collection. I also laid out the ways in which these grammatical features assist with blame avoidance moves in the rebuttal of

each major allegation. As these conclusions will be explored in detail in chapter six, my goal was only to summarize the main points of this analysis.

In the next chapter, I turn to the analysis of lexical content in the text applying Frame Semantic theory to explain how semantic and rhetorical polarization are constructed.

Chapter 5

Polarized Framing in the Representation of the CIA and the Committee

In this chapter I take up the analysis of CIA's construction of epistemic authority through contrastive evaluative lexis within a polarized conceptual frame. I am borrowing the concept of 'epistemic authority' from social epistemology to describe the unequal access to interpretive resources that accounts for why some people and not others are seen as reliable sources and recipients of knowledge ('good knowers') in some field or domain (Fricker, 2007; Kukla, 2014; Zagzebski, 2012). More specifically, in the analysis and discussion that follows, I am calling epistemic authority the control over the production and diffusion of information pertaining Intelligence collection. CIA's positive self-representations and the Committee's negative representations are constructed through relational opposites (Ruppenhofer *et. al.*, 2016, p. 15) that assign the role of 'expert' to the CIA and 'amateur' to the Senate Committee, thereby ascertaining the agency's superiority in the domain of Intelligence. Counter arguing on the basis of who controls knowledge of Intel work, authors present a contrasting view of both CIA and the Committee wherein the agency is presented as the experts in Intel work while the Senate Committee is seen as amateur actors. This is accomplished by establishing unequal footing through counter arguments that build professional credibility for the agency and disqualify the Committee as apt assessors of Intel work. The same arguments are further used to justify 'enhanced interrogation techniques' in each of the cases assessed by the Committee. These counter arguments can be grouped into three categories: a) defamations of the Committee as assessors of Intel work; b) self-appraisals in CIA's self-representations as experts, and c) self-criticism in their acknowledgment of wrongdoing. In this manner, authors effectively fashion a positive image anchored as much in self-recognition as in criticism of the Committee as credible assessors of Intelligence.

Similar to the syntactic patterns examined in the previous chapter, contrastive lexis was also found to vary in function of the same local contexts. Unlike the contextual

valence of syntactic forms, however, the contrastive use of evaluative lexis is established by a polarized frame wherein the CIA is reputed to be more knowledgeable and experienced in Intel work than the Senate Committee. The lexical items that are charged with positive and negative sentiment are mainly nouns and adjectives associated with specialized knowledge and experience, but also verbs that evoke the idea of scientificity and objectivity. Unequal footing is thereby enacted in value-laden language that conveys the idea of differing degrees of knowledge. Premised on the notion of some form of authority, CIA's legitimization of torture is grounded not on legal but epistemic authority.

My analysis of evaluative lexis draws on Frame Semantics theory and on the online database from FrameNet, a collaborative project from the University of California at Berkeley. FrameNet draws on Frame Semantics and it comprises an online lexical repository of language used in context, annotated for part-of-speech and semantic role to show meaning and usage. The lexical items examined were compared with the dataset from the 'Expertise' frame in FrameNet, some of which were matched with the lexical units from this frame. The elements for this frame will be laid out in detail in the next section. Some of the lexical units that appear in the text are part of the lexical repository of this particular frame while others belong to additional semantic frames that evoke the idea of objectivity and purpose.

This chapter is organized in four sections. The first is a brief review of the theoretical assumptions of Frame Semantics; in the second and third sections I present example passages along with the analysis of the lexical patterns that convey positive self-representations and negative Other-representations pertaining Intel work. A brief conclusion summarizes the main points presented in this chapter, leading to the subsequent discussion chapter.

5.1 Frame Semantics: Basic Assumptions

In this analysis, I apply Charles Fillmore's theory of Frame Semantics (1976, 1982) which postulates that meaning and sense are created by our mental representations of the world. More specifically, Frame Semantics seeks to model the mental

representations of predicates and the relationship between lexical units that appear to be unrelated in the surface, but in fact share the same conceptual structure (Fillmore, 1976, 1982; Petruck, 1996). The underlying assumption is that syntactic structure is dependent on the semantic roles assigned to participants in a given event (Fillmore & Baker, 2001).

A semantic frame is an underlying cognitive structure that organizes our thoughts and experiences into more or less general categories (or specific) of information that are activated by words that evoke a common conceptual domain (Goffman, 1974).

Frequently compared to ‘scripts’ and ‘scenarios’, ‘frames’ comprise conceptual elements interconnected by overlapping lexical-semantic structure that have an experiential basis (Lakoff, 2014). Fillmore (1976) defines framing as “the appeal, in perceiving, thinking, and communicating, to structured ways of interpreting experiences” (p. 20). He also suggests that we obtain our knowledge of the meaning of words from the contexts in which we perceive their referents-- the objects, emotions, and ideas they name-- to be situated in the world (Fillmore, 1976, 1982). Therefore, frames constitute a repository of perceivably relevant categories of experiences encoded in the grammar of a language that enable speakers to understand each other. Frames are intrinsically related to the notion of ‘schema’ and ‘scenario’ as cognitive systems with which we interpret and organize our experiences (Goffman, 1974). Conceived as such, they form our inventory of interpretive resources that are lexicalized, stored in memory, and activated in the speaker’s mind by the linguistic forms associated with its elements. In time, the elements of a frame become entrenched in language use, being evoked by words associated to a particular event (Fillmore, 1975, p. 25). They form an overarching conceptual system that structures not only what we say, but also how we reason about the world.

Fillmore and Baker (2001) posit that frames have deep and surface structures, with the first comprising the conceptual elements and the latter the syntactic realization of interrelated concepts about a particular event. When frame-evoking words are verbs, its frame elements (FEs) are its syntactic dependents. For example, the verb ‘buy’ has at least two mandatory arguments- the subject (‘the buyer’) and a first object (‘the good’), but is part of the lexicon of a much broader frame (the ‘business or commercial transaction’ frame), which includes also ‘the seller’, ‘the price’, ‘the money’, ‘the manner

of transaction', 'the location typical for that transaction', so forth. Other units of the lexicon associated with this frame include 'sell', 'pay', 'charge', 'spend', 'bank', etc. Even though, each of these units highlight particular elements or aspects of the frame, they conjure up the entire frame of a business transaction in the speaker's mind.

Petruck (1996) defines frame as "structures of expectations" that organize knowledge of the world and enable speakers to communicate the meaning of specific words within a more general semantic structure of reference. She argues that a frame is a general conceptual system shared by speakers to categorize human experience semantically (Petruck, 1996). This shared nature of a semantic frame explains why speakers can understand different words in the same context as well as different senses of these words across contexts.

For Lakoff (2006, 2014), abstract concepts are physical products of mental processes. He explains that concepts are actually physical because they are produced by neurons that input sensorial information into neural circuits. The meaning of words repeated over a period become permanent in our brain and easily retrievable from our memory. Since this process occurs at the unconscious level, we hardly ever scrutinize our reasoning and the possible interpretations we ascribe to words and ideas. He also argues that concepts are always associated with other concepts and contexts in highly structured mental configurations or conceptual spaces called frames (Lakoff, 2006). For Lakoff a frame is a scenario involving an event, an entity, the participants, and their relation to them within defined boundaries (Lakoff, 2006, p. 11). This means that we can only think of a word or idea within the elements of that frame; elements left outside the frame cannot be apprehended. Fillmore also postulates that frames are abstract scenes that conceptually characterize different experiences in the world (Fillmore, 1975). Petruck (1996) concurs with this understanding of frames as "cognitive structuring devices" that contain interdependent ideas about events in the world (p. 2). When these ideas are activated in specific frames they invoke particular shared conceptual elements.

The application of Frame Semantics to explain polarized participant roles helped me to offer a robust account of how lexis is patterned contrastively in all representations of CIA's actions and the Committee's accusations in the text. Whereas authors

characterize CIA's actions with language conjuring precision, impersonality, objectivity, and accuracy, the Committee's claims appear in semantic contexts that suggest manipulation, ineptitude, and bias. Example passages from the report demonstrate how these pairs of opposite share an overarching conceptual frame- 'Expertise' frame- wherein the CIA and the Committee are assigned the role of 'expert' and 'amateur' by means of the lexicon that populate the particular contexts in which they are mentioned. The interrelation among these different ideas associated to the concept of 'expertise' constitutes an important discursive device in constructing CIA's legitimization of torture methods. Relevant to the analysis presented in this chapter is the idea of 'truthfulness' intrinsic to the notion of 'trust', and more specifically, to 'epistemic trust', which will be discussed in great detail in the next chapter.

5.2 Frame of Expertise

This frame relates to specialized knowledge and skill in a specific domain as opposed to lay or folk knowledge of a given subject or field⁹. Applied to the participant roles emergent in the CIA's comments, the 'expert' is someone who is skilled, experienced, and knowledgeable of Intel work whereas an 'amateur' is inept, inexperienced, and judgmental. Structuring this frame is the idea of technical competence and professional credibility relative to the evaluation of Intelligence work. Whereas CIA constructs itself as the apt assessor of Intel work, they present the Committee as their amateur counterpart, whose assessment of CIA's actions is inaccurate and biased.

In this frame, expertise means the ability to accurately operate and assess tasks relative to the collection, production, dissemination, and evaluation of Intelligence obtainable from various sources regarded as crucial for national security (ODNI, 2013). Our ideation of expertise is based on our belief that some people have more skills and information about a particular topic than us either because of the epistemic markers they carry-- degrees, academic or nobility titles, awards-- or because we see them as possessing higher intellectual ability to discern on matters we cannot. The belief in the latter functions like a gate-keeper separating the people who have access to certain types

of knowledge from those who do not because they are seen as incapable of receiving or producing them either for lack of appropriate credentials or insufficient skills. This mapping from the broad frame of expertise to the specific field of Intel work allows us to begin to understand the representational choices of participant roles and the rhetorical polarization that define statuses and stances assigned to each participant.

Below is the presentation of the core and non-core elements of the Expertise frame directly extracted from FrameNet. The lexical units from this frame that appears in the CIA text and bear special interest to my analysis are also given in the sequence. Although not all lexis examined constitute lexical units from the Expertise frame, all of the items included in the analysis are synonyms, near-synonyms, antonyms, and semantic neighbors of those lexical units.

5.2.1 Frame Elements of ‘Expertise’¹⁰

A. Definition: “This frame concerns people's knowledge or skill in certain domains. It does not concern acquaintance or familiarity with people. With adjectives as targets in this frame, we annotate on two FE layers.”

1. Frame of Expertise (FrameNet)

<p>B. Core Frame Elements:</p> <p>Behavior_product []</p>	<p>A product of behavior that shows the Protagonist's skill or lack of skill. A SKILLFUL advertising campaign persuaded voters that his opponent was soft on crime.</p>
<p>Focal_participant [Focal_participant] Excludes: Behavior_product</p>	<p>This frame element can only occur in place of a skill expression. It refers to the prototypical patient in an action involving the Protagonist. For instance, in the following sentence the children are experts at some (contextually given) action such as rolling the hoops. Some children were quite EXPERT with wooden hoops.</p>
<p>Knowledge [] Excludes: Behavior_product</p>	<p>The area of knowledge (as opposed to a practical skill) in which the Protagonist's experience is assessed.</p>

Protagonist [Prot] Semantic Type: Sentient	The person whose expertise is assessed.
Role [] Excludes: Behavior_product	This frame element denotes a role in which the protagonist has developed his expertise. His PROWESS as a surgeon is impressive. In many cases, the Role noun secondarily evokes the Skill that is at issue.
Skill [Skill] Excludes: Behavior_product	Skill identifies the Protagonist 's talent or ability to do things with one's hand or body.
C. Non-Core:	
Degree [Degr] Semantic Type: Degree	Degree to which event occurs
Judge []	The individual whose point of view is taken in assigning the judgment denoted by the target.
Manner [] Semantic Type: Manner	The Manner give further description of the way in which the Protagonist exhibits their skill or lack of skill.
Time []	The Time when the Protagonist has the expertise.

Some of the lexical units (LU) belonging to this frame include, but are not limited to, the nouns and adjectives as well as antonyms when applicable of the following words: *amateur, competent, excel (v.), experienced, expert, familiar, inept, knowledgeable, lay, proficient, skillful, specialist*. The most salient elements of *expertise* are *protagonist, skill, and degree*. In FrameNet, lexical units (LU) are lemmas taken in one of its senses paired with a frame, so when used in the particular context associated with that sense it evokes the specific frame. Two examples from the data are given below to show how Frame semantics was applied to the analysis, and illustrate some of the core elements and lexical items that populate local contexts.

