

# **Security as Emancipation**

A theoretical reconsideration

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*To Julia,  
for everything*

## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis sets out to reconsider security as emancipation. Security as emancipation is a theoretical framework for the critical analysis, normative assessment, and political reconsideration of existing security arrangements, grounded upon the struggles and insecurities of real people in real places. However, in its current formulation, this theory still has some insufficiencies that reduce its analytical, normative, and transformative potential. This thesis seeks to tackle this issue. Drawing upon the method of immanent critique, it investigates how the theoretical framework of security as emancipation can be strengthened by incorporating critical resources from the ethnographic, practice, and posthuman turns in social and political thinking. The thesis puts forward four arguments. First, integrating ethnographic methods into this theory will make it better prepared to engage with the struggles and insecurities of real people in real places. Second, incorporating critical resources from practice thinking can enable security as emancipation to better assess the social construction of existing security arrangements and their implications upon real people in real places. Third, engaging posthuman thinking can allow security as emancipation to reconsider the ethical, political, and affective relation between the insecurity of real people and the security of real places. Finally, once equipped with critical resources from these turns, the theory of security as emancipation can create new openings in the agenda of critical security studies. The argument offers a contribution to extant discussions in critical security studies by illuminating some of the benefits that can result from exploring the potential synergies between critical security theories and critical security turns.

### **Keywords**

Security as emancipation; critical security studies; critical security turns; ethnography; practice theory; posthuman thinking.

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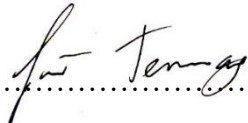
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## DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

Signed.......... (João Terrenas)

Date 24 September 2019

The word length of this dissertation is 78,909.

## Introduction

This thesis is a work of theory development. The overarching purpose of the argument is to strengthen the theoretical framework of security as emancipation (Booth, 2007). Security as emancipation is a critical theory of security that seeks to provide us with a framework for the analysis, normative assessment, and political reconsideration of existing security arrangements (Nunes, 2014a). In contrast with other critical security theories, it understands security as a powerful resource that can be harnessed towards the reduction of harm and vulnerability as well as the promotion of freedom and well-being (Basu and Nunes, 2013; Nunes, 2016). Up until now, there have been numerous works inspired by security as emancipation. They have covered topics such as health (Nunes, 2014a), migration (Bilgic, 2013), humanitarian assistance (Stamnes, 2004), or environmental issues (McDonald, 2012). As a result, this theory has been frequently considered as one of the most significant for the development of critical security studies (Peoples and Vaughan-Williams, 2015; Floyd and Croft, 2011; Fierke, 2015; Jarvis and Holland, 2015). However, in the last few years security as emancipation has become increasingly absent from critical debates within security studies (Hynek and Chandler, 2013). While this certainly reflects a widespread suspicion towards the idea of emancipation within the broader field, it is also the product of some theoretical, conceptual, and methodological insufficiencies persisting in this approach (Browning and McDonald, 2011; Nunes, 2012; Bilgic, 2015). The aim of this thesis is to identify and redress some of these problems.

In order to do so, the thesis will reconsider three quintessential aspects of security as emancipation. First, it will engage with and problematize its commitment to engage as faithfully as possible with the struggles and insecurities of real people in real places (Bilgic, 2015; Nunes, 2014). Second, it will investigate its ability to provide a critique of existing security arrangements and practices (Bilgin, 2005; Bilgic, 2013). Third, it will assess and reconsider its intention to function as a critical theory of world security (Booth, 2007; Bilgic, 2016). These three issues lie at the heart of emancipatory security thinking. In spite of that, they also remain insufficiently theorized by this

approach. To tackle this issue, the argument will explore the potential synergies between the critical theory of security as emancipation and three critical security turns (Salter and Mutlu, 2013). More specifically, the thesis explores how incorporating resources from the ethnographic (Vrasti, 2008), practice (Bueger and Gadinger, 2015), and posthuman turns (Cudworth et al., 2018) can help us to redress the insufficiencies of security as emancipation and, in doing so, strengthen the analytical, normative, and transformative potential this approach. In addition to that, it will be argued, once equipped with these resources, emancipatory security thinking can also create new opportunities for the agenda of critical security studies. Overall, the aim of this thesis is to reinvigorate security as emancipation and encourage others to consider this approach as a valid resource with which to engage critically with security.

The introductory chapter is divided in three parts. First, it explains the two puzzles that underpin this thesis and the broader argument pursued. The first puzzle refers to the recent shift from theories to turns in the agenda of critical security studies and the gradual fragmentation of the broader critical security project. The second concerns insufficiencies that persist in the theoretical framework of security as emancipation and its increasing absence from critical security debates. It is argued that integrating theories and turns provides us with a privileged entry point to reinvigorate security as emancipation and re-establish this theory as a valid alternative to critical security scholars. Following from that, it lays out the research design of the thesis by explaining the methodology adopted and clarifying the research questions addressed. It concludes with an overview of the thesis that summarizes the key arguments put forward in each chapter.

## **Research Puzzles and Argument**

### ***Critical security studies: from theories to turns***

The first puzzle underlying this thesis is the recent shift in the agenda of critical security studies from a concern with critical security theories towards a concern with critical security turns (Salter and Mutlu, 2013). As will be explained in the first chapter, critical security studies is a field of research that brought together security scholars dissatisfied with traditional security studies (Smith, 1999; Mutimer, 2010). Seeking to put forward an alternative agenda for security studies, the research

programme of critical security project was structured around two different but mutually reinforcing commitments: the deconstruction and reconstruction of security (Krause and Williams, 1997; Browning and McDonald, 2011). While the first represented a more negative view of critique that sought to lay bare the assumptions, problems and inconsistencies of existing security discourses and practices, the second offered a more positive view that aimed to explore the possibilities to redefine them (Krause and Williams, 1997; Tulumello, 2020).

Given the ambitious commitments espoused by this group of scholars, as well as the strong resistance put forward by traditional security scholars (Krause, 1998), the development of critical security studies has not been a simple and straightforward process. In their early stages, critical debates within security studies were largely organized around two overarching goals. The first was that of liberating the discipline of security studies from the meta-theoretical chains of realism and positivism (Krause and Williams, 1997). This involved a systematic discussion and problematization of the ontological, epistemological, axiological, and ethico-political assumptions that underpinned traditional security thinking (Walker, 1997; Booth, 1997). The second was the development of critical theories of security through which the critical project could move beyond the critique of traditional security thinking and put forward an alternative research programme for security studies (Smith, 1999; Krause, 1997).

During this period, critical-oriented scholars started to engage systematically with traditions of social and political thinking up until then largely neglected by security studies, such as poststructuralism (Der Derian, 1995; Dillon, 1996; Campbell, 1992), feminism (Cohn, 1987; Enloe, 1990; Tickner, 1992), constructivism (Katzenstein, 1996; Ringmar, 1996), human security (Newman, 2016), or postcolonial thinking (Ayoob, 1997; Barkawi and Laffey, 2006). Nonetheless, one of the most important breakthroughs of the critical project in security studies was the emergence of three distinctive critical security theories: securitization theory, in/securitization theory, and the theory of security as emancipation (CASE, 2006). These three perspectives came to be commonly known as the Copenhagen, Paris, and Aberystwyth Schools of security studies (Waeber, 2004; Van Munster, 2007). Notwithstanding their problems, the development of critical security theories was crucial for the emerging field (Croft, 2008; Peoples and Vaughan-Williams, 2010; Mutimer, 2016). By helping to clarify the types of questions that could be posed by critical security scholars, these theories

consolidated the critical security project as a valid alternative to the agenda of traditional security studies (Floyd and Croft, 2011).

Despite that, in recent years the discussion within critical security studies has gradually moved from the focus on advancing critical security theories towards a concern with critical security turns (Salter and Mutlu, 2013). Reflecting a broader tendency within the study of international relations, critical security scholarship started to increasingly frame the discussion in terms of a discursive (Milliken, 1999), ethnographic (Vrasti, 2008), affective (Åhäll, 2018), visual (Hansen, 2011), practice (Bueger and Gadinger, 2015), methodological turn (Aradau and Huysmans, 2013), among others. Similar to critical security theories, critical security turns helped to strengthen the critical security agenda. They promoted a more systematic dialogue between security studies and other fields of inquiry better equipped to address the operational challenges of conducting critical applied research (Salter and Mutlu, 2013; Aradau et al., 2015). This not only opened up critical security debates to scholars from other areas of research, but it also allowed them to identify blind spots that persisted in the critical security agenda and explore potential ways to address them (Bueger and Gadinger, 2015; Andersen and Vuori, 2018). It is in that sense that we can speak of a critical turn in security studies, as well as critical security theories and critical security turns.

Still, the shift from theories to turns also raised two important challenges. The critical turn in security studies was an essentially integrative and inclusive endeavour (Krause and Williams, 1997). It aimed to integrate a group of dissenting voices and provide them a safe space no longer disciplined by the strictures of realism and positivism (Krause, 1998). But the emergence of critical security theories prompted a division of the critical project between different schools, each of which focused on a different aspect of the agenda but often avoiding any form of systematic engagement and collaboration (Mutimer, 2009). Concomitantly, the overwhelming interest in both securitization and in/securitization theories led to a declining concern with the more positive or reconstructive aspect of critical security studies (Nunes, 2012). Critical security turns not only did little to redress this imbalance, but they also furthered the division of critical security studies into different niches of research (Salter and Mutlu, 2013). Simply, the shift from theories to turns reflects a burgeoning tendency towards the fragmentation of critical security studies and accentuated the disparity between the deconstructive and reconstructive agendas that structure the critical project. This thesis

argues that linking theories and turns offers a potential opportunity to lessen the fragmentation of critical security studies and, by focusing on security as emancipation, help to reinvigorate its reconstructive agenda.

***Reconsidering security as emancipation: from theory to practice***

This feeds directly into the second puzzle orienting the thesis: the insufficiencies that persist in the theory of security as emancipation and its increasing absence from critical security debates. As noted, security as emancipation seeks to provide us with a theoretical framework for the critical analysis, normative assessment, and political reconsideration of current security arrangements (Booth, 2007). It recognizes the arbitrary forms of violence and exclusion that are often justified through the language of security (Booth, 1991; Wyn Jones, 1999). Nonetheless, and different from the other two critical security theories, it depicts security as something with the potential to help improve the current state of affairs and increase the freedom and well-being of real people in real places (Basu and Nunes, 2013). Hence, this theory adopts a strong reconstructive outlook: it seeks to not only contest existing security arrangements but also, and when necessary, support counter-hegemonic struggles in favour of those systematically placed in a position of insecurity and vulnerability (Bilgic, 2013, 2015; Nunes, 2014). Today, security as emancipation is strongly established as one of the most significant critical approaches to security, figuring in most works that introduce and assess the broader field of critical security research (Williams, 2008; People and Vaughan-Williams, 2010; Caveltly and Mauer, 2010; Shepherd, 2013; Collins, 2016).

Nonetheless, this theory has been strongly criticized by critical security scholars. As will be discussed in the second chapter, security as emancipation has been accused of reinforcing a Western-cum-liberal and imperial conception of security (Barkawi and Laffey, 2006), deploying an abstract and idealistic view of emancipation (Eriksson, 1999), and helping to legitimize security practices framed around the idea of human security (Chandler and Hynek, 2011), mostly those carried out in the context of external-led intervention and post-war reconstruction (McCormack, 2009). In fact, it has even been suggested that security as emancipation encapsulates everything that is wrong with the reconstructive commitment that underlies critical security studies (Neocleous, 2008). As a result, and despite the attempts to revitalize the emancipatory agenda within security studies, this theory has gradually been placed at the margins of

current critical debates (but see Nyman and Burke, 2016). But while there are excellent reasons to be careful when combining the ideas of security and emancipation (Aradau, 2004), much of this criticism actually fails to engage with what this theory actually says and, more often than not, does not account for most of the work that has been carried under the emancipatory rubric.

The vast majority of criticism levelled against security as emancipation has relied on two strategies. The first is that of conflating this theory with the idea and agenda of human security (McCormack, 2009). This is particularly problematic given that there are substantive differences between the two. Even if both place the individual as the starting point for studying security and, therefore, end up opening up the range of issues that can be considered as legitimate security threats, they start from contrasting assumptions about politics and the political role of security thinking (Basu and Nunes, 2013). This idea is reinforced by the second strategy adopted to challenge security as emancipation, which basically mimics the criticism made against the concept of emancipation outside the context of security studies (Petersen, 1992; Laclau, 1996). In this case, most critics argue that this theory functions as a mechanism of domination by imposing Western and liberal visions of progress upon those who are to be emancipated from insecurity. This is also particularly problematic given that, within the context of critical security studies, this theory has made a consistent effort to develop a view of emancipation that considers the limitations that are associated with the more classical, Frankfurt-inspired, understandings of this notion (Brincat, 2011).

In spite of that, this thesis suggests that there are still three important limitations within this security as emancipation which, if left unaddressed, can bring into question its ability to deliver upon its promises and reconnect with critical security debates. First, while seeking to put forward a reconsideration of security that is grounded upon the struggles and insecurities of real people in real places, this approach is yet to demonstrate how this commitment can be translated from theory to practice. Second, in its current form, this theory still shows some difficulties when it comes to investigating the conditions that make possible existing security arrangements and unpacking the ways in which these contribute to curb or reinforce the insecurity of real people in real places. Finally, by relying upon an anthropocentric conception of the world according to which the non-human can only be conceived as a threat to the human or an instrument to security, this theory is unable to understand the ways in

which the security of the later is intertwined with the former. This thesis argues that redressing these issues can place this theory in a stronger position to rebut its critics and reinvigorate the reconstructive agenda in critical security debates.

## **Research Questions and Methodology**

This thesis will address a research question that brings together the two puzzles underlying the thesis: the increasing gap between of critical security theories and critical security turns and the insufficiencies that persist in the theoretical framework of security as emancipation. Specifically, this thesis sets out to investigate: *how can the engagement with critical security turns help us to redress the current limitations of security as emancipation and expand the capacity of this theory to deliver upon its promises?* In other words, can the ability of this theory to provide a critical analysis, normative judgement, and political reconsideration of security be strengthened by incorporating ideas and resources from different turns within critical security studies? Can this engagement make security as emancipation better prepared to offer a critique of security oriented by the struggles and insecurities of real people in real places? And, equally important, will it make security as emancipation better equipped to not only achieve its commitments but also contribute to critical security studies more broadly?

The main question is operationalized through five sub-research questions, each of which addressing a specific layer of this problem: from the problems that persist in security as emancipation to the benefits that can result from incorporating insights of critical security turns into this theoretical framework. First, the thesis asks what are the most significant insufficiencies in security as emancipation and how do they constrain its potential to function as a critical security theory? Second, what are the critical resources within social and political thinking that are more appropriate to help us redress these insufficiencies? Third, how have these resources inspired critical security turns and contributed to advancing critical security studies? Fourth, and building upon that, the argument asks: how can they be incorporated into security as emancipation in a way that strengthens its analytical, normative, and transformative potential? Finally, the argument asks: once equipped with resources from critical security turns, how can security as emancipation create new openings in the agenda of critical security studies?

The five analytical moves entailed by these questions follow the tenets of immanent critique, the research strategy privileged by security as emancipation (Wyn Jones, 1999; McDonald, 2012; Basu and Nunes, 2013; Fierke, 2007). As a research method, immanent critique involves assessing something based on the ideas and standards that it uses to legitimize itself and, building upon that, searching for alternative possibilities available within that situation (Antonio, 1981). The purpose of immanent critique is to reveal the divergence between the claims justifying a particular idea, theory, or policy with what they actually delivers when translated to practice. In doing so, this strategy seeks to open up the space to discuss alternative ideas and solutions that already exist, and which can be more adequate to redress that problem (Sabia, 2010). This methodology is thus particularly suited to this project, which seeks to explore how certain ideas and concepts that are already being discussed within the critical security literature can strengthen the analytical, normative, and transformative potential of emancipatory security thinking (Brincat, 2011). Moving beyond that, however, it also allows us to show the potential benefits that can emerge from linking critical security theories and critical security turns and, in doing so, strengthen the critical security project as a whole.

This thesis does not put forward a new framework for emancipatory research, even though it opens new questions that this theory can address, nor does it offer a specific case study against which its ideas are tested, even though it engages with various empirical issues that are central to security as emancipation. This is intentional and justified by two reasons. First, the aim of this thesis is not to achieve some form of methodological closure nor to impose the definitive interpretation of security as emancipation. Rather, the overarching goal of the argument is to identify some insufficiencies that persist in this theoretical framework and explore the possibilities that already exist to redress them. Second, this thesis departs from the tendency of reconsidering critical security theories through empirical case studies. This has been the preferred avenue of critical security scholars and there are excellent reasons for that. Nonetheless, rather than limiting the focus to one particular issue or context, the thesis opted to engage with literature that covers numerous topics, all of which shed critical light upon the limits of this approach and the openings that emerge from bridging the schism between critical security theories and critical security turns.

## **Structure of the Thesis**

This thesis starts from three assumptions. The first is that while critical security studies has been able to consolidate as a valid alternative to traditional security studies, the field has also been increasingly fragmented into different niches of research with little or no collaboration between them. This process, whilst furthering the pluralism and methodological rigour of the critical project, also reinforced the overwhelming emphasis upon a negative or deconstructive view of critical security studies. The second is that exploring the synergies that already exist between critical security theories and critical security turns can help us to develop a more balanced, inclusive, and integrated view of critical security studies and its agenda. Finally, given the strong reconstructive outlook of security as emancipation as well as the insufficiencies that persist in its theoretical framework, this theory is in a privileged position to help us pursue this endeavour. Grounded upon that, the argument sets out to assess how linking security as emancipation with critical security turns can help us to expand the potential of this theory and create new openings for critical security studies. The structure of this thesis reflects that purpose.

Part I sets out the terrain for the analysis, assessment, and reconsideration of security as emancipation through an engagement with critical security turns. Each chapter delves with one of the two puzzles underlying the argument.

Chapter 1 provides an analysis of critical security and its emergent trends regarding the shift from critical security theories to critical security turns. It starts by laying out the emergence of the critical security project as an inclusive endeavour, seeking to destabilize the realist and positivist foundations of traditional security thinking, and anchored to a two-fold commitment towards the deconstruction and reconstruction of security. It then assesses the theoretical development of critical security studies by exploring the key tenets and contributions of feminist, poststructural, constructivist, and postcolonial approaches as well as human security. Next, it engages with the three critical security theories that helped to consolidate this project: securitization, in/securitization, and security as emancipation. It argues that, whilst there has been a consistent dialogue between the first two, security as emancipation has been largely absent from this debate. Finally, it analyses the ongoing shift from theories to turns in critical security studies. It will be pointed out that, despite the benefits that resulted from

this process, critical security turns also contributed to further divide the critical project and reinforce the imbalance between the deconstructive and reconstructive agenda.

The aim of Chapter 2 provides an assessment of security as emancipation. It starts by contextualizing the idea of emancipation within critical thinking and critical security studies, laying out the three commitments of security as emancipation, and unpacking two distinctive features of this approach: the notions of *praxis* and immanent critique. Following from that, it puts forward a cumulative understanding of the emancipatory agenda in critical security studies that integrates the different moves through which the literature inspired by this approach has operationalized its analytical, normative, and transformative commitments. It identifies six distinctive but interconnected moves: deepening and extending security; zooming in, and zooming out on insecurity; transforming in/security; and reflecting upon and the possibilities for emancipation. Following from that, it demonstrates that much of the criticism faced by this approach often fails to engage with what it actually proposes, as well as the extensive literature that it inspired. Still, the critical potential of this theory is still constrained by some insufficiencies that persist within it. The chapter argues that there are three issues in the theoretical framework of security as emancipation that deserve further analysis and reconsideration.

Part II sets out to redress them by incorporating into this theory insights from critical security turns. Each chapter deals with a specific promise of security as emancipation that deserves further theoretical analysis and reconsideration: its commitment to offer an analysis grounded upon real people in real places, its aim to offer a critique and reconsideration of existing security arrangements, and its desire to function as a critical theory of world security. Each of these chapters also explores the extent to which this can lead to potential benefits for the broader agenda of critical security studies.

Chapter 3 reconsiders the promise of security as emancipation to build the critique and reconsideration of existing security arrangements upon an in-depth engagement with real people in real places. It shows that, despite being a quintessential aspect of security as emancipation, this theory does not have the methodological tools in place with which to translate this commitment into practice. It then shows that a systematic engagement with ethnography can help us to address the methodological deficit in security as emancipation. Ethnography provides it with a set of research methods

particularly suited to investigate the struggles and insecurities of real people in real places. Autoethnography can allow emancipatory security researchers to enhance their reflexivity and appreciate the multiple ways in which their own subjectivities and research projects are entangled with broader structures of violence and oppression. In addition to that, collaborative ethnography allows security as emancipation to co-produce knowledge with the subjects of research in a way that holds a stronger potential to enter public debate and help reshape certain security policies. Equipped with collaborative methods of ethnographic research, security as emancipation can help to advance current discussions about critical security methods and visibility in security studies.

Chapter 4 chapter engages with the commitment of security as emancipation to provide an in-depth critique and reconsideration of existing security arrangements. It shows that, in its current configuration, this theory still experiences some difficulties when it comes to demonstrate how current security practices come to be accepted as necessary and legitimate and, more importantly, how they contribute to curb or reinforce arbitrary forms of violence and exclusion. The chapter introduces some thinking tools of Pierre Bourdieu and demonstrate how they can help to rectify this issue. By allowing it to reconsider the practices of professionals as the entry point for the analysis and reassessment of security, these tools strengthen the capacity of security as emancipation to unpack their conditions of possibility and the extent to which they reinforce the insecurity of real people in real places. Given its concern with emancipation, this theory is particularly well placed to advance the practice turn by pushing it to balance its overwhelming emphasis upon domination and oppression with a greater attention to agency and the conditions that make possible acts of resistance and subversion.

The fifth chapter explores the commitment of security as emancipation to function as a critical theory of world security. It argues that, in its current formulation, this intention is still constrained by its reliance upon an anthropocentric conception of the world. In its current form, security as emancipation can only conceive the non-human as either a threat to the security of human beings or as a means to secure it. This limits its ability to understand the intertwinement between the freedom and well-being of real people and the security of real places. To address this, the chapter introduces some ideas from the posthuman turn in social and political thinking and demonstrates how

they have helped to broaden the critical security agenda. The final section will assess the different ways in which incorporating elements of posthuman thinking can expand the capacity of security as emancipation to offer a theory of world security. Engaging with the posthuman turn not only enables this theory to develop a more sophisticated understanding of the increasing role played technology in existing security arrangements and practices, but it also broadens its understanding of the conditions that make possible the systematic reproduction of violence and insecurity. Equipped with these insights, security as emancipation can offer a middle ground between anthropocentric and post-anthropocentric assessments of insecurity, as well as help to reduce the normative emphasis of current discussions about planetary justice.

The concluding chapter rounds up the discussion. First, it summarizes the key problems identified in security as emancipation and the potential openings created by an engagement with these three critical security turns. Second, it assesses the extent to which these insights can undermine or strengthen the analytical, normative, and transformative commitments subscribed by security as emancipation. Third, it lays out the type of questions that this theory can pursue once it is equipped with this ideas and the extent to which this adds something new and important to existing critical security debates. Finally, it points out the way in which this revised version of security as emancipation strengthens the critical edge of critical security turns.

## **Part I**

# **Critical security studies and security as emancipation**

# 1 Critical security studies

The introduction outlined the intention of exploring some potential synergies between critical security theories and critical security turns with the aim of strengthening the critical potential of security as emancipation. This chapter starts to set the terrain for that endeavor. In order to do so, it will investigate the emergence and development of critical security studies and contextualize the transition in current debates from critical security theories to critical security turns. More than a review of the critical security literature, the chapter sets out to illuminate key trends within it and identify potential opportunities that are worth further investigation.

The argument is divided in three sections. The first part investigates the constitution and development of critical security studies. It argues that critical security studies resulted from an interest to go beyond the broadening and deepening of security and engage in the deconstruction and reconstruction of security. The second part surveys the key tenets and achievements of five different perspectives that supported critical security studies: feminist, constructivist, poststructuralist, and postcolonial thinking as well as human security. The third part analyses the three critical security theories that have been most frequently associated with the critical security project, as well as the recent shift from critical security theories towards critical security turns. It is argued that the development of these three theories reflected an increasing fragmentation of work within the critical security literature. This process has been further reinforced by critical security turns. Overall, it suggests that the field can benefit from developing a more integrated view of critical security studies that reduces the imbalance between the deconstructive and reconstructive commitments to which it subscribes, as well as the distance between the three critical security theories and critical security turns.

## **1.1. Setting the scene: the emergence of critical security studies**

The goal of this section is to introduce the emergence and core commitments of critical security studies. It starts by demonstrating that critical security studies resulted from an attempt to rethink the four cornerstones of traditional security studies: states, strategy, science, and the status-quo. Still, it will be argued, this required going beyond previous attempts to broaden and deepen security and developing a distinctive project inspired by the broader critical turn in International Relations. Building upon that, the critical project was established upon the two-fold commitment of engaging with the deconstruction and reconstruction of security. While the first sought to investigate the practices through which security practices came to be considered as natural and necessary and explore its social and political implications, the second aimed to demonstrate that it was possible to develop other ways of thinking and practicing security and help us to evaluate between alternative possibilities.

### ***1.1.1. States and Strategy: Security beyond broadening and deepening 1698***

The discipline of security studies was officially established in the context of the Cold War (Baldwin, 1995). During that period, the agenda of security studies was clear-cut as the discipline was organized around four cornerstones: states, strategy, science, and status-quo (Williams, 2008). While states represented the main level-of-analysis and the core value to be protected, war and the potential uses of military force were seen as the main threats to state security and thus the core empirical focus of security studies (Bilgin et al., 1998). Within this context, the aim of security knowledge was to provide an objective assessment of potential threats to national and international security by replicating the methods and assumptions of the natural sciences, with the goal of assisting those in power to secure current the state of affairs (Smith, 1999). While sometimes contested, these four concerns were shared by most security scholars. As a result, for most of that period the research agenda of security studies was almost entirely concerned with addressing one specific puzzle: ‘how could states use weapons of mass destruction as instruments of policy, given the risk of any nuclear exchange?’ (Walt, 1991: 214).

