SECURITY AS BOUNDARY FUNCTION:
CHANGING INDETITIES AND "SECURITIZATION" IN WORLD POLITICS

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Introduction: "Societal Security"?

The discipline of International Relations has recently witnessed a number of attempts to redefine "security" in innovative ways. Unfortunately, barely can an agreement be said to exist on the direction in which security studies should be heading. Even more, almost every single author seems to adopt an individual definition of "security." Is the concept to relate to the state alone? Is state security of the same quality as personal security? Answers to questions such as these vary widely. In addition, concepts like "insecurity," "risk," "danger," etc., are used freely with either no analytical distinction being established at all, or at best in a highly arbitrary manner. In this paper, I propose that a lot of the confusion surrounding the conceptualization of what "security" means can be avoided by not treating it as an independent object or field of study, but rather by linking it to larger-scale developments in social systems, thus also taking advantage of the rich conceptual approach that has been developed by modern systems theory—yet remains unused in IR theory.

I would like to take the concepts of "societal security" and "securitization" as a starting point, which in the current literature come closest to a concept that links the study of security to developments in the wider social world.[1] Most prominently, these concepts have been developed and elaborated by what has become known as the "Copenhagen School," especially in the works of Ole Wæver and Barry Buzan.[2] For the purpose of introduction, the main ideas as developed in the context of this school can be summarized as follows:

- next to state security (the issue that students of international relations/international security have mostly dealt with), issues of "societal security" need to be accounted for in order to understand an international order that is no longer defined by one dominant form of conflict;
- an issue is an issue of societal security if a society perceives it to constitute an existential threat to its identity;
- for an issue to constitute a threat to a society's identity it is necessary that society perceives/constructs the issue as such ("securitization"); this also implies that a society can "desecuritize" an issue, i.e., cease to perceive it as a threat; and
- at the most basic level then, "security" is a speech act; to study security therefore means to study "a particular set of historical discourses and

practices that rest upon institutionally shared understandings" (Krause and Williams 1996: 243).

These ideas have been successfully applied to take a fresh look at issues as diverse as international migration, European integration and regionalism (see Wæver, 1995a; 1997). Not only have they provided new concepts to tackle the notion of "security," but have helped to alert students of international affairs to the intricate links that exist between the maintenance or failure of order(s) and issues of "identity," thus fostering the further introduction of a theme into the discipline of IR that has come to preoccupy many of the social sciences. This in turn has contributed to the discipline becoming much finer attuned to some of the fluidity underlying the categories of "nation" and "territory" that still constitute the main fabric of the current international system.

Be that as it may, in spite of its contributions to the new roads of inquiry just mentioned, the Copenhagen School has been criticized for "freezing" the notions of "identity" and "society," allegedly not giving due respect to the insight that identity "is not a fact of society," but a process (McSweeny, 1996: 85). While it is certainly not the case that the constructed nature of "societal identity" has gone unnoticed by the group, it indeed seems prone to refer to a certain, more or less fixed construct of "identity" in order to be better able to handle the fluent attribute of "security" (but see Buzan & Wæver 1997).

While the differentiation of the notion of security into process terms, securitization and desecuritization, has a lot to offer in terms of a fresh look at issues of peace and conflict in the context of a changing international order, the criticism is legitimate that such an analysis, if it wants to explain change in the meanings and practices of "security" cannot start from the assumption that societal identity and state identity, as its reference points, are fixed. We here encounter a far-reaching problem that continues to plague all social sciences. However, IR as a discipline that only recently encountered the dynamization of its theoretical approaches (in constructivism, postmodernism, ect.) seems to be affected in particular. Therefore, some general remarks on this problem seem to be warranted here.

Trying to explain process solely through process will always remain a futile exercise. One needs to arrest categories, draw boundaries and build frames in order to establish "mental maps" that relate process to something which, at least temporarily, has to be taken as fixed and stable.[3] Thus one cannot hope to come to terms with a process like "securitization" solely by relating it to a process like "identification." In the analysis of security, no less than in the rest of the discipline and in fact much of the social sciences—and especially in its "critical" part—it seems to have escaped the attention of analysts quite regularly that such a process of drawing lines and establishing boundaries is inherent in their thinking, as well as the world that they study. However, neither the "rigid mind" that only thinks in terms of fixed entities and categories surrounded by clear boundaries, nor the "fuzzy mind" that respects no boundaries and thinks only in terms of process can expect to be able to make sense of things "as they are," yet explain change. What is needed to explain a world which is full of turbulence is, in the words of Eviatar Zerubavel (1991), a "flexible mind." This means to respect the need for boundaries and categories, yet recognize "that any entity can be situated in more than one mental context." It

means to accept the constitutive role that boundaries play, thereby enabling perception and meaning, yet to avoid seeing boundaries as merely enclosing.

Following this understanding of a necessary duality of fluidity and fixation even in the analytic categories we use to make sense of world politics, I propose that the concept of "security" is able to unfold its full explanatory power if seen not as either process or as a state of affairs, but as a boundary-function. Such an argument tries to preserve the analytic richness of the notion of "securitization" without accepting the main shortcoming of its analysis as developed in the context of the Copenhagen School—namely the fixed nature of its notion of "societal identity." Contrary to other critics, such as Bill McSweeny, I do not want to argue at all, however, that this "rigidity" regarding societal identity is due to a lack of understanding of the processual character of identity formation (and reproduction) on the side of the Copenhagen School. It rather seems as if the conceptual rigidity of this type of "security studies" is to blame for the fact that "identity" is taken to refer to "society" in the first place (Albert, 1997a). If one, on the one hand, does not want to make an outdated and oversimplifying claim that the world consists of clearly and rigidly demarcated societies (i.e., that societies are basically congruent with the territorial state), then the usefulness of the notion of an identity of "a" society becomes highly dubious. If one, on the other hand, comes to accept that bereft of territorial attachments or primordial groundings, the only appropriate definition of "society" is that it is that which includes, reproduces and forms horizons for social communication and that therefore today only world "society" can legitimately bear the name as the highest-order social system that includes all other social systems and communication (cf. Luhmann, 1997), then the interplay between concepts that refer to "society," concepts like "security," "identity" and "order," are in need of reexamination. The first and maybe most important consequence of such a change of focus is then to question the givenness or continuity of the territorial character of these reference points. If "societal identity," "societal security," etc., cease to be meaningful analytic categories because the idea of the whole of "society" becomes an unstable reference, then one is forced to spell out more clearly which part of (world) "society" it is to which the identity, or security processes referred to pertain: the social system, the political system, the military system, various national, ethnic, or others groups?