(A) “*non-standard interrogation methodologies [Sk]* were not an area of *expertise* of *CIA officers* or of the *US Government* generally [Prot].”

(B) “We found that *accuracy [SSCI- Dg]* was *encumbered* as much by the *authors’ [SSCI- Prot]* *interpretation, selection, and contextualization of the facts [SSCI- Beh]* as it was by *errors* in their

recitation of facts [SSCI- Sk], making it difficult to address its flaws with specific technical corrections [CIA Sk]”.

While (A) has the Skill and Protagonist clearly represented, (B) adds Behavior and establishes an implicit comparison by mentioning the Committee’s lack of skill at analyzing facts and CIA’s skill at making technical corrections on the former’s faulty analysis. While in the first example *expertise* is a LU of the frame, the lexemes from the second are all related to the LUs *excellence, proficiency, skill, knowledge*, all of which relate to the idea of mastery and precision. The underlying assumption is that a knowledgeable and skilled Intel officer does not err or deliver a flawed, inaccurate analysis on matters he is expected to master. The lexical content examined in the text comprises mostly verbs, nouns, and adjectives, although intensifiers and quantifiers also contribute to oppositional framing of participant roles. For example, in the following passage intensifiers play a key role in blame avoidance.

(C) *“Perhaps the most important context that the Study ignores in its assessment of the information obtained from detainees is how little CIA knew, despite considerable effort, about al-Qa’ida and its allies on 9/11 to inform efforts to prevent another terrorist attack.”*

The contrastive use of lexical evaluatives to blame the Committee for a biased and inept assessment of the information collected from detainees and to justify CIA's use of torture is enhanced by 'how little (CIA knew)' and ‘considerable effort’.

The other lexis that evoke the frame is particularly associated with the lexical unit of the ‘amateur’, defined by FrameNet as ‘a person considered inept at a particular activity’. If the expert in Intel work is a person skilled, intellectually capable, and knowledgeable of Intelligence work, the amateur is someone lacking the aptitude, experience, and skills necessary to proper analysis and evaluation of this work. Some of the nouns and adjectives repetitively used in CIA’s report also include antonyms, near antonyms, and semantic neighbors of the LUs from the ‘Expertise frame’.

5.3 Lexical polarization: Establishing unequal footing

The Committee's main claim, which is the main finding presented in their report, is that CIA's use of torture during their Rendition, Detention, and Interrogation Program (2001-2009) did not produce unique intelligence to prevent future terrorist threats against the U.S. This conclusion is partly based on the Committee's conclusion that the information obtained from detainees under torture had already been collected from suspects submitted to conventional methods of interrogation, but also that the information produced was false since detainees often lied in order not to be subjected to torture (SSCI, 2014, pp. 2 -4). The Committee also accused CIA high officers of being incompetent, inconsequential, and of misleading the program since its incipient stage. Overall, the Committee's conclusion points to the ineffectiveness and arbitrariness of CIA's use of torture to obtain crucial intelligence from detainees that would have justified their unorthodox and legally controversial 'enhanced techniques of interrogation'.

In their response, the authors deny the Committee's main claim by affirming that torture did produce crucial intelligence that would not have been obtained from conventional interrogation techniques, and this intelligence helped to prevent terrorist plots against the U.S.A. Their counter argumentation is premised on CIA's perception of the Committee's biased and inaccurate account of the RDI program because of their lack of expertise to accurately assess Intel work. By contrast, the authors present CIA's review as objective and precise, leading readers to construe the agency as the sole experts in Intelligence. The supposition is that the Committee's accusations have no merit because the Committee is not a reliable, thus credible, evaluator of Intelligence. The example passage below illustrates how this unequal footing is established and maintained throughout CIA's response.

Example (5) (p.7)

1 *The purpose of the review was to focus, as the Study does, on the Agency's conduct of the*

2 *RDI program, in the interest of promoting historical accuracy and identifying lessons*
 3 *learned for the future, with the ultimate goal of improving the Agency's execution of*
 4 *other covert action programs. Indeed, as the former detention and interrogation program*
 5 *was ended as of 22 January 2009, and has been completely dismantled, forward focus on*
 6 *ongoing covert action activity is critically important. Accordingly, in this submission, we*
 7 *do not address the policy decision made to utilize coercive interrogation techniques as part*
 8 *of the RDI program, nor do we advocate or otherwise express any judgments concerning*
 9 *the wisdom or propriety of using those techniques.*

In this first passage, the authors establish the purpose of their response to the Committee, and first position themselves in relation to torture methods of interrogation. The claims the authors present qualify CIA and disqualify the Committee as credible assessor of Intelligence, which serves to establish unequal footing between CIA and the Committee. This assertion of CIA as qualified source of Intel work is linguistically constructed through personification (the attribution of human qualities to inanimate entities or processes) and evaluative lexis that draw on two opposing semantic frames that evoke ideas associated with expert knowledge versus amateur knowledge (Kovecses, 2010; Lakoff & Johnson, 2008).

In line (1), by defining their response as a *review* the authors construe it as an objective, ‘technical assessment’ of the RDI program rather than a defense of their use of torture. This grants them distance from any self-evaluation in relation to their own actions while it shields the agency from criticisms by the Committee or other potential opponents. Also, in lines (1-3) the sequence of four phrases of purpose serves to shift the focus from the reasons behind or results obtained from torture methods to a technical assessment of the agency’s execution of the program. The first of these phrases in (1), *to focus on the Agency’s conduct*, explicitly redirects the attention from the actions (use of torture and its outcomes) to the actors (the agency), restricting interpretations to the set of assumptions about CIA’s good or bad performance in their actions that preclude others related to the merits or demerits of the actions themselves. The prepositional phrase in (2) *in the interest of promoting historical accuracy*, the choice of *interest to promote* to describe CIA’s goal conveys both the authors’ good intentions in their future actions as

well as their commitment to truthfulness about the facts reported. This is reinforced by the object being promoted, *historical accuracy* since *historical* alludes to the idea of an unequivocal reconstruction of facts while *accuracy* signals to a high degree of precision in the knowledge produced. The third phrase in (2-3) *identifying lessons learned for the future* refers to CIA's self-assessment of their misconducts wherein a close causal link can be drawn between the agency's ability to recognize mistakes and their willingness to avoid them in the future. The fourth and last phrase in (3) *to improve the agency's execution* completes the meaning construed in this passage of CIA's commitment to the truth and corrective measures to misconduct.

The general inference that torture methods yielded the expected results is given by a presupposition that CIA successfully identified mistakes in their execution of the program and are willing to make future corrections, eliminating any other interpretation of the program itself. Again, this interpretative constraint is effective in deflecting blame from the negative outcomes of their use of torture (death of detainees, lawsuits of survivors of torture, widespread negative publicity) to their performance by presuming that torture methods were effective despite shortcomings in their application.

Another central feature is metonymy and the use of agentless subjects in lines (1-6) to represent CIA's assessment as a natural occurrence and an agentless event. For Kövecses (2010), a metonymy is an expression conceptually connected to another one that becomes mentally accessible when the expression is used (pp. 172 -174). The most common type of metonymy found in the text is the PRODUCT FOR THE PRODUCER where the NPs refer to the Agents whose actions resulted in a product like *the Study for the Committee*. Essentially, metonymy is rhetorically strategic in forcing an inference about an event as being agentless or naturally occurring by shifting the focus from the actors responsible for some action to the action itself. For example, the long NP in (1-4) has *the review* as the Agent whose *purpose* is to *focus* on the agency's conduct, and whose *interest* is to *promote historical accuracy*, and *identify lessons learned*, and *improve the Agency's execution*. An agentive version of the sentence with the CIA as the subject would yield 'The CIA's purpose was to focus' or 'The CIA had as the purpose of its review to focus' in which the causal link is clearly established between the CIA and the

way they conducted their assessment of the Committee's report. By demoting itself from the subject position to the object of *focus* in *the Agency's conduct* (1) and the *Agency's execution*, the authors change the interpretation of the sentence in three ways. Firstly, no clear causation can be inferred between *the review* and CIA's purpose as already mentioned because by changing semantic roles for the CIA and the review, the agency is not represented as the doer, the willful actor of its actions, but the object of the review's focus. Secondly, non-sapient and non-sentient subject NPs (inanimate objects, processes, or events) obscure agency and naturalize events. Here it constructs an event- *the review*- as a pre-existing entity by ascribing human properties such as cognitive abilities (*identify and learn lessons, improve*) and drive (*purpose, goal, interest, ability*). The questions speakers would inevitably ask would be 'whose purpose is it?' 'whose interests are to promote accuracy?' and 'who learned the lessons?' An alternative interpretation would be to consider *the review* as a metonymy (the object used for the user) in which the review stands for reviewers. Even assuming speakers can infer that *the review* is the product of humans, this decrease in agentivity from a change in semantic roles suggests an understanding of the purpose of the review as naturally occurring independent of human volition, and therefore, choice (also on metonymy, see Lakoff and Johnson, 2008, p.35).

In lines (4-6), an existential construction with a fronted object *forward focus on ongoing covert activity is critically important* ('It is critically important to focus forward on ongoing covert activity') has the same function of obscuring agency as in the previous sentence because it portrays CIA's focus on future action as the natural state of affairs in the world. With a verbal predicate we would have 'CIA is focusing forward on ongoing' and 'because we consider it to be critically important'. Like before, speakers are forced to infer that it is the CIA who has a *focus forward* while *critically important* is not a statement of truth conditions, but the agency's position on the matter. Hence, the agency's choice to focus on future actions instead of past mistakes that would otherwise need accounting are rationalized and represented as 'the inevitable course of events'.

Finally, lines 8-9 constitute a key passage where authors present a disclaimer for CIA's use of torture. By doing so, they avoid an explicit position in relation to torture,

effectively evading the burden of a moral account. One could argue that CIA takes an ambiguous position in relation to torture to avoid interpretations of its possible condoning of torture as a method to obtain Intel. In addition, authors build credit by establishing a degree of superiority via phrasing that denotes intellectual capabilities such as *historical accuracy*, *improve the execution*, and moral faculties such as *lessons learned* and *critically important*, and at the same time they reject those that denote emotion or value judgment like in (8-9) in which their denial of any position in favor or against torture shields them from possible criticism. The overall positivity of the language used in this passage builds CIA's positive self-representation as a reliable and committed source of Intel work, not only capable of engaging in effective future actions but also able to amend past mistakes and learn from them.

By contrast, the authors also set unequal footing by disqualifying the Committee as reliable sources of knowledge about Intel work. In a second example passage, a recurrent pattern of argumentation is first observed that consists of an initial acknowledgment of a Committee's claim (one of the accusations of misconduct) by the authors followed by a counter-claim in which they deny what was previously stated and offer an alternative interpretation of the events. CIA's counter-claims comprises explanations, regrets, and denials of acts of misconduct. Together these counter-claims are overcharged with negative sentiment and used as rhetorical attacks against the Committee to disarm its members and disengage them from any future accusations against CIA's actions.

Example (6) (p.8)

- 1 *The Study has all **the appearances of an authoritative history** of CIA's RDI effort.*
- 2 *As Chairman Feinstein announced to the press the day it was approved by the*
- 3 *Committee, its authors had access to 6 million pages of records-most provided by CIA*
- 4 *and they cite more than 35,000 footnotes. **However, although** the Study contains an*
- 5 *impressive amount of detail, it **fails in significant and consequential ways to correctly***
- 6 ***portray and analyze** that detail. Simply put, the Study **tells part of the story** of CIA's*
- 7 *experience with RDI, but **there are too many flaws** for it to stand as **the official record***

8 of the program. Those flaws stem from two **basic limitations** on the authors: A
 9 methodology that relied exclusively on a review of documents with no opportunity to
 10 interview participants, owing to the Department of Justice investigation of the program;
 11 and **an apparent lack of familiarity** with some of the ways the Agency analyzes and
 12 uses intelligence.