This started to change in the last four decades. Specifically, since the late 1980s and early 1990s, security became the focal point for a growing number of debates, all of which seeking to revisit the meaning of this concept and, consequently, the agenda of

security in terms of both theory and practice (Baldwin, 1997; Krause and Williams, 2018). By and large, the discussion revolved around three common axes: broadening, deepening, and modifying security (Krause and Williams, 1996). Broadening security was about incorporating non-military issues into the security agenda and therefore, into the scope of security studies. From this perspective, issues such as the environment, economics, politics, health, migration, food, water, or basic human rights could be considered as legitimate objects of security theory and practice. (Meyers, 1989; Homer-Dixon, 1991; Mathews, 1989; Thomas, 1987; Ullman, 1983; Brundtland Commission, 1987)

At the same time, a different group of scholars and policy-makers sought to modify the idea of international security by coupling it with adjacent notions such as common, cooperative, mutual, or comprehensive security (Galtung, 1983; Kupchan and Kupchan, 1991; Dewitt, 1994). Different from the first group, most of these aimed to replace a vision of security underpinned by the realist tradition of power politics with an approach grounded upon the liberal principle of collective security (Krause and Williams, 1996). In contrast, deepening security was meant to expand the gamut of referents to be secured beyond the traditional concern with the state. According to them, the referent of security could move either upwards to encompass broader security referents such as global (Kaldor and Rangelov, 2014), international (UN, 1986), and regional security (Ayoob, 1989), or downwards to accommodate societal (Buzan et al., 1990), human (UNDP, 1994), and individual security (Booth, 1991). In brief, while broadening questioned what constitutes a security threat and modifiers replaced the realist tenets of security, deepening stressed the necessity to rethink whose security was being threatened and thereby what is in need for protection (Smith, 2005; Rothschild, 1995).

Nonetheless, early attempts to revise the meaning and scope of security were met with some resistance. The criticism came from two groups. The first group was essentially conservative. It sought to maintain the centrality of states and military power within security studies, as well as the standards and methods of natural sciences as the benchmark to validate security research (Nye and Lynn-Jones, 1998; Hafterndorn, 1991; Morgan, 1992). According to this group, broadening and deepening the agenda would make the discipline of security studies 'intellectually incoherent' (Walt, 1991), 'potentially boundless' (Betts, 1997: 9), and therefore turn security into a 'notably

unhelpful concept' (Gray, 1997: 60). The vision that supported this argument was encapsulated by one of the most influential figures in the field, according to whom:

Security studies seeks *cumulative knowledge* about the role of military force. To obtain it, the field must follow the standard canons of scientific research: careful and consistent use of terms, unbiased measurement of critical concepts, and public documentation of theoretical and empirical claims (Walt, 1991: 222).

In contrast, the second group that challenged the broadening and deepening of security was more progressive. While also showing a strong dissatisfaction with the ongoing attempts to add new threats and referents to the concept of security, it advanced a much more sweeping line of thought (Krause and Williams, 1996; Smith, 2005).

First, it pointed that by increasing the number of issues and referents that could be legitimately linked with security, the broadening move also expanded the horizons of sovereign authority beyond its traditional limits (Buzan et al., 1998). Similarly, merely including other referents to be protected failed to take into consideration that, more often than not, it is the state that represents the major source of insecurity for most of its people (Wheeler, 1996). Basically, for this later group the intention of expanding the number of threats to be secured and the range of objects to be protected would simply reify the primordial status of the state as a security receiver rather than a security provider while, at the same time, legitimizing the harm and violence so frequently carried out in its name (Wyn Jones, 1999: 102-104). For them, the danger was not that the discipline could become irrelevant or incoherent but that, in adding new threats and referents to the concept without questioning its assumptions and implications, it would remain an instrument to the powerful. According to this second group, the challenge was not to rebuild the meaning of security, but 'revisioning' the entire structure of security studies (Tickner, 1996).

In sum, during Cold War the meaning of security was to a large extent taken for granted. Security was about protecting the state from external military threats. This changed with the revival of security studies. Scholars started to suggest that this notion was no longer adequate to the new security environment. To some, the meaning of security should broaden to include new threats; to others, it should deepen to encompass new referents. Ultimately, all of them aimed to rethink the meaning of security and, consequently, of security studies. However, these ideas were not so easily

accepted. While some resisted to expand security, others argued that this move was not going far enough. According to the latter group, security could neither be simply extended nor remain unquestioned. Something much more radical was necessary. The entire structure of security studies had to be changed. Ultimately, it was not enough to simply question the centrality of states and strategy in security studies. It was also necessary to revise its concern with both science and the status-quo. It is this particular context that we can understand the emergence of critical security studies.

### ***1.1.2. Science and status-quo: Security beyond realism and positivism***

For critical scholars it was thus necessary to rethink the entire basis of security studies. Up until that moment, the disciplinary boundaries were limited by the meta-theoretical chains of realism and positivism (Smith, 1999). As a philosophy of science, positivism warranted security studies with an epistemological position according to which security threats could be objectively measured, represented, and explained as long as certain methods and rules were thoroughly applied. Basically, it posited that the methodologies and insights produced by the natural sciences could be replicated in the social sphere, that facts and values could be objectively separated, and that the validity of theoretical claims could be tested against the empirical world (Smith, 1996; Hollis, 1996). As a political theory, realism delimited the contours of security studies by predefining what was real about the world. It framed the state as the highest political value and its security as permanently threatened, thereby emphasizing the salience of material capabilities to secure survival (Lynn-Jones, 1999; Walt, 2010; Wohlforth, 2010). Together, realism and positivism helped to create the reality that they purported to describe. In order to open up space for the critical project, it was first necessary to disrupt these boundaries (Fierke, 2007; Smith, 1999).

The act of liberating security from the meta-theoretical chains of traditional security thinking took inspiration from ongoing debates within the broader field of International Relations. The first source of inspiration was the ‘post-positivist turn’ in International Relations theory (Lapid, 1989). Positivism has been understood and characterized in a myriad of ways: as an epistemological position concerning the possibility of knowledge about the world, as a methodological stance concerning the set of rules and standards that should orient our study of the world, or as a more technical concern about the specific set of methodological tools that can be utilized to

investigate the world (Smith, 1996: 31-32). Despite that, it is fair to suggested that as philosophy of science, positivism relies upon four foundational claims: the objectivist assumptions that we can produce objective knowledge about the world; the naturalist belief that this can be pursued through the same methods of the natural sciences; the empiricist argument that experience is the only legitimate standard to validate knowledge; and the behaviorist suggestion according to which social action is immutable because it follows a set of predetermined rules and regularities (Hollis, 1996: 302-204).

The post-positivist movement opposed this logic and brought together scholars from different theoretical inclinations, all of which sharing three main concerns.<sup>1</sup> The first was an intention to lay bare the connection between the different layers of social and political knowledge. For them, ontology, epistemology, axiology, methodology, and method could not be separated. Decisions taken at one level would necessarily impact upon the other. The second was the intention to unveil and problematize the particular meta-theoretical assumptions underpinning different theoretical perspectives. For them, it was necessary to make explicit the ideas and assumptions sustaining different approaches to the world. The third was a rejection of a universal set of criteria to validate the production of knowledge. For them, the merits of any knowledge claims can only be assessed against its own propositions (Brown, 1994). Thus, the post-positivist turn was not a synthesis of critical theoretical perspectives nor a unified theoretical project. Instead, it was just a group of scholars concerned with the arbitrary ways in which positivism had disciplined the boundaries of International Relations and predefined the limits for knowing the world (Smith, 1996). By questioning and revealing its assumptions, post-positivism opened the ‘thinking space’ for the critical project (George, 1989).

But if the concern of traditional security studies with replicating the tenets of natural sciences could be defied through post-positivism, the intention to contest rather than support the status-quo required an engagement with Critical Theory (Cox 1981; Linklater, 1990; Hoffman, 1987; Neufeld, 1995). First of all, Critical Theory made explicit the connection between the underlying assumptions of traditional security

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<sup>1</sup> The label ‘post’ is itself contested, as for some it means anti-positivism and to others it means after-positivism. The first position rejects positivism in its entirety, the second tends to question focus more on certain aspects of positivism than others.

thinking with the interests of powerful actors and the ways in which they reproduce unequal power relations. Specifically, it upholds that positivism was underpinned by an interest in increasing the control of man over nature and facilitating the administration of society (Horkheimer, 2002). Critical Theory thus offered the tools with which to reveal how different modes of realist thinking were underpinned by particular ideologies and interests and, in turn, how they contributed to reproduce a particular conception of international and domestic politics (Ashley, 1981). Second, and based on that, Critical Theory provided an alternative research programme upon which it was possible to develop a critical security project as a valid alternative to traditional security thinking (Devetak, 2018; Bilgin, 2008). This programme was organized around three commitments: first, providing a framework for the historical analysis of social problems; second, illuminating the possibilities that already exist to transform them; and third, offering an anchorage to evaluate between potential alternatives (Linklater, 1996; Cox, 1981).

Overall, the increasing interest in post-positivism and Critical Theory opened up the space to rethink the perennial assumptions of International Relations theory and, concomitantly, revise the basic premises of traditional security studies (Lipschutz, 1995; Krause and Williams, 1997). They pushed security scholars to go beyond the more conventional questions of who should be secured, how, why and by whom and reengage with how exactly security should be studied and by which means? Whilst the post-positivist challenge made clear the epistemological assumptions that underpinned traditional security thinking, Critical Theory expanded this effort by questioning the historical conditions and political interests that made them possible in the first place. It argued that the challenge was not simply to question the theory and practice of international politics but also, and crucially, to search for the immanent possibilities to improve them. In that sense, Critical Theory made explicit the normative and transformative dimension that entailed by the post-positivist challenge. As a result, post-positivism and Critical Theory opened the space for the emergence of a critical project within security studies oriented by a desire to contest the four cornerstones of traditional security thinking: states, strategy, science, and the status-quo.

### *1.1.3. Deconstruction and Reconstruction: The agenda of critical security studies*

The critical security project thus brought together a group of dissenting voices, all of which dissatisfied with the then common attempts to revise the concept of security by broadening the agenda to include non-military security threats or deepening it to include other referents above and below the state (Krause and Williams, 1996). As a result of that, much of the literature has characterized critical security studies as a mirror image of traditional security studies. While helpful to signal some important differences between the two agendas, this narrative is unhelpful when it comes to delineate the core commitments that orient critical security scholarship (Peoples and Vaughan-Williams, 2015; Browning and McDonald, 2011). A more productive way of mapping the field was the argument that, whilst setting itself against traditional approaches to security, the emergence of critical security studies was anchored to two distinctive but mutually reinforcing concerns: the deconstruction and reconstruction of existing discourses, concepts, and practices of security (Krause and Williams, 1997; Tulumello, 2020). Each of these commitments represented the entry points for the development of three new critical security theories.

The aim of deconstruction was, broadly put, to unpack the social processes through which certain issues, such as pandemics, ecological degradation, ethnic tensions, or climate change became accepted by policy-makers and public opinion as threats to global, regional, national, or human security, as well as the practical implications of this process. Among other issues, deconstruction offered a major contribution to help us appreciate how security was socially constructed (Campbell, 1992; Weldes, 1999), how it normalized specific conceptions of risk and insecurity (Amoore, 2011; Aradau and van Munster, 2008), how this broadened the authority of traditional security actors over non-military domains (Huysmans, 2002), how it allowed the entry of non-military actors into the field of security (Bourne et al., 2015; Doty, 2013), or how it authorized the use of new measures and devices to deal with security problems (Jacobsen, 2012; Schouten, 2014; Frowd, 2014). In addition, deconstruction shed critical light upon some of the most detrimental effects of this process, which often contributed to reinforcing arbitrary forms of exclusion, reproduce stigma, or limit the rights and freedoms of certain groups and individuals (Bigo, 2016).

Reconstruction set out to complement this exercise. It aimed not simply to scrutinize the problems and contradictions of contemporary forms of security provision, but also problematize how security can be conceived and carried out differently. Faced with the numerous forms of violence and unfreedom carried in the name of security, the reconstructive agenda was particularly interested in investigating how we can rethink security both in theory in practice, so that this concept can become a tool with which to curb rather than reinforce inequality and insecurity (Krause and Williams, 1997; Krause, 1998). Reconstruction thus involved assessing recent transformations of security but also, and more importantly, identifying alternative ways of thinking about and redressing issues as well as to evaluating solutions that are more appropriate to that particular context (Booth and Vale, 1997; McDonald, 2013; Bilgin, 2004; Bilgic, 2013). Thus, deconstruction and reconstruction did not represent two different and mutually exclusive facets of the critical security project. Rather, the former should be seen as the logical first step for the latter. As Keith Krause and Michael C. Williams (1997: xiv) wrote:

If a critical theory involves de-essentializing and deconstructing prevailing claims about security, then the question of how security is to be redefined seems necessarily to follow.

Deconstruction and reconstruction are different aspects of the broader concern of critical security studies: the transformation of security. Each of which engages with a different layer of this process. While deconstruction investigates the conditions that make the transformation of security possible and the implications that result from it, reconstruction added a critical edge to this effort by helping us to assess these effects and, building on that, inquire into the transformative possibilities that already exist to conceptualize and prefigure it differently. If, on the one hand, it is only through deconstruction that we can scrutinize security and open up the space for its potential reconstruction, it is only once we recognize the need to revisit what security means and how it is pursued that we can possibly justify the need for its deconstruction in the first place. Apparently, thus, it is only when deconstruction and reconstruction are tied into a coherent whole that we can truly make sense of what it means to be critical about security and, more crucially, why we need a critical project in security studies. As João Nunes (2014a: 126) puts it:

A critical approach to security is thus one in which the researcher is conscious of the political nature of knowledge claims and sets out to intervene in the political process by making a normative judgement on predominant arrangements, contributing to their transformation if need be.

In sum, this section demonstrated that the commitment to offer a valid alternative to traditional security studies resulted in a critical project anchored to the commitment to deconstruct and reconstruct security. Deconstruction basically seeks to denaturalize existing security arrangements by unpacking their underlying assumptions as well as the processes through which they are constructed. In contrast, reconstruction sets out to reveal the alternatives that already exist to those arrangements and provide a basis upon which to assess competing possibilities.

## **1.2. Advancing critical security studies: critical approaches to security**

Up until now, the argument has contextualized the emergence of critical security studies and explained its underlying commitments. It was argued that the creation of critical security studies aimed to offer an inclusive space for non-traditional security scholarship. Bringing an eclectic group of researchers together, this project was built upon three underlying commitments: to challenge and reconsider the meta-theoretical assumptions of traditional security thinking, as well as to engage in the deconstruction and reconstruction of security. In order to deliver upon this promises, however, critical security scholarship has taken inspiration from a wide array of perspectives. Five of which have been particularly important to the critical project in security studies: feminism, constructivism, poststructuralism, postcolonial theory, and human security. This section explores the underlying tenets and main achievements for each of these strands of critical security thinking. In doing so, it clarifies the differences and overlaps between critical approaches to security and the three critical security theories that will be explored in the following section.

### ***1.2.1. Feminist security studies***

While playing a quintessential part in world politics, the role and experiences of women were seldomly recognized by the agenda of traditional security studies. This started to change in the late 1980s and early 1990s, with the emergence of feminist

security research (Elshtain, 1987; Enloe, 1990; Peterson, 1992; Sylvester, 1994; Tickner, 1992; Cohn, 1987; see Blanchard, 2003). By questioning the androcentric assumptions of dominant conceptualizations of security and foregrounding the everyday lives and experiences of women, feminist scholarship was able to challenge the gender-neutrality of traditional security thinking and demonstrate the multiple ways in which gender permeates every layer of international politics and security (Tickner, 2005; Wibben, 2011). Still, feminist security research does not represent a distinctive critical security theory. Rather, it includes an array of approaches grounded upon different epistemological, ontological, and methodological assumptions and thus privileging a different way of exploring how gender intersects with security and insecurity (Hansen, 2010). Despite some important differences, all of them uphold that 'gender is conceptually, empirically, and normatively essential to studying international security' (Sjoberg, 2010: 2). Feminist approaches to in/security can be divided into liberal, critical, postmodern, postcolonial, and posthuman perspectives (Whitworth, 2008). However, the critical security project was particularly influenced by two strands of feminist theorizing: standpoint feminism (Haraway, 1988; Harding, 1992) and poststructural feminism (Butler, 1993).

Standpoint feminism sets out critique and rethink existing conceptions and practices of security in two moves. At the ontological level, it shifts the analytical focus of security research from the state and the international system towards the experience of women in a position of vulnerability (Tickner, 1992). Specifically, it recasts the voices and experiences of women as the entry point for the assessment and reconsideration of dominant concepts, policies, and practices of security. By foregrounding the physical and structural insecurities of women, standpoint scholarship has been able to demonstrate how their concerns are systematically excluded from traditional security thinking as well as how different aspects of security such as health, environment, and poverty are interconnected (Seckinelgin et al., 2010). This bottom-up approach provides the groundwork for a more feminist reconsideration of security that stresses the link between the different dimensions and levels of policy. At the epistemological level, standpoint feminist privilege interpretive methods of research such as narrative and ethnographic strategies of inquiry that are particularly tailored to shed light upon the perspectives, struggles, and insecurities of women, as well upon the broader ideational and material conditions that contribute to their

insecurity (Wibben, 2011; Stern, 2006; Ackerly et al., 2006). The goal is three-fold: to authorize embodied forms of knowledge as legitimate source of knowledge whilst complicating the divide between subject-object divide (Haraway, 1988; Harding, 1992), to unpack the ideational structures through which certain values and roles are ascribed to masculinity and femininity (Enloe, 1990; Tickner, 1992), and to challenge the conception of women as passive victims and reveal their agency in reproducing insecurity or contesting and transforming existing security arrangements (Sjoberg and Gentry, 2007; Sjoberg, 2016).

Seeking to overcome some of the problematic assumptions of standpoint feminism and the ways in which it equates experience with authenticity, poststructural research shifted the focus from investigating how silenced women experience insecurity towards researching how gendered identities and differences are performed, constituted, and governed through security (Peterson, 1992; Shepherd, 2008). Specifically, they explore how security discourses and practices ascribe feminine or masculine characteristics to certain security referents such as states, cultures, or particular groups by constructing through categories such as rational or emotional, victims or perpetrators, civilized or barbaric (Parashar et al., 2018). They also interrogate the different ways through which gender issues are framed and securitized, that is, how issues such as violence against women in particular regions are constituted as a security problem and the policies, exclusions, and silences that are authorized through that process (MacKenzie, 2009). Given that they start from the assumption that gender differences are intersubjectively constituted, this strand of research has also been concerned with illuminating instances wherein conventional gender dichotomies are resisted, disrupted, and reconfigured (Sjoberg, 2016; Penttinen, 2018). Feminist research thus contributed to destabilize the traditional categories and methods of security studies and complicate the androcentric biases of critical approaches such as human security (Hoogensen and Stuvoy, 2006) or securitization theory (Hansen, 2000). More crucially though, it offered new and more productive ways of deconstructing the gendered character and implications of security, as well as to reconsider existing security discourses, institutions, and practices along more inclusive and gender-sensitive lines.

### *1.2.2. Constructivist approaches to security*

Starting from the idea that ‘reality is socially constructed by cognitive structures that give meaning to the material world’ (Adler, 1997: 322), constructivism depicts world politics as the product of the intersubjective relations and ideational beliefs of different actors (Onuf, 1989; Wendt, 1998; Ruggie, 1998; Katzenstein, 1996). Similar to feminist approaches, constructivism is not a single and coherent perspective. Rather, constructivism can better be understood as a theoretical spectrum that encompasses different views of the social world ranging from the more conventional, rational, or thin versions of social constructivism to a more critical, reflexive, and thick form of constructivist research (Finnemore and Sikkink, 2011; Checkel, 2007). While there is no straightforward line dividing the two, the most important difference lies in that whilst conventional constructivism maintains a positivist epistemology and seeks to explain the ideational factors that shape certain security concepts, norms, and policies (Katzenstein, 1996; Adler and Barnett, 1998; Hopf, 1998), critical constructivism adopts a post-positivist approach to analyse the discursive constitution of existing security threats and arrangements (Doty, 1993; Zehfuss, 2002, Weldes., 1999; Fierke, 1998). As a result, critical constructivists often contest the overwhelming focus placed by conventional scholarship upon the military dimensions of national and international security. Nonetheless, both strands share an underlying concern with the role of norms, language, interests, identity, and culture in the making and remaking of world politics and security. (Fierke, 2002; Farrell, 2002; Huysmans, 2002; Agius, 2013; McDonald, 2008).

Conventional constructivism aimed to redress some important limitations in realist security thinking (McDonald, 2008). By focusing on the development of international norms and institutions, this strand of constructivist research not only aimed to question essentialist readings of states as rational actors and power-maximizers, but also stress the role of ideational factors and intersubjective relations in the reconfiguration of existing security arrangements and conceptions of security (Adler and Barnett, 1998; Katzenstein, 1996). In turn, critical constructivists set out to investigate the discursive constitution of security and the particular set of assumptions, narratives, and linguistic representations upon which they rely (Weldes, 1999; Mutimer, 2000). Rather than taking security threats or national interests as a given, they interrogate how certain narratives about national, international, or human security help to constitute particular

identities and how these identities, in turn, help to authorize certain courses of political action and institutional arrangements instead of others (McDonald, 2013). In doing so, however, critical constructivism also stresses the contingent character of hegemonic security representations and the contextual meaning of security and thus opens up the space to assess different ways of framing the construction of security (McDonald, 2012; Fierke, 1998).

Against this backdrop, social constructivist research has offered at least four major contributions to critical security studies. First, by rejecting to take security as a given, constructivism helped critical scholarship to appreciate the intersubjective practices through which the meaning of security is mediated, contested, and authorized, as well the cultural assumptions and collective beliefs upon which those meanings rests, and the norms which they help to reproduce (Williams, 2007; Gheciu, 2005; Weldes, 1999). Second, by stressing the mutual constitution of agents and structures as well as the evolving character of intersubjective meanings, beliefs, and norms, constructivism helped to undercut teleological readings of world politics and lay bare the possibility of social change (McDonald, 2012; Fierke, 2015; Weldes, 1999). In addition to that, it helped to further dismantle the tendency to consider security scholarship as value-neutral and objective and, instead, recognize that writing security is always complicit in helping to challenge or reinforce existing norms, practices, and beliefs and, in doing so, made explicit the normative character of security thinking (Huysmans, 2002). Finally, constructivist insights provided critical researchers with a set of important meta-theoretical assumptions, methods, and methodologies to investigate the social construction of security (Klotz and Lynch, 2007; Lupovici, 2009; Pouliot, 2007).

More recently, however, there has been a growing interest in problematizing the ethical openings of constructivist research (Price and Reus-Smit, 1998), whether that is by providing the missing link between normative and empirical research (Price, 2008) or analysing the ways in which ethics informs the behavior of different actors and helped to transform existing identities and normative structures (Reus-Smit, 2008; Hoffman, 2009). Still, the most important contribution of constructivism at this level is in its ability to help us shed light upon the ethical assumptions underpinning and reproduced by different conceptions of security (McDonald, 2013; 2016). In doing so, critical constructivist research has been particularly useful to help critical scholarship

in clarifying the different conceptions of politics and the political subject embedded within the conceptions of security articulated and promoted by different actors.

### *1.2.3. Poststructuralist security research*

Similar to other critical approaches to security, poststructuralist rejected considering security threats for granted (Waever, 1995). Instead, it understands them as the intersubjective product of discursive performances through which certain identities, values, cultures, and bodies were represented as normal and worthy of protection and others as abnormal and threatening. Performances of security are a particularly productive ground for poststructuralist inquiry since the language of danger and survival as well as the concern with the state are particularly powerful ways of enacting difference and authorizing particular modes of governing social and political life (Klein, 1990; Shapiro, 1990; Der Derian, 1995; Walker, 1997). Hence, in contrast with traditional modes of theorizing that seek to explain the causal factors that underpin particular practices of security and which turn a particular object or referent into a security threat, poststructural work investigates the discursive conditions that make certain security policies possible in the first place, and the ways in which their underlying conceptions of politics are inscribed into certain bodies (Doty, 1993; Klein, 1994; Walker, 1997; Burke, 2007). Specifically, they place the focus on the ways in which linguistic constructions of security function to reframe something or someone as a security problem and, in doing so, authorize certain modes of dealing with that problem rather than others (Hansen, 2006; Shapiro, 1990; Aradau et al., 2015).

Starting from the assumptions that identities are intersubjectively constituted, most poststructural research has been concerned with interrogating how representations of security mediate intersubjective relations and constitute difference (Hansen, 1997). Since the authority of security policies and institutions require the perception of a potential threat, a large bulk of poststructural literature focused upon showing how the Cold War or the War on Terror were authorized through systematic enactment of a threatening other (Dalby, 1990; Burke, 2007), or how post-war interventions are authorized through representations of a threatened other that must be saved (Jabri, 2007; Heck and Schlag, 2012). In doing so, they were able to demonstrate that security discourses and practices not only exercise power through physical and structural violence, but also by helping to constitute particular subjects and bodies in certain

ways (Dillon and Lobo-Guerrero, 2008; Dauphinee and Masters, 2007). Security, from this standpoint, is reconsidered as a political tool through which biopower is exercised (Dillon, 2007; Dillon and Reid, 2009; Foucault, 2008). Security is not understood as a concept that can be broadened and deepened, but rather as an ordering device through which certain conceptions of politics and its subjects are authorized, whilst others are rejected and constituted as dangerous and threatening (Jabri, 2007; Campbell, 1992). In doing so, poststructural researchers shifted the focus from the traditional concern with refining the concept of security of analysing the link between security and certain threats, to unpacking how political life and the categories of knowledge, be that ‘risk’ (Van Munster, 2009) or ‘resilience’ (Joseph, 2013), upon which it relies are governed and reinforced through discourses of security (Walker, 1993; Bartelson, 1995; George, 1994).