To embark on such an effort does not promise to result in a new grand concept of "security." Quite to the contrary, it entails quite a substantial multiplication of realms to which the term could possibly be applied.[4] What it does promise, however, is to help shed light on some of the common traits which legitimize why such a variety of concepts and practices can claim to be about "security"; yet it also does not reduce "security" to a conceptually overstretched reference point which explains everything yet nothing at all. In a larger theoretical context, it promises to contribute to a better understanding of the continuing evolution and transformation of "the (Westphalian) state", the international political system and the role that security plays in it—and vice versa. And, last but not least, it does not promise but at least sincerely rests on the hope that it can make a small contribution towards vaporizing some of the unnecessary communicative barriers that the discipline erects around the various notions of "security."

The next section will briefly outline the questions that need to be asked in order to establish the analytical framework in which "security" is seen as having an important function

for every social system. The section following thereupon will then sketch some approaches to deal with these questions: first, by deriving the meaning of security as a boundary function from some tenets of modern systems theory; second, by scrutinizing the relationship between "security" and "identity" and especially the role of "state" and "nation" in this respect; and third by distilling a refined meaning of the terms "securitization," "desecuritization" and "asecuritization" from this analysis. Another section will illustrate some consequences of these thoughts for the analysis of changing notions of statehood.

Questions on "Securitization"

Analysis starts with differentiation. Any analysis of processes at work in the framework of world society has to start by acknowledging the latter's character as being differentiated into functional subsystems, with individually varying evolutionary status. In modern systems analysis this is accommodated by breaking down world society into a multitude of more or less developed social systems. Relating "security" not to one, but to all of these social systems seems only logical, yet also seems to be the issue most fervently disputed in security studies. Indeed, some scholars want to preserve the usage of the term for purely military issues (i.e., the military system), while others are afraid that the logic of these issues might unduly distort thinking about other issues through the usage of the term. Yet, to conclude from that fact that security is a function in the military system, and that it should only be used in this context is as absurd as it would be to conclude that the term "system" should only be applied to one system. The concept of "identity" as well cannot be exempted from being examined in its differentiated nature. It will in fact be one of the main tasks of this article to elucidate some of the intricate relationships that appear when identities and securities are taken together in their variety. It is in referring to the processes underlying this variety that one can approach the important questions that have to be asked in this regard.

What does it mean to say that an issue becomes an issue of security or is "securitized?" In terms of modern systems theory, "security" first of all means a security of expectations. "Expectation" here is to be understood in a very basic way as a cognitive relation to the future. A certain security of expectations is the *sine qua non* for system stability. It is required for and achieved through the formation of identities. It is created at the system boundary by "filtering out" communication from an (infinitely) complex environment and then processing it according to the system's own operational code (system language). In this sense security, or, better securitization forms a basic boundary function of social systems. Every social system has to create a security of expectations in order not to be overwhelmed by an infinitely complex and chaotic environment. For that reason a system needs to, in fact is defined by, the establishment of boundaries that allow it to reduce complexity. It is now obviously the case that not every operation of reducing complexity upon the entry of communication into the system is actively perceived by the system or parts of the system as a potential "threat." Certainly, securitization involves a reduction of complexity, but not all reduction of complexity necessarily involves

securitization. The question then is when and how do issues become "security" issues proper, i.e., issues that are "securitized" in the sense that they are perceived to constitute a threat to an identity in and/or of the system? How do processes of identity-formation and identity-reproduction fit in the picture, given that these processes are dependent on and supportive of border-processes of reducing complexity? If we want to gain an understanding of "securitization" that does not freeze one reference point, i.e., (societal) identity, but can account for identity's processual character too, we have to able to explain why some issues are more "prone" to being securitized than others and why the repertoire of issues and their "proneness" to be securitized differs from system to system.

Proper questions in this regard may be, for example, why it is that European Monetary Union is more easily constructed as a potential threat to national identity than other measures in the context of European integration that intrude into people's daily lives; why is it that the death of one U.S. soldier on another continent is perceived as a matter of national security while hundreds of homicides in the District of Columbia are not, etc.? What follows is not an attempt to give the only possible answer to difficult questions like these. It is, however, an attempt to scrutinize them in such a way so as to be able to achieve a more broader understanding of the process of securitization, an understanding that is less reliant on the notion of a fixed "societal identity"—or, for that matter, any other inappropriately "fixed" point of reference—and thus applicable to a greater variety of cases.

How do you Securitize?

1. Securitization and the Security/Insecurity Code

There is no security without insecurity. Since the meaning of one of these terms is only established in relation to the other, it is impossible, indeed meaningless, to have one without the other: "A structureless chaos would be absolutely insecure; only that would be secure. Basically, the concepts of security and insecurity have no meaning for such a state. Through the differentiation of expectational structures, this state is replaced by a combinatory interplay of relatively secure or insecure positive and negative expectations" (Luhmann, 1995: 307). Security is about introducing a stability into expectations that would otherwise be unstable (i.e., disappointment of expectations would be the rule). In his 1996 presidential address to the International Studies Association, Dennis Bobrow (1996) reflects on this fact by treating security as primarily being about coming to terms with "complex insecurity." Such an approach illustrates that security and insecurity need not be considered as facts, but can be treated as poles or "ideal models." This becomes especially clear in relation to social systems. As ideal types, neither absolute insecurity nor absolute security can exist as real states of a social system (or, for that matter, any other system, as safety experts are well aware of). Bobrow seeks to illustrate this state of affairs by comparing insecurity-security to illness-health: "The metaphor of disease, illness, and decline implies that we come to terms with insecurity as an unending stream of

threats and imperfect strategies" (1996: 448). If security is referred to as a boundary function of social systems, then "securitization" means a process that is somehow involved in the reduction of complexity in order to increase the security of expectations in the system. By no means, however, does the operation of securitization mean that "something" which is insecure is turned into "something" which is secure. As succinctly pointed out by the Copenhagen School, "securitization" as a "speech act" is more about implanting something into the meaningful realm that is defined by the security-insecurity difference (that is why there is only "securitization" and "desecuritization," but not "insecuritization"). In spite of the central place that this process of securitization occupies in the analysis, it is nonetheless very important also to be precise about what it actually means to say that something is meaningful in terms of security/insecurity. The notion of "threat" is highly unspecific in this regard and it seems more appropriate to start by pointing to the sources, the raw materials so to speak, that lend itself to securitization and that can be distinguished accordiung to two fundamental categories: risk and danger. The "risk concept indicates a complex state that, at least in modern society, is a normal aspect of life" (Luhmann, 1993: 23). While both risk and danger are basically about the anticipation of (possible) future loss (i.e., disappointment of expectations), "risk" is about a loss to be attributed to the system's environment, "danger" refers to future loss as a consequence of a decision taken by or in the system. How do these concepts relate to security? Is it safe to say that the more risk and danger processed by the system (i.e., "securitized issues"), the "higher" the level of security in it? And that the higher the level of unprocessed risk and danger, the higher the level of insecurity? Quite obviously not. In fact, any attempt to answer these questions must in the end remain futile, giving the essentially processual character of security. There are no "levels of security," and being secure or insecure is not an attribute of an identity or a system. Rather, certain kinds or levels of complexity are identified by the system as risk and danger. And it is exactly when complexities are observed by the system and translated into its own code (i.e., the moment that the communication/information crosses the system's boundary), that "securitization" happens. Of course, this as such does as yet say anything about why some issues are securitized and others are not. Nonetheless, it is known that in operatively closed, complex social systems this involves observation, either self-observation or the observation of the difference between system and environment. "Security," then, cannot possibly be about "eliminating" risk, but rather about enabling the (observing) system to successfully process it: "Security as a counterconcept to risk remains an empty concept on this constellation, similar to the concept of health in the distinction ill/healthy. It thus functions only as a reflexive concept" (Luhmann, 1993: 20; emphasis added).

