Performative securitization

from conditions of success to conditions of possibility

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Performative securitization: from conditions of success to conditions of possibility

Lise Philipsen[1]

Abstract This piece develops a performative take on securitization theory. It argues that rather than seeing authority as a prerequisite for speaking security, we need to zoom in on how speaking security can be used to claim authority. Such acts of claiming authority are crucial to understand the current political struggles to redefine security. In order to do so, I make two claims taking securitization theory further, an *iterative* claim and a *performative* claim. One, following Derrida, we must open up *what* can be said about security, enabling an analysis of how the security logic is not only used, but also challenged and changed. Two, following Butler, we must open up *who* can speak security, seeing how speaking security can be used to take authority, rather than seeing authority as a precondition for speaking security.

Keywords Butler · Derrida · Iteration · Performativity · Poststructuralism · Securitization

Introduction

In the past decades, insightful explorations of securitizations in world politics have revealed how the logic of security is spreading to new areas. In this way, the framework of securitization has proven apt for analysing contemporary shifts and struggles in the security field (Ciuta 2009, p. 305).[1] However, as security travels to

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[1] The idea of securitization was developed by Ole Wæver. In its best-known form, it has been made part of a larger framework also including sectors and regional security complex theory. The larger combined theory, now invariably termed the Copenhagen School, was developed by Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and

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new areas, it is not simply adopted, but rather adjusted and changed (Elbe 2006; Howell 2014, p. 969; Trombetta 2008). Applied to these new areas, security not merely reconfigures them, it is also reconfigured by them. This points to a limitation in securitization theory being unable to account for how new securitizations spur not only a dissemination of the security logic, but a change in the logic of security itself.

So far, this problem has mostly been countered by the so-called 'externalist' versions of securitization locating the potential for change outside of the securitizing speech act (Balzacq 2005, 2011; Klüfers 2014; McInnes and Rushton 2013; Stritzel 2014). This piece ventures down the less trodden 'internalist' path zooming in on how change happens in the security speech act itself.[2] The argument is that to capture the political value of speaking security, we need a performative version of securitization that reveals how new conceptualizations of security at once play on the established meaning of security and invest it with new meaning. This restores the original purpose of the theory to analyse security speech acts as particularly powerful interventions and allows us to account for political change in the concept of security. The result is a performative approach to securitization that builds on the main merits of securitization theory, but takes it further by viewing the logic of security as a condition of possibility for new acts of security, rather than as a criterion for success.

In order to do so, I make two claims taking securitization theory further, an *iterative* claim and a *performative* claim. One, following Derrida, we must open up *what* can be said about security, enabling an analysis of how the security logic is not only used, but also changed. Two, following Butler, we must open up *who* can speak security, seeing how speaking security can be used to take authority, rather than viewing authority as a precondition for speaking security.

The first, iterative, claim explains why we should move from the kind of change that securitization theory identifies, to a concern with iterative change. Here I argue that, when the idea of the speech act is adopted in securitization theory, so is the problem of referring to a set of conditions for its success that are essentially indeterminable. Instead, by paying specific attention to the iterative ways in which the logic of security is reconceptualized, we can identify not only the areas to which the security logic is extended, but also how the very form of security is challenged and changed.

This understanding of change as iterative lays the ground for the second, performative, claim. Here I show how iterative change opens up ways for political contestation of existing orthodoxies and relations of power. To account for new developments in the security field, new and less powerful actor's attempts to redefine security must be taken into account. For this reason, historically sedimented

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Footnote 1 continued

Jaap de Wilde and laid out in the book *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* in 1998. Here, I engage only with securitization theory seen as distinct from the broader theoretical framework of the Copenhagen School.

[2] I use the terminology of two centres of gravity, 'internalist' and 'externalist', as helpfully identified by Holger Stritzel to distinguish the poststructuralist and the sociological aspects of the theory and their further development in second generation securitization analyses. See Stritzel (2007: 359) and Buzan et al. (1998: 31, 46–47).

relations of power shaping who can talk and practice security must not determine the analysis from the outset. To avoid such limitation, where only some people have sufficient authority to securitize, it is crucial that we follow the theory's 'internalist' centre of gravity, emphasizing its poststructuralist credence. I do so by reversing the premise that authority is a *prerequisite* for declaring security (Buzan et al. 1998, p. 33). Instead, I point to how actors can use the security speech act to *take* authority.

From conventional securitization to iterative securitization

In this section, I undertake the claim that we need to move from the contextually bound kind of change that securitization theory identifies to a concern with change as it happens *in* the speech act. Drawing on Derrida's critique of Austin's speech act theory (Derrida 1977a, b/1988a), I show that by adopting the speech act theory from Austin, securitization theory also adopts the problem of not being able to account for conceptual change.[3] As a consequence of defining securitizations as contingent on a set of certain social conditions and a fixed logic, the theory becomes static.

The critique that the security concept in securitization theory is too static to take recent developments in the security field into account is not new. It was first made by Jef Huysmans, has since been elaborated a number of times, and has also been acknowledged by the originator of the theory as the most salient critique—indeed the blind spot of the theory (Huysmans 1998, 2006; Williams 2003; McDonald 2008; Ciuta 2009; Wæver 2011; Floyd 2016). Most attempts to overcome this staticity have done so by designating change to a sociologically bound context.[4] While these approaches are convincing, both in their critique and in their development of contextual accounts of securitization processes, they are unable to capture the kind of change that is at the heart of securitization theory—namely the change that speaking security itself spurs. What I want to show here is, therefore, why such externalist approaches, while allowing for change in the concept of security, do so at the considerable cost of relegating change to a context that is essentially indeterminable. This prevents us from analysing how securitizations in themselves provoke change.

To clarify this critique, I use the terms *intension* and *extension*. The main point made by securitization theory is that, by basing the definition of security on the *intension* of security speech acts (that is, their internal logic, grammar, etc.), their *extension* (the specific things to which they apply) can be allowed to vary. This definition overlooks how attempts to spread the security logic to new areas simultaneously affect the security logic—that this is, indeed, one of their main

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[3] Derrida's critique in *Signature Event Context* was followed by a fierce controversy with Searle's more stringent interpretation of Austin (Derrida 1977/1988b). A more direct route from Austin to Searle in securitization analysis can also be taken and has been, quite successfully, *e.g.* Vuori, (2008) and Balzacq (2005). In these analyses, securitization is analysed as dependent on the conventionality of the speech act for its success.

[4] See, for instance, the recent volume by Balzacq (2015). For notable exceptions see Hansen (2011b) and Oren and Solomon (2015).

purposes. I argue that any change in the extension of the security concept calls for a change in its intension, and that such dialectic shifting between intension and extension is precisely what we should analyse as indicative of the conceptual battles currently characterizing the field of security.

