Blurred Lines

A Critical Inquiry into Power, Knowledge and (in)Security

Author: Pascal Duclos
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Supervisor: Edward Deverell
Abstract

This paper seeks ways of understanding the new challenges of a rapidly changing world, and does so by attempting to resist the disciplinary power of orthodox research methodology, by critically and reflexively inquiring into the politics of (in)security, and ultimately, by seeking novelty. It begins by first declaring its ethical and methodological starting points, then draws out an assemblage of contemporary security problematics. This leads over and narrows down into an inquiry into how to understand the developing structure of information and cyber security in Sweden. Drawing from critical security studies and feminist research ethics, it sketches out an analytical story of power and knowledge in an age of boundless risk, security and information. It furthermore argues for the need of security scholars, practitioners and politicians alike to move beyond simplistic understandings of the world, and to revision it as shaped by more complex dynamics and flows of the global, digitalized and virtual reality of the world.

Keywords: (in)security, International Political Sociology, critical security studies, cybersecurity, intelligence, power, knowledge

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# ABSTRACT


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1. Introduction

This inquiry is fundamentally about the production of knowledge, of subjectivity and of criticality. A combination of two perspectives – one ethical and one methodological – is laid out as the first analytical guidelines. The ethics of feminist research and the methodology of critical security studies. In short, the former urges researchers to be attentive to the power of knowledge and of one’s own situatedness as a researcher (Ackerly & True 2008). The second is the methodology of *bricolage*, which allows researchers to experimentally combine different perspectives, methods, and empirical objects into heterogeneous assemblages, in search of novelty. Rather than being problem-solving, it is a *problematizing* methodology that breaks from orthodox research praxis. It also raises awareness to the way that issues, objects and subjects of security are enacted throughout the "institutional, political and technological" fields of actual security *practitioner* (Aradau *et al.* 2015: 4-5, 23).

This assemblage of perspectives entails a range of assumptions that will later on be explained in full (see section 2 and 3), but since they have serious implications on the authorship and style of this paper, a simplified version should be presented here. They are as follows:

- Scientific research produces knowledge $\rightarrow$ Knowledge provides authoritative/symbolic power to specific discourses on social realities and shapes the practices $\rightarrow$ These practices take part in structuring the trajectories of the real politics that shape human societies.

Putting it in another way: research is never politically neutral, and knowledge *is* power. And so, in a way, this paper is inevitably “political”. Given that, and the fact that I am myself a soon-to-be security *practitioner*, by following the feminist ethics of self-reflexivity and utter criticism of “scientific objectivity”, it partly seems like an ethically responsible approach towards the field of security, defence and crisis, since it is ultimately the wellbeing of people that is on the line. But even more profoundly, albeit highly problematic, it is deemed to be a methodological necessity. To thus openly reflect upon the situatedness of authorship and epistemic context of this paper, is a conscious and deliberate method of explicating, and actually *revealing*, the subjectivity from wherein it was created.
1.1 Drawing the First Lines

This bachelors’ thesis is the second step in a thought process that began when writing the preceding exam-essay at the Swedish Defence University (SEDU). The first instruction then was to choose to write from the perspective of either security or crisis management, since this reflected the two cores of the program, as well as the overall structure of the university. One closer to practice, and one more theoretical. However, when writing about the first successful(sic) terrorist attack that occurred just months before in Stockholm in (April 2017), and of the ensuing political debate and legislative countermeasures, this disciplinary divide suddenly became problematic. With security studies literature and its different takes terrorism and exceptional security politics on the one hand, and crisis management literature studying the effects that terrorist attacks have on law and policymaking on the other. Both bodies of knowledge study the same phenomenon, but with different theoretical and analytical tools. Believing that the two fields probably had a lot to inform one another, a search began for ways of allowing this dialogue to be possible. When following the research of leading ‘critical’ scholars, I discovered the experimental methodology of Bricolage of Critical Security Studies (Aradau et al., 2015). One of the most important aspects of this methodology was its view on the construction of knowledge, and the hygienizing and gate-keeping effects of orthodoxy. That is, the “rules” within a disciplinary field that dictate what counts as scientific, and what does not. Using this, the paper attempted to give reason to further explore this disciplinary divide between security studies and crisis management, which it somewhat did, although not in a very coherent way.

This final paper, however, was to be related to security and/or crisis management. But, the ways of doing the “and” part was still fairly unknown to me since the bulk of the literature available was hard bring together in a coherent way. I decided on approaching the paper differently by instead trying to comprehensively understand the workings of security and crisis. And as it happens, over the last decade much in Sweden has changed when it comes to security crisis management. For one, the Russian annexation of Crimea and occupation of eastern Ukraine in 2014 jolted Sweden into boosting its territorial defence capacities, to reintroduce military conscriptions, and to further deepen its cooperation with NATO, the EU and other bi- and multilateral treaties. Following the Syrian refugee crisis, Sweden also became the number one recipient (percentagewise) of refugees within the European Union. Critique followed towards the
sitting administration for taking in either too few or too many, towards governmental agencies such as the Migration Agency, against the reorganization of the Police department and within the healthcare system (MSB, 2017). And then in June 2017, The Swedish Transport Agency-scandal happened. It was revealed that the agency, after outsourcing their services and bypassing security regulations, had caused a major leak of confidential data. For example, information that revealed the identity of undercover military and police operatives to countries in eastern Europe. Sweden is now reviewing its entire cybersecurity structure to both ensure such security failures don’t happen again, as well as in response to the parallel process of adapting to the EU-levelled initiative to increase its internal security and defence cooperation (and the cybersecurity dimension being a significant part in that).

Taking all of the above under consideration, the only thing left should be to recall what I’ve learned over the years, focus on a specific problematic from out of the above, choose a suitable theory and method, and type away. And so, as a lecturer repeatedly asked us during our tutoring sessions: What is the problem? What problematic perplexes me?

Throughout the programme at SEDU, we’ve explored a wide range issues and questions concerning new and differing ways of studying the politics of security, defence and crisis management. Encapsulating everything is the diffuse implications of globalization, the so-called broadening of security, and the seemingly inescapable spread of transboundary threats and risks (e.g. Swain, 2013) To account for all these changes, traditional disciplinary divides are being traversed, bridged and cross-fertilized, most notably (but not exclusively) within the “critical” scholarships. Instead of simply the nation-state, other referent objects of security have emerged, such as the security of the human, of women, of the environment, and so on. And voilà, the disciplinary floodgates of security studies fell wide open, and gushing in came the broader fields of the social sciences (e.g. sociological, historical and criminological bodies of knowledge, See Bigo 2016b), prying away the concept of “security” from its long-time partnership with (military state) “defence”, and sent it adrift.