Social systems, then, abound with security and insecurity. Some expectations or sets of expectations are more secure than others. It is important to reiterate, however, that "securitization" is not a process in which expectations that have been insecure become secure. "Securitization" is the process which makes it possible (and necessary) for the system to process a perceived risk or danger with the reflexive device of "security"—or, more correct: with the reflective device that is constituted by the ideal-type distinction of security-insecurity. Bearing security's quality as a reflexive device in mind does help to get a fuller understanding of

particular systems in question and also why it is that some issues are securitized and others are not.

Although set in the complex language of systems theory, it is worth quoting Niklas Luhmann's elaboration on the link between system quality and security/insecurity at length:

> The time that is measured chronologically is still the most secure one: no matter what happens, it continues on. At least one condition of insecurity [i.e., condition for having expectations that can be disappointed at all; M.A.] is absolutely secure. Time and security/insecurity are different dimensions, and this difference can be used to steer the selection of expectational structures. Even organic life develops anticipatory systems by means of it, selecting indicators in the present (which is all that is available) that will correlate more securely with changes in the future and can thereby prepare for the future without "knowing" it. Meaning systems consolidated this technique by forming expectations and giving these structural, that is, connective value.

If this is possible, the insecurity can finally be "voluntarily" accepted and enhanced. All evolution seems to rest on massing and amplifying insecurities. This principle of amplifying insecurity is repeated in sociocultural evolution and in the decisive interpenetration of entire human beings into the social order. One must treat human beings as if they were reliable and at the same time secure expectations against disappointment. One can form riskier expectations if one can guarantee that disappointments remain tied to specific events and do not trigger accumulations that would endanger security. Viewed in this way, evolution is an ever-new incorporation of insecurities into securities and of securities into insecurities without an ultimate guarantee that this will always succeed on every level of complexity" (Luhmann, 1995: 310).

The idea of a connection between a system's evolutionary stage and the interplay of security-insecurity will become very important when the possibility of desecuritization is addressed. First, however, it is necessary to take a closer look on how "securitization" works and why it is that some issues are securitized and others are not. This is where it becomes necessary to inspect the Copenhagen School´s definition of security once again: "Societal security is about situations when societies perceive a threat in identity terms" (Wæver, et al., 1993: 23). Following the preceding thoughts, it can now be spelled out in greater detail what identity is about. Identities are means to stabilize expectations over time. The trick is to relate expectations "to something that is not an even, that is, cannot in the strict sense itself be expected" (Luhmann, 1995: 313; i.e., formally speaking, whose meaning is structurally embedded in the present, without relation to the future). It is important to be clear about the notion of "identity" at this point. "Identity" simply refers to a common reference point for expectations, not the same kind of expectations. When we refer to identities in the context of (world) society, we do of course refer to identities that are the reference point of expectations that emerge in the context of various social systems. It is by no means necessary that an "identity" serves as a reference point for expectations emerging from but one social system. Thus, for example, "national identity" can serve as a reference point for expectations that are generated in the political system as well as

for expectations that are generated in the economic system; and this does not imply, by any means, that once an identity is formed the expectations referring to it would cease to emerge from and remain embedded in different, operatively closed systems (in fact, this example helps to clarify one of the main points of modern systems theory, i.e., that autopoietic systems are "open" in spite of their operative closure).

If security is about identity, then one could think that it is those communications that become "securitized" upon observation by a social system ("at the system's border") that relate to expectations that refer to an identity. In order to see if this conclusion forms a useful proposition to analyze the relation between security and identity, however, it is necessary to see what it actually means to say that an "identity is threatened." To shed further light on this question, I will now briefly summarize and then elaborate and extend the account that the Copenhagen School gives on this question.

2. What Is an Identity and how Is It Threatened?

When Ole Wæver introduces the concept of "societal security" (Wæver, et al., 1993: 17-40; Wæver, 1995b), he is clearly aware of the need to provide a sharper circumscription of the vague term "society." However, after inspecting many uses of the term in social and political thought, he comes up with something that very closely resembles its "classical" meaning: society is defined solely in relation to the state (see Wæver, et al., 1993: 18-21).Given such a broad and pervasive notion of "society," the reference points that it can relate to must also be broad enough to be able to support the great variety of expectations that refer to it. That is why the "identity" of a concept like "society" can only arise in concepts like nation and religion (Wæver, et al., 1993: 22). Alas, while societal security is about society, the nation is the preferred point of reference for constructing identities in modern societies: hence most studies of societal security find themselves winding up as studies of "national security" (i.e., in relation to national identity). Wæver correctly identifies "the nation" as "a circular reference to an empty spot" (1996a: 18). But this also holds true, if not more so, for society. The uneasiness regarding the question of identity in relation to "society" is expressed in the difficulty of attaching societal identity to any particular feature that may be said to characterize "a" society. This operation works for society probably even less than it does for "nation" or "culture." "Society," or what we used to associate with this term for quite some time, has a multiplicity of identities as it is composed of many systems with and supportive of a multitude of different identities. That such a by and large meaningless notion as the identity of a society is preserved so as to constitute a meaningful frame of analysis for security, is arguably largely due to the fact that the Copenhagen school as yet does not go the full way to acknowledge the processual core of the security idea. Rather than deal with securitization as an important, indeed indispensable function of highly developed and diverse social systems, "security" remains a "property" of units.[5] This is not to suggest that the Copenhagen school would be on the wrong track from the very beginning of its enterprise. However, its analysis proceeds on the ground of a tacit understanding that there is no such thing as a society's identity and what it boils down to is the identity of states and nations: "State and nation offer symbols and identities which both attract individuals seeking expression and outlet

for their insecurities, and reproduce the political conditions that are one of the major sources of personal insecurity" (Buzan, 1993: 20).[6]