Conventional securitization

The theory of speech acts sets out from the claim that not all statements are referential, i.e. not all statements refer to something in the world. Rather, some statements are acts in themselves, and have the potential to create a new reality: 'to say something is to do something' (Austin 1978, p. 12). To be distinguished from the everyday hustle and bustle, a speech act has to abide by certain criteria pertaining to the participants and the setting in order to succeed. Crucially, the speech act gains its power, as an act shifting an issue into a new sphere, by virtue of its conventionality and the intersubjective character encompassing both statement and context into one moment (Butler 1997, p. 25; Vuori 2008). A speech act, thus, relies on having a highly conventional and institutionalized character in order to function. Both a specific linguistic framing and a particular intersubjective context is required (Austin 1978, pp. 14–15; Wæver 2009, 2011, p. 468). In Austin's words, 'There must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, that procedure to include the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances' (Austin 1978, p. 14).

   The idea of the speech act is adopted by securitization theory. Speaking security is not like any other conversation you might have, it is a particularly powerful speech act precisely because of its ritual character moving an issue into the realm of security, where exceptional means can be used and democratic rules broken (Buzan et al. 1998, pp. 31–33). Exactly the exceptional character of speaking security carries the main analytical as well as normative thrust of the theory (Buzan et al. 1998, pp. 5, 19; Pram Gad and Lund Petersen 2011, p. 319; Williams 2015). We should—all things being equal—avoid making this move from normalcy, political debate and sound reasoning to emergency measures, power politics and rushed decisions (Buzan et al. 1998, p. 29; Wæver 1995, 2003, 2009). The understanding of securitization as a decisive and powerful moment, shifting an issue from the benign realm of politics to the problematic and dangerous realm of security, is the reason why it is so important that we analyse and criticize securitizations. Because something powerful is done in the act itself, securitization is framed as an illocutionary speech act (Wæver 2009).

   The conventionality making this decisive move possible is, however, also what makes the theory static because the conditions of success are determined by convention. What has to be fulfilled in a successful securitization is determined by what was said and done in the past. Establishing criteria pertaining to both the internal and the external dimensions of the security speech act leaves little room for change. In a successful securitization, the internal conditions of success determine a specific rhetorical framing to be used, while the external criteria require a number of contextual circumstances to be in place. Both a specific logic must be used and this must be done from a position of historically contingent authority. The theory is, so

to speak, fixed both from the inside (the logic) and the outside (the context). This excludes securitizations that break with the security logic, or are made from contexts not considered powerful enough (Macmillan 2015, p. 73; Pram Gad and Lund Petersen 2011). As such, the framework is unable to deal with the process in which new concepts of security challenge existing logics and power relations. The external criteria exclude the possibility that new actors can utilize the logic of security to gain authority, and the internal criteria exclude the possibility of reformulating the logic of security while speaking it.

Intensional and extensional change

Whereas securitization theory focuses on how an issue changes from being a political issue to being a security issue, current redefinitions of security reveal a change in the very way security is understood. Framing something in security terms is not only an attempt to expand the number of issues responded to within a security frame, it is also an attempt to redefine the very logic of security. This raises the question of how we can understand changes to the logic of security itself.

The difference between the kind of change securitization theory sets out to analyse and the conceptual change I engage with here can be explained by applying the terms *intension* and *extension*. The extension of a concept consists of the things to which it applies. For instance, the concept 'horse' refers to a number of concrete horses. This can be contrasted with the intension of a concept: the ideas, properties and corresponding signs it implies. The claim made by securitization theory is that by fixing the logic of security variation in the scope of issues covered by this logic can be accounted for. While the content of security is changing, this change, according to the theory, happens under the same rhetorical form (Buzan et al. 1998, 27). This argument is equivalent to saying that, by fixing the *intension* of the concept of security, variation in the *extension* of the concept can be explored. Thus, in securitization theory, the change assessed is not a change in how security is characterized, but a change in what issues are categorized as being security issues. It is an *extensional* change focusing on how securitizing actors expand the security logic to new areas by moving certain issues from the political realm to the realm of security.

When the idea of the speech act, with its conditions of success, is adopted in the theory of securitization, so is the problem of referring to a concept of security for its success that is essentially indeterminable and always changing. This makes the theory blind to the fact that, when the security logic moves to a different context (extension), this context reflects back on the security logic (intension) and changes it. For instance, when the security logic is applied to climate issues, this represents not only an effort to elevate climate issues to the level of security pushing for the use of more pertinent measures. It also involves a call to fundamentally alter what we understand as security. The securitization of climate does not seem to involve a reversion to military means and there is no evidence of undemocratic procedures and emergency measures resulting from this securitizing move (Corry 2012; Oels 2012; Trombetta 2008, 2014).

Perhaps even more clearly, when the UN frames the human as a referent object in its human security agenda, this does not involve dealing with security issues by using undemocratic, military or extraordinary means. To the contrary, the concept of human security represents a manifest challenge to the traditional security concept, replacing the state as the relevant referent object for security and recommending a broad and preventative range of non-military efforts as a more efficient means of targeting current security threats (Grayson 2008; Krause 2008; Newman 2010).

Another example where the security logic is put at play, yet at the same time challenged, is the recent NSA leaks. Here, Edward Snowden uses the security logic to problematize US security policy, framing surveillance as a threat to the freedom of the liberal individual (Snowden 2014). In this way, Snowden questions the emergency measures invoked in the war on terror by employing a contrasting securitization, framing current NSA security strategies as a threat to liberal society.[5] This, contrary to what securitization theory predicts, iterates security in a way that problematizes extraordinary means, making instead a call for the necessity of reverting back to the democratic rules of the liberal state (Buzan et al. 1998, pp. 31–33). Here the security logic is used reversibly to problematize the extraordinary means inherent in a traditional securitization.

Such empirical examples of securitizing moves, while not sufficient to live up to the theory's conditions of success, give evidence to how the security concept is altered and struggled over in a political battle over how security should be practiced. These changes are interesting in revealing how security is mobilized for different purposes, and are crucial to understand as they challenge how we think and act security.

Iterative securitization

If we want to grasp this discursive battle, we must replace the focus on conventional security with a focus on security as being constantly redefined by different actors, all part of a negotiation and struggle over how its content should be conceptualized and carried out. The point here is not to delude the idea of the speech act, but to reinvigorate it. Because something powerful happens in the act of speaking security, we should retain the security speech act as central. Yet, to avoid the staticity of the speech act as it was theorized by Austin, we need to move beyond the security speech act as bound to certain criteria for success and towards a Derridean theorization of the speech act as iterative.