Poststructuralism thus offered some major contributions to the agenda of critical security studies. First, it played a major role in helping to destabilize the foundational ontologies upon which the agenda of traditional security studies relied (Hansen, 1997). It shed light upon the assemblage of practices through which the distinction between inside and outside (Walker, 1993), self and other (Campbell, 1992), or civilized and barbaric (Austin, 2015) were performed and naturalized. Second, in terms of method, whilst early scholarship often understood discourse as text and focused predominantly upon deconstruction and genealogy (Der Derian, 1992; Milliken, 1999; Hansen, 2006), recent research underpinned by a poststructuralist sensibility has opened upon new avenues for the analysis of security such as the focus on images, objects, or technological devices (Aradau et al., 2015; Lundborg and Vaughan-Williams, 2015; Bleiker et al., 2013). Third, poststructuralism enables the development of a more rigorous understanding of the intersubjective relations and regimes of knowledge through which certain conceptions and practices of security come to be accepted as natural and legitimate (Bigo, 2014; Aradau and Van Munster, 2011; Amoore and Raley, 2017; Van Munster, 2009).

#### ***1.2.4. Postcolonial security thinking***

Postcolonial insights can also be divided into conventional and critical approaches to security. Conventional approaches were often defined as the ‘Third World’ approach to security or ‘subaltern realism’ (Ayoob, 1997). This strand of scholarship not only

questioned the absence of developing regions from security studies during the Cold War (Acharya, 1997; Thomas, 1987), it also suggested that the concepts of security that dominated the agenda in this period, were inadequate to understand the security predicaments facing non-Western states (Ayoob, 1991; 1992; 1997; Acharya, 1997). Once the gaze of security research shifted from Western to non-Western states, it was evident that the most significant sources of instability and threat were not external but internal (Ayoob, 1983). Building upon that, postcolonial research questioned the overwhelming emphasis given to military aspects of security and, instead, stressed the role of economic inequality and political legitimacy upon societal stability and human security (Thomas, 1991; Al-Mashat, 1985; see also Wendt and Barnett, 1993). For them, the concept of security and the agenda of security studies should be extended to incorporate not only external but also the internal and non-military aspects of security (Ayoob, 1997; Acharya, 1997; Azar and Moon, 1988). Conventional scholarship was thus predominantly concerned with redefining and recentring security: it sought to reconceptualize security to better reflect the threats and experiences of non-Western regions (Barthwal-Datta and Basu, 2017) and, in tandem, place these regions at the centre of security studies (Acharya, 1997, 2001; Bilgin, 2004).

In contrast, critical postcolonial scholarship aimed at decentring, decolonizing, and unsettling security, that is, to decouple security theory, method, and practice from the Western-centric and racialized assumptions upon which it was grounded (Honke and Muller, 2012). At the theoretical level, postcolonial critique has been consistently interested in unearthing the colonial-cum-imperial rationalities that underpin security studies and the ways in which they contribute to reproducing international hierarchies (Laffey and Weldes, 2008). Beyond reconsidering security studies as a constitutive practice of international politics, they argued that the silencing, appropriation, and erasure of non-Western voices and experiences has been a constitutive feature of the discipline as a whole (Bilgin, 2010, 2016; see also Beier, 2005; Chowdhry and Rai, 2009). Still, the limits critical approaches to security have also been a major focus of postcolonial critique. Specifically, postcolonial scholarship argued that the Western underpinnings of concepts such as human security or emancipation not only erase the agency and experiences of non-Western actors but also authorize particular modes of external-led intervention into post-colonial (Barkawi and Laffey, 2007; Tadjbakshs, 2010). For some, by resting upon an abstract conception of the human, Foucauldian

approaches sidestep the foundational role of violence and exploitation in the rise and reproduction of biopolitical security assemblages (Howell and Richter-Montpetit, 2018; Ali, 2020). Similarly, by adopting liberal conceptions of politics and progress, securitization theory normalize racialized distinctions between Western and non-Western societies and reproduce preconceptions of the first as ordered and civilized and the latter as anarchic and barbaric (Howell and Richter-Montpetit, 2020; Baaz and Verweijen, 2018; Wilkinson, 2007). This led to a growing interest in exploring non-Western modes of theorizing (Acharya and Buzan, 2010) and, more importantly, unsettling and decolonizing the practice of critical security research (Laffey and Weldes, 2008; Dixit, 2014; Ryan, 2015; Bilgin, 2016; Qadim, 2014; Hendershot and Mutimer, 2018).

In terms of practice, the shift from ideology to culture that underpinned the reconfiguration of security as an ordering principle after the Cold War has provided the backdrop for postcolonial research in security studies. Setting themselves against essentialist and racialized conceptions of culture and broader regarding the clash of civilizations, postcolonial critiques have been particularly interested in revealing the colonial rationalities and implications of contemporary security assemblages (Ali, 2020; Gray and Franck, 2019; Jabri, 2007; 2011), as well as exploring postcolonial conceptions of politics, agency, and subjectivity (Jabri, 2012; Qadim, 2014; Honke and Muller, 2012). An important instance of this discussion has been the gradual shift in the focus of conflict intervention and post-war reconstruction from institution towards individuals. Seen as a continuation of colonial and imperial practices by other means (Riley and Inayatullah, 2006), the local shift often couched in the languages of culture, hybridity, capacity-building, resilience, or post-liberal politics (Chandler, 2010). For postcolonial scholarship, however, the assemblage of practices emerging from this language functions further erase the agency of post-colonial subjects whilst, concomitantly, turning peacebuilding into a political mechanism with which to impose Western-cum-liberal values and subjectivities upon non-Western subjects (Jabri, 2013; Barkawi and Laffey, 2006). This led to an increasing interest in the War on Terror, the set of violent and colonial histories and practices that make it possible, and how they function to authorize the subordination and transformation of non-Western subjects and bodies deemed as potentially harmful and threatening (Dauphinee and Masters, 2007; Richter-Montpetit, 2014; Jabri, 2007). Hence, despite some important

nuances postcolonial literature shares an underlying commitment to problematizing the how discourses about security and international politics, whether in terms of theory or policy, have not only hidden their racialized and ethnocentric assumptions but also, and in doing so, contributed to legitimize colonial and imperial practices (Inayatullah and Blaney, 2004)

Still, this literature argues, colonial logics are not only inscribed in security discourses and practices themselves, but in other social and political artefacts through which they are represented and made to appear as natural and necessary, such as the death of Osama Bin Laden (Dixit, 2014), the broader construction of the ‘Muslim Problem’ (Ali and Whitham, 2018), or the ways in which diasporas are represented at the domestic level (Laffey and Nadarajah, 2012). For postcolonial scholars, security discourses have been crucial to furthering militarize state-society relations and everyday life (Parashar, 2018) by reifying self-other dichotomies and sediment cultural differences as sources of imminent threat (Agathangelou and Ling, 2004). Parallel to this, however, has been the increasing transference of neo-liberal technologies and modes of governing security from the global North to the global South (Frowd, 2014), not only helping to universalize and standardize Western conceptions and practice of security, but also further contributing to reinforce governmental practices of exclusion and control based upon based upon cultural differences (Jacobsen, 2012; Ali, 2020). Finally, this literature has been particularly interested in investigating contemporary manifestations of postcolonial agency and the ways non-Western subjects, whether states (Biswas, 2013; Qadim, 2014; Bilgin, 2008), groups (Basu, 2016), social movements (Bilgic, 2015), or individuals (Innes, 2014) have sought to articulate alternative conceptions of ethics and the political, against the backdrop of biopolitical governmentality (Jabri, 2012; 2014; Hobson and Sajed, 2017). This, however, has been accompanied by a serious reflection about the problems that can result from any attempt to decolonize the ethics of security. (Chako, 2016)

### ***1.2.5. Human security***

For various reasons, critical scholarship has often resisted considering human security as a critical approach to security (Chandler and Hynek, 2011). Nonetheless, it is also widely accepted that, whilst policy-oriented, human security also held an important

role when it came to disrupt the boundaries of traditional security studies and opening the space for critical scholarship (Croft, 2008). In fact, this idea represented a radical shift to the concepts of national and international security. It entailed two fundamental moves. First, human security deepened the referent of security analysis and policy from the state to the security of groups and individuals and, second, it broadened the threats that could be considered to include a wide array of concerns (Roberts, 2006; Flora et al., 2013). In its initial form, human security stressed seven interconnected dimensions: economic security, health security, environmental security, personal, political, and community security (UNDP, 1994). This notion achieved major political traction and resulted in the redefinition of security priorities, referents, actors, and practices as it was not only adopted by various institutions and non-governmental organizations, but also turned into a strategic concern for the foreign policy of states such as Japan, Canada, and Switzerland (Black, 2006; Neufeld, 2004; Hynek, 2012). At the broader level, it paved the ground for the development and implementation of human-centered practices of security (Newman, 2016).

Nonetheless, while those building on human security share a commitment to placing the individual as the referent for security analysis and practice, there has been a recurrent disagreement regarding exactly which threats should be considered by human security as well as how exactly should they be tackled (Thomas and Tow, 2002; Bellamy and McDonald, 2002; Jacob, 2014; Liotta, 2002). This reflects the existence of a tension between the two normative principles that underpin this human security: 'freedom from fear' and 'freedom from want' (Hanlon and Christie, 2016). The first, freedom from fear, results in a narrow or minimalist conception of human security as survival and, as a result of that, is predominantly concerned with issues that pose a direct physical threat to groups and individuals, such as internal conflict, crime, or political violence. Hence, whilst reconsidering the individual security rather than state security as the focus of policy interventions, it still retains an highly militarized view of security (Krause, 2004). In contrast, freedom from want, broadens the scope and potential of this idea by reconsidering security as the well-being of groups and individuals. It offers a maximalist conception of this notion and, as a result, promotes a more ambitious agenda that ties security explicitly to developmental concerns which include, among others, issues of food security, economic security, health security or human rights (Stoet, 1999; Thakur, 2000; cf. Roberts, 2008).

The existence of two distinctive views of human security has posed some difficulties (Paris, 2001; Newman, 2004; Wibben, 2016). First, while the broad understanding of human security holds a stronger potential to reduce structural inequalities and promote positive social change, it was the narrow conception of this notion that anchored some of the most significant and successful initiatives conducted in its name. Second, while the broad discourse of human security has come to be gradually incorporated into the values and missions of international organizations and other, mainly Western, civil society organizations, the process has been characterized by an instrumentalization of the concept that has also reduced its progressive potential (Neufeld, 2004; Glasius, 2008; Chandler, 2012). For instance, the human security discourse has been frequently mobilized to justify a local turn in practices of post-war reconstruction, humanitarian assistance and international development (Newman, 2011) that, while oriented towards vulnerable groups and individuals, often fails to take into consideration the historical, social, and economic conditions that make them possible in the first place (Gilmore, 2011). In fact, some argued, human security is grounded upon a deeply problematic conception of the human (Marhia, 2013). As a result, much of the critical security literature depicts it as a mechanism of biopower and thus as a technology of neoliberal governmentality that functions to reinforce rather than transform unequal power relations (De Larrinaga and Doucet, 2008; Chandler, 2008; Voelkner, 2011). Far from opening the space for the radical questioning and reconfiguration of existing social arrangements, it helps to legitimize the existing institutions and normalize the status-quo (Chandler and Hynek, 2011; Christie, 2010). Despite this gap between the normative aspirations and practical implications of human security, there are some important avenues to reconsider the conceptualization, study, and ethics of human security along critical and potentially transformative lines (Newman, 2010; 2016).

### **1.3. Assessing critical security studies: from theories to turns**

The previous section argued that critical security studies benefited from engaging with different strands of critical theorizing. Each of them helped critical scholarship to both dismantle the underlying tenets of traditional security scholarship and illuminate some of the potential openings created by a critical revisioning of security in both theory and practice. However, it was the development of three critical theories of security,

also known as the Copenhagen, Aberystwyth, and Paris schools of security studies, that helped to further consolidate the critical security project. By combining ideas from different theoretical positions, they demonstrated that the critical project in security studies was not only able to apply insights from critical theories to the realm of security but also, and more importantly, it was able to develop new ways of thinking about it. Still, the sedimentation of critical discussions around these three schools of security thinking also provoked a gradual fragmentation of critical security thinking. Whilst forging important openings for the critical security agenda, the emerging shift from critical security theories to critical security turns has also contribute to further dissolve the debates and erect some problematic boundaries among different strands of critical security thinking. Exploring the shift from critical security theories to turns and assessing its implications will be the focus of this section.

### ***1.3.1. Securitization, insecurity and security as emancipation***

The first line of securitization theory, also known as the ‘Copenhagen School’ of security studies (McSweeney, 1999), provides a discursive framework to investigate the illocutionary ‘speech-acts’ through which social actors publicly frame something or someone as a security problem (Waever, 1995). It posits that, by arguing that the survival of a referent object is threatened by a particular issue – be that environmental change, an infectious disease, migration crisis or terrorism – a ‘securitizing agent’ is reclaiming the necessity to prioritize that issue and to address through ‘extraordinary measures’ (Buzan et al., 1998: 21). According to this approach, if accepted by the ‘audience’ as a legitimate security threat, the issue is elevated from the realm of normal politics to the sphere of high politics, wherein appropriate actions can be taken without passing through normal processes of decision-making. For securitization theory, an issue has been successfully securitized when three specific criteria have been met: the issue has been presented through the logic of ‘threat-defense;’ as a result of that, ‘emergency measures’ have been put in place; and the conventional measures utilized for dealing with that issue have been modified (Waever, 1995; Balzacq, 2005). Analytically, securitization theory is operationalized through discourse analysis and asks: ‘who can ‘do’ or ‘speak’ security successfully, on what issues, under what condition, and with what effects’ (Buzan et al., 1998: 27).

In/securitization theory, also known as the 'Paris School' (Wæver, 2004) of security studies, extended those insights by offering a sociological framework to investigate the bureaucratic processes through which new security practices are incorporated into existing security arrangements (Bigo and McCluskey, 2018). According to this framework, the construction of security is not only the product of exceptional measures but also the result of mundane, surreptitious, and everyday practices of multiple security actors, each of which seeking to authorize their distinctive form of expertise as the most appropriate to understand and redress security issues (Bigo, 2008). In that sense, the Paris Schools extends the focus from the discursive framing of existential threats towards the everyday practices and institutional routines through which networks of security experts and practitioners define and redefine potential security risks. It thus directs the attention of scholars towards the legal, pedagogical, and scientific contexts within which certain security practices, devices, networks and institutions are created, developed, and incorporated into security arrangements (Bigo, 2014). At the analytical level, applying this framework often requires the triangulation of ethnographic methods with the intention of asking: 'what are the current practices of security, how they emerged, and how they evolved'? (Balzacq et al., 2010)

Therefore, there are some nuances between the Paris and Copenhagen frameworks for the study of securitization. Not only in terms of their focus on either the discourses of policy-makers or the everyday routines of professionals, but also in their conception of security working through the logics of exception or unease. Nonetheless, there are also strong analytical, ethical and normative similarities between securitization and in/securitization. At the analytical level, while securitization adopts a discursive lenses and in/securitization works within a sociological framework, they are both concerned with the same phenomenon: to understand the 'construction of security' (McDonald, 2008) and thus explore how security issues 'emerge, evolve, and dissolve' (Balzacq, 2011). Both perspectives start from the assumption that the construction of security is a self-referential practice (Huysmans, 1998: 232). That is, something or someone becomes a security issue not because it objectively represents an existential threat but because it is intersubjectively performed as such (Buzan et al., 1998: 24). Moreover, both securitization and in/securitization are particularly concerned with unveiling the conditions that make securitization possible in the first place and, in addition to that, identify how exactly that process helped to reshape existing security arrangements

(Huysmans, 2000). Finally, both posit that when something is successfully securitized it results in the empowerment of elites and security experts, the evasion of democratic norms, and the narrowing of the space for debate thus reducing the scope for choosing between different possibilities.

The two approaches uphold that securitization consists in a set of intersubjective performances that mobilize fear to authorize certain actors, practices, institutions, devices and subjectivities that would not be accepted if subjected to open, transparent, and democratic debate. Similar to poststructural arguments, underlying securitization theories there is a shared belief that security works an ‘universalising discourse that is at the same time both imbued with and driven by exclusion’ (Jabri, 2016: 27). As a result, both support the argument that:

more securitization does not lead to less insecurity, but on the contrary expands it as each practice of security creates more insecurity and fear for other groups, or even for the same group or person. The process of securitization is always drawing limits, excluding categories, banning people, even when it claims to be doing the opposite (Balzacq, et al., 2010).

Therefore, regardless of their different assumptions and methodological choices, both securitization and in/securitization share an ethical commitment against security that can be articulated as a preference for the process of ‘desecuritization’ (Waever, 1995) or the ‘unmaking of securitization’ (Huysmans, 1998), through ‘the shifting of issues out of emergency mode and into the normal bargaining process of the political sphere’ (Hansen, 2012: 526). Desecuritization means the ‘removal of issues from the security realm’ (Browning and McDonald, 2011: 2141) and, consequently, the ‘return of a certain number of issues into the realm of politics’ (CASE, 2006: 446). It reflects the underlying argument, upheld by both perspectives, that security is better understood as a ‘thick signifier’ (Huysmans, 1998). In other words, security is not merely a concept that can be redefined; rather, security epitomizes a governing principle that is historically linked to a particular way of organizing social and political life and which helps to govern groups and subjectivities deemed threatening. Security is a mode of ‘mediating belonging’ (Huysmans, 2000: 758). It is enacted through the constitution of difference and, as a result, of helps to authorize practices of control, subordination, and exclusion. However, the main difference between the two approaches lies in how exactly they conceive the processes through which the politics of constructing security

and thus mediating belonging is made and remade. According to securitization theory, exclusion and difference are enacted and made to be accepted through the dramatic 'politics of exception;' in contrast, for in/securitization theory this process the product of mundane practices of security professionals through which notions of threat and risk are defined and whose authority results from a 'politics of unease' (Huysmans and Buonfino, 2008).

However, the overwhelming acceptance of security as something negative within both strands of securitization thinking paved the way for a systematic engagement with the politics of desecuritization and the normative potential of securitization theory. Regarding the latter and building upon just war theory, Rita Floyd (2011; 2014; 2016; 2019) put forward a typological framework to assess whether securitization moves can be considered as morally rightful. First, securitization is morally justified if the issue at stake represents an existential threat to the referent; second, if the securitizing agent has the legitimacy, ethical and political, to enact those claims; third, if the measures put in place to deal with that issue are appropriate. For her, a just securitization move requires not only the existence of a just cause to securitize, but also the existence of justice during and after the securitization process. As such, she argued, it is only when the three criteria are simultaneously met that the securitization move can be considered as morally rightful. Differently, Lene Hansen (2012) argued that desecuritization can be carried in at least four different ways: stabilization, when the problem still assumes a dominant role in the policy agenda but is no longer framed as a security problem; replacement, when a security issue is gradually replaced by a different concern; third, rearticulation, when the matter at stake is resolved and moved down from the realm of security to normal politics; and silencing, if the issue, groups, or concerns in question are simply excluded from both politics and security.

It was exactly the ethical and normative aspect of security theory and practice that underpinned the emergence and development of a third critical theory of security: security as emancipation. Also known as the 'Aberystwyth' (Wæver, 2004) or 'Welsh School' (Smith, 2005) of security studies, security as emancipation puts forward a framework for the analysis, normative assessment, and political reconsideration of existing security arrangements (Booth, 2007; Nunes, 2014a). This, however, must be grounded upon an engagement with the struggles and insecurities of real people in real places. Analytically, this theory engages with different layers of security: it uncovers

the political assumptions of existing security configurations (Wyn Jones, 1999), assesses their social and political implications (Stamnes, 2004) and, when these are considered harmful, illuminate the alternative possibilities that already exist to replace them (Bilgic, 2013). Oriented by the idea of immanent critique, at the operational level it allows for a combination of various methods (Basu and Nunes, 2013) that can help us to ask: whose insecurities are at stake, how are security theories and policies connected to it, what are the resources that already exist to redress these insecurities, what actors are better positioned to do so, and to which extent can these transformative efforts be counter-productive and how can they be reconsidered in the long term? (Basu, 2011)

Taking inspiration from different approaches, the theory of security as emancipation is characterized by three distinctive features. First, in contrast with traditional security studies (Walt, 2010), it reconsiders the individual as the core unit of social and political life (Booth, 2007). This, however, does not mean neglecting the importance of the state or the international system, but rather reconceiving the human being as the ‘ultimate referent’ of security (Booth, 1991). Second, security as emancipation argues that the theory and practice of security are mutually constitutive: theory informs practice and practice informs theory. In other words, security theories do not simply help us to explain the world and identify potential security threats, they also take part in constituting the objects and referents of security, as well as to define the appropriate ways to redress them (Wyn Jones, 1999; Bilgin, 1991; 2005; Bilgin et al., 1998). Third, this theory is explicitly committed to promote emancipation (Booth, 1991; 2007). In other words, security as emancipation is not only concerned with contesting existing security arrangements deemed unfair. Rather, it also seeks to take an active role in supporting existing struggles to resist them and helping to orient their progressive transformation. Emancipation is conceived as the ‘securing of people from those oppressions that stop them carrying out what they would freely choose to do, compatible with the freedom of others’ (Booth, 2007: 112).

Similar to securitization theory, various aspects of security as emancipation were revisited and refined. One important focus of that was its conception of power. In its initial form, Booth (2007) conceived power as oppressive force that contains material and ideational layers, and which works to constrain or enable actors. To Nunes (2012), however, this conception of power as structure of oppression should be supplemented

by an understanding of power as a productive force, that is, as something which works not only by constraining individual actions but also by helping to constitute the subjects of security in certain ways rather than others. Differently, Bilgic (2015) suggested that given the emphasis placed by emancipatory security thinking in disrupting existing security arrangements and giving voice to the voiceless, this theoretical framework still required a conception of power that stressed the collective agency of those most made insecure. According to him, this form of emancipatory power, conceived as the power-to, can help those engaging with insecurity from an emancipatory perspective to better appreciate existing practices of resistance. As such, these reconsiderations addressed earlier calls stressing the need to avoid imposing a predefined conception of security or emancipation and, concomitantly, conceptualize vulnerable groups and individuals as agents of their own security (Basu, 2011).

Securitization theory, in/securitization theory, and security as emancipation have thus been central to organizing the debates within critical security studies (Floyd and Croft, 2011; Van Munster, 2007). Still, restructuring the debate around distinct 'schools' also ended up creating some problems. First of which, collective attempts to stimulate dialogue and identify a common ground for critical security work (C.A.S.E., 2006) ended up further silencing some voices and creating artificial boundaries between some of these schools and other perspectives (Salter, 2007; Sylvester, 2007; Walker, 2007; Peoples and Vaughan-Williams, 2015). Moreover, this narrative also replicated the argument that security as emancipation was exclusively focused on the normative aspect of critical security theorizing. That is, whilst securitization and insecurity theories were concerned with the deconstruction of security, the only purpose of security as emancipation was only its reconstruction. At the same time, the latter showed some reluctance to engage with the former (Booth, 2007; Bilgic, 2013; Mutimer, 2009; but see Wyn Jones, 2005). As a result, while securitization and insecurity theories have been in constant dialogue, security as emancipation has been largely absent from this debate (Bigo and McCluskey, 2018; De Larrinaga and Salter, 2014; but see Aradau, 2004; Floyd, 2007; Browning and McDonald, 2011). The outcome of this process was not only a gradual fragmentation of the field but also, and more importantly, the division of critique into two different and mutually exclusive camps (Mutimer, 2016; Nunes, 2012; Tulumello, 2020). As will be seen in

the next section, the tendency towards fragmentation has been intensified by the recent shift from critical security theories to critical security turns.

### *1.3.2. Critical security turns*

Despite the strong interest in engaging with, applying, and developing critical security theories, in recent years the discussion has rapidly moved away from the focus on theories towards the language of turns (Huysmans and Aradau, 2013; Salter and Mutlu, 2013; Heck and Schlag, 2013). Critical security turns can be understood as a concerted shift towards a specific aspect of security or method for critical security research (Salter and Mutlu, 2018). Rather than organizing critical debates about security around a certain theoretical framework, turns restructure the discussion around a particular layer of security and its study: the ‘linguistic turn’ seeks to explore the discursive and intertextual practices through which existing security arrangements are framed, authorized, or contested (Hansen, 2006; Fierke, 2002; Milliken, 1999); the ‘emotional turn’ engages with the ways in which the security performances enact an affective response to a security problem (Clément and Sangar, 2018; Fierke, 2013; Hutchison and Bleiker, 2014; Van Rythoven, 2015); similarly, the ‘material turn’ seeks to foreground the political force of non-human objects in stabilizing and rearranging existing security arrangements (Aradau, 2010; Lundborg and Vaughan-Williams, 2015); the ‘narrative turn,’ in contrast, explores how alternative ways of narrating and interpreting both security and insecurity can function to disrupt contemporary security policies and practices by helping us to complicate its problematic assumptions and implications (Wibben, 2011; Ravecca and Dauphineé, 2016; Inayatullah, 2010).