The 9/11 terrorist attack sometimes serves as a periodic milestone in international security politics, where the “global war on terror” instigated a repolarization of the world in terms of either standing behind, or against the US-led coalition (Agrell, 2015). In this new period, pre-emptive military action and imprisonment based on suspicions alone were being legitimized
through the phrasing of terrorism as an existential threat towards liberal democracy. By now, there is ample research on this development within security studies, drawing focus to how the conceptualization of (in)security has led to the legitimization of coercive and preventive measures, privileging “security over freedom, privacy and even democracy” (Bigo, 2017: 303). This form of exceptionalism from democratic liberal rights also became intimately related to the assessment and management of risks (on pre-emption, see Aradau & Van Munster 2007, Amoore 2013; on exceptionalism, see Van Munster 2004, Lynn Doty 2007; on security and risk, see Bengtsson, Borg & Rhinard 2017). As such, in a way, it would seem as though Jef Huysmans (2014: 1) got it right:

    Security is unbound. Language and images of insecurity are everywhere…
    Our lives and times seem to be defined by multiplications of danger, threats, risks, uncertainties, anxieties… some speak of the rise of cultures of fear; others of the dominance of risk management and pre-emptive government.

The analytical story of mainstream International Relations and Security Studies often orients itself both spatially and temporally against the military and economic power shift following the end of the cold war, underscored by a “general geographical assumptions of geopolitics and IR theory” (Laughlan et al., 2015: 27). Also, despite efforts to “broaden” security by bringing in immateriality into the equation (e.g. culture, discourse, identity, gender and so on), the material order of the Westphalian world of states has largely remained as the foundation upon which reality is conceived. However, now mediated by the explosive development of the internet, “cyber space” and information and communications technology, the constitution of reality has increasingly begun to slip over into the virtual. Now, no longer limited by spatial proximity and social (physical) interaction, the flows of the information and social encounters that shape our knowledge and perceptions of reality have become unleashed from the grasp and control of the nation-state. (More on the concept of the virtual later on).

In a way, this could be seen as though the “power of knowledge” has been made available to everyone. Seen as such, and if knowledge is understood as empowering, shouldn’t this age of limitless information actually connote the ultimate triumph of democratic liberty? Nowadays, every individual with an internet connection has the ability to find out everything about anything, right? Actually, one could argue, only so in theory. You still need to know what it is that you are
looking for, and how to go about in finding it. And the origins and providers of the questions that guide us aren’t always known. Be it why we often end up voting like our parents, why we suddenly feel a strong craving for Coca-Cola, or feel scared when we’re riding the city bus, more often than not, we are already bound by the unknown know, shaping our curiosity and dictating our inquisitiveness.

And as a further source of confusion when engaging in contemporary security research, the word “blurred” (or some other synonymous expressions such as unbounded, borderless or fuzzy) kept reappearing in the course literature. Positively biased, but no matter where I looked – be it the grey-zone of conflict in military affairs, between war/crime, in the domestic/foreign, the internal/external, private/public, and even between man and woman – the state of almost everything appeared to be blurred, rendering the usual analytical distinctions unsatisfactory whenever comprehensively trying to understand matters of security.

Distinctions among all fields of scholarship are increasingly fluid and contested, and for many reasons. However, they are especially fluid and contested as a consequence of broad historical dynamics that have made it more and more difficult to remain rooted in assumptions about any particular sociopolitical order without worrying too much about relations with other sociopolitical orders. (Bigo & Walker 2007: 2)

Adding even more to the pot, new phenomenon’s such as “troll factories” and “fake news” – alongside the resurgence of cold war-style propaganda, influence operations and “active measures”, but now mediated through social media and cyber space – has now brought the (in)security of information and cyber technology to the international political foreground. In the European Union for example, this last decade has seen a progressive development of supranational security, defence and crisis management policies (e.g. Kuipers et al., 2015; Bengtsson, Borg & Rhinard, 2017) One of the most recent projects has been on the development of a common, resilient information/cyber security structure (European Commission, 2016) So, when seeking to find up-to-date and relevant research on security, liberty and information/cyber technology, I turned to a field of knowledge production that is intimately related to both information and security. Namely that of intelligence studies. In the conference notes from a
workshop at the Centre for Asymmetric Threat Studies (CATS) at the Swedish Defence University, this quote appeared:

One of the great paradoxes of our times is that all the wonderful technology created to connect people has ended up segmenting them into “echo chambers” in which they hear only what they want and learn only what they already thought. (Treverton 2017: 12)

And lastly, a final source of confusion. In 2013, the publications of the Snowden documents revealed to the world the existence of a global network of mass surveillance, led by the US National Security Agency (NSA). This intelligence and security network, originating from the cold war intelligence alliance – the so called “Five Eyes” – has according to the documents since the fall of the Soviet Union, not only continued to scan the horizons for potential threats, but even vastly expanded its global reach to unprecedented levels. And highly relevant to this paper: according to the documents leaked by Snowden, since 1954, the neutral and alliance free country of Sweden had apparently been a close and valued partner to the enterprise. And still was in 2013 (Agrell, 2015). Wilhelm Agrell, a Swedish professor in intelligence studies, published in 2015 a book on this development. Its eerie title – in combination with the thought of “echo chambers” in cyber space controlling and keeping us in some sort of cognitive prison – neatly illustrates a compounded version of the chosen problematic of this paper, in one short sentence. Roughly translated, the title reads:

“Who can you trust?”

1.2 Problems of Research

When taking the previous section in as a whole, the problem appears not only to be of who, but in what one can trust. How does one make sense of a globalized and digitalized world with borderless knowledge? How does one study the effects of ‘alternative facts’, and of the ‘reality’ of the virtual? What sites of security does one study, when the whole arrangement of security is changing both nationally and internationally? In a reality where the previous boundaries controlling and regulating the international flows of people and information have been destabilized, and where liberal democracies are taking exceptional security measures at the cost of liberty. With green little men running around on the countryside, and foreign intelligence
agencies are operating on Swedish territory. How to study the cybersecurity development in Sweden from the chosen theoretical framework, when already being imbedded in a disciplinary field of (in)security at SEDU? Or putting it in another way, how does one incorporate these perspectives and wide range of security issues, and still write a sensible paper?

1.3 Purpose of Product

The fundamental purpose of this paper is to problematize security, power and knowledge in a globalized and digitalized world. Informed by critical scholarship, the paper refrains from creating a piece of knowledge that reproduces traditional perspectives on security that, albeit being written by an unwitting novice, don’t feel fully convincing. The core aim of the paper is thus to stubbornly try to avoid being anyone’s useful idiot\(^1\) (Gustafsson & Hagström, 2017), to seek ways to transcend binary and dichotomous thinking (Ackerly & True, 2008), and to resist the disciplinary constraints of orthodox research methods (Aradau et al., 2015). Fundamentally, it is about an acceptance and affirmation of the complexity of human existence, of not reducing the vast variation of human practices into slim models built out of minimal variables (Bigo, 2007), and an equal refusal of being reduced to an “excellent sheep”\(^2\) (Deresievicz, 2014).