The struggle to define what is understood as security can be theorized by employing Derrida's concept *iterability* (Derrida 1977a, b/1988a, p. 7). The idea of iterability is that every text, while happening on the basis of established conventions, always creates something new. Derrida was inspired by the basic idea of the speech act: that the uttering of words has constitutive effect in itself. However, he criticizes speech act theory for being static by demonstrating that 'a

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[5] For a contextual explanation of the importance of governance in shaping the security field see Hameiri and Jones (2013).

context is never absolutely determinable, or rather, why its determination can never be entirely certain or saturated' (*ibid.*: 3). Derrida's critique of Austin's speech act theory is based on the premise that Austin's analysis 'at all times requires a value of context, and even of a context exhaustively determined' (*ibid.*: 14). Derrida's point is quite simply that, because the context is always changing, it cannot be used as criteria for success. Consequently, there can be no pure performative, no 'successful' securitization (*ibid.*: 17).

This, Derrida then shows, should not lead us to the conclusion that there are no speech acts; rather, the possibility of failure is an essential part of the speech act. Iterability—repeating convention while at the same time breaking with it—is not an accident, but a structural characteristic of every mark (*ibid.*: 9, 15). Furthermore, this should not be seen as a problem, but as a positive condition making new speech acts possible (*ibid.*: 17). In fact, Derrida points out how part of the success of the act lies precisely in its breaking with the given. In other words, if the speech act did not in some way break with its context, there would be no reason to undertake it, because it would not change anything. The same goes for securitizations; without the aim to change something in the way security is practiced there would be no reason to securitize at all. Thus, change is as much a part of the speech act as repetition is.

This does not imply that every reiteration of security calls for a radical alteration of the conventional security frame. To the contrary, most iterations of security replay similar, conventional and predictable patterns. Yet, where many current conceptualizations of security practice stress the routine and contextual contingency of security acts, Derrida helps us think about how securitizations that seem to merely mobilize the existing security pathways and tools are never merely re-runs of old securitizations. In each act of iteration, something new is added. So while some patterns of securitization are familiar and can be identified over centuries (like securitizing immigrants), new meaning is ascribed in every resignification made. Insisting upon countering a security threat in conventional terms must therefore also be seen as a move vested with political force. It might, for instance, entail a call for higher military expenditure or increased border control, in this way seeking to alter existing security practices. However small these alterations may be, the trajectories they mark have political implications for how security is thought and practiced in further reiterations. The theoretical space that using Derrida opens up is therefore one of radical contingency. There is both room for securitizations that revert back to old security ways and new ones that radically challenge these old pathways. What is crucially added is an accentuation of the political value inherent in all of these trajectories, where neither leads to a mere standstill nor a simple re-enforcement of the status quo.

Applying Derrida's critique to securitization theory reveals how making securitization dependent on the conventional concept and context of security renders the theory static. While securitization theory establishes a theory able to encompass different empirical cases, it takes away this analytical advantage again by conflating the security logic with its empirical extension. In a successful securitization, an issue is drawn into a particular mode of realist exceptionality by means of convention, hence reducing securitization to a static event of applying

fixed meaning, rather than seeing it as an always iterative process of generating new meaning (Stritzel 2007, p. 366). Here, the kind of change that new conceptualizations of security exemplify simply falls outside of the theory, because they cannot be established as successful according to a set of historically contingent conditions.

This stands in marked contrast to what we, following Derrida, can call *iterative speech acts* where the 'success' of the act is always open, because the speech act cannot be constrained to the current context, but always has the ability to travel to new contexts where it is redefined. Conceptualizing the security concept as iterative opens the structure of the act to an indefinitely disseminated transformation where it is always possible that the act will be interpreted in new ways (Derrida 1982, p. 345). Following Derrida's critique of speech act theory, securitization theory can therefore be criticized for imposing too strict terms of evaluation by insisting that a certain conventional security framing must be used and accepted by a certain audience for the speech act to succeed. The key point is that the meaning of the speech act can never be fixed, because it has the ability to travel to different contexts where it is invested with new meaning. In this way, setting down any fixed conditions for success is impossible since both concept and context are always constantly changing. This makes determining the criteria, whether internal or external, that will make the speech act succeed impossible.

What we can do, according to Derrida, is to study the meaning of the speech act in its own right: 'The sign possesses the characteristic of being readable even if the moment of its production is irrevocably lost and even if I do not know what its alleged author-scriptor intended to say at the moment he wrote it' (Derrida 1977a, b/ 1988a, p. 9). This analysis must be separated from any predetermined context in order not to determine the analysis from the outset. So, following Derrida, we should not use the always contingent conditions of success as criteria for when something can be analysed as security, but rather as a background against which perpetual change happens. Analytically, this approach has the advantage that, by identifying where the logic of a particular securitization breaks with previous securitizations, we can identify change. It is exactly in this breakage with the traditional security logic that the political value of current security speech acts is found.[6]

By establishing certain criteria for successful securitization the theory of securitization turns the logic of security into a condition of success. The theory thereby fails to keep concept of security open for change in the sense of setting the stage for what can be said and done, but still leaving space for this to be altered. Installing historically deduced conventions as conditions for success here obscures the theory's poststructuralist credence, delimiting the theory from being able to analyse changing conceptualizations of security. If we are concerned with how different security conceptualizations (even as they fail) challenge how security is carried out, we should move from the kind of conventional securitization that securitization theory identifies to viewing securitization as iterative—that is,

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[6] This point resembles Wæver's elaboration of the theory's quality as a 'model that can be held against empirical instances to assess structural similarity', arguing that 'It is the very attempt at analysis through the concept of securitization that establishes what is distinct in new practices that do not immediately conform to normal patterns' (Wæver 2011: 470).

perpetually changing. This means turning the theory's conceptual and contextual conditions of success into conditions of possibility from where new security speech acts can be made.

Performative securitization

Following the claim that we should attend to the constant negotiation of what security means by viewing security as iterative, this section argues that such an approach opens up for analysing how existing relations of power are challenged. Making this argument, I reverse the assumption that authority is a prerequisite for undertaking security speech acts (Buzan et al. 1998, p. 33).[7] Instead, I point to how speaking security can be seen as a way of claiming authority. This enables us to analyse how different actors intervene in the field of security by 'speaking with authority without being authorized to speak' (Butler 1997, p. 157). I do so, firstly, by highlighting the benefits of seeing change as performatively created in speech acts, rather than established through larger societal processes. Secondly, I explain how this makes us able to see how sedimented structures of power can be challenged from outside of the locus from where security is normally spoken. Thirdly, this opens up a space for analysing performative change in the security concept as part of a battle for discursive power.