Similar to the theoretical approaches previously explored, however, turns are not singular and coherent moves that demarcate definitive lines within critical security studies. In fact, there are some important tensions and overlaps between certain critical security turns. For instance, whilst signalling a shared interest in a particular method of research, the ‘ethnographic turn’ (Vrasti, 2008) encloses within it different strands of critical security theorizing. On one hand, ethnographic research paved the ground for the ‘practice turn’ (Balzacq et al. 2010; Bueger and Gadinger, 2015; Pouliot, 2011), which focuses on the everyday activities and interactions of high level policy-makers, diplomats, bureaucrats, experts and governmental and non-governmental agents in charge of designing and implementing security policy. On the other hand, it also been

pivotal for the research associated with the ‘narrative’ (Doty, 2004; Wibben, 2011), the ‘vernacular’ (Jarvis and Lister, 2012; Vaughan-Williams and Stevens, 2016), as well as with the ‘autoethnographic turn’ (Brigg and Bleiker, 2010; Dauphinee, 2010; Inayatullah, 2010) in security studies, and which shift the emphasis towards the ways in which personal predispositions mediate scholarly practice, or how certain groups and individuals interpret, experience, resist, and transform security.

However, the meaning of critical security turns is not something rigid and definitive. For instance, the agenda concerning the ‘visual turn’ (Heck and Schlag, 2013) or ‘aesthetic turn’ (Bleiker, 2003) in security studies has been consistently broadened. Initially focused in the images through which certain security practices are justified, stabilized, and contested, this turn has expanded to include other visual elements that also make up existing security discourses and relations. For instance, visual security researchers have investigated the role of colours in rendering security intelligible, the introduction of visual technologies into security governance, and even the possibilities of using visual methods of research to engage critically with security and insecurity (Vuori and Andersen, 2018; Bleiker, 2019). Similarly, the systematic discussions resulting from particular turns in critical security studies often lead to a shift in the meaning of its object. For instance, earlier discussions associated with the ‘methodological turn’ (Wilcox, 2016) focused on either clarifying the methodological tenets of particular approaches to security (Ackerly, 2006; Hansen, 2006; Salter and Mutlu, 2013) or, alternatively, exploring methods for gathering and interpreting data (Milliken, 1999; Shepherd, 2013; Neumann and Neumann, 2015). In contrast, recent debates have set out to problematize the grounds for assessing critical security knowledge and reconceive method both as a social practice that takes part in the making of existing security arrangements, as well as a potential strategy with which to resist and disrupt them (Aradau and Huysmans, 2013; 2018; Aradau et al., 2015). Moreover, the language of turns is not exclusive to critical security thinking and has often been deployed by mainstream security scholarship (Adamson, 2016).

Nonetheless, within critical security studies the language of turns thus signalled at least two important trends in the literature. First, it expressed a widespread desire to move the discussion from the initial concern with the meta-theoretical, conceptual, and normative issues that are intrinsic to any critical project and into the more practical or operational aspects of critical methodology and method (Salter and Mutlu, 2013;

Aradau et al., 2015). Thinking in terms of turns allowed scholars to identify common methodological tendencies within the field and thus, helped to establish a more consistent dialogue among different strands of critical scholarship (Bueger and Gadinger, 2015; Andersen and Vuori, 2018; Clément and Sangar, 2018). This not only helped to clarify the debate wherein there was an exponential growth of researchers, but it also helped them to identify more clearly the achievements, limitations, and opportunities for critical security research (Clément and Sangar, 2018; Nyman and Burke, 2016). Second, adopting the language of turns also mirrored the growing interest of critical security researchers in experimenting and applying ideas and concepts from other areas of inquiry, often with a richer tradition in terms critical thinking, such as linguistics, cultural studies, anthropology, sociology or science and technology studies (Aradau and Huysmans, 2013; Cudworth et al., 2018; Vrasti, 2008). The logic of turns thus represented a move outwards towards that increased the dialogue with other fields of research, after an earlier move inwards through which the field came to be consolidated in the first place. This held important implications for the critical security agenda.

Similar to theories, turns also played also major role in strengthening the critical security project as a whole. First, they allowed it to increase its autonomy vis-à-vis International Relations and, concomitantly, add some critical edge to security studies (Vrasti, 2008). By forging a stronger dialogue with other areas of research, critical security turns helped to make the critique of security more reflexive. That is, turns made visible some important blind spots that persisted within the critical security literature and put forward new ways of addressing them. For instance, recent turns have criticized the overwhelming focus on language and elites, as well as the limited engagement with the visual and socio-technical performances through which certain issues, objects, and subjects came to be authorized as threats and referents of security (Aradau, 2010; Andersen and Vuori, 2018; Lundborg and Vaughan-Williams, 2015). Second, and equally important, turns helped to protect the critical security project. By foregrounding methodological questions, they challenged the validity of neo-positivist criteria and procedures as the only legitimate benchmarks with which to assess the production of security knowledge (Aradau and Huysmans, 2013; Salter and Mutlu, 2013). This is something particularly important against the backdrop of post-truth and within a context wherein the allocation of resources to social sciences became

increasingly dependent upon quantitative-cum-neo-liberal metrics (Aradau and Huysmans, 2018). Simply, by emphasizing methodological questions, turns made the study of security more critical and the project of critique more secure (Wilcox, 2016).

However, the move from theories to turns was not without its challenges. First, while the critical project was always framed as an attempt to liberate security debates from the boundaries of international relations (Krause and Williams, 1997), the logic of turns ended up making security studies become increasingly subservient to the debates and dynamics in other fields of inquiry. Not only was this reflected upon the growing number of scholars from other areas of research entering the critical security debate, but it was also mirrored in the subtle attempts to discipline the field through standards and ideas developed within other areas of inquiry (cf. Vrasti, 2008; Aradau and Huysmans, 2013). This is not something entirely negative. Critical security studies can and should strive to learn as much as possible from adjacent fields of research and this requires engaging, as thoroughly and rigorously as possible, with the debates that unfold within them. In fact, this has been the preferred avenue when it comes to detect problems within the critical security literature and search for new ways of redressing them (Aradau, 2010; Aradau et al., 2015; Aradau and Huysmans, 2019; Balzacq and Cavelti, 2016). But even if turns have successfully helped to broaden the critical security agenda and extend the analytical reach of critical security research, they also limit the ability of critical security scholars to build something new. By fostering the systematic extraction of ideas already circulating in other fields of inquiry in order to engage critically with security, the logic of turns inherently reduced their incentives to build upon existing theories of security or develop new and original ways of thinking about it.

Second, while broadening the pluralism of critical security studies, the forms through which turns were appropriated, translated, and presented by security scholars helped to reify pre-existing problems and exclusions within the field. Even if most of the areas and debates from which critical security turns took inspiration sought to avoid the reification of critique as deconstruction, it was exactly this agenda that came to be privileged by critical security scholars (Salter and Mutlu, 2013). Whether focused upon practices, discourses, images, or materiality, the main focus of critical security turns became that of exploring how these new ideas and methods could help us to better understand the processes through which emerging security practices, agendas,

and institutions were authorized and with what implications (see Aradau et al., 2015; Vuori and Andersen, 2018; Bueger and Gadinger, 2015). As a result, very few works have used the insights from critical security turns as a potential entry point to advance the reconstructive agenda and explore the possibilities that already exist to assess and transform current security ideas, practices, or institutions (but see Nyman and Burke, 2016). Put simply, turns helped to reify the idea that deconstruction and reconstruction represent two distinctive and mutually exclusive forms of engaging with security.

This imbalance was reflected in the way that turns engaged with critical security theories. Similar to the dynamics of inter-theoretical dialogue, the increasing focus on turns has largely privileged the engagement with securitization theorizing over security as emancipation. Within this literature, there is a substantive number of works seeking to reinvigorate securitization either by advancing a framework for studying the role of images in the securitization process (Hansen, 2011; Heck and Schlag, 2012; Williams, 2003), by reconstructing this theory to account for the role of emotions in securitization moves (Van Rythoven, 2015), by stressing the different rhetorical strategies that can be mobilized in the construction of existential security threats (Senn, 2017), by pushing it to account for the political force of non-human things and recognize the imbrication between material and discourse practices (Aradau, 2010), by making an effort to revitalize securitization theory through an engagement with new materialist approaches (Salter, 2019), by developing a framework to assess the circumstances under which securitization can be considered morally permissible (Floyd, 2019), or even by suggesting the incorporation of experimental methods into securitization theory (Baele and Thomson, 2017). In contrast, up until now security as emancipation has been largely absent from the discussion (but see Nunes, 2016). Despite the extensive literature that draws upon and applies this approach, we still lack an understanding how it could benefit from an engagement with critical security turns and, in turn, how turns could benefit from engaging with a reconstructive approach to security.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter aimed to start laying the groundwork for the theoretical reconsideration of security as emancipation. The argument started by suggesting the critical project in

security studies emerged out of a dissatisfaction with both traditional approaches to security as well as attempts to broaden and deepen the concept of security. This opened up the space for a discussion between two groups: the first, adopting a conservative outlook, sought to retain the state-centric, realist, positivist, and militaristic character of security. In contrast, the second group argued that, in order to develop a more reflexive agenda for security studies and create space for different approaches to security, it was necessary to revision the entire field of security studies. This required, on the one hand, destabilizing the realist underpinnings upon which dominant conceptions of security were grounded and, on the other, reconsidering the positivist assumptions upheld by traditional security thinking. Inspired by the critical turn taking placed within International Relations, an eclectic group of authors then started to both contest the ontological and epistemological foundations of security and security studies and, following from that, explore the question of security from different vantage points. It was this latter group that would later be associated with the emerging field of critical security studies.

Beyond the broader debates about post-positivism and Critical Theory, the agenda of critical security studies thus benefited substantively from the increasing engagement with different resources from critical thinking. Within the five lines of critical theorizing explored, there are some clear shared concerns. The first of which is the recognition that the traditional assumptions, methods, and categories of security studies were not only inadequate to understand insecurity but also contributed to their reproduction. The second of which, is that they reject the idea of security as a given. Rather, every strand of critical security scholarship has stressed the socially constructed character of security and the idea that different conceptions of security are underpinned by different views of politics and its subject, as well as the role of security in mediating the relationship between the two. Third, all of them recognized that it is not sufficient to demonstrate the problematic assumptions that underpin security nor lay bare its implications. It is also necessary to explore the possibilities that already exist to conceptualize and practice security differently, as well as the instances wherein existing security discourses and practices are already being resisted and prefigured differently. It was argued that the critical security literature has tackled this issue in different ways.

Some researchers, especially those linked to human security and early feminist and postcolonial thinking were predominantly concerned with revising the concept and scope of security and its study, to better reflect the insecurities afflicting those excluded by traditional security conceptualizations. In contrast, others have placed a stronger focus in revealing the ways in which security discourses and practices have contributed to reproduce difference and exclusion by reifying dichotomic identities and constitute certain cultures, values, bodies, and objects as potential sources of threat and insecurity. This divergence was also evident in how critical approaches to security engaged with the link between knowledge and security. The first group set out to reconsider this knowledge-security nexus by authorizing subaltern and marginalized voices as legitimate sources of security knowledge, whose insights could pave the way for the reconsideration of existing security arrangements along more inclusive lines. In contrast, the second group aimed to demonstrate the ways in which both traditional as well as critical security scholars relied upon ethnocentric, racialized, and gendered assumptions and the ways in which these supported the reconfiguration of security that followed the end of the Cold War, as well as the War of Terror. In turn, this resulted in another key differences between the two groups: this time in terms of the ethics orienting critical security research. Whilst the first group envisioned critique as a potential way of reorienting the reform of existing security institutions, for the second group transformative purpose of critical scholarship should be limited to that of contesting them as well as exploring the instances wherein these are being resisted and prefigured differently. Simply, at the ethical level it was possible to grasp a division between those conceptualizing reconstruction as reform and those who privileged deconstruction as resistance.

These subtle but important differences were also reflected in the three critical security theories upon which critical security studies consolidate itself as a valid alternative to traditional security studies. Whilst securitization and insecurity theory were more clearly aligned with the second group, by placing the focus mostly on deconstructing existing security arrangements and its implications, security as emancipation adopted a position much closer to those seeking to rethink security from the ground-up, starting from the experiences and insecurities of most frequently excluded by dominant conceptualizations of security and, in that sense, building upon that, exploring the possibilities that already exist to reform existing security

arrangements. This not only complicated the debate between them, but it also led to a gradual fragmentation of critical security debates. The outcome of that process was two-fold: on the one hand, there was a gradual fragmentation of critical security debates and a division of labour between different critical security theories; on the other, there was an increasing imbalance between the deconstructive agenda, often the preferred avenue of critical security scholars, and the reconstructive agenda, most systematically engaged with by those inspired by emancipation. More crucially though, this trends would be reinforced by the recent shift within critical security debates.

Specifically, the concern with reviewing and consolidating critical security has been gradually replaced with a focus upon critical security turns. Changing the focus of critical research from a particular theory to a specific aspect of security, such as language, materiality, or visibility, these turns have made an important contribution to the critical security literature. They helped to create a more systematic dialogue with other areas of inquiry as well as to identify a common ground that could structure extant debates about security. More importantly, critical security turns helped to create new analytical, normative, and transformative openings for critical security research. By placing methodological issues at the forefront of critical research, they provided critical scholarship with the resources with which to move more consistently from theoretical discussions to empirical research. In spite of that, critical security turns also helped to reproduce some tensions and limitations that already existed within critical security studies.

First, whilst helping to organize the debate around a common concern, critical security turns also ended up contributing to reproducing problematic and somewhat artificial divisions among critical security scholars. In other words, they ended up contributing to increasing the fragmentation of the critical security project. Second, whilst contributing to expand the potential of critical approaches to security, such as feminism, postcolonialism, or poststructuralism, turns are yet to explore how they could add something important to the three critical security theories. Finally, whilst helping to forge new and important openings for critical security researchers, the insights resulting from critical security turns were mostly, if not exclusively, concerned with the deconstruction of security. As a result, they further helped to increase the imbalance between the deconstructive and reconstructive agenda of

critical security studies. Against this backdrop, linking security as emancipation with critical security turns offers a privileged avenue to both strengthen this theoretical framework and, concomitantly, reduce the imbalance between the deconstructive and reconstructive agenda of critical security studies.

## 2 Security as emancipation

The previous chapter showed that in the last few years critical security scholars have gradually shifted the concern from theory-building to the development of critical security turns. This not only helped to reify the critique of security as an essentially deconstructive endeavour, but it also contribute to fragment even further the discussion within critical security debates. Despite that, this thesis argues that it is possible to redress this issue and reinvigorate the reconstructive impulse of critical security thinking by linking critical security theories and turns more consistently. Incorporating the insights from critical security turns can help critical security theories to both reflect upon their existing problems and identify potential ways of addressing them. Building upon that, the aim of this thesis is to demonstrate how a more consistent engagement with three critical security turns can strengthen the theoretical framework security as emancipation.

This chapter starts to tackle that puzzle by analysing and assessing the theoretical framework of security as emancipation. After exploring the distinctiveness of this approach from the more classical understandings of emancipation and detailing its connection to Critical Theory, the argument investigates two notions through which it translates its commitments from theory to practice: the ideas of *praxis* and immanent critique. It will then unpack the six tasks of security as emancipation: deepening and extending security, zooming in and zooming out on insecurity, as well as transforming in/security and reflecting upon the possibilities and limits of emancipation. Finally, it shows that most of the criticisms levelled against this approach fail to engage with the arguments that it actually puts forward. Building upon an analysis of the literature that applies security as emancipation, it will be argued that a reconsideration of this theory must be grounded upon its ability to deliver upon its core commitments and underlying promises. Specifically, the argument detects three potential insufficiencies in security as emancipation that will be addressed in the following chapters.

## **2.1. From Rome to Aberystwyth: Historicizing emancipation in security studies**

The link between security and emancipation was initially introduced by Ken Booth (1991). Since then, this idea has been transformed into a distinctive critical security theory that has been central to the project of critical security studies (Booth, 2007). Nonetheless, the idea of emancipation is not something new. The political history of emancipation is umbilically tied to slavery (Engerman, 2007). The concept was initially utilized to describe the process whereby Roman slaves were liberated and granted freedom. Yet freedom, in that context, was markedly different from equality, as those made free did not receive the same political status as the citizens of the Roman empire. More recently, the vocabulary of emancipation was also associated with the abolition of slavery within Western empires, especially during the 1800s when European colonial powers such as Great Britain or France adopted these measures (Petley, 2011). Emancipation was not, however, limited to the liberation of former colonies from colonial powers and also resulted from internal pressures, as in the case of Haiti and the United States (Nesbitt, 2008).

The notion of emancipation was also linked to the liberation of Jewish communities within Europe, who up until then had been segregated from the remaining population (Sorkin, 2019). Still, this did not mean that those liberated from slavery or no longer ghettoised would receive the same rights than citizens. In fact, for several decades strong differences persisted between the two and their integration would only come later, once again, through emancipatory struggles. More recently, emancipation was adopted to conceptualize the struggles for racial and gender equality, both of which making particularly clear the limits and contradictions within this notion. At the broader level, however, the idea of emancipation has been consistently linked to the contested project of Enlightenment as one of the main driving forces of emancipatory struggles. (Manning and France, 2006).

The content and form of emancipation has also evolved within the academic milieu. Having become a major touchstone of Marxist political thinking, this idea was recurrently explored, questioned and reinterpreted in the light of social, economic, and political changes. An excellent example were the three waves of Critical Theory of what is often known as the Frankfurt School of social thinking, each signalling a

distinctive understanding of emancipation (Best et al., 2018). Strongly inspired by Marxist thought, the first wave is often associated with the early works of Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno. It located the impediments to human freedom within the sphere of production and, consequently, their answer to the emancipatory challenge focused mostly on the problems of economic-cum-material redistribution (Tarr, 2011). In contrast, the second wave, associated with the work of Habermas (1972) and Honneth (1997) and closer to the Kantian tradition, considered that the major sources of exclusion and subordination were located in the sphere of communication and thus reconceptualized emancipation in terms of reducing the barriers to social and political recognition. More recently, the third wave, linked to the work of Nancy Fraser, revised the meaning of emancipation through a synthesis between redistribution and recognition (Fraser, 1985). Despite their clear differences, there was one feature that clearly unified this scholarship: the idea that the function of philosophy was not simply to interpret the world, but to change it. Against that backdrop, the concept of emancipation provided the normative orientation for that change.

The double promise to locate the key contemporary features of inequality, exclusion, and domination while simultaneously unearthing the possibilities that already exist for progressive change was the backbone for the emergence and development of Critical Theory with International Relations (Weber, 2005; Roach, 2020). Since the 1980s, this project has successfully developed a research agenda (Ashley, 1981; Linklater, 1982, 1990; Neufeld, 1995; Hoffman, 1987). Starting from a distinction between traditional and critical theory (Cox, 1981), in the following years this agenda was developed around three distinctive but mutually reinforcing commitments: at the sociological level, the goal of critical thinking was to offer a more rigorous and long-term historicization of the social, political, and economic conditions that made the current state of affairs possible; at the normative level, its purpose was to provide an assessment of the existing state of affairs and identify the competing alternatives that already exist to it; finally, at the praxeological level, it was committed to illuminate the ideas, values, and actors that are better positioned to promote its modification, attuned with the interests of those systematically excluded from existing social and political arrangements (Linklater, 1996; 2005).

It is against this backdrop that we can appreciate the distinctive character of security as emancipation. Strongly inspired by the Frankfurt School (Wyn Jones, 1999; Booth, 2007) within and outside IR, the theoretical framework of security as emancipation is also assembled upon three central assumptions that, to some extent, reflect the commitment of Critical Theory. In the context of critical security studies emancipation is conceptualized in the following way:

As a discourse of politics, emancipation seeks the securing of people from those oppressions that stop them carrying out what they would freely choose to do, compatible with the freedom of others. It provides a three-fold framework for politics: a philosophical anchorage for knowledge, a theory of progress for society, and a practice of resistance against oppression. Emancipation is the philosophy, theory, and politics of inventing humanity (Booth, 2007: 112).

As a philosophical anchorage, the aim of security as emancipation is to offer a more comprehensive analysis of the historical evolution of ideas, discourses, and practices of security as well as the contemporary manifestations of social, economic, and political exclusions that produce structural and systemic insecurity (Booth, 2007: 112). It seeks to contest the traditional-cum-realist foundations for the production of security knowledge and, concomitantly, provide us with an alternative, more inclusive, lenses with which to investigate the insecurities of particular groups and individuals. This entails a reconsideration of the epistemological and ontological foundations of traditional security thinking. At the epistemological level, security as emancipation adopts a pragmatic and post-positivist posture according to which the methods, concepts, and strategies of research depend upon the insecurities experienced in that particular context, rather than upon a predefined statement about the character of social life and the adequate methods for its study (Basu and Nunes, 2013: 75). At the ontological level, it mobilizes a holistic framework that considers multiple referents of insecurity beyond the state but also incorporates other analytical layers with which to study them, such as the focus on gender, class, or race (Booth and Vale, 1997; Basu and Nunes, 2013).

Second, as a theory of progress security as emancipation sets out to offer a normative basis upon which to assess existing security practices and their implications and, building upon that, evaluate the alternative possibilities that already exist to transform them. This requires two moves. The first is reconsidering the individual rather than

the state as the ‘ultimate referent’ for thinking and practicing security (Booth, 2007: 225-228). The second is placing emancipation instead of survival as the underlying purpose of security (Booth, 2007: 101-104). From an emancipatory perspective, security is not simply a technique to ensure the stability of the state but a vehicle with which to potentially increase the freedom and well-being of vulnerable groups and individuals (Nunes, 2016). In other words, from an emancipatory standpoint security policies are not to be assessed by the extent to which they contribute to secure and strengthen the sovereign states; rather, they should be judged based on the extent to which they help to curb or alleviate the structural and contingent insecurities of those within them (Stamnes, 2005; Nunes, 2014b).

Finally, as a practice of resistance security as emancipation seeks to provide a practical tool with which to further the possibilities of radical political change in favour of those placed at the margins (Booth, 2007: 112). In other words, this theory aims to be directly involved in the social and political efforts to resist and transform existing security configurations (Wyn Jones, 1999). On the one hand, it does not merely subscribe to ongoing efforts to broaden and deepen the concept and practices of security; on the other, it stresses that the purpose of critical security scholarship cannot be limited to deconstruct existing security arrangements. Instead, a critical approach should help us to both assess existing practices of security and, when necessary, support their progressive transformation (Booth, 2007; Basu, 2011; Bilgic, 2013; Nunes, 2014b). In that sense, this approach strives to have an impact that goes beyond academic debates. It seeks to strengthen counter-hegemonic movements and provides a framework to identify obstacles that can emerge during those struggles, but also to assess the alternatives that they present or make possible (Bilgic, 2015).

## **2.2. Praxis and immanent critique: The distinctiveness of security as emancipation**

Security as emancipation makes explicit its desire to engage not only in the deconstruction of security but also in its reconstruction. For this theory, revealing the problems and assumptions of existing security arrangements is only relevant insofar as it can help us to pave the way for their reconsideration. However, to translate this reconstructive outlook from theory to practice takes inspiration from two notions: the

idea of *praxis* and the methodology of immanent critique. Whilst the first allows us to reconsider the link between security theory and practice, the second provides us with a tool particularly tailored to operationalize at the procedural level. This section will unpack each of them.

The notion of *praxis* is crucial to differentiate between security as emancipation and both traditional and critical security theories. From a traditional perspective, the main function of security theory is to help us explain existing threats, risks, and insecurities. In this context, security theory holds a descriptive and prescriptive purpose: it allows scholars to reduce the complexity of the social world in order to identify and explain security threats and thus, help policy-makers to delineate more rational and efficient ways of tackling them (Walt, 1998). Put simply, the aim of traditional security studies is to provide an objective assessment of existing risks and threats that builds on the assumption that security refers to the stability and survival of the state (Walt, 2018; Rosato and Schuessler, 2011). In doing so, it seeks to have impact at the political level. Traditional security scholars often assume the role of experts and advisors who can produce scientific knowledge to help political leaders achieve strategic advantage (Bueger and Berling, 2015). In that sense, from a traditional vantage point the study of security and the process of security theorizing is seen as an objective and value-neutral endeavour (Smith, 1999). It does not help to shape and reshape the existing state of affairs unless it is translated into the agenda of security policy. This is exactly the aim of traditional approaches: to support decision-making and help policy-makers (Booth, 1979).

In contrast, critical security studies are underpinned by a commitment to use security thinking as a tool with which to scrutinize and contest existing security policies. Starting from the assumptions that theory and policy are mutually constitutive, critical scholarship placed an extensive effort into demonstrating how, by reifying certain assumptions about the social world and how to study it, traditional security theorizing has been directly complicit in authorizing some problematic conceptions and practices of security (Wæver and Buzan, 2015; Smith, 1999; 2005). The aim is not merely to broaden the security agenda or deepen the security referent (Ticker, 1995). Instead, critical approaches seek to explore the conditions that make security arrangements possible in the first place and lay bare their social and political implications (Doty, 1993). From a critical perspective, then, theory has been mostly understood as a tool

with which to contest and denaturalize rather than support policy-making. Put simply, while traditional scholars have mostly sought to investigate why certain issues could be considered potential security threats with the intention to facilitate policy-making, critical security scholars have turned the focus into questioning how new security threats and referents came to be considered as legitimate security problems and introduced into the realm of security policy (Waever and Buzan, 2015).

By seeing itself as a form of *praxis*, security as emancipation seeks to offer a middle ground between these two conceptions of security theorising. On the one hand, this approach explicitly rejects the idea that security and insecurity can be objectively explained as long as certain methods and assumptions are thoroughly applied, as upheld by traditional security scholars. On the other hand, it also challenges the argument that security is always implicated in the reproduction of harm and violence and the maintenance of an unequal state of affairs. Instead, the emancipatory approach posits that critical security theorizing should also seek to offer alternative, potentially more progressive, ways of thinking about and practicing security that do not reflect or replicate the ideas of policy-makers and security bureaucrats and practitioners (Wyn Jones, 2013). From an emancipatory perspective, thinking critically about security should not only help us to scrutinize existing policies and make clear its underlying problems and social implications but also, and equally important, to support the struggles and practices of resistance being enacted by those whose insecurity is systematically exacerbated through existing security arrangements (Nunes, 2014; Bilgic, 2015). Building upon the idea that theory is informed by practice and practice is influenced by theory, security as emancipation offers a mode of critical security theorizing that not only recognizes this relationship, but which uses it strategically so as to advance the interests of the powerless. That is, it reframes security theory as a tool to subvert hegemonic conceptions and practices of security while, concomitantly, disclosing the possibilities that already exist to improve them.