In contrast with the previous passage, here the counter-claim is an explanation as to why the Committee's Study lacks credibility. This explanation is rhetorically constructed through a concessive clause in conjunction with lexis that conjures the idea of lay knowledge in the representation of the Committee. In (1) the authors characterize the Study as an outward subjective account of the RDI program expressed in *the appearances of an authoritative history* since the inference is that *appearances* conveys the idea of something that is only true in the surface. If the Study only appears to be what is not, then the Committee's claims cannot be taken as true. This initial disqualifying claim sets negative expectations regarding the Committee's accusations as it leads readers to believe the Study is based on an impressionistic rather than a factual account of CIA's conduction of the RDI program, and therefore has no merit. In lines 2-4, the authors acknowledge the ways in which the Committee presents its Study as a factual account of the program, but soon dismiss them by presenting a counter-claim that further disqualifies the Committee's account. The counter is given in a strong contrast in (4-6) in which the authors first acknowledge the Study's detailed account of the program, but then dismiss its contribution by affirming that the information produced is inaccurate, and thus unreliable. This contrast is two-fold: It is first established at the semantic level of the sentence, but also through the conceptual structure of the concessive relation.

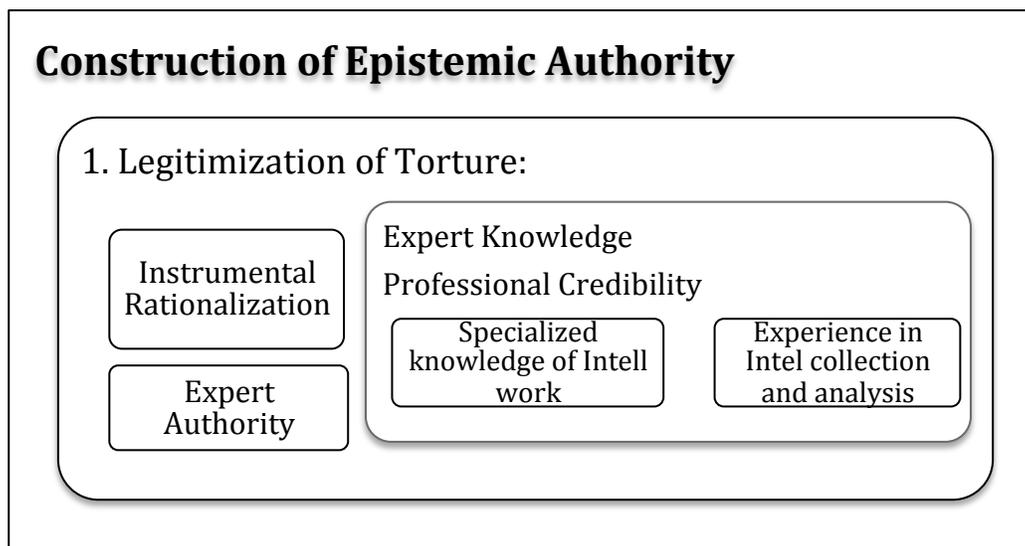
First, the contrast is semantically constructed through evaluative lexis conveying a negative evaluation: a compliment which is first expressed in the NP *an impressive amount of detail* is soon eclipsed by a strong criticism encoded in negative lexis in the entire main clause in (5). Whereas *fail* entails an absolute inability to attain a goal, namely to produce an accurate assessment, the choice of the intensifiers *significant* and *consequential (ways)* coupled with the adverbial *correctly* magnifies the categorical affirmation that the authors of the Study are incapable of producing accurate and reliable

information. It is noteworthy the choice of the descriptive verb *portray* to characterize the analysis of the Committee, which is suggestive of a subjective reconstruction of the actions instead of an value-free description of the same since ‘to portray’ means ‘to represent’ rather than ‘present’ something. It can be inferred from this overall negative lexis that evoke ideas of bias, inaccuracy and, by some stretch, ill intentions, that the Committee does not have the set of skills or knowledge required to produce a quality assessment to critique CIA’s past actions or inform changes to future operations. Second, the concessive relation alone is also responsible for the meaning construed in the sentence. The initial idea expressed in the concessive clause that the Study has merit is weakened by a statement that contradicts, and thus, denies that claim. It is the sequence in which the claims are presented that constructs the meaning of the sentence: a conceding move that acknowledges an initial idea is followed by a counter move that *re-claims* by offering an alternative idea. Simply put, the counter-claim presented in the main clause (the Committee fails to produce correct information) falsifies what is stated before (‘the Study produced a great amount of information’), changing the direction of the inference to an understanding of the Study as being unqualified as producers of Intelligence.

Another interesting disqualifying lexical evaluative is found in *tell part of a story* in (6), which appears to demote the epistemic status of the Committee in two important ways: First, as a political actor, and second, as a producer of Intelligence. First, by claiming ‘the Study tells a story’, the authors assign a role of ‘storytellers’ to the Committee members, which evokes the frame of the ‘amateur’, associated with a host of negative ideas about knowledge production. Storytellers are folk people who do not possess scientific or expert knowledge of topics, and whose accounts are invested with as much subjectivity as imagination. From professional assessors, the Committee is turned into a *non-credible*, unreliable source of factual information. Second, by characterizing the Study as a story about CIA's experiences, it disqualifies the type of knowledge produced by the Committee¹¹. As a genre, the Study is also demoted from a factual report to a narrative, which also carries a set of negative inferences since stories are understood as being partial, subjective, open to interpretations, and packed with emotional content and moral evaluation.

The final sequence of this passage carries negative evaluative language that reinforces the image of the Committee as inept, amateur assessors of Intel. In lines 7-8, the existential construction *there are too many flaws* present the author's perspective as a given truth independent of their interpretation. The repeated use of the NP *flaw* also evokes the idea of a failure to achieve a goal, and in this particular context, an inability to produce a reliable record of the program. Added to this, the NPs *basic limitations* in (8) and *lack of familiarity* in (11) are a direct assertion of the CIA's superior status as sources and recipients of Intelligence. A power differential is thereby rhetorically constructed through opposing degrees in levels of knowledge of Intel work with the CIA occupying the highest position and the Committee the lowest. This differential in epistemic status fulfills a key role in CIA's legitimization of torture since it grounds it on the assumption that the Committee's assessment is not on par with that of an expert, but likely to fit an amateur analyst of Intel work.

Diagram 1: Construction of Epistemic Authority



5.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I looked at how positive self-representations and negative representations are constructed through contrastive use of evaluative lexis. Unequal footing is established in language that evokes the frame of 'Expertise' where CIA has the role of 'expert' and the Committee is the 'amateur'. Legitimization of torture methods is anchored to the notion of epistemic authority, which sets CIA apart from the Committee to the extent that they have higher control over knowledge production about Intel work.

Rhetorical polarization is linguistically encoded in agentless syntactic constructions such as personification and metonymy, but more significantly, in lexical selection that evokes the frame of Expertise particularly associated with knowledge, competence, success, all of which are key conceptual elements on which to build professional credibility and trust. The collection of these rhetorical moves- agentless constructions combined with concessive structure and evaluative lexis- effectively legitimizes torture methods because they force an inferential pattern towards positive interpretations of alleged wrongdoings by shifting the focus from 'actors' to 'acts' and investing each protagonist with disparate degrees of credibility.

In the next chapter, I sum up the results from my analysis and discuss how legitimization of torture is discursively constructed on rhetorical grounds that seek to *de*-legitimize one of the participants rather than their arguments. Therefore, the dispute is settled not over arguments that offer the most compelling explanations or positive outcomes for the use of torture, but which participant can be considered an acceptable 'knower' of techniques of interrogation for Intelligence collection.

Chapter 6

The Discursive Construction of Epistemic Authority

In the previous chapters, I analyzed how CIA authors counter argue against allegations that torture methods were ineffective in producing unique intelligence as the agency had initially claimed. I hypothesized that CIA's need to legitimize torture to the government, and ultimately, the population prompted the agency to articulate an identity as sole experts in Intelligence work as opposed to the perceived ineptitude of the Senate Committee as evaluators of Intel work.

I found that CIA effectively legitimizes torture through blame avoidance strategies operationalized into syntactic forms and contrastive use of evaluative lexis. On the one hand, strategies such as deflection, denial, or reversal play a crucial role in downplaying CIA's responsibility by obscuring agency or characterizing excessive use of force as either unintentional or not wrong at all. On the other hand, legitimization of torture is also encoded in lexis that evokes notions related to expert knowledge, scientific objectivity, and professional experience, while *de*-legitimization is conveyed in language that conjures ideas associated with amateurism, bias, and inexperience.

The four recurring grammatical constructions that I found to vary in function of local contexts were: Syntactic voice, nominalization, concessive clauses, and lexical selection. Overall positivity or negativity is encoded in the language used in claims and counterclaims. The Senate's allegations and CIA's justifications constitute the negative contexts in which the outcomes of CIA's actions are represented as negative, whereas CIA's denials of some of the claims followed by self-appraisals and blame reversals constitute the positive contexts. Combined, these grammatical realizations contribute to CIA's effective legitimization of torture through a polarized frame in which the agency emerges as the 'expert authority' on Intelligence and the Senate Committee as the 'opinionated amateur'. The contention over the 'truth' about what constitutes effective methods of collecting human Intelligence unfolds in a hermeneutic arena of competing

interpretations of the events that followed 9/11, which led to the creation of the Detention and Interrogation Program.

Thus, legitimization of torture is linguistically constructed through contrastive use of language and polarized framing to fulfill two important rhetorical tasks: (1) blame avoidance for the use of ‘enhanced interrogation techniques’ during the RDI program, and (2) disqualification of the Senate Committee on Intelligence as experts in Intel work. This measuring of credibility relative to Intel work licenses CIA the right to justify the use of torture methods to obtain information without a need for moral or legal approval. The dispute is not on grounds of what the facts are about torture methods but over who has sufficient knowledge to accurately interpret those facts. Torture methods are thereby legitimized not because they are morally or legally righteous, but rightly appraised.

On the matter of unequal epistemic status, Fricker (2007) argues that the control over interpretive resources structures power relations across social groups by pre-establishing which participants are credible as reliable sources of knowledge and which ones are not. In Western culture, the criteria to determine who can produce and receive knowledge include age, gender, ethnicity, social class, but more importantly, higher education and specialization, which helps us to understand the higher status maintained by the so-called ‘experts’ in public forums. Also Van Dijk (2003) discusses the control over knowledge production in post-capitalist societies, pinpointing to the way in which powerful groups have ‘preferential access to various kinds of knowledge in society’ by means of defining what constitutes objects of knowledge, who can create them, and who can retrieve them (p. 88). Within this framework, CIA’s ‘discourse of expert authority’ ascribes them greater epistemic authority much as it challenges the Senate Committee’s ability to understand Intel work, and consequently, correctly evaluate CIA’s actions. This notion of unequal access to knowledge is key to understand how authors set the Committee apart from the CIA and, ultimately, from the rest of the Intel community, as a reliable source and recipient of knowledge on Intelligence.

6.1 Legitimizing torture: Rhetorical effects of language use on message

Before getting into the discussion of how legitimization of torture is discursively constructed in the text, I will briefly describe the concept of legitimization and how it relates to that of authority. According to Weber (as cited in Van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 5), “every system of authority attempts to establish and to cultivate the belief in its legitimacy”. For Van Leeuwen (2007) legitimization is the act of establishing causal relations for social practices and institutions that require either some form of rationalization or moral validation to become socially acceptable (p. 92). He further asserts that legitimizing arguments fulfill the important task of assigning meaning and purpose to social actions by offering “some version, some re-contextualization of a particular social practice, action, or event, providing not just information about it but also explanations and justifications for it” (Van Leeuwen, p. 93). Legitimizing arguments “answers the questions of *why did we have to do it? why did we have to do it in this way?*” (Van Leeuwen, p. 93).

In the case of CIA’s detention and interrogation program, the question that poses a series of puzzling conjectures is ‘how does a U.S. government agency find a legal and political base for violating basic human rights?’ Also, ‘to what extent can an Intel agency apply anti-democratic extralegal measures in the name of national security?’ Answers to these questions might shed some light on our understanding of the underlying assumptions, beliefs, and intentions that motivated the U.S. Executive to condone such practices. Furthermore, it will also deepen our understanding of how the U.S. government have come to define its role and that of the Intelligence community in the post-9/11 era.

As I will discuss in the next sections, CIA’s discursive construction of legitimization is a rational form of rationalization much like ‘the means-justify-the-ends’ in that ‘the end-goal of an action is the result it produces’ (Habermas, 1975). Very effectively, the authors construct justificatory arguments to each of the Committee’s accusations in two ways: 1) By offering an alternative interpretation to a reprehensible act; 2) By disqualifying the Committee as a valid opponent. By doing so, they discursively reenact the agency’s legal authority as the sole experts in intelligence collection to which the Committee is compared, and subsequently, downgraded. In this

sense, the authors' legitimizing arguments function as repairs for CIA's acts of wrongdoing that lack legal precedence, and thus require a rhetorical way out.