Explaining change through the performativity of acts

Most critiques of securitization theory argue that 'too much weight is put on the semantic side of the speech act articulation at the expense of its social and linguistic relatedness' (Stritzel 2007, p. 359). A line of critique followed by an impressive research agenda focusing on how sociological micro-practices move us away from a logic of exceptionality towards a logic of risk where threats are dealt with below the level of exceptionality (Abrahamsen and Williams 2009; Balzacq 2005; Bigo 2002, 2006; Huysmans 2006, 2011; Haacke and Williams 2008; McDonald 2008; McInnes and Rushton 2013; Rasmussen 2001; Vaughn 2009). Such sociological conceptualizations view 'linguistic practices as embedded in and thus related to but ultimately subordinate to social practices' (Stritzel 2012, p. 552). These externalist readings draw on a Bourdieusian understanding of power where 'authority comes to language from outside […]. Language at most represents this authority, manifests and symbolizes it' (Butler 1997, p. 146). Focusing on the social embeddedness of the securitizing actors and audience, they give priority to the social preconditions for speaking security and to the perlocutionary effects of the speech act instead of the political value of the speech act itself (Balzacq 2011; Ciuta 2009; Huysmans 2011; McDonald 2008, pp. 572–73; Stritzel 2007). Here the changing security logics are explained as a consequence of contextual factors, emphasizing the social

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[7] 'The external aspect of a speech act has two main conditions. One is the social capital of the enunciator, the securitizing actor, who must be in a position of authority' (Buzan et al. 1998: 33).

boundedness, rather than the performative aspects of securitization (McInnes and Rushton 2013, p. 119).[8]

An instructive example of an externalist approach that, similar to this piece, seeks to retain a focus on what security does has been formulated by Felix Ciuta. As Cuita notes, securitization theory 'is torn between its aim to establish the "essence" of security, and its claim that security is what actors make of it' (Ciuta 2009, p. 303). When securitization theory fixes the definition of security it isolates the concept of security from its actors and politics. This prevents us from analysing how security actors *use* security (*ibid.*: 315). To counter this, Ciuta suggests a theorization where the contextual variation of security is the locus of analysis. Yet, as Rita Floyd notes in a recent piece, this leaves us with little, if anything, left of the theory (Floyd 2016). In addition, as Ciuta admits: 'the application of this algorithm is unlikely to uncover radically new meanings and practices of security' (Ciuta 2009, p. 325). This raises the question of whether it is possible to retain a theory of securitization that is open to contextual variation as well as variation in the meaning of security.

As Rita Floyd argues, there is a need to retain the specificity of the security logic in order to maintain the analytical thrust of the theory. She reiterates the original intent of the theory to sustain a clear definition of what security is and what it is not, in order to ensure the intellectual and analytical coherence of the theory (Buzan et al. 1998, pp. 5, 19), arguing that 'if one does not differentiate between securitization as exception and non-exception, securitization becomes indistinguishable from politicization' (Floyd 2016, p. 692).[9] On this basis, she makes a convincing case for a more contextually precise theorization of the success of securitizing moves based on the effect of the securitization.

Contrary to such theorization, I will argue for restoring the analytical value of the securitizing speech act through an invigoration of the logic of security, rather than the contextual consequences of the act. The purpose of this is to retain the analytical value of the theory as tied to the power of speaking security, rather than our analytical ability to determine the success of the act. The difference is ontologically as well as epistemologically decisive. Following the above-conceived Derridean conception of the speech act, where the success of the act can never be determined, we, as analysts, do not have the means to evaluate the value of the context in the way that Floyd proposes. Epistemologically this entails shifting the analytical focus from one of determining the success of particular acts to analysing such acts as invested with a political potential for change. According to a poststructuralist framing, this potential can never be contained by a theoretically specified context, but is always open for new iterations, themselves able to spark change. This theorization is based on the always political and indeterminate nature of the speech act event (Stritzel 2007, p. 361; Wæver 2004, p. 11) whose meaning and performative force transgresses its context. The aim of the critique offered here is, therefore, not to argue that the logic of security should be excluded from the theory,

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[8] See Saugmann Andersen (2017) for a convincing middle ground.

[9] For a discussion about whether recourse to extraordinary emergency measures is, or should be, decisive of 'successful' securitization, see Huysmans (2011), Salter (2011), Williams (2011), Roe (2012), Trombetta (2008), Balzacq (2015), Floyd (2016: 677).

but to suggest that it is viewed as a condition of possibility for new security speech acts, rather than as a condition to be fulfilled. The logic of security that the theory identifies here adequately captures what new security conceptualizations work on and up against as they create new ideas of security.

In this light, we can see the 'tearing' of the theory that Ciuta identifies 'between its aim to establish the "essence" of security, and its claim that security is what actors make of it' (Ciuta 2009, p. 303) as precisely what securitization scholars should analyse as expressive of an ongoing battle to redefine security. By analysing the tension between the conventional meaning of security and the myriad of ways in which it is reiterated, we can capture what is politically at stake when security is redefined. The performative value of the theory lies precisely in its unique theorizing of how security articulations play out on the basis of a well-rehearsed, institutionalized and powerful logic, however, politically expanding from this logic to new venues and innovative uses. A focus on the security speech act is here what makes political critique of security practices possible (Huysmans 2011). What the theory in its formulation of historically contingent criteria for success fails to acknowledge fully is how this change is open-ended.

Highlighting the politics of speaking security helps us recognize why appeals to security are so powerful and allows us to ask fundamentally political questions about what security means in the different contexts where it is enacted (Der Derian 1995; Deudney 1990; Edkins 2002; Wibben 2016). As Wibben (2016, p. 142) notes, 'security practices enacted in a particular moment are deeply political. Studying the politics of security consequently requires attention to these acts and their conditions of possibility'. Clearly security articulations that reproduce the conventional meaning of security also carry this political weight. Here we may recall the original intent of the theory: to name something security is a politically salient move that shifts an issue into the realm of emergency (Buzan et al. 1998, pp. 5, 29)—'a productive moment, as a discontinuous reconfiguration of a social state' (Wæver 2011, p. 468). Maintaining issues as security issues by reiterating them in securitized terms must, therefore, likewise be viewed as a heavily political practice. No acts can, in this sense, be seen as merely derivative.

Stressing the political character of speaking security shifts attention away from further theorizing of the contextual conditions of success, such as the character of extraordinary means, or the power of the audience (e.g. Balzacq 2015, p. 7; Vuori 2008, p. 72), because we cannot know what circumstances empower the securitizing actor (Côté 2016, p. 548). Instead, extraordinary means must be seen as part of the security framing and the audience as able to resist and revert this frame in new security speech acts. In an internalist reading, we might therefore see the audience not as passive receivers of the security speech act, but as potential securitizing actors, themselves able to twist securitizations in new directions.

