quite difficult to define term "the public," which many studies adopt prematurely within the securitisation framework.[43]

3.1.3 Securitisation *Theory?* Or: How to Predict the Present

Attentive readers will not have failed to notice that the present study has so far been careful not to speak of securitisation *theory* but only of the securitisation *framework* or *concept*. On the one hand, one of the great attractions of securitisation and a major reason for its success is its usefulness as an analytical framework capable of practical application and empirical enquiry. On the other hand, it has been criticised for being more of an interesting observation than a theory that has a practical purpose for political actors. This ambivalence, that is, the symptomatic lack of theoricity has been subject of the 2014 forum "What kind of theory (if any) is securitization theory?"[44]

The "(if any)" in the forum's title was a suggestive reference to the doubts harboured by some of the most prominent securitisation scholars. Their choice of words was telling about their implicit understanding of theoricity and consequently their answer to the question in the title of the forum. While Thierry Balzacq and Stefano Guzzini, both representatives of the context-centred *perlocutionary* strand, largely avoided the combined term 'securitisation *theory*' and speak simply of 'securitisation' or 'the concept of securitisation,'[45] Wæver, after begging the question "*what* is politics, theory, sociology and philosophy,"[46] simply continues to refer to securitisation as 'the theory.'

Yet, whether and to what extent securitisation constitutes a theory was not explored in depth by Wæver and though he admitted that "the specific meta-theoretical explications were not available at the time, but probably present implicitly," Wæver concludes confidently:

> "Many references [to securitisation] are to the 'idea' or the 'slogan'. However, numerous dissertations and other studies have been made with this 'framework for analysis', so it seems that more than the concept has proven useful. […] The critical question is rather whether it has been *too much* of a theory – whether it is necessary and/or helpful to play the theory card that hard or more is gained by a 'less theoretical' approach such as, for example, the so-called 'sociological' version. To assess this, the discipline needs to cultivate a more elaborate terminology and publication format for assessing *how* a theory participates in specific studies – what exactly does it do."[47]

Since the theoretical framework of this present 'theory-driven' historical study draws in large part on securitisation, the substance of this assertion should be addressed.

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43 Vibeke Schou Tjalve, "Designing (De)Security," *Security Dialogue* 42, 4–5 (2011), https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010611418715.

44 Thierry Balzacq et al., eds., *What kind of theory – if any – is securitization?* 29 (2015).

45 Balzacq and Guzzini, "Introduction: 'What Kind of Theory – If Any– Is Securitization?'"

46 Balzacq et al., *What kind of theory – if any – is securitization?*, p. 26.

47 Ole Wæver, "The Theory Act," in Balzacq et al., *What Kind of Theory – If Any – Is Securitization?*, Vol, p. 31., emphasis in the original

Rachel Suissa has cautioned that theories of the "New Security Studies" must pass the test of falsifiability in order to distinguish themselves from pseudo-science.[48] She contends that analogous to Popper's critique of Freud's psychoanalysis,[49] securitisation seems to be able to explain any outcome by putting any empirical observation to work in its service: securitisation can be used to explain why a certain referent object was successfully securitised, but may also explain the opposite case, that is, why the securitisation of the very same referent object failed. Securitisation analysis thus runs the risk of its use becoming self-fulfilling: any analysis that announces its use in the introduction would automatically imply its endorsement in the conclusion. This type of theoricity problem stems from the fact that every outcome of a securitising move lies within the limits of what is permissible and possible, including successful securitisation and successful desecuritisation, yet as Ruzicka showed,[50] also *failed* securitisation and *failed* desecuritisation including all the consequences of the 'in-betweens' of these four types.

Furthermore, according to Ruzicka, securitisation scholars have been too infatuated with facilitating conditions but largely neglected much thought on hindering conditions, which may include that the securitising actor is unable to securitise in a specific context,[51] may not have sufficient authority or social capital, the threat is unsuitable for securitisation or simply the audiences refuse to grant the extraordinary measure because it does not deem the referent object worthy to be saved.[52]

In any case, pointing out the irrationality of successfully securitising a referent object does little to change the political dynamic. Even despite scholarly analysis, political actors cannot escape a securitised event and are still forced to deal with (de)securitised issues in the same (de)securitised way. Thus, analysing a (de)securitising move has a lot of explanatory potential but little predictive potential because the contextual factors represent myriad tweakable variables, which are incidentally non-exhaustive.