6.2 Blame avoidance through contrastive use of syntactic voice

Blame avoidance in politics and government communication has attracted a growing number of researchers in CDA who see government texts as an opportunity to investigate how hegemonic ideologies are discursively perpetuated in society. Linguists have become increasingly interested in this topic to the extent that today these text types constitute a specific genre of discourse appearing in court trials, family and personal relationships, media debates, political speeches, and government communication to name a few (Wodak, 2006; Hansson, 2015). Perhaps the pervasive influence of blame in public life or the growing power of the media as the court of public opinion have prompted officeholders to devise more sophisticated discursive strategies to maintain power in face of accusations of wrongdoing.

Among linguists researching this theme, Hansson (2015) proposes a comprehensive analytic model drawn from previous critical discourse approaches to analyze blame avoidance discourses in government communication. Examining a corpus of texts produced by government officeholders in the UK between 2008 and 2013, Hansson identified common "blame-shifting" and "denying strategies" used for the purpose of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation to efface accusation. Results of his analysis reveal common rhetorical mechanisms by which blame is framed, shifted or justified. Hansson concluded that interpreting mediated government discourses from the perspective of blame avoidance strategies helps to explain how ideological manipulation is knitted in the discursive practices of political institutions.

In a similar vein, Connell and Galasinski (1996), analyzed documents from the CIA's website from 1990's, and demonstrated how they are used to create a positive corporate identity rather than to inform the public of their operations. Their main claim was that the CIA constructed a positive public image aimed at building popular consensus in order to legitimize their covert actions and gain public trust. Their analysis

of the linguistic mechanisms employed in these texts showed that CIA's positive image is built indirectly by means of framing their activities as a service to the State, and by identifying their values with those of Americans. Furthermore, the authors argued that while portraying itself as an organization subscribed to the rule of law, the CIA also uses a "discourse of excellence" to establish themselves as a modern corporation committed to professionalism and effectiveness.

Following the footsteps of these authors, I homed into the relation between linguistic realizations and blame avoidance strategies. The use of active versus passive voice to represent social action has been vastly discussed in CDA literature (Fairclough, 2015; Fowler, 1991; Fowler *et. al.*, 1979; Hodge & Kress, 1993). From a pragmatic-functional perspective, it is understood as the variation in degrees of agentivity encoded in the semantic roles (Agent, Experience, Cognizer, Patient) assigned to participants in a discursal event (also Fairclough, 1992, pp. 27, 76; Fairclough and Wodak 1997; Johnstone, 2008, pp. 53-63). Halliday (1968) and Van Leeuwen (1995, 2007) are particularly interested in representational choices of verbal predicates relative to the processes they encode (active/dynamic, affective, cognitive) and their relation to power differentials between social actors in different contexts.

According to Van Leeuwen (1995) the author's choice of representing social action and actors gives us access to their mindset because these 'representational choices encode different interpretations of and different attitudes to the actions represented' (p. 81). He argues that verbs that express affective processes (feelings, desires, beliefs) weaken the actors to which they refer compared to verbs that express dynamic and cognitive processes (thoughts, speech, actions), because emotions are susceptible to fallacies, and thus do not support statements of facts. He claims that 'emotiveness increases as status and power decreases' (Van Leeuwen, 1995, p. 88). Adopting a broader operational definition of grammatical agency as power differential among participants in an interactional event (the ability to perform an action), we can start to inspect how power relations are enacted in the grammar of a text through the relative position occupied by participants in the events described in a sentence.

In the CIA's text, the contrastive use of active and passive voice establishes a pattern of correlation between degrees of agentivity and positive and negative context. Active and passive sentences are found in relation to types of allegations- the more serious the allegation (e.g. unauthorized techniques, excessive force), the less agentive CIA's semantic role in the clause. The first recurring pattern I found was the choice of dynamic and cognitive verbal predicates to represent CIA's actions such as *developed standards and guidelines, sought guidance, accurately assessed, made referrals, conducted a review, engaged in a variety of planning efforts, explored options, took corrective action*, etc. In these contexts, CIA appears in subject position in active sentences either as an Agent or Cognizer in positive contexts where it is the knowledgeable decision-maker, the experienced provider of correct information, or the thoughtful commander who remediates problems, but also recognizes and makes amends to past mistakes. In negative contexts, CIA is demoted to the position of object in a prepositional phrase (*by the CIA*) or simply omitted from the passivized sentence in passive constructions where it appears as a bad manager, a power abuser, and a deceitful agency who misrepresents its program to the government and the media. While active sentences present CIA as the willful actor that builds credit for positive actions or acknowledges mistakes, passivization is strategically used to deflect blame by obscuring agency. Also, deontic and epistemic modals are found in both active and passive sentences and frequently appear in contexts where authors express a regret or make a promise like *had an affirmative obligation, needs to develop, should not have been considered, could have been done better, we believe CIA leaders erred*. In such contexts, modal expressions mitigate wrongdoing and, moreover, build moral credit by representing CIA as a rational actor, capable of taking responsibility for misdeeds and redirecting future actions. Therefore, modality functions as a hedging device to build moral stance and alignment with the Senate (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 275).

Against CIA's positive self-representations, the Committee is assigned opposite roles. Verb types selected to represent the Committee's actions also include dynamic and cognitive processes, but unlike CIA's representations these appear in the context of a failure or mistake. Some choices of verbal predicates that exemplify greater agentivity

embedded in these roles include (the Study) *exaggerates CIA's use of unauthorized techniques, fails to take note of important improvement, ignores the information obtained from detainees, omits important additional facts and contexts, neglects to point out, incorrectly claims, and mischaracterizes CIA's other representations*. In these contexts, the Committee is mostly the unfair accuser or inept critic of CIA's actions while the latter is represented as the victim of their incompetent and biased accusations. Interestingly, the number of instances in which passive voice is used to describe the Committee's actions is significantly smaller than CIA's without any noticeable change in contextual valence.

6.3 The function of nominalization in naturalizing torture

Nominalization of verbal phrases is yet another representational construction that has been broadly discussed by CDA researchers (Fowler *et. al.*, 1979; Hodge and Kress, 1993; Fowler, 1992, 1996; Fairclough, 2015). As described in chapters 3 and 4, nominalization is a grammatical process through which a noun is derived from a verb, more specifically, by down-ranking verbal phrases from their canonical position in the predicate to the subject position. In this analysis, my focus has been on 'action nominalizations' (Payne, 1997, p. 224), which refer to those nominalized verb phrases that are in subject position and denote processes or actions.

In the data, nominalized VPs along with non-agentive subjects express the relation between non-agentive subjects and types of accusations, and similarly to syntactic voice, they manipulate agency by shifting the focus from actors to actions as in *the facility and the existence of a detention and interrogation program, the decline in reporting over time on the use of enhanced techniques, the use of certain techniques declined over time*. Fowler (Fowler *et. al.*, 1979, pp. 25, 32, 208), Hodge and Kress (1993, pp. 20-21, 44) argued that nominalized forms of action verbs represent events as pre-existent and independent of human agency because unlike verbs, nouns do not encode time or the speakers' perspective. In his discussion of 'transitivity', or what he calls 'transactional language', Halliday maintains that events and actions can be described as the relations between the participants and the experiences in which they are

involved (Halliday, 1985). Devices or mechanisms such as passivization or nominalization serve to emphasize, de-emphasize, focus, defocus, reorient attention to events and perspectives and unassign responsibility and agency to participants. The inexplicitness of agency and responsibility reorients readers' attention to the event, informing their understanding of such event as devoid of a causative agent, that is, an event without causation. Whereas passivization *de-emphasizes* CIA's role in the actions of which they are accused, non-agentive subjects and nominalization 'naturalize' these actions by making responsibility implicit in the clause (Also in Van Dijk, 2001, p. 359). The collection of these constructions in the text reframed developments as devoid of a causative agent, creating a version of events in which misfortunes happen rather than *being caused* to happen.

In the text, nominalizations are found mostly in representations of CIA's actions in negative contexts like *CIA's failure to immediately respond to the extraordinary and high-risk requirements*, *CIA's handling of lower-profile detainees*, *the improper capture and rendition of Khalid al-Masri*, *Gul Rahman's death catalyzed significant improvements in the organization*. Justifications and explanations for the acts of which CIA is accused are linguistically realized through nominalized VPs that create a distance between Agent-like subjects and predication (Myhill, 2001, p. 165). Consequently, this syntactic distance obscures any causal relation that could lead to authorship of wrongdoing and blame being assigned to CIA. Hence, nominalized forms along with non-agentive subject noun phrases make human agency inexplicit, and its co-occurrence in negative contexts leads us to interpret CIA's missteps as naturally occurring and unavoidable. In the case of CIA's use of torture, the focus is shifted from officers who used torture to the types of torture they applied, then from the negative impact of their use to a positive outcome. Some examples are (1) *the use of the waterboard on Khalid Shaykh Muhammad and Abu Zubaydah did not contravene the (legal) principles (of the Office of Legal Counsel) underlying the August 2002 opinion*; (2) *Enhanced techniques were one tool used to implement these authorities*, and (3) *As occasional errors occurred over the remaining life of the program (...)*.

As a result, our inference of what happened is changed in two significant ways: 1) officers who approved and used torture are not responsible for the application of these techniques because they are presented as a ‘natural’, normal method of Intelligence collection, and 2) the negative consequences of the use of torture –the death or inhuman treatment of detainees, the acquisition of false information, and the moral and political cost of approved torture methods for the government and CIA to name a few –are presented as ‘misuses’ of those techniques by undertrained officers along with the shortcomings of how some techniques operate. However, most importantly, any questions raised about its moral or legal legitimacy is offset by the significance of the information allegedly obtained. Torture is thus naturalized as pre-determined by an uncontrollable external force (Al-Qaeda), and intrinsic to Intelligence collection instead of the result of a questionable political decision (Bush’s *War on Terror* policy) that involved the violation of international laws for the protection of human rights.

The choice of representing CIA’s decisions as pre-existing facts instead of contextually situated actions creates the impression that officers did not have a choice or the control of the situation (Johnstone, p. 56; see also Fairclough, 1992, pp. 27-29). This change in inferential pattern is a crucial mechanism to first avoid blame, and then, build credibility when responding to accusations of wrongdoing.

6.4 The function of concessive relations in building justifications

The most interesting pattern I found was the use of pre-posed concessive clauses in the context of justifications. The observed pattern is that contrastive clauses in pre-position carry a negative presupposition about CIA's actions always followed by a main clause containing either: A) a rationalization of the wrongful action; B) a regret for an acknowledged wrongdoing, or C) a negation of the wrongdoing altogether. But before discussing the function of concession in building justificatory arguments, I will first lay out the operational definition I have adopted here for concessive relations.

As a basic everyday notion, to concede means to accept, to acknowledge a presupposed fact (an assumption) to be true. Prior studies on concessive relations have

come to define this subset of contrastive clauses in terms of its conceptual structure and function in discourse (Barth-Weingarten, 2003; Iten, 1998; Mizuno, 2008; Ota, 2015; Rudolph, 1996). Barth-Weingarten (2003) characterizes concessive relations as a tripartite sequence of verbal moves that she calls ‘*The Cardinal Concessive Schema*’ made of claiming, conceding (acknowledging), and countering what was initially claimed (p. 4). She also defines the act of conceding as being “circumscribed with concepts such as agreeing, (reluctantly) allowing for something, admitting, acknowledging and giving way” (2003, p. 18). Its conceptual structure includes the notion of unwillingly accepting a claim and *reclaiming* it, and it is linguistically realized through *although* types of clauses that can be captured in the relation *Although P, Q* or *Q although P* (where *P* is a hypothesis and *Q* a conclusion). Mizuno (2008) explains that two propositions contained in any standard *although* clause express incompatible situations that can be expressed by *if p then not-q* (p. 7). For example, in the following claim ‘although I was late for the exam, I finished it on time’, the speaker first acknowledges his being late to the class and then reassures that this does not pose a problem. The shift in inference comes from the underlying assumption we have that students are not or should not be late for exams because if they are, they cannot finish it on time. Hence, the speaker’s tardiness constitutes an exceptional circumstance which does not change the expected outcome of the situation, namely, the completion of the exam on time.