It is in indeed true and essential for a meaningful understanding of security to acknowledge that the state and the nation (or a "combination" of both) offer points of reference which provide identities for various social systems as well as for individuals. It is very important to stress, however, that the way and the processes in which identities are constructed in a symbolic way do account for the differences regarding the production of security to a considerable extent. This is the case especially since the production of security is more properly described as a symbolically mediated processing of insecurities rather than, as could be thought after reading the quotation of Buzan in the preceding paragraph, individuals "dumping" their insecurities on to symbols and identities. Acknowledging that "what we can study . . . is the processes producing security concerns" (Wæver, 1996a: 8), Ole Wæver has done extensive work on the way that the process of European integration has to proceed in order to avoid its securitization, i.e., a European identity coming to be perceived as a threat to national identities. Starting from the insight that is also advocated here, namely that "most identity will need complex, multidimensional systems to make sense" (Wæver, 1996b: 4; see also Diez, 1996), he explores how the discursive spaces of (national) societies—as the realm where meaning (and, hence, identity) is constructed—are conditioned by various layers of discourse. Thus, to explore the question of the compatibility of European integration with national identity, i.e., trying to avoid a "securitization" of the former, it is necessary to see how the self-perception of a "society" vis-a-vis "Europe" and concepts of Europe emerging therefrom are structured by and cannot escape the horizons set by the very first layer of "domestic discursive structure" (Wæver, 1996b: 9). This first layer, which conditions discursive possibilities at the second and third layers, is shaped according to the basic relation of state and nation in "domestic society," a relation that is usually regarded to oscillate between the ideal models of the French Staatsnation and the German Kulturnation. The basic argument is that "European stability requires two kinds of compatibility that it is in each of the major countries possible to construct a narrative of state, nation and Europe that makes sense in relation to the national tradition of political thought . And then when we in this way get Europe in the plural, that these different Europes are compatible" (Wæver, 1996a: 26).

I do not want to take odds with Wæver's analysis in this respect at all; quite to the contrary, it seems to be among the most sensitive and theoretically innovative current analyses of European integration. To elaborate the horizons of meaning structured by the interplay of nation and state (as, to paraphrase Wæver, circular references to empty spots) does however not suffice to gain a more general understanding of the interplay between securitization as a border function of social systems and the category of "identity." Appropriate though the analysis may be in the case of European integration, the notions of "state" and "nation" are far too unspecific as to provide an insight to the question how it is that some issues are more prone to securitization than others upon their observation by a social system. What an analysis of the kind that Wæver conducts provides is insights on why a specific issue is securitized in the context of highly specific social subsystems (most prominently the French and German political systems). Yet there is even more to be gained by looking at how something becomes a security issue for an identity.

However, to further approach this question, it is first of all necessary to see how a concept like "nation" came to occupy the "central place" to which identities could refer, yet remain an "empty spot" at the same time.

Historically, an ethnic consciousness and an "ethnic identity" built thereupon have usually been contingent upon a relatively high degree of communication and interaction among the individuals of a group. In spatial terms, ethnicity as a constantly reproduced feature of individual and collective identity was certainly of the most intensive character on the local and maybe on the regional level, whereas it depended on an elite understanding (e.g., the nobility) to have ethnic or ethnic-like commonalities carried much further. The evolution of modern societies necessitated and effected a profound change in the meaning of ethnic identity, especially by introducing the concept of the nation.[7] No longer a matter of elite consciousness, the nation became a melting pot of various ethnic identities and has managed to become a reference point for ethnic identity while being largely divorced from direct, locally bound interaction and communication (thereby supplementing modern societies with fiction-like elements of community). This abstract and intangible nature of the nation itself may on the one hand explain its durability in the process of modernization: while local contexts are penetrated and transformed by the global, the nation still provides orientation points for ethnic identities where (especially in Western culture) the local and regional level are only good or more folcloristic stuff. On the other hand, its abstractness and remoteness from local or regional specifics makes nationality the perfect choice for identity-construction projects where these former specifics by themselves would hardly lend themselves to legitimize a clear or even violent distanciation from the other (see Estel, 1994: 15).

This fluent character of national identity is also clearly visible when looking at its relation to the construct of ethnic identity. Witness the present-day United States, where it has become basically impossible to construct an "American" ethnic identity. Whereas this is perfectly possible and common in France or Germany, the U.S. has witnessed an upsurge of projects of constructing ethnic identities along purely racial lines; these retain a necessary connection to national identity, but this connection is not sufficient for the construction of an ethnic "American" identity. A similar argument is made by Eisenstadt and Giesen when they point out that collective identity is never fixed and given, not even in the sense of a "fixed construction" which uses myths and narratives of origin as legitimizing reference points. Rather, collective identity crucially depends on flux: it can "fulfill its 'function' only if the social processes constructing it are kept latent" (Eisenstadt & Giesen, 1995: 73), from which follows that one has to "reconstruct the process by which latency is achieved and by which the fragile social order is considered to be the self-evident order of things" (ibid., emphasis added). What is it therefore that preserves the fixation of everyday thinking as well as theorizing in the social sciences on reference points such as "state," "nation," or "society," while on the other hand rendering their identities impossible to spell out?

"Collective identity is produced by the social construction of boundaries" (ibid.: 75). However, it is important to remember that the mere construction of boundaries does not "necessarily entail a process of inclusion and exclusion" (ibid.: 74). Also, the social construction of boundaries is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition to produce a collective identity.

Rather, what is on either site of the boundary needs to be symbolically coded in order to mark the difference as a positive difference, in contrast to the boundary, which only allows a difference to be perceived in negative terms (Eisenstadt & Giesen, 1995: 76).[8] These symbolic codes can be grouped into various "layers." The most basic symbolic codes form "original references" which over time are extremely immune to change; change is not impossible, but highly unlikely. In as far as "primordialism" would refer only to these codes, one could easily grant validity to a primordialist perspective even from a social constructivist point of view. These original codes are the differences between kin and akin, hierarchy and equality, parents and children, etc.[9] What a collective identity "is," however, will for the most part depend not on differences between the utilized "original references," but "in the special way they combine and interfuse the 'them and us' distinction with other distinctions like 'sacred and profane,' 'parents and children,' etc." (Eisenstadt & Giesen, 1995: 76).

Supplementing this first major type of codes for constructing collective identity are a second and third type. The second major code is the civic code, which "is constructed on the basis of familiarity with implicit rules of conduct, traditions and social routines, that define and demarcate the boundary of the collectivity. It links the constitutive difference between 'us and them' to the difference between the routine and the extraordinary" (ibid.: 80). A third major type links the constitutive boundary between us and them to a particular relation of the collective subject to the sacred. Eisenstadt and Giessen describe how, building on these codes, German national identity is constructed as a cultural code that achieves latency by categorizing and thereby basing itself "on an essential tension between the profane sphere of politics and economy and the sacred sphere of morals, aesthetics and culture" (ibid.: 92). Drawing on the extensive anthropological work done on these issues, one can further clarify these processes by taking note of the fact that the symbolism used to mark boundaries is very often not expressed in a highly visible manner, but "part of the meaning which we intuitively ascribe to more instrumental and pragmatic things in ordinary use—such as words" (Cohen, 1985: 14).[10] Indeed, sometimes contents are so unclear that categories only exist in terms of their symbolic boundaries (ibid.: 15). Such seems exactly to be the case with the nation, in relation to which a lot of people share its symbols, but do not attach the same meanings to them.