The notion of *praxis* is put forward to encapsulate this spirit. It is meant to underline the dialectical relationship between theory and practice and, more importantly, to operationalize the commitment to think about security in a way that can inform radical social and political action (Wyn Jones, 1999: 38). Specifically, *praxis* foregrounds the fact that thinking critically about security from an emancipatory perspective does not simply seek to help us understand the world and guide practical political practice;

rather, it aims to support and help to orient efforts explicitly intended to transform existing structures, practices, and relations in favour of those systematically placed in a position of subordination and disadvantage or, as Booth (2007: 199) puts it, to help ‘those who are being starved, oppressed, threatened, or killed in the name of a certain theory of politics or economics – or security.’

The conception of *praxis* advanced by security as emancipation combines Marxist and Gramscian insights. From the first, it reinforces the idea that the purpose of philosophy should go beyond understanding the world and seek to transform it; from the second, it espouses a commitment to support counter-hegemonic movements, emphasizing the role of public intellectuals in offering guidance about the immanent possibilities of radical political change (Wyn Jones, 2013). As Wyn Jones (1999: 76) points out:

Politics involves making choices: choices between different visions of the ends pursued and choices between different means of pursuing them. But choices are seldom clear-cut. Means and ends may conflict, short-term goals may contradict longer-term objectives, and of course, actions often have unintended consequences. Thus, part of the task of theory with emancipatory intent is to delineate and clarify the choices being faced in the practical realm and to examine and illuminate conflicts and contradictions between them. In this way, theory can give direction to action; theory and practice can be consciously unified in praxis.

Seeing theory as a form of *praxis*, thus, means more than recognizing the mutually constitutive relationship between theory and practice. It refers to building knowledge that is informed by practical possibilities that are immanent within the current state of affairs and which can advance practical transformations in existing relations of power. It is a collective endeavour that is strategically designed to subvert existing structures of power while cultivating marginalized forms of knowledge and alternative approach to think about and pursue security. In this context, from an emancipatory perspective the role of intellectuals is to offer a bridge between different potential sites for radical change such as students, civil society movements, policy-makers, and the media. As Booth (2007: 267) points out:

In contemplating the practice of a critical theory of security on issues such as nuclear weapons, it is necessary to think in terms of a division of labour. One individual cannot do everything, so workers on behalf of critical security theorising must be mutually supportive. Some might choose to be more theoretical, others more policy-

oriented; some might refer to engage with policymakers, others with global civil society; some will concentrate on the near term, others on more distant horizons. All this work has value, and all add to the collective picture.

This is an extremely ambitious project for a critical theory of security. It envisions an extensive reconfiguration of security studies in terms of its purpose, assumptions, methods and practices. It does not merely reposition the role of security scholars from that of supporting policy-making to that of contesting security policy. Rather, it seeks to open up the possibilities of security scholarship to study and engage in the remaking of security, underlines the collective and bottom-up character of this endeavour, and promotes a stronger collaboration between the different actors that are interested in rethinking security along more emancipatory lines. This involves giving voice to those who are made silent by traditional approaches, supporting those who are already working to transform existing security arrangements, developing a framework for the study of existing practices of security and their relation to contemporary insecurities, but also promoting new pedagogies with which to further a critical engagement with security studies.

Translating this commitment to reconstructing security from theory to practice demands a specific mode of critical knowledge production, that is, a methodology through which the commitment to assess existing practices and insecurities as well as to inform social and political change can be operationalized. To do so, security as emancipation relies upon the strategy of immanent critique. As Booth (2007: 112) notes:

emancipation is a framework for attempting to actualise both nearer-term and longer-term emancipatory goals through strategic and tactical political action based on immanent critique.

Immanent critique can be understood as a mode of critical social analysis introduced through the works of Hegel and Marx and adopted by the Frankfurt School (Wyn Jones, 1999). It aims to assess a specific situation or problem from within, with an eye to identifying the possibilities that already exist to improve it. In practical terms, following this methodology involves critiquing something based on the ideas and standards that it uses to legitimize itself and, in a second moment, searching for alternative possibilities that are already immanent within that particular context (Sabia, 2010). In doing so, immanent critique enables us to reveal the divergence

between the claims justifying a particular policy or ideology and what it actually delivers. Based on that, it opens up the space to discuss alternative ideas and practices that are more adequate to address the issue being researched. Immanent critique, put simply, is about contrasting the existing state of affairs with the emancipatory potential that is already present (Antonio, 1981; Brincat, 2011).

This strategy has thus been frequently mentioned by those working with security as emancipation. To some, an emancipatory analysis of security requires us ‘to engage in an immanent critique of the prevailing security regimes, that is, comparing the justifications of those regimes with actual outcome’ (Wyn Jones, 1995: 124); for others, it allows us to ‘re-think security in both theory and practice by pointing to possibilities for change immanent in world politics’ and enables us to locate the ‘voices articulating emancipatory alternatives’ (Bilgin, 2005: 60). Immanent critique turns the analysis of security and insecurity into a potential ‘point of departure for resistance and change (Fierke, 2007: 184). In addition to that, it helps this theory to avoid some common criticisms by seeking ‘within society the sources of emancipation and change rather than trying to find them in an extraneous utopia’ (Toros and Gunning, 2009). An immanent critique of security thus involves two steps:

first, it must investigate the assumptions, structures and relationships that are implicated in the production and maintenance of insecurities and second, on the basis of this, it must identify existing potentialities for transforming predominant arrangements and seek to contribute to the realization of this ‘immanent potential’ (Basu and Nunes, 2013: 68).

In sum, the *praxis* and immanent critique are two cornerstones of this theory. They encapsulate the goal of this approach, to help us critique and reconsider security, and the strategy through which this can be translated from theory to practice. This section argued that the combination of these two ideas enabled security as emancipation to put forward an approach to security that is different from traditional and critical security perspectives. The following section consolidates this argument by showing how these two ideas have been operationalized by security as emancipation. Specifically, it demonstrates that security as emancipation puts forward a distinctive framework for the analysis, assessment and reconsideration of security grounded upon an engagement with the struggles and insecurities of real people in real places. In doing so, the section offers an overview of the research inspired by security as emancipation that integrates the distinctive insights of those using this theory to engage critically

with security. This helps to clarify the specific benchmarks against which it is possible to evaluate the achievements and limits of security as emancipation and, based on that, illuminate the features of this theory that could benefit from a stronger engagement with critical security turns.

### **2.3. Critique and Reconstruction: The analytical and normative framework of security as emancipation**

Despite the clear salience of security as emancipation in critical security studies as well as the large number of works inspired by this theory, one of the main challenges that continues to hamper its development and application is the lack of theoretical systematization. Given that it puts forward an ambitious project inspired by Critical Theory but also absorbing the insights from other intellectual traditions, from feminist research to Peace and Conflict Studies, different authors often adopt different routes of research, thereby making it difficult to understand, beyond their emancipatory commitment, the extent to which they feed into each other. Seeking to pave the ground for the assessment and reconsideration of this theory, this section puts forward a new reading of this theory which links the six moves through which, up until this moment, the emancipation-oriented literature has deconstructed and reconstructed the politics of security. The six moves consist in: deepening security, extending security, zooming in on insecurity, zooming out on insecurity, transforming in/security, and reflexively engaging with the limits and possibilities of emancipation. When brought together, these moves provide us with a more integrated and systematic understanding of security as emancipation and, in doing so, offer as a backdrop against which it is possible to assess the extent to which this theory is able to deliver upon its promises.

The first stage of emancipatory security analysis is that of deepening security. As was noted in the previous chapter, from a more conventional vantage point deepening security referred to incorporating into the analysis of security other referents beyond the state (Krause and Williams, 1996). Security as emancipation reconceptualizes this idea. From an emancipatory perspective, deepening means revealing the political interests and assumptions underpinning different conceptions and discourses about security (Wyn Jones, 1999). Starting from the assumption that security is a ‘derivative concept,’ deepening requires ‘drilling down to uncover the political theory from which

security attitudes and behaviour derive' and, as a result, 'reveal who and what different political theories privilege' (Booth, 2007: 150-157). Simply put, the underlying goal of this move is to reveal that the existing ideas about security, and the political agendas that derive from them are not a simple reflection of reality as it is. Rather, they are the product of a particular political theory which, in turn, mimics the interests and assumption of a particular group and their conception of who should be secured, why, from what, and how through which means. As Booth (2007: 153) suggests:

by drilling down, it is possible to discover how the referents, agents, and policies of different conceptions of security derive from the assumptions of different political theories.

A second concern for emancipatory analysis is extending security. Also, in contrast with traditional perspectives, from an emancipatory perspective the idea of extending security does not mean adding non-military threats to the security agenda, the so-called broadening of security. Rather, it means recognizing that 'the appropriate referent object varies from case to case' (Wyn Jones, 1999: 91) and thus extended the focus in order to consider the insecurities impending upon a larger range of potential referents beyond the state, such as regions, states, communities, individuals, or the planet as whole (Booth, 2008). In this case, the goal of extending security is to clarify, on one hand, the threats faced by these referents and, on the other, identify the agents and practices that best positioned to promote the security in each particular case (Booth, 2007: 160-171). The aim, however, is not that of considering other referents beyond the state as the legitimate referent of security. Rather, the goal is to explore how conceptualizing and framing security in terms of referents other than the state can help to improve or reduce the security and well-being of groups and individuals.

There are some emancipation-oriented works that focus particularly on the type of deepening and extending security that is envisioned by security as emancipation. For instance, the work of Pinar Bilgin (2005) contrasts existing conceptions about regional security in the Middle East. Her work shows not only the limits and pitfalls of the more traditional-cum-Western and militaristic perspectives through which discussions about security in this region have been framed and existing security practices have been authorized; rather, it also demonstrates that there are alternative discourses regarding regional security in the Middle East that can open other possibilities to think and practice security differently in this region. Paul Williams (2007) offers a similar

example by showing that Africa has been constructed through different images, each of which directed to different target audiences and serving different interests. This allows him to argue that current manifestations of insecurity in the region are not something inevitable and, building on that, locate the images of Africa better positioned to promote social and political transformation along more emancipatory lines. In both cases, the deepening of dominant security conceptions that paves the way for extending the analysis of alternative ideas and referents of security that already exist within that particular context.

Beyond deepening and extending security, a key concern for security as emancipation is to assess the struggles and insecurities of real people in real places. This is pursued by zooming in and zooming out on insecurity. Zooming in means turning the critical gaze into the everyday, localized, and corporeal insecurities of vulnerable groups and individuals (Booth, 2007: 101; Wyn Jones, 1999; Nunes, 2014b). Through this move, security as emancipation seeks to displace the traditional state centric vision of security as something concerning exclusively threats to the state and, at the same time, the idea of security as being simply about survival and the safeguard of the current state of affairs. To a human being, being alive is not the same as being secure. Thus, security must always be a means to make things better and not to keep them as they are. Security must be 'survival-plus' (Booth, 2007: 102). Privileging the struggles and insecurities of real people in real places is thus essential to shift the meaning of security to emancipation and, at the same time, to understand its meaning in that particular context.

Individual experiences of insecurity have frequently represented a privileged entry point to engage in the critique and reconstruction of security from an emancipatory perspective. For instance, in his study of irregular migration in the European Union, Ali Bilgic (2013) starts by detailing the insecurity generated by this process both on those trying to enter Europe and those living within it. Apart from showing that both groups have a common interest in addressing this problem, his work demonstrates how dominant narratives often help to frame both of them as passive victims of insecurity rather than as agents that can potentially contribute to transform this situation. In her analysis of the UN's preventive deployment in Macedonia, an engagement with local experiences and concerns enables Eli Stamnes (2004) to problematize this intervention and the extent to which it redressed the contingent and structural insecurities faced by

the most vulnerable in that context. Zooming in on real people in real places is a cornerstone of emancipatory security thinking. Experiences are not privileged simply to stress the salience of a security problem or assess the implications of a security policy; rather, they also provide this theory with the normative anchorage upon which it can judge existing security arrangements and, following from that, illuminate the ethical horizons and possibilities for the emancipatory change of society.

The second step is zooming out on insecurity. Zooming out is about contextualizing the individual experiences of insecurity within the broader social, cultural, political, and economic set of structures and relations that make them possible. In this regard, security as emancipation upholds that it is not enough pointing out that certain individuals are insecure nor identify how such insecurities are manifested. Instead, it is also necessary to grasp how such individuals are systematically placed in a position of neglect and vulnerability that results in a permanent state of insecurity (Basu, 2011). The goal of zooming out is to reveal the multi-dimensional and inter-sectional character of insecurity (Basu and Nunes, 2013). It requires situating the everyday experiences of vulnerable groups and populations within the relational and structural conditions that constrain their freedom and reduce their well-being (Nunes, 2015). Ultimately, zooming in and out on insecurity provide this theory bridge between the deconstructive move and the reconstructive impetus of security as emancipation.

Several works inspired by this approach can be utilized to show how experiences of insecurity has been placed in their broader context. For instance, when developing an emancipation-inspired framework for the study of health security, João Nunes (2014b) contextualizes the insecurities constraining the everyday lives of individuals and communities within broader relations and structures within which these unfold, be that in terms of the social stigmatisation surrounding HIV/AIDS, or the reduced level of attention and resources dedicated to water and sanitation within the global agenda. Similarly, focusing on the industrial accident in Bhopal in 1984, Soumita Basu and João Nunes (2013) showed how an intersectional approach to insecurity can help us to demonstrate the extent to which these insecurities are not the natural product of this incident; rather, these communities were already placed in precarious and vulnerable position previous to that, which would only be reinforced by the inadequate response by the government. Zooming out is thus crucial to place existing insecurities within the broader context that made them possible in the first place and, in doing so, achieve

a more refined understanding of what exactly these groups and individuals are to be emancipated from (Nunes, 2012).

The following step is engaging with the possibilities for the transformation of security. According to this theory, the process of emancipatory transformation comprehends distinctive temporalities that range from short-term changes in terms of contestation, resistance, and subversion, to medium-term changes in the subjectivities and relations that normalize the conditions of insecurity under study, to long-term modifications in the structures, norms, and institutions that can prevent their reproduction. According to this theory, emancipation is ‘a process not an end-point’ (Booth, 2007: 21). It can mean different things, to different people, and in different contexts. It can also be promoted by different actors and through different means. Thus, this approach has frequently stressed the emancipatory potential immanent in different sites, depending on the issue at hand. Some have explored the transformative potential of international organizations or global norms, while others have turned the focus towards non-governmental organizations, social movements, or individuals.

For instance, while Ali Bilgic (2015) has frequently engaged with resistance and emancipatory change by focusing on the dynamics of social movements, Soumita Basu (2016) explored the major impact of civil society organizations from the Global South in shaping the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda. In contrast, Ruth Blakeley (2013) showed how the human rights agenda and its legal and institutional architecture contributed to curb some violations of human rights perpetrated by the US during the War on Terror, while Margarita Petrova (2018) argued that the immanent critique carried out by non-governmental organizations contributed to implement a ban on the use of cluster munitions. Regardless of their differences, what becomes clear in this efforts is that the meaning and means of emancipation are strongly contested and context-dependent. There is no fixed and predefined view of this notion and neither are agents inherently emancipatory. Rather, the extent to which the potential for emancipatory change already exists with social and political arrangements can only be assessed on a case by case basis.

Finally, emancipation-oriented literature is characterized by a strong concern with reflexivity. In fact, reflexivity is at the heart of security as emancipation and is an integral part in each of the previous moves; nonetheless, it often takes different forms

for different authors. The first of them concerns positionality or self-reflexivity (Booth, 1997). It refers to being aware of how the identity and interests of the researcher impact upon the different stages of the project from selecting empirical puzzle, theoretical framework, to methodological strategy and even the collection and interpretation of data. The second is theoretical reflexivity. It concerns an awareness of how social knowledge does not provide a neutral and objective view of reality; rather, it takes part in its constitution by contesting or authorizing certain ideas, practices, relations, institutions and subjectivities (Neufeld, 1995). The third is practical reflexivity and relates to the need to ensure that the means of security are attuned to the ends of emancipatory change (Booth, 2007). The final aspect is emancipatory reflexivity and refers to the necessity to reflect upon the contingent character and potential limitations of emancipation within a particular social, historical and political context (Basu, 2011). Reflexivity is thus what enables this approach to recognize the link between theory and practice, researcher and researched, as well as the unstable, contested, and necessarily contingent process of emancipatory change.

In sum, security as emancipation has been operationalized through the ideas of *praxis* and immanent critique. The latter of which has been understood and operationalized through six different moves: deepening and broadening security, zooming in and out on insecurity, as well as transforming in/security and being reflexive about the limits and possibilities of emancipation. Security as emancipation thus goes beyond other theories of security, both critical and traditional. It is against this backdrop that we can assess this theory and locate the problems persist within it. Before that, however, it is necessary so explore how this theory has been received by critical security scholars.

#### **2.4. The insufficiencies of security as emancipation**

The previous sections have introduced the theory of security as emancipation. It was argued that, although strongly inspired by broader debates within Critical Theory, this theory puts forward a distinctive framework that has been articulated through six different moves. This section explores the current limitations of this approach and paves the way for its reconsideration. The argument starts by exploring the main criticisms faced by security as emancipation. It shows that, to a large extent, much of this literature fails to assess this theory against what it actually claims. Despite that, in

the second sub-section the argument identifies three insufficiencies that persist in security as emancipation and which constrain its analytical, normative, and transformative capacity. Each of which offers a potential entry point to strengthen this theory through an engagement with critical security turns.

#### ***2.4.1. Engaging the critics of security as emancipation***

The idea of emancipation has been central to the development of critical security studies (Krause and Williams, 1997; Peoples and Vaughan-Williams, 2010; Fierke, 2015). Despite that, within critical debates this approach is yet to receive the same level of engagement as other critical security theories, like securitization theory or poststructuralist approaches to security (Balzacq et al., 2016). This is important since criticism is often a crucial to support theory-development. By shedding light on meta-theoretical and methodological inconsistencies that remain in a particular approaches, criticism pushes it to reflect more systematically upon its own promises and limitations and search for alternative possibilities to redress them. However, most of the criticism targeted at security as emancipation has been explicitly aimed at discrediting any potential commitment to emancipation within critical security studies. Not only does this criticism rely upon a skewed vision of what is actually argued by this theory, it bypasses almost entirely its effort to reconsider the meaning and purpose of emancipation in the context of security. As a result, it is within the literature inspired by security as emancipation that we can find the most in-depth and consistent criticism levelled against this approach (Peoples, 2011; Nunes, 2012; Kaltofen, 2013; Bilgic, 2015).

Despite that, it is possible to identify three main lines of criticism levelled against this approach. The first focuses upon the idea of emancipation and, in broad strokes, suggests that it is essentially a mechanism with which to authorize the imposition of liberal and Western-centric modes of knowing and being across the globe. In this regard, scholars have pointed out that the emancipatory language is deeply rooted in the Western ideas and categories of thought which have been frequently mobilized to justify imperialist projects and subjugate non-Western people. More than that, some have pointed out that, because it is based upon Western traditions and has evolved in line with Western problems and concerns, it is inadequate to grasp the contexts and character of insecurity outside that particular milieu (Ayoob, 1997). For most of them,

emancipation is simply an ideological mechanism underpinned by racist and colonial assumptions that, when applied to practice, functions to legitimize Western practices of violence and domination (Laffey, 2016). In that sense, far from giving voice to the silenced, liberating the oppressed, and challenging the existing state of affairs, the idea of emancipation is seen as a tool with which to justify, reproduce, and extend existing hierarchies of power and reinvigorate colonial practices and relations. Ultimately, as some suggested, emancipation is depicted as a mechanism with which to impose Western-cum-liberal liberal subjectivities upon the non-Western world, that is, a strategy of liberal governmentality (Bilgic, 2015).

The second source of criticism directs the attention towards the notion of security. According to this argument, the idea of security is umbilically tied to contemporary forms of violence and exclusion (Neocleous, 2008; Huysmans, 2020). For them, the language of security has been one of the most powerful mechanisms to expand the states' authority and control over its population. Framing a growing number of issues as existential threats to national, international, or human security, they suggest, justifies and normalizes the invasion of the state into the private life of its citizens. On the other hand, the growing authority of security professionals and experts has normalized exceptional and extra-legal practices that reduce the freedom of individuals (Huysmans, 2006; Balzac et al., 2010). This broadening of security authority has been reinforced by a problematic change in the logic of security from one focused on controlling and managing potential threats to one concerned with anticipating and predicting them (Aradau and Van Munster, 2011; Bigo, 2014).

As a result, security is seen as the main anchorage upon which a growing number of illiberal practices has been justified and the motor for the broader normalization of the state of exception (Bigo, 2002). It not only enables military intervention under dubious conditions, but it has also been central in allowing states to systematically bypass their constitutional duties and obligations vis-à-vis their own citizens. From this perspective, the notions of security as well as emancipation are understood as mechanisms of domination that reduce the capacity of individuals to freely choose how to conduct their own lives. While some of this literature does not engage directly with security as emancipation, it nonetheless has systematically reinforced the first strand of criticism and, more specifically, the idea that this theory has 'rarely involved

sustained examination of the meaning of ‘security’ and, ‘likewise, ‘emancipation is not interrogated’ (Coleman and Rosenow, 2016: 203).

However, these criticisms often reveal a level of insufficient engagement with what is actually being proposed by security as emancipation. First of all, this theory does not underplay rejecting the negative connotation and implications of security. Indeed, this is the exact starting point for security as emancipation: the detrimental effects of traditional ideas and practices of security within and beyond traditional security studies paved the way for a radical reconsideration of this notion and its study (Booth, 1979; Bilgin, 2005; Bilgic, 2013; McDonald, 2012). However, instead of seeing security as problem to be resolved or a political principle to be dismantled, this approach suggests that in order to adequately understand the world of insecurity, it is necessary to understand the word security: what it means, how it works, what it does, but also what it could potentially do (Booth, 1991; Stamnes, 2004; Nunes, 2014a). Thus, while security as emancipation does not neglect the negative implications resulting from existing security practices, it rejects any attempt to leave this concept untouched. It suggests that it is important to think about the meaning of security exactly because it is so powerful (Booth, 1991). By speaking security, we can bring neglected concerns under the public eye and attract attention and resources. This is because the notion of security carries intense political force which can be harnessed to improve the world. In fact, to assume that security will always work to reproduce the interests of the powerful is to neglect the ways in which the powerless have constantly used the vocabulary of security to actually challenge and resist the current state of affairs (Nunes, 2015).

Second, this theory does not unreflexively advocate for emancipation without considering its historical limits and pitfalls (Neufeld, 2004; Kennedy-Pipe, 2004). In fact, it stresses the deeply reflexive, contingent, and evolving character of this notion. Yet, neither the means nor meanings of emancipation are ever fixed, for emancipation is something highly contingent and context-dependent (Basu, 2011). Emancipation cannot be imposed, nor ungrounded from reality. It must be based on what already exists, that is, on what is immanent within the current state of affairs (Wyn Jones, 2005). But emancipation and progress are always a reflexive process: as soon as they are envisioned, they must be questioned once again. Emancipation, put simply, is about improving our existence by removing the conditions that determine our choices

and reduce our freedom; it is about making things better but without predetermining what this means nor presupposing how it can be done. It is a critical lenses to grasp injustice and inequality, an anchorage to judge social arrangements, and a commitment to transform the world (Booth, 2007: 113). But while emancipation is particularly difficult to define, it is rather clear what emancipation is not. As the distinction between true and false emancipation suggests, false emancipation

is any conception that understands emancipation as timeless or static (whether in relation to ideas, institutions, or situations); undertakes emancipatory politics at the expense of others (making the emancipatory goals of others impossible); or uses emancipation as a cloak for the power of 'the West' or any other entity claiming to have the monopoly of wisdom (Booth, 2007: 113).

A third line of criticism focuses on the idealism of security as emancipation. Specifically, it suggests that this theory is entirely disconnected from the real world. For some scholars, security as emancipation fails to acknowledge that its core ideas are already being utilized in the governance of security to reproduce imperial logics and reify unequal power relations at the international level (McCormack, 2010). According to them, this theory simply mimics the logics that underlie the current agenda of human security as well as the ontological shift, from states and society towards individuals and communities, that characterizes current practices of external-led intervention and post-war reconstruction, often defined in terms of post-liberal peace (Chandler, 2012). Much like the previous lines of criticism, they see security as emancipation has being complicit in strengthening neo-liberal structures of power and domination while allowing Western powers to evade their responsibility for their role in the process (Chandler, 2005).

In addition to that, critics argue that security as emancipation is grounded upon a series of utopian assumptions which do not to provide a solid orientation towards the positive transformation of security. Specifically, they suggest that this theory is basically an idealistic project that tells us very little about how the world works and, as a result, can tell us very little about how to actually make things better, since it focuses more on 'how things could and should be rather than how they are' and because 'it is more a method of asking questions than a theory of politics' (Eriksson, 1999). For all of these critics, however, emancipation cannot provide any sort of valid anchorage for radical political change and, as a result, in order to truly offer a challenge to the current

status-quo, the field of critical security studies must be either anti-emancipatory or post-emancipatory (Hynek and Chandler, 2013).