Concessive relations can be analyzed from two angles: the actions they accomplish, that is, the communicative tasks at hand, and the verbal moves produced (Barth-Weingarten, p. 3). From a discourse-pragmatic perspective, a concessive relation includes the initial acknowledgment of a speaker's point of view followed by a counter that contradicts it by either denying or weakening what was stated. Besides the relation established by two contradictory propositions, researchers also maintain that the order of the concessive clause in relation to the main clause also affects the direction of the inference. Mizuno (2008) point to a correlation between clause ordering and interpretation, arguing that pre-posed concessive clauses tend to weaken the presupposed claim making it be perceived as less true, while post-posed concessive clauses do just the opposite (pp. 37, 42, 48–50). Ota (2015) suggests that pre-posed concessive clauses

weaken the presupposition it contains because the speaker's focus is always on the main clause where new information is packaged¹². Similarly, Iten (1998) posits that pre-posed concessive clauses do not eliminate an assumption but make it weaker by contradicting its most contextually accessible interpretation (pp. 13–14). Rudolph (1996) further asserts that concessive clauses in pre-position can background negative information by presenting it first so readers know that the main idea in the second clause will constitute a positive contrast (pp. 48–52). The underlying logic is that presenting a challenge first strengthens the result because it builds a compelling scenario for speakers by raising their expectations of a positive outcome.

Given its three-fold nature, concessive relations are typical of competitive settings because they strategically mitigate direct confrontation by accommodating adversarial positions. In this way, a speaker's claim is initially accepted by his opponent but soon replaced by an alternative interpretation rather than an explicit denial of what he stated. As a rhetorical device, concession is also associated with the idea of exception to the rule, understood as the most expected inference given by a presupposition (Iten, 1998, pp. 21–22). Barth (2001) identifies as one of the main functions of pre-posed concessive clauses to avert anticipated objection (p. 75). For example, in the proposition *although no systematic, comprehensive assessment of the various techniques was performed (...), officers involved in the program did regularly make such assessments on an ad hoc basis (...)* the underlying assumptions are: 1) 'systematic and comprehensive assessment of various techniques is expected and performed', 2) 'this assessment was not done'. The *although* clause is the author's acknowledgment of a possible objection that CIA did not perform any systematic and comprehensive assessment of enhanced techniques with which they would concur that it did not happen. The ordering of the concessive clause, however, with the second assumption in the initial position and subordinated to the first changes the inference from 'systematic and comprehensive assessment was not performed' to 'some kind of assessment was performed' whereas the lack of systematicity and comprehensiveness is construed as an exception to the rule. If an exception is made to a rule, and this exception is beyond one's control or claimed to be necessary to some purpose, then no rule is perceived as broken. This last notion of

concession is instrumental to understand justifications of wrongful doing where the action is either illegal or morally questionable.

Therefore, justifications function like repairs to acts of wrongdoing that lack legal and moral precedent and thus require a rhetorical exit. They include the notion of conceding and reclaiming and are linguistically realized through concessive expressions. Concessive relations in the CIA's report have the following conceptual structure: 1) an allegation –the presupposed act of wrongdoing CIA –in a declarative clause admitting to the wrongdoing, or in a modal clause that expresses admission of guilt. The main clause that follows the concessive invariably contains an explanation or a regret followed by a promise that future wrongdoings will not happen again. Here are some examples: (1) *Although conditions at (...) improved after early 2003, CIA never did- as we believe it should have- put the facility under the dedicated full-time management of a more senior CIA officer(...),* and (2) *Although we judge that the outcomes of these accountability exercises were inadequate, at least in scope, the record does show that, contrary to the claim in Conclusion 16, CIA often learned much from its mistakes and took corrective action.* An explanation is a rationalization of the reasons behind CIA's actions that establishes a causal link between events otherwise disconnected. I argue that this redirects the reader's focus from the negative consequences to some positive outcome. In the text, pre-posed concessive clauses strategically serve to background or downplay CIA's acts of wrongdoing by presenting it first in the sentence, so readers know that the main idea will constitute a contrast. In the context of government wrongdoing, presenting a negative action in a concessive clause first strengthens the main claim because it raises the readers' expectation of a positive outcome. One example is (1) *Although conditions at the facility remained sub-optimal throughout its existence, significant improvements at the site prompted two SSCI staff members who visited the facility in late 2003 to compare it favorably with military facilities at Bagram and Guantanamo Bay,* and (2) *However, on balance we concluded that, although CIA officers may not have been comfortable engaging with the IG on RDI-related matters, when they did so they nevertheless generally provided accurate information on the operation and effectiveness of the program.*

As outlined above, I believe that this change in inferential pattern caused by a concessive relation changes speakers' perception of truth about an initial claim. The instances found in the text suggest that the relation between the initial conceding move – the acknowledgment of some act of wrongdoing –and the final denial of such act by a counter in the main clause- changes the contextual valence of the passage because the focus is redirected to the new information given at the end of the sentence.¹³ Therefore, concession appears to play an important role in structuring justifications, specially in the kinds of wrongdoing that call for some form of social validation.

6.5 Lexicon selection in negative representations of the Senate Committee of Intelligence

Finally, I look at the contribution of evaluative lexis in the discursive construction of legitimization, in particular, the role of contrastive lexicon to disqualify the Committee as credible assessors of Intel work. For this purpose, I employed Frame Semantics theory to better understand the relation of lexical items that in the surface appear to be semantically unrelated, but stem from the same conceptual domain. The most interesting pattern I found was the selective use of nouns, adjectives, and verbs that evoke the frame of 'Expertise' to construct an image of professional credibility for the CIA and amateurish incompetence for the Senate Committee. While lexical items semantically associated with precision, objectivity and diligence are used to characterize the actions of the CIA, others related to inaccuracy, bias, and ineptitude are used to describe SSCI's study. This contrastive use of lexis conjures up an image of the Committee as inept, their results as inaccurate, and their evaluation as unreliable. The contexts in which this polarized lexis appears are the counter arguments presented by the authors comprising defamations of the Senate Committee, self-appraisals, and regrets. While defamations are made of negative representations of the Committee's accusations as judgmental and unfounded, self-appraisals and self-criticisms constitute CIA's positive self-representations of their assessment of torture methods as objective, insightful, and technically sound.

For Van Dijk (2001a), “ideologically loaded expressions contribute to the overall polarization of the conceptual structure of the text and the formation of a biased, polarized model of the events, where the actors are neatly differentiated between the good and the bad” (p. 105). In this sense, the roles of CIA and the Committee are defined within a dualistic conceptual structure that gives rise to oppositional pairs like the hero-villain, victim-culprit, and the expert-amateur. In negative contexts, CIA is represented as either the hero who protects national security against imminent terrorist threats or the victim of political mischaracterizations given by the Committee’s distorted views of Intelligence operations. In contrast, the Committee plays the role of villain or culprit because of its unfavorable, systematic depiction of the CIA as an insubordinate and deceptive agency who not only employs excessive force but misrepresents its actions to the government and the public. In positive contexts, however, CIA is the Intelligence service provider who diligently conducts information gathering within the legal limits prescribed by the constitution under the scrutiny of a multitude of government offices. In these contexts, authors present wrongdoings as a set of miscalculated actions and errors in assessment as a result of external pressure for a prompt response to 9/11, but also of their inexperience with ‘enhanced interrogation techniques’. In either scenario, authors explicitly acknowledge faults but not culpability for questionable acts because these are rationalized as necessary steps to preserve national security or, alternatively, interpreted as mishaps that can be prevented in future operations.

As discussed in the previous chapter, these oppositional roles evoked by the ‘Frame of Expertise’ emerge across various contexts in which the CIA and the Committee are discursively assigned adversarial positions. The interrelation among these different ideas associated with the concept of ‘expertise’ constitutes an important discursive device in constructing CIA’s legitimization of torture methods. Thus, it is not surprising that we find a host of noun and verb phrases that denote intellectual property and objectivity to describe CIA’s actions (*factual record, promote historical accuracy, take corrective actions, conducted careful review, provided detailed responses*) and those that encode emotion and value judgment to describe the Committee’s actions (*unqualified assertions, exaggerates, fails to note, ignores*). In this way, the authors deflect blame and

build credit by articulating an epistemic authority based on intellectual, and at times, moral superiority to legitimize its use of torture methods and the overall conduction of the RDI program.

6.6 Competing discourses, identities, and interpretations

In their response to the Senate Committee's report, authors effectively legitimize torture and maintain legal status by enacting a discursive identity anchored in an oppositional frame throughout their comments wherein the CIA emerges as the expert in Intelligence and the Committee as the inexperienced amateur. Overall, I have identified three main stances of CIA authors in relation to the Committee's accusations of their use of torture. In these stances, while the Senate Committee on Intelligence is represented as a harsh and unfair accuser of CIA's actions, the latter is presented as the victim of adverse circumstances and of the Committee's biased and imprecise accounts of their actions during the RDI program:

1) Acceptance: Authors align with the Committee's report by taking the blame and accepting the Senate's claims without further contesting them. CIA assesses the reasons for wrongdoing leading to two positions: 1) regrets about past decisions that led to power abuse, and mismanagement of resources and personnel; 2) promises towards changes in conduct and procedures in future initiatives.

2) Justification: Authors oppose the Committee by explaining the motivations behind negative actions. Justifications were described before as a three-fold process made of an initial concessive move wherein authors accept the Committee's claim, but only to the extent that the negative consequences of CIA's actions (e.g. the deterioration of detention centers, the death of detainees as a result of trauma) are acknowledged as true. This rhetorical move involves accepting the Committee's interpretation of negative effects of CIA's actions but refuting the causes they present by offering an alternative interpretation. The initial agreement with the Senate gives way to a series of

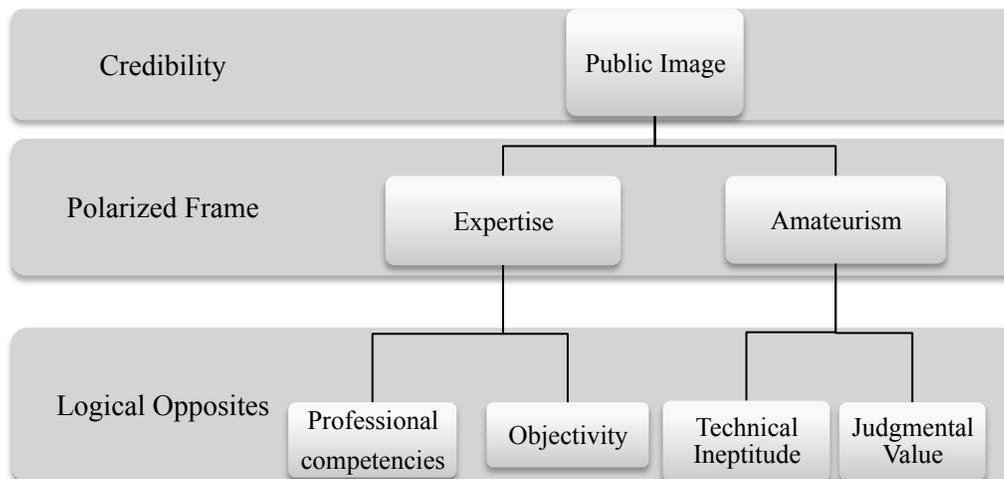
counterclaims containing some form of rationalization for the actions leading to the positive outcomes of the program.

3) Denial: Authors oppose the Committee by refuting their claims through a series of countermoves that include disqualifying the Committee as credible assessor of Intel based on: 1) Lack of evidence to support their allegations and counterevidence that falsifies the information presented in the report); 2) Lack of competencies in Intel work leading to unbalanced and imprecise accounts of the events; 3) An inherent negative bias towards CIA and Intel work in general, which prompted Committee members to produce a distorted and overall negative interpretation of CIA work along with their Rendition, Detention, and Interrogation program.

This set of macro arguments is linguistically constructed within positive and negative contexts in the text. The relation between bivalent contexts and grammatical forms has significant relevance on how meanings are layered into different types of legitimizing arguments in the text. More specifically, the re-occurrence of particular forms in the same contexts directs speakers to certain interpretations of the events otherwise not inferable.

As discussed in the previous sections, the alternation of syntactic voice, nominal forms, pre-posed concessive clauses, and selective lexis operate as effective strategies for deflecting blame but also, and perhaps more importantly, for reversing blame.

