Security! How Do You Study It? An Introduction into Critical Methodologies and Research Methods[1]

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It has been over fifteen years since Jef Huysmans (1998) posed the question essential for every student of security: "Security! What do you mean?" Several theoretical orientations have crystallized in response, confirming Huysmans's observation that the "exploration of the meaning of security is the security studies agenda itself" (1998: 223). There were few analyses dividing critical security studies into schools of thought (Wæver 2004; Taureck 2006) as well as a synthesis attempting to "go beyond the artificial boundaries in order to combine a variety of critical approaches under a common framework without, nonetheless, reducing one approach to another" (C.A.S.E. Collective 2006: 451). And no matter how many new security issues are identified (Burgess 2010), the meaning of security remains contested, as distinctive and mutually exclusive logics of security are theorized.

In the critical literature, two main logics of security are confronted. The first one relates security to exclusion, violence, fear, and anti-democratic politics. Against this bleak vision, the concept of emancipation is erected to conceive security in terms of human freedoms and rights. As such, the conflict over the meaning of security has been related to a normative problem: is it possible to make security in a positive way, or is the point to distance oneself and resist its oppressive logic to achieve emancipation? (Browning and McDonald 2013; Nunes 2012; Van Munster 2007). The adherents of the latter approach have suggested different *politics out of security* (Aradau 2008; Bigo 2010; Neocleous 2008; Peoples 2011). However, their opponents have countered with the argument that there is no intrinsic, timeless, and abstract logic of security; there are merely dominant representations and practices of security that can be and, in fact, should be dissected and challenged.

It is far from banal to assume that security indeed does different things at different times and in different places, as this has important implications for methodology (Ciuta 2009). Since research on security "comes from somewhere, is produced by someone, and has potentially significant impacts on others" (Jarvis 2013: 236), the idea of neutrality or pure objectivity is untenable and the question of context and interpretation gains in importance. Hence, not only "theory is always for someone and for some purpose" (Cox 1981: 128), but also the ways through which we study (in)security empirically inevitably contain certain political decisions and dilemmas leading to highlighting some and obscuring other elements of the social reality. The reflexivity, as in all social sciences, is thus the crucial aspect of solid research process.

In this chapter, we will discuss the recent development of interest in methodology and research methods in critical security studies as a sort of conclusion to this book. The words "methodology" and "methods" have been treated as a source of confusion and anxiety especially on the side of students. Without textbooks or manuals on the use of formalized methods specifically in the field of security studies, students of security were often wrestling with hardships and doubts about the practical aspects of research and its relationship to the endless supply of theoretical frameworks and concepts. Dealing with the question of what it means to study security critically both in terms of theoretical approaches and discussions, and actual research practice, we aim to provide a basic introduction which might help to think about as well as to conduct an inquiry into the world of (in)security. To advance this intention, we focus on our long-term research projects, which happen to focus on two rather different fields: first, the practical world of security

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professionals; and second, the socially excluded locality – with both of the research projects embedded deeply in the context of post-socialist Central Europe (Slovakia and Czech Republic). As these projects were conceived from the very beginning as critical enterprises, this trait is particularly scrutinized.

First, we describe the recent shift of attention from theory to methodology in critical security studies. As there are no methodological questions which do not engage theory, a very short introduction to the contemporary theorization of security is included, as well as a discussion of the specific problems of ethics in security research. The second section focuses closely on the "methodological turn" in critical security studies. In particular, the topics of research design, the methodological genres titled "methodological turns" by Salter and Multu (2013), and the critical re-conceptualization of methods debunking their performative and political nature (Aradau and Huysmans 2013) will be presented.

The paper concludes with two practical security research examples and their discussion. Once a security bureaucrat himself, Ľubomír Lupták introduces his (auto)ethnographic study of the people who *do* security (i.e. the security professionals operating in the bureaucratic, academic, media, and NGO spheres in Slovakia and in the Czech Republic), trying to grasp the cultural and political significance of everyday practices, interactions, communal rituals, and symbolic production of this strange tribe of experts. Václav Walach turns attention to the experience of people who are often talked about in the context of security – the Roma, who in the Czech Republic are often relegated to marginalized neighborhoods (see also the third chapter of this book), attempting to make sense of their everyday (in)securities through his ethnographic inquiry.

From Critical Theory to Critical Methodology

After the "return to theory" in security studies (Wæver and Buzan 2013), one may speak about entering the age of methodology. Ontological and epistemological issues were for a long time at the heart of critical debates, whereas the "ideas that inform the methods and techniques that we use" (Shepherd 2013: 1) were rather put aside (Aradau – Huysmans 2013). That is not to say, of course, that the methodological question of "how we do what we do" (Salter 2013a: 1-2) had not been discussed before, nor that researchers did not think critically about their inquiries.[2] We can nonetheless see recent years as a time of change in critical security studies, as a number of publications, research projects, seminars, workshops, courses, and public lectures have been devoted exclusively to methodology and research methods.

On the other hand, this explosion of methodology may also be viewed as an expression of rather problematic transformations occurring in the social sciences in the recent decades. Methodological fetishism, a bias toward quantitative research, and ritualistic proceduralism have been criticized by a whole range of authors as devastating to the actual ability of the social sciences of providing original insights into social processes and phenomena.

More than half a century ago, Charles Wright Mills attacked the abstracted empiricism and bureaucratic ethos taking over the various departments and institutions of social science (Mills 1959: 50–119). Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc Wacquant have condemned the "methodologism" and "theoreticism" as two forms of "involution … separating reflection on methods from their actual use in scientific work," leading to the cultivation of "method for its own sake" (Bourdieu – Wacquant 1992: 26–27). Most recently, Jock Young's lament about criminology points out how "reality has been lost in a sea of statistical symbols and dubious analysis" (Young 2011: viii), where the focus seems to be more on innovation of statistical techniques and mathematical equations than on understanding and explanation of phenomena (ibid.: 47).[3] Even in predominantly interpretative

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    There are various remarkable contributions to the subject that we highly recommend reading, see, e.g., Ackerly *et al.* 2006; Alker 1996; Friedrichs and Kratochwil 2009; Hansen 2006; Jackson 2011; Klotz and Lynch 2007; Klotz and Prakash 2008; Krause 1998; Milliken 1999; Pouliot 2007; Sylvester 1994; Vrasti 2008, etc.

disciplines like anthropology, scholars have noticed the pressure of "scientific" research standards, often derived from the deductive logic of research, impeding their work (Okely 2012: 1-25).

