

Call for Papers

Panel submission to the DVPW IB-Sektionstagung, Freiburg im Breisgau, 07-09 October 2020,
University of Freiburg.

Panel: Re-conceptualizing Security and (De)Securitization – contributions from discourse studies

During the 1990s, the notion that “danger is not an objective condition” (Campbell 1992) was established and opened the way for new frameworks to analyze security. These new approaches allowed for studying the role of discourses and the performative nature of language in the construction of security. The process of ‘broadening’ and ‘deepening’ the understanding of security has been the source of various theoretical approaches which have re-shaped the conceptualization of the manner in which security is socially constructed as well as the effects this has on discourses and societies. The best known and probably most comprehensive of these approaches remains the Copenhagen School of securitization (Buzan et al. 1998). This approach has proven extremely fruitful in inspiring and guiding countless empirical studies on a broad range of topics, including the legitimization of policy (re)actions through instances of securitization. This success has also, of course, opened the way for substantial critiques of the theoretical, methodological and normative assumptions it carries. Intense and varied discussions within and between approaches to conceptualize the construction of security have taken place.

In the theoretical realm, dominant points of critique and discussion have, amongst others, been continuing state-centric assumptions about security (Williams 2003), the underlying conceptions of power (Langenohl 2019; Broecker/Westermeier 2019) and politics as well as tensions between conceptualizing securitization in terms of single communicative instances versus conceptualizations based on discursive processes including the influence of practices, administrative procedures, longer-term developments (Bigo 2002; Huysmans 2011) and the materiality involved in such processes. These discussions have been paralleled by those on the methodological conception asking whether securitization is best understood in terms of speech act theory (Huysmans 2011; Vuori 2008), models of discourse (Stritzel 2007) or Bourdieu-inspired sociological approaches (Balzacq et al. 2016). While second generation scholars of securitization have tended towards more discourse-oriented conceptualization of securitization, the many theoretical and conceptual challenges have not yet been addressed in a comprehensive discourse-based framework (Stritzel 2012).

Debates have also been provoked regarding the normative implications of securitization (Hansen 2012). Securitization has regularly been associated with the radicalization of ‘othering’, the transgression of conventionally acceptable political norms of conduct and the replacement of democratic procedures with executive powers as expressed in the passing of emergency laws as well as increased policing and surveillance (Williams 2003; McDonald 2008; Langenohl 2019). This has caused several scholars to

declare de-securitization the preferential state of political conduct. By contrast, however, securitization may also be employed in positive and emancipatory political objectives (Ciuta 2009; McDonald 2008) while its potential to generate increased resources may be harnessed to deal with a prescient issue at hand. The latter leading to questions whether particular issues, such as climate change, would indeed benefit from being framed as security issues in order for them to gain the attention they deserve and to enable their political prioritization (Dupont, 2019; Diez et al. 2016).

In light of these variegated discussions, this panel wants to explore what discourse theory can contribute to the development of comprehensive, theoretically sound conceptualizations of security and (de)securitization and which vantage points could and should be further pursued with this aim in the future.

We are particularly interested in papers that address the following questions:

- How can we re-conceptualize securitization in terms of discourse theory? What does discourse theory have to offer in terms of addressing, overcoming and potentially integrating the many critiques and theoretical tensions which have accompanied the deepening and widening of the security studies?
- How can we conceptualize the mechanisms and aspects of subversion of and change as well as the stabilization of security discourses?
- What can discourse studies contribute to the conceptualization of the normative dimension of securitization, particularly regarding the tension between its exclusionary tendencies on the one hand and its potential to mobilize (political) resources on the other hand?

While the panel is focused on theoretical approaches, submissions using empirical cases to underline their arguments and/or theory-driven case studies are welcome.

Please submit your abstract of no more than 250 words to Hannah Broecker, broecker@staff.uni-marburg.de and Elena Dück, elena.dueck@uni-passau.de. Deadline for abstract submission is **30 October 2019**. We will inform you about the outcome by 15 November 2019.

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