Diagram 2.Polarized Framing: Credibility/Knowledge



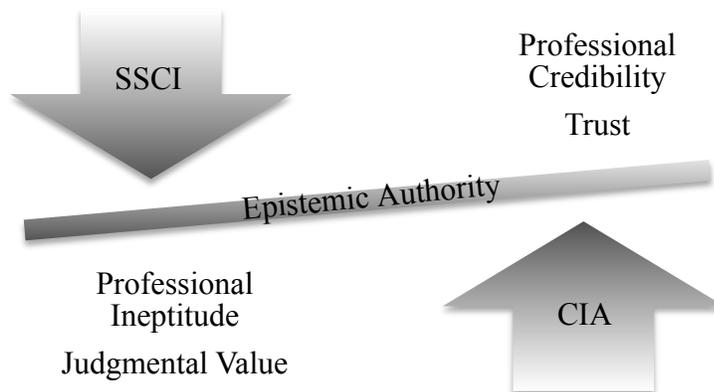
In positive contexts, CIA is mostly represented in Actor-like roles that encode higher agency along with lexicon conjuring accuracy, objectivity, and experience. CIA is thereby constructed as the expert authority who remediates problems, recognizes mistakes, expresses regrets, and promises to amend past mistakes and to redirect changes towards future actions. By contrast, in negative contexts CIA is represented in Patient-like roles either as the victim of inevitable circumstances, or the remorseful wrongdoer callously accused of unintentional misconduct, in arguments that strategically reassign responsibility to other actors (the government, terrorists, the political climate, etc.). Besides blame reversal, authors build credit by countering accusations of unaccountability in cases of power abuse and ineffective use of enhanced interrogation techniques with arguments that highlight the candor of commanding officers in their response to the Committee's allegations. Such representations draw readers to the inference with the greatest cognitive availability: Power abuse and human rights violations are consequences of naturally-occurring circumstances out of CIA's control instead of the willful decision-maker responsible for the torture and killing of suspected terrorists during the RDI program.

In addition to semantic roles, nominalized verbs in subject position also obliterate agency along with any readings of the actions partaken by CIA as the result of choice. Flaws are in this way construed as either deficiencies in resources or negative conditions

forced upon officers instead of faults in decisions by commander officers running the program. The effect of non-agentive subjects is the transformation of negative actions into negative characteristics, or the omission of a required positive characteristic for a human agent to have control of its actions. For example, the representational choice of adjective predicates instead of transitive verbal predicates to describe actions presupposes less control by an agent –e.g. ‘*officers were unprepared for interrogation*’ instead of ‘*officers did not prepare for interrogation*’ –muddling the assignment of responsibility to otherwise identifiable persons. Therefore, power abuse, deceptive practices, and mismanagement in different phases of the program are all constructed as the absence of permanent qualities (unpreparedness of officers, scarcity of time for proper assessment of interrogation techniques, inexistence of information and experience with these techniques) leading officers to unlawful actions rather than the result of a shady vision of how to best respond to terrorist threats and political pressure.

The power distance discursively enacted in these oppositional stances throughout the text licenses the authors the right to legitimize torture on the assumption that the Committee is not on par with CIA to evaluate all aspects of Intelligence collection. The main take-away is that the Senate Committee is presented as not possessing sufficient knowledge, technical skills, nor experience to fully comprehend intelligence work, let alone the efficacy of different methods of collecting human intelligence. This means that the Committee is not, and never will be considered, an apt assessor of interrogation techniques because it is not a good enough knower of Intel work. Underlying this notion of epistemic inequality is the idea of ‘truthfulness’ about the stated facts, intrinsic to building epistemic trust, and ultimately, professional credibility. In this sense, a true statement gives an apt description of actions and events, and apt explanations for what cause them to occur. From a political perspective, what is at stake is the knowledge of the facts presented and how to correctly interpret them, or to put it simply, over who can be trusted to tell the truth. In this dispute over knowledge, CIA not only controls the interpretive resources, but monopolizes the right to access them because of the secretive nature of Intelligence work that will always keep it restricted to a handful of people in government.

Diagram 3. Epistemic Inequality



6.7 Conclusion

In the previous sections, I discussed the rhetorical effects of the variation of linguistic realizations in function of the structure of argumentation, highlighting the overall shift of focus from negative to positive outcomes for CIA's actions. While this focal shift does not change the true-conditions of propositions, it redirects the interpretation of implicit inferences or assumptions between what is stated and what is believed to be true such that a favorable opinion about CIA is constantly forced upon readers. In this way, the expectations are always drawn to the positive information in the text, fulfilling the authors' main task of legitimizing torture. The co-occurrence of dualistic semantic roles across bivalent contexts establishes unequal footing between CIA and the Committee leading to a type of epistemic inequality founded on disparaging levels of knowledge.

The dispute is settled not over arguments that offer the most compelling explanations for the use of torture, but which participant can be considered an acceptable 'knower' of techniques of interrogation for Intelligence collection. This power differential in epistemic status enables CIA to legitimize torture on rhetorical grounds that seek to focus on the positive outcomes of its use and at the same disarm the

Committee as a reliable critic of the RDI program, in particular, of ‘enhanced techniques of interrogation’.

One could say, then, that CIA’s effective legitimization of torture is discursively constructed as much by its self-construction as experts in intelligence and national security as by de-legitimizing the Committee as a valid opponent. In this way, textual roles emerge to re-enact power relations between political actors according to varying levels of epistemic authority, given by the control they each have, or claim to have, over interpretive resources. This, authority understood as control over knowledge production structures power relations by determining which actors can be sources and recipients of knowledge and which actors cannot (Fricker, 2007, Kukla, 2014, Morris, 2010). CIA’s ‘discourse of expert authority’ confers them greater epistemic authority and disqualifies the Committee as reliable evaluators of Intel work.

Chapter 7

The Discursive Construction of Epistemic Authority

7.1 Summary of Findings

In my analysis of the ways in which legitimization for political wrongdoing is discursively constructed, I departed from the central question of how CIA legitimizes its use of torture in face of opposition, and arrived at a far more complex problem related to epistemic control over knowledge production about intelligence. Among my research questions, I wanted to know which discursive strategies CIA authors employed to shift attention from accusations to positive outcomes for the use of torture, how these strategies are linguistically realized in the text, and which rhetorical effects they might bear on readers. Upon examining recurring patterns of language form and context, I homed in the communicative tasks these strategies accomplish in the agency's self-representations in the post-9/11. Results indicate that competing discursive identities are enacted in the text –‘the expert’ versus the ‘opinionated amateur’ –which establish a power differential between the agency and the Committee in relation to intelligence know-how. Power defined as control of knowledge production structures power relations by determining which actors can be epistemic agents (sources and recipients of knowledge) and which actors cannot. CIA's ‘discourse of expert authority’ serves to ascribe them greater epistemic authority as sources of knowledge on Intel work while disqualifying the Committee as such.

In terms of rhetorical structure, we see that not all accusations are promptly refuted or countered; authors do align with the Committee in a number of points, yet to avail self credit for amends made to acknowledged wrongdoing. As to those accusations denied or contended, authors downgrade the Committee as poorly invested with the experience or interpretive assets to properly scrutinize CIA's work. Hence, power asymmetry is rhetorically constructed via polarized framing wherein CIA and the Committee emerge as ‘the experts’ and ‘the amateurs’, respectively, and the dispute is decided even before actors enter the arena of competing arguments. It is their initial

status relative to their perceived knowledge of intelligence that enables CIA to discredit the Committee as an equal opponent irrespective of the strengths or flaws in their argumentation. Therefore, unlike most political settings, the debate between CIA and the Committee over the truth about torture methods is set on unequal grounds of epistemic agency in which the winner has already been established. This is evidenced in the series of disqualifying arguments presented by CIA authors, but also in the lexical selection and grammatical constructions used to critique the Committee's alleged 'biased', 'exaggerated', and 'inaccurate' accounts of CIA's actions. Such negative representations were instrumental to further legitimize torture methods by reversing the blame to the Committee for being 'unfair' and 'incompetent' in their assessment of the interrogation and detention program. On this matter, one can argue that the strongest form of *de*-legitimization is stripping a government official or office of their epistemic agency because it removes their status as trustworthy officials in the service of public interest. Trust and competence are conceptually tied to credibility to such extent that a misperception is formed of the individual or office as undeserving public trust and approval. The disqualification of the Senate Committee as capable of providing a valid and sound account of CIA's use of torture in their program, is the underlying key argument in their response to the study. Authors discursively raise CIA to such heights that no other actor can be deemed to have knowledge and, consequently, credibility on par with the agency.

Other than this initial epistemic inequality, I found that torture is also legitimized through rationalization of its use, that is, by virtue of compelling arguments to justify their appropriate use, their purposes, and results. I described how the instantiation of certain grammatical forms in bivalent contexts contribute to an overall understanding of CIA as a credible and legitimate agency zealous of national security and democratic values. In contrast, the Committee is depicted as biased and intentionally deceptive in their characterization of the agency's conduct. I concluded that the reoccurring patterns of linguistic form in negative and positive context to characterize both actors redirects readers' attention from the accusations to the results allegedly obtained, changing the inference from blame to gain. Blame avoidance moves are thereby operationalized into

context-dependent linguistic forms to background accusations and foreground CIA's subordination to the U.S. government. By discursively constructing epistemic authority on matters of Intel collection, the authors effectively accomplish two communicative tasks: 1) Disqualify the Committee as credible assessors of Intelligence, and 2) Reassign any blame for wrongdoing to the Committee by virtue of their incompetence to accurately assess 'enhanced interrogation techniques'. Such tasks enable the CIA to articulate a professional identity as a provider of intelligence services to the US government and as the guardian of democracy for Westerners.

Given the secrecy surrounding its covert operations, CIA has been historically associated with undermining and subverting national and international political decisions. Recreating their public image as a professional provider of intelligence services strategically shifts the focus from stark accusations of human rights violations to the positive outcomes of their tactics that, ultimately, can disarm critics, build popular consensus, and lend institutional legitimacy to their detention and interrogation program.

7.2 The Construction of Epistemic Authority in Legitimization Discourse

I have argued that legitimizing arguments function as repairs for acts of political wrongdoing that require a rhetorical exit. Different forms of legitimizing arguments need to afford valid and sound answers to questions like '*why did we have to do it?*' and '*why did we have to do it in this way?*' (Van Leeuwen, 2007, p. 93). What is at stake in this seemingly battle of wits is CIA's credibility as an agency given its inability to provide truthful accounts of the uniqueness of the intelligence obtained from 'enhanced interrogation techniques'. We can hypothesize that if veracity entails reliability and trust, then the agency needs to represent itself as sole experts on intelligence to maintain its unique position as the only credible authority who can legitimize any acts or measures that might violate constitutional laws.

Drawing on a large body of literature in critical discourse studies about legitimization in discourse, I examined the ways in which blame avoidance strategies such as deflection, reversal, and denial are linguistically operationalized to obscure

causes and manipulate agency. The example passages provided demonstrate how passivization and nominalization decrease the agency's responsibility by reassigning blame to causeless events or external circumstances. Passivized and nominalized subjects were found to yield an ahistorical reconstruction of events insofar as they portray actions as agentless. From this angle, demoting or deleting syntactic agency means disempowering social actors because it represents political choices as a natural development of the state of affairs in the world. As a result, decisions that would otherwise need accounting are instead rationalized and presented as 'the inevitable unfolding of events in the world' as it was done in the post-9/11.

Added to passivization and nominalization, I also found a pattern of pre-posed concessive clauses used in negative contexts where justifications are given for torture and other wrongful acts. In these passages, pre-posed concessive clauses appear to weaken the accusation they carry by presenting it firstly in contrast with an explanation, regret, or some positive outcome for the act expressed in the main clause. Given the fact that our focus is always on the main clause where new information is packaged, it is likely that this ordering redirects the initial inference that some negative act was committed to some positive or acceptable conclusion. Whereas explanations and results are rationalizations of actions that can establish a causal link between events otherwise disconnected, regrets appeal to empathy or forgiveness warranted from the recognition of the wrongdoing and the promise to make amends. Despite the need for further empirical testing, I indicated that this ordering of concessive relations is likely to cause a change in sentiment, from what would be a negative attitude towards the wrongdoers to a positive one. Together, these grammatical constructions play an important rhetorical role in obscuring, justifying, or denying CIA's use of excessive force and insubordination to government oversight.