Looking back at the changes in academic writing in the last few decades, we can observe a significant increase in formalism and proceduralism, turning the ever-increasing and sophisticated methodology sections into spaces of academic intimidation rituals, the function of which is far from making one's road to his or her results more transparent. Attempts to reclaim methodology (see e.g. Hansen 2006: 16) and to delve into worlds of ritualistic *ptydepe*[4] thus may seem unfortunate – submitting to the new "rules of the game" instead of accepting (and resisting) the fact that the "game is rigged" (Broadus 2006). The explosion of new forms of academic writing patterns concentrated around formalized methods and the increasing mathematization of the social sciences may well be interpreted as a result of the triumph of bureaucratic formalism over sociological imagination, with the academic craft and methodological procedures trumping research questions. Descriptions of methods used in our research might be helpful for the reader, but they should not serve to cover the fact that there is not much to say, and neither should they be used as tokens of "scientific-ness," substituting for the actual results of one's research. Defying this formalism with a return to the literary style of writing of classical authors of social theory (and for the simple fact that in order to write something we must have something to say) might be a better way of resistance of the bureaucratization of social science than devising and engaging in our own methodological newspeak.

In this paper, however, we depart from such a gloomy assessment of recent developments. Instead of "killing method" in favor of insight and creativity (Ferrell 2009), we hold the view that the "tyranny of method" can be overturned. If we reframe methodology as an "overarching epistemological and meta-theoretical reflection," it helps us to not only to understand all the stakes implicit in an empirical investigation, but also to strengthen our inquiry this way (Aradau and Huysmans 2013: 2). As it is not possible to meaningfully answer methodological (or any other kind of) questions without epistemology or theory, it is necessary to begin with a very short introduction to the theory of critical security studies.[5]

According to Columba Peoples and Nick Vaughan-Williams (2010), there are several ways to characterize critical security studies. One of the first definitions conceived critical security studies more as an "orientation toward the discipline than a precise theoretical label" that would make the "question and problem of security" opened to change in terms of conceptualization and policy (Krause and Williams 1997: xii). The apparent broadness and permissibility mirrored the plurality of approaches influenced by multiple philosophies, ranging from critical theory and feminism to post-structuralism and post-colonialism. Since they sometimes found themselves in conflict, their opposition to traditional Realist/Liberal security studies has functioned as the lowest denominator of them (see also Buzan and Hansen 2009).

To understand the nature of the critical challenge, we can recall a now classic distinction between problem-solving and critical theory. Critical security studies are meant to be critical precisely in the sense that they, unlike traditional security studies, do not "take institutions and social and power relations for granted but [call] them into question by concerning [themselves] with their origins [i.e., of these social relations] and how and whether they might be in the process of changing" (Cox 1981: 129). Later on, Fierke (2007: 27), among others, reaffirmed the "shift to an understanding of security as a social and political construction," calling for a further politicization of security. It is the question *what security does politically*, that is, how "representations and discourses of security encourage sets of practices, legitimize particular actors or indeed constitute

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For a critical defense of quantitative methods, see Sjoberg and Horowitz (2013).

[4] In Václav Havel's play „The Memorandum", ptydepe is an artificial language boasting the ability to overcome the ambiguity of all other languages by adherence to strictly scientific principles – in the end, however, the language is an absurd and incomprehensible mess. Here the word is used as a metaphor of the various technical/bureaucratic jargons which often seem much better in obscuring meaninglessness than in conveying meanings. .

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For a more extensive summary of the theoretical development in security studies, see Daniel in this volume.

political communities and their limits in particular ways" (Browning – McDonald 2013: 239), which is supposed to be answered.

Given this, João Nunes (2012) came up with the reading of security as the narrative of politicization in order to, first, organize the increasing production of critical security studies and, second, point to some of its limitations. In particular, he spoke about the demise of critique within the project, as scholars have largely resorted to the "negative" conception of security (see also Hynek and Chandler 2013). Some scholars have concentrated on how security proclamations produce a exceptionalistcurtailment of democratic procedures; others have highlighted routine practices that make certain social categories insecure as a result of the inner workings of the field of security professionals (e.g., Bigo and Tsoukala 2008; Buzan *et al.* 2005; Lupták 2011). Either way, security may be conceptualized as a mode of exercising power based on drawing a line between normality and deviance, or, more precisely, as a "principle of formation" which fosters violence and insecurity, establishing limits, divisions, and hierarchies between and within different social groups (Aradau and Van Munster 2010: 74). As security denotes, after all, "practices of survival" aimed at "postponing death by countering enemies" (Huysmans 1998: 234, 236), the most radical understanding of security in this sense identifies its final horizon with the extermination of dangerous deviants, for which Neocleous (2009) reserves the notion of the "fascist moment."

The more security has been identified with the negative logic, the more the orientation of moving away from security and its potential emancipatory effects came to be seen as politically and ethically sound. The rise of the security state along with the repressive logic of surveillance after the events of 9/11 made this approach comprehensible (Agamben 2005; Aradau and Van Munster 2007; Bauman and Lyon 2013; Bigo *et al.* 2010; Bigo and Tsoukala 2008; Jabri 2006; Neal 2010). To Nunes (2012: 350), nevertheless, the "extraordinary progress in problematizing predominant security ideas and practices" was paid for by the "depoliticization of the meaning of security itself," which has resulted in the diminished analytical capacity of critical security studies, the decreasing possibility of alternative notions of security, the inability to operate as a political resource, and in being constantly at risk of political counter-productivity. If security indeed is a "framework for organizing contemporary social life" in a post-9/11 world (Goldstein 2010: 488), the price for not inventing more inclusive and democratic security practices might be too high (see also de Lint and Virta 2004).

Security as emancipation represents a positive outlook. For its advocates, "critique of security can be both deconstructive (denaturalizing and problematizing) and reconstructive (engaged in political struggles for transformation)" (Bosu and Nunes 2013: 75). The workings of security described previously can be transformed "not only by social struggles, but also by ideas that shape these struggles" in order to create "spaces in people's lives in which they can make decisions and act beyond the basic necessities of survival" (Nunes 2012: 351, 357). To put it in Marxian terms, all that is solid eventually melts into the air, and the seemingly unshakable security representations and practices are no exception (Linklater 1996). This prospect is founded on the idea that security equates to "freeing people from the life-determining conditions of insecurity" (Booth 2007: 115). In other words, security and emancipation are "two sides of the same coin" which one uses to buy himself or herself out of the insecure circumstances limiting his free action (Booth 1991: 319). More security means therefore more freedom for everyone. Practices of survival might be carried out "not against others, but with them" (Booth 2007: 115).