This criticism overlooks the number of works that have utilized this theory as an entry point to explore different case studies. During the last three decades the ideas and assumptions of security as emancipation have been applied, developed, and refined in relation to numerous contexts. They inspired the explorations of regional security within the context of South Asia (Burke and McDonald, 2007; Barthwal-Datta and Basu, 2017), Europe (Booth, 1992; Bilgic, 2013), and the Middle East (Bilgin, 2005), as well as critical investigations of post-conflict societies such as Burundi (Stamnes and Wyn Jones, 2000), South Africa (Williams, 2000; Booth and Vale, 1997), Macedonia (Stamnes, 2005), and Kosovo (Bourne and Bulley, 2011). Security as emancipation has also been mobilized to explore some key concerns within the international agenda such as the theory and practice of human rights (Booth, 1995; Blakeley, 2013), the security dilemma (Booth and Wheeler, 2008), and the prevention of complex humanitarian crisis (Butler, 2011; Wheeler, 2001), nuclear strategy and strategic thinking (Wyn Jones, 1999; Peoples, 2010), and terrorism (Smyth et al., 2009). At the empirical level, this approach was also mobilized to investigate the industrial accident of Bhopal (Basu and Nunes, 2013), the UNSCT Resolution 1325 on Women and Peace and Security (Basu, 2016), the Dialogue of Civilisations (Bilgin, 2012), the emancipatory role of NGO's in the Convention on Cluster Munitions (Petrova, 2018), resistance in the Israel (Abu-Zhara et al., 2016), irregular migration in Europe (Bilgic, 2013), asylum policies in Australia (McDonald, 2014) the Yugoslav anti-war feminist movement (Bilgic, 2014), the globalization of protest movements, and resistance tactics in Cairo's Tahrir Square (Bilgic, 2015).

In addition to that, researchers addressed the evolving discourses of environmental security in both Brazil and Australia (McDonald, 2012) and the contrasts between traditional and indigenous discourses about security in the Canadian Arctic (Harrington and Lecavalier, 2014), and the emancipatory potential of hydrosolidarity (Harrington, 2015). Security as emancipation was also the theoretical anchorage to reconsider discourses of food security (Richardson and Nunes, 2015), problematize hunger as structural violence (Shepherd, 2012), and to volume on critical environmental studies (Schnurr and Swatuk, 2012). Regarding the health-security nexus, emancipation inspired research delved into issues such HIV/AIDS and the questions of water and

sanitation (Nunes, 2014b), or the historical connection between disease and immigration, the development of colonial medicine, and the transformative potential of using health as a bridge for peace (Nunes, 2014a). Scholarship has also taken security as emancipation beyond the narrow confines of security studies and demonstrated its potential in areas such as conflict and peace studies or terrorism studies (Smyth et al., 2009). Ultimately, it is clear that the emancipatory security agenda cannot be reduced to the more theoretical-oriented works of Booth and Wyn Jones, as is often the case.

Engaging critically with this approach thus requires assessing, as thoroughly as possible, the numerous empirical contributions that it has inspired. This is well illustrated by some recent work, which conducts a critique of security that explicitly aims to develop a more nuanced appreciation of the analytical, normative, and transformative potential of security as emancipation. This research has also demonstrated the ways in which potentially emancipatory discourses and ideas have been frequently co-opted by the powerful and, in some cases, with the explicit intention to justify violent practices of exclusions and subjugation (Kennedy-Pipe, 2004). They have stressed that security as emancipation should pay more attention to the practices carried out in the name of security and the agency of insecure subjects in modifying the current state of affairs (Neufeld, 2004). Apart from that, there have been some authors concerned with amplifying the normative ground of this theory by developing ideas that can strengthen the normative and transformative potential of security as emancipation, such as the notions of care and vulnerability (Nunes, 2016; Harrington, 2017). In that sense, the most productive route to scrutinize security as emancipation and identify how it can incorporate the insights from critical security turns is to assess this theory based on its underlying premises, analytical premises, and ethico-political commitments.

#### ***2.4.2. Assessing the limits of security as emancipation***

Despite the important advances in the theoretical and normative framework of security as emancipation, there are still some problems within this approach. First, it has been reiterated in the literature that security as emancipation sees itself as a ‘theoretical framework with which to explore and engage with the security of real people in real

places' (Booth 2007: xii). Privileging the experiences and struggles of real people in real places is at the heart of emancipatory security thinking: it not only provides this theory with a privileged entry point to challenge dominant narratives about security, it is also central to identifying the meaning of emancipation in that particular context and the actors that are already engaged in promoting it. It is through this simple but radical gesture, of engaging in/security from the bottom-up and shifting the analytical entry point from the powerful to the powerless, that this theory seeks to put forward an emancipatory approach wherein vulnerable individuals are not regarded simply as referents to be secured but as 'agents of their own security' (Basu, 2011: 100-102). In spite of that, however, this theory is yet to systematically engage with the tools that are most adequate to investigate the insecurity of real people and real places.

There are some reasons for that. First, this gap reflects the insufficient engagement of this theory with methodology and, more specifically, in the question of method. As will be detailed in the following chapter, even if there have been some sustained interest in laying out ontological assumptions and refining the methodology of immanent critique, up until now this theory has almost entirely bypassed any systematic engagement with the tools of emancipatory research. Whenever it engaged with this topic, security as emancipation limited its efforts to putting forward broader frameworks for analysis and methodological principles or, in other cases, to critique the limits of traditional security methods and methodologies (Stamnes, 2004). Second, and no less important, this theory has been entirely absent from more recent discussions concerning critical security methods (Salter and Mutlu, 2013). This reflects a clear contrast with other approaches such as constructivism, poststructuralism, or feminism that have been increasingly active in that debate. Simply, security as emancipation did not engage with questions of method with the same level of coherence and sophistication than it did with other aspects of emancipatory security agenda. This limits not only its impact in extant debates but, more crucially, its potential to function as a critical theory of security. By offering a set of critical methodological tools with which to give analytical privilege to real people in real places, the ethnographic turn is particularly suited to help security as emancipation to tackle this problem, as will be explored in Chapter 3.

Second, for security as emancipation, in order to critique existing security arrangements and practices it is necessary to fully open the relationship between

theory and practice. As noted, up until this moment, this has been mostly pursued through the strategy of deepening and extending security, that is, by delving into the discourses through which existing practices are justified in order to reveal the hidden political assumptions upon which they rest. This strategy, however, is not without its problems. While seeking to expose how theoretical assumptions and political interests inform current security practices, in its current configuration security as emancipation does not go beyond the narratives through which they come to be authorized and contested. Practices, that is, the actual doings of security that emerge out of these discourses and which make them possible are never taken into consideration. Still, like discourses, practices are inherently contingent, unstable, and contested, often readjusted to the particular context in which they are deployed, and transformed by the structural and intersubjective conditions through which they come to materialize. By failing to engage with the everyday, mundane, and often surreptitious activities carried out in the name of security, the theory of security as emancipation neglects an important part of how security is made and, therefore, its implications in naturalizing existing insecurities as well as its potential to transform them.

Focusing the deepening of security on discourse is not necessarily something inadequate but insufficient. Often, we can locate the conditions that enable certain ideas and practices of security in the everyday actions and rituals of security experts, practitioners, and bureaucrats. For instance, borders cannot be increasingly managed through technology without the development of sophisticated software and the applications of new parameters to measure security; transnational networks of organized crime cannot be mapped without the collaboration of different security agencies; and military agencies cannot engage in humanitarian assistance without some degree of articulation with the development agencies in the field. Simply, the conditions that make security possible cannot be reduced to discourse. More importantly, by focusing overwhelmingly on discourse, the critique offered by security as emancipation is unable to unpack the link between existing security arrangements and the insecurities of real people in real places. This inherently hinders its capacity to offer a normative judgement and reconsideration of current security practice. By reconsidering practice rather than discourse as the analytical entry point for research, the practice turn in security studies is particularly tailored to help us address this limitation, as will be explored in Chapter 4.

The third problem with the theory of security as emancipation speaks directly to the first two. It concerns the fact that this theory relies upon a human-centric conception of world security and consequently, puts forward an anthropocentric view of emancipation. Security as emancipation seeks to provide us with a more comprehensive understanding of security; a perspective that incorporates within the same analytical framework multiple referents to be protected, threats to be secured, and ways of pursuing it. It does this in order to go beyond the traditional scope of security theory and, consequently, open the gamut of possibilities that already exist for security practice. It is based on this idea that this theory describes itself as a ‘theory of world security’ (Booth, 2007; Bilgic, 2016). Despite that, this theory still sees security through an anthropocentric gaze that fails to account for the imbrication of human and non-human beings. In other words, for security as emancipation the social is exclusively human; all the rest is merely part of the structural backdrop that constrains or enables human relations. As a result, this theory reduces non-humans to either threats to human well-being or instruments to improve it. That is, it elicits an instrumental approach to security according to which the non-human is only relevant insofar it can either endanger or secure the human. Non-humans can be either threats or means, they are never the referents of security themselves.

But one only needs to look around that the non-human is much more than that. That is, the world of security is more-than-human. Non-human beings are not passive beings nor are they mere instruments of human will. Machines resist our intentions, hurricanes transform our lives, dogs give them meaning, and tiny microorganisms are what makes them possible in the first place. Nature, technology, or matter broadly conceived are not just an instrument for common humanity, they are an intrinsic part of it. Suffering is not exclusive to human beings, and neither is our responsibility towards others something that is human-bound. In fact, once we start to look at insecurity beyond the human, we also start to think about emancipation after the human. Is it possible to reduce systematic harm, violence, and vulnerability without accounting for things that are non-human? Is it possible to truly think about security from an holistic and emancipatory perspective if other species are not considered as something worthy of being protected? Is it possible to problematize emancipation if non-humans can only be considered as threats to be secured or as instruments for security? In this context, the stakes are particularly high for security as emancipation.

It is impossible for this theory to simply continue to bypass this challenge. By seeking to reconsider the anthropocentrism of social and political thinking, the posthuman turn is well-placed to help us engage with this problem and reconsider security as emancipation beyond the human, as will be detailed in Chapter 5.

## **Conclusion**

The aim of this chapter was to introduce security as emancipation and identify some of its existing limitations, therefore paving the way for its reconsideration through an engagement with critical security turns. Seeking to tease out the distinctive approach and commitments put forward by emancipatory security thinking, the argument started by contextualizing the meaning of emancipation within the context of critical security studies and identifying the analytical, normative, and transformative functions of this approach: to offer a philosophical anchorage to critique existing security practices, a theory of progress to judge between potential alternative, and a practice of resistance to transform them in accordance with the interests of the most vulnerable. Put simply, security as emancipation sees itself as an approach that engages both in the deconstruction and the reconstruction of security. This intention is articulated through two core ideas: *praxis*, that is, a framework that is not only informed by existing practices of security but also seeks to inform emancipatory struggles; and, immanent critique, according to which the possibilities to improve the current state of affairs are pregnant within contemporary practices and relations.

Following from that, the chapter explored the different steps with which security as emancipation has engaged in the critique and reconstruction of security: deepening and extending security, zooming in, and zooming out on insecurity, transforming security along emancipatory lines, and reflecting upon both the possibilities of security and the contingent character of emancipation. The last section located potential entry points to reconsider of this approach. It showed that most criticisms levelled against emancipatory security thinking often fail to take into full account the ideas put forward by this approach and bypass the burgeoning literature that applies this approach to conduct empirical research. The argument concluded by arguing that, as various emancipation-inspired works have already discussed, the merits and limitations of security as emancipation can only be assessed against what it actually sets out to

achieve. Seeking to map potential entry points for reconsidering security as emancipation in a way that reinvigorates the theoretical potential of critical security studies, it was suggested that this theory still has some problems that can ultimately hamper its capacity to offer an emancipatory critique and reconstruction of security.

First, while privileging real people in real places is crucial for security as emancipation, this theory is yet to demonstrate how exactly that can be pursued at the practical and operational level. Second, while seeking to unveil the connection between existing security practices and the political interests that sustain them, up until now this approach has focused too much on discourse while not paying enough attention to practices. Third, despite its ambition to offer a critical theory of world security, security as emancipation adopts a human-centered view of the world and, consequently, emancipation. But how exactly do these limitations constrain the critical potential of security as emancipation? What are the resources that already exist which could help this theory to overcome them? How have they helped other security scholars? What can they help security as emancipation to do in terms of critique and reconstruction? How can these resources lead to a reconsideration of emancipatory thinking within critical security studies? The following chapters will address these questions and, in doing so, help us to illuminate how the critical potential of security as emancipation can be reinvigorated by incorporating into this theory some resources from critical security turns.

## **Part II**

# **Linking security as emancipation with critical security turns**

### **3 Security as emancipation and the ethnographic turn**

The previous chapter indicated some insufficiencies in the theoretical framework of security as emancipation. This chapter starts to tackle these problems. Specifically, the argument will explore how incorporating ideas and resources from the ethnographic turn can strengthen the critical potential of security as emancipation and broaden its ability to offer a critique and reconsideration of security grounded upon the struggles and insecurities of real people in real places. It starts by investigating the centrality of an engagement with real people and real places in the analytical, normative, and transformative commitments of security as emancipation. Still, it will be argued that in its current formulation, this approach does not have the tools in place to fulfil this promise. Linking security as emancipation with the ethnographic turn is a promising way to redress this problem. Ethnographic modes of inquiry can provide this theory with a set of methodological resources that are particularly suited to bring this theory closer to the struggles and insecurities of real people in real places, but also with which to problematize the tensions and limitations that are intrinsic to this move.

After discussing the limits of security as emancipation, this chapter discusses some of the core components in ethnographic research by looking into the strategies of autoethnography and collaborative research. It then unpacks how the growing interest in ethnography allowed the study of security and international politics to get closer to the world but also to become more reflexive about its own role within it. The final part of this chapter details how incorporating the resources from ethnographic thinking can broaden the capacity of security as emancipation to deconstruct and reconstruct security whilst foregrounding real people in real places. It argues that by engaging with the ethnographic turns this theory is better equipped to: first, provide a more nuanced engagement of the everyday manifestations of insecurity as well as the strategies already being developed to resist it; second, collaborate with the insecure in the production of emancipatory security knowledge, and; third, reflect more rigorously

upon its own imbrication in broader structures and relations of insecurity and stimulate the commitment towards emancipation. Engaging with the ethnographic turn not only strengthens the potential of security as emancipation to offer a critical theory for real people in real places, it also new possibilities for critical security studies as a whole.

### **3.1. Real people in real places**

This section problematizes the role of real people in real places in the theoretical framework of security as emancipation. It will be shown that the struggles and insecurities of real people in real places are considered the basis for the analysis, normative assessment, and practical reconsideration of security. Despite that, up until now, this theory has provided limited attention to the practical or operational aspects that are required by this commitment. As a result, security as emancipation still lacks a systematic engagement with the adequate methods to foreground the struggles and insecurities of real people in a way that is attuned to the epistemological assumptions and praxeological aspirations that underpin this approach. Given the growing interest in methodological issues within critical security studies, incorporating insights from ethnographic thinking into emancipatory security thinking is a privileged avenue to reinvigorate this approach whilst contributing to advance the field as a whole.

#### ***3.1.1. Security as emancipation and real people in real places***

Exploring the struggles and insecurities of real people in real places is quintessential for security as emancipation. First, according to this theory, engaging with the everyday layer of insecurity represents a strategy with which to destabilize dominant-cum-traditional conceptions of security by exposing, in a powerful and systematic form, their economic, social, and political implications upon the lives of vulnerable groups and individuals. By foregrounding the experiences of real people in real places, this approach seeks to bring our attention to the insecurities that go unnoticed by traditional security studies and, in doing so, expose the ways in which these theories are complicit in their systematic reproduction (Booth, 2007: 13-17). In this sense, this epitomizes a strategic move to lay bare the limits and contradictions of traditional security thinking: it reveals how both conventional security theory and dominant security policies fail to deliver upon their claims, and provides a privileged entry point

to illuminate the ways in which contemporary security arrangements not only exclude the security concerns affecting the majority of people on the planet, but also reinforce an unequal state of affairs (Bilgic, 2013: 19-33).

Second, the insecurities and concerns of real people in real places provide this theory with the normative anchorage upon which to assess the problems of existing security configurations. On the one hand, they can help us to show both the insufficiencies of traditional security thinking as well as the flagrant manifestations of insecurity that result from current security practices. On the other, they also help to build the ground to understand what exactly the security can and should mean in that particular context. Because security as emancipation does not seek to merely replace one view of security with another, voicing the concerns of real people in real places is a crucial move to explore the potential meaning of security from the bottom-up (Nunes, 2014a: 34). It offers this theory with a basis upon which to assess both the practices that are already in place but also the alternatives that already exist to improve or replace them. Engaging with real people allow us to perceive which vision of emancipation is more appropriate for a given context and, building on that, identify the actors and institutions that are better positioned to promote it (Basu, 2011: 108-113).

Third, this movement aims at unlocking the agency of the insecure and ensure that their voices, expectations, and concerns are central in the reconceptualization of security in both theory and practice. If, on the one hand, it is necessary to identify who can support transformative efforts and how, on the other, this cannot be carried whilst denying the agency and resistance of those who are insecure. For security as emancipation, real people in real places are considered as ‘agents of their own security’ (Basu, 2011: 102). This move aspires to allow security as emancipation to collaborate with the subjects of insecurity and ‘aid people in their efforts’ (Neufeld, 2004: 122) to transform the existing state of affairs. Engaging with security from the ground-up is thus what makes possible to see critical research as ‘a partnership for change from within rather than one that has been imposed externally’ (Burke et al., 2015: 65) and reconsider insecure groups as ‘partners in the process of emancipatory changes’ (Neufeld, 2004: 111).

In brief, the entire theoretical edifice of security as emancipation is based on a desire to engage and redress the insecurities of real people in real places. This engagement is

important to expose the limitations of traditional conceptions of security, assess the problems and blind spots of existing security practices, identify the alternative possibilities that already exist to transform them and, when necessary, illuminate that which is more appropriate to that context and the actors better positioned to promote it. This, however, must not be pursued by speaking about the subjects of insecurity but with them, by establishing partnerships through which they can become the agents of their own security while, concomitantly, ensuring that the security student can take an active role in that process. Grounding the analysis of security upon the insecurities of real people in real places is thus quintessential to contest current security arrangements and reconsider them according to the interests of those at stake.

### ***3.1.2. Real people, method and the limits of security as emancipation***

Given the centrality of real people in real places for the analytical, normative, and praxeological commitments of security as emancipation, one could expect an in-depth discussion not only about the importance of this engagement but also how that can be pursued. Surprisingly though, we do not. In fact, in three decades the methodological aspect of both critique and reconstruction has been one of the features most widely neglected by this approach. Despite the extensive discussion about the normative commitments and underlying assumptions of security as emancipation, up until now there has been no consistent discussion regarding the questions of method and methodology beyond the strategy of immanent critique and the problematization of some key concepts for this theoretical framework. By failing to tackle this issues, however, this theory ends up replicate a problem that, up until recently, has been widespread among critical security scholars: the predisposition to move directly from sophisticated meta-theoretical discussions to the production of critical empirical insights with little or no consideration and reflection for all that happens in-between.

This, naturally, creates important limitations for the emancipatory security project. First of all, while seeking to provide a valid alternative to traditional approaches to security, this theory is yet to engage in a systematic discussion about the technical or operational aspect of both critique and reconstruction. In other words, up until now it remains unclear how exactly can we translate the analytical, normative, and transformative commitments of emancipation from theory to practice. In this aspect, security as emancipation has limited itself to provide a set of principles that can orient

emancipatory research. Concomitantly, it displayed a concern with offering an approach that is: holistic, in that it engages with security and insecurity from different perspectives; personal, in that it considers the self as a valid source of knowledge; and pragmatic, in that it searches for resources that can expand its potential to deconstruct and reconstruct security in both theory and practice (Booth, 2007: 3). But these are only briefly mentioned and none of them actually tells something helpful about how we can engage with the insecurities of real people in real places in an emancipatory way.

Moreover, security as emancipation has also put forward a strong case why they should reject the traditional approaches to security and about the need to be more reflexive about its study. Despite that, this theory is yet to show them how exactly that can be done. In this regard, security as emancipation did not go beyond stressing the potential of immanent critique as an overarching strategy for critical security research. Three examples are particularly illustrative of this tendency. The first was an early attempt to strengthen this theory by developing a specific mode of immanent critique, that would allow scholars to compare existing security practices more consistently, but which bypassed the task of engaging real people in real places (Stamnes, 2004). The second was the development of a more relational approach to emancipatory security thinking wherein the concern with everyday livelihoods and concerns would be more systematically integrated into the immanent critique of security, but without problematizing the operational aspects required by that move, that is, how exactly should we engage with real people in real places (Basu, 2011). The third was reconsidering this approach by supplementing the engagement with experiences of insecurity with a focus on the intersubjective practices and the broader structural conditions that make them possible (Nunes, 2014b). However, while allowing security as emancipation to avoid romanticizing the victims of insecurity, it did not explore how these can be brought into the analysis whilst ensuring that they are not merely seen as someone to be emancipated from a condition of insecurity but as someone with whom to partner with in emancipatory change.

These efforts made a substantive contribution to advancing the emancipatory agenda in critical security studies. Still, in each of them the main focus was placed on delineating methodological principles rather than practical strategies of research. However, methodology is more than that. It certainly includes ensuring the alignment

between meta-theoretical principles and the overall process of research, as well as setting the benchmarks to assess the quality of research (Jackson, 2011). These represent the most basic requirements of any theoretical framework, and they are something to which security as emancipation has dedicated some attention. But any mode of research, even those that adopt an explicitly post-positivist outlook, requires some degree of engagement with the question of methods, that is, with the set of strategies and techniques that can be utilized to collect and interpret information (Salter and Mutlu, 2013). Even if methods are often understood as disciplinary tools that foreclose discussion and impose a specific view of legitimate modes for knowledge production, among critical researchers there is a growing recognition that they can also function as a privileged entry point to open up new possibilities in terms of analysis but also in terms of politics and ethics (Aradau and Huysmans, 2013). Methods can allow alternative modes of research and critique to resist neo-positivist logics and authorize marginalized ways of both knowing and writing security. A systematic engagement with method consolidates critique and, in doing so, strengthens its ability to disrupt and interfere in both the discipline and the world (Wilcox, 2016).

However, when we move beyond methodology, broadly understood, and engage with method, security as emancipation has very little to say. As some have pointed, security as emancipation allows for a combination of different tactics and tools, as long as these are aligned with the commitments of this theory (Basu and Nunes, 2013). It is also evident that, given the extensive amount of research that was inspired by this approach and the range of topics explored, several methods have been utilized in emancipatory security thinking (McDonald, 2012; Stamnes, 2004; Jarvis and Lister, 2013). However, up until now there is still insufficient reflection on the methods that can help us to advance emancipation in critical security studies. Simply, none of these works has been focused on discussing practical strategies of emancipatory security research, their potential advantages and drawbacks, or the ways in which they can further the capacity of this theory to both deconstruct and reconstruct security. Paradoxically, the question of method has been increasingly discussed in relation to various theoretical perspectives, such as constructivism (Pouliot, 2007), feminism (Ackerly et al. 2006), or poststructuralism (Hansen, 2004). In fact, in recent years, methods have become a central concern for the critical agenda thus leading to what has been termed as a

methodological turn in security studies (Aradau and Huysmans, 2013). Still, emancipatory security thinking remains conspicuously absent from this discussion.

Hence, regardless of its intentions, in its current formulation this theory does not have the tools in place with which to engage with real people in real places, much less to do so in a way that is aligned with the normative and transformative interests espoused by this approach. This methodological deficit raises some issues that reduce the critical potential of this theory. First, it limits the capacity of security as emancipation to offer an in-depth engagement of the struggles and insecurities of real people in real places which, consequently, reduces its capacity to offer a critique of existing security practices. Second, it constrains the analytical range of emancipatory security thinking when engaging those actively resisting them and, naturally, when exploring the alternatives that already exist and assessing which are more appropriate for that particular context. This, naturally, undermines the ability to this theory to empirically locate potential sites to advance emancipatory change in the short-, medium-, and long-term. In spite of that, this gap in security as emancipation also offers a privileged entry point to further reintegrate this theory into extant debates within critical security studies. This means both exploring what a stronger focus on methods can do for security as emancipation but also, what this approach can add to the discussion once it develops its methodological repertoire.

This section has demonstrated that engaging with the struggles and insecurities of real people in real places is quintessential for security as emancipation. Grounded upon this engagement, it assesses the implications of current security arrangements, explores the meaning of insecurity for different groups and individuals, and puts forward an anchorage for transformative efforts. However, up until now this approach is yet to demonstrate how this engagement can be pursued in a way that fulfils the commitments to which it subscribes. This opens the door for criticisms concerning the idealism of this theory as well as difficulties for those who wish to apply it. More importantly, it can bring into question this entire framework as it unsettles the glue that binds together its deconstructive efforts with its normative and transformative aspirations. Building on that, the remaining chapter will investigate how incorporating ideas and strategies from ethnographic research can help security as emancipation to offer a theory of praxis for real people in real places.

## 3.2. Ethnography

Engaging with method is a major opportunity to strengthen security as emancipation whilst also reinvigorating critical security debates. In this section we start to address this puzzle by introducing some resources and research tools from ethnographic thinking which are particularly suited to engage with and problematize the insecurity and resistance of real people in real places. After detailing some the core tenets of ethnographic thinking, the argument explores autoethnography and collaborative ethnography therefore paving the way for their incorporation into the theoretical framework of security as emancipation.

### 3.2.1. *Ethnography: a brief overview*

There are at least four strong reasons to link ethnography and security as emancipation. First, the aim of ethnographic works is to provide an in-depth interpretation of the everyday life and culture of individuals and communities living at the edges of modernity. Second, especially in the last decades the ethnographic style of research has been characterized by a strong rejection of positivist research (Geertz, 1973). Third, recent waves of ethnographic research have been committed to not only casting light on the conditions and struggles of those in a position of subordination but also, to do so in a way that can stimulate progressive change at the social, economic and political level (Mahmood, 2012). Fourth, ethnographers have pioneered the democratization of knowledge and the use of collaborative research strategies that can activate those transformations (Lassiter, 2005). Against that backdrop, it is all the more surprising that security as emancipation is yet to engage with openings created by ethnographic research. After all, ethnography is also a mode of research concerned with ‘real people in real places’ (Behar, 2003: 16).

