a social philosophical look into securitisation theory

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Declaration of authenticity

I hereby declare that this thesis, “A social philosophical look into securitisation theory”, is my own work and my own effort and that is has not been accepted anywhere else for the award of any degree or diploma. Where sources of information have been used, they have been acknowledged.

Cederic Thomas Benjamin van Petegem

1st of June 2013


Summary

This research focuses on getting a more comprehensive understanding of successful securitisation, as posted by the Copenhagen School, by means of Pierre Bourdieu’s practice theory. Despite the difficulties of analysing and interpreting the philosophical writings of Bourdieu, this research shows that practice theory is capable of comprehending securitisation. The theory revolves around three main aspects: habitus, structures and practices. The first is something every individual ‘possesses’ and which is responsible for the production of practices. Practices are the practical outcome of what the habitus decides (i.e. it is an ‘action’). The structures, in turn, are the environmental aspects that are responsible for the development of the habitus. However, the habitus is also influenced by previously produced practices. These three notions, which are mutually constitutive, are part of a bigger part namely field theory.

This theory places the agent (containing the three mentioned aspects within him) into a broader picture of a field, a field being a configuration of social roles between agents that is characterised by oppositions (e.g. teacher versus student). Within the field the agent is capable of enhancing his capital (social, economic, cultural), which enables the further development of his habitus and also provides him with symbolic power. It is this symbolic power that stands at the centre of getting a better comprehension of securitisation theory.

Bourdieu sees the world as an arena of power relations; an agent always tries to gain as much power as possible, because this enables him to impose his view of the socially constructed world upon the dominated class. In order to do this an agent needs to possess symbolic power, but it is this same power
that enables him to obtain a dominant position. Besides the fact that this shows that the process of obtaining power is vicious circle, it also gives a possible way of comprehending securitisation theory.

The theory revolves around the notion of a speech act, which has the purpose of persuading an audience into accepting the speech in order for its speaker to obtain extraordinary powers. The speech itself is a way in which the speaker can present his vision of how the social world should be constructed, and being able to convince an audience gives him a form of power.

This goes to show that understanding how the social world ‘works’ is far from easy, let alone using its understanding in order to comprehend a complex issue (i.e. securitisation) within it.
Preface

The work that lies before you is the end of a long road, which I turned into six years ago. It has been a long road with many different twists and turns; plenty of bumps and holes in the roads; and the car has not stayed in perfect condition along the way. The ending of this road, the writing of my master thesis, was one of the unexpected turns that I have made due to the fact that my initial education at the Royal Netherlands Naval College only entailed a bachelor degree. I was granted the privilege of extending my route on land with another year. A year of feeling what it is like to be a full time student at a civil university. And truth be told: after having spent almost five years in a ‘harsh’ military environment, the student life felt good. Not having to attend duty call every morning at 7.30 am worrying about whether the uniform was flawless, but strolling into class at more civilised hours instead.

Beside these apparent trifles this road also provided the opportunity of encountering different cars, driven by other minded people, with different driving styles and skills than the ones I got used to within military bases. This also explains, to a certain extent, the subject of this thesis, for in general it is not very common for a student to choose for a theoretical analysis. Let alone a theoretical analysis of social philosophy in order to comprehend a theory from International Security Studies. Add to that the fact that I am a professional soldier and you can imagine the astonishment on the face of my supervisor. Although partly influenced by new ways of thinking and points of view experienced during my drive on the, for me unfamiliar, road of civil university, there was also my intrinsic need for wanting to know how things work. This need of wanting to know also led to the writing of a bachelor thesis in the unknown field of social psychology. The funny thing is that both
theses try to get a better understanding of the same theory: securitisation theory.

During the introductory meeting with my supervisor she immediately warned of the troubles I might get into: trying to use an unfamiliar theory from an unfamiliar discipline would put me way out of my comfort zone. Having the urge of wanting to know how people ‘work’, and having had the similar warning the year prior during a meeting with the supervisor of my bachelor thesis, I smiled at the warning saying that it merely meant a challenge. In hindsight I might have, and probably should have, made some second considerations. However, I then probably would not have turned into this astonishing road that I will forever remember. I cannot deny that at certain moments I wondered what I was thinking when I decided to look into social philosophy. But looking back it has, in a way, been eye opening and joyful. Especially considering the fact that I had never before taken a deep plunge into philosophy. It has been eye opening because the theory postulated by Pierre Bourdieu was completely unknown to me, and it offered a different way of looking at how people act as opposed to the familiar theories of rationality. The complexity of it all, even though at times it is quite confusing, grasps my interest and allowed for me to continue to dive even deeper. In the end I can say that I not only managed to get an answer to the research question of my thesis, which is of course very convenient, but I also gained new knowledge as to how people in everyday situations produce the actions that they do. And I hope that the readers of this research, in a way, also gain this knowledge for I think that it is very useful insight.

As with any writing of considerable size, this thesis did not come to its final completion without any help. It is therefore that I here want to thank my supervisor, Margriet Drent, for her time and effort in examining, and correcting where necessary, the thesis in order for it to reach its final version. And I want to thank her for having the confidence that I would be able to
conduct the research, despite the possible obstacles that could appear along the way.

This road called civil university also allowed me to do something that I had long ago given up on ever doing. Due to the freedom of time, I gained the opportunity of joining a student rowing society and enthusiastic as I am, I ended up in the freshmen’s team. This implied that all the time not needed for studying was spent training on a daily basis, leaving practically no spare time for being social. Especially towards my family who had hoped that this year would offer them the opportunity of spending more time with me, for at the end of my master I will have to report back for duty and before the end of the year I will probably be somewhere at sea. So I want to thank my family for putting up, after five years already, with another year of me not having an awful lot of time to spend with them.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

“Philosophy aims at the logical clarification of thoughts… Without philosophy thoughts are, as it were, cloudy and indistinct: its task is to make them clear and give them sharp boundaries.” - Wittgenstein

Aristotle, Socrates, Plato, Descartes, Voltaire, Foucault, Nietzsche, Habermas, Hobbes, Heidegger, Kant, Spinoza, Sartre, Rousseau, and Wittgenstein; these are the names of but a few of the many philosophers that have walked the face of this earth. And these are just the ones that are well known, because when looking at the quote of Wittgenstein it could be argued that any person can be a philosopher. How often has the phrase “I need to clear my mind” been pronounced by random individuals? This shows that philosophy can be regarded as part of the everyday life, even if it is not that clear. For many people philosophy is, however, something ‘vague’ or ‘hazy’, something that should be left to old, bearded men. And who could be blamed, when reading the works of some of the ‘great’ philosophers of all times, their writings are not an everyday novel that can be read through with in a matter of days; just trying to get through the sheer amount of nearly unpronounceable words takes ages. Let alone the amount of time it takes to truly comprehend the meaning of their thoughts. Yet that is exactly what philosophy is about: thinking about the meaning of things; trying to comprehend the written words and ask questions about it. But what good does mere thinking and talking about things do? Practical application is far more useful. But take, for example, Pythagoras who is considered to be an influential philosopher even in modern times. If he had not philosophised about triangles and their relations, there would not have been the rule of $a^2+b^2=c^2$. This is but a simple example of how philosophy contributed to the everyday life.
The example with Pythagoras concerned a mathematical problem, which can be regarded as a rather ‘simple’ problem as it revolves around the rules between numbers. Philosophy becomes less tangible when it takes a turn into the ‘meaning of life’ or ‘the reason for behaviour’. Because what makes people do what they do? Why does one person decide to jump down from a bridge tied to an elastic cord, whereas another does not? Or put in a more theoretical question: how can an agent’s behaviour within society be explained? There are two theories that can be considered as mainstream regarding this question. The first depicts an agent as a *homo economicus* and states that decisions are made on a basis of rationality (sometimes referred to as the logic of consequences) (Pouliot & Mérand, 2013, pp. 30-31). As the name indicates, the theory has its origins within economics and maintains the concept that an agent compares actions according to their expected outcomes and chooses the most profitable one (Coleman & Fararo, 1992, p. xi).

Although many new and nuancing insights to this theory have been found (Doucouliagos, 1994; Henrich, et al., 2001), the key concept remains rationality. The other theory portrays the agent as *homo sociologicus*, which means he is a member of a community and acts according to their rules, identities, and norms (commonly known as the logic of appropriateness) (Pouliot & Mérand, 2013, pp. 30-31). Although originating within the academic field of economics and sociology, both theories have found their way to other fields, International Relations [IR] being among them. During the stalemate of the Cold War rationality was one of the major ways of interpreting superpower decision making, as shown by Allison and Zelikow (Allison & Zelikow, 1999). This consequently resulted in the development of decision-making theories such as ‘the prisoners dilemma’ and ‘the game of chicken’, pertaining the vision that a person will base his decisions on a logic of consequences. Continuing in the Cold War it became clear that such rationality, even with nuclear arsenals, could not always explain human behaviour. Although the alternative theory, the *homo sociologicus*, allowed for a more complex and comprehensive understanding of decision-making some
pertained the idea that this theory could not explain everything. Within the field of philosophy a different way of understanding human action in society developed: practice theory. And considering the fact that IR has looked past its own borders before (i.e. in using economic theories), it seems more than logical that it could do so again.

The field of practice theory is known for many renowned scholars (e.g. Anthony Giddens, Marshall Sahlins and Michel Certeau), but one name has been most influential: Pierre Bourdieu, a French sociologist, anthropologist, and philosopher. His fieldwork in Algeria during the War of Algerian Independence formed the starting point for his sociological and philosophical search for better understanding human behaviour, and most importantly his wish to deliver this knowledge to others in order for them to better understand the society they live in (Robbins, 1991, p. 1). Bourdieu’s works are influential and have made contributions to many academic disciplines, but it is hard to nail it down to a single one as he tends to research different subjects in different fields (Robbins, p. 2). However, it was not until recent years that his theory started to being applied within IR by, for example, Bigo and Williams (Pouliot & Mérand, 2013, p. 24). Rebecca Adler-Nissen (2013) has made a first step in cataloguing the influence of Bourdieu and showing how his theory can help to better understand international relations. She acknowledges the fact that Bourdieu is yet another thinker, but with a slightly different approach that “helps us to take the discursive, visual and embodied practices in international politics more seriously” (Adler-Nissen, 2013, p. 1). The co-authors of her book go at length to show that Bourdieu has had influence on IR and how his theory can be used to better understand several aspects and debates within the subject. Bigo even admits, though not being a big fan of Bourdieu, that practice theory is capable of explaining more than traditional theories (Bigo, 2013, p. 114). With his research Bigo tries to explain how (euro)terrorism has become a major issue for the (in)security of Europe. Starting from the anti-Europe movements during the Cold War such as the Rote Armee Fraktion and Action Directe, he found that as these organisations
diminished, the security sector expanded. (Bigo, pp. 115-116). He explains this by means of the securitisation theory, introduced by Buzan, Wæver and De Wilde in 1998, but after that he goes on to use practice theory to explain, on a rather theoretical level, the actions of agents. Securitisation theory, drawn up in 1998, can be regarded as a relatively new theory within International Security Studies [ISS]. ISS, in its turn, is a disciplinary subfield of IR and the most common view is that it emerged after the Second World War. Gradually developing itself during the Cold War, ISS has turned into an academic discipline of its own. Primarily due to the contribution of Barry Buzan, who in People, States and Fear (1983) deepened the traditional ISS state-centric viewpoint by introducing other actors such as the individual, society, groups, and the system, but maintained the idea that the state was the primary object of looking at these new actors. Besides deepening the debate within ISS, Buzan also made a first attempt in widening it. To do this he introduced five relevant sectors to ISS: military, political, economic, societal and environmental (Williams P. D., 2008, p. 5). These sectors would eventually from the basis for securitisation theory in 1998.

As illustrated by Bigo, securitisation theory helped to better comprehend a complex issue he had been researching for more than a decade, namely the perceived threat of (euro)terrorism. In more recent history the theory can be used to take a different look at the beginning of the Global War on Terror [GWoT], which started after the attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York (Salter, 2011, p. 121; Vultee, 2011, p. 80). The Arab spring, the intervention in Libya by NATO in 2011 and the waging civil war in Syria are interesting crisis on which securitisation theory can possibly shed a clarifying light. Practice theory, in its own right, is capable of offering a different way of looking at the social aspect of how individuals take actions, as opposed to the mainstream theories. It seems that both theories can be regarded as

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1 Although this is a rather bold statement, for a more comprehensive analysis of securitisation and speech act theory I refer to my bachelor thesis: Securitisation theory: een sociaal-psychologisch onderzoek naar de acceptatie van een speech act.
‘controversial’ in the sense that they take on the traditional theories within their respective academic disciplines. The work of Adler-Nissen goes on to shows that philosophical thinking can be used to better understand certain issues within IR. It does not, however, go as far as to integrate this way of thinking into it. It seems as though IR, as a discipline, tends to look outside of its own box only when it is incapable of understanding complex or unclear issues. This also goes for securitisation theory within ISS. The theory offers a new way of understanding how the field of security comes to being, namely by means of a speech act. Although the theory goes at length to elaborate on the different sectors within ISS and how issues can become securitised within them, it does not do so for explaining how the securitising move ‘works’. Of course the authors of the theory give an outline of the process of securitisation, the speech act and how it comes into effect when an audience accepts it, they do not, however, elaborate on how and why the audience accepts the speech act. Without going into too much detail, as this will be done in the analysis below, the theory resolves around three main criteria, which are expressed by means of a speech act: an existential threat, extraordinary measures and acceptance by an audience.