By deploying the feminist research ethics and methodology of bricolage, the more precise aim of this paper is to experimentally explore how to approach the evolving structure of cybersecurity in Sweden. Motivating this angle is the belief in the possibility of finding novelty in change. And since changes concerning security are a plenty these days, this form of optimism in progress should arguably be a well-needed quality, equally so for academics, politicians and professionals within the security field. And, since I am on the edge of the former category, soon crossing over into the latter, it seems rather fitting to have a last go at this problem from the perspective of academia, before making the final plunge into the “reality” of the security profession.

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\(^1\) ‘Useful idiot’ means in rough terms to uncritically produce research that serves the purpose of political powers.

\(^2\) ‘excellent sheep’ signifies the production of uncritical students by elite universities.
1.4 Caveats and Disposition

The employment of the ethical and methodological perspectives mentioned in the introduction is, in itself, somewhat of a problem. The self-reflexivity and attentiveness to the researcher situatedness and aim for heterodoxy (as opposed to orthodoxy) shepherd this inquiry into looking broadly at all the security related issues described above, in search of other ways of approaching security.

Evidently, the scope of this paper is unconventionally broad and, indeed, very blurry. It paints a picture of many and complex issues that normally would’ve been analytically separated in a paper of this kind (e.g. analytically distinguishing one narrow research subject). Thus, in a way, it has already gone against the praxis of orthodox research. Instead, it simply takes this conglomerate of heterogeneous issues together, experimentally, and explores a broader, and more complex, picture of security, power and knowledge. The argument is actually that there is much worth in exploring ways to comprehensively study this complexity. If so much is changing and uncertain today, then, the need for new frameworks should be all the more important to find. However, the paper does not have the illusion of finding “it”, the way, or what have you. It is simply exploratory in its ambition, and aims to encourage students at the Swedish Defence University in particular, and the overall scholarship of security studies in general, to be critical and creative when writing.

Being critical and creative still needs to be complemented with an aim of constructively contributing to the field. This paper does so by specifically problematizing focusing on finding ways to study the recent development of cyber security in Sweden as a case in part of a wider, international, field of (in)security. In effect, it creates and proposes a thorough theoretical framework for a future research agenda. This is motivated by the hypothesized way that “cybersecurity” and the politics and practices surrounding the phenomenon as such, brings together a wide range of the many problematics that security studies engage with. War/crime, internal/external, security/liberty, agency/structure and power/knowledge, all of these binary problematics is presumed to be related to the cybersecurity issue.

In the next section, a brief overview of previous critical security research is presented. In the following 2nd section, the ethics of feminist research and the critical security methodology of Bricolage will be explained in more depth, as well as a presentation of Tom Lundborg (2016)
analysis of the concept of the virtual. It is however by no means exhaustive, and only seeks to give credence to the analytical story that this paper aims to present. In order to “fit” his analysis into this paper, and to avoid being charged with plagiarism, it should be stated now that direct quotations will be used in a manner that probably goes against praxis, but, are nevertheless deemed as necessary. The reason for this is partly because of the highly complicated nature of these philosophical theories. Much would be lost, if not just misinterpreted, if I myself posed as a philosopher. Moreover, if I would attempt such a feat, the limits of this paper would not be enough. This is a way of making sure that the work of other scholars isn’t claimed as my own.

In the 3rd section, the theoretical framework of International Political Sociology, the theory of PARIS (Political Anthropological Research of International Sociology), and method of mapping will be described in depth. The concluding discussion in the 4th section summarizes the analytical lines drawn and reflects on the product as a whole.

1.5 Previous (Critical) Research

As previously mentioned, this paper is theoretically grounded in critical security studies. What that means is of course a whole subject in itself, since there is a wide range of fields and agendas associated to it. A common way of categorizing them is to talk in terms of the “Welch school”, the “Copenhagen School” or “the Paris school”. However, if not well read on the differences between the schools, this terminology serves little purpose. Browning and Mcdonald (2011: 235) argues that the critical project in security studies revolves around three central themes. Their definition will be used in this case:

    The first is a fundamental critique of traditional (realist) approaches to security; the second is a concern with the politics of security – the question of what security does politically; while the third is with the ethics of security – the question of what progressive practices look like regarding security.

Following 9/11, the “war on terror” was instigated as an almost paradigmatic research topic in critical security studies. A central problematic became the one of security, liberty, and exceptionalism. Research showed how security was being presented as something that motivated states to in fact rein in on liberal democratic right, and supposedly so in order to secure the liberal democratic way of life. The analytical story of exceptionalism has been related to the
work of Carl Schmitt, and his statement of the necessity of exceptions: “Sovereign is he who decides on the exception” (Schmitt, 2005:5).

The philosopher Giorgio Agamben also became somewhat of a tone-setter in the debate on security and terror, by identifying the Nazi concentration camps as the older version of exceptionalism, now replaced in the post 9/11 era by the terrorist detainee camps of Guantanamo Bay and its likes (Agamben, 2001). Research has ranged from theoretical reasoning on the possibility of balance between security and liberty (e.g. Huysmans, 2004; Zedner, 2005; Aradau, 2008), of the visualities, techniques of securitization and gendered discourses (e.g. Amoore, 2007; Masters, 2009), on democracy and exceptionalism (Van Munster, 2004), or how the practices of exceptionalism actually become normalized (Neal, 2012), and many more: “the securitization of migration […] asylum […] commodification of security […] the proliferation of risk calculation and management [and] practices of surveillance” (Aradau et al., 2015:1).

Especially central to this paper when considering the framing of the problematics relating to information, surveillance and cybersecurity, is a review of Tom Lundborg’s (2016) analysis of the political stakes of the virtualization of security. Another reason for why the virtual as a concept is important to this paper comes from the motivation by Lundborg for why the stakes of virtualization are high. Accordingly, the virtualization of security poses a “fundamental challenge to many of the most basic assumptions on which the modern political subject and the modern subject of security rest.” (Lundborg, 2016: 5). More on this in the next section.
2. Ethics, Methodology & Philosophy

2.1 Feminist Research Ethics

In the article *Reflexivity in Practice*, Brooke Ackerly and Jacqui True (2008: 693) begins with the question of how to go about studying power, “when we, as researchers, also participate in the projection of power through knowledge claims?”. The suggested answer derives from the research practices associated with critical feminist theory, or more specifically, the ethics of feminist research. This ethics of research entails a set of questioning practices that is proposed to function as guidelines when researchers face perplexing dilemmas. The practice consists of four foundational commitments, stating that the researcher needs to be attentive to:

1. the power of knowledge and of epistemology,
2. boundaries, marginalization, and silences,
3. relationships and their power differentials, and
4. our own situatedness as researchers. (ibid: 695)

(1) **Attentiveness to Epistemology** means being aware of the system through which we process, evaluate and separate facts from fiction, of what compounds knowledge and what is acknowledged as proof of it. That means that I, being a he, needs to be attentive and even suspicious of the inferences and conclusions that I draw, and strive to be “noticing and thinking through silences in epistemology, boundaries, and power dynamics (of the research process itself) […]” (ibid). The feminist research ethics is ultimately about “destabilizing our epistemology”, and not “just because”, but to also “empower the researcher to break new ground” (ibid: 696).