But what is ethnography exactly? Etymologically, this notion results from the combination of the Greek words *ethnos* – meaning people – and *graphein* – meaning writing. Ethnography is thus about the writing of people, but neither the notions of writing nor people are something fixed and unproblematic (Clifford and Marcus, 1986). Ethnography is not a method or tool for social research but a methodology that is particularly suited to provide us with an in-depth interpretation of a specific social setting (Brewer, 2000: 11). Ethnographic research can thus draw upon a multiplicity

of research methods including participant observation, interviews, film-making, drawing, documental research, surveys, focus groups, and so on (O'Reilly, 2005; Fife, 2005). Despite that, conducting ethnographic work often involves some proximity and immersive engagement with the subject of research for extended periods of time (Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007). But ethnographically should not be taken lightly. Allowing for a systematic understanding of other people in other places has turned ethnographic methods into potential tools of domination especially when its tools are brought to support efforts of war or colonial expansion (Zehfuss, 2012).

In the last decades there has been a growing concern with epistemological, ethical, political and textual layers of ethnographic work (Bunzl, 2005). It was especially during this period that ethnography started to be associated to critique, collaboration, and the democratization of knowledge (Tedlock, 2008). On the one hand, ethnographers started to display a stronger concern with reflexivity; on the other, and following from that, they began to revise the role of the anthropologist not simply as a dispassionate scientist in search for knowledge, but as a political activist in search for change (Sheper-Hughes, 1995). While this was not necessarily a widespread tendency, ethnographers became increasingly aware of the colonial tendencies intrinsic to early anthropological work and the ways in which ethnography had been working to reinforce existing projects of power and domination (Geertz, 1988). This, in turn, opened the space for the development of experimental (Marcus and Fischer, 1986) and collaborative forms of ethnographic engagement and representation (Lassiter and Campbell, 2010), most of which oriented to mitigate the unequal positions between the researcher and the researched. Even if these have also be the subject of some concern and the focus of an ongoing debate among some cohorts of anthropologists and others (Clifford, 1983), it is in this strand of ethnographic scholarship that we can find the ethnographic ideas that better link to the commitments of security as emancipation. In the following sub-sections, two strategies that speak closely to the commitments of security as emancipation will be introduced: autoethnography and collaborative ethnography.

### *3.2.2. Autoethnography: From participant observation to the observation of participation*

Combining insights from ethnography and autobiographical research, the strategy of autoethnography emerged as a privileged means to emphasize and mitigate the artificial divide between subject and object and foreground more systematically the ways in which personal subjectivities, conditions, and emotions intersect and shape the process and product of research. Autoethnographic research is not simply about describing personal experiences, expectations, and theoretical concerns of the scholar. Rather, it is first and foremost about subjecting the self to the same gaze to which the subjects of research are subjected. In other words, the goal is not that of retroactively telling how the relation between researcher and research evolved, but to lay bare the multiple and complex ways it structured and transformed the conceptualization, conduct, and product of inquiry. There are multiple ways of doing so (Coffey, 1999). However, this strategy is first and foremost about telling something important about that context or situation that would, without that inward movement, be erased. As Ruth Behar (1996: 14) points,

the exposure of the self who is also a spectator has to take us somewhere we couldn't otherwise get to. It has to be essential to the argument, not a decorative flourish, not exposure for its own sake. It has to move us beyond that eclipse into inertia.

Ultimately, the emergence of autoethnography marked a radical departure from the earlier focus on participant observation towards a concern with the 'observation of participation' (Tedlock, 1991). To foreground the self, at least in this way, is to consider bodily emotions as legitimate sources of knowledge, to open new ethical, affective, and aesthetic possibilities for knowing and writing the world (Ellis, 1991). These are possibilities that resist the logic of knowledge for the sake of knowledge and which extend the evocative reach of ethnographic inquiry to a wider audience (Fassin, 2017). In doing so, they can also help to forge a stronger ethical relationship between the reader and that which is being read. Autoethnography, to put it simply, broadens the possibility of writing to affect and effect change. It is a means of rewriting the self and, in doing so, rewriting the social (Reed-Danahay, 1997). It can serve a therapeutic or healing function, for both writers and readers (Kiesinger, 2002). But more importantly, by laying bare emotion through a relational ethics it curbs

distances that, through the objective gaze of science, have been artificially kept apart (Ellis, 2007). This more reflexive, critical, and activist outlook of ethnographic work has been strongly reinforced by the emergence of collaborative ethnography.

### ***3.2.3. Collaborative ethnography: from informants to consultants***

Collaboration has always been a fundamental aspect of ethnographic investigation. In fact, without the permission and active collaboration of the individuals and groups studied by ethnographers, it is simply not possible to conduct research that provides an in-depth understanding of their lives and experiences (Holmes and Marcus, 2008). In spite of that, it was only in the last few decades that ethnographers took this insight a step further. For a small but already thriving group of researchers often associated with ‘applied anthropology,’ collaboration should not be simply a methodological requirement for ethnographic research, but an ethical responsibility orienting the entire process of inquiry (Clerke and Hopwood, 2014). It is insufficient, they suggest, to simply express a concern with understanding and improving the living conditions of the groups and individuals studied. Instead, we should also search for ways of materializing that concern, to put it front and center of ethnographic research. Ethnographic collaboration offers that possibility.

In collaborative ethnography the subjects being studied are not simply considered as informants, that is, as someone that provides the researcher with data that can be analysed and interpreted, but as consultants and authors, that is, as someone that takes an active role in every step of the project: from the conceptualization of the problem, the forging of research questions, the construction of research design, to the conduct of inquiry and crucially, to the writing and publication stage (Field, 2008). Collaborative ethnography, in that sense, can be defined as:

an approach to ethnography that *deliberately* and *explicitly* emphasizes collaboration at every point in the ethnographic process, without veiling it—from project conceptualization, to fieldwork, and, especially, through the writing process. ... Importantly, the process yields texts that are co-conceived or cowritten with local communities of collaborators and consider multiple audiences outside the confines of academic discourse, including local constituencies (Lassiter, 2005: 15).

Collaborative ethnography thus espouses a commitment to make the research relevant, not only for academic debates and discussions but, most crucially, for the lives of those

that are at the center of research. In some cases, it makes it possible for the subjects of research to have a stronger influence over policy-making (Goodson and Phillimore, 2010). While there are no definitive rules or guidelines for the conduct of collaborative research, there are some important principles that tend to be shared by collaborative ethnographers.

First, collaborative research seeks to challenge the tendency to collect the narratives of subject and translate them through theoretical vocabulary (Lassiter, 2008). It considers individuals and groups not as subjects of knowledge but as knowing subjects, deploying their own theories of the world and so it respects and reflects their language. Second, it seeks to reduce the asymmetry of power between researcher and researched by making the latter into active participants in every stage of the project by adopting a horizontal method of research (Rappaport, 2008). Third, and building on that, it aims to challenge existing hierarchies in the production of knowledge by mobilizing the mechanisms that authorize social science to validate indigenous, local, and vernacular ways of knowing and being in the world (Schensul et al., 2008). Fourth, collaborative ethnographic work is intended to create knowledge that is not only relevant for academic debates but first, and foremost, to those who are the focus of research. Fifth, it reconceives ethnography as an act of public engagement and social intervention. By being presented in a way that is accessible to a broader public, whether the product of ethnographic work is written or otherwise, collaborative ethnography seeks to reach a larger audience and extend the potential of research to change the world (Lassiter, 2005).

Collaboration and autoethnographic work thus speak directly to the core commitments of an emancipatory approach to security. They not only open new and more reflexive possibilities of foregrounding other voices that are often absent from security debates, but they also offer a set of tools with which an emancipatory concern with partnering-up with real people in real places can be translated from theory to practice. Thus, they can help to reduce the methodological deficit of security as emancipation and broaden its analytical, normative, and transformative potential. However, the synergies that can emerge from that process also need to be explored in relation to the ethnographic turn within security and international politics. That will be the focus of the following section: to problematize the ways in which ethnographic modes of research enabled researchers to bring the discipline closer to the world and, concomitantly, opened up

the possibility of making the researcher more transparent and responsible about his or her own imbrication in the worlds that are forged through writing.

### **3.3. Ethnography, international politics and security**

The previous sections identified some methodological fragilities that persist in security as emancipation and introduced two modes of ethnographic inquiry that speak directly with this issue: collaborative and autoethnographic research. This section explores the openings created by the ethnographic turn in the study of security and international politics. These can be organized around two different but two mutually reinforcing agendas. The first was a move outwards that sought to investigate more critically how the experiences of marginalized groups and individuals are linked to contemporary practices of violence and exclusion, as well as the strategies that they adopt to resist them. The second was a move inwards, aimed at making explicit the voice of the researcher within the text by displacing the dominant style of writing and authorizing the self a legitimate source of critical knowledge.

#### ***3.3.1. Moving outwards: ethnography and the other***

The growing interest in ethnography was provoked by a desire to bring the study of security and international politics closer to the world. By privileging the voices and concerns of those so frequently silenced by the discipline, ethnography offered the possibility of studying the world from the bottom-up and engaging the concrete experiences and struggles of subjects rather than relying on abstract categories of knowledge that oversimplify their condition. This was both challenging and rewarding for students of world politics. While it forced researchers to move away from the exclusive concern with texts and elite interviews and engage directly with the complexity of everyday living, it also provided them with a powerful set of tools with which to foreground the struggles and concerns of those systematically placed at the margin. Far from a linear and straightforward process, however, this move towards the world also entailed a constant openness to consider the potential limitations of ethnographic work.

First, engaging with ethnography reflected a growing frustration with the elitist bias displayed by international and security studies both within and outside critical circles.

Despite the radical impetus of the post-positivist turn, more than a decade later traditional as well as critical scholarship was still characterized by a predominant if not overwhelming focus on the discourses and practices of experts and politicians, thereby leaving untouched much of the subjects that actively contribute to make world politics (Vaughan-Williams and Stevens, 2016: 41). Not only did scholarship overemphasize the state and the system as the dominant levels-of-analysis, whenever it reduced the ontological foci of investigating individuals this often meant placing a concern with those surrounding the corridors of power (Cohn, 1987). Naturally, the elitist bias that persisted within the field contributed to make policy-takers invisible and further marginalize their interests, experiences, struggles and concerns from the agenda. Basically, it erased their agency from the world.

Ethnographic modes of research offered an opportunity to disrupt that tendency and find a greater balance between policy-makers and policy-takers. Challenging the idea that only the words and gestures of those at the policy table should be considered by security scholarship, ethnography posited that the world should be ‘studied up from people and not down from places that sweep blood, tears and laughter away’ (Sylvester, 2012: 484). By foregrounding the worlds of the forgotten, it provided the perfect tool with which to bring into the discipline the voices that remained unheard. Basically, it offered the possibility to ‘reorient security analysis around the everyday experiences of people’ and, as a result, ‘amplify the lives of marginalised actors’ whilst opening ‘space for people to speak’ (Jarvis and Lister, 2013: 161). It was not simply a matter of bringing their voices into the discussion, but also, and most fundamentally, about enabling them to shed light upon complex and minute ways in which contemporary security arrangements and other practices impact upon everyday lives. It helped scholars to further analyse existing policies by providing them with strategies to ‘experiment, report, and deconstruct violence in its daily effect on people’ (Ratelle, 2013: 280).

The systematic engagement and problematization of ethnographic methods were also fruit of a widespread dissatisfaction with the ways in which these voices were often extracted and translated into critical research. The underlying claim was that most of the research engaging with the everyday layer of global politics adopted an outdated, simplistic, and somewhat parochial view of ethnography which reduced its methods to an instrumental technique of data collection, an excuse to adopt a more aesthetic

mode of writing the world or, alternative as a mere means with which to criticize the overwhelming focus on language in extant research (Vrasti, 2008: 281). Some posited that the few works in which marginalized groups were engaged with and brought into the discussion, that engagement with marginalized groups could be accused of producing a thin and superficial rendition of their lives, relations, struggles, and subjectivities (Vrasti, 2008: 288-290). To some extent, even the theory of security as emancipation can even be accused of contributing to this literature, as it was often inspired by a feminist strand which would become the focus of this criticism, but also because it often relied upon a simplistic reading that limited itself to enumerate the threats afflicting those most vulnerable.

In contrast, ethnography turned the subject of insecurity from passive recipients of knowledge into world-makers that create and deploy their own ideas and categories of knowledge. Taking an ethnographic stance required students to avoid filtering these experiences through a meta-theoretical vocabulary that constrains their agency by predefining the boundaries of what is relevant about everyday lives and relations. It allowed scholars to understand how subjects ‘construct and describe experiences of security and insecurity in their own vocabularies, cultural repertoires of knowledge and categories of understanding’ (Croft and Vaughan-Williams, 2017: 21). It also forced them to ensure that the ‘participants themselves are recognized as active authors of their own stories, literally authorizing their voices in the construction of wider understandings’ (Johnson, 2016: 392). In doing so, it contributed to displace the disciplinary ‘insistence on speaking for the field instead of listening to it’ (Ratelle, 2013: 79).

Still, the value of a more systematic engagement with ethnography was not limited to a deeper and more nuanced analysis of insecurities. By bringing scholars more closely to the world, ethnography could also contribute to renewing political potential of the critical project. It made the discipline more capable of challenging the highly technical and abstract character of contemporary security discourses, and to re-politicize this concept by bringing ‘public voices and views into discussion around the meaning, limits, sources and functions of security’ (Jarvis and Lister, 2013: 173). Beyond allowing us to unpack how individuals and groups make sense of the world, it placed students in a better position to appreciate how individuals and groups challenge, resist and transform the dominant logics of politics and security through their everyday

actions. Ethnography opened the space to look at potentially disruptive practices taking place at ‘the small interstices of both time and space that are often overlooked or deemed insignificant in policy debates’ (Doty, 2006: 55). Simply, it created new opportunities for engaging with and promoting the positive transformation of unjust and unequal social relations, but without imposing a pre-determined view of what that change should mean or how it should happen (Johnson, 2016: 396).

All of this speaks directly towards security as emancipation. Both this theory and the ethnographic turn are oriented by an underlying desire to reconceive those whose insecurity is at stake not merely as subjects of violence and objects of security studies, but as legitimate actors in their own right. That is, as actors that are involved in the making and remaking of security through their own critical modes of theorizing their condition and reflecting upon the possibilities that already exist to expose, resist, and alter the unjust social arrangements. Hence, the ethnographic turn is particularly well positioned to help this theory to translate its analytical, normative, and transformative commitment from theory to practice. It provides this approach with a set of research tools upon which to ground an immanent critique of security that starts from the bottom up, and which uses the engagement with real people in real places as an anchorage to assess existing security practices, explore alternatives that already exist, and assess which of them is most adequate to a particular context.

### ***3.3.2. Moving inwards: ethnography and the self***

In tandem with the interest in bringing debates closer to the world and engaging with the everyday struggles of real people in real places, ethnography also allowed security scholars to better reflect upon their own position and imbrication vis-à-vis the world about which they researched and wrote. The move outwards, towards the world, was supplemented by a move inwards, towards the self. It is in that sense that we can speak of autoethnography as an alternative mode of critical security theorizing. Adopting an autoethnographic sensibility was not necessarily something entirely new for students of international politics, as several works placed the self as a legitimate interlocutor of critical research, particularly in the context of gender, security, and war (Cohn, 1987; Elshain, 1987; Kruzel and Rosenau, 1989). In fact, security as emancipation was one of the pioneers in this type of engagement (Booth, 1997).

However, it was only after the seminal piece by Roxanne Doty (2004) that critical students started to engage more thoroughly with the question of academic voice and exploring the ethico-political openings created by autoethnography. In that piece, she suggested that despite the almost unbridgeable differences erected between traditional and critical thinkers, the field remained unified by one important element: its voice and, therefore, its way of writing the world. Regardless of theoretical and methodological proclivities, authors continued to adopt a writing style wherein scientific authority was established through the absence of the author from the text. This, in turn, helped to reproduce an artificial divide between that which is being researched and those of research it. Doty argued that erasing the voice of researchers not only constituted a form of disciplinary violence through which the identity and subjectivity of the researcher was silenced and sanitized, it also erected an artificial distance between the writing subject, the reading subject, and the subject of research. In hiding their intrinsic relation, soulless writing also limited the ethical and political horizons of critique. By foregrounding the self, autoethnography offered researchers the opportunity for recovering their own voice and, in doing so, reconnecting research with the world that they bring about:

Voice is who we *are* on the page and who we are in relation to what and whom we write about. Voice gives us, as writers, a presence in our own writing. Our voices can thus position us as part of the humanity we write about or as separate and coolly detached. Rendering our own voices, our own humanity absent from our writing affects the stories we tell and the worlds that are either brought to life and made real or are made virtually non-existent on the page (Doty, 2004: 382).

Since then, there has been a growing number of scholars considering autoethnography as a critical resource with which to experiment with their own voice in the text and, more critically, problematize the analytical, ethical, affective, and political openings that this can create. Whilst focusing on particular aspects of autoethnographic writing around and why to mobilize personal insights, most of them pointed in similar directions: the interconnected issues of reality, power, and ethics in critical research (Dauphineé, 2010).

First, an autoethnographic mode of writing makes public the voices and emotions that, despite being so forcefully hidden within the conventional academic text, still bear a crucial influence over the conceptualization, conduct and writing of research. It

confronts the writer with his or her own desires and fears, turns emotions into important source for knowing, allows us to feel the world as a way of knowing it (Leander, 2016). Put simply, it brings the 'I back into IR' (Lowehneim, 2010). This, however, is not about finding a more radical way of writing the world but first and foremost, a way of opening the space for alternative, potentially more radical worlds, to emerge from writing. Second, writing the world is always a practice of power, of someone defining what something is or is not, of what it was, and what it can be. There is always a certain hierarchy between those who write, those who read, and those who are written upon. What autoethnography allows us to do is to make this relationship more transparent, sometimes challenging it, others reducing the distance that it simulates and entails (Inayatullah, 2011: 8). By bringing other things into being, autoethnography makes visible the power relations intrinsic to the act of knowing and researching, as well as the inconspicuous forms of violence implicit in the practice of writing and representing the world.

Third, autoethnographic modes of writing allow us to cast light onto the choices taken during research and the conditions that made them possible, that is, the positional aspects that push us to take a certain direction during the craft of research, to change our subject of research and the way we look at it. It challenges the idea of research as this highly rational and objective way of writing the world, bringing forward all that is important yet unwritten, all that makes us do what we do but is not accounted for in our work. In doing so, it pushes us to take full responsibility for our decisions, for what we write, and for those who we write about: it 'opens space for the reader to see the intentions – and not just the theories and methodologies of the researchers' and thus, 'opens us to a deeper form of judgment' (Dauphineé, 2010: 813). As a method that is mostly concern with how we write the world, this strategy makes research into more than a technical act. Researching becomes part of an affective and ethical relationship, wherein the role of researcher is not simply that of collecting and filtering information. It is that of helping us to know the world a bit better and bring into being the alternative worlds that are looming within it.

Finally, engaging the world autoethnographically also raised some important issues in terms of method, that is, in terms of the extent to which the self should be brought into analysis and the extent to which this actually adds something meaningful for the discussion (Naumes, 2015: 826). Bringing the self to the fore cannot be a mere

aesthetical gesture, it has to allow to say, see, write, note something important. Autoethnography foregrounds the question of reflexivity (Hamati-Ataya, 2012). By being about the self and the ways it relates with the world and the word, autoethnography is always about positionality and relationality. By foregrounding our intuitions, expectations, emotions, and intentions into research, autoethnographic writing can help us to be more explicit about concerns that emerge at different moments of research: pre-field, in-field, and post-field (Neumann and Neumann, 2015). Nonetheless, to be true to its purpose, autoethnography should be oriented at making a difference, that is, it should seek to disrupt dominant modes of thought by raising ‘uncomfortable questions that may otherwise be ignored’ (Naumes, 2015: 826).’ In sum, by complicating narrative and academic modes of writing the world, autoethnography seeks to open the possibility of writing in a way that can create new political, ethical and aesthetical possibilities to intervene directly upon the world (Edkins, 2013).

### **3.4. Security, emancipation and ethnography**

This chapter explores the limits of security as emancipation in relation to real people in real places and introduced some core ideas and insights from ethnographic thinking. It was then argued that the ethnographic turn in the study of security and international politics helped to curb the fictive distance between the discipline and the world and foreground more consistently the agency of those made systematically insecure by current social arrangements. This speaks directly to the commitment of security as emancipation to not only challenge dominant modes of thinking and writing security, but also searching for modes of intervening directly in its transformation. This section demonstrates the analytical, normative, and transformative gains that can result from incorporating ethnographic methods into this theory. In addition to that, it illustrates how once equipped with ethnographic resources, security as emancipation can also contribute to advance the agenda of critical security studies.

#### ***3.4.1. Contextualizing the experience, resistance and transformation of insecurity***

Incorporating ethnography into the methodological repertoire of security as emancipation holds promising insights for this theory. Ethnographic strategies are

particularly useful to overcome the tendency of speaking about certain groups and individuals rather than speaking with them. With these methods, real people in real places can be reconsidered as co-authors and agents capable of articulating and forging their own theories and practices of security, disrupting hegemonic understandings of the subject and prefiguring alternative practices of resistance and progressive change. By looking at the critical literature that adopted an ethnographic lenses, it is possible to illustrate the multiple ways in which ethnography can be turned into a fundamental research strategy for emancipatory security thinking. By placing real people in real places as the entry point for the critique and reconsideration of security, these methods can allow this theory to build a more contextual understanding of insecurity, agency, and change that will inherently broaden its capacity to analyse, assess, and contribute to the progressive transformation of contemporary security arrangements.

Up until now, in most of the work inspired by security as emancipation the engagement with real people in real places has relied almost exclusively upon information collected by other scholars (Bilgic, 2013). This does not necessarily undermine security as emancipation. However, given its promise to radically change the way in which security is theorized and critiqued by placing the most vulnerable at the heart of research, this theory should be more ambitious. Ethnographic methods offer an opportunity to take emancipatory security thinking closer to the world. By incorporating ethnographic strategies into the vocabulary of security as emancipation, scholarship inspired by this approach will be better equipped to investigate: How exactly are the insecurities of real people in real places are reinforced through existing practices of security? How can existing security policies be readjusted to better reflect the contextual and localized character of the insecurities that they seek to redress? How are these insecurities already being resisted and which alternative visions and practices security are being imagined and prefigured through the everyday actions of real people in real places?

First, adopting ethnography can help this theory to provide a deeper and more nuanced analysis of the structures and relations that make insecurity possible in the first place. For instance, ethnographic insights have been utilized to demonstrate how existing security approaches to HIV/AIDS can contribute to replicate the same vulnerabilities which they seek to redress. Focusing on the experiences of women in Burundi, Seckinelgin et al. (2010) utilized their voices to cast light into the pitfalls of the

dominant security practices to address HIV/AIDS and, concomitantly, explore the structural conditions and relations that make women living in that context particularly vulnerable to this problem. For them, dominant framings of this debate tend to consider women as potential security threats and thus, not only neglect the structural factors that underlie the pandemic in that particular context but contribute to increase their vulnerability to it. Indeed, by advancing a militarized and generic conception of the relationship between HIV/AIDS and security, policy has reduced the attention given to the broader set of structural conditions that make people, and particularly women, vulnerable to the disease.

These insights point that ethnography can enable an emancipatory analysis to unpack more thoroughly the implications of security policies upon the subjects of insecurity. Going beyond the enumeration of threats afflicting real people in real places, ethnographic methods provide this theory with the possibility of tracing the ways in which official discourses about security and the practices that they promote contrast with the localized insecurities which they are intended to redress. Security as emancipation is thus better equipped to ask: To what extent existing security policies are attuned to the insecurities that justify such policies in the first place? Are these adequate to redress insecurity in that particular context or, if not, why is that the case? How are the gendered, racialized, and militaristic underpinnings of existing security policies implicated in reifying the insecurities experienced by real people in real places? Simply put, ethnography strengthens the ability of this approach to connect more explicitly the subjective layer of insecurity with the structural conditions and relations that make insecurity possible and, in doing so, consolidate its ability to offer a critique of security configurations that is grounded upon the struggles and insecurities of real people in real places.

However, ethnography is not useful only to critique existing security arrangements and pinpoint their current fragilities. Rather, this tool can also be particularly useful to help us identify the possibilities that already exist to improve them. Charlotte Lemanski (2012) utilized this strategy to capture the extent to which the human security agenda is disconnected from the insecurities experienced by individuals in the developing world. By foregrounding the voices and experiences of urban dwellers in Cape Town, she was able to demonstrate the sharp disjuncture that persists between conventional discourses and policies of human security and the pragmatic concerns

afflicting some of the most vulnerable groups on the planet. This localized engagement with everyday insecurities not only allowed her to stress how local individuals and groups develop their own ways of achieving security, independent from the state and external actors, but also pinpoint some of the possibilities that already exist to rescale the human security agenda in a way that is more attuned to the everyday, personal, and contextual insecurities afflicting individuals in that particular setting.

In this case, ethnography allows security as emancipation to depict the subjects of insecurity as people directly affected by existing security policies, but also as being heavily invested in resisting them. Contrasting ideas about security with the corporeal and everyday insecurities that they seek to address, ethnography opens the possibility of asking: In what ways can existing conceptions and practices of security be adjusted to better reflect the insecurities that they seek to redress and the contexts in which they are implemented? How can these policies start to reconsider these groups and individuals not only as security referents to be secured but also as collaborators that can help to identify priorities in the agenda and delineate the strategies most adequate to pursue them? Put simply, ethnography can enable security as emancipation to go beyond the critique of existing security arrangements and, if needed, mobilize the insights of everyday insecurities and struggles to orient their reconstruction. It allows this approach to both lay bare the inadequacy of current security policies and, building on that, identify potential ways in which they can be rethought to better reflect the localized and contextual insecurities that they seek to redress.