Perhaps the best way to resolve this dispute might be to see "negative" and "positive" security as two poles of a continuum of security politics. Actually existing security representations and practices can be studied precisely in relation to the position which they occupy in the continuum. That is, if they are more pernicious to human freedom, they go closer to the "negative" pole and *vice versa*. This approach is fully compatible with Browning and McDonald's suggestion to engage with the "nuanced, reflexive and context-specific analyses of the politics and ethics of security" (2013: 248) as a way to overcome the abstract security dichotomy through an understanding of how security is performed and experienced in reality. Empirically grounded inquiry that prefers the concrete over the abstract and the particular over the universal appears to us as a site of potential

transformation, regardless if it is framed by the notion of security or not. Contextualized empirical research is never devoid of abstract theorization. Explicitly or implicitly, the way we grasp our object of research structures the research process itself, from our initial questions to our final interpretation and conclusions. As "there is... no such thing as description... that does not engage a theory" (Wacquant 2002: 1523–1524), researchers should reflect upon the theoretical assumptions that underpin their inquiry; otherwise, they will submit to lay interpretations and common-sense explanations.

This is true of all research, but the importance of theoretical reflection especially arises in the case of fieldwork. Here, although we strongly encourage researchers to employ a "methodology of conducting fieldwork that allows individuals to speak in their own voice" (Croft 2008: 504), they should not do it "unarmed," This means, to paraphrase Wacquant (2011: 87-88), that they should carry out their inquiry equipped with all available theoretical and methodological tools, with the full supply of problems inherited from their discipline, with their capacity for reflexivity and analysis, and guided by a constant effort *to objectivize the experience acquired in research and construct the object*, instead of allowing themselves to be naïvely embraced and constructed by it.

Theories have impact on research designs, for they structure the understanding of research object as well as research ethics. The titles of the two security logics might be perplexing; however emancipation lies at the heart of critical security studies overall (Wyn Jones 2005). As Jarvis (2013: 242-243) argued, the researcher as critic not only wants "to know the world better or differently, but also to challenge and critique existing sources, agents, and consequences of insecurity," Whether we intend to attain it *through security* or *against security*, there is always an idea of progress underneath.[6] Even postmodern or post-structuralist approaches to security, deemed notorious for their reluctance to articulate any notion of progress whatsoever, share this preoccupation. For instance, Aradau and Van Munster (2010: 80) claim that the challenge to ongoing security practices is oriented towards emancipation as an "unconditional principle" which refers to a *de jure* universality – freedom and equality.

Burke (2013: 80, 87) also insists on preserving the "hope that [critical security studies] could constitute a form of scientific and ethical progress," whilst recognizing "two major contributions to a postmodern ethics of security": an "ethics of resistance and critique" and an "ethics of relation," The first has been introduced on a basic level; it coincides with the critique of dominant security representations and practices that must be resisted and unmade. Nonetheless, since security practices are frequently tied up with and enable the "larger ontologies (the systems and signification of identity, otherness, and being)," it is identity itself – the self and its relations with others – that must be rethought to bring about a progressive change (see also Neumann 2010). The ethics of relation accentuates diversity and interdependence of human beings. It is based on the recognition of others through giving up the conception of "self-contained and self-referring ego, one that seeks mastery over its environment, nature, and other human beings" (Burke 2013: 87; see also Burke 2007).

One of the routes to this end might be in Habermasian politics, in open dialogue, creating the symbolic and material possibilities of such a dialogue, and broadening the relationship between deliberation and its outcomes (Browning and McDonald 2013; Wyn Jones 1999). On the other hand, we should be wary of overlooking contextual specifics. When we research, for instance, how the field of security professionals contributes to the production and reproduction of social realities through (in)security discourses and practices, should we still talk about emancipation, or is emancipatory research of security reserved for research projects focusing on "experience of those men and women and communities for whom the present world order is a cause of insecurity rather than security" (Wyn Jones 1995: 309) after the fashion of immanent critique (Fierke 2007: 167–

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  Emancipation through security is obviously affiliated with Ken Booth (2007) and the "positive" strand of security thought. The approach against security is most eloquently articulated by Claudia Aradau (2008) and Mark Neocleous for whom Booth is "as mistaken as one can possibly be about security," as, instead of security and emancipation, "security and *oppression* are the two sides of the same coin" (2008: 5, italics in the original).

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Obviously, these perspectives are seldom incompatible. Security representations and practices are part of the insecurity picture; they themselves produce insecurities which tend to target certain social categories more than others. Such an (in)security asymmetry might be the starting point in identifying emancipatory possibilities within the field of security professionals, out of which the current security representations and practices can be rendered more inclusive and democratic. At the same time, researching such representations and practices should be complemented by understanding what effects they have for those targeted by them. In Naderian terms (1972), both the studying up and down suit emancipatory purposes in security studies agenda. To identify how security politics operates in certain environments requires plunging into messy empirical worlds (Squire 2013).

In the next section, we present five methodologies relating the methods of ethnography, field analysis, discourse analysis, corporeal analysis, and analysis of material culture to other components of research procedure such as the object of research, techniques of data construction, the nature of data, etc. (Salter and Mutlu 2013). Afterwards, we elaborate on the re-conceptualization of methods as performative and political instruments to demonstrate the possibilities and limitations that their application in an empirical inquiry creates.

The Methodological Turn(s) of Critical Security Studies

With "more than twenty years of solid work in critical security studies" (Salter 2013a: 11), the issues of methodology and research methods have risen to prominence. The questions of how we do our research and how such projects can inspire other researchers are of particular importance, because the production of theoretical knowledge can hardly be imagined without a "serious engagement with the empirical" (Salter 2013b: 15). An immersion into the empirical requires reflexivity in methodology as well as in theory. In more specific terms, it means "to include method as an explicit pillar of research that supports the argument as much as theory" (Salter 2013a: 13).

Openness toward the research object and reflexivity regarding the research process are crucial features of critical methodology. In this respect, Salter (2013a: 2-3) speaks of "four postures of critical inquiry," The first one considers social and political life to be complex and messy, making it impossible to identify any single unifying principle in social reality – context-specific understanding matters. Second, agency is presumed to be everywhere: in individuals, groups, states, ideational structures, and non-human agents too, and if we want to understand it, we need to deal with all of these subjects as well as the conditions they have produced and shaped them. The next posture bears on the nature of the relationship between these conditions and particular outcomes. Relying on the work of William E. Connolly, causality is supposed to be emergent. That is to say, there is no single or complex source to be set out by the analysis; there are only conditions of possibility allowing sets of politics, identities, or policies to occur. Discourses, institutions, structures, and agents render some paths possible, but not necessary; certain outcomes have been produced in certain ways, but their emergence out of these conditions is however never automatic or self-evident.