(2) **Attentiveness to boundaries** involves taking on and trying to “transcend binary thinking about war/peace, order/anarchy, man/woman…” (ibid: 693). It is about being aware of the silencing power of boundaries, which can include marginalisation’s of races, social classes and gender, as well as the exclusion of certain theoretical perspectives, methodologies and disciplines (ibid: 696). It brings notice to both why we, as humans, often need to draw lines in the sand to comprehend our existence, but to also remind us of the possibility and, indeed, our responsibility of being attentive to when there is a need to draw new ones.
(3) *Attentiveness to Relationships* requires of the researcher to reflect on social power structures and interconnections, and compels us to adopt an ethics of care and moral responsibility towards the people we study (ibid: 697-698). For this paper, it means many things. For one, consideration needs to be taken to the relationships of and between the individuals being mapped later on. Since much is not publicly available in the fields of security (and intelligence), one needs to take heed to both ethical *and* juridical aspects.

(4) *Situating the Researcher* is the final element of the feminist research ethics, and means in simple terms to situate and reflect on one’s own position in “the three preceding power dynamics – of epistemology, boundaries, and human relations – and to attend to these as a matter of methodology” (ibid: 698). This involves being attentive to how the researchers situatedness in a globalized world affects her epistemology and belief systems. The authors define globalization as “a set of fundamentally constitutive social, cultural, economic and political processes”, and not just by global economic transactions. The researchers situatedness in relation to the research subject is also a boundary, but by being attentive to this and attempt to methodologically transgress it, it is possible to destabilize its disciplinary power and “rethink community knowledge claims” (ibid). The following sentences are especially relevant for this paper:

> Yet this same move might also undermine the research’s disciplinary legitimacy if she does not replace the methodological purpose of the boundary between researcher and research subject with another methodological device. (Ackerly & True, 2008: 699)

And most importantly, of remaining

… committed to the politics of every stage of the research process. (ibid)

In order of doing this, the following part on the methodology of *bricolage* will be the so-called replacement in this paper. And regarding the commitment to be aware of the politics of the research process, this whole product is in itself an illustration of this exact commitment.
2.2 Methodology of Bricolage

To study the many and diverging sites of interests in security studies, and touching on the debate concerning the conceptualization of security “as speech act, discourse, field of professionals, dispositifs, or practice”, Aradau et al. addresses in Critical Security Methods: New frameworks for analysis (2015) the need within critical security studies (CSS) to develop a new methodological framework for the scholarship. The methodology of bricolage shares the epistemological view of feminist research ethics in several ways, but comes from a slightly different angle. The break from orthodox methodology is done in three moves.

First, the methodology of CSS attempts to break away from this orthodox by reconceptualizing methods as practice, based on a criticism of the “cascading path” that traditional research is said to follow. This rationalistic cascading path, as the authors describe it, starts of the research process from theory, and thereafter establishes the epistemological, ontological and normative grounds for the research. The term ‘rational’ doesn’t denote rational choice social science, but is rather the way that the choice of methods is seen as a “rational choice that aligns a technical instrument of analysis to a theory for the application of a coherent set of procedures and techniques”. This, however, means that the “meaning, purpose and practice of scholarship” (ibid: 1-2) is determined before the methods of inquiry are actually engaged with the empirical world. As in all areas of knowledge production, also when analysing security, specific methods are used. The tools, structures and ways of “doing security” is understood to have a profound effect on the results of both the research and the real-life security practices. The methods we use are understood as actually playing an important role in constituting the “socially acceptable norms, conduct, knowledge, research and political practice” that distinguished the security field (Aradau 2015: 3-7, 10).

The second move goes “beyond the assumptions of coherence that frames this cascading approach to method and methodology” (own emphasis, ibid: 3), and does so by employing the concept of methodological bricolage, which means opening up for a more relaxed and experimental usage of methods. Not understood in any ‘clinical’ sense, this experimental methodology is about “a more freely combinatory approach to methods” (ibid: 16). By bringing together into an assemblage of heterogeneous concepts, methods and empirical objects, it opens up for new findings and allows the researcher to resist orthodoxy, and avoid being forced into
“[…] prescribed requirements of coherent alignments of methods, meta-theory, theory and research problem” (ibid).

And then finally, the third move “extend[s] the critical sensibility of security analysis in CSS to methods as well” (ibid: 3), and is made by reconceptualizing the nature of methods as inherently political and normatively non-neutral (ibid: 10). As such, it is also in par with the feminist research ethics described above. This ‘sensibility’ involves understanding that methods are used in all realms of knowledge production, be it in research or by professionals, and the methods used on ‘security’ are no exception. Paraphrasing the authors; methods don’t simply come from out of nowhere, they are “a practice of and from within power relations: they exercise power and are inscribed by power relations”, and “are also about the reproduction of particular habitus and social fields” (ibid: 11).

The methodology of bricolage composes a number of assemblages of methods, wherein one of them is called “Mapping”, but more on this and the concepts habitus, social fields, and the ‘disciplining’ effects of the academic field, later in the 3rd section.

2.3 Philosophies of the Virtual

By delineating three ways of conceptualizing the virtual, drawing on the philosophies of Jean Baudrillard, Giorgio Agamben and Gilles Deleuze respectively, Tom Lundborg explores “other ways of thinking about the relation between security and reality, which go beyond the positivist/post-positivist divide” (Lundborg, 2016: 3). This divide understands reality respectively as either independently existing and “can be known and represented as such” or “as something that is produced by practices of interpretation and representation. In both cases, however, reality belongs to what may be referred to as an ‘actualized’ reality” (ibid: 23-24). Lundborg states that in “a very broad sense, the virtual in these analyses highlights something taking place beyond the realm of representation and the actualized layer of reality; something that belongs, rather, to a virtual dimension of reality” (ibid: 4).

By particularly focusing on the mechanisms of political capture and resistance, how the virtual “opens up and/or closes down the spaces of resistance” (ibid: 1), Lundborg presents three different ways of understanding “what happens to the subject of security once we move from an actual to a virtual layer of reality. Specifically, it shows how this movement affects the capacity
of the modern subject to resist whatever happens to ‘it’ within the realm of the virtual” (ibid: 5). The issue of resistance is said to be closely related to “the question of whose security is at stake”, (i.e. the subject of security, and for political contestation to be possible, sovereign states and/or sovereign individuals need a certain degree of freedom and ability to change their surroundings). The possibility of representing and reconfiguring reality through the virtual is meant to have serious implications on “modern” core assumptions, such as that of sovereignty, freedom, autonomy and democracy (ibid: 4-5). The three ways of understanding the virtual are as follows: 1) virtual as a new reality, 2) the virtual as a potential reality, and 3) the reality of the virtual.