Put in different terms, if people form a national community, whose boundary is defined in terms of a shared relation to symbols such as flag, anthem, historic events and myths, their commonality is not established by virtue of the way that people form their identities in relation to these symbols. Such a view would inevitably lead to an account which sees collective identity to be constructed as the sum of its parts. It would quite obviously be wrong, however, since people do not relate to these symbols in the same way, i.e., attach the same kind of meaning to them.

This means that a shared relation to symbols is as important in constructing a collective identity as is the latency of this shared set of symbols. Thus, a collective identity is not sufficiently understood as a shared relation to some symbols (to which others supposedly do not relate). Rather, with a view to the equally important aspect of maintaining latency in this specific resource of codes, a collective identity is better understood as a shared form of processing differences between those that share these symbols and the rest of the world. Kulturnation and

Staatsnation do not point to combinations of state and nation as historically constructed and variable identity-cocktails. Both express different modalities of processing differences (between shared set of symbols and other symbols as well as between specific ways to retain the latency of the body of symbols and other such ways). This does not lead to an account that would be incompatible with that presented by Wæver on the issue of European integration. However, having differentiated the category of collective identity much further than the Copenhagen school, it is now possible to see more clearly how "threats" or even "existential threats" to identity can emerge, i.e., how it is that some issues are more prone to securitization than others. How can "an identity" be threatened? By endangering the successful continuation of its construction (and continuous reconstruction), its prime task of stabilizing various expectations, its ability to cluster a number of symbols to form a referential point for various expectations yet keep the meaning of this point latent. This means that a system which uses this point of reference (in its self-description) will securitize an issue exactly when it interferes with the possibility of a continued successful processing of differences by the means of utilizing the tension between a symbolic repository and its latency. An issue becomes a security issues if it interrupts the system's ability to process differences.

In order to employ this very general description for the study of specific processes of securitization, it is necessary to take account of the fact that the requirements for processing differences and the construction of identity vary significantly not only from system to system, but especially also between different evolutionary states of the same system.

On the one hand, for example, the European political system can be seen as a highly complex social system which is so far developed that its main problem has become its own cognitive and systemic complexity. It processes differences at this high level of complexity either discursively in the highly connective structures and processes of "multi-level governance" (Jachtenfuchs, 1995), or even generatively by excluding systemic properties from the system, thus reducing system complexity and creating (proto-) boundaries for new systems. Following the argument made above it would seem that in order to successfully stabilize expectations at this level of systemic evolution it is necessary to keep up the tension between a very subtle and diversified set of symbols (probably much less in the form of institutions nowadays than increasingly in the form of the intrusion of these symbols into everyday life) and a highly elusive and underspecified idea of "Europe" that is structurally similar to, but much less mythically condensed than most national identities. In this case, and basically supporting Wæver's argument in this respect—"securitization" would for example occur if an attempt were made to give the "idea of Europe" a more fixed and definite shape, thus possibly tying symbols to fixed meanings they do not and cannot support, because as "latent" symbols they are also claimed as reference points for the construction of a "national" identity.

On the other hand, a social system in its early stages of evolution would securitize different issues. Thus, for example, a balance-of-power-system between states that has just developed some kind of structure and only rudimentary differentiation along processual lines usually has to process differences by introducing norms (international law) that guarantee a security of expectations. At this level of systemic evolution, "identity" consists of a tension that is upheld between various symbols (treaties, etc.) of the law and an ideal or mechanism of law

enforcement intrinsic to the idea of law, but practically non-existent.[11] Thus, for example, "securitization" in such a system happens to everything perceived as upsetting this balance, for example by trying to tie international law to an effective law enforcement mechanism.

Such a formulation of the function of securitization in relation to identity of course warrants a great deal more of empirical work, or a re-reading of some empirical work. Nonetheless, before moving on to describe how this interplay of security and identity in complex social systems translates into the analysis of "new" or "changing" forms of statehood, the conceptual argument can be driven one step further by more precisely defining the meaning of securitization and desecuritization in the context of systems-theoretical thinking.

3. Systems Evolution: Desecuritization and Asecuritization

How does an issue, once securitized, become desecuritized again? Having linked the function of securitization to the evolution of the social system in question, it is now possible to state more precisely the process of securitization—an issue becomes not necessarily securitized if it intervenes in an "identity-driven" processing of differences in the system, but primarily if it does so at unconsolidated levels of complexity of the system in question, i.e., levels of complexity the system has to deal with "actively," so to speak, and not as routine. In today's European Union, the European Court of Justice is arguably not a frequent source of "securitized" issues, because the court operates at a level of normative integration that has long been surpassed by the evolution of the European legal and political systems (and, one should add, because the national judicial systems have by and large successfully managed to include the European layer of European jurisdiction into their own self-description). While the processing of normative differences in and through the European Court of Justice has for a time now been a quite routine affair, it could only produce issues prone to securitization if it chose to address questions on the highest level of system complexity (if it were to rule, for example, on what a European identity is).

It is then quite clear what "desecuritization" would mean in this context. An issue becomes "desecuritized" by system evolution, i.e., if the system ceases to deal "actively" with the complexity at whose level an issue got securitized. This leads to a seemingly marginal, yet important difference to Wæver's account of desecuritization processes: "Détente, as negotiated desecuritization and limitation of the use of the security speech act, contributed to the modification of Eastern societies and systems that eventually made possible, via sudden desecuritization through a speech-act failure, the radical changes of 1989" (Wæver, 1995b: 60). Given the account of the connection between securitization and system development outlined above, one would phrase this differently and take the process of détente as a strong indicator that the East-West-system had developed into one in which the reference point of identity had changed from one of antagonism to one of common destiny, heavily desecuritizing some issues which are operational only in reference to processing antagonism. Put in this way, the observation may not be that utterly different from Wæver's. It does however relieve it of the the burden of having to tie systemic change to interactions ("speech acts"). This means that in the case given by Wæver one cannot speak of a "desecuritization through speech-act failure"; the speech-act

failure is rather an indicator of desecuritization through system evolution. That account also sheds light on the notion of "asecuritization." The notion of "asecurity" was developed by Pertti Joenniemmi (1997) to account for the fact that the Baltic Sea Region as a qualitatively new way of organizing political space, alternative to or defying the logic of territorial statehood, was characterized by a total absence of any securitization logic. "Region" is here understood as a "regionality," a new form of organizing political space, not as a territorial, but a functional agglomeration (Albert 1997b). While it would certainly be incorrect to regard the Baltic Sea region as a system without any function of securitization, it is certainly correct that it has established a different system where before the logic of the state and state security had dominated political space. In the context of regional cooperation in the Baltic, this could be read as a highly complex system having "emitted" some of its functions regarding the organization of political space, these functions creating boundaries of a different system of regionality. This system became "asecuritized" in the sense that its properties were no longer meaningful on the security-insecurity scale of the preceding system. This does not mean that there would cease to be any "security-logic" in the new system, just that it is an entirely different one.