We already said that the issue of ethics is vital for critical security studies. Accordingly, the fourth critical posture corresponds with the recognition that research, writing, and public engagement are inherently political. Critical scholarship entails an active engagement with the world which has profound implications for the role that a researcher plays in "both the activity of investigation and the narration of results" (Salter 2013b: 20–23). "Research never takes place in a vacuum" (Jarvis 2013: 236); it is situated in various social, political, institutional, and intellectual contexts, and this enables and constrains the choices available to researchers. Personal characteristics of the researcher always influence the research process, as his or her position in ethno-racial, class, gender, or spatial hierarchies usually differs from the position of those under study and makes it much harder to see the world through their eyes.

How can we handle a research project under these circumstances? Constant reflexivity is the

first part of an interpretivist answer, clarity in research design and appropriateness of method for the object of study the second (Salter 2013b). As we in interpretivism are concerned with "legibility and not replicability" (ibid.: 15), a clearly specified research methodology is of utmost importance. Although not without reservations, the metaphor of "turn" has often been applied to methodological issues in critical security studies. We play on it here, too, as this style of explication is beneficial in presenting the research process as a coherent complex distinguished by its specific genre of analysis. On the other hand, the idea of genre should not lead to bounded, "inside-the-box" thinking that prioritizes methodological purity over the goal of inquiry. Researchers are encouraged to leave off formalized procedures and opt for *bricolage* whenever they feel it can benefit their aims. It is, first of all, the purpose of understanding the world of (in)security that should guide our conduct. Salter and Mutlu (2013) recognize five methodological approaches coined as the ethnographic, practice, discursive, corporeal, and material "turns":

>*The ethnographic turn*: The term "ethnography" is used to describe a

>>range of qualitative data generation techniques that are *naturalistic*, meaning that they involve studying people or phenomena in their 'natural' setting or context, and produce accounts of research that are *experience-near*, meaning that they are based on people's experiences of events, actions and phenomena in the setting or context (Wilkinson 2013: 129, italics in the original).

To put it another way, an ethnographer strives for an "empathetic analysis of culture"(Salter 2013c: 51) that generates "thick description" (Geertz 1973: 5) based on participant observation, interviewing, and document analysis. As such, it is well-suited to the study of the self-understanding of human collectivities, their identities, norms, rules, and way of being, as well as the dynamics of encountering the other. Traditionally associated with anthropology, ethnography is not a total stranger to security studies, although its usage has been rather intuitive and non-reflexive (Vrasti 2008). Ethnography's significance nonetheless has increased, as the practical worlds of justice, power, and domination occupy a central place within the agenda of critical security studies. Especially, but not exclusively, "in cases where government statistics are suspect, media outlets are controlled by political interests, and poverty, lack of infrastructure, illiteracy, or political violence impede survey research, ethnographic approaches are often the most reliable and practical means of collecting data" on how the meaning of security is constructed in a certain context (Bayard de Volo and Schatz 2004: 269).

>*The practice turn*: This approach is notably indebted to Bourdieu and his "thinking tools," that is, field, capital, and habitus (Grenfell 2012; Růžička – Vašát 2011).[7] If ethnography seeks for meaning, field analysis lays stress on the logic of practice, the meaning of which must be unearthed in relation to the social and cultural context that makes its production possible (Bourdieu 1990). That is, when a researcher aspires to understand what people say and do, she must account for the internal functioning of fields in which they operate, applying the techniques of participant observation, interviewing, document analysis, and also statistics. Field is a relatively autonomous social space in which actors compete, struggle, cooperate, and interact for various types of capital (economic, cultural, social, symbolic) according to particular rules of the game (Salter 2013a). Viewed as an effect of a field, the practical materialization of habitus is seen in the form of mental schemata of perception, appreciation, and action that drive the operation of field (Salter 2013d). "To make visible the habitus and particular relations of struggle, competition, and dominance, analysts point to informal knowledge, social positions, and networks" of the agents engaged in the field (Salter 2013a: 3). The goal is to map the dominant objective structure of the field and the subjective understanding of the rules of the game, as they together produce certain effects.

>*The discursive turn:* Basically, there is a bit of discourse analysis in every methodological

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The "practice turn" in sociology has surpassed Bourdieu's œuvre and includes other social theorists such as Luc Boltanski, Laurent Thévenot, Michel de Certeau, Anthony Giddens, Stephen Turner, etc. (see Schatzki *et al.* 2001).

approach. To be inspired by discourse analysis and to use it as a primary method are nevertheless two different things. As defined by Mutlu and Salter (2013: 113), discourse analysis is the "rigorous study of writing, speech, and other communicative events in order to understand these political, social, and cultural dynamics." It is a "method to analyze these spoken, sign-based, or any other significant semiotic markers that provide meaning to the social world surrounding us" (ibid.). Discourse as such is a "linguistic practice that puts into play sets of rules and procedures for the formation of objects, speakers and themes" (Åhäll and Borg 2013: 197). A key aspect of this definition is the assumption that discourse does not merely describe objects or communicate certain meaning, discourse in fact does something. As it produces a more or less fixed representations of reality, discourse is constitutive of what we understand as "reality" (see also Neumann 2008). In security studies, the method has been applied, especially demonstrating the "impact of language on discourses and practices of security; not only highlighting the linguistic origins of insecurities but also demonstrating the impact of competing narratives in shaping them" (Mutlu and Salter 2013: 118; see also the second and third chapters of this book). There are a variety of ways to do discourse analysis. Bakhtin's intertextuality, Foucault's genealogy, and Derrida's "anti-method" of deconstruction (Griffin 2013) are all among their cornerstone tools. Among the modes of discourse analysis, there is, however, a gap to be filled with the visual. Though the ethnographers routinely collect visual data, the visual representations of the worlds of security (both the world of experts, security practices, and narratives, as well as of the subjects of security) still remain rather unexplored, though it is hard to contest their pervasiveness or significance. The possibilities offered by visual fieldwork methods (cf. Pink et al. 2004: 11-99), iconography (Leeuwen 2008: 92-118, cf. also Collier 2008: 35-60) or interpretation through ethnographic film (Baena et al. 2004: 120-134) all seem to provide promising avenues for exploration.