In practice, this is very much what analyses of securitizations have done, increasingly seeing securitization as a gradual and fluctuating process (Salter and Mutlu 2013, p. 818). As several analyses of ongoing securitizations reveal, audiences are active agents and processes of securitization strongly iterative and interactive struggles for authority and legitimacy (Saugmann Andersen 2017; Stritzel and Chang 2015, p. 549). Here, 'securitization audiences do not necessarily

adhere to strict, predetermined contextual rules to determine securitization success or failure' (Côté 2016, p. 551). In this way, 'securitization has come to be seen, more and more, as a dynamic, intersubjective and argumentative process, rather than as a process that either succeeds or fails completely' (Rasmussen 2015, p. 199). Revealing how audiences do not just accept or reject the securitizing act, but build on it to create new securitizations, desecuritizations or countersecuritizations, these analyses expose how securitization proceeds in an iterative fashion, rather than as definite acts that we as analysts can evaluate in terms of failure or success.

To analyse agency-driven change, where speech acts have the ability to modify the concept of security, and where actors are empowered in 'speaking' security, we need to get beyond the assumption that change in the logic of security can only happen as part of larger societal changes. For this purpose, we need a slimmer and more focused theory of security speech acts per se, rather than a more comprehensive and contextually dependent theory of securitization. This amounts to an internalist, poststructuralist reading that takes seriously the claim that performative utterances have the potential to create a new reality.[10] A reading that is methodologically at odds with privileging the intersubjective security context in which the speech act is embedded (Balzacq 2011; McDonald 2008; Stritzel 2007, pp. 359–360, Stritzel 2011, p. 349).

So, in contrast to externalist approaches where the context of securitization is decisive, a performative take on securitization focuses on the action that the speech act performs (Butler 1997, p. 72). Placing agency *in* the speech act, a performative approach sheds light on how speech acts drive change, rather than how change is driven by the intersubjective structures surrounding such acts (Butler 1990, p. 25; Hansen 2011b, p. 360; Weber 1998, pp. 79–81). This explains speech acts as inherently political, rather than as expressions of larger political structures. The potential for change is therefore rooted in the performativity of the speech act itself, whereas in sociological readings change happens as a larger societal process that can only be evaluated in hindsight (Buzan et al. 1998, p. 47; Trombetta 2008, p. 589; Williams 2003, p. 523).[11]

Such poststructuralist take on securitization might seem to leave the theory bereft of any stable means of identifying what is or is not a security issue, which was of course the central problem that securitization theory set out to resolve. The point is exactly this: to upset the belief that we can reach a definite assessment of the success of any security speech act. Instead, a poststructuralist approach would analyse the indefinite play between *intension* and *extension* that characterizes the perpetual battle to fix the meaning of security. This inherent undecidability opens up the conditions of possibility for change. Here it is vital to retain the security speech act as central to the theory. Whereas opening up the logic of security from an externalist perspective means that the concept can vary indefinitely as a consequence of

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[10] Here, I follow the first underdeveloped centre of gravity that Holger Stritzel (2007) identifies in his identification of two centres of gravity in the theory.

[11] This reading lies close to the claim that 'a speech act is interesting exactly because it holds the insurrecting potential to break the ordinary, to establish meaning that is not already in the context – it reworks or produces a context by the performative success of the act' (Buzan et al. 1998: 46), but is at odds with the Bourdieusian understanding of field in the theory (*ibid.*: 25, 31–33, 46–47).

contextual changes, an internalist perspective insists that security can only be spoken with reference to its previous frame. The result of a performative take on the security speech act is therefore not that anything can be security; to the contrary, only acts that iterate security are securitizing acts. As Oren and Salomon point out, the speech act 'exceeds itself in past and future directions, an effect of prior and future invocations that constitute and escape the instance of utterance' (Oren and Salomon 2015, p. 319). Securitizations always happen in relation to former iterations of security, and, as securitization theory makes us understand, it is via these former iterations that security is installed with the particular force it carries. Yet, new securitizations need not necessarily repeat this frame loyally. Indeed, a security utterance may gain its force precisely by breaking with the conventional security frame in order to contest what has become sedimented as the ordinary. Such breaks with prior context and ordinary use are crucial to the political operation of the performative (Butler 1997, p. 145).

Change is consequently understood as a political and agency-driven process taking shape through particular acts that iteratively work on the basis of and challenge previous acts. The argument is therefore not simply to open securitization up for more security speech acts, but to claim that securitization theory crucially misses the iterative dynamic that is part of any security speech act when instating its internal and external conditions for success. Missing the iterative character of speaking security here crucially impedes the theory's ability to account for conceptual change. It thereby also misses out on the political quality at stake when speaking security, which is not limited to reinforcing the traditional security logic, but often involves attempts to fundamentally alter the ways we respond to security threats. Indeed, it seems that a major political purpose of current interventions in the field of security is precisely breaking with and contesting the traditional security logic as bound to emergency measures and undemocratic politics. Seeing security speech acts as part of a constant and ongoing negotiation, we can grasp the way practices of security simultaneously play on established logics and reinvent them to invoke change. This enables a theoretical framework that operates on the basis of the logic that securitization theory identifies, but exposes how embedding the security logic in different contexts works politically to alter the logic of security.

Speaking with authority without being authorized to speak

The insistence to keep a strong division between successful and unsuccessful security speech acts in securitization theory stems partly from the aspiration of being able to identify securitization as a normatively problematic move from normal politics to politics of exception (Bourbeau 2014, pp. 188–191; Buzan and Wæver 1997; Pram Gad and Lund Petersen 2011, pp. 319–320; Williams 2003, pp. 519–520, 2015). This means that anything that falls below the threshold of exceptionality is excluded—a bias that has been noted and criticized by a number of scholars (Hameiri and Jones 2013; Howell 2014; Huysmans 2006; Watson 2011). Making this move from normal politics to a politics of the extraordinary requires having the authority to do so. At the same time, it is precisely from places where this level of authority does not exist that we currently see persistent calls for a

reinvention of the security concept, for instance from the g7 + group of failed states, media agents, religious actors and NGOs (Bourbeau 2014, p. 192; Elbe 2006; Howell 2014, p. 969; Trombetta 2008). Fisher and Anderson shed light on how governments in Africa have eagerly promoted national securitizations in order to muster international support, precisely in response to an articulated lack of authority (Fisher and Anderson 2015), and Stritzel and Chang's analysis of securitization in Afghanistan reveals how locals become part of securitization (Stritzel and Chang 2015).