For my bachelor thesis I made a social-psychological analysis of the acceptance by an audience, looking at the problem from the perspective of the individual and its behaviour in groups. However, there are many different roads that lead to Rome, and perhaps its even better to take and remember more than one as it allows for a better understanding of the surroundings of the city. With that in mind, looking not only to speech act, but at successful securitisation as a whole seems to be a logical next step in better understanding the complexity of the theory. This means looking beyond the individual and its behaviour within a group (i.e. the audience), and incorporating the social circumstances around them as well. For this is an aspect that remains rather untouched by securitisation theory, although it can be argued that in order to understand why an audience accepts a speech act these circumstances could play an important role. This entails stepping up in
scale, thus the choice for sociology instead of the prior used psychology. Although it does seem that Bourdieu’s practice theory, albeit it is philosophical, shows signs of linkage with psychology and biology in the form of the *habitus*.

That is, therefore, exactly what this research will aim to do: analysing to what extent Pierre Bourdieu’s practice theory, which focuses on social circumstances, can be used to get a more comprehensive understanding of successful securitisation as posited by the Copenhagen School.

But why use social-philosophy to try and understand a security theory? Although securitisation theory has its origins within ISS, its foundation can be regarded as lying with sociology. For how can the acceptance by an audience otherwise be explained? Buzan et al. with their theory thus introduced a sociological phenomenon, namely the acceptance of a speech act by an audience, but did so without fully explaining how it (might) work. Bourdieu’s sociological research into the social circumstances in society offers an opportunity to fill this apparent niche. In order to do so, this research will be split along two major lines. First an analysis will be made of securitisation theory in order to understand what it comprises of and how it works. To do so the theory will first be placed within the academic field of International Security Studies [ISS], after which the theory itself will be critically analysed. In the third section of the chapter the critiques of securitisation theory will be brought to the attention. The second major line of this research concerns Bourdieu’s practice theory. This chapter is structured the same way as the previous, so it starts with placing practice theory within the academic field of Sociology. In the second section the theory itself will be the centre of analysis, but it will be linked to securitisation theory. In the final section practice theory will be subjected to critiques in order to unearth its possible flaws and weaknesses. Chapter four will be dedicated to Bourdieu’s concept of field theory, which is interconnected with practice theory. The chapter will focus on field theory itself and on integrating the analysis of practice theory. The
final chapter, five, will be used to make a comprehensive linkage between practice and securitisation theory in order to come to a more comprehensive understanding of successful securitisation. It will furthermore take the analysis a step deeper by looking at social psychology in order to get a better understanding of what the ‘audience’ entails.

Before turning to the theories it is important to elaborate a bit on the philosophical practicalities that could be rather limiting to the research. As said, Bourdieu has his origins within the field of anthropology. During his fieldwork in Algeria he encountered the biggest problem for any anthropologist: the problem of neutrality. How can the researcher remain neutral, when he is part of the world that he is observing? As he is present with the subjects he is observing, the subjects see him and react to him. Thereby it becomes impossible to gain a completely neutral observation. Although this research is not about observing subjects, as an anthropologist would do, the problem of neutrality is at play here. As a researcher I am looking at this problem from a certain perspective, namely the viewpoint of the discipline of International Security Studies. Although every researcher attempts to remain as neutral as possible, every person will have certain preferences and/or prejudices while conducting research, especially a social researcher (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 10). In slightly other words: a researcher is looking at a problem from the inside in order to better understand the outside, and not the other way around. Another practicality that poses a problem for this research concerns interpretations. To put it more specifically: interpretations of interpretations, because Bourdieu’s original writings are in French, a language that I do not master well enough to read philosophical literature. So I will have to work with translations, which could possess certain errors that are unknown to me. Besides the possible translational problems, there is the problem of interpretation, for the translator interprets the original text in a certain manner, which is related to the first problem of neutrality. Thus, the English translation of Bourdieu’s work quite possibly contains translational and interpretational differences with the original. It is these
translations that I will mainly use for my research, but I too have certain preferences and prejudices. This means that this research will be based on my interpretations of the interpreted and translated works of Bourdieu. This becomes even more of a problem when taking into consideration that Bourdieu himself has translated some of his works to English, but in the process slightly changed the text according to newly acquired insights (Robbins, 1991, pp. 4-5; Wacquant, 1989, p. 30). Although this can be explained by the fact that Bourdieu constantly kept developing his theory, this does not make understanding his writings more easily. Furthermore, the style of Bourdieu’s writing is difficult to read, due to his attempt to remain as neutral as possible and not be captured within ‘isms’, ‘movements’ or ‘schools of thought’ (Robbins, p. 2).

A final remark concerns not Bourdieu’s theory, but difficulties about writing and reading sociology in general. This problem arises due to the fact that people do not talk about the how the social word is, but how it ought to be, meaning that the discourse of the social world is primarily performative (i.e. it revolves around wishes, exhortations, reproaches, etc.). This leads to the problem that sociological discourse is perceived as performative, whereas it tries to be descriptive. For example, by calling Muslims extremists it does not imply that I think that they are fanatic extremists that are linked with terrorism. The act of trying to understand what Muslim extremism entails is something that is being done by the social background of a reader’s habitus (Bourdieu, 1993, pp. 20-23).

Despite these apparent complexities it is nevertheless relevant to use Bourdieu’s practice theory to try and comprehend a theory from the field of ISS. If anything, it is precisely because of its complexity that practice theory is a fascinating way of trying to better understand the field of ISS. The work of Adler-Nissen (2013) is first in its kind as it shows that integration between social-philosophy and ISS is indeed possible and, more importantly, imperative in order to better understand a social phenomenon such as
securitisation. Considering the fact that it was published in 2013, it can be argued that a possible integration between social-philosophy and ISS is still to be regarded in its infancy. This also becomes clear by the fact that throughout ISS-literature Bourdieu is used to explain certain aspects in ISS theory, but without thoroughly analysing his works (chapter 2 will provide more in depth analysis and examples). This leaves the opportunity to conduct an in-depth analysis of Bourdieu in order to use that to analyse securitisation theory.

Or to use the words of Bourdieu: “...[T]heory of knowledge and political theory are inseparable: every political theory contains, in implicit form at least, a theory of perception of the social world...” (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 54)
Chapter 2: Securitisation theory

“Words wreck havoc.” - Sartre

This chapter will begin with a short introduction into the emergence of the academic discipline of ISS, before setting off to analyse the securitisation theory as posited by the Copenhagen School\(^2\). For a deeper understanding of the speech act aspect of the theory John Austin’s How to do things with words will be shortly analysed. This will also assist in the analysis of Bourdieu’s practice theory as it makes use of the same work. In the third section some critics of securitisation theory will be cited in order to bring forward the limitations and possible flaws of successful securitisation.

Securitisation theory and ISS

As said in the introduction, ISS started off as a subfield within the large academic discipline of IR, and that Buzan’s work marked the beginning of ISS as a discipline of its own (Bigo, 2008, p. 120). Considering the fact that ISS ‘outgrew’ IR, its theories, to a large extent, are still under the influence of mainstream theories from their nursing mother (Williams P. D., 2008, p. 10). The discipline has distinguished itself from IR by looking, and applying, theories and agendas from outside its comfort zone of IR. For example, many ISS theories show linkages with academic discipline such as sociology, social policy or geography (Croft, 2008, p. 500), and by taking on issues that are at the centre of security, ranging from the more classical (e.g. war, coercion, and the security dilemma) to the more recent (e.g. poverty, health, and environmental change) (Williams P. D., 2008, p. 11). The two main ways of

\(^2\) It is worth mentioning that Buzan et al. did not name themselves ‘The Copenhagen School’, but were coined so for the first time by McSweeney (McSweeney, 1996, p. 81). In their reply to his work Buzan and Wæver actually criticise him for coining different scholars under one umbrella (Buzan & Wæver, 1997, p. 250).
thinking within ISS are, as with IR, Realism and Liberalism, and all their subfields (i.e. the both ‘neo’s’, defensive and offensive structural realism, neoclassical realism. On the liberal side there are democratic peace theory, Kantian, and *douce commerce*). In the realism corner stand thinkers as Hans Morgenthau, Stephen Walt and Kenneth Waltz, whereas the liberal corner is backed by names as Robert Keohane and David Baldwin (Elman, 2008, pp. 15-28; Navari, 2008, pp. 29-43). A third large influence on ISS has been constructivism, which holds that the world that individuals live in is constructed through intersubjective interaction (McDonald, 2008, pp. 59-60). This implies that agents (and with them structures) construct the world in a certain way, but that this world is also capable of constructing them and their perceptions. Take, for example, the United Nations [UN]. By means of singing the UN Charter the organisation became an entity, something that existed only on paper. As time went by the UN turned into an organisation with significant influence on the states that first created it. Although constructivism can be regarded as more of a social theory that allows for the better understanding of other approaches, within ISS the Copenhagen School and their notion of speech act applied it in a more practical sense as it is based on the construction of an existential threat (McDonald, p. 60). A fourth stream within ISS that is worth mentioning is the critical approach to security. This approach, which leans on the works of Booth, Cox and Wyn Jones, aims at looking past the traditional military aspect of security and instead focuses on the emancipation of the individual. This allows the agent to decide for itself whether an issue should be seen as a security problem and not leaving that decision to a higher agent such as a government (Bilgin, 2008, pp. 100-101; CASE, 2006, pp. 448 & 455-456). This emphasis on emancipation can be used to regard Bourdieu as critical, since he wished to educate, or emancipate, society in order for it to better understand it (Bourdieu, 1993, pp. 23-24). The Copenhagen School can be regarded as a constructivist approach, due to its focus on speech act and the way words can create security. This is also recognised by Buzan et al. as they state “securitization is intersubjective and socially constructed” (Buzan, Wæver, & De Wilde, 1998, p. 31). The theory
also shows signs of realism with its focus on existential threat as the essence of security (McDonald, 2008, p. 60; Williams M., 2003, pp. 514-515).

Within ISS there are two camps: traditionalists and wideners. The debate between them arose out of the narrowing of ISS due to the nuclear obsession of the Cold War. Buzan et al. conduct an analysis between traditionalists (military and use of force) and wideners (security issue exist in economic, environmental and societal sectors as well) in order to make a comparison between their costs and benefits (Buzan, Wæver, & De Wilde, 1998, p. 1). The debate between the two camps within ISS is quite lively as Stephen Walt, a hard-core traditionalist, shows:

“…By this logic, issues such as pollution, disease, child abuse, or economic recessions could all be viewed as threats to ‘security’. Defining the field in this way would destroy its intellectual coherence and make it more difficult to devise solutions to any of these important problems.” (Walt, 1991, p. 213)

Widening of the field can be considered a bad thing too, as it runs the risk of running into the ‘security trap’ as coined by CASE. Meaning that being able to securitise more subjects does not necessarily imply that more security will follow. The consequences of this kind of reasoning are, however, difficult to handle (CASE, 2006, p. 460).

What should be kept in mind is that ISS focuses on the subject of ‘security’; what is it? Who does it concern? How should it be handled? The framework that Buzan et al. present with their securitisation theory is just one way of looking at the issue. According to them any issue can end up on the spectrum, which ranges from non-politicised to politicised and ending at securitisation. The circumstances and geographical differences (e.g. in the Netherlands ‘dykes’ are of importance to the existence of the country, thus issues related to them are always positioned on the securitisation end of the
spectrum) between them determine where a certain issue will end up. In general they consider securitisation to be the extreme version of politicisation (Buzan, Wæver, & De Wilde, 1998, pp. 23-24). Due to its constructivist background securitisation theory, paraphrasing Wendt, states “[s]ecurity is what actors make of it” [emphasis in original] (Buzan & Wæver, 2003, p. 48).