Additionally, ethnographic strategies and their focus on the vernacular, ordinary or everyday experiences allow us to reveal the alternative discourses of security that already circulate within society and the multiple ways in which they either challenge or reinforce dominant conceptions of threat and insecurity. For instance, Nick Vaughan-Williams and Daniel Stevens (2016) built upon the more conventional strategy of focus groups to demonstrate that non-elite knowledge, often neglected by both traditional and critical security scholars, holds within it the potential to both disrupt dominant security narratives and policies and foreground existing possibilities for alternative security politics. Similarly, Lee Jarvis and Michael Lister (2012) also use focus groups to lay bare the multiplicity of security conceptions circulating within the UK. Based on upon in-depth discussions about individual perceptions of security, they pointed towards the prominence of alternative security understandings whose

focus goes well beyond the traditional concern with the survival and stability of the state and, instead, bring to the fore concerns much more aligned with the values of an emancipatory approach to security, such as the concerns with belonging, hospitality, equality, and freedom.

To security as emancipation, real people in real places do not simply experience and resist insecurity. They are also actors that articulate their own views about what security can and should mean. Concomitantly, security policies are tailored to redress the societal perceptions of insecurity widespread among citizens. However, these are often decided by a small group of experts that do not necessarily engage with those that are being secured. Using ethnographic strategies can allow this theory to explore this disjuncture more thoroughly. It enables it to ask the question: To which extent are the priorities of security policies aligned with the perceptions of those which they seek to protect? How do conceptions of security uphold by citizens reinforce or disrupt governmental strategies? In what ways do they envision alternative views of security and what values that underpin them? To what extent can these give way to a more inclusive approach to security? Ethnographic strategies can thus take the engagement with real people in real places beyond those who experience insecurity on a daily basis and push this theory to engage with ordinary citizens. This broadens the ability of this emancipatory security thinking to both understand the extent to which governmental and societal conceptions of security are aligned and, more importantly, to illuminate alternative conceptions that are already immanent within the current state of affairs.

However, citizens do not simply articulate alternative views of security and ideas that challenge governmental authority. Often, they are involved in collective projects that seek to both resist it and translate these alternative conceptions from theory to practice. These are not mere social movements but rather communities of resistance, wherein counter-hegemonic views of security are prefigured and materialized. Ethnography can allow security to capture that process. This is illustrated by Catherine Eschle (2018), who adopts an ethnographic gaze to explore the everyday ideas and strategies utilized by anti-nuclear peace activists. Focusing on the Faslane Peace Camp, she provides a detailed picture of the multiple strategies through which a group of activists articulate conceptions of insecurity that directly challenge the predominant discourses on deterrence and nuclear weapons and, more importantly, how they materialize these ideas through alternative security practices. For her, their everyday activities in the

camp give body to an emancipatory style of critique. First, they challenge dominant approaches to deterrence through non-violent practices that seek to disrupt the everyday activities of the nearby military base. Second, they prefigure alternative modes of living by showing that improving security must go beyond the concern with nuclear weapons and consider other issues such as gender relations or environmental sustainability.

Scholars inspired by security as emancipation have often engaged with instances of collective resistance. Nonetheless, most of them have been exclusively concerned with emancipatory moments. Ethnographic tools can allow us to go beyond that and unpack the conditions and practices that make these possible in the first place. In other words, by following these insights an emancipatory approach can explore instances wherein security is resisted through collective mobilizations, but which result from longer-term processes and relations wherein alternative conceptions of security are collectively negotiated, experimented, systematized, and translated by real people in real places. It can ask: How are communities of resistance contesting dominant narratives of security and disrupting existing policies? What alternative conceptions of security are being prefigured through their everyday actions, practices, and relations? To which extent can these allow for a reconceptualization of security along more sustainable, inclusive, and horizontal lines? Ethnographic research broadens the ability of emancipatory security thinking to shed light upon the alternative possibilities that are already immanent in counter-hegemonic movements and, in doing so, allows this theory to better appreciate their role as agents, intellectuals, and providers of security in their own right.

In addition to that, ethnographic thinking can also enable security as emancipation to better grasp the agency of individuals seeking to transform existing security practices and advance their own embodied conceptions of security. For instance, Alexandria Innes (2014) utilizes narrative strategies to follow the journey of Qasim, a migrant that sees his asylum application denied in the UK searches for alternative ways of achieving security. She demonstrates how this individual understands his own condition and actively seeks to transform it. Instead of treating him as a hopeless victim of structural inequalities whose voice only illustrates the nefarious outcomes of security policies, her work mobilizes his narrative to show how he systematically developed a strategy for being secure in ways that are distinct and even resist those

provided by the state. According to her, Qasim is not just an asylum seeker but someone that, through his embodied practices of security-seeking, is both theorizing and practicing his own, alternative, and counter-hegemonic conception of security. This illustrates how, through an ethnographic engagement, security as emancipation is not only prepared to unpack collective practices of resistance and change. Rather, it can also investigate the ways individuals in a position of vulnerability reflect upon their own condition and find new and creative ways of resisting it.

This can help this theory to demonstrate more consistently that individuals are not only subjects of security but also agents that conceptualize and develop their own theories of politics and, through their everyday performances, articulate conceptions of security that do not depend nor reify the state as the only legitimate referent for security. By engaging with real people in real places, ethnographic methods of research allow this theory to ask: How do individuals come to be placed in a position of insecurity? How do they perceive and conceptualize that condition? In which ways do they interact with the authorities who are responsible to provide it? How do they find alternatives when these are unable or unwilling to do so? How, in practice, do real people in real places mobilize embodied knowledge to resist and transform their conditions of insecurity? Simply, by incorporating the methods of ethnography this theory is in a better position to provide an assessment of insecurity that resists reducing the experiences of different people to a common set of concerns and, in that process, reconsider the individual not only as a subject subjected to insecurity but as an agent actively engaged in crafting its own vision and security.

In sum, the underlying commitment of security as emancipation is to offer a critique and reconsideration of security grounded upon real people in real places. In spite of that, this theory is yet to fully engage with the methodological resources that can enable it do so in a way attuned to its epistemological and ethico-political premises. All of the works explored are concerned with the insecurities and struggles of real people in real places and all of them go beyond pointing out what is wrong with security. Even if they do not associate themselves with security as emancipation, all of them illustrate the analytical, normative, and transformative gains that can result from incorporating ethnographic strategies into this theory. Engaging ethnography would leave this theory better prepared to provide a normative assessment of security policies grounded upon an engagement with real people in real places and, building

on that, identify potential ways in which they could be adjusted to that particular context. In addition to that, mobilizing ethnographic methods can broaden the ability of emancipatory analysis to locate alternative conceptions of security that are already immanent in the practices of real people in real places and, following from that, unpack the collective and individual strategies through which they translate them from theory to practice.

#### ***3.4.2. Seeing and collaborating with real people in real places***

For security as emancipation the critique and reconsideration of security is, first and foremost, about caring and working with the most vulnerable, from the bottom-up, to overturn existing structures of power and domination. Despite that, up until now this theory is yet to show how this commitment can be translated from theory to practice. Ethnographic methods offer a potential avenue to redress this issue by making it possible for security as emancipation to adopt an explicitly activist mode of research. Specifically, the strategy of collaborative ethnography can provide those inspired by this theory a horizontal method that includes the subjects of research into every aspect of the project. This method

involves the people who are studied in an active way, as individuals or groups having vested interests in the project through their participation in the research design, execution, publication, and outcomes potentially related to community or individual improvement of well-being (Fluehr-Lobban, 2013: 163).

Collaborative ethnography emphasizes partnering up with the subjects of research both during the procedural dimension of research, in terms of research design, but also in the conception and dissemination of the product, in terms of writing and publishing it. Like most critical ethnographic work that explicitly assumes an activist outlook, collaborative ethnography is strongly committed to bridge the gap between academic work and the general public. However, in this case collaboration is seen as a privileged avenue to forge deeper affective and ethical connections that can contribute to activate progressive social change. Critical collaborative ethnographies not only reconceive collaboration but also the idea of writing itself, suggesting that are other means of research that are potentially more radical, transparent, horizontal and disruptive than putting words on a paper. For instance, photos, movies, documentaries or even theatrical performances are seen as holding an outstanding potential to materialize the

critical, transgressive, and collaborative ethos whilst concomitantly disrupting dominant conventions of knowledge production.

Like security as emancipation thus, the idea of ethnographic collaboration underlines the need to align the means and ends of critical research. However, it also stresses that if academic work truly seeks to work as a positive force in the current state of affairs, then it not only needs to shift its underlying purpose but also the form through which it pursues it. To make a difference research must be conceptualized, carried out, and publicized differently. This does not mean that to be emancipatory, research must always be collaborative. Neither does it mean that once research is collaborative it becomes emancipatory. There is important work to be done, in terms of exploring dominant discourses, how they are authorized, and with what implications that is and will continue to be important for a critical theory of security as emancipation. Still, collaborative ethnography shows that it is possible to embed the emancipatory commitment more explicitly into the methodologies through which this approach seeks to debunk existing practices of security, their social and political effects, and, when necessary, investigate the alternatives that already exist to transform them.

Given the radical change in terms of research practice that is called for by this method, how is it possible, in practice, to craft an emancipatory critique and reconsideration of security that builds on collaborative research? In this regard, there are at least two particular ways of doing collaborative research that could be particularly useful for this approach: through photography and film. Both of which can offer a way out of pitfalls of naturalist and humanist modes of representation while, concomitantly, helping this theory to develop a more dialogic and pluralist mode of research which foregrounds the interests and experiences of real people in real places (Zweekhorst et al., 2016). By communicating through visuality, collaborative ethnography can support security as emancipation to further democratize the production of critical security knowledge in a way that expands the possibilities of critique to reach a broader public. As a result of that, collaborative ethnography can expand its potential to have an effect, to provoke change, and, thus, transform the current state of affairs. To mobilize this method does not mean, necessarily, that change will take place, as some have already debated. However, it potentially increases the chances of that happening. Collaborative ethnographic work can thus help us to not only place real

people in real places at the heart of research. Rather, it also ensures that they are both the means and the ends of emancipation. But how exactly can this be pursued?

In terms of photography, the strategy of photovoice is particularly suited to operationalizing a collaborative and emancipatory research project. As the name suggests, this method utilizes photographic images to elicit voice. Methodologically, photovoice involves providing photographic cameras and training to individuals in a specific community, which will later use photography to capture important aspects of their life and use them as springboards for reflection (Sutton-Brown, 2014). Following from that, the photos are curated in group and utilized to engage the broader public, in order to promote social change. However, this method also requires constant dialogue throughout the project, especially regarding the ethical dilemmas intrinsic to any photographic endeavour (Musoke et al., 2016). As any other method, it contains strengths and limitations, but this one is particularly useful to facilitate reflection, promote collective dialogue, and expand the ability of vulnerable communities to influence policy-making (Wang and Burris, 1997). Photovoice is, first and foremost, a method aimed at promoting empowerment and social change (Liebenberg, 2018). In sum:

In photovoice projects, participants are invited to express their viewpoint, by exploring community issues and daily lived experience by taking photographs, discussing the photographs, developing narratives of the photos and participating in social action to enact social or policy change (Johnson, 2016: 801).

Photovoice has been frequently utilized by public health scholars as a strategy that can deepen our understanding of the everyday insecurities afflicting vulnerable communities as well as a mechanism to bridge the gaps between practitioners, policy-makers, and policy-takers (Mitchell and Sommer, 2016: 521). In addition to that, photovoice as research strategy also been taken on board by other areas of inquiry that demonstrate a strong commitment to develop research that can further social integration and provoke social change, such as education, refugee studies or disability studies (Sutton-Brown, 2014). Those inspired by security as emancipation could potentially use those examples as a source of inspiration for their projects and, in doing so, would not only contribute to this approach but to the broader critical security field. Simply, by focusing on real people in real places, working side by side with them, and

aiming at radical change, photovoice not only embodies all the core concerns of security as emancipation, but it also translates them into practice.

Collaborative filmmaking is another strategy that could be adopted by this theory. Whilst not being necessarily recent, collaborative approaches to film have been important to dislocate the authority of positivist knowledge over common sense understandings of marginalized groups. Like photovoice, they offer us a multivocal research method that rearranges the relationship between the researched and the researcher or, in this case, the observer and the observed (Dienderen, 2007). The aim is to open up layers of reality that cannot be captured through textual representation. In collaborative film-making, collaboration is not simply about cooperation, that is, a practice in which those being studied limit their role to provide consent and advice to the researcher (Ruby, 1992). Rather, it is about integrating their insights into every aspect of the film, from the development stage in which the puzzle is constructed and negotiated, to both making and acting in it, to taking editorial decisions, being part of the audience, and even fulfilling the role of moderators in screenings (Gruber, 2016). Ultimately, collaborative film-making aims to create images and stories that ‘transform and empower’ (White, 2003).

Developing a bottom-up mode of critical theorizing security has been one of the major concerns for security as emancipation. Seeking to displace the methodological elitism of both traditional and more critical approaches to security, this theory has sought to include into critical security debates the insecurities of real people in real places. To see them not merely as victims but as agents and actors involved in contesting hegemonic practices and advancing alternative ways of addressing these issues. This discussion showed that collaborative ethnography can provide this theory with powerful strategies with which to translate this commitment more fully from theory into practice. These strategies not only reduce the gap between researcher and researched as well as the hierarchy that underlies this relationship, but also the distance between critical security knowledge and the broader public. In addition to that, by democratizing who can be considered as a legitimate source of critical knowledge and how it can be both produced and presented, it can also help this theory to provide a more powerful assessment of existing insecurities and the concerns that should be accounted for in the transformation of existing security practices and policies.

### ***3.4.3. Emancipation after ethnography: imaging security and insecurity differently***

Up until now, the argument focused on showing that incorporating ethnographic methods can broaden the analytical, normative, and transformative potential of security as emancipation. It is still necessary to problematize how, once equipped with the ethnographic tools of research, this approach can also add something important to ongoing debates within critical security studies. It will be argued that security as emancipation can advance the visual turn in security studies to move beyond deconstruction and engage more explicitly with the reconstructive potential of visibility. Specifically, an emancipatory engagement with images can help us to go beyond the overwhelming interest in the performative role of images in construction, contestation, and subversion of security. By starting from an engagement with real people in real places and reframing them as both co-producers of knowledge and agents of security, security as emancipation can help to authorize visual research methods as legitimate strategies for critical security research and illustrate how these are in a privileged position to help us produce a mode of critical security research that can provoke practical transformative changes in favour of groups and individuals systematically placed in a position of vulnerability.

Photos, movies, pamphlets, or comic-books have always been an important element in reifying certain views of security, identity, and world politics. Masterpieces such as *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* shaped the imaginary of the Cold War for decades. Similarly, series such as *Hearts and Minds* or the iconic photo of the Napalm Girl shifted decisively public opinion in the United States as well as the perceptions of broader international community perceived the Vietnam War. Despite that, it was only in recent years that scholarship started to systematically consider the role of visibility, broadly understood, in global politics. Prompted by a dissatisfaction with the predominance of textual modes of analysis and the overwhelming emphasis on language, this move led to what has been termed as a visual, aesthetic, or even pictorial turn in security studies (Bleiker, 2001; 2009). To some, however, this does not represent merely another turn in the critical project. Rather, it signals the emergence of an entirely new cross-disciplinary sub-field, visual security studies, with a research agenda that aims to:

highlight how much of contemporary practice is visual and to foster an increased attentiveness to visibility in security politics, security practice, and the possibilities of

employing visual research methods in security scholarship (Andersen and Vuori, 2018: 3).

By authorizing the visual as a legitimate source of critical research and intervention, this turn produced important insights for security studies. It helped to show, more systematically, that images often play a central role in making certain policies and practices of security possible. For instance, the photo of a defaced Afghan young woman in the cover of Time magazine can be seen as an explicit attempt to legitimize the continued presence of the US in Afghanistan, helping to securitize gender and performing the violence to which women would be subjected if the American troops abandoned the country (Heck and Schlag, 2012). In broad strokes, this agenda made clear how images can be utilized to construct collective sensibilities upon which political decisions often rely and through which certain political ideas and practices enter the public realm and become accepted as something necessary and legitimate.

Images can either help to reinforce our duties towards those that are being represented or, in turn, reify stigma, prejudice and indifference (Bleiker et al., 2014). This was also illustrated by exploring the ways in which asylum seekers have been depicted in Australian newspapers and the extent to which this contributes to reinforce them as potential sources of insecurity among public opinion, preventing the fuller integration of migrants and refugees into the broader society (Bleiker et al., 2013). In addition to that, an engagement with the visual layer can also be particularly helpful to help us understand the ways in which public perceptions of certain issues shift when they become considered as security problems, such as in the case of HIV/AIDS (Campbell, 2008). But the visual is not limited to images and, as such, also opens up the possibility of investigating aspects such as the role of colours in making security practices intelligible, or the way that the logos utilized by private companies seek to enact authority in the field of security (Andersen et al., 2015).

More recently, the visual turn has also been able to demonstrate that images can function as potential mechanisms to contest rather than reinforce dominant ideas and power relations (Campbell, 2003). By making visible some aspects of security that often remain invisible, selected photographs are particularly helpful to provoke acts of resistance and help to bring into question dominant conventions for representing security issues such as war or surveillance (Andersen and Möller, 2013). Images can support collective resistance. They can help to amplify the concerns of those who are

systematically silenced and, in doing so, strengthen their claims against broader structures of meaning through which their silences are reproduced (Cooper-Cunningham, 2019). Beyond more or less iconic images, an interest in visuality also leads us to interrogate how artistic interventions interfere in world politics or how pieces of popular culture often contribute to destabilize hegemonic conceptions of gender, race, and national security (Danchev and Lisle, 2009; Cooper-Cunningham, 2020).

Differently, the utilization of visual methods such as film making can be considered as a privileged entry point to reconsider self-other relations, helping to understand and promote alternative sensibilities, unpack gradual shifts in terms of identity, or contest the invisibilities reified through dominant narratives about international politics and security (Callahan, 2015; Weber, 2011; Harman, 2019). Some scholars have also utilized their own photos as a springboard to discuss international politics, in a way that combines autoethnography with images in order to complicate the politics violence, insecurity, and the role of researchers within them (Lisle and Johnson, 2019). Finally, images have also been utilized as means with which to decentre text-centric modes of teaching and learning about the world. In that context, they can foster learning and push students to reflect more systematically about the situatedness of security knowledge and positions that they can take in relation to it (Roberts, 2018; Bilgic et al., 2018).

This literature has clearly showed the added value of engaging critically with the visual layer of security and the multiple ways in which visuality is entangled in the making and remaking of world politics. More critically, however, it also showed that there is still some room wherein emancipatory security thinking can help to advance this debate into a reconstructive direction.

Up until now, most of the literature resulting from the visual turn adopted an explicitly deconstructive outlook towards the study of security and worlds politics. As a result, we have a strong understanding of the performative role of images and other visual artefacts in the reproduction of difference, exclusion, and particular modes of violence by making them appear as something almost natural, necessary, and thus legitimate. We also understand by now some of the ways in which images have been utilized to contest, subvert, and transform dominant understandings of security. Similarly, there

has also been some engagement with the role of images in the process of securitization and their potential in desecuritization (Möller, 2007). Despite that, we still lack an understanding about how images can be mobilized to critically investigate everyday manifestations of insecurity, assess the effects of existing security arrangements in specific contexts, and promote alternative modes with which to think about what should be secured, by whom, how, and for what purpose. In other words, visibility has been mostly approached as an object of study rather than as method with which to legitimately produce critical knowledge about insecurity.

Once equipped with the tools of collaborative ethnographic research, emancipatory security thinking could push this effort further and take this literature beyond the focus on the role of visibility in securitization and desecuritization. Instead, it can push scholarship to engage more consistently with the critical, disruptive, and potentially transformative potential of producing security knowledge through visual methods. This not only speaks directly to the growing interest on visibility as a legitimate method of critical security research (Moore and Farrands, 2013). Rather, and given the emancipatory concern with foregrounding the concerns of real people in real places, it also cements the intention of reconsidering the methods as acts, that is, as strategies of research through which critical scholars

can intervene and disrupt given worlds by creating fragile objectivities from taking a position in favour of subjugated knowledge, subjects and objects. (Aradau and Huysmans, 2013: 612)

Emancipatory security thinking is well positioned to advance this debate. Through strategies such as photo-voice or collaborative film-making, this approach can broaden the discussion, pushing it beyond exploring the politics of representation, that is, how certain issues, objects, or people are visually represented and how that can either help to reinforce, disrupt or dismantle existing security arrangements. Instead, this theory can take the visual turn to engage with the question of how they can be represented in ways that re-open the hegemonic conceptions of security and promote alternative ways of thinking and practicing security. Concomitantly, this will also push us to reconsider the role of the critical security researcher vis-à-vis the visual politics of security and, more specifically, the extent to which it should be limited to map the different ways in which these are represented or, instead, take the risky but potentially rewarding path of co-producing alternative representations of the world. In that sense, this effort to

link security as emancipation with critical ethnographic methods stresses something crucial discussed in the introduction: the need to reconsider critical security turns not only as opportunities to extract insights from other areas of inquiry and apply them to critical security debates but also, and more importantly, as privileged entry points to explore and problematize how critical security studies can add something new and important to debates within other fields of research.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter engaged with a perennial issue for security as emancipation: the need to ground the critique and reconstruction of security upon the struggles and insecurities of real people in real places. The first section demonstrated that, despite this promise, in its current configuration this theory continues to rely upon a narrow and superficial engagement with real people that does not reflect its commitments. It was shown that this failure denotes a lack of methodological clarity and analytical resources and can ultimately bring into question the entire theory of security as emancipation. In the following sections, the chapter introduced ethnography as a potential resource to resolve this issue by focusing upon two radical ethnographic strategies: collaborative ethnography and autoethnography. This was then followed by an investigation of the ways in which the growing interest in ethnographic thinking helped to forge a move towards the world for those studying security and international politics. This turn helped to curb the distance between the discipline and real people and consisted either upon a move inwards, towards the self, or outwards, towards the other. Finally, the chapter demonstrated how incorporating ethnographic insights can help security as emancipation to address the limitations earlier identified in this chapter.

First, it was suggested that, by centering research upon an in-depth engagement with real people in real places, ethnography provides this theory with the resources appreciate more thoroughly the effects of insecurity in the lives of those groups and individuals systematically placed at the margins of existing security arrangements, as well as the ways in which they are already resisting, subverting, and transforming dominant security discourses and practices. Second, ethnography can help security as emancipation to work side by side with real people and create critical knowledge that not only speaks to a broader public, but it is also more meaningful for those whose

lives are at stake. Finally, it was argued that, once equipped with the methodological resources offered by collaborative ethnography, this theory can also add something important to extant debates about the visual turn and help to legitimize visual methods as legitimate tools of critical knowledge production.

## 4 Security as emancipation and the practice turn

The previous chapter argued that emancipatory security thinking still demonstrates some insufficiencies regarding the methodological strategies required to engage with the struggles and insecurities of real people in real places. It showed that engaging with the ethnographic turn can offer this theory some resources particularly tailored to address this problem. Building on that, this chapter explores security as emancipation can be strengthened through an engagement with the practice turn in critical security studies. The argument starts by exploring the problems that persist within this theory in terms of its understanding and engagement with security practices. It will be argued that, in its current configuration, the immanent critique of security provided by security as emancipation does not go beyond engaging the narratives through which these practices are discursively framed and authorized and assessing their underlying ideas and assumptions. This reduces its ability to fully understand the conditions of possibility of contemporary security practices and to shed light upon the extent to which they contribute to reinforce or reduce the exclusion and insecurity of particular groups and individuals.

The argument will introduce some of the thinking tools advanced by Pierre Bourdieu as potential resources with which to redress this problem. It explores some of the key concepts that ground his theory of practice and which, to a large extent, have inspired the practice turn in critical security studies. This will be the object of the following section which explores the common ground of practice-oriented research and how it developed a more refined understanding of the social construction of security and the processes through which the field of security has been gradually transformed. The final section investigates how the thinking tools provided by practice thinking can support security as emancipation to develop a more in-depth analysis, critique, and reconsideration of existing security arrangements. Finally, it argues that once equipped with resources from the practice turn, emancipatory security thinking can expand the

agenda of critical security studies. Given its two-fold commitment to both deconstruct existing security arrangements but also engage with the strategies through which they are being resisted and transformed, emancipatory security thinking can provide critical scholarship with a bridge between critical and pragmatic approaches to practice and link the former concern with domination with the latter emphasis on the possibilities of resistance and emancipation.

#### **4.1. From theory to practice**

Seeking to pave the ground to link the thinking tools of the practice turn with security as emancipation, this section investigates and problematizes how this theory has conceptualized the relationship between the theory and practice of security. After detailing the central role played by the deepening of security in both deconstruction and reconstruction, the argument explores the extent to which this strategy still creates important limitations at the analytical, normative, and transformative levels. It will be argued that the tendency to ground the immanent critique of security upon the analysis of security concepts, texts, and political theories leads this theory to adopt a discourse-oriented understanding of practice, that is, an understanding that relies upon what actors say in relation to security but neglects what practitioners do about it. As a result, security as emancipation still shows some difficulties when it comes to grasping the conditions that make possible contemporary security practices and pinpointing how exactly they are intertwined with the struggles and insecurities of real people in real places. This limits its ability to provide an assessment of current security arrangements and, when necessary, evaluate the alternative possibilities that already exist for their progressive transformation.

##### ***4.1.1. Deepening security***

As pointed previously, the nexus between theory and practice is a central concern for the theory of security as emancipation (Bilgin