In relation to this, securitization theory's definition of security in binary opposition to democratic debate is at odds with a poststructuralist take, which would assert that such binary order in its discursive instability might potentially change. Here a poststructuralist would argue that all security speech acts have the power to affect their context—that the security speech act can indeed be used as a claim to sovereignty. In this light, securitization theory's take on security as inherently negative stands merely as one possible construction among others. The opposition between security as negative and democracy as positive can therefore not be treated as a given, but must be seen as a dialectic relationship under perpetual negotiation. This also means that we must be open towards how the security logic can be utilized not only in opposition to, but also in support of a liberal democratic state order, as we see it in the cases of human security and the NSA leaks. Here the security logic is used in arguments for a more democratic order, rather than in calls for emergency measures and breaking of democratic rules. What security speech acts do politically is not fixed and neither is it always singlehandedly problematic (see, for instance, Floyd 2007a, b; Roe 2012). Indeed, the ongoing reinvention and contestation of the traditional security logic seems representative of a current struggle to define security between totalitarian and liberal state orders. From a poststructuralist perspective, such struggles are exactly what we should be interested in analysing as constitutive of international politics. Here a fixed definition of security problematically excludes the political battles to define security from analysis by systematically excluding those 'constructed as dangerous' (Aradau 2012) or as non-sovereign. The point is that there will always be acts that fall outside any predetermined conditions of success no matter how elaborate they are made. It is precisely the gap between the speech act and its possible effects that opens up the possibility for agency in which the meaning of words can be reappropriated and turned into something new.

Additionally, because every context is different, every speech act (also the 'failed' ones) will enter this context differently and as a consequence create something new. Who is to say that a so-called *misfired* securitization might not have more impact than a successful one (Biba 2016)? Such moments of claiming authority where one has none, and thereby calling into question the established grounds for legitimacy, performatively produce a shift in authority, as Butler explains:

> By understanding the false or wrong invocations as reiterations, we see how the form of social institutions undergoes change and alteration and how an invocation that has no prior legitimacy can have the effect of challenging existing forms of legitimacy, breaking open the possibility of future forms.

> When Rosa Parks sat in the front of the bus, she had no prior right to do so guaranteed by any of the segregationist conventions of the south. And yet, in laying claim to the right for which she had no prior authorization, she endowed a certain authority on the act, and began the insurrectionary process of overthrowing those established codes of legitimacy. (Butler 1997, p. 147)

While current securitizations may not resemble Rosa Parks on many levels, the point here is that *any* attempt to securitize can be seen as endowing the act with authority and, thus, potentially changing the context it arrives at and is interpreted in. What is interesting here is not whether an act fails or succeeds, but how it fails or succeeds.

The confirmation bias in the theory was noted as early as 2000 when Lene Hansen pointed to the importance of security issues that are not securitized and the political value invested in their silencing (Hansen 2000). It has recently been engaged with by Mark B. Salter arguing that crucial knowledge lies in understanding why securitizations fail. He counters this by zooming in on the contextual factors that explain failure or success (Bright 2012, p. 879; Salter 2011; Salter and Mutlu 2013).[12] The downside of assigning all explanatory power to context is that it effectively leaves acts of securitization bereft of any explanatory power, 'moving the focus away from the act that is securitization, toward a causal theory of securitization instead' (Floyd 2011).[13] Here, a performative take with a focus on the speech act as iterative would instead analyse how a securitization fails as it is taken up by one audience, while succeeding in another (Hansen 2011a), and how numerous consecutive securitizations allow securitizations that have failed in the past to succeed in the future and vice versa. Think, for instance, about how differently the Iraq intervention in 2003 was framed for different 'audiences'. Towards one audience, the intervention was securitized as a pre-emptive security strategy, where the existence of chemical and biological weapons was argued to pose a threat to international security. Yet, for another audience, this argument established the conditions of possibility for a counternarrative in which the intervention itself was securitized as a threat to international security by breaking with international law. From other places, the intervention was argued to protect the citizens of Iraq from a dictatorial leader. Yet, this narrative has been persistently challenged by a counternarrative arguing that the intervention has caused massive civilian suffering and increased the insecurity for the population. In this way, we can see how a securitization is often met with further securitization or counter-securitization invoking new identities as referent objects (Hansen 2012, p. 541; MacKenzie 2009; Tromble 2014, 541). This shows how you can never predict failure or success, because all securitizations fail in some ways, while succeeding in

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[12] See also Lupovici (2014), Balzacq (2011).

[13] Lene Hansen (2011b) has developed an account of the theory that highlights the structuring power of discourse and how securitizations are embedded in larger discursive structures. Here I wish to highlight the political power embedded in the act of security and how the security speech acts can work to challenge or sustain current power patterns, but the present approach is not methodologically incompatible with Hansen's approach. Something similar is developed in Howell's (2014) analysis of medicine as a strategy of security.

others. What is characteristic, however, is that they all participate in the political battle of defining how security should be practiced.

To make this kind of analysis possible, we have to move from a focus on how an issue shifts from the realm of normal politics to a change in the very meaning of security. By removing the contextual criteria of the security speech act, the possibility of using and challenging the dominant conceptualization of security is opened up. Derrida's formulation here offers a way to think performativity in relation to transformation because the disjuncture between intention and action produces a possibility for a politically consequential renegotiation of security (Butler 1997, pp. 92, 151). Here anyone can claim power by speaking security and, in this sense, every securitizing move is a claim to sovereignty. Such moves have an effect, and are crucial to investigate to understand how security authority is currently challenged from places outside of formal security authority, even when not powerful or sedimented enough to enable the use of extraordinary means. While not all actors have the same amount of power in the security field, and by historical contingency institutionalized security actors have more leverage than others, new actors can still intervene into and challenge the dominant conceptualizations. Likewise, while the traditional way of conceptualizing security, as a matter of military capacity of nation states, still plays a major role in these battles about how current security threats should be responded to, it can also be questioned and contested. To capture speech acts that challenge how security is practiced from the usual sites and with the usual means of authority, we must look at speech acts that arise from outside a contextually bounded security field.

Butler's idea of the performative further brings out how a discursive approach to analysing security does not necessarily entail downplaying or excluding non-linguistic practices from analyses. A point that has been noted by Wæver pointing out how 'Searle waters out Austin's speech act theory when he (as most other mainstream philosophers and linguists) re-creates a divide within speech act theory between language and action' (Wæver 2015, p. 123). Hansen makes the same point when arguing for integrating bodily acts and the visual in analyses of security (Hansen 2000, 2011b).

Analysing struggles of reinventing security

As such, the field of security can be perceived as a political battleground where a certain concept of security, tied to states and military threats, dominates, but where new conceptualizations both play on and up against these old ideas and practices of security. The changeable power of concepts here marks a discursive performativity. In order to gain ground in this fluctuating political field, actors use the logic endowed in the security concept to formulate new conceptualizations that challenge the traditional security discourse by defining themselves in contradiction to it. Here the iterative character of any speech act constitutes the political possibility of reworking the force of the speech act (Butler 1997, p. 15). An open-ended change that happens as a chain of resignifications whose origin and end remain unfixed and unfixable and therefore cannot be controlled (Butler 1997, pp. 8, 14). Seeing

discourse as an iterative chain of resignifications opens the possibility for reappropriation and talking back (Butler 1993, p. 82, 1997, p. 15).