The theory analysed

The work of Buzan et al. aims at offering a new framework of analysis for security studies. It starts with the debate within IR concerning the different levels of analysis (i.e. international systems, international subsystems, units, subunits, and individuals), which revolves around what should be the preferred referent objects for security (i.e. the individual versus the state). Although the five different levels are considered not to be completely objective due to their close link with neorealist thoughts, Buzan et al. recognise them as usable (Buzan, Wæver, & De Wilde, 1998, pp. 5-7). They continue to link the five sectors (military, political, economic, societal, and environmental), introduced first by Buzan in 1983, to the levels of analysis. The link between the levels of analysis and the sectors continues in their complexity: they cannot be regarded as separate, but as a complex; they spill over into one another (Buzan, Wæver, & De Wilde, p. 8). Using the levels of analysis and the sectors Buzan et al. continue to analyse what security exactly entails and state that it revolves around survival. Survival is related to security issues within the international system, and not social security (i.e. national police). Or to put it more formally:

“It is when an issue is presented as posing an existential threat to a designated referent object (traditionally, but not necessarily, the state, incorporating government, territory, and society). The special nature of security threats justifies the use of extraordinary measures to handle them.” (Buzan, Wæver, & De Wilde, 1998, p. 21)
The key aspect of securitisation theory revolves around what is called the securitising move in which an issue is presented as an existential threat. It is presented by means of a speech act, performed by a securitising actor, which is an individual or a group (e.g. political leaders, governments, lobbies, etc.) (Buzan, Wæver, & De Wilde, p. 40). The most important aspect of a securitising move, however, is that it only becomes successful when an audience accepts the speech act (Balzacq, 2005, p. 173; Buzan, Wæver, & De Wilde, 1998, p. 31; Dolinec, 2009, p. 163; Sedivy & Zaborowski, 2004, p. 205). This goes to show that a successful securitisation rests ultimately with neither the object nor the subjects, but among the subjects.

Because the success of a securitising move depends on the acceptance of a speech act, Buzan et al. divide a successful speech act into two categories (Buzan, Wæver, & De Wilde, 1998, pp. 32-33). The first are called the internal conditions and revolve around linguistic and grammatical formalities: the speech act needs to include the three necessary subjects of an existential threat, a point of no return and a possible way out (i.e. extraordinary measures). The second category concerns the external conditions and focuses on the social capital of the enunciator (i.e. he must be in a position of authority) and any features of alleged threat that either facilitate or impede securitisation (e.g. objects that clearly threaten the security, such as tanks). By identifying two kinds of conditions for the success of a speech act, Buzan et al. pertain the vision that a successful speech act revolves around a combination of language and society. However, they only focus on the enunciator (i.e. the securitising actor) for their external conditions of successful securitisation, whilst the acceptance of the speech act depends on an audience. What is more peculiar is that in order to derive at this statement Buzan et al. refer to Bourdieu and his notion that a group (i.e. the audience) authorises and recognises a speech act (Buzan, Wæver, & De Wilde, p. 32), but discard of him in their final step. By not incorporating any social aspect of the audience into their external conditions they show signs of ambiguity: stating that the audience is essential in securitisation, but not analysing as to

Concerning the internal conditions Buzan et al. make use of John Austin’s *How to do things with words* in order to show how the construction of words can construct new realities, and thus explain the success of a speech act. In earlier work Wæver even stated that “[T]he word ‘security’ is the act” (emphasis in original) (Wæver, 1995, p. 55). This in itself seems of no importance to this analysis, were it not that Buzan et al. come to their statement on a successful speech act via Austin and then Bourdiuie, but without explaining or thoroughly analysing any one of them. Furthermore, Bourdieu makes use of Austin as well (Robbins, 1991, p. 112), what can be explained to his constructivist stance (this will be further elaborated on in chapters four and five). Due to this linkage it is worth to analyse Austin’s work.

**John Austin**

Austin made an effort to trace back the essence of words and how they could influence the world people live in. Up until then an utterance was seen to only be true or untrue, or as he called it, a *constative*. Austin, on the other hand, held the idea that the utterance of a sentence actually was the performing of an action: a *performative*. This action could not be true or untrue, but ‘happy’ or ‘unhappy’ (Austin, 1962, pp. 6-7). He provided for the best examples: marriage and ship naming. In the first case two people say ‘yes’, after which the reality is changed due to the fact that they are united in marriage. In the second case a ship is named, smashed upon with champagne, and launched into the water. The reason that the realities change after these actions is due to the fact that they meet up to a total of six criteria, according to Austin (Austin, pp. 14-15). The first two entail procedural aspects of the utterance. The way in which the action is performed needs to be an accepted procedure consisting of an utterance by a certain person in certain circumstances. Secondly, that a certain person needs to be the appropriate one
for that procedure. Looking back to the example this means that when a janitor walks by the ship smashes a bottle of beer against it and proclaimed her ‘Big Beauty’ whilst chucking away its support beams it is not a case of a ‘happy’ performative. The same goes if this same janitor were to marry a couple in the broom closet. The next two criteria are related to the procedure itself, which needs to be correctly and completely executed by all the participants. The final two are more difficult to check, as they are related to the sincerity of the procedure: the persons conducting the procedure need to wholeheartedly stand behind the thoughts and feelings of the procedure, and need to actually execute it. What becomes clear is that Austin relies heavily on the grammatical correctness of an utterance, whilst also recognising that certain (social) circumstances are of importance for the successfulness of a speech act. As with Buzan et al. he takes this notion for granted and does not elaborate further on how these non-grammatical circumstances work.

Relating to the actual speech act, Austin pertains that at all times there are three aspects present: the locutionary, the illocutionary and the perlocutionary. The first aspect could be regarded as stating the obvious, as it revolves around the actual pronunciation of sounds, words, and coherent sentences (Austin, pp. 92-93). The second one, the illocutionary, is the logical consequence, as it comprises of locutionary acts. It means that by saying something a certain action is undertaken, and that collates the illocutionary with the performative (Austin, p. 89 & 113). The perlocutionary, on the other hand, is related to the audience of the speech act. It is concerned with the effect the utterance can have on the audience and that this effect can have a certain consequence. For example, by warning somebody (an action) a person will become more alert to things, but also be more on the lookout for dangerous situations. There is, however, an important difference between Austin on the one hand and Buzan et al. on the other. The former uses language and his theory to make people aware of the phenomenon called speech act by emphasising the existence of the performative and illocutionary; making sure that people can recognise it in order to respond appropriately. The latter, on the other hand, shift the focus towards the
perlocutionary and the way in which people accept a speech act. They hereby alter the success of a speech act from certain grammatical criteria (Austin) to the acceptance of it by an audience, and they do so, as mentioned earlier, by using Bourdieu (Buzan, Wæver, & De Wilde, 1998, pp. 25 & 31-32).

It becomes clear that securitisation theory holds the notion that the success of a securitising move relies on the social capital of the securitising actor, without explaining what this precisely entails; and on the grammatical criteria as posted by Austin, who in turn claimed that these grammatical criteria are prone to certain (social) circumstances. As with Buzan et al., Austin neither explains as to what these circumstances are or how they work. Thus, the situation emerges where both securitisation theory and Austin’s linguistic theory rely on (social) circumstances, but without analysing how these might work. Furthermore, Buzan et al., in an attempt to substantiate their theory, use Austin’s theory to explain their successful speech act. In the course of which they use Bourdieu to make a linkage between the linguistic criteria and the social capital of the enunciator.

Critical notion here is that there need not be an actual existing existential threat, an issue only needs to be presented as such by a securitising actor (Buzan, Wæver, & De Wilde, p. 24). In recent years Buzan even stated that security threats are politically and socially constructed, whereas real existing threats are (yet) not brought to the attention (Floyd, 2011, p. 427). Buzan et al. explain this by calling security a ‘self-referential practice’ (Buzan, Wæver, & De Wilde, p. 24), but without explaining what ‘practice’ precisely entails. Wæver even goes as far as to state that ‘security is a practice, a specific way of framing an issue” (Wæver, 1996, p. 106), thereby showing that securitisation revolves around the practice of using language (framing).3 The

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3 Language is only one aspect of framing, images are evenly (or perhaps even more) of influence in order for a successful framing. Within securitisation theory, however, the focus lays with speech act and thus with languages. Due to the usage of words by Bourdieu as well, this research will not entail the full spectrum of framing. The working and influence of framing within securitisation theory is worthy of its own research.
language part is explained by the way of Austin’s speech act and the construction of things via words. Practices, on the other hand, are not explained in any matter, they are just there (Ciuta, 2009, p. 311). This is peculiar, as the quote above shows that securitisation theory hinges for a large part on practices. Wæver does acknowledge, however, that practices are a specific field and that security has become an indicator for this separate field (Wæver, 1995, pp. 50-51). As with the part of the external conditions of successful securitisation only relating to the securitising actor and not the audience, the lack of explanation on practices offers an opportunity for Bourdieu’s practice theory. As well as the fact that Buzan et al. refer to Bourdieu in order to make their step towards the perlocutionary act without explaining his works.

Criticising securitisation theory

As with nearly every theory that is known within IR or ISS, securitisation theory has had its fair share in critiques. Most notable is the fact that Buzan et al. themselves pose the question as to how far the security debate should go. Should it be restricted to only security or need it be even wider (Buzan, Wæver, & De Wilde, 1998, pp. 2-4; Ciuta, 2009, p. 305)? As their theory is on the widening side of the debate within ISS, the obvious critique comes from the corner that wishes to keep the security debate limited to the traditional military and political issues. Some, namely Bigo, actually accuse Buzan et al. of being narrow-minded. This is related, however, not to the debate about widening or narrowing the topic of security, but rather to the theory itself. Bigo states that securitisation theory focuses too heavily on the aspect of speech act and the securitising actor. Instead more attention should be paid to other forces that are at play in the process of securitisation (Bigo, 2013, p. 118). Related to this is the argument that Wæver made in earlier work that the word ‘security’ is an act of securitisation as it triggers something within actors. By merely naming their work Buzan et al. invoke a securitisation of the issue they present. This critique is partially supported by Stritzel and
Williams, who claim that the theory does not pay enough attention to the situation around the speech act (Stritzel, 2007; Williams M., 2003).

Another critique comes from McSweeney (1996), who disapproves the way in which Buzan et al. handle the social aspect of their theory. According to him securitisation theory is “sociologically untenable” due to the fact that its authors do not elaborate on the notion of societal identity and just presume that society has an identity (McSweeney, 1996, p. 89). Within their sector approach Buzan et al. treat the identity of society as a fixed entity, instead of a fluid one. Buzan and Wæver reacted to this critique in order to riposte McSweeney alligations. Their main argument is that McSweeney did not take into consideration that they adhere to the construcivist approach of security studies and try to make identity-related security issues workable with classic security studies (Buzan & Wæver, 1997). McSweeny even goes as far as accusing the theory of lacking a fundamental methodological questioning as to the deeper and more philosophical meaning of identity (McSweeney, p. 84). More broadly the theory lauded for its contribution in showing a new insight into security, but lacking a thorough sociological foundation for its statements about identity, and relation between the audience and the securitising actor (Williams M. C., 2011b, p. 212)

Most notable is the work of a network called Critical Approach to Security in Europe [CASE], who criticised the theory for being open to different interpretations, conceptual modifications and theoretical expansion (CASE, 2006, p. 454). It is not the critique that makes this most notable, but its authors. Being a collective CASE houses some of the main thinkers within IR and ISS; Balzacq, Bigo, Stritzel, Wæver and Williams, to name but a few.

More recently Ciuta added to these conceptual and epistomological critiques a new one, which he has dubbed the ‘contextual’, and which is a fusion of prior critiques (Ciuta, 2009, p. 303). The contextual refers to the fact that, according to Ciuta, securitisation theory contradicts itself by establishing
an essence of ‘security’, whilst assuming that it “has a general meaning independent of its context” (Ciuta, p. 307). He attributes this flaw to the fact that securitisation theory maintains two different definitions of security: one a more controversial (i.e. based on speech act) and a second one that has more linkage with traditional security studies approaches (Ciuta, p. 306). He continues by arguing that this ‘hierarchy of definitions’ undermines the coherence of the theory and furthermore Wæver’s statement of security being a practice (Ciuta, p. 311).

As said before, all theories are subject to criticism, but this does not necessarily mean that the theory is inherently flawed. As shown, Buzan and Wæver have responded to certain critiques, but they have also further developed their theory, knowing that the subject of security is an on-going process. Securitisation theory, as posted by the Copenhagen School, can be regarded as an influential and mainstream theory within ISS, despite the critiques (Taureck, 2006, p. 4). Analysing Bourdieu’s practice theory can help shed a better light into the practices of securitisation theory and the way in which in a securitisation becomes successful.

Securitisation theory in the twenty first century

Securitisation theory, as laid down in 1998, focussed mainly on the middle level of political units. With developments in recent years, for example the framing of the GWoT and the discourse on climate change, that premises was no longer sustainable (Buzan & Wæver, 2009, p. 254). Buzan and Wæver therefore updated their theory with the notion of macrosecuritisation, which relates to the system level. It has the same characteristics concerning existential threat related to a referent object and exceptional measures as ‘normal’ securitisation, but it bundles the higher and lower levels of securitisation (i.e. the levels of analysis) together and thus is more complicated than normal securitisations concerning middle and lower level (Buzan & Wæver, 2009, p. 257). Recent years have furthermore seen a shift of focus within securitisation theory towards the notion of desecuritisation, and
questions have even been raised whether the theory is still relevant or that it has been (or is being) superseded by new theories relating to ‘risk’ instead of ‘security’ (Wæver, 2011, pp. 471-474). Wæver in his article clearly shows that he thinks that evolving the theory is useful. However, he states that the debate about securitisation that has been developing the past fifteen years could benefit from a return to the origins: what is a theory and what does it do? (Wæver, 2011, p. 476).