The first one is Baudrillard’s rather pessimistic understanding of the political stakes of virtualization. To Baudrillard, according to Lundborg, the virtual represents a new form of reality that’s been created though “the proliferation of electronic and digital media, screens and computers”, which “means that reality has become increasingly virtualized” (ibid: 6). This understanding of the virtual is of a “simulated hyperreality, in which the capacity of modern subjects to actualize and represent objects has been lost; where the potentialities to radically alter the conditions of life have disappeared; and where the proliferation of screens has created a new post-political age” (ibid: 24). This philosophical understanding of the virtualization of security seems reasonable when Lundborg, referencing to the aforementioned work of Huysmans and his idea of “unbounded security” (2014), considers the “excessive production of new dangers that characterizes the contemporary social and political order in the west” (ibid: 7). In Lundborg’s words, for Baudrillard “there can be no sustainable distinction between the actual and the virtual. The actual has been absorbed by simulation, making reality something that only exists virtually” (ibid: 7). Understood and analytically used as such, the virtualization of security represents a loss of freedom, control and ability to alter one’s own conditions. Moreover, Lundborg writes that the “immediacy of the flows of information means that all threats are immediately realized, in ‘the time of virtual reality’ and through ‘simultaneous screens and networks’ – without going through the detour of actualization” (ibid: 8; in reference to Baudrillard and Noailles, 2007: 119). And further:

Within this order we are thus forced [to] encounter a new reality principle, the main purpose of which is to exterminate all forms of contingency without any delay. The only thing that is considered worthy of being aspired towards is a sense of ‘total’ or
‘complete’ security, which will eradicate any traces of ‘evil’ that might harm the simulation of the maximum good. (ibid: 8)

Referencing to Vaughan-Williams (2010: 1080), similar research that shows how the United Kingdom’s “new border security doctrine” is no longer drawn according to territorial and geographical measures but more as a “continuum of security practices”. This doctrine extends pre-emptively the sovereign security ban to other countries, and “The territorial borders of the sovereign state are clearly disrupted in this process and to a considerable extent replaced by a new virtual space of existence” (Lundborg, 2016: 10).

According to the second take on the virtual in Lundborg’s analysis, of Agamben’s virtual as a potential reality, the virtual has an immanent potentiality of both being and not being actualized. This understanding of potentiality relates to Agamben’s work on the biopolitics of the western political realm, where the sovereign power to decide who are qualified as citizens worthy of security (bios), or simply humans who’s lives can be left to fate (zoê). The outcome of this is that as a human, you always exist in between, as a Homo sacer, or bare life, never being sure of on which side of the sovereign ban you will end up (Agamben, 1998: 6, 48; in Lundborg, 2016: 11-12). As such, the sovereign exists and acts as the drawer of lines, in the “zone of indistinction”, and that we all are “virtually homines sacri” and potentially “excluded from the politically qualified life and reduced to the simple fact of living and dying”. The potentiality of people becoming dangerous is decided through the sovereign exception at the “onto/techno-virtual” nexus of security politics, and the “ultimate goal of biopolitical forms of control is to pre-empt this potential” (Lundborg, 2016: 13-14). The potential of people becoming dangerous is thus pre-emptively acted upon, a priori the actualization of becoming so in reality. However, in comparison to Baudrillard’s take on virtualization, Agamben also draws attention to way the virtual can be space of resistance, of political contestation, in that it “can be used both for demonstrating how the potentialities of life are locked into a vicious relationship with the actualization of the sovereign ban, but also for thinking about how this relationship may be resisted by refusing to draw lines and thereby render sovereign power inoperative” (own emphasis, ibid: 24).

Deleuze’s understanding of the virtualization of security is similar to Agamben’s, in terms of a potentiality which might, or might not be actualized. The reality of the virtual however, is not
dependent on its actualization, and the virtual avoids being captured or represented, and is a form of reality in itself (ibid: 14). Actualization and counter-actualization becomes important terms, the former signifying a move “from the virtual to the actual, the latter points in the reverse direction: from actualized state of affairs to a virtual potential” (ibid: 16). According to Lundberg, this understanding of the virtual becomes important when understanding the pre-emptive nature of contemporary security practices. The potentiality of the future has taken over as “the main form of temporality, and instead of actuality, the virtual potentiality of the threat is the primary form of reality” (ibid).

In the sense that Agamben’s biopolitical philosophy seeks a refusal of drawing any lines at all, Deleuze instead insists on the importance of drawing new ones: “Politics is active experimentation, since we do not know in advance which way a line is going to turn” (Deleuze and Parnet, 2006: 103; in Lundborg, 2016: 22). In Deleuze’s philosophy, in the virtual lies a potential of challenging power and allows for political contestation (Lundborg, 2016: 24).

In summary, Lundborg deems the philosophy of Baudrillard to have “a lot less to offer when it comes to politicizing by way of resisting the virtualization of security” (own emphasis, ibid: 25). In Agamben’s combination of the virtual with the biopolitical however, potentiality and actualization is still “active and alive” and allows for political contestation by the means of not drawing any lines. And finally, Deleuze’s approach, which “can also be seen as the most wide-ranging as he points as much to the violence of capture inherent in actualization, as to the potential of resistance in counter-actualization”. And crucially, as Lundborg states, the adoption of Deleuze’s philosophy of the virtualization of security doesn’t necessarily exclude the insights from either Baudrillard or Agamben.

Not wanting to ruin the elegant phrasing, the concluding statement of Lundborg’s article was as follows:

Ultimately, Deleuze’s gesture is one of pluralism and openness to the multiplicity of lines running through our lives; lines of capture and lines of escape; old lines and new lines; actualized lines of being and pure lines of becoming; lines that constitute not just one politics, or two politics but many politics. (Deleuze and Parnet, 2006: chapter 4; in Lundborg, 2016: 25)
3. Theory & Method

This section presents to the reader an overview of mainly Didier Bigo’s research from over the last decade that is deemed relevant to this paper. It draws out the development of the scholarship of International Political Sociology, the “Paris school” of critical security studies, and to Bigo’s current research, the PARIS approach, that studies the processes of security, (in)security and fate by mapping the fields of security practitioners (Bigo, 2016a/b). Moreover, the aforementioned method of ‘Mapping’ will described. The two main approaches to this method are one the one hand from the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (but mainly developed by Didier Bigo), and one the other hand by Bruno Latour. Due to the limited space of this paper, only the Bourdieuan take on mapping, in Bigo’s terms, will be described, since it is argued that this approach is the more “nuanced understanding of the workings of security” (Loughlan et al., 2015: 23-24).