To exemplify what this approach entails analytically, we may relate it to the recent practice turn concerned with the everyday performance of international practices. Whereas the present proposition for an invigoration of the security speech act shares with the practice turn an attention to how security is enacted in different settings not limited to sovereign acts of instating measures of emergency, it entails a shift in the way that these everyday performances might be studied.

The practice turn has spurred a research agenda focussing on 'socially meaningful patterns of action' (Adler and Pouliot 2011, p. 6), 'organised around the common implicit understandings of the actors' (Schatzki et al. 2001, p. 3), and 'done on the basis of what members learn from others, and capable of being done well or badly, correctly or incorrectly' (Barnes 2001, p. 6). This concern with routines (Adler and Pouliot 2011; Pouliot and Cornut 2015), implicit knowledge and tacit understandings (Bueger and Gadinger 2014, p. 386), the self-evident and commonsensical (Pouliot 2008, p. 258) does as its proponents recognize make 'explicit knowledge and articulated meaning of secondary relevance' (Bueger and Gadinger 2014, p. 386). In contrast, a poststructuralist approach concerns itself precisely with the acts through which explicit meaning is created. In addition, by theorizing practice as either routine or incompetent (Adler and Pouliot 2011, p. 8), the practice turn can only point to how certain practices are unsuccessful if they fail to live up to the existing norms, but not how a reworking of the norms can be read as a success, or how incompetence and failure can generate new meaning and patterns for future action.[14]

What is particular to a poststructuralist approach to practice in the tradition of Derrida and Butler is an attention to how meaning is produced and a highlighting of the agency and power that is at play in each of these acts, however routine or incompetent they may seem (Bialasiewicz et al. 2007, pp. 405–407). Conceptualizing the performative in the poststructuralist tradition accentuates the doings of security as productive of discourse. Performativity aims at shedding light on how the political is constructed through repeated but varied performative acts. Doing security is creating security.[15] Butler's concept of performativity entails that every act, bodily as well as spoken, performs an iteration of the current. Through the notion of the performative as an act which brings into being that which it names, Butler opens up a space for agency in an ongoing, always incomplete series of reiteration (Laffey 2000, p. 431). Understanding performativity in discursive terms, therefore, brings attention to how structures of power are reproduced and altered in constant performances.

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[14] The case of the 2011 Libya intervention and its aftermath is quite telling in this regard (Adler-Nissen and Pouliot 2014).

[15] As Weber (1998: 82) notes, there is a difference between performance as 'a singular or deliberate "act" with a definite beginning and end', and performativity 'as the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names'. This difference, though, should not be overemphasized as the recent edition on *International Relations and Performance* by Edkins and Kear (2013) demonstrates. Weber's authorship also demonstrates that she is in no way guilty of this.

In addition, performativity can help account for change over time because performativity draws attention to the iterative and citational practice by which discourse produces what it names (Butler 1993, p. 2) underscoring how such change is always invested with political meaning (Bialasiewicz et al. 2007, p. 407). The main difference between ascribing to a performative take on security and recent sociological accounts of everyday performances therefore lies in performativity's attention to the creative production of politics and the political consequences of adopting one mode of representation over another (Laffey 2000, p. 429) versus the social contingency emphasizing the competence of actors within a bounded field that lies in the practice turn.[16]

This does not exclude a concern for the material and bodily performances of practices. For Butler, the concept of performativity is explicitly an embodied rethinking of the relationship between structure and agency. The meanings, identities, social relations and political assemblages that are enacted are both ideal and material (Butler 1992, p. 13; Hansen 2011a, p. 293). Likewise, there is no reason that a performative approach to security cannot be combined with an attentiveness to the everyday and avoid armchair analysis (Neumann 2002). But, in contrast to emphasizing the routine, the habitual and the norms that structure these routines, a performative take on security practice in the poststructuralist tradition stresses the improvisational character of the carrying out of every routine and points to the tension between stability and rupture within practice itself (Hansen 2011a, p. 282).[17]

The political force in the original theory of securitization is, as Huysmans (2011) and Saugmann Andersen (2017) note, deeply tied to the notion of sovereignty. Yet, in an open-ended performative theorization, we can embed this notion in the frame of security and, instead of seeing sovereignty as a condition for acting security, see how performing security works as a way of claiming sovereignty (Butler 2010). By thinking the securitizing act as an iterative act, we can see how acts of security made from outside places of sovereign authority employ the security logic to gain the momentum of securitization. Maintaining the analytic of the security logic as a discursive frame evoking sovereignty thereby serves to distinguish security speech acts from other acts by pointing to the inherently political nature of any designation of security issues and, as Wæver notes, 'puts an ethical question at the feet of analysts, decision-makers and activists alike: why do you call this a security issue? What are the implications of doing this—or of not doing it?' (Wæver 1999, p. 334).

A performative approach would then attend to the small moments and actions, the programming algorithms, routine collections of data and CCTV footage, the 'little security nothings' that Huysmans points to (2011, pp. 371, 372, 377)[18] by

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[16] As Debrix (2002: 204) notes some analytical strategies point to normative principles and want to re-erect the salience of rules and norms of social activity, while others are performative in character.

[17] Hansen (2011a: 279) provides a convincing performative take on practices revealing how 'routine' practices are in fact taking place on a terrain that is much more contested and unstable than it appears.

[18] According to Huysmans, securitization's conception of the act implies an elitist vision of politics, because in the original conceptualization of the theory the rupture that a securitization brings about as a move into the unexpected and the unknown is embedded within the authority of the sovereign: 'Exceptionalist acts are not ephemeral disruptions but key events that put the existing order in the

tracing these performances in their numerous citations at a micro level in order to identify the claim for authority that lies in each of these acts and the politics that is being played out by each of these acts. What must one do to abide by the security regulations? In what ways are security regulations being reworked? To what end and for what purpose? It entails inquiry into how these acts generate a particular way of practicing security and how certain acts in their multiplicity establish what qualifies as a security threat.

While both a sociological reading and a performative reading are attentive to everyday acts, the Bourdieusian reads them as a consequence of field and habitus, whereas a performative approach views them as generative of a particular field, discourse and subjectivities. Instead of focusing on their contingency and rules of implementation, the performative highlights what happens in the very acts through which they are implemented and sees these repetitions as productive of policy (Bialasiewicz et al. 2007, 407–408). Through the process of resignification new meaning is created. Reiteration is compulsory, but agency lies in the possibility of resignification (Butler 1993, p. 94). The mundane everyday bureaucratic, diplomatic and technological practices are in this manner to be analysed with a view to the politically salient ruptures they bring about, on equal terms with the more poignant ones spoken from places of sovereign authority.