However, there is another connotation of the idea of "asecurity" that can be distilled from the conceptual linkage between securitization and system evolution. "Generative differentiation," defined as the exclusion of a system property from a highly developed social system—thus as to reduce system complexity and thereby create the boundaries of possible new (quasi-)systems—can also result in an "asecuritization" of a different kind. Whereas "asecuritization" was just seen as a process to which the newly created (quasi-)system was subject (by not being subject to the "mother systems" securitization functions any longer), "asecuritization" might as well refer to the highly developed social system undergoing generative differentiation. "Asecuritization" would then mean that it is securitized issues that are shed from the system's self-description as a result of processes of generative differentiation. Such issues cease to be security issues for the system because as issues they are now exempt from the system's self-description and rather form part of the system's environment. In a sense, of course, this is also "desecuritization." However, since it comes out of a process that changes the contours of the system in that it leads to a creation of a new system, it seems but appropriate to refer to this process as "asecuritization."

I will now illustrate how this framework of analysis that combines insights from modern systems theory with newer studies on the concept of "securitization" in international relations can usefully be employed to study change in the concept of "the state," first in conceptual terms, then by taking as a case the "privatization" of security through the privatization of policing.

Wither "State Security?"

The changing meanings of state, security, state security versus societal security and the relation of all to "identity" currently receive a significant amount of attention in international studies. Rarely do studies dare to go beyond an analysis that includes but two dimensions, the categories in one of which are ususally thoroughly fixed. Be it that "society" is fixed and

"securitization" is liquefied, or be it that "security" is fixed and the "societal" construction of threat seen in a processual manner (as in most contributions in Katzenstein, 1996). Utilizing some tenets of thought taken from modern systems theory carries no promise to provide an overall remedy and be able to analyze all important dimensions of the issue in question and address them in their processual character. It may be enough, however, if it simply adds to the possibility to break down some of the fixed categories of other approaches into pieces—pieces of which then at least some can duly be treated as processes.

Regarding "the state," it is two distinctions that can be introduced immediately. Though they may seem to be of a marginal character at first glance, they reveal tremendously altered views of various processes in the course of their analysis. The first of these distinctions, both of which in their obviousness barely even warrant attention in modern systems theory, would be to differentiate between the various operatively closed social systems, an overlap and coupling of which is usually very unspecifically called "the state" (i.e., political system, legal system, economic system, etc.). The second distinction would be to pay attention to system-sub-system relationships (e.g., international political system-national political systems). The consequences of introducing these distinctions to the analysis of "the state" can briefly be introduced and used as a springboard in order to ask how the state has changed in relation to its "security function."

1. The State and its Systems

To illustrate the distinction between system and sub-system, one could, for example, reserve the usage of the term "security" for the function that allows a "national" political system to preserve its operative autonomy and its system boundary. This seems to be the meaning of "security" that during the years of the Cold War was by and large undisputed in "security studies." In current discussions on the "new" meanings of security, two trends prevail in attempts to redefine the term. More orthodox contributions basically do nothing else than accept that as a result of the sudden disappearance of the East-West-conflict the environment of national political systems has become more complex; "the state" now faces dangers from international terrorism, environmental hazards, social conflict. Others, such as the Copenhagen School, try to alert to the fact that it may rather be that it is the referent object of security that has changed. To introduce a simple system-subsystem distinction into the analysis means to show that these two lines of thought are by no means exhaustive and that indeed the "new security agenda" may in fact not only be about new security issues for a political system or security issues for a system other than the political system, but for the international political system as a whole. It may not be "the state," but the "world of states" which needs to modify its boundary-function of securitization in order to cope with the increasing risk that is generated by other systems but that cannot be handled by these systems. However, the system-sub-system distinction can only be useful if taken together with the second distinction—that between different social systems. Almost as a rule in the analysis of international relations, various social systems are usually collapsed indiscriminately into "the state." While "the state" or a certain "model" of statehood (i.e., "Westphalia") may serve as an important, even outstanding reference point for some systemic identities or identities in systems, reference to it very often obscures underlying

distinctions between different systems or system-sub-system-distinctions. In contrast, introducing these distinctions as well as the notion of system evolution not only leads to new perspectives on the changing "nature" of "the state," but also on the changing "nature" of "security." From this perspective, it is indeed correct that most misunderstandings of security are a direct outcome of misunderstandings of the role of the state in a changing world (Del Rosso,1995: 177); it is even more correct to add, however, that the misunderstandings of the role of the state in a changing world are a direct outcome of misunderstandings of the evolution, coexistence and coupling between various social systems. Thus, for example, given the existence of an international political system in which all states are embedded, "all states are states." Even the qualifier "quasi-state"—meaning that the state is "sovereign" in formal terms (and that usually means: recognized as such in an international context), but lacks "real control" of a developed Westphalian state (e.g., control over entire territory)—does not deprive a state in question of its statehood (see Jackson, 1990). Quasi-states "are" states, given that we can deem the presence of a functioning political system as sufficient to assume the existence of "a state." This is however the place where the reference to ideal models such as "Westphalian state" is indeed very misleading, because we then tend to assume that only those states "are" states that (i.e., their political systems) are most highly developed in relation to this ideal model (that is states whose political systems are functioning according to the same standards). Yet, it would be nonsense to conclude from the fact that various groups fight for territorial control in Afghanistan and the absence of a functioning "state apparatus" that there is no political system. Afghanistan's political system has not developed beyond (or, devoluted into) a first-stage social system that fulfills the prime system function of territorial demarcation by adjusting to the problem of different authority claims on the same territory by constitutive wars; yet it is a political system.[12] And the fact that a multitude of political systems in various evolutionary stages exist in world society does not at all alter the fact that most of them are not autonomous, but sub-systems of the international political system, bound into the latter's operative logic and exerting an influence on its evolutionary status. This duality of political systems being characterized by their evolutionary stage and their embeddedness as sub-systems in the international political system also accounts for the difficulty to come to terms with what "security" means. According to the argument made above, what becomes securitized depends on the kind of complexity that the system is primarily dealing with. The matter gets even more complicated if we are dealing with different levels of complexity, and thus different border/securitization functions—on systemic and sub-systemic levels. Although certainly not holding out the promise of leading to generalized forecasts about what the "nature" of security is going to be in the future, these differentiations have to be taken into account in explorations of its change. And indeed it seems that slowly they are taken into account; thus, in a recent article on the military and state-formation in the Middle East, Keith Krause concluded, "the quest for security in the developing world cannot be understood without reference to the process of military development, the insertion of new states into the global security order and the state-building projects that new regimes have embarked upon" (1996: 345). Although certainly not based on modern system theory, this quotation very well expresses the conclusions that can be drawn from the conceptual argument made here. The only difference being that the latter would claim explanatory power beyond the developing world (or in fact see

the whole world as developing), beyond a too narrow focus on "military" development, and beyond the idea that it is all about new and original events. Thus Krause should read more like: "the quest for security in world society cannot be understood without reference to the process of system evolution, the insertion of 'states' into the 'world of states' (sub-systems into systems) and the project of complexity-reduction that various systems have embarked upon."

