Introduction to securitization theory

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The Copenhagen School

- This social constructivist method of conceptualizing security known as 'securitization' was first presented in a 1989 Working Paper "Security the Speech Act: Analysing the Politics of a Word" by Ole Wæver.

- Based in the Copenhagen: Centre for Peace and Conflict Research, **O Wæver** and **B Buzan**

- a series of works including a book on societal security in Europe, *Identity, Migration and the New Security Agenda (1993) and*

- *Security: A New Framework of Analysis (1998),*

- *which extensively expands* upon the conceptual understanding of securitization as well as its practical application.

- The Copenhagen School has offered an innovative and fascinating approach to security

What does securitization?

The Copenhagen School - a 'next step' in the ongoing discussion on how best to understand 'security'.
-it alternatively implied
  -- a conceptual move,
  -- a framework of analysis, and
  -- an empirical and political theory of security.

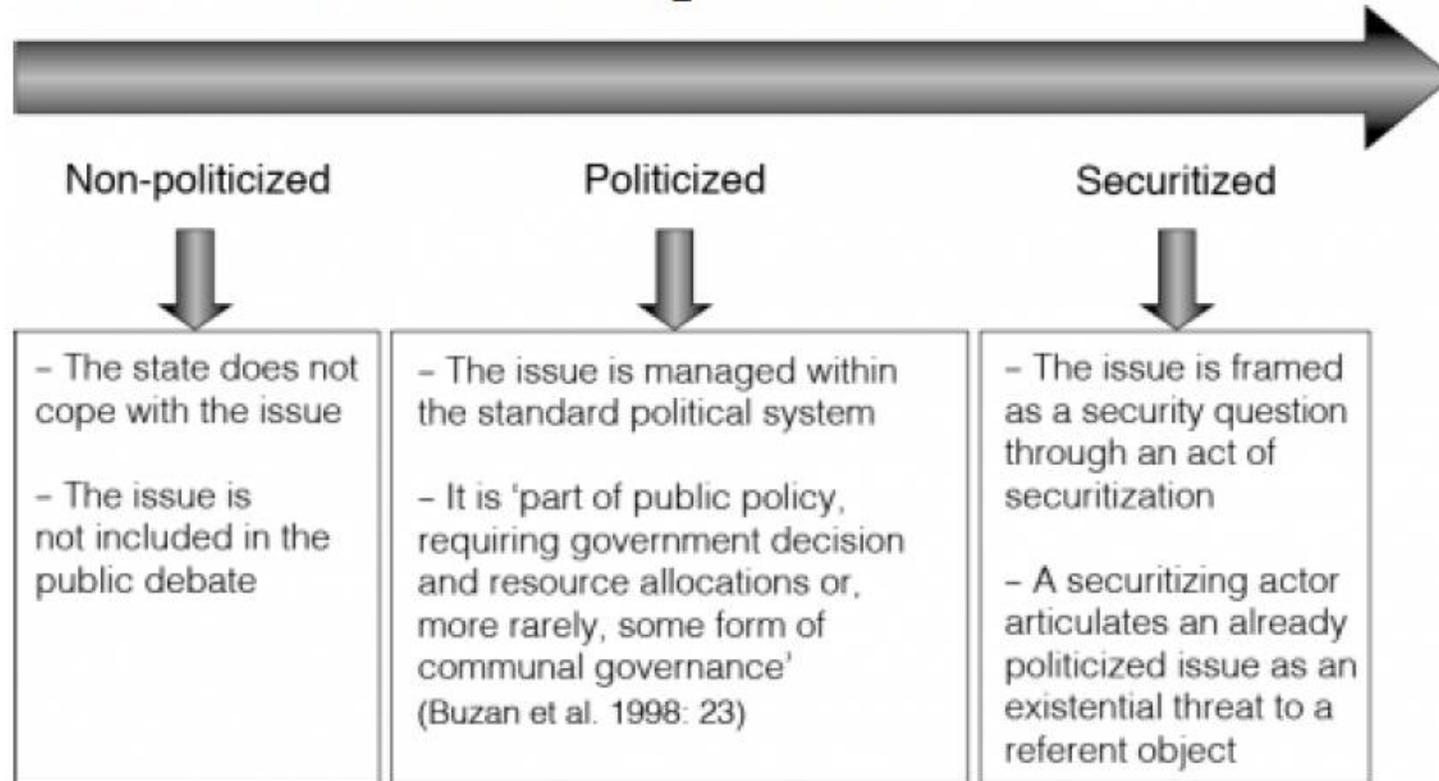•It is probably fair to say that 'securitization' was foremost a broad conceptual move.
•It went beyond conceptualizing security in objectivist terms – I.E a qualitative and quantitative tool of evaluating security
•it also left a subjectivist security concept behind, where security is whatever significant actors may regard as such.

SECURITY IS WHAT WE MAKE OF IT!

- The securitization theory developed in the late '90's by the **Copenhagen School** (Security: A New Framework for Analysis, 1998)
- it has **widened the concept of secur**ity - military sector but also to the political, economical, societal and environmental spheres.
- it has "developed a substantial body of concepts to rethink security, most notably through its notions of **securitization** and **desecuritization** [...]."
- do not pertain exclusively to the state, but can be enacted by other for as well providing a framework to analyze security, namely to understand **how an issue** becomes **securitized or desecuritized**.
- it has introduced a **subjective approach** to security analysis, turning security into a self-referential practice on the claim that security is not an objective existing reality but an inter-subjective[3] one, being the result of **social**[4], **subjective**[5], **discursive**[6] processes and determined by **actors with political potential**, that benefit from privileged positions[7]. (Emmers 2007:112)
- **Sociology -** proper toll to understand security

Chart 1: Securitization spectrum

Non-politicized	Politicized	Securitized
– The state does not cope with the issue – The issue is not included in the public debate	– The issue is managed within the standard political system – It is 'part of public policy, requiring government decision and resource allocations or, more rarely, some form of communal governance' (Buzan et al. 1998: 23)	– The issue is framed as a security question through an act of securitization – A securitizing actor articulates an already politicized issue as an existential threat to a referent object

Source: Emmers (2011: 138)

act of securitization

- Non-politicized issues are those that the state does not deal with and that are not part of public debate.
- Politicized issues are tackled within the political system and are part of public policy calling for government action.
- Securitized matters, at the end of the spectrum, are those which ask for extraordinary means, beyond normal political procedures of the state (Emmers 2011: 138f).
- According to the Copenhagen School, matters are moved from the politicized into the securitized area of the above shown spectrum via an 'act of securitization'.
- Buzan *et al. (1998: 23) state that "security is the* move that takes politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue either as a special kind of
- politics or as above politics",
- securitization can therefore be considered a more extreme version of politicization.
- desecuritization implies the reverse process of moving issues from the emergency level back into the normal political arena.

every securitization is composed of

- a *security act (by speaking the language of* security and asking for the adoption of extraordinary counter-measures) and

- a *political act (a political decision* to articulate the threat in such a way as to convince the target audience).

Normative dilemma

- Securitization processes have normative implications, which is understood here to be the negative securitization of a referent.

- The negative securitization of a referent is asserted to be carried out through the unchallenged analysis of securitization processes which have emerged through relations of exclusion and power.

- It then offers a *critical understanding and application of* securitization studies as a way of overcoming the identified normative dilemma.

Barry Buzan at the University of Bucharest (2007)