This performative take on security additionally moves us away from the idea of the field as a structured Bourdieusian field, which is fundamentally at odds with the intrinsic iterability of a performative speech act (Butler 1997, pp. 142–147). Instead, the field of security is viewed as a battlefield where performative acts perpetually strive to change its order. This means replacing the distinction between the normal and the exceptional with an attention to how securitizations at once play on connotations to traditional security, while working to create something new. Such contestations show how the concept of security might potentially change. The ability to take new or different conceptualizations from the dominant one into account is essential precisely if one wishes to show how the concept of security is changing. As Butler explains:

> Understanding performativity as a renewable action without clear origin or end suggests that speech is finally constrained neither by its specific speaker nor its originating context. Not only defined by social context, such speak is also marked by its capability to break with context. Thus, performativity has its own social temporality in which it remains enabled precisely by the contexts from which it breaks. This ambivalent structure at the heart of performativity implies that, within political discourse, the very terms of

Footnote 18 continued

balance; they posit politics as moments with decisional gravity – sovereign moments.' (Huysmans 2011: 375) See also Saugmann Andersen (2017). Huysmans criticizes Butler for 'devolving the sovereign power to decide arbitrarily to the many professionals who implement policies, including immigration officials, border guards and private security personnel' (Huysmans 2011: 380). Yet, the point of Butler's 'petty sovereigns' who enact the sovereign power to decide arbitrarily is not to place a decisionist epistemology in the hands of these people, but to analyse how they embody sovereignty by acting security in an iterative and performative manner (Butler 2004: 56).

resistance and insurgency are spawned in part by the powers they oppose. (Butler 1997, p. 40)

The point is, therefore, to explore how this change happens in constant, creative rearticulations of security. In this sense, what securitization theory defines as audience is important, not as assessors of the success of security speech acts, but as active creators who can redefine and bring about something new from the 'original' speech act. Here we must see the audience as capable of installing the security concept with new meaning at every point of reinterpretation. Viewing speech acts as iterative highlights their productive power to create new meanings and patterns of significance. This enables us to see how the speech itself has the power to shift authority and transform security as it travels to different contexts. When Edward Snowden shifted the NSA documents from the sphere of the highly securitized and confidential archives of the CIA to the public realm, this act worked to invoke an authority that he did not formally have as a civil servant. Yet, this act of taking authority by claiming security worked to fundamentally reconfigure the debate on surveillance and anti-terror security policies.

The central point to be taken from the idea of the performative is then that the iterability of the act opens up for resignifications and shifts in authority. For Derrida, the force of the performative is derived exactly from its break with a prior context and its capacity to assume new contexts (Butler 1997, p. 147). Even if one could delimit a single context for the creation of security, its circulation and implementation would necessarily depart from such context. What happens when a frame in this way breaks with itself is that the taken-for-granted is called into question (Butler 2010, p. 12). The survival and relevance of the concept of security can in this light 'only be secured through a repetition that it fails to repeat loyally' (Butler 1993, 167). At the same time, as a security concept lands in new contexts, it also creates new contexts by virtue of that landing, becoming a part of the very processes through which new contexts are delimited and formed (Butler 2010, p. 9).

For this reason, we have to look into the multiple iterations where security is invoked to understand its political relevance in spurring new political structures. By analysing concrete instances of speech acts in which security is iteratively reworked we can grasp the political play of power through which security is transformed. In this sense, what is constituted as security is not fixed, but becomes the condition and occasion for further action (Butler 1993, p. 139). Holding new logics of security up against the conventional security framing, we can identify how the traditional logic of security is simultaneously used and challenged in order to claim authority and invoke new patterns of security practice.

Conclusion: from conditions of success to conditions of possibility

The theory of securitization follows Austin's speech act theory in pointing out that when speaking security one does not merely refer to some state of affairs, but is part of actively creating security. Following Austin, securitization theory sets down a number of conditions that must be in place for such creation of security to succeed.

Not only must what is spoken happen according to a given logic, it must also be made from a position of authority, and accepted by a relevant audience. The securitizing speech act here relies on how security has conventionally been spoken to succeed. This adoption of the speech act as relying on convention, however, also renders the theory blind to how conceptual change happens through speech acts. Further, seeing authority as a precondition for speaking security makes the theory unable to take into account the ways that new actors challenge the security logic from outside of conventional positions and frames of security. This means that the theory is unable to capture the political force invested in the conceptual battle to redefine security.

Does the inability to account for change then mean that we should abandon the framework of securitization all together? Or find a different theory for analysing change in the security concept? I argue not. Because by revealing the logic that security practices rely upon, securitization theory gives us an accurate and valuable description of the terms according to which new conceptions of security can be created. Giving securitization a poststructuralist twist, the logic of security that securitization theory elegantly lays out can be viewed as a condition of possibility for new articulations of security. By further abandoning the threshold definition of security, moving instead to analysing how security speech acts at once play on the traditional meaning of security and breaks with it, the staticity in the theory can be overcome. This kind of analysis further opens up for an analysis of how speaking security works to disrupt existing structures of authority. Such take opens up the theory for analyses of agency-driven change by recognizing that new as well as old actors can challenge and reinvent established logics and practices of security.

What we gain from a performative take on securitization is, thus, a framework that reveals how through constant iterations the logic of security is reformulated. Viewing security as iteratively constituted enables us to analyse how, as security travels to new fields, this travelling provokes change in the concept of security. A performative approach here opens our analyses of securitization to take into account practices that do not necessarily 'succeed', yet still affect current security debates and practices. And that do not necessarily happen on the background of a contextually settled authority, but rather work to claim authority. In this endeavour, focusing on multiple speech acts on the ground allows us to analyse security as it is created, rather than as contingent on grander societal structures. In addition, it highlights the power practices embedded in speaking security and enables an analysis of how some speech acts create certain subjectivities, while others contest them.

In this way, securitization theory's important and useful insights into the security logic can be utilized. While new concepts of security constitute a challenge to the staticity of securitization theory by pointing to the iterability inherent in any articulation of security, this problem can be overcome by viewing such iterability not as a problem, but as a potential for change. Such performative approach enables an analysis of security as it is performed in iterative acts that work by using the security logic, but at the same time reinvent it in order to provoke political change in the security field. Hereby, the power relations at play when security is reiterated are opened up. This strategy ultimately reflects the underlying assumption that security

is a concept, which is changing, but that this change happens on the background of and according to a specific logic that securitization theory helps us identify. Hereby, it becomes possible to identify how the logic of security is both reinforced and challenged by pointing to how the *intension* and not only the *extension* of the security concept might possibly change.

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