The corporeal turn: Covering affect, emotions, and the somatic is an "emergent research agenda within critical security studies" (Mutlu 2013a: 139). This methodology comes from feminist approaches to critical security studies where the body is seen as a "political site" and a "site of resistance" (Salter 2013a: 7). It is characterized more by its research object than a distinctive method, and the specification of the object becomes even more vital for research design. There is a substantial difference among the attributes of the corporeal which manifests itself in the choice of fitting method. When we study affect (or the absence of it), we are interested in bodily reactions such as smiling, crying, increase or decrease of blood pressure, or head movement, and auto-ethnography, interviews, and participant observation seem to fit this aim best. On the other hand, when we are concerned with verbal or written expressions of those affective reactions, i.e., emotions like happiness, sadness, anger, pain, fear, lightheartedness, shame, etc., then we should go for discourse analysis. In both cases, a focus on corporeal practices is chiefly favorable, as bodies are increasingly subjected to security control exerted by state and private apparatuses. The somatic refers primarily to the subjugation of gendered bodies to the social. To understand how bodies are shaped by power relations and security practices in particular, we can apply discourse analysis, interviewing, participant observation, or archival research (Mutlu 2013a).

The material turn: Whereas security scholars have paid attention to the role of meaning, practice, discourse, and the corporeal, material objects were largely missing in the agenda. The material turn can be seen as a critique of all previous approaches, since they fail to make sense of how objects mediate human agency. It is this methodology, resting on the "radical reorganization of our social hierarchies, one that recognizes both human and non-human actants as agents of impacting our social world" (Mutlu 2013b: 179), that redresses it.Full body scanners, CCTV, biometric identification systems, databases, and non-lethal weapons are all objects that have become part of everyday governance. The essential idea behind this approach is that such "objects have a social that expands beyond their material existence," and, as such, they are central to the performance of our identities and practices (ibid.: 173). Ultimately, human agency is understood to be indistinguishable from its surroundings. To the followers of Actor Network Theory, it is a network consisted of human and non-human elements who act (see also Soreanu and Simionca 2013; Latour 2005). In this methodology, researchers use a "combination of discourse analysis,

mapping [social network analysis], and participant observations to trace the genealogy and quotidian uses of security objects" (Mutlu 2013b: 175) and examine an object's effects on its surroundings.

These tools are relatively new to security studies and have their merits as well as limitations. To conform to standards of rigor, "frank discussion of research design limits, processes, and failures" is advisable (Salter 2013a: 9). In Guillaume's words, "critical research design should open up inquiry, privileging the questioning rather than the answering, the doubt rather than the certainty that comes with an entrenchment in disciplinary practices" (2013: 31). In the rest of this section, we take seriously the claim that the "world is given through our methods of studying it" (ibid.: 3) and address the criticality of research methods.

By and large, methods are considered to be neutral techniques of gathering and processing data which guarantee the scientific natures of research. Because of the seeming separation of politics and methods, and the disciplining and constraining function of methodological requirements, methodological inquiry has been seen as "inherently suspect for a critical approach" (Aradau and Huysmans 2013: 5). Aradau and Huysmans (2013: 3) oppose this reading and propose to make method and methodological reflection a "key site of revisiting critique and politics.' At the heart of this endeavor is the re-conceptualization of methods as performative and political instruments. Far from being "no more than ways of acquiring data" (Della Porta and Keating 2008: 28), methods not only serve to analyze the world, but also to construct or deconstruct it in different ways.

That is to say, methods are conceived as both performative and political; they present an "enactment of and rupture into the worlds of knowledge and politics" (Aradau and Huysmans 2013: 18). Methods, just like theories, are performative in that they "make and remake worlds, identities, and things in a fragile, continuously changing way" (ibid.: 9). All methods, be they surveys, data-mining techniques or in-depth interviews, drag along certain visions of social realities which are substantive in their effects. As devices, they inscribe themselves into the worlds they are supposed to study. Methods are also political rather than value neutral: "They are instruments not for creating common ground, but for power struggles, competing enactments of worlds and/or creating disruptive positions in the worlds of international politics" (ibid.: 3). To illustrate this by the authors' own example, the "world of terrorism is different when accounted for by mapping global inequalities rather than by mapping terrorist networks" (ibid.: 9). Conceptualizing methods as acts, Aradau and Huysmans draw attention to the fact that methods can also have disruptive effects, entailing ruptures in the representations of the world enacted by different methods. In this sense, the use of ethnography in a power-laden, exclusive, and secretive context not used to this kind of research practice, or any kind of research scrutiny for that matter, is in itself such a disruption, an act of sabotage consciously willing to strike both the world of academic (mainstream) security studies, as well as the world of the security bureaucrat.

The twofold reconceptualization of methods answers a demand for critical orientation in security studies. Reclaiming methods themselves as areas that critical approaches can examine, the authors shed light on the high stakes of knowledge production. The ways we study the world have their specific political effects. Methods make certain worldviews as well as unmake them. Therefore, the basic methodological questions are how and what worlds we produce by means of research and, furthermore, what consequences result from this activity.

Reflections on Critical Inquiry in Central Europe

In this section, we analyze our research with respect to what has been said so far. The first body of research we would like to introduce may be considered traditional – to the extent that it is an exercise in critical political sociology as a discipline focusing on the relations between governance and social structure, with a special focus on the factors of bureaucracy, oligarchy, and ideology (cf. Bendix and Lipset 1966). Security is viewed simply as an overarching emic category motivating, legitimizing, and giving meaning to various forms of behavior of predominantly bureaucratic actors

(i.e. actors occupying more or less significant positions in institutions of power or providing various services for these institutions). Security thus does not belong to the set of conceptual tools used in this research; on the contrary, these tools have been constructed with the exact aim to dissect and overcome the category of security as a major obstacle to understanding specific spheres and forms of practice connected with power and governance in contemporary societies.