3.1 The Political & Social of the International

In the first editorial of the Journal International Political Sociology in 2007, the founders Didier Bigo and R. B. J. Walker discusses the need of establishing deeper and more focused dialogue between International Relations theory and other social theories. Specifically, sociology, since both the ‘international’ now pervades into most areas of human action, as well as the “social” becoming an importance aspect of IR theory. Although political science for a long time has been interdisciplinary in character, the traditional assumptions and historical socio-political stories structuring the scholarship still seems, according to the authors, to “inhibit appreciation of other disciplinary”, something which in the words of the authors is somewhat paradoxical, given that IR “it has sought recognition as one of the broadest of all possible disciplines, one struggling to understand the broadest possible forms of modern political life” (Bigo & Walker, 2007: 1-2).

The rise of constructivism in IR theorizing “marks an attempt to relearn much that has been commonplace in sociological analysis but that has been squeezed out by prior commitments to systemic, structuralist, formalist and institutionalist analysis” (ibid: 2). The ambition is however not to argue for the creation of some sort of “megadisciplin”, but is rather an argument that the very distinctions and borders that exist on what constitutes and delineates the ‘international’, ‘social’ or ‘political’ needs to be taken seriously by both of the disciplinary fields. These boundaries have created difficulty, when analyses of the international are either starting with assumptions of the social or the political, and produces such diverging results (ibid: 3).
The historical trajectories of the disciplines have, according to the authors, given sociological analysis an implicit sense of lesser relevance, or that “society must be subordinate to the state”, placing the social “somewhere between the primary levels of man, the state, and the system of states and justified through appeals to the elegance and parsimony of simplified models of human life” (ibid: 4) Paraphrasing Bigo and Walker, the re-emerging interest in practices, as well as studying discourses as practices, is good motivation for thinking in sociological terms when studying politics within IR. Since sociology is more or less the study of what social actors do, it seems logical to not simplify the scholarship of states, system of states and sovereignties to “more or less disembodied structures, even abstractions” (ibid: 5).

Furthermore, (and particularly relevant for this paper), the perspective of sociology is important when studying the social practices, since it:

[...] often involves the participation of analysts in the situations they are analyzing. Such participation, or fieldwork, places a premium on reflexive scholarship: not least on forms of knowledge that are attuned to the effects and responsibilities of those making claims to knowledge, to the way knowledge, including empirical data, is constructed in the act of writing, and to the expertise and judgments of those who are being studied. (ibid)

A sociological approach also:

[...] encourage[s] reflection on appropriate ways of writing, and resistance to any assumption that one’s audience is as abstractly universal as the state and system of states has seemed to so many analytical traditions within international relations. There is considerable scope for creativity in all these respects and more. (ibid)

Since the purpose of this paper is explicitly to explore non-binary ways of studying security, while remaining reflexive, critical and creative as a researcher, and have already gone a long way away from ‘appropriate’ ways of writing this kind of paper, the International Political Sociology scholarship seemed like a promising area to explore even further.
3.2 Practices, Social Fields & Habitus

In an article in 2011, Didier Bigo develops three arguments for the adoption of Pierre Bourdieu’s theories. Encouraging heterodoxy and destabilizing the disciplinary divide between ‘mainstream’ and ‘constructivist’ research, the first argument is what Bourdieu identified as one central problem in contemporary IR studies, specifically, the way the discipline has been:

[...] organized through the opposition between an empiricist-objectivist mainstream and an idealist form of constructivism that neglects the most basic knowledge of how social practices emerge, persist and constrain actors beyond their individual imaginations and beliefs. (Bigo, 2011: 226)

The second argument is an encouragement to students of international relations to reflect on and try to find “other ways of doing research that avoid dogmatic statements, imposed methodologies, simplistic dichotomies and smuggles teleologies”, and of being “systematically reflexive and aware of the political effects of simplistic separations between a theory that reduces empirical research to a test and empirical research that refuses to reflect on the condition of its production” (ibid: 226, 229).

The third argument, and now returning to the previously described methodology of bricolage, is of the benefits of using the Bourdieuan ‘thinking tools’ of social fields and habitus. The “practice turn” within the social sciences brought about an emergence of “spatial” terminologies as ways of conceptualizing the “practices” that were being studied, such as the use maps, networks, fields, boundaries, and so on. The French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu’s “approach to power and practice” came as a unique way of moving away from the geographically oriented assumption underscoring IR and security studies. Bourdieu’s ‘theory of fields’ is principally about the positions of social agents, the relations between these positions, which together form a sort of ‘social space’. Paraphrasing the authors, the relational element of this theory is that the different positions of the actors can’t be understood in any absolute terms, since the positions and their significance only can be located in relation to other positions within the field. In terms of differences in power among agents within a field, the only way of making sense of an agent being ‘powerful’, is through its relation to another less powerful one (ibid: 27).
The ‘field’ works in the way that if one agent has a change in power, the other agents who recognize themselves as being part of the same field as the former will have a change in power as well. The nature of power in the field theory is understood as being of different capitals, of which the most important ones are economic, cultural, social and symbolic (Loughlan et al., 2015: 28).

The notion of field can then be said to refer to a specific social space of objective positions structured by struggles between social agents over a specific capital, determining part of what is at stake in these struggles. The field is a bordered network of relations in which some positions are central (and hence dominant) and others are peripheral or marginal. All positions, however, are definable in relation to one another – that is, they are knowable and measurable in objective terms. (Loughlan et al., 2015: 28)

Society, as such, is “composed of as many fields as there are species of power, hierarchies of positions, and stakes over which agents struggle” (ibid). When it comes to studying these fields, collecting data and so on, it is not the individuals that are of interest but the relations in the field and their relative positions. Methodologically here it is about describing and understanding these differences, for example between rich/poor, professionals/amateur, experts/novices and so on. Since the important thing in the field is the relational configurations among the social spaces (held by agents), the Bourdieuan theory of fields, is opposed to rational choice based theories. Rather than being agent’s rational calculations that leads to decisions, it is the field-specific socialization of agents that drive it (Bourdieu, 1998, in Loughlan et al., 2015: 28).