As argued before, by merely mentioning the word ‘security’ an issue will get the attention of an audience. This can be related to the notion of ‘fear’ within international security, as securitisation theory regards security as the “freedom of threat” (Wæver, 1995, p. 52; Ciuta, 2009, p. 311). Williams, in explaining liberalism of fear, shows that threat and fear are closely related (Williams M. C., 2011a, p. 453). He continues to argue that fear can serve as a basis for desecuritisation as individuals can fear the fear implicated by a securitising move, thereby linking the ‘normal’ and ‘security’ politics of the Copenhagen School (Williams M. C., 2011a, p. 456). Williams goes even further by taking fear as an important factor in the constituting of groups in securitisation (i.e. audiences of speech acts) in the way in which Bourdieu analysed the “mystery of the Ministry” (Williams M. C., 2011b, p. 215).

Although aforementioned scholars took securitisation theory as their starting point, no one really undertook the step of taking the theory to a next level. Floyd did. She introduced three criteria that allow for the evaluation of a securitisation to be morally just or unjust. Due to the fact that the original theory lacks the opportunity to be used in normative analysis, Floyd revised it (Floyd, 2011, p. 428). She argues that securitisation theory makes no distinction between the acceptance of a speech act and the illocutionary act. However, as the preceding Analysis of Austin has shown, Buzan et al do not make use of the illocutionary aspect of language. They shifted the acceptance of a speech act to the perlocutionary act. This becomes clearer by looking at the statement of Floyd that “[a] securitization is complete only if the
warning/promise in the speech act is followed up by a change in relevant behaviour by a relevant agent…” (Floyd, p. 428). Placing the statement next to the analysis of Austin actually shows that she proposes a perlocutionary act, as shift that Buzan et al., deliberately or not, already made. Even so, the revision that Floyd proposes is certainly valuable, as it looks at the sincerity of the securitisation and thereby making it possible to analyse why certain issue become securitised and others do not.

Besides this revision and the expansions of securitisation theory with the academic discipline of ISS, the theory has also been extended by means of a different discipline. Holbraad and Pedersen (2012) use an anthropological analysis of Cuba to show that in certain state-socialist contexts securitisation does not revolve around the moving along the fixed spectrum of normal politics to the realm of emergence. Instead, it can lead “to a shift in the basic coordinates of the political matrix itself” (Holbraad & Pedersen, 2012, p. 167).

The aforementioned shortcoming in the theory Buzan et al. concerning the lack of explaining on how the audience ‘works’ has not gone unnoticed by scholars, Waever being among them (Léonard & Kaunert, p. 59). Balzacq (2005) took this shortcoming within securitisation theory to argue that securitisation could better be understood by regarding it as a “strategic (pragmatic) practice” that occurs within certain circumstances, of which the “psycho-cultural dispositions of the audience’ are a part (Balzacq, 2005, p. 172). In analysing the audience he suggests that the level of acceptance by the audience depends on what he calls the audience’s frame of reference; its readiness to be convinced; and its ability to grant or deny a formal mandate to public officials (Balzacq, p. 192). Another significant contribution is by Salter (2008) who uses dramaturgical analysis to identify four different settings (popular, elite, technocratic, and scientific) that characterise the relationship between the securitising actor and the audience (Salter, 2008, p. 328). Salter’s analysis gives a better insight into what different audiences there may be, as well as showing the characteristic that distinguish them (e.g. practices and
languages) (Léonard & Kaunert, 2011, p. 62). Although Balzacq and Salter both offer a good elaboration on the notion of what the audience in securitisation theory entails, they fail to go in depth into the question of what it actually is that makes an audience accept a speech act.

It becomes clear that the initial theory of securitisation as posted in 1998 has its shortcomings, something even recognised by one of its authors. Not only are there critiques against methodological and analytical issue in the theory, some notions were left untouched. The analysis above has shown that the initial theory by Buzan et al. is built around the notion that an audience accepts a speech act in order for a successful securitisation to arise. They did not, however, analyse in depth as to how an audience would come to accept a speech act (that does not even necessarily need to be true). Although in more recent works scholars have brought these shortcomings forward, mainly Balzacq and Salter, it can be argued that their attempts were half-heartedly. Even the revision of Floyd and the extension of Holbaard and Pedersen, albeit both being where valuable, leave untouched the question of how the audience in securitisation theory ‘works’. Taking the most recent work by Adler-Nissen (2013) concerning Bourdieu in IR into consideration as well, it becomes even more clearer that there is a need for a more thorough analysis of the possibilities that Bourdieu’s practice theory might have for comprehending securitisation theory.
Chapter 3: Practice Theory

“Practice has a logic which is not that of a logician” - Bourdieu

Before an attempt can be made to understand securitisation by means of Bourdieu’s practice theory, it seems more than logical to elaborate on his theory as well. This chapter will begin by placing Bourdieu’s practice theory within the academic discipline of sociology in order to get a better understanding of what it tries to do. The second part will consist of an analysis of the theory in order to get a comprehending of how it works in doing what it does. As practice theory revolves around three main subjects, the analysis will follow the line by way of treating these three subjects separately: the habitus, practices, and structures. The third and final part of this chapter will, like in the previous chapter, be devoted to the critiques of Bourdieu’s practice theory.

Practice theory within sociology

The field of sociology is rather new and it not only questions itself, but other scientific studies as well (Bourdieu, 1993, pp. 8-9). When it first became a true science it had to prove this to the other sciences. Once a field has become an official science, it no longer has to prove itself; it is taken for granted. Sociology, on the other hand, increasingly moved away from the scientific practices that it had to adhere to order to be accepted as a science. In order to be regarded as an academic science, sociology had to hide the fact that in reality it was a political science (Bourdieu, 1993, pp. 27-28). At its core sociology believes that there is a reason as to why agents act in the way they do, but there are different points of view as to how this can be explained (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 76). The most common ways of thinking, which have been mentioned in the introduction, are *homo economicus* (rationality) and *homo
sociologicus. A third way of explaining agents’ behaviour is by means of practice theory, which looks at “the immanent dynamics of decisions” (Robbins, 1991, p. 1) in order to comprehend actors’ behaviour. Bourdieu does not pertain the vision that agents act without reason; it should only not be assumed that they are rational (Wacquant, 1989, pp. 43-45). Agents can act in certain ways that can be explained as their behaviour not having reason as its principle (Bourdieu, 1998, pp. 75-76). Besides Bourdieu, other known practice theorists are Anthony Giddens, Marshall Sahlins and Michel Certeau (Ortner, 1996, p. 40).

According to Bourdieu there are three modes of theoretical knowledge concerning the social world (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 3). The first he calls the phenomenological and sets out to make explicit the truth of primary experience of the social world. The objectivist mode, the second one, constructs the objective relations that structure practice and representations of practice (i.e. primary knowledge, practical and tacit, of the familiar world). In a reaction to the objectivist point of view, practice theorists posed dialectic relations between the objectivist structures to which the objectivist mode of knowledge gives access and the structured dispositions within which those structures are actualized and which tend to reproduce them (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 3). Bourdieu found out that the objectivist’ analysis was not capable of properly explaining what was going on in the Algerian societies that he researched (Robbins, 1991, p. 113). He further argued that objectivism (and with it interactionism) was limited to seeing the world in nothing more than profiles, whereas practice theory is about the theoretical and social conditions of the possibility of objective apprehension of knowledge (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 4 & 18). According to Bourdieu the main problem with interactionism is that it is based on “constructs of the constructs made by the actors of the social scene”, while the only correct way of looking at it should be “by constructing the objective structures” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 21; Bourdieu, 1989, p. 15). These kinds of statements, as well as his position on the role of the social scientist as elaborated on in the introduction, go to show that Bourdieu can be regarded
as a “structural constructivist” (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 14; Pouliot & Mérand, 2013, p. 25).

When reading through Bourdieu’s writings it becomes clear that he has been influenced to a large extent by the works of Karl Marx. Whereas Marx stated that the class society would come to an end by means of a united uprising of the lower class, Bourdieu focuses more on the education of society in order to overcome the class difference. The question that arises is whether a theory first thought of over forty years ago and comprising of a class division constructed even longer ago, is still relevant in analysing a relatively new theory. Concerning the factual age of Bourdieu’s practice theory it can be argued that that should not be a major issue. As said before, he constantly kept revising and renewing his theory as he gained new insights or thoughts concerning the matter. The Marxist division of classes could be regarded as rather old fashioned and irrelevant. Whereas Marx contributed the class division on mainly economic (i.e. money, goods, etc.), Bourdieu introduced other forms of capital that are less tangible: cultural, symbolic and social capital. These different capitals are interconnected with each other, meaning that acquired social capital can be transformed into economic capital (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 183; Bourdieu, 1993, pp. 31-33). For example, high-society people see a cocktail party not as merely a gathering for consuming food and beverages; it is a place where business deals are closed. Concerning cultural capital Bourdieu, in almost all his works, refers to the difference in education between social classes. The higher class prefers to distinguish themselves from the lower class by acquiring the knowledge, for example, of ancient languages. Not for the sake of learning the writings of ancient Roman or Greek philosophers, but in order to be different than the lower class.

There is, however, an aspect that brings to question the existence of class division. Bourdieu acknowledges the fact that his theory shows resemblances with Marx’ division of classes, he does not use them because he believes in that division. He actually argues the opposite and states that social
classes do not exist, but what makes them real is that they are socially constructed (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 12; Thompson, 1991, p. 30). This, again, shows Bourdieu’s constructivist stance in the construction of the social world, and especially the construction of social classes. He also maintains the view, however, that not everything can be constructed in either practice or theory (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 18). Instead he explains his usage of Marx’ social classes due to the fact that they are useful in order to analyse sociological questions.

For what is considered to be a class? How many classes are there? What determines the class of a person? The most commonly heard answer is that there are the rich and the poor. But what is the threshold of being rich, or for that matter poor? According to Bourdieu there are two ways in which classes are constituted. The first is based on income, number of children, education, etc. The second manner of classification goes on in the heads of the agents: it is a construction of their minds (Bourdieu, 1993, pp. 54-59). Merely thinking and talking about classes create classes. When looking at the issue of practice theory’s relevance, this offers a way out. For in the contemporary world there still is a division between lower class and higher class, it could be argued. But when looking at the more philosophical explanation of Bourdieu, the modern world is easier to be seen as class-divided: there are the rich, the poor, the nouveau-rich, the petit bourgeois, the celebrities and so on.

The ‘structure-agency’ debate is one of the most problematic debates within IR theory, which revolves around truisms of social life. Alexander Wendt put it clearly in his article of 1987: “…human agents and social structures are, in one way or another, theoretically interdependent or mutually implicating entities” (Wendt, 1987, p. 338). Bourdieu’s logic of practice is at the middle of this debate by saying that practices are the result of interaction between the habitus and the field (Bigo, 2013, p. 124; Pouliot & Mérand, 2013, p. 30), and in a way Bourdieu steps out of the ‘structure-agency’ debate in saying that it is social circumstances that shape the habitus, which in turn is responsible for an individuals’ actions (Benson & Neveu, 2005, p. 3). By looking beyond the ageing debate and offering a different insight Bourdieu
made his contribution to the debate timeless. Although this step allowed him to go beyond the debate about structures and agents, he does use them in his theory. It is unclear, however, how he defines agents; he merely cites them and leaves an open question as to what agents exactly entail. Without going into too much detail, there is a debate as to what ‘agents’ are. In short, there are two ways of looking at them. The first sees agents as individuals or social groups, as described by Alan Dawe (Smart, 1982, p. 132). The other states that entities (i.e. organisations, religions, etc.) are agents as well. Although Bourdieu does not specify his meaning of agent (something not only he is guilty of since it is considered to be a rather confusing aspect within sociology (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p. 962)), by analysing his writings it can be said that he adheres to the first version⁴. His theory is mostly concerned with the division between the higher and lower classes and focuses on the role of the individual in it. Bigo in his research about the (in)security of Europe, on the other hand, sees entities like the EU or NATO as agents. In this research the more limited version of agents will be adhered to, because it follows more the line of Bourdieu’s work. Secondly, it can be argued that, although their influence cannot be disregarded, entities are ultimately made up of, and represented by, individuals.

**Habitus, structures and practices**

There are many different aspects to Bourdieu’s theory of practice, which all hang together in certain ways. It is, however, impossible to deal with them all at once and therefore this section will focus on three aspects that can be regarded as the basis of practice theory. They will be analysed separately, but it should be kept in mind that they are interrelated. At the centre of Bourdieu’s practice theory stands his notion of the habitus (Thompson, 1991, p. 12). The easiest way for this subject to be dealt with would be to state its definition and how it is used within the theory. This would, however, take away the charm of philosophy. Perhaps Bourdieu thought the same thing or

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⁴ For a more elaborate analysis on the concept of agency I refer to the articles of Emirbayer and Mische, and Wendt.
he just kept developing his theory, but in the many works he has produced the meaning of habitus slightly differs. It could be argued that all the different meanings should be analysed in order to find where the differences are. But that would not leave this research with a usable definition that can be used to analyse Bourdieu’s contribution to the successfulness of securitisation. Therefore, it is more useful to analyse the works and find similarities between the different meanings of habitus. Before turning to the analysis itself, it is imperative to first introduce an example. In order to better understand the theory a comparison with a casino will be used, with different kinds of games, tokens and players; Bourdieu made the comparison between games and fields himself as well, making the choice for an example as this logical (Bourdieu, 1993, pp. 34-35; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, pp. 98-100). The analysis will start at the lower level, the players, in order to be able to understand them before turning to their position in the games. This agent is a person that participates as a player within a certain field; in this case an agent is considered to be a player within a casino (field). The next part will be dealing with understanding how the player behaves within the casino in the way he does.