The less traditional aspect of this research (besides, perhaps, the above-mentioned attempt to rob security of its relevance, gravity, and drama) lies in the specific position of the researcher as an insider in the practical struggles and discourse arenas marked by the category of security, a former security professional turned (auto)ethnographer, shifting from participant to participant observer/observed. Obviously, the position of a rogue insider conditions the critical attitude toward the master categories structuring his or her former activities to a large extent, and the utilization of ethnographic and auto-ethnographic tools brings very specific tensions to the processes connected with entering and leaving the research field, as well as to the relations with former colleagues turned informants. This should make clear that the results of such research will not and probably cannot resonate very well with what security experts themselves would term security research.[8]

The primary research goal was simply to grasp and understand the researcher's previous and rather strange and disconcerting experience as an actor in the field of security professionals in a small post-socialist country – research seemed to be a perfectly logical way to order, extend, and interpret it. There were a great many things to be explained: How come the actors in this segment of social space constantly engage in meaningless and futile routine activities,[9] knowing they are meaningless and futile, but constantly performing with the *gravitas* connected with the vocation of a security expert "protecting" the society? How come huge amounts of bureaucratic/security texts, many of them classified, are created without any specialized training, in a manner that evokes high school papers rather than the peak of official expertise? How come most of the bureaucratic texts, regardless of their position in the official hierarchy of strategic documents, do not really have anything to do with the ways in which the huge amounts of resources are spent? How come the structure and language of the texts produced by security experts is so ritualistic and metaphysical, and at the same time so technically sounding, claiming unique access to specific knowledge of a "scientific" kind? How does one actually become a "security expert" and what is his or her function in the complex system of governance? Why have the numbers of security experts and their texts multiplied so much in recent decades?

There seemed to be no way to provide a meaningful answer to these and countless other questions within the social world under scrutiny; emic concepts seemed too blunt and blind for grasping these problems. The research, therefore, had to be conducted with a set of theoretical tools alien to the research field, allowing the researcher to "exoticize the domestic, through a break with [the] initial relation of intimacy with modes of life and thought which remain opaque... because they are too familiar" (Bourdieu 1988: xi). At the same time, the practicality of the research questions as well as the nature of previous experience allowed for no other but a long-term direct empirical

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For an illustrative emic (security professional) account of what is important for security research, see e.g. Ušiak and Lasicová (2007).

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 E.g. writing a huge number of dossiers no one outside the closed world of a few security bureaucrats would (reluctantly) read, sometimes even engaging in prolonged and exhausting but largely pointless battles over words with other bureaucrats; formulating banal official positions with regard to this or that bureaucratic text that no one really cares about; preparing plans and strategies no one would follow (at times even pushing them through the government or Parliament, with no impact on their non-binding character); reading "top secret" documents consisting wholly of content copied from publicly accessible websites; engaging in endless rants against this or that "incompetent" or "useless" person or department (and knowing that the trope of "uselessness" may rightfully be used against you); or constantly complaining about lack of time (and being able to spend several hours of each workday doing so). The latter two examples are among the most pervasive routines serving important social functions in the worlds of petty bureaucratic politics, as well as providing a (modest) cover for the meaninglessness of one's own activities.

(ethnographic) investigation with as many complementary modes of data construction as possible, focusing on the world of everyday practices of security experts, as well as on their texts, and, last but not least, on a reflexive exploration of one of our own career trajectories as a security expert.

The core of our theoretical toolbox was constituted by the first critical security theory I[10] encountered – the Copenhagen school's theory of securitization (see especially Wæver 1995; Buzan et al. 2005). Its limits in grasping and interpreting the everyday routine activities of the security experts, the language of security, and the goings-on of some segments of their world called for several pragmatically-oriented updates of the theory, which were thankfully provided by numerous crucial discussions and mutations of securitization theory within the field of critical security studies and international political sociology.

The most important, however, was an update provided by Didier Bigo (2002, 2008), connecting the critical analysis of discourses and practices connected with the label of security with Bourdieu's rich theoretical apparatus. To be able to overcome the static and rather succinct character of the original securitization theory in the analysis of the linguistic and normative aspects of security, Lupták decided to draw from Holger Stritzel's recent addition in the form of security as translation (Stritzel 2010, 2011). The final (at least at this time) addition to the conceptual toolbox was intertwined with the attempts to explore a particular part of the research field, that is, the communal celebrations of security experts (workshops, conferences, symposia, anniversary meetings etc.). Erving Goffman's dramaturgical and frame analyses (see especially Goffman 1956, 1971, 1986; also Krčál 2013 or Salter 2008) seemed to reconcile very well with the basic theoretical assumptions of other theories Lupták exploited, and provided a unique opportunity to delve deeper into the ceremonies and rituals of the strange tribe of security experts. Viewing these ceremonies as among the most important sites where the particular, localized regimes of security-truth are performed and negotiated (cf. Salter 2008: 322) allowed us to grasp better the relations between the banal, everyday practical world, textual practices, and the ceremonial behavior of the security expert.

As mentioned above, the core approach to data construction was ethnography as the most powerful tool for exploration of an insular face-to-face community (cf. Hejnal 2012), with a semi-covert[11] approach to participant observation oscillating pragmatically between active and peripheral membership (Adler and Adler 1987: 36–66). Access to the field was fairly easy – due to Lupták's position as a former actor in the field and prolonged contact with former colleagues, some of them turned to core informants, while others helped in snowballing. The semi-covert research strategy employed to access the field was in hindsight very useful, and though it is connected with considerable ethical dilemmas, these are by no means unsolvable. On the other hand, if Lupták chose to walk the path of gaining formal validation of my access to the field, disclosing my research to the persons and bureaucratic hierarchies under scrutiny, I would most probably have closed the entryways guarded by the more jealous and secretive gatekeepers, and caused unwanted reactivity among the potential informants.

The main complementary techniques of participant observation included informal (field) and unstructured narrative interviewing driven mostly by the informants and focusing on their everyday problems, their career trajectories, ambitions, self-perceptions and perceptions of others, and other things they themselves considered relevant (cf. Gillham 2005: 37–53). Adopting the "collector and walking archive" role (Okely 1994: 20), and stumbling upon huge amounts of security texts, Lupták also had to find a set of techniques allowing both the organizing of this data and the ability to delve deeper into the discursive techniques of security, grasping the structures of relevance and the basic assumptions governing the texts as well as the various modes of meaning construction and meaning exclusion utilized by security experts. To deal with the overwhelming number of texts, Lupták

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    See Lupták (2011).

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    A more detailed explanation of the motives and rationales of this approach may be found in Hejnal and Lupták (2013a).

decided to use tools of computer-assisted qualitative and quantitative data analysis (see Hejnal and Lupták 2013b), combining structural (inductive) and formal (theory-driven) content analysis. The CAQDAS tool used (MAXQDA 10, later MAXQDAPlus 11) also served very well as a digital hub, storing all of the data constructed in the field (field notes, text materials, and interviews, as well as visual and audiovisual data) and allowed the consistent coding of a wide array of data types.