I also found that rhetorical polarization is linguistically encoded in lexical selection that evokes the semantic frame of 'expertise' as opposed to 'amateurship'. Lexical items populating the phraseology used to characterize CIA associate them with expert knowledge and experience, which are key conceptual elements in our understanding of credibility and trust. CIA's self-representation as expert authority evokes the image of a pre-existing entity, legally bound, and united against all forms of

harms against the nation. Construed as a monolithic block, this uniformed identity further instills the belief of strength and control over their acts since institutional homogeneity presupposes impersonal power and organization above individuals. By contrast, the Committee is characterized by overall negative lexis related to imprecision and bias, leading to a reading of them as inapt actors for the assessment task. Authors manage to successfully efface responsibility for the agency's use of torture and to disqualify their assessors as credible. The collection of these rhetorical moves effectively legitimizes torture methods because they act as cognitive shortcuts to reinterpret acts that require moral validation.

The concept of epistemic authority is particularly instrumental to account for competing discourses among actors of equal status. Epistemic agency is a person's recognition of her ability to know, to gain knowledge and produce knowledge. This knowledge is built from our access to hermeneutic resources – schemas, constructs, lingo, meanings – that we create and use to make sense of us and of our experiences in the world. Hermeneutic resources are interpretive resources, defined by Habermas (1975) as “interpretations members of a society use in identifying one another as belonging to the same group, and through this group identity assert their own self-identity” (p. 3). They are based on apt descriptions of actions and events, and apt explanations. According to Habermas (1975), apt is always a judgment call, therefore apt explanations are competing interpretations about the same events in the world that produce equally competing discourses about these events. Epistemic agency is thereby founded on the belief that a given actor has the ability to present a credible interpretation of a given event or events. A credible interpretation is one that conforms to prevailing schemas and constructs entrenched in habitual social life (Also Van Dijk, 2003, pp. 86–87).

When social actors are represented in terms of their epistemic markers, that is, their qualifications, experience, degrees, and other stamps of epistemic status, they are assigned unequal degrees of epistemic agency in relation to their control of interpretive resources or lack thereof. Fricker (2007) defines power as “a socially situated capacity to control others' actions” (p. 4). Applied to the dispute over the truth about torture methods, we see that CIA's ability to discursively compel the readers to believe that the

agency monopolized Intel knowledge does not change the final decision of the Executive to officially ban ‘enhanced interrogation techniques’ and shut down the program in 2009. However, it does raise many doubts about the propriety of that decision as well as the aptness of the actors who brought it to bear. As Fricker (2007) puts it, “whenever power is at work, we should be ready to ask who or what is controlling whom, and why” (p. 14). In this case, CIA authors have the ability to control inferences about what led them to adopt extreme methods of interrogation, how those methods were applied, and who is to blame for the cascade of failures in their execution of the program. And even though such inferences do not change the events, they do alter the perception of their truth conditions.

7.3 Relevance of the topic and the contribution of the analysis

My goal was also to investigate the ways in which power dispute is linguistically exercised in current public discourse by political actors who have equal status. In this sense, my analysis offers a contribution to the study of discourse phenomena from a pragmatically oriented point of view. The main question I sought to answer was ‘how does CIA discursively legitimize torture in their response to the Committee’s accusations during their detention and interrogation program?’ More specifically, my interest was to understand how linguistic forms contribute to the overall rhetorical construction of justifications and legitimizing counter arguments. The results demonstrate that recurring linguistic patterns occur in function of the types of arguments required to counter each accusation, and the pairing of form and context strategically accomplish two main communicative tasks: (a) Disqualify the Committee as an acceptable opponent, and (b) Build credibility for the CIA. I also described how common blame avoidance strategies such as deflection, reversal, and denial appear to come hand in hand with linguistic structure, giving the text overall coherence in terms of counter argumentation.

To date, most CDA analyses have focused on prevailing public discourses produced by powerful social actors to the detriment of those representing disempowered groups in settings defined by asymmetrical relations. CDA scholars have traditionally assumed that power relations and ideological domination are re-enacted and reinforced

by hegemonic discourses diffused through mass communication and everyday discursive practices. They sustain that this is how social hierarchies and different forms of injustice are reproduced and perpetuated in post-capitalist societies. However, power and ideological disputes are also discursively enacted by actors who are equals in competitive settings. This is true of government debates which are very so often turned into tugs of war over outcomes in decision-making processes. The analysis presented in the previous chapters confirms such prediction: On the matter of the open condemnation of torture methods and the shutdown of CIA's program in 2009 based on the Committee's study, CIA maintains the upper hand in their determination that 'enhanced interrogation techniques' did constitute a legitimate method of intelligence collection by countering the ability of the Committee to produce valid claims.

Building on previous research on discourses of legitimization, this analysis also contributes to the literature in critical discourse analysis with the focus on government discourse at two levels. First, considering that most CDA studies focus on cases from Europe, my analysis extends the application of CDA to discursive practices in the U.S. by examining how ideological dispute is linguistically exercised in government discourse. Second, it expands the scope of themes traditionally investigated by CDA researchers from media discourse to government debates of controversial public issues. Beyond linguistic analysis, CIA's Comments also raises important questions about the political and moral authority of the U.S. government in respect to human rights both inside and outside American territory. Notwithstanding the Committee's role to oversee Intel agencies and question their decisions, CIA's defense of torture before the Senate and the Executive branch suggests that American democracy is equally susceptible to practices of political silencing and power abuse, which have historically characterized non-democratic regimes. As mentioned before, the notion of a 'state of exception' as a possible articulating principle or reasoning to justify torture methods is troubling given its efficacy in lending political legitimacy to acts otherwise deemed unlawful in a democracy.

Finally, this analysis provided some insights into how communicative aspects of blame avoidance encoded in linguistic strategies are used to minimize allegations and

criticism. The strategies used by CIA authors to present a compelling depiction of its detention and interrogation program, and in particular, of its use of ‘enhanced techniques of interrogation’ demonstrates how ideological stance can be discursively constructed as predicted in CDA literature. At a macro social level, it has deepened our understanding of how intelligence agencies have defined their role in the post-9/11 era and the repercussions it has to democratic ruling. Future inspection of the underlying assumptions, beliefs, and intentions of Intelligence decision-makers is needed before we can formulate any conclusive knowledge about the direction the intelligence community has taken in preventing terrorist attacks and protecting democratic values.

7.4 Final remarks

In face of growing demands for accountability in the post-9/11 era, CIA has been increasingly pressured to disclose information that might hurt their reputation as reliable provider of intelligence services. It has also had to redesign its institutional identity to dissociate itself from negative past representations as a secret agency responsible for intervening in foreign politics and violating the human rights of other societies. CIA’s *Comments on the Senate Committee on Intelligence’s Study* can be taken as an instance of a meta discourse of legitimization for acts of questionable legality such as the use of torture methods. What is noteworthy in this particular text is the fact that the agency’s reputation as trustworthy intelligence provider is, and will likely always be, untouched provided that no other actor can rise to its epistemic status.

The question of epistemic authority thus gains center state in the discussion of how power relations are reenacted by political actors in public debates. Situated in the field of philosophy, more specifically, in social epistemology, the topic of epistemic agency has raised important questions about social practices that engender inequalities in knowledge production and exchange by social groups (Dotson, 2011, Fricker, 2006, Kukla, 2014, Morris, 2010). For Fricker (2007), credible knowledge pertains the ability of an epistemic agent to offer apt descriptions of actions or events, therefore, apt explanations. But different from what she argues when discussing hermeneutic injustice,

in the case presented here, the epistemic agent perceived as not possessing credible knowledge is not from a historically marginalized group. Rather, it is an agent with equal high status in the political arena, one who would presumably dispense with a need for accreditation, and whose assertions would be deemed as competent and trustworthy.

In this respect, the interpretations afforded by either CIA or the Committee of the actions of which the agency is accused are not submitted to the test of veracity to establish whether or not they correspond to the facts stated. Instead, they are submitted to the test of validity to determine which of the interpretations convincingly establishes the truth about the program and torture methods. Hence, I had stated earlier that the dispute is not over the plausibility of torture being used by the CIA, but over the correct interpretation of its use, the results obtained, and whether it is inarguably justifiable. CIA authors, in my view, despoiled the Committee from its epistemic status by disqualifying their evaluation as a politically biased, whimsical version of events fabricated to frame CIA as an insubordinate and law-breaking institution. By portraying the Committee's study beyond its dimension as legislative oversight of intelligence operations, CIA authors cast shadows of doubts over whether such group can ever accurately provide valuable support to the Intel community.

Given the specificity and interwoven web of meanings layered into the text, attesting to this epistemic victory is quite challenging. A robust account of legitimizing strategies necessitates more data to reliably corroborate the linguistic patterns I discussed, and accurately capture the role these might play in the construction of legitimization for wrongdoing. Despite these shortcomings, I believe that the question of who controls knowledge over Intelligence work remains essential for any discussion on ethics and accountability to be taken seriously. I also believe that for legitimizing discourses to go unchallenged calls out for discourse analysts to make a choice of whether they will go beyond the text or remain in the safe haven of academia. This, however, is one final prediction CDA scholars are yet to fulfill.

A final note on the place of critical discourse analysis in current linguistic research is its unshaken prediction that it could lead to a reflexive position of the investigator in relation to its topic. In this sense, CDA scholars encourage discourse

analysts to situate their knowledge in the research process. To advance the idea that scientificity does not preclude taking a position on research topics, I have presented this analysis as well as the conclusions to which they led me from the position of a human rights advocate. My hope is to stir discussion on discourses produced and diffused by the U.S. government that have long been taken as unarguably truthful. In the battle over what the truth about CIA's use of torture methods is, we might take George Washington's conviction of "*the truth will ultimately prevail*" as a beacon of democracy during troubled times. But it is not without its risks. Heeding Foucault's warning, we must contend those same historical contingencies around which discourses are organized, so when they surface again, we will not have to bear witness of their deceptive truths.

References

- A timeline of the U.S.-led war on terror. (2019, February 1). *History Channel*. Retrieved from <https://www.history.com>
- Barth-Weingarten, D. (2001). *Concession in spoken English: On the realisation of a discourse-pragmatic relation* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Konstanz University, Konstanz.
- Bybee, J. L., & Fleischman, S. (1995). *Modality in Grammar and Discourse*. John Benjamins Publishing.
- Central Intelligence Agency. (2013). *CIA Comments on the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence's Report on the Rendition, Detention and Interrogation Program*. Retrieved from <https://www.cia.gov/library/reports>
- Connell, I. & Galasinski, D. (1996). Cleaning Up its Act: The CIA on the Internet. *Discourse & Society*, 7(2), 165-186. doi:10.1177/0957926596007002002
- Chafe, W.L. (1976). *Givenness, Contrastiveness, Definiteness, Subjects, Topics and Points of View*. New York: Academic Press.
- Dotson, K. (2011). *Tracking Epistemic Violence, Tracking Practices of Silencing*. *Hypatia* 26(2), 236-257.
- Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and Social Change*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Fairclough, N. (2010). *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. (2nd ed). New York: Routledge.
- Fairclough, N. (2015). *Language and Power*. (3rd ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Fairclough, N. & Wodak, R. (1997). Critical Discourse Analysis. In T.A. Van Dijk (Ed.), *Discourse as Social Interaction* (pp. 258-284). London: Sage Publication.
- Fillmore, C. (1976). Frame semantics and the nature of language. IN, S. R. Harnad, H. D. Steklis & J. Lancaster, *Origins and Evolution of Language and Speech* (pp. 20-32). Annals of the NY Academy of Sciences, Vol. 280.
- Fillmore, C. (1982). Frame Semantics. In Linguistic Society of Korea (ed). *Linguistics in the Morning Calm* (pp.111-137). Seoul: Hanshin.

- Fillmore, C. & Baker, C. (2001) Frame Semantics for Text Understanding. *Proceedings of WordNet and Other Lexical Resources Workshop*. Pittsburgh: NAACL.
- Foucault, M. (1981) The order of discourse. In R. Young (Ed.) *Untying the text: A Post-Structuralist Reader* (48-78). Boston/London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Fowler, R. (1991). *Language in the news: Discourse and Ideology in the Press*. London: Routledge.
- Fowler, R. (1996). On Critical Linguistics. In C. Caldas-Coulthard & M. Coulthard (Eds.). *Texts and Practices: Readings in Critical Discourse Analysis* (pp. 3-14). London: Routledge.
- Fowler, R., Hodge, B. Kress, G. & Trew, T. (1979). *Language and Control*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- FrameNet at <https://framenet.icsi.berkeley.edu>
- Fricke, M. (2007). *Epistemic Injustice: Power and Ethics of Knowing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Goodwin, C. & Duranti, A. (1992). *Rethinking Context: Language as an interactive phenomenon*. Great Britain: Cambridge University Press.
- Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Gumperz, J.J. (1982) Contextualization Conventions. IN C.B. Paulston & G.R. Tucker (Eds.). *Sociolinguistics: The essential readings* (pp.139-155). Malden: Blackwell Publishing.
- Gramsci, A. F. (1971). *Selections from the prison notebooks*. (Q. Hoare, & G. Nowell-Smith, Trans.). International Publishers.
- Habermas, J. (1975). *Legitimation Crisis*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Halliday, M.A.K. (1968). Notes on Transitivity and Theme in English: Part 3. *Journal of Linguistics*, 4(2). 179-215.
- Halliday, M., Matthiessen, C. M., Halliday, M., & Matthiessen, C. (2014). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. Routledge.