Bourdieu started explaining his theoretical thinking in his work *Outline of a theory of practice* in 1977 and kept developing it up until 1998, a few years prior to his death, with *Practical Reason*. In a reaction to the more rational theories he posed that every agent inhabits a habitus, something that is intangible but which is of great importance. It should not, however, be considered the only way of explaining agent behaviour (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 20). In his 1977 work Bourdieu defined habitus, quite lengthy, as follows:

“[habit] systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations which can be objectively ‘regulated’ and ‘regular’ without in any way being the product of obedience to rules, objectively adapted to their goals without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends.
or an express mastery of the operations without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor.” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 72)

In his 1998 work he describes the habitus slightly different:

“The habitus is this generative and unifying principle which retranslates the intrinsic and relational characteristics of a position into a unitary lifestyle, that is, a unitary set of choices of persons, goods, practices.” (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 8)

When taking these two statements about the habitus, and with it the many he used in his works between them, a more general description of the habitus can be acquired. The most essential elements can be found in the two provided quotations: disposable dispositions, structuring structures, and generative principles. Another important aspect of the habitus concerns the fact that it is “a socially constituted system of cognitive and motivating structures, and the socially constructed situation in which the agents’ interests are defined” [emphasis in original] (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 76). The habitus is something that every agent has within him and that enables him to conduct practices (what practices are will be dealt with further on), and consists of a set of dispositions, which are the result of an on-going process (Thompson, 1991, p. 12). Here is important to make a decision as to what habitus is, for Bourdieu explicitly rejects mentalism and argues that the habitus is something bodily, not mentally (Hanks W. F., 2005, p. 71). Yet, he also states that the habitus comprises of cognitive systems, which are imbedded in the human mind (Siegal & Varley, 2002) and with that within the body. Thus it can be said that the habitus not necessarily needs to be either mentally or bodily, but that it simply resides within a human.

The moment that an agent is born his habitus will start to develop, under influence of its parents (whom both possess a habitus which developed in a certain way), its environment and its own experience. The environmental aspect draws on the class difference referred to above. According to Bourdieu
there is a difference in the educational system between the social classes, which accord for a different development of the habitus. This means that there is a difference in habitus between classes, but also between generations as both grow up in different environments (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 79). Having said that, agents that grow up within a certain class and within a certain field are likely to develop their habitus (hence it can be referred to as class habitus), and with that their practices, in a similar way (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 85; Jackson, 2008, p. 165). This sounds more than reasonable: if two players grow up learning just the game of poker it is likely that they will learn all the in’s and out’s of the game and thereby their actions become similar, as opposed to a player that grows up with another game but tries a game of poker for once. Another important aspect of the habitus is the fact that it gains experience not by mechanical learning, but due to a structure of series that become mastered due to their coherence (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 88). Bourdieu also refers to this by means of calling in the importance of the past, for in every agent there is an aspect of the decisions and experiences he as made in the past. These, to a certain extent, are responsible for how the habitus reacts to future situations (Bourdieu, 1977, pp. 79, 82). It should be noted that these reactions are not to be considered as mechanical reactions, but more like regulated improvisations as there is not a standard reaction to an unfamiliar situation (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 78). The habitus can thus be regarded by what others might call a conscience: it consists of social aspects that influence the practices, but which also rests on the structure of the particular field that it resides in and which, in turn, structure the action within that field. In short, the habitus can be seen as the practical sense of the agent, a player’s ‘feel’ for the game (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 25).

Apparently the habitus is, to a certain extent, dependent on the structures of the field in which the agent stays. But what are these ‘structures’? According to Bourdieu they consist of the material conditions of existence that are characteristic of a class (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 72). These refer to the earlier mentioned environmental aspects that are responsible for the
development of the habitus: the structures of the field (e.g. the educational system or the economics; fields will be elaborated on more in detail in the next chapter. For now these examples suffice). The education of an agent can be considered the main contributor to the development of the habitus, especially during the younger years (Thompson, 1991, p. 12). However, the school institutions also contribute to the distribution of cultural capital (the role of capital in practice theory will be elaborated on further down the road) and with that to the structure of social spaces (fields) (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 19).

It is therefore that Bourdieu refers to them as ‘structuring structures’ since they are responsible for in what way the habitus develops itself. In order to better understand these structures Bourdieu makes use of his research experience in Algeria. In an attempt to make the ‘structuring structures’ more tangible he uses the example of the traditional house. In it are objects that are each other’s opposites: light/dark, human/animals, hot/cold. These oppositions structure the life of the agents in the house. For example, in the event of a guest they will be seated in the room with light, for the dark room is designated for the sick and the dead (Bourdieu, 1977, pp. 90-91). This small metaphor shows that structures structure the habitus and thereby the practices that the habitus produces. (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 72).

That leaves only practices to be dealt with in order to understand the theory as posted by Bourdieu. It is practices that are the centre of Bourdieu’s theory and he tries to explain that “practice has a logic which is not that of logic [rational choice]” (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 82). In its most basic form a practice entails nothing more than an action (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011, p. 1241); making a decision on where to move on a court field in a game of tennis, or deciding to fold the cards in the game of poker in the casino. It is the clarification of how these practices come to being, that is at the core of practice theory and in order to do so the habitus and structures come back into play. The substantialist and realist reading of practices revolve around the mechanical relations between practices and social positions (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 3). Bourdieu, however, uses the habitus and structures to show that
practices are not the result of mechanical relations, but instead are based on former experience (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 77). These experiences are responsible for forming the structure of the habitus and thus practices are the product of the structuring structures of the habitus. This kind of reasoning sounds complex and seems to show that practice theory shows a mutual constitutiveness regarding the habitus, structures and practices (Hanks W. F., 2005, p. 73). It is this mutual constitutiveness that makes Bourdieu’s theory a good contribution to the agent-structure debate, as it shows that the habitus is part of both of them. In a more practical manner: the poker player at the poker table in the casino makes his decisions in the game (field) based on his growing up in the corresponding field, that of poker. His growing up, as well as the structure of the game, is responsible for the way in which he makes decisions and takes actions in the game. These actions, in turn, contribute to the further development of the habitus for the production of future practices, or what is more commonly known as ‘learning’.

Illustration 1: The agent
**Criticising practice theory**

Besides of concerns of the complexity around the mutual constitutiveness concerning the habitus, structures and practices, there are more fundamental critiques of Bourdieu’s practice theory. One of the most commonly heard is the fact that his writings are simply difficult to read due to his stance on remaining as ‘neutral’ as possible as a sociologist (something that can be argued he did not entirely manage). In his work *Outline of a theory of practice* Bourdieu strongly disagreed with structuralism, although in his earlier works he shows clear signs of structuralism himself (Robbins, 1991, pp. 86-87). Bourdieu claims to do so in order to prevent a misreading of his work (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 4). In doing so he, however, reverts to the usage of difficult words that do not run through the everyday language (e.g. ‘doxa’, which will be elaborated on in the next chapter) and an idiolect that could scare off a linguist (Wacquant, 1989, p. 31). Another critique concerns the ambiguity in his description of, for example, the habitus. Although Bourdieu explains this by the fact that he constantly kept developing his theory (Wacquant, 1989, p. 30), it nonetheless attributes to an even more difficult reading of his works. On a more theoretical level Bourdieu has been criticised for ignoring the agency – structure debate by using the notion of the habitus (Ortner, 1996, p. 11). This kind of critique is, however, not well founded as Bourdieu himself states that he introduced his notion of the habitus in order to introduce a new point of view to the long going debate (Robbins, 1991, p. 1). Perhaps the most important critique concerning the theory does not have to do with its theoretical argumentation, but with a mixture of several critiques and Bourdieu’s personal drive. For he wanted to educate (although not used by Bourdieu, perhaps the use of ‘empowerment’ is in place) the whole society, but in particular the lower class as it has a lower educational level than the higher class, in order for its inhabitants to better understand the society in which they live. Due to the earlier mentioned ambiguity and usage of difficult language the work of Bourdieu, however, has mainly been read and debated by that part of society that actually do not really need it: the higher class (Robbins, 1991, p. 128). For they already have a better idea about how
society works due to the difference within the educational system. This also shows a limitation of this research. Because in order to better comprehend securitisation theory by means of Bourdieu, his works need to be analysed and it is nearly impossible to ignore the many different wordings and ambiguities. Thereby, in a way, this research will only be limited accessible to people from ‘lower classes’ (for as far as there is a true class difference), thus overshooting the aim of the research: making people (i.e. the ‘lower class’) more aware of the process of successful securitisation.

This chapter focussed on how the single player at the poker table got to make the decisions he makes. It showed that there is a circular relation between the habitus, structures and practices that attribute to how the agent acts as he does. Within the casino, however, there is more than just the poker table, and there are more than just poker players. Furthermore, within the casino there is a large amount of chips that can be used at all the assorted game tables. The next chapter will look at the bigger setting than just the poker table, in order to get to a better linkage with, and understanding of securitisation theory.
Chapter 4: Field theory

“Complexity lies within social reality and not in the somewhat decadent desire to say complicated things.” - Bourdieu

The previous chapter lay bare the core of Bourdieu’s practice theory by analysing the habitus, structures and practices. The working of these, however, is only related to a single agent and it seems quite obvious that securitisation entails more than just single individuals. This chapter will put the findings of the preceding chapter into a bigger picture; whereas the poker player and his actions were at the centre of analysis, the focus will now shift towards the casino and all its facets. Having discussed the player, this chapter will start with the different kinds of chips he holds: his capital. After which attention will be put to the ‘rules of the game’ and lastly an analysis will be made of the entire concept of the casino: fields.

Capital

Bourdieu made a distinction between four kinds of capital: cultural, economic, social and symbolic, all of which have an influence on how the habitus develops (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 16; Bourdieu, 1989, p. 17; Bourdieu, 1998, p. 25). Something that seems logical, when relating it to the casino: the more chips a player acquires, the greater his possibilities get in playing the different games. Because not everybody has the same amount of chips in the casino, the same goes for agents within fields. There is a differentiation between agents according to their total capital: there are people sitting at the high rolling table (e.g. minimum wager of $10,000) and those with less fortune. After looking at the total amount of capital, a second distinction is made according to the relative weight of the different capitals. This distinction can be compared to the differentiation in classes (Bourdieu, 1998, pp. 7-8).
Again, the casino players all have stacks of different kinds of chips, which also differ according to the total amount of capital: the lowest chip value of a high rolling player can be worth more than the highest chip value of a normal player. There is also a relations between the chips as, for example, five $1 chips can be exchanged for one $5 chip. Agents in a field can also apply this principle to the acquired capital, as acquired cultural capital (e.g. certain educational qualifications) can be exchanged for economic capital (e.g. salary for work) (Thompson, 1991, p. 14). And doing so, capital (in all its forms) is also responsible for the development of the habitus, as well as to the possible practices produced by the agent. However, the relation between capital and the different kinds of fields is also connected to one another. As said the economic capital (i.e. the chips) can easily be exchanged and are of value at any table. Other capital, for example acquired skills and techniques, can only exist and function in relation to a specific field (Wacquant, 1989, p. 39); knowing how to play poker is of little value when playing roulette. Building on the schematic from the previous chapter:
Of particular interest for the comprehension of securitisation theory is the fourth kind of capital: symbolic. This capital comprises of charm, prestige and charisma and it is accumulated through the exchange of services, gifts, care and attention (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 128). In his earlier research in Algeria Bourdieu observed the role of symbolic power by means of marriage between different tribes, clans and classes. In order to gain more capital a family would purchase an extra ox as to show that they were wealthy (economic capital), but this would also give the family a certain status within the community (symbolic capital) (Bliege Bird & Alden Smith, 2005, p. 223). The possession of symbolic capital, in turn brings with it the possession of symbolic power, something that is of interest for securitisation theory and speech act. The possessors of this power are then in a position to yield, what Bourdieu calls, ‘symbolic violence’: they are capable of dominating over the other class in order to impose their view of the social world (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 167; Moi, 1991, p. 1022). The main issue with symbolic power is related to the successfulness of a speech act: its success lies with its acceptance, not primarily with the speaker/possessor. Symbolic power is an invisible power that only exists because people recognise its possessor to hold the power; people believe in “the legitimacy of the power and those who yield it” (Thompson, 1991, p. 23). It can thus be regarded as a structuring structure, but only because it is structured itself (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 23; Bourdieu, 1991, p. 164). This thinking brings with it the question of how one imposes his views upon others in order for them to believe them. The next chapter will deal with this question by looking at the linguistic aspect that both Buzan et al. and Bourdieu use for their theories.