The preliminary conclusions of this research (for more details, see Lupták 2011 or 2012) revealed a specific kind of symbiosis between various types of actors participating in security practices and discourses in a postsocialist context, and pointed to the fact that it may be useful to view the local postsocialist world of security in three basic positions. First, as a pool of symbols and rhetorical and practical strategies used by political actors to localize the (neoliberal) transformation of governance: a specific segment of culture. Second, as a world of practice, with the overproduction of security text and expansion of security-related techniques as a multilayered survival strategy utilized by bureaucratic, academic, police, military, and other cadres in the context of the global expansion of security discourses on the one hand, and postsocialist (neoliberal) transformation on the other. Third, as a source of economic and symbolic profit for actors attempting to capitalize on the cultural functions of security discourses, either by funneling large parts of security-related public budgets to private hands through selling goods and services to state and private institutions, or by utilizing the symbolic force inherent in securitizing discourses for mobilization of political support or for re-channeling of public attention toward an external enemy, turning it away from the local political elite. From the point of view of critical social research, of course, the third position seems to be most important; however, it cannot really be explored any deeper without tackling the first two.

The second of our research projects also started with personal discontent. The initial dissatisfaction with the grotesque securitization of Roma minority practiced by security experts, the prevailing tendency in the Czech Republic to see the areas with a higher concentration of marginalized Roma foremost as a "security risk for the majority" (GAC 2008: 25), and numerous violent rallies against "Roma criminality" was eventually transformed into a longstanding academic interest out of which an ethnographic research in a marginalized neighborhood originated. The inquiry aimed to make sense of how its inhabitants perceive the condition of security within the place where they live. Rejecting the *a priori* allocation of the roles of the menacing and the menaced, the research pursued a critical orientation, as it was anchored in the "corporeal, material existence and experiences of [those] human beings" (Wyn Jones 1999: 115) who were predominantly seen as the source of danger rather than the subject of security.

Embedded clearly in the context of security-as-emancipation approach, security was conceptualized as an equivalent of human freedoms and rights that contributes to a specific meaning in a certain environment. To have a better grasp of the process surrounding the construction of the meaning of security, the research object was further specified. As a standard dictionary definition of security is the "absence of threats" (Booth 1991: 319), the notion of security itself can be understood as a set of three definitional components: the threat, the threatened, and the desire to escape harmful possibilities. Each of those "core elements of security" (Booth 2007: 100) was used to formulate specific research questions to (re)construct the meaning of security from the point of view of those who are imminently involved: What threats do the marginalized identify? What identities are expressed in this sense? What strategies do they adopt to prevent undesirable consequences?

The ethnographic standard – participant observation, interviewing, and document analysis – seemed from the very beginning as the most suitable tools to address these questions. However, when the author was designing the project, ethnographic methodology appeared to him as insufficiently elaborated in the discipline. To enhance competence in this genre, cultural criminology was highly instrumental. As it itself draws on a rich tradition of "getting-the-seat-of-your-pants-dirty" inquiry (cf. Robert E. Park quoted in McKinney 1966: 71), it was chiefly helpful in thinking about methodological questions. Security was thus read in the research as a "creative construct" (Hayward and Young 2004: 259), a result of "expressive human activity" (Ferrell et al.

2008: 2) that constitutes the "webs of significance" in which all people are suspended (Geertz 1973: 5). The symbolic reality of (in)security is intended to be enacted temporarily and through participation of a variety of actors. Not only the marginalized, but also social agents, politicians, journalists, the public, researchers, and others produce different interpretations in the circumstances of unequal power relations which make some of them dominant and others subordinate.

Owing to the researcher's previous experiences with grounded theory method, data gathering and analysis were informed by some of its procedures. In particular, the idea of theoretical sampling that denotes a technique to create data through a constant comparison of observed processes of human action provided basic guidance in achieving the stated goal of inquiry. Avowing the broad-ranging critique of grounded theory (see e.g. Thomas and James 2006), the method was thus employed as a "flexible and versatile data analysis technique" (Timmermans and Tavory 2007: 495) rather than as a systematic methodological approach as conceived by its founders (Glaser and Strauss 1967). The main part of analysis took advantage of ATLAS.ti software which not only facilitated the process but also ensured better orientation in data (for more detailed account of analysis see Walach 2013a).

Unlike Lupták, Walach needed to determine a field for the study more specifically. In 2006, a map with more than 300 "Romani socially excluded localities" in the Czech Republic was published (GAC 2006). Firstly, Walach considered a locality in the city where his university is located in order to reduce travel expenditures and to keep himself more in touch with research participants. This place, however, seemed too overcrowded by researchers, so Walach eventually decided on a locale in his hometown. Not only had it been largely neglected by academic researchers, but it was moreover publicly recognized as problematic in terms of security, as street crime as well as hate crime had been registered here. Finally, it was also possible to capitalize on his personal connections, including a Roma activist who promised to arrange the contact with marginalized residents. Entering the field was therefore significantly easier. The reason of my presence was no secret. Of course, not everyone I met during participant observation knew about it, but generally I did not conceal my research identity, since I considered it to be the best way to ensure the ethical side of inquiry.

Doing research on security among the marginalized is stacked with ethical challenges (Jacoby 2006; Stern 2006). To mention one, in Walach's inquiry there were many situations when he was captured in a swirl of responsibility towards conscience and the well-being of people under study, ranging from registering the small everyday cases of law-breaking to asking the big questions concerning appropriate ways of presenting the research arguments. Most importantly, Walach was confused by the narratives of many research participants, as they were almost indistinguishable from the dominant discourse on the "Gypsy menace" (Stewart 2012). My own experiences from the field, however, did not support the dismal picture portrayed by respondents. We do not argue that there were no cases of the frequently-mentioned social ills such as aggression, robbery, or theft. What we doubt was their quantity and intensity, which supposedly made the locality different from other parts of town. The uneasiness related to the risk of making the condition of the marginalized even worse ultimately prompted me to rethink my research project in a way of "stepping back" from the ethnography in favor of discourse analysis accounting more extensively for the symbolic construction of marginalized Roma neighborhoods as dangerous places (Walach 2013e).