In any such a field, there resides a habitus. This stands for the sort of ‘practical sense’ that develops within any given social field. Habitus is central to the move away from orthodox academic methodology that the methodology of bricolage aims at. The habitus of the academic field, the so-called ‘cascading path’ of orthodoxy, has a ‘hygienizing’ and gatekeeping logic of reasoning, constraining the research(er) into alignment with orthodoxy, and homogenizes the practices of science. Understood as such, the habitus of the traditional scholarly disciplines of IR and security studies has a specific ‘hygienic’ conceptualizing methods of research, disciplining the study of security into the ‘cascading path’ of orthodoxy (Loughlan et al., 2015:10, 12-13).
3.3 The PARIS approach of Didier Bigo

In *Theorizing Internal Security Cooperation in the European Union* (Bossong & Rhinard, 2016) in the chapter written by Didier Bigo, the International Political Sociology (IPS) perspective is described as seeking to both learn from the “contemporary science on complexity and the useful insights found in anthropology and sociology”, to transcend the “caricature-like opposition in international relations between so-called idealist versus realist theories or between critical versus mainstream ‘camps’. It has a multipurpose of being “materialist, constructivist, empirical and reflexive” at the same time. It further argues that IR should be thought of sociologically, beginning with the practices and incorporating the study of relations and processes (trajectories) into the analysis, on a transnational scale (Bigo, 2016c: 64-65).

In contrast to the common way in IR scholarship to think in terms of agency-structure, the IPS approach theorizes in terms of process-relations, and transcends the problematics related to the former. To understand what shapes the trajectories of institutions, a *processual* perspective is deemed necessary, and “requires seeing the world as a sea of flux, comprising a manifold of changes that are not clear-cut replacement of one hard-edged state by another, but a melting and fusing of boundary-less processes” (ibid: 69). The need for a *relational* perspective is ontologically grounded in a conception of reality *being* relational, and not interactionist, and that the real “is made of discrete institutions” (ibid: 70). The IPS approach “pursues knowledge concerning the ‘doing’ of actors” and the relations of meaning and imitation, or ‘mimesis’, that shape the habitus of fields and the dispositions of the agents within. Paraphrasing Bigo, it is an approach that looks at the ‘field effects’ created by these relations, “effects which crystallize at certain moments”, but which also implies that “the boundaries of fields are always changing” (ibid: 71).

Drawing on Foucauldian theorizing on specific historical *episteme*, Bigo describes how the conceptions such as security, freedom, democracy and politics are all terminologies dependent on and changing with different circumstantial social settings, or universes (ibid: 66). And that security, being an especially contested concept, leads actors to compete:

[…] for the monopoly of the definition of security – and the priorities of the struggles against threats and risks – will try to determine the allocation of tasks and budgets between multiple organizations as well as the scale of the concentration of the major
means of coercion in the hands of ‘public’ actors. The process of (in)securitization, which can be understood as the distribution of the use of violence and coercion between insecurity, security, and fate, will make visible some forms of insecurity and conceal others, and will transform some actions of violence into either an inescapable fate where no one is responsible and nothing can be done, or a way to justify exceptional means and emergency measures to control and tackle them. (ibid: 66, Bigo referencing to Bigo 1994, 2013).

Bigo further argues that the (previously mentioned) ‘Paris School’ of critical security studies more rightly should be called the PARIS (Political Anthropological Research of International Sociology) approach. When considering the origin of what has been counted as either internal or external security, the former being related to border guards and police, and the latter of militaries and diplomats, Bigo describes it as several centuries long process of “professionalization of the means of violence by state bureaucracies” (Bigo, 2016c: 66). Applying the perspective of IPS, or more precisely the PARIS approach, when, for example, studying EUs internal security, it: 

[…] only makes sense inside this broader picture of the state–and of the transformations of the relations between the main institutions dealing with coercion, intelligence and espionage, and the fight against criminals, as well as those involved with the management of border controls and the propagation of fear in an assemblage of various ‘global’ insecurities. (ibid)

The external dimension of EU internal security, that is, the way that the field effects of the professionals of (in)security aren’t bound by its actual geographical borders, is ‘centrifugal’ and expands beyond the unions actual borders into neighbouring regions and transatlantic relations. Following the blurry distinction between war and crime that has arisen through the (in)securitization of terrorism, as well as migration, this “external dimension has sharpened via intelligence that epitomizes the logic of policing at a distance and via surveillance technologies for ‘prevention’ activities such as tracking and tracing” (ibid: 67). This argument and legitimization of prevention and shared need to further expand technologies of surveillance, has led to a sort of merger of the two previously distinct spheres of “proactive policing and military strategists” (ibid: 77), a hybridization of police and military logics and practices in the post-cold war era (ibid: 75).
3.4 Mapping the Guilds of (in)Security Information Management

[...] the blurring of the previously stark boundaries between an inside and an outside, a national and an international, [and police and military] created opportunities for regional organizations to enter the sphere of security matters and provided a space for the use and proliferation of policing techniques and counter-insurrection tactics. (own emphasis, Bigo, 2016c: 75)

The PARIS approach requires researchers to both understand the formal boundaries and configurations of institutions of (in)security as well as the informal and transboundary connections, relations and practices of the (in)security professionals. Or as Bigo calls it, the study of the “guilds of (in)security information management”. The actors part of these guilds:

(i) are strongly devoted to the question of (in)security at the European scale, (ii) strive to prioritize their importance vis-à-vis other actors by differently categorizing and prioritizing the lists of threats, risks and even acts of fate with which they consider the world is confronted, and (iii) work routinely as professionals with different crafts in order to use techniques that they present as the best solutions to violence. (ibid: 72)

In this way, the PARIS approach captures both national and transnational fields of insecurity practices, across different professions, private/public and military/police, and examines “how multiple fields relate to security, and are configured by the confluence of broader historical trajectories linked to the development and definition of the state”. It also, and more so than many other critical takes on security, avoids the tendency to reproduce the IR assumption of the state being the “sole container ‘of the society and its rules’ related to security. By focusing on “the existence of transnational solidarities and struggles between groups and specific social universes that cross frontier, be they state borders or identity borders” (Bigo, 2016c: 72). In rough terms, the PARIS approach consists of tracing, relating and mapping:

(a) who are the actors that participate routinely in practices of (in)securitization, (b) where they come from, especially in a context of intense privatization of some spheres of public activities, and (c) centrally, what do they, how they are congregating around specific stakes, and what kind of use do they have regarding new technologies.” (ibid: 73)
3.5 Flows, Order and Change

Paraphrasing Bigo, these EU and transatlantic networks, or guilds of (in)security information management, take the shape of informal intelligence and policing clubs. Although not large in terms of number of people, these heterogeneous but interdependent networks expand across the western sphere and shapes its security politics, driven by internal struggles over the resources and means, but most significantly, the symbolic power over which ‘truth’ of (in)security they propagate for. They exert this effect via the categories used for exchanging information, and they change previous national configurations by considering some local autonomous events as an example of a bigger picture, which forges a necessary link to the ‘globalization of crime and terror’

This struggle of (in)security practices is intense and prone to changes in its boundaries due to its specific relation to the political field. Negative results of one defined organization can lead to the loss of symbolic power – followed by political decisions (driven on by public opinion) reorganizing and delegating the resources and authority differently (Bigo, 2016a: 77-80).