It is this kind of thinking that makes Bourdieu more than a traditional constructivist, for they only look a the fact that the world is a social construction. Bourdieu, on the other hand, tries to understand what it is that makes agents construct the world as they do. As he sees it (symbolic) power is the driving force behind the socially constructed reality of everyday life and it is therefore that he makes use of the social theory of Marxism with its classes.
In the social world there are the dominant and the dominated, and the former will do everything within their power to uphold the dominant position that they have. Take the different players at a poker table. The aim of the game is, obviously, to win as much chips as possible. The way in which is more interesting though, because one does not always have to have the best cards: it is possible to bluff. In order to successfully bluff it is imperative that the other players believe what the bluffer is saying. Here it is possible to see how capital works. The bluffer player needs to have a certain charisma in order for other players to believe what he is saying, something that he can support by holding a large amount of chips (e.g. cultural and economic capital). Due to the amount of capitals he comes into a position of holding the power to influence the other players in believing what he wants them to believe, namely that he is holding favourable cards. The poker player in this example can also be substituted with the securitising actor from securitisation theory, who tries to convince an audience into believing his claim for security that not necessarily needs to have a relation to an empirical reality. This goes to show that symbolic power exists within ISS, for as long as people belief in it. Or as Bourdieu put it quit correctly: “Symbolic power is the power to make things with words.” (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 23).

‘The rules of the game’

One of the structuring principles of field theory is, besides the notion of the habitus, something what Bourdieu calls ‘doxa’. As with the previously discussed aspects of practice theory, the definition about doxa is neither set in stone as Bourdieu changed the meaning of it in several of his works (Myles, 2004, pp. 92-93). The meaning of doxa can best be described as ‘the rules of the game’. Within the field that agents operate there is a set of rules (written or unwritten) to which every agent tacitly adheres (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 169; Pouliot & Mérand, 2013, p. 27). These rules make sure that every action within the field is conducted appropriately. The best way of visualising this is by thinking about a game, for instance soccer. In this game all the players share the notion that none but the goalkeeper is allowed to touch the ball with
his hands. Thus the doxa has a limiting influence on the potential courses of action of agents; they cannot simply pick up the ball and start running off. Due to the fact that the agent needs to adhere to the doxa of a field, it becomes evident that doxa can be regarded as a structuring structure for the habitus and its practices. The schematic can thus be expanded further:

Illustration 3: Introducing doxa

However, within the field there can be agents who try to transform the power relations within it, and thus try to change the rules of the game to their own benefit. In the ensuing struggle that will follow between the agents that want to uphold the standing rules (the dominant class) and the ones trying to change them (dominated class), agents make use of their capital (e.g. symbolic power) in order to impose the rules that favour them the most (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 169). Linking this back to securitisation theory it means that within the field of security there are certain rules that all agents adhere to. A securitising actor will make use of these rules in order to make a successful securitising move. When other agents will start to question his move, he will revert to his power (i.e. capital) in order to impose his view of the social world (i.e. the existence of an existential threat). The questioning and riposting of it
can be regarded as the struggle Bourdieu refers to. Although Bourdieu does not make a clear statement as to what the struggle should look like, analysing his works can derive a meaning. In them he openly acknowledges the fact that he uses Marxism for its usefulness in analysis, giving the idea that he might also support the struggle as suggested by Marx himself. However, Bourdieu in all his works pays a lot of attention to the educational system and the power that lies within it. Stating that class difference can be overcome by means of equal education, implying that a struggle between classes should be regarded less violent as apposed to Marx’ rise of the underclass, but instead attention should be paid to the educational system and the meaning and power of linguistics. When looking at it from such point of view a link can be seen with securitisation theory, as it revolves around a struggle between the securitising actor and his audience that is ‘fought over’ by means of a speech act (i.e. a linguistic act).

The field

All the previously discussed subjects (habitus, structures, practices, capital, doxa) are intertwined with one another in complex ways, and it is here that the overarching subject, field theory, will be dealt with. It is due to the interaction between the field and individuals that the habitus develops itself (Hanks W. F., 2005, p. 72; Thompson, 1991, p. 14), and some even pertain the vision that practices are the direct result of the interaction between the habitus and the field (Pouliot, 2013, p. 45; Thompson, 1991, p. 17). Furthermore, field theory provides the reflexivity necessary in political analysis (Martin, 2003, p. 3). It is therefore useful to put Bourdieu’s practice theory into perspective with field theory. The theory itself originates from the discipline of physical sciences, particularly the sciences about fluid mechanics dating back to the eighteenth century (Martin, 2003, pp. 3-4). Around that time scientist were starting to figure out what gravity exactly was, for it could not be objectively measured or even be seen, but it certainly had its effects on

5 Within social theory reflexivity refers to the circular relationship between cause and effect: the ability of agents to assess their own actions’ consequences and reconsider.
the objects. This means that in order to prove that a field exists its effects need to be proven (Martin, p. 5). According to Bourdieu the boundaries of a field, in the sociological meaning of the word, can only be empirically determined and are marked by “institutionalized barriers to entry” (Wacquant, 1989, p. 39).

Before turning to the way in which Bourdieu uses field theory, a comparison with securitisation theory can already be made. For security is something that not necessarily can be measured, but it certainly has its effects on society and individuals. Field theory can therefore be used to explain the dynamics between people and groups of people, something that will be elaborated further in the next chapter.

It was not until halfway through the twentieth century that the concept of field theory first was seriously applied within the social sciences. And although Bourdieu became the most prominent exponent of field theory, he was neither the only one nor the first. Most notably are Lewin, who focussed on the social-psychological aspects of the theory, and DiMaggio and Powell, who used it for inter-organisational relations (Martin, p. 20). Two main features characterise a field: a configuration of social roles, agents’ positions, and the structure they fit into; and a historical process in which those positions are taken up (Hanks W. F., 2005, p. 72). In a relational way of thinking, deriving mainly from structuralism, the roles between agents in a field are one of oppositions: teacher vs. student, judge vs. jury, or poker player vs. croupier. And the agents (or institutions) are engaged in a struggle over power, or over the distribution of capital that has been acquired in previous struggles (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 73; Hanks W. F., 2005, p. 72). Within the casino there are, for example, many different kinds of fields: black jack, poker, roulette, etc. Each field has its own agents who are positioned opposite to each other: croupier (representing the casino) and player (who oppose each other in certain ways as well). The struggle over capital (i.e. power) is more than clear as each agent tries to acquire as much chips as possible.
The main problem with Bourdieu’s concept of field theory is that he never fully explained the many sides of the concept (Jackson, 2008, p. 166) and that therefore it remains a “fuzzy term” (Adler-Nissen, 2013, p. 13). As with the habitus Bourdieu does not make a single definition of what he sees as a field, but he rather goes at length to give descriptions of what it can or should entail:

“A field – even the scientific field – defines itself by (among other things) defining specific stakes and interest, which are irreducible to the stakes and interests specific to other fields and which are not perceived by someone who has not been shaped to enter that field.” (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 72)

This definition does not, although lengthy and comprehensive, comprise of all the aspect present in field theory. For field theory revolves around the notion of power, the distribution of it, and the struggle over it (Bourdieu, 1993, pp. 72-73). The definition above does provide the opportunity to give examples of fields as it shows that fields are defined by interest. Bourdieu himself attributed much of his time towards many different subjects, or fields. He is, for example, known for his analysis of the religious, literate, academic and artistic fields. In his analysis of the fields of production he even explored the relationship between agents and structures (Robbins, 1991, p. 90). Bourdieu also made the distinction between the political field and the field of power, which should not be seen as the same field. The latter is a more theoretical one as it entails a space in which agents compete with one another in order to be able to dominate the corresponding field when the value of the different capitals is questioned (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 34). The political field, on the other hand, is unlike any other field (e.g. sciences) as it is depended on the relation with a broader range of social positions, groups and processes (e.g. the audience of the securitisation theory). In order for agents of the political field to succeed they must appeal to non-professionals outside the field (Thompson, 1991, pp. 27-28).
With these examples in mind it can be argued that new fields can also emerge. Looking at the casino, it is likely that new kinds of games will be developed and introduced over time. Thus it seems plausible that the same goes for the social world in which agents act. Security is an issue that has gained much momentum and attention in recent years and it can be regarded as being a field of its own. Securitisation theory then falls somewhere between the political and the security field, as it is concerned with issues that alter from being politicised into being securitised. This also shows that there can be an overlap between different kinds of fields (Hanks W. F., 2005, p. 74). Relating back to the casino this is quite obvious: players can walk through the casino from table to table, bringing with them their acquired chips. It is imperative, though, that the players know the rules of all the different kind of games. If not, they run the risk of losing their chips (i.e. losing, for example, symbolic capital in the form of prestige) or even of being excluded from the table by other players.

Within the political field the problem of agents not knowing the rules has been partially resolved. For over the course of time the political field has become an autonomous field with bureaucracies and institutions. Whenever an agent enters the field these institutions make sure that the agent becomes equipped with all the necessary skills and competences that are needed to operate within the field (Thompson, 1991, p. 27), in a way they structure the habitus of the agent. But what is it that links the habitus to the field?

**Illusio**

In order to understand why agents choose the field they participate in Bourdieu introduced the notion of *illusio*, which is best defined as interest. Although this idea has been criticised of putting Bourdieu in a privileged position regarding his epistemological point of view⁶ (Kim, 2004, p. 373), it

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⁶ Kim here refers to the fact that Bourdieu pertains the notion that sociologist should remain as neutral as possible, something that is quite impossible when taking into account that every agent (i.e. sociologist) possesses a certain *illusio* that makes them interested (and thus not completely neutral) in the field of sociology.
does offer a useful way of linking the agent and a field. It is imperative, though, to make a distinction between ‘interest’ as used by Bourdieu, and ‘interest’ as used in economics. The latter is connected solely to economic purposes, whereas the former has its origin with Weber and is related to the cultural sphere (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, pp. 115-116; Wacquant, 1989, p. 41). As with the oppositions in the structuring structures, illusio must be seen in relation with its opposite: ataraxia (i.e. disinterestedness). These two concepts are key in the understanding the relationship with the field, in bit of the same way as the position of doxa; illusio indicates the attribution to a social game, or as Bourdieu says, whether something is “worth the candle” (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 77). Doxa refers to the rules of the game, whereas illusio indicates to what degree an agent is involved in a field. The interest (i.e. illusio) in the game is something that players (i.e. agents) agree with upon playing the game and not by means of a ‘contract’ (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 98). Or as Bourdieu captivated it:

“To be interested is to accord a given social game that what happens in it matters, that its stakes are important (another word with the same root as interest) and worth pursuing.” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 116)

This definition used by Bourdieu shows that he also pertained the vision that interest in a field is connected to the field itself; the field itself produces interest so that agents become interested in the game. This shows, firstly, that illusio and field are, just as the habitus, practices and structures, mutual constitutive. There is also a relation between the habitus and the socially structured situations in which the agents’ interests are defined. Meaning that the main principle for the production of practices by an agent is interest (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 76) and that there are as many forms of illusio as there are fields (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 115).
The interesting thing about illusio is that Bourdieu compares it to libido (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 78), and at a certain point increasingly replaces his notions of illusio with that of libido (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 25). He does not, however, elaborate further on what exactly libido is, or what arouses it. Libido is most commonly associated with sexuality and not with something social philosophical as field theory. When looking at libido from a more psychological point of view it is associated with sexual activity and thus with hormones, particularly the hormone testosterone (Swaab, 2010, pp. 129-130). Thus part of Bourdieu’s philosophical thinking, namely the part related to illusio can be explained by means of psychology, meaning that it is less prone to critiques. The fact that Bourdieu uses the notion of libido without further explaining it allows for a deepening of his work. The next chapter will make a analysis of social psychology in order to derive at a more comprehensive understanding of Bourdieu’s theories, thus contributing to the better understanding of successful securitisation.