2. State Security and the Public Peace

Of course there is no way of asking if the state either "looses" or "gains" power (vis-a-vis society, transnational actors, NGOs), or if it changes its "nature" (becoming "post-Westphalian," for example). There is no "either-or" involved here. What there is is one question of "power-gains" or "losses" that may arise between various social systems,[13] but not in relation to the symbolic reference-point that serves to construct identities of or in (some of) these systems. And there is another question of changes of the systems themselves, i.e., either system evolution or generative differentiation (in highly developed, autopoietic systems). As argued above, such generative differentiation can be seen as a case of "asecuritization" of the "expelling" system, if the property excluded from its self-description was securitized in the system. And such has happened, or is happening, to quite some highly developed political and judicial systems, with immediate repercussions as to what the notion of "security" can mean in relation to them—or, for that purpose, what it can mean for "state" and "society."[14]

If the "Westphalian model" is about "sovereignty," then it is also about a process—the "norms of sovereign control develop through the practical resolution of international issues which must first be politicized [i.e., processed by the political system]" (Thomson, 1989: 250). If it is fair to say that the evolution of state sovereignty as the central distinguishing feature of the Westphalian model involved the consolidation of the state's (or, the political and, partly, the judicial system's) monopoly on the legitimate use of power on a certain territory and, as suggested by Thomson, on the control over extraterritorial violence, then a challenge on this monopoly/control means that what "state sovereignty" entails is changing. Such a change may come as a result of system devolution; in highly "developed" political and legal systems, it is more likely to be an indicator for further system evolution through generative differentiation. Thus, one could argue that places like South Central L.A. and South East Washington D.C. are indicators for the emergence of such new systems. In a more radical interpretation, they may even be seen as being excluded from the political system's self-description as being based on territory, thus forming "new" extraterritorial spaces within the geographical borders of a sovereign state. In this sense they would have not only ceased to belong to the system by forming a new (quasi-)system, that however still does operate according to the modern "guiding difference" ("Leitdifferenz") par excellence, functional differentiation, but would be on the way to form a system that differs radically from existing social systems by beginning to function on a new "Leitdifferenz."[15] In such a case, these new systems would not only belong to the environment of other social systems, but become "non-addresses." However, in a less radical interpretation, these areas would be characterized more by the fact that the functional systems that set the framework for interaction in these areas use codes and mechanisms that formerly

were part of, regulated and securitized by, other systems. While these developments are about genuinely new ways of controlling people in relation to territory, they are not only restricted to locally limited developments, but indicators for the direction of overall change of "the state" (Herbert, 1997). In fact, as Didier Bigo notices, the "delinking of territory and control . . . generates very significant practical and symbolic alterations which affect concepts of sovereignty, power and its day-to day exercise" (1996: 66). This change is most clearly epitomized in a much more wide-spread phenomenon that can be summarized as the "privatization of security": a "multiplicity of legitimate arms-bearing, institutionalized centers of coercive power—witness university police—as well as the relative powerlessness of many government units" (Dan-Cohen, 1994: 1216).

At first glance, this may be seen as a decline or erosion of "public security," the political system's "monopoly" on the legitimate use of force, etc. However, primary indicators like public police being outnumbered by private police in many countries do not sufficiently describe the phenomenon. First of all, the resurgence of private policing has to be seen against the background of its earlier demise. As can be seen in the U.S. case, the railroad and mining companies' policing practices arguably led Congress to seek a strengthening of state policing not because of "power" issues, but because public policing was intrinsical to a concept of public peace that made up part of the symbolic repertoire that allowed to construct a collective "state identity" (Shearing, 1992: 404).

If there was to be any role for private agents, it was not as police sustaining a private conception of peace. The only acceptable roles for them were as guards which assisted private entities in a very limited way to protect life and property as an expression of self-defense or self-help" (ibid.: 407). However, the resurgence of private policing, especially in the 1980s, did not seem to threaten public peace in the way it seemed to do so before. This is mainly due to the fact that the political system's self-description had changed considerably by the 1960s and 1970s. Shearing convincingly argues that this is very well expressed in an influential RAND study from this era. "The image of private policing as private armies challenging state authority was replaced with one of private policing as just another industry providing services to the public" (ibid.: 410), without the RAND-report even raising the question of civil liberties (ibid.: 419). The growing importance of private policing[16] has to be primarily understood in the context of changing self-descriptions of various social systems, in the sense that the notion of the public peace they relate to has been altered. In addition, one also has to take account of the qualitative change in public policing itself. As policing is no longer monopolized by public police, it experiences identity-crises (Bayley & Shearing, 1996: 585). In the most "advanced" countries in this respect, the U.S. and Canada, the legalistic (police officer as law officer) and professionalist (police officer as public servant) self-perceptions of police give way to "communitarian" self-descriptions (police as agents of, on behalf of and in the community; more radical even—community as part of police!; see Feltes, 1994: 38). In that process, community policing ceases to be perceived as a program, but comes to be seen as a guideline for all policing (Smith, 1994). It is indeed no longer possible to describe this as a weakening of public versus private policing as the difference becomes more and more blurred—public police begin to charge fees for some kinds of protection and "moonlighting" police officers work additional jobs as security guards but retain their

authority of public police invested in them in personam while performing private policing (Bayley & Shearing, 1996: 589-90).

It is of course possible to describe these developments as genuine transformations of "the state," its "weakening" or "strengthening"; however, this is not the question. The question to be addressed to such phenomena as community policing or community mediation is not whether they expand or limit things like the "state's control over conflict resolution" (Pavlich, 1996: 708). Rather, it is a question if a particular political system in question is still the same as it was before. And it isn't. Quite to the contrary, to deal with its increasing complexity as a system it has in processes of generative differentiation excluded some system properties from its self-description as a system: "In effect, central government is, in this field of policy as in several others, operating upon the established boundaries which separate the private from the public realm, seeking to renegotiate the question of what is properly a state function and what is not" (Garland, 1996: 453). This means that parts of what before was clearly seen as "public peace" by a political (and legal) system whose function was to uphold this system is simply not considered to be part of that public peace any longer. "The normality of high crime rates in late modern society has prompted a series of transformations in official perceptions of crime, in criminological discourse, in modes of governmental action, and in the structure of criminal justice organizations" (ibid.: 446). Some sorts of crime are simply shed from the political system's description of the public peace; a range of minor crimes are "desecuritized" in the sense that they simply do not pose a threat to "society" any longer. This is reflected in the fact that police agencies are more and more evaluated "by reference to internal goals . . . rather than by reference to social goals such as reducing crime rates" (ibid.: 458).