Instead of outlining some conclusions of this still-ongoing inquiry (for this see Walach and Císař 2013; Walach 2013b, 2013c, 2013d), Walach ends this presentation with emphasizing and favoring the messy, shaky, and ambiguous character of research process in line with "wondering as a research attitude" (Lobo-Guerrero 2013). As wandering back and forth, from side to side, and all the way around happens to be much more fitting to the actual conduction of inquiry, the linearity of research should be approached critically. To speak metaphorically, I started to ask people in their living rooms about what they fear in the neighborhood, went ahead through gambling at slot machines in dilapidated casinos, traveling cross-country to Roma parties, providing local rappers with inspiration for their lyrics and finished with visiting the city council meetings and anti-racist rallies, but never ceased to ask myself how all of it relates to the given research goal and if the goal

itself is formulated correctly after all. Walach asserts this sort of research "disorganization" is a good way to allow for the "singularities of a practice or a discourse to stand out and for the researcher to make them explicit" (ibid.: 25). It was frequently due to surprises, those "unexpected disruptions in the order of knowing about phenomena" (ibid.: 27), that certain wider rationalities of thought were discovered and gave rise to fertile courses of inquiry.

Conclusion

Critical research on security is an idea whose time has come. If critical security studies are about to succeed (in Central Europe as well as in the West), its exponents must definitely devote themselves to political issues beyond the boundaries of theoretical problem-solving (cf. Booth 2013). At the heart of the project, there is a "commitment to researching the lived experience of those affected by (in)securities" (Croft 2008: 506). There is the maxim to study security in ways that "seek to help to lift the strains of life-determining insecurity from the bodies and minds of people in real villages and cities, regions and states" (Booth 2005: 276), whether it is done by focusing on those who produce (in)security, be they disgruntled security bureaucrats or beat cops, or those who are on its receiving end. To deal effectively with (in)securities of "real people in real places" (Wyn Jones 1996: 214) requires the realization of Wyn Jones's thesis according to which "only political practice can bring about the development of a peaceful, secure, and just world order" (1995: 315). Conducting critical inquiry comes under this rubric; as "barbarism is still a strong possibility" (ibid.: 314), it aims not only to interpret the world in various ways, but also to change it.

In this chapter, we attempted to elucidate what is encompassed in researching security in a critical manner. Since there is no methodology without theoretical and epistemological reflection, we started with a short introduction to the current state of affairs of theorizing security. Borrowing the language of security logics, we endorsed the overcoming of the abstract dichotomy of "negative" and "positive" security conceptualizations in favor of an understanding of *what security does* and *what ethical stakes are implied* in specific contexts. Such a re-orientation of critical security studies undoubtedly puts the issues of methodology and research methods to the forefront. Openness and reflexivity are typical features of critical inquiry, whether it is conducted through ethnography, field analysis, discourse analysis, corporeal analysis, or the analysis of material culture. All of these methodological genres utilize manifold techniques of data processing, ranging from participant observation and interviewing to statistical methods. To recognize that different methods enact and disrupt certain representations of the world is part of a critical reading of methodology as an overarching epistemological and meta-theoretical reflection.

This was followed by the presentation of two research projects conducted in postsocialist Central Europe which, due to its specifics of capitalist triumphalism, expanding securitization discourses and security practices, the spread of anti-Roma discourses, and rising social inequalities, appears to be truly well-suited for critical and engaged research. By analyzing the everyday representations and practices of security professionals, Lupták challenged the political gravity and analytic value of security as a concept and instead focused on how it was used in the transformation and performance of governance in contemporary societies. With help of its native set of categories (threat, enemy, risk etc.), the discourse of security served to divert or channel public attention, depoliticize and technicize certain measures, stage symbolic performances of power relations, and ultimately served as a vital cog in the machinery of stratifying and classifying its members. His inquiry can therefore be classified as conforming to the "negative" logic of security. On the contrary, the "positive" motivation of Walach's inquiry was embodied in the will to give voice to those who were securitized as the originators of insecurity rather than the recipients of insecurity. The authors applied a variety of different theoretical tools to make sense of their research objects, from (in)securitization theory to cultural criminology. While both of them used the techniques of direct observation and interviewing, their inquiries, however, differ in methodological genres. With his interest in the internal logic of operation of security professionals' field, Lupták is closer to Bourdieusian field analysis. The way through which Walach examined how the inhabitants of a

socially-excluded locality constructed the meaning of security in their surroundings corresponds to more traditional ethnography, though it was further enriched by the analytics of grounded theory method. The issues such as the construction of field, ethical challenges, and more practical problems were also discussed.

The other two studies in this book have employed more distant methods of studying security, such as discourse analysis, and could be thus described as belonging to the previously introduced discursive turn. Both of them were also somewhat closer to the "negative" approach to security conceptualization. However, similarly as Lupták's and Walach's research projects, both Potjomkina's and Csiki's studies investigated the construction of security and security threats in specific Central European contexts. Showing that traditionally perceived external security issues have important domestic underpinnings, Potjomkina's contribution investigated how the meanings of security, identity, and sovereignty are contested and negotiated within distinct national discourses that create differing interpretations of relations with a "key" foreign ally. This issue is very much shared by other states positioned between Russia and Western Europe as well. Focusing on another pressing topic for many of the Central European states – relations between the majority and minorities – Csiki's chapter looked on the traditionally national ("internal") topic and analyzed the intentional process of the construction of a security threat by extreme-right movements. Even though both these studies used different concepts, theories, and levels of analysis, both of them (again, similar to Lupták and Walach) pointed to close connections between security, politics, and identity in their analyses, and the problematization of these three concepts lies at the heart of the taks of critical security research.

As a newcomer to Central European academia, critical security studies represent a very promising orientation. They can provide researchers with a strong rationale as well as a colorful theoretico-methodological framework for the study of contemporary politics. Security is a "powerful political word" (Booth 2007: 108), and the political significance of many issues endowed with "security" firmly calls for a serious engagement. The hitherto taken-for-granted assumptions must be put under scrutiny, the representations and practices of security problematized, and an emancipatory perspective stressed in order to understand the condition of those who speak and do – as well as experience – (in)security. In light of the fact that most of the conceptual development in security studies occurs in North America and Western Europe, scholars should take the advantage of the specific political and social situation of postsocialist countries, as this unique context might be the fertile ground out of which new perspectives on security theory and practice will blossom (Drulák 2009).

To conclude, let us thus again highlight the importance of context-specific knowledge, which was demonstrated by all the studies presented in this book. Whether it is the construction of security threats by militant extreme right-wing parties, or by (in)security professionals, it is precisely the understanding of security in time and space that allow us to acquire the relevant insights into what security means, how it works, and how it might be potentially changed. The students of security have nothing to lose but their theoretical chains and "commonsense" prejudices. They have a world to win.

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