This link to the politics of states also connects the configurations of these guilds to the globalized flows of economy and international politics. Sociologically, however, the flows of information, resources and people between human societies isn’t caused by either globalization or digitalization (Bigo, 2017: 305). Such transactions have always occurred throughout the history of (wo)man. However, these flows have become hyper-intensified over the last decades, and in a regulatory sense, ‘order’ has become the political logic and practical sense (habitus) of (in)security, where disruption of order and loss of state control is inherently viewed as something negative.

As such, the security episteme has become that of order and control over the human flows. Bigo develops an alternative understanding of this, by first regarding the paradoxical tendency of security authorities stating the inevitability of the realization of threats. Most prominently, the way that terrorism and migration is not thought of in terms of if it will occur, but rather when it will. Here, Bigo flips the coin, and instead suggests we think in terms of the inevitability of flows. “Flows are first, order is Second” (ibid: 306).
4. Concluding Summary

This paper is heavy with complexity, no doubt about it. It takes the reader on a turbulent journey across wide philosophical and theoretical divides, and draws out an analytical story of order and disruption, of flows and control, and of certitude and confusion. However, where else does one turn to when seeking answers, if not to science.

Putting it plainly, the practice of science is fundamentally about asking the ‘right’ questions and finding the most reasonable answers. It is the human activity of systematically searching for and convincingly providing evidence for something resembling a truth about a (more or less) defined matter. A common approach in the social sciences is to seek and define explanations to a specified problematic. For example, the problematic can be derived from events that are paradoxical, or go against what previous experience or research would have predicted. Also in the field of political science, the problematic must be of a scientific nature, and not just problems that are on the political agenda. However, this distinction is increasingly hard to make when just about everything seems both interrelated and problematic these days, and would be so even without the ‘most powerful man in the world’ systematically waving aside the community of science in favour of so-called ‘alternative facts’.

Faced with that, this bachelor’s thesis attempted to inquire into how to study complexity. By first and foremost being informed by principles of feminist research ethics, it achieved being attentive to the power of knowledge, epistemology and of boundaries. Since the inquiry didn’t study any specific set of individuals, it only abstractly reflected on relationships and their power differentials through the employment of the ensuing methodological and theoretical choices. Most significantly, I was attentive to the situatedness of myself as a researcher. By being thoroughly suspicious of the inferences and conclusion I drew, it was deemed necessary to be (infuriatingly) explicatory about the experimental and explorative purpose of the paper. The critical security studies methodology of bricolage opens up avenues of doing just that.

The presentation of Tom Lundborg’s analyses of the philosophies on ‘the virtualization of security’ and the different political stakes that they suggest has, however, thus far not been connected to the theoretical framework of Didier Bigo. This is partly due to lack of space, but is more importantly because of the primary reason for introducing the ‘virtual’ to the reader. One of the criteria of this paper was to connect the research to the main areas of the political science
programme at the Swedish Defence University, namely, security and/or crisis management. As the introduction mentioned, this paper was the result of a thought process that’s been at the back of my mind during these past two and a half years. One of the main questions I have repeatedly asked during the programme has concerned the reasons and motivations behind the different abstractions and theoretical boundaries drawn in research. With that question perpetually lurking in the background, taken together with the fact that this paper must be of political science, and not (for example) of sociology, I needed to take a deeper dive into theory, at the expense of further moving away from practical use and empirical contributions (or, at least so I thought).

Wanting to connect the political with the social, (being one of those differentiations I didn’t understand), I needed to find the missing bricks needed for bridging this divide. The first building blocks of feminist ethics and methodology of bricolage, as mentioned, provided the first tools that led the inquiry to the issue and phenomenon of ‘cybersecurity’. Still lacking, however, was a thorough way of appreciating what this notion of ‘cyber’ meant in terms of security and reality. The philosophies of reality and security opened up, in my opinion, for a broader approach. This is how the virtual came to be a part of this thesis. And finally, being unsure if the International Political Sociology perspective was close enough to IR, a wider turn was taken into the ‘Paris school’ of critical security studies, and thus, the disciplinary grounds were secured.

The PARIS approach (Political Anthropological Research of International Sociology) and the method of mapping emerged as the edge of the analytical tool I was experimentally constructing.

The more ‘precise aim of this paper’ was to experimentally explore how to study the changes in Sweden concerning its cybersecurity structure, and, all the while being grounded in the papers ethical and methodological starting points. The PARIS approach and its mapping of the transnational guilds of (in)security presents a promising way of doing just that. It accounts for the informal and formal, the external and internal, private and public, military and police, and perhaps most importantly, both the empirical and theoretical. It thereby transcends binary and simplistic understandings of this complex world, without being either to ‘fuzzy’, ‘post-structural’ or idealist, and still challenges orthodoxy and ultimately, resists power. However, and in conclusion, an application of the different philosophies of the virtual with the PARIS approach, what it would result in, or even how one would go about it, is still left unexplored.
5. Limitations and Future Research

By both striving for depth and width, this paper ended up have many gaps and blind spots. This is evident when considering both the rather simplified description of feminist research ethics, as well as the application of it. The only situatedness reflected on thus far has been of the ‘field’ I as a researcher am embedded in at the Swedish Defence University. The many other forms subjectivities I carry, such as that of being a young white male, surely has had its impact on the way I ‘constructed’ this piece of knowledge. Moreover, the choices in literature and sources of inspiration that led to this product should by no means stand as a ‘causal representation’ of the programme at the University. Chance, luck, social encounters, personal biases and much more has played a part in the process, and naturally, this paper should not be interpreted as the way to apply the education, write a paper or even think about security. It is simply the result of a reflexive attentiveness to power and knowledge.

However, as an interesting side note that actually gives credence to this approach, and might possibly even convince the most ‘realistic’ of security practitioners, is the fact that the use of Bourdieuan field theory has recently been applied to military operational analysis (Gunneriusson, 2017). And furthermore, when considering the methods and practices that the global surveillance of NSA uses, mapping individuals and creating networks of social interactions and their dispositions (or habitus?), the similarity is actually not that farfetched. In terms of future research, then, perhaps an exploration of and dialogue between the disciplinary fields of intelligence studies and critical security studies would prove fruitful. This disciplinary and empirical duality could be motivated with, for one, the unusual relationship that both fields have with the notion of ‘scientific standards’. The former is strongly associated with the harsh ‘reality’ of the world and of ‘practical sense’, while in contrast, the caricature of the latter is of post-modern and unscientific fuzziness. Secondly, both fields come from the margins, often working in the silences of society and behind the shadows cast by ‘mainstream’ knowledge. Critical scholarships seek to unsettle power structures, to problematize the dominant logics of power and (in)security that shape the politics, while intelligence instead often serves, upholds and protects the established power with secrecy, in the name security. That is, at least hypothetically.
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