Put in the context of the previous argumentation: since "desecuritization" occurred through the political system, excluding a part of the public peace from its self-description, this development can be described as "asecuritization." These asecuritized issues can not be transformed to be non-securitized from one day to another, they are too firmly designated as "security" ("the speech act"). "Asecuritization" simply means that these issues cease to be securitized in the political system—they will probably continue to be treated as securitized issues in the new systems that they form (or that take them up). However, as they enter/constitute a new (quasi-)system, they transform from stumbling blocs in an old system in which they had been securitized because they where perceived to interfere with the "identity-driven" processing of differences in a system at an unconsolidated (here, highest and not consolidable) level of complexity, to building blocks in new (quasi-)systems.[17] What does this mean for "the state?" First of all it means that the political system has changed. And it is only here that a question of weakening or strengthening could be asked: has the political system be strengthened or weakened in its capacity to influence the context parameters in which the legal, economic, etc. systems do operate and define themselves? What no answer to these questions can put in double, however, is that as a point of reference, "the state" retains its function for the political system and as such does not change as long as it continues to serve as an efficient reference point for the construction and reconstruction of collective identity, necessary to stabilize expectations in the system.

Security's Future

In has been argued that the privatization of security entailed a changing definition of the public peace that pointed to evolutionary processes in modern social systems. The argument I have tried to make is that modern systems theory can profitably be employed to analyze changes in various realms can that it can do so in a way that can deal with the elusiveness and flexibility of concepts like identity and security, without reducing them to catch-all concepts. If this is a call for increasing the complexity of seemingly simple social concepts (which simply aren't that simple), it is also a call for constantly situating the development of these concepts in relation to larger-scale trends in world-society. Thus, for example, the privatization of policing has to be seen against the background of a militarization of law enforcement and the assumption of more and more policing functions by the military (see Bigo, 1997). While in this case the privatization of policing points to an evolution of individual political systems, the latter developments point to a burring of lines between individual political systems and the international political system.

To bring down a conceptually broad argument to the strategic confines of disciplinary debate—in the latter's terms, to make the present argument means to argue for an extreme "broadening" and a "narrowing" of security studies at the same tome. On the one hand, it means to broaden the security agenda. I use modern systems theory to describe how security is a boundary function of every social system. I propose that seeing security as such a function and thereby to be dependent on the character and especially the evolutionary status of functionally differentiated social systems allows us to tackle the complexities in today's world in the complex way that is adequate to them, not reducing security and other concepts to grand schemes which in the end explain nothing at all.

On the other hand, however, this also means to narrow, or better:shrink, the security agenda;not by placing a lighter conceptual burden on "security," but by removing its glamour. We do not study security in and for itself. We study security as a function of certain social systems. And as such a function, "security" is first of al a reflexive device. A reflexive device for the system in question, but also for those who observe these systems.

Note

1. This does not mean that there aren't other approaches that share that ambition; most notably, the field of "critical security studies" has to be mentioned in this respect. However, contributions in this field have as yet by and large failed to translate their conceptual criticism of the traditional security studies into new conceptualizations of "security." See Krause and Williams (1997).

2. Amidst the many publications of the group, the two that are probably most characteristic of its approach are Buzan (1991) and Wæver, et al. (1993); see also Buzan, et al. (1997).

3. The human mind needs to arrest categories and draw boundaries and frames. A highly accessible general account has been provided by Zerubavel (1991); see also Nippert-Eng (1996:

277-92); on the urge to penetrate boundaries, Falk (1973); the notion of "mental maps" is borrowed from Gould and White (1974).

4. Which is also to say that the very idea that "security" can be framed in a theoretically dense way and in an enclosed explanatory scheme is probably itself very much a contingent idea emerging from cognitive predispositions influenced by the Cold War and most visibly expressed in the **reduction** of security studies to strategic studies; see Baldwin, 1995.

5. Of course, these units might now not only be states, but they remain framed along an undifferentiated model of individuality/subjectivity; cf. Buzan (1993: 35-38).

6. One could of course make the argument that it is exactly a specific combination of nation and state identities that makes up a society's identity, but this would not show why society should be congruent with nation and state; in addition, it is extremely unlikely that "society" could empirically be shown to present itself as a repository of symbols and identities (one could, maybe, make the case that some kind of positive identificatory reference to an abstract notion of "society" had begun to develop in West Germany during the 1980s, as expressed in the idea of constitutional patriotism.

7. Of course, "introduction" of the nation does not refer to the concepts that may have been associated with "nation" initially, but the way that they were appropriated in projects of nation-state building. My thinking as outlined here has been shaped to a large extent by Estel (1994).

8. Eisenstadt and Giesen (1995: 73) remind us, however, that implicated in any analysis of boundaries is an inside/outside distinction that is trichotomic: one never refers simply to inside and outside, but always to inside, outside and boundary; the classical contribution on this is Barth (1969).

9. These "original codes"are not to be confused, however, with the usually much more simple and much less determined (more latent) basal operational codes of complex social systems. The latter are of a more abstract yet simpler dichotomic structure.

10. One could indeed argue that in a sense everything is symbolic as even the single human body, through natural symbols, contains an image of the entirety of society; cf. Douglas (1973); **locus classicus**: Cassirer (1955; 1946).

11. This may be read as the decisive contrast to national systems of law, where this latency is provided by the idea of "justice."

12. Thus, more correct and more in line with the terminology of the quasi-state (and indeed more correct in terms of system-theory), the political systems referred to here are "quasi-systems." Very important on this thematic Ayoob (1995).

13. In proper systems language, this would of course not be framed as an issue of "power," but of interferences and the limitation of autonomy by structural coupling between various systems.

14. An important question here of course is if the legal system can be treated as autonomous or if it is part of social and political discourse (cf. Kirby, 1989: 215). In the perspective of systems theory, both is true. While the (discourse of the) social and political system influence and try to influence the legal system, this can possibly only bedone effectively if the legal system can and does translate the inputs from its environment (in this case the social and political systems) into its own language (or "code"). Of course, this is not the only way of influence available: as in many totalitarian regimes, the political system can set out for a de facto

destruction of the legal system, in which case its institutional facades continue to work only in the mode of the political system, directly executing its decisions. But even then studies of the destruction of the legal system in modern societies, e.g., in Nazi Germany, will reveal that it had to go through some process of translation at first. In the case mentioned, this process of translations did not only include the attempt of the political system to wrap up its policies in legalistic phrase, but also the attempt from the legal system to rationalize its own destruction in its own terms (e.g., legitimizing the abolition of fundamental legal principles). One could of course go even a step further and argue that even the Nazis did not succeded to alter the basic operational codes of the legal system—which was one of their long-standing goals—namely the total abolition of the principles of Roman law that guided (and until the present day) guide German civil law; cf. Wessels (1993: 145-76).

15. The possibility of a changing Leitdifferenz actually seems to be the crack in systems theory where a notion of "epochal change" could conceivably enter.

16. These privatizations are not only limited to enforcement activities; see, for example, Brister (1996).

17.Of course, the process may also not lead to the emergence of new (quasi-)systems, but in the properties being included in the self-description of another system, for example in the economic system (i.e., "commodification").

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