Yet, according to Popper's demarcation criterion, theory needs to be prohibitive and make risky prediction about the future of states of affairs. Since Megan MacKenzie showed that the Copenhagen School's normative preference for desecuritisation is not always favourable in terms of gender-equality,[53] Suissa stresses that the falsifiability of securitisation is not just a theoretical argument but one of direct practical relevance:

> "In order to protect against potential terrorist threats, it may be legitimate to take preventive measures when there is a valid threat, yet insufficient evidence of an im-

48 Rachel Suissa, "The Scientific Status of New Security Studies: A Critical Search for Epistemic Identity of Homeland and Civil Security Research," in *Cross-disciplinary Perspectives on Homeland and Civil Security: A Research-Based Introduction*, ed. Alexander Siedschlag (New York: Peter Lang Inc., International Academic Publishers, 2016), p. 233.

49 Karl R. Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations: The growth of scientific knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1963).

50 Jan Ruzicka, "Failed Securitization," *Polity* 51, no. 2 (2019), https://doi.org/10.1086/702213.

51 It should be borne in mind that the issue with context is also that what facilitates securitisation may but not necessarily will hinder (de)securitisation.

52 Ruzicka, "Failed Securitization," p. 373.

53 Megan H. MacKenzie, *Female soldiers in Sierra Leone: Sex, security, and post-conflict development*, Gender and political violence series (New York: New York University Press, 2016).

> pending terrorist attack. This must be distinguished from taking measures against an alleged terrorist threat that may be a theoretical possibility, but for which there is no valid evidence present. Therefore, decision-makers in homeland security must be able to distinguish between scientific and pseudoscientific claims."[54]

In contrast, essential understandings of security, such as the Aberystwyth School's, provide a basis for how to conduct international diplomacy. Yet, as outlined above, these are problematic in another way. Thus, though this study draws from securitisation, it is careful not to call it a 'theory' because its state of 'theoricity,' as seen by Popper, is controversial.

However, the argument at hand is not to revive the positivism controversy of the 1960s – on the contrary, as described at the beginning of the chapter, the merit of constructivism is to elaborate the processualism of security – but, to put it succinctly, the argument at hand is that studies using securitisation tend to analyse past events to 'predict the present.' For example, Vuori pointed out that securitising moves are frequently used to legitimise past events.[55] In consequence, securitisation seems to be a mainly backward-looking framework that should be well-suited for historical analysis. Ironically, however, applying securitisation to historical analysis has only been a case of the recent past.

3.1.4 Historicisation of Security & Securitisation of History

A common criticism directed toward International Relations concerns its ahistorical tendencies since it focuses its attention predominantly on the immediate political context of direct-physical and directly observable violent events. Securitisation is also frequently subject to the same criticism, that is, concrete structures and practices of governance (as well as the possibility of mobilising opposition and resistance against them) are commonly regarded to be more decisive for the emergence and course of (de)securitisation dynamics than the historical constellation.[56]

Aglaya Snetkov noted that for this reason there are only few long-term perspectives for securitisation so far. Snetkov, who understands issues of security not as isolated, self-contained events, but as simultaneous processes that are part of a larger dynamic and therefore only become visible in a long-term perspective, contends that "Little empirical work has been conducted on the way in which securitizations, initially constructed across multiple spatially bounded referent objects, subsequently evolved over the full life cycle of (de)securitization processes and the political effect this has had on security politics."[57] Considering this with the aforementioned, this observation seems surpris-

54 Suissa, "The Scientific Status of New Security Studies: A Critical Search for Epistemic Identity of Homeland and Civil Security Research," p. 233.

55 Vuori, "Illocutionary Logic and Strands of Securitization," p. 83.

56 Maria Ketzmerick and Werner Distler, "The 'Politics of Protection' and Elections in Trusteeship and International Administration. The Cases of Cameroun and Kosovo," in Bonacker; Distler; Ketzmerick, *Securitization in Statebuilding and Intervention*, Vol:

57 Aglaya Snetkov, "Theories, Methods and Practices," *Security Dialogue* 48, no. 3 (2017): 260, https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010617701676.