This chapter focussed on putting the analysis of the previous chapter in a bigger perspective by means of analysing Bourdieu’s notion of field theory. It showed that there are many different forces at play within the concept of a field. At the centre of it all stands the agent with his habitus, structures and practices. He is the one who participates and acts within the field. Within the field this agent acquires certain capital (social, economic, cultural and symbolic) which put him in a position to ‘play the game’ of the field. This game is, as Bourdieu sees it, a game of power and thus an agent will try to dominate others and put everything at play to maintain a dominating position. He does so by using his acquired capital and turning it into symbolic power in order to impose his view of the socially constructed world. There are, however, certain rules (i.e. doxa) that determine the position of the agent within the field and limit him, to certain extents, in his movements. All this

7 Here critiques from the sociological field are meant. Theories about the human brain and its functioning are still in their infancy and are therefore subject of many critiques. This can partly be explained by the fact that the human brain can be regarded as quite a mystery to human.
interaction is, in its turn, determined by the interest (illusio) that an agent has for the field in which he partakes. He needs to have the feeling that the game played within the field is ‘worth its candle’. This also shows that the practices produced by his habitus are indirectly, yet primarily, determined by his illusio. Or, when put into a schematic:

![Diagram of field, capital, agent, symbolic power, and doxa]

Illustration 4: Complexity

The next chapter will make a comprehensive linkage between securitisation theory and practice theory in order to get a better understanding of successful securitisation. It will do so by focussing on a subject that is of importance in both theories, namely language.
Chapter 5: Taking it together

“I write so that people, and especially those who are authorized to speak, the ‘spokesmen’, can no longer produce noise about the social world that sounds like music.” - Bourdieu

Having analysed both securitisation and practice theory, this chapter will focus on linking the two together in order to come to a comprehensive understanding of successful securitisation. The previous chapters have shown that practice and field theory are quite complex, and that they consist of several mutual constitutive structures. Several subjects of the two theories have, when possible, been linked together to show the possibilities of using practice theory. This chapter will focus on two main topics in order to analyse the possibility of comprehending securitisation theory by means of practice theory. The first topic concerns the security field and what it entails, or whether such thing as a security field actually exists. After that attention will be drawn to the emphasis that both theories place on aspects of language, and its role in the construction of the social world by means of symbolic power. In the third section attention will be drawn to the subject of social psychology in an attempt to further deepen the analysis of comprehending successful securitisation.

The security field

The previous chapters started with analysing the way in which a single agent acts by means of his habitus, practices and structures, and followed with exploring how they interacted with capital, field and illusio. Before turning to the influence of language in both theories, it is important to look at how the two theories relate. Throughout the example of the casino has been used. As said before, security can be considered as being a field as described by
Bourdieu. The CASE collective touches upon Bourdieu’s notion ever so slightly, whereas they think his concept can be used to better explain the ‘field’ of security (CASE, 2006, p. 458). Within this field, as within any field according to Bourdieu, there is a struggle for power, which in securitisation theory can be identified with the struggle for successful securitisation. Contrary to the rather simple field within the casino example, in the real world the line between different fields is not that clear. Especially the political field is a difficult one to grasp, as it appears to influence many other fields (e.g. the security, the academic, the educational, etc.) (Bourdieu, 2005, pp. 29-30). Buzan et al. make use of speech act in order to get an issue from the political onto the security agenda, also showing how the two fields overlap. As analysed in the previous chapter, there are no solid demands for what a field is; it can only be measured by the effects it sorts. Thus it is not easy to state that something like the security field ‘exists’. The security field can be regarded as a social construct that has been constructed in order to deal with (un)certainties within the social world of agents. Within this constructed field of security, securitisation theory can be regarded as a ‘subfield’ that is concerned with trying to get a better understanding of how ‘security’ works. As analysed in chapter two it does so by distinguishing two actors: the securitising actor and the audience. A resemblance can be made to Bourdieu’s practice theory that pertains the notion of two classes: the dominant and the dominated. On the surface it seems as though there is a linkage between the two, but when looking at it from a more analytical perspective reveals even more comprehensiveness.

Accepting the postulation that there is something called the security field, it is imperative to identify the main agents within it and the role they play (i.e. keep in mind the example of the casino). On the one hand there are the securitising actors, which consist of what can be called ‘the specialists’: people whose daily work consists of security matters (e.g. soldiers and security analysts) and who are stakeholders in potential security issue. Opposite to them is the audience, which is not elaborated on by Buzan et al. Looking at
contemporary security debates this audience can be identified as comprising of politicians. The ‘game’ that is played between these players, is what is at stake in the security field. The securitising actors, by means of speech acts, try to convince the politicians of the eminent threats that press upon them in order to be granted extraordinary measures (e.g. budgetary expansion or ‘drone attacks’).

**Practices and speech acts**

Bourdieu sees a speech act as a practice conducted by an agent (in this case the securitising actor) that hinges on the social dispositions of the linguistic habitus that determine whether the agent is capable of producing proper language (i.e. the skill of giving a speech), and on the structures of the linguistic market (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 37). Bourdieu, as Buzan et al., pertains the notion that a “discourse of authority” (a speech act) needs to be recognised in order for it to sort its effect, and the conditions that he sets are quite similar to the internal and external conditions posited by Buzan et al. (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 113). Speech acts thus occur within the political and security field, and according to the analysis of field theory in chapter four any agent can get up, take his chips and walk to any other table in the casino. The political field, however, can be regarded as a table reserved for high rolling players only: not every agent can participate as a functioning agent within the field. Instead, the power in the field is distributed amongst a few agents and this division is more likely to be upheld if ordinary individuals are deprived of the means necessary for participation in the political field (Bourdieu, 1991, pp. 171-172). The dominated class is deprived of the means necessary to participate in the political field due to the power used by the dominant class. In order to acquire the required skills and qualifications proper education is essential. It is here that Bourdieu argues that the dominant class exercises its true power by controlling the educational system, which is responsible for how individuals perceive the socially constructed world (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 35). Why is it that universities and all its side issues (e.g. the title of professor or degrees) are regarded as being more ‘valuable’ than other forms of
education? It seems as though the old practices of titles and nobility has been superseded by the titles bestowed by universities. The government of a state has a great influence on family life through institutions, the educational system and policy (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 72). In doing so it creates situations in which it is capable, intentionally or not, to determine to a certain extent how the habitus of an agent will develop. All this goes to show that the dominant class reverts to the usage of their symbolic capital in order to maintain their dominant position. As analysed in chapter three, symbolic power derives from acquired capital (social, cultural, economic and symbolic) and can be obtained in different kinds of fields. The dominant class thus, for example, uses its social capital, which it acquired in the educational system, to keep in position the division imposed by that very system. Of course solely social capital cannot be suffice and therefore it is imaginable that economic power (e.g. donations to universities, scholarships, etc.) plays an important role as well.

To comprehend how securitisation becomes successful it is imperative to understand that the social circumstances of the audience are socially constructed by the agents of which it consist, but also by the actions of the dominant class (i.e. the government, powerful corporations, etc.). The question that arises, however, is how the dominant class is capable of imposing its view of the social world upon the dominated class. As mentioned at the beginning of this section, speech acts play a major role in both theories and its therefore that language will be used as the final connecting stone between the two.

**Language**

Having said that successful securitisation revolves around the socially constructed social circumstances of the agents involved is only part of understanding the problem. Because how is this social world constructed? Who determines what it looks like? If every agent could determine for himself how his world would look like there would be as many different social worlds as there are agents in the world. Again, the key to understanding this is the
notion of power (i.e. the authority to speak), but this time in relation to language and in particular to speech act. The analysis of securitisation theory in chapter two showed that Buzan et al. make use of Austin’s theory about the working of words to support their theory, which focuses on the notion of a speech act. They shifted the attention, however, from recognising a speech act to accepting it; a perlocutionary act. The importance of the language in their theory revolves around the fact that it is a medium through which a securitising actor tries to reach an audience in order for it to be convinced of an existential threat. Bourdieu also recognises the importance of language in the everyday life. He takes a more constructivist approach, however, and argues that “the constitutive power which is granted to ordinary language lies not in the language itself but in the group which authorizes it and invests it with authority” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 21). He traces back the origin of language to the struggle between the dominant and dominated classes, in which the former uses language to maintain its position of power. The latter needs to get a better understanding of the power of language in order to weapon themselves against the dominant class’ ‘poor mans’ psychoanalysts’ (Bourdieu, 1993, pp. 23-24). It becomes clear that both theories use language for ordering the power distribution within their respective disciplines. They both make use of the same practice for claiming power, namely a speech act, showing that the phenomenon of speech act is part of a ‘linguistic field’. This seems to imply that language should be regarded as a field separated from others, and in a sense this is so. However, as show above, in reality fields are not that easily divided and they more than often overlap, as shown by Hanks (Hanks W. F., 2005, p. 74). The ‘linguistic field’, which can be considered as separate in order for it to be analysed, is by far a field that overlaps with other ones. If not all other possible fields as language forms the basis for communication. This also shows that, even within different disciplines, the role of language as a medium of power relation is important (Wacquant, 1989, p. 45), especially within securitisation theory as it clearly uses language (i.e. speech act) as the medium through which the securitising actor tries to execute his symbolic power.
Bourdieu builds on Austin, but holds the notion that Austin did not actually know what he was doing and therefore failed in putting together a complete analysis (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 111). Whereas Austin (and other formalist analysts) focus solely on the articulation, pronunciations of varying words or a rich vocabulary, Bourdieu instead argues that the authority of the legitimate language resides “in the social conditions of production and reproduction of the distribution between the classes of the knowledge and recognitions of the legitimate language” (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 113). Due to their focus on the *illocutionary* and *performative*, Austin and others look past the fact that the position of the speaker is of greater importance. If the speaker (e.g. securitising actor) is perceived as a fraud, an imposter, than his words will be empty. He needs to live up to his appearance (*noblesse oblige*), which is based on a collective belief, guaranteed by institutions and made concrete by qualifications (diploma’s) and symbols (uniform) (Bourdieu, 1991, pp. 125-126). This relates back to the external condition of Buzan et al., which holds that the securitising actor needs to be in a position of authority (Buzan, Wæver, & De Wilde, 1998, p. 33). The peculiar thing here is that the qualifications are bestowed by, among others, the universities that in turn are part of the power relations system as described above. In simpler words: the universities grant titles to individuals (which give them a position of authority), and the worthiness of this title lies in the fact that people with authority have decided so. Besides these different forms of capital, which have been discussed before, there is also the importance of the linguistic capital for the position of the agent within a social space. The words that an agent uses are, apart from the qualifications and symbols, also determining for whether his words will be accepted. Bourdieu uses the distinction between ‘stiff lip’ upper class and ‘loud mouth’ lower class (Thompson, 1991, pp. 17-18). Linked to securitisation theory this means that a securitising actor will need to adjust the way of uttering his words according to the kind of audience he needs to convince.
There are symbolic struggles over the perception of the social world (objective and subjective). The latter involves an agent that tries to transform the perception of the social world by means of the words that construct the social reality in order to impose the ‘legitimate’ principle of vision and division. In order to be able to do so, the agent (securitising actor) needs to have enough symbolic capital, which he has acquired in previous struggles or which even can be juridical endowed (the authority of the securitising actor). Agents who possess large amounts of symbolic capital can be recognised in the higher class, which is also in control over the institutions (school) that determine the symbolic ranking (Bourdieu, 1989, pp. 20-21). This symbolic ranking entails the value that is associated with different titles, for example professor, engineer, etc. In a constructivist manner Bourdieu argues that agents can mould the political world, as part of the social world. It can become so when the members of a group believe that they have a common way of experiencing the social world, something they did not have before the utterance (speech act) of a legitimate speaker. The success of this lies with the symbolic power of the speaker.

**Diving deeper**

Bourdieu, in referring to group members, allows for taking the analysis to a next level. For up until now the successfulness of securitisation has been related to the social circumstances of the audience and securitising actor and to his linguistic capabilities to persuade the audience. But what does ‘the audience’ actually entail? Buzan et al. only mention the word ‘audience’ and do not elaborate further on what, or who, this might be. The most obvious picture that comes to mind, considering the fact that Buzan et al. use the word in relation to a speech act, is that of a (large) gathering of people of all assorted backgrounds. In the first section this picture has, in respect to the security field, been sharpened to entail only specialists and politicians. However, politicians can have many different kinds of backgrounds. Bourdieu uses the Marxist divide between a dominant and a dominated class, which has is starting point at the difference in education (but also economic and social
capital). As stated before this division is useful for analysis and to a certain extent can still be applied to modern society. However, when looking at modern society there is more to class division than meets the eye.

One way of doing that is by stepping into the field of social psychology, as it is concerned with understanding how and why people act in groups. As mentioned in the introduction this road has been taken before and the aim of this analysis was to look for a new road. Sometimes, however, it is possible that roads leading to Rome cross each other before reaching it. The same goes for getting a better understanding of securitisation theory. Although this analysis focuses mainly on the social circumstances surrounding securitisation, in order to fully comprehend how these circumstances relate to the individuals concerned with securitisation a deepening of Bourdieu’s theory is needed.

One of the main reasons why individuals want to become part of group is not just enhancing their chances for physical survival as pertained by Rousseau, but because they seek social survival (Fiske, 2010, p. 184). It is the sense of belonging to and not being left out that makes individuals partake in a social group. Next there is a division between the in-group and the out-group (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2010, p. 1088; Hogg, 2006, pp. 122-123; Turner, 1991), which can be linked to the two classes used by Bourdieu. The in-group is the group to which an individual belongs to, for example its political party, whereas the out-group consists of other political parties. The individual will have an intrinsic motivation to regard his own group as positive and the others as negative (Fiske, 2010, p. 439; Soeters, 2005, p. 79). In contemporary (Western) societies a clear distinction can be observed between ‘citizens’ and ‘foreigners’ (i.e. a division between ‘in’ and ‘out’ groups), which has its influence within the political field (Bourdieu, 2005, p. 38). The process within

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8 Although Bourdieu himself does not make any explicit reference to social psychology, I think that it offers a different and enlightening point of view. Due to the fact that most theories in psychology are based on scientific research and data make it more fundamental than philosophical thinking.
the *in-group* is sometimes also referred to as ‘group-identity’, which entails as much that individuals are more willing to go at length for other people as long as they can identify him with their own group (Durlauf & Fafchamps, 2004, p. 19; Fiske, 2010, p. 374).