- Hansson, S. (2015). Discursive Strategies of Blame Avoidance in Government: A Framework for Analysis. *Discourse & Society*, 26(3), 297-322. doi: 10.1177/0957926514564736
- Hodge, R. & Kress, G. (1993). *Language as Ideology* (2nd ed). London: Routledge.
- Inspector General, *Special Review: Counterterrorism Detention and Interrogation Activities* (September 2001-October 2003), Report no. 2003-7123-IG, May 7, 2004. Stable at <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu>
- Iten, C. (1998). 'The meaning of although: A relevance theoretic account.' *UCL Working Papers in Linguistics*, 10, 81-108.
<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.232.9069&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- Johnstone, B. (2008). *Discourse Analysis*. (2nd ed.). United Kingdom: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Kress, G.R. (1985). *Linguistic processes in sociocultural practice*. Victoria, Australia: Deakin University Press.
- Kukla, R. (2014). *Performative force, convention, and discursive injustice*. *Hypatia* 29(2), 440-457.
- Kovecses, Z. (2010). *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Laffut, A. (2006). *Three-participant Constructions in English: A Functional-cognitive Approach to Caused Relations*. Amsterdam, IL: John Benjamins Publishing.
- Lambrecht, K. (1994). *Information Structure and Sentence Form: Topic, Focus, and the Mental Representation of Discourse Referents*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lakoff, G. (2006). *Whose Freedom? The Battle over America's Most Important Idea*. New York: Picador.
- Lakoff, G. (2014). *Don't think of an elephant! Know your values and frame the debate*. White River Junction: Chelsea Green Publishing.
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (2008). *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Meyer, M. (2001). Between theory, method, and politics: positioning of the approaches to CDA. IN R. Wodak, R. & M. Meyer (Eds.) *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (pp.14-30). London: Sage Publications.
- Miles, A. D. (2016). *Perspectives on Enhanced Techniques of Interrogation*. Congressional Research Service Report. Retrieved from <https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc824659/>
- Mizuno, Y. (2008). *Although-clauses in English discourse: A functional analysis* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Hokkaido University Collection of Scholarly and Academic Papers. Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/2115/324>
- Morris, R. (Ed.). (2010). *Can the Subaltern Speak?: Reflections on the History of an Idea*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Myhill, J. (2001). Typology and Discourse Analysis. In D. Tannen, & H.E. Hamilton, (Eds). *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis* (pp.161-174). Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers.
- Office of the Director of National Intelligence. U.S. National Intelligence: An Overview 2013. Retrieved from <https://www.dni.gov>
- Ota, Y. (2015). *A study on the functions of although* [Unpublished manuscript]. <http://hdl.handle.net/10097/60547>
- Payne, T. E. (1997). *Describing morphosyntax: a guide for field linguists*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Petruck, M.R.L. (1996). Frame Semantics. In J. Verschueren, J. Östman, J. Blommaert & C. Bulcaen (eds.). *Handbook of Pragmatics* (pp.1-8). John Benjamins. Retrieved from https://www.princeton.edu/~adele/LIN_106:_UCB_files/Miriam-Petruck-frames.pdf
- Polanyi, L. & Zaenen, A. (2006). Contextual Valence Shifters. In Shanahan, J. G., Qu, Y., & Wiebe, J. (2006). *Computing Attitude and Affect in Text: Theory and Applications* (pp.1-10). Berlin: Springer Science & Business Media.
- President Bush addresses the nation. (2001, September 20). *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from <https://www.washingtonpost.com>

- Rudolph, E. (1996). *Contrast: Adversative and Concessive Relations and their Expressions in English, German, Spanish, Portuguese on Sentence and Text Level*. New York: Walter de Gruyter.
- Ruppenhofer, J., Ellsworth, M., Peyruck, M., Johon, C.R., Baker, C.F., & Scheffczyk, J. (2016). *FrameNet II: Extended Theory and Practice*. Retrieved from https://framenet.icsi.berkeley.edu/fndrupal/the_book
- Santhanam, L., & Epatko, L. (2018, September 11). 9/11 to today: Ways we have changed. *PBS News Hour* [Nation]. Retrieved from <https://www.pbs.org/newshour>
- Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. (2014). *Committee Study of the Central Intelligence Agency's Detention and Interrogation Program*. <https://www.intelligence.senate.gov>
- September 11 Terror Attacks Fast Facts. (2019, November 13). *CNN Library*. Retrieved from <http://www.cnn.com>
- Smith, M., & Zeigler, S. M. (2017). Terrorism before and after 9/11 – a more dangerous world? *Research & Politics*, 4(4), 1-8. doi:10.1177/2053168017739757
- United Nations Human, General Assembly, resolution 39/46, *Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment*, (10 December 1984). Available from <https://www.ohchr.org>
- Van Dijk, T. A. (1993). Principles of critical discourse analysis. *Discourse & Society*, 4(2), 249-283.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (1995). Discourse analysis as ideology analysis. In C. Schäffner & A. Wenden (Eds.). *Language and Peace* (pp. 17-33). Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2001). Critical Discourse Analysis. In D. Tannen, D. Schiffrin, & H. Hamilton (Eds.) *Handbook of Discourse Analysis* (pp. 352-371). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2001a). Multidisciplinary CDA: A plea for diversity. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer (Eds.). *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (pp. 104-120). London: Sage Publications.

- Van Dijk, T. A. (2003). The Discourse-Knowledge Interface. In G. Weiss & R. Wodak (Eds.). *Critical Discourse Analysis: Theory and Interdisciplinarity* (pp. 85-109). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2006) Discourse and Manipulation. *Discourse & Society*, 17(3), 359-383. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42889055>.
- Van Leeuwen, T. (1995). Representing Social Action. *Discourse & Society*, 6(1), 81-106. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42887962>
- Van Leeuwen, T. (2007). Legitimation in Discourse and Communication. *Discourse and Communication*, 1(1), 91-112. doi 10.1177/1750481307071986.
- Van Leeuwen, T. & Wodak, R. (1999). Legitimizing Immigration Control: a discourse-historical approach. *Discourse Studies*, 1(1), 83-188. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24045863>.
- Van Valin, R. D. (2001). *An Introduction to Syntax*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Weber, M. (2004). *The Vocation Lectures* (R. Livingstone, Trans.). D. Owen & T. Strong (Eds.). Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing. (original work published in 1919)
- Weber, M. (1947). *The theory of social and economic organization*. The Free Press, New York.
- Weaver, K. (1986). The Politics of Blame Avoidance. *Journal of Public Policy*, 6(4), 371-398. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4007281>
- Weiss, G. & Wodak, R. (2003). Introduction: Theory, Interdisciplinarity and Critical Discourse Analysis. In G. Weiss & R. Wodak (Eds.). *Critical Discourse Analysis: Theory and Interdisciplinarity* (pp. 1-32). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Widdowson, H.G. (1995). Discourse analysis: A critical view. *Language and Literature* 4(3), 157–172.
- Wodak, R. (1989). *Language, power, and ideology: Studies in political discourse*. Amsterdam: J. Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Wodak, R. (2001). What CDA is about – a summary of its history, important concepts and its development. IN R. Wodak, R. & M. Meyer (Eds.) *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (pp.1-13). London: Sage Publications.

- Wodak, R. (2001a). The discourse-historical approach. IN R. Wodak, R. & M. Meyer (Eds.) *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (pp.63-93). London: Sage Publications.
- Wodak, R. (2006). Blaming and Denying: Pragmatics. In K. Brown (Ed.). *Encyclopedia of Language & Linguistics* (2nd ed.), 59-64.
- Wodak, R. (2006a). Critical Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis. In J. Ostman & J. Verschueren (Eds). *Handbook of Pragmatics* (pp. 1-25). Philadelphia/Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Wodak, R. & Meyer, M. (2009). Critical discourse analysis: history, agenda, theory, and methodology. IN R. Wodak, R. & M. Meyer (Eds.) *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (2nd ed.), (pp.1-34). London: Sage Publications.
- Zagzebski, L.T. (2012). *Epistemic Authority: A Theory of Trust, Authority, and Autonomy in Belief*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Notes:

¹ For a complete list of ‘Standard Interrogation Techniques’ used by the US military and ‘Enhanced Techniques of Interrogation’ permitted only to trained CIA officers, see Tab E/F in the Inspector General’s Special Review of the Counterterrorism Detention and Interrogation Activities (September 2001-October 2003).

² According to Article 1 of the ‘Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment’ (1987), torture is defined as “any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity. It does not include pain or suffering arising only from, inherent in or incidental to lawful sanctions.” Retrieved on 11-16-2019 from <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cat.aspx>

~~For a complete list of ‘Standard Interrogation Techniques’ used by the US military and ‘Enhanced Techniques of Interrogation’ permitted only to trained CIA officers, see Tab E/F in the Inspector General’s Special Review of the Counterterrorism Detention and Interrogation Activities (September 2001-October 2003).~~

² According to Article 1 of the ‘Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment’ (1987), torture is defined as “any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity. It does not include pain or suffering arising only from, inherent in or incidental to lawful sanctions.” Retrieved on 11-16-2019 from <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cat.aspx>

³ In their response to the Senate Committee’s Study on the Detention and Interrogation Program, CIA authors state, “In commenting on the value of the information derived from

detainees, we are not arguing in favor of the decision to use the enhanced techniques to which these detainees were subjected. We are not endorsing those techniques, we are not making an "ends-justify-the-means" case for them, nor are we implying that those techniques were the only way to obtain the information from detainees. We only are assessing the accuracy of CIA's representations in response to the Study's allegations that those representations were false." CIA's Comments on SSCI Study on CIA's Detention and Interrogation Program, June 27, 2013, p.13.

⁴ In the Executive Summary of the Study, p.9.

⁵ Retrieved from <https://www.cia.gov/library/reports> on October 5, 2015.

⁶ For a in-depth analysis of the different positions taken on CIA's use of enhanced techniques of interrogation see discussion presented by Intelligence and national security policy analyst Anne Daugherty Miles of the various arguments and points raised by different government agencies in relation to CIA's EITs. In Perspectives on Enhanced Interrogation Techniques. Congressional Research Service Report, January 8, 2016.

⁷ I have adopted Van Valin's classification of semantic roles (2001, pp.22-33).

⁸In the FrameNet index, the three crime frames associated with this lexical content are Crime_Scenario, Crime_Investigation, and Crime_Process, each containing overlapping core elements such as suspect, authorities, crime, incident, and charges. For a complete list of all core elements and non-core elements visit <https://framenet.icsi.berkeley.edu/fndrupal/frameindex>

⁹ For a complete description of this frame along with all its core and non-core elements see FrameNet Data at <https://framenet.icsi.berkeley.edu/fndrupal/frameIndex>

¹⁰ From Frame of Expertise in FrameNet at <https://framenet.icsi.berkeley.edu/fndrupal/frameIndex>

¹¹ For an interesting discussion about different types of knowledge see Van Dijk (2003).

¹² For a complete account on the relation between discourse and grammatical complexity see Lambrecht (1994).

¹³ According to Information Structure theory, one could argue that the order of the concessive clause in the sentence changes the perception of truth condition of the initial assertion based on the End-Principle. The assumption is that information is packaged from

old to new because the first given information at the beginning links the sentence to the previous discourse while the new information is usually taken up in the continuing discourse. Cognitively, the focus shifts onto the new information because it is 'heavier' than the old, that is, it carries more detail, and thus requires more processing. It follows that if the negative information is in the concessive clause (the wrongdoing) and the positive in the main clause, then the focus is on the positive part of the sentence which in this case contains either an explanation or a regret. This relation, however, needs to be further tested in the context of justifications and legitimizations before a definitive conclusion can be claimed. For an account of the relation between pragmatic structure and clause ordering, see Chafe (1976) and Lambrecht (1994).