Bourdieu admits that the social division of classes can be overcome and thus for higher and lower class agents to be rallied together in unity, but only in extreme cases of nationalism or chauvinism. In these cases the drawing closer of the two classes is only superficial and not everlasting (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 11). Although a case of securitisation can be regarded as one of extremism and perhaps national crisis when related to national interest (i.e. referent object) thus realising the exceptions made by Bourdieu, this need not be the case. Therefore it is useful to look at the social psychology for the way in which individuals act in groups.

Belonging to a group cannot explain why an audience (i.e. a group) will accept a speech act in order for securitisation to succeed. Within groups there are many different processes that can offer an explanation, but conformity and obedience offer the best reflection as to the power struggle used by both securitisation and practice theory. Conformity relates to the transformation of an individual’s behaviour in order for it to comply with that of others (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004, p. 606; Fiske, 2010, p. 535). Within Sociology there are two main theories related to conformity. The first, developed by Moscovici, pertains that if a majority exercises enough pressure on an individual, he will conform to the groups’ way of thinking out of fear of being cased out (which means exclusion from social survival) (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004, p. 607). The other theory revolves around informational influence, in which case an individual will conform to the position presented when he is convinced of the validity of the speaker (Hogg, 2000, p. 224; Turner, 1991, pp. 143-145). The theory concerning obedience is a more sensitive subject within Sociology ever since Stanley Milgram conducted his (in)famous experiment in 1961. Although the results of his experiment are subject to many criticisms, they still have a
major influence in the disciplinary field (Benjamin & Simpson, 2009, p. 15; Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004, p. 597; Fiske, 2010, p. 543). Obedience involves that an individual dutifully obeys the orders of a legitimate authority in order to prevent social displeasure, which in turn might lead to social exclusion (Milgram, 1963, p. 372; Zimbardo & Leippe, 1991, p. 71). Turner explains this by means of ‘power’, which exists in two forms: leadership and legitimate authority (Turner, 1991, p. 115). The former can be directly linked to the legitimate authority of the securitising actor and can be regarded as quite straightforward. Leadership, on the other hand, is a rather difficult concept, for what is good leadership? Turner acknowledges this difficulty and states that it entails structuring the group and allowing it to achieve its goals, but also to maintain a good social cohesion within it (Turner, p. 133). The extent to which group members comply with the words or demands of the group leader (e.g. the securitising actor) earlier mentioned social circumstances of the person, which make the agent ‘attractive’ for the audience to believe (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004, p. 598; Freedman & Fraser, 1966, p. 201). This goes to show that the interaction between the speaker and his audience is somewhat similar to the mutual constitutiveness running through the other theories: the social circumstances of the speaker are of importance for the acceptance by the audience. The audience, in turn, is more willing to comply with the request made when the securitising actor is considered ‘attractive’. This shows that the ‘leader’ of a group (e.g. a political party) holds a position of power in which he is capable of constructing and structuring, to a certain extent, the social world of the group members. Relating this back to securitisation theory this implies that the securitising actor can convince his audience by means of his power as a group leader (authoritative position conform securitisation theory), but also due to his symbolic power, which derives from the capital that his habitus possesses.

The aim of this chapter was to analyse to what extent Bourdieu’s practice theory could be used to better comprehend securitisation theory. It did so by focussing on three main topics: the security field, practices and
speech acts, and language. The first topic concentrated on the fact whether or not there is such a thing as a ‘security field’ of which securitisation theory is a part. Taking into consideration that both the Copenhagen School and Bourdieu are constructivists it can be argued that indeed there is a security field, but only because it has been constructed so by agents that have in interest in the existence of such a field. What is more interesting is how this social world can come to being. Both theories look for the construction of the social world to the phenomenon of speech act, the second topic, for answers. Although not depicted as such by securitisation theory, speech act can be regarded as what Bourdieu refers to as practices, showing another clear link between the two theories. The final topic, language, can be seen as a continuation of the second topic, for speech act can only be made by means of language. Again, due to their constructivist nature, both theories make use of language as the basis for there theories. The use of language cannot, however, be analysed on its own, but needs to be put into the perspective of the power relation between classes as posited by Bourdieu. It showed that there is, as before, a mutual constitutiveness between language and power. By taking a sidestep into the social psychology this is can be better understood. As said before, language was to be used in order to explain how the dominant class is able to maintain is position of power. Language, being part of the social capital (i.e. educational system), must be seen in correlation with the other forms of capital. The power that language has comes, in part, from the fact that the dominant class simply holds the dominant position. Social psychology shows that, within groups, people are keener on listening to what the leader of a group (in which a dominant person can be seen) has to say. This has to do with the fact that he may hold a position of authority (as both Buzan et al. and Bourdieu agree with), or due to his leadership abilities (which rest on his attractiveness and capabilities, relating it all back to the capital of an agent). In both cases the processes of obedience and conformity apply to understand why a group, among other things, agrees with the leader (i.e. the securitising actor).
Chapter 6: Conclusion

How can the research and analyses set out in the preceding chapters, containing multiple mutual constitutive structures and many philosophical interpretations, be moulded into a clear and sound conclusion? The answer is, actually, quite simple: it cannot. If anything, this research has shown that getting a comprehensive understanding of a philosophical theory such as practice theory is difficult enough by itself. Using that same understanding to get a more comprehensive understanding of a theory from a different discipline then becomes even more difficult, particularly when there are not many earlier researches to stand upon. Having said that, I think that it is safe to say that this research, within its limitations, is useful contribution to the understanding of securitisation. But how does it eventually work?

In many analysis the conclusion tends to be a summary and talking together of all the data analysed. For example, theory A postulates certain criteria that can be seen in case B and C, thus coming to the conclusion that the theory works to explain matters. When conducting a theoretical analysing such an answer is not likely. It is therefore difficult to even find a good starting point for giving a good summary of this research: there are so many interconnected topics that are part of mutual constitutive structures, which in turn are partly related to the starting topic, that trying to find the beginning is an analysis of its own. However, since the aim of this research is to better comprehend successful securitisation, it seems logical to start there.

Securitisation is successful when an audience accepts a speech act, made by a securitising actor. In order to understand how securitisation works, the first question that needs to be asked is why the actor wants to make the speech act in the first place? Using Bourdieu’s practice theory it can be argued
that within the socially constructed field of security there are two main classes: the dominant class represented by the specialists of the field, and the dominated class represented by (mainly) politicians. The aim of the dominant class is to maintain their dominating power position, because from there it is capable of imposing their construction of the social world (which according to them is one consisting of existential threats) upon the dominated class. Thus the reason why speech acts (the medium through which securitisation works) are made is because of the power relations between different classes.\(^9\)

Knowing the reason why a securitising actor might use a speech act brings the next part into play: how it becomes successful. As can be deducted from the analysis, the successfulness of a speech act hinges on two factors: the securitising actor and the audience. The former tries to convince the latter of the threat proposed by him. Compare it to a poker player at the table in the casino. He will try to convince the other players that he holds the strongest hand, even though this does not have to be the case. In the securitisation case the poker player is the securitising actor, and in order for him to be able to convince the other players he needs to be trustworthy. He needs have certain characteristics that attribute a certain ‘power’ to him. For example, he needs to have charisma, but he also needs to be smart and articulate; not many people will believe a shy and dumb man. The other players (i.e. the audience), on the other hand, as part of a group also act in a certain manner. This is mainly controlled by the processes of obedience and conformity, as described in the previous chapter.

But how do the agents (both the securitising actor and the audience) process all the information that is presented to them (in the example this being the information the bluffing poker player presents to them)? It is here that Bourdieu’s practice theory comes into to play, for both agents are bestowed with habitus, structures and practices. On the securitising actors side

\(^9\) Note that I do not make use of solely the two classes as used by Bourdieu. Although such division is useful for analysis, the real world is a lot more unruly.
the speech act is considered to be a practice, whereas on the other side accepting the speech act can be regarded as a practice. Categorising ‘accepting’ as a practice implies that the act of ‘accepting’ is influenced by the structures and habitus of the agent (i.e. the many different agents of the audience), which in turn are the product of the capital that the agents have acquired in different fields during the course of their life. The acceptance of a securitising move in the form of a speech act by an audience thus relies on the habitus, structures and practices (not meaning the practice of accepting, but practices produced by the agent in the past which formed the habitus).

All this, according to Bourdieu, is related to power relations. The securitising actor wants to impose his view of the constructed world upon the audience and uses the speech act to reach that goal. The dominant class (to which the securitising actor belongs) maintains its position by upholding the division between classes, and the main way of doing so is the educational system. Education being part of the capital of agents, the dominant class influences the development of the habitus of agents in the dominated class. And thus, in a manner, sways the practices of those agents. In order for the dominant class to influence the capital of the dominated class, it reverts to using its own acquired capital as a source for (symbolic) power that enables them to do so.

The way in which the dominant class uses its capital is by means of symbolic power, which is exerted, in the case of securitisation theory, in the form of the speech act. This shows that there is a vicious circle concerning the usage and acquiring of (symbolic) power by the dominant class, which in turn is influenced by the mutual constitutive processes within the agent (habitus, structures and practices). The success of securitisation lies with the distribution of power within the political field. The dominant class tries to keep the individual/lower agent out of the field by erecting social, economical and cultural barriers. The educational system is at the beginning of it, as it limits the growth of the habitus to a large extent, and thereby the ‘need’ to
acquire other capital (economic and cultural). This leads, to a certain extent, to making the dominated class more receptive to symbolic power, which the dominant class knows how to use successfully. (Bourdieu, 1991, pp. 172-175). Translated to securitisation theory this implies that the securitising actor first needs to raise the interest of an agent to become involved into the field (i.e. the security field), and than make use of his different forms of capital, culminating in linguistic capital (i.e. a speech act) in order to convince the audience of the security issue at hands.

In the research laid down above I have attempted to shed a clarifying light on how a successful securitisation, as posted by the Copenhagen School, could be analysed by means of Pierre Bourdieu’s practice theory. Although I can state that the analysis indeed worked out to be able of comprehending securitisation theory, by no means did it make it any easier. The problem being, mainly, trying to interpret translated works written by a French sociological and anthropological philosopher who tried his best in writing as neutral as possible. And beside that he furthermore kept updating his theory, meaning that articles written years after the initial publication of his Outline of a Theory of Practice contained different postulations about the same subject. This also shows that this research has its limitations, as it is an analysis based on interpreted and analysed works.

Does this research have a general application? It seems so, as within any cultural and/or country different fields can be identified and the development of the habitus depends on the structures within the field, thus making it clear that an agent in a different country/culture develops its habitus in a different way. It could be argued, however, that this research thus cannot be regarded as a ‘neutral’ analysis as Bourdieu tried to do with his works: I am part of a wealthy, western country and therefore have a certain point of view, no matter how hard I try to remain neutral. So if this research is ‘biased’ how can it be applied to different culture? If there were an exact copy of myself in a different culture, would he have made the same decisions concerning a
similar research? Or would his habitus have developed in a different way (something that seems logical) and therefore would have put his focus on other matters?

Another matter, which is related to the limitation mentioned in the preceding paragraph, concerns the applicability of securitisation theory. Although the theory has been used in analysis on many occasions, theses mainly concerned researches in Western countries. This is also recognised by Wæver who has stated that the further research is needed to analyse whether alternatives or corrections are needed in order for securitisation theory to be able to be applied in non-western theorising (Wæver, 2011, p. 475).

As concluding remarks I would like to state that although this research has attempted to show a deeper insight into a more comprehensive understanding of securitisation theory, by no means should it be regarded as the way of understanding it. There are many different roads that can be taking; this is only one of them. What the analysis of Bourdieu’s practice theory has shown, though, is that trying to comprehend how people ‘work’ is a difficult, complex and perhaps a never ending process. More research, with different starting points, with different insights, from different academic disciplines will offer different and perhaps even better understanding. And perhaps trying to understand how humans ‘work’ will be all that is able, and there will only be a better understanding with fewer uncertainties. An interesting thought about this can be found in the work of Frans de Waal. In his research concerning the social interaction, needs and behaviour of chimpanzees he found striking similarities with humans. But in trying to understand the behaviour of the chimps he came across situations that he could not explain. He rationalised it by not regarding any action or behaviour as being a calculated and conscious process. Instead, some (or even many) strategies conducted by chimpanzee (and De Waal continues this argument onto humans) are the product of intelligence and experience, but without consciously thinking (De Waal, 2007, p. 187).
Thus perhaps it is best not try to understand everything humans do, but accept the fact that some things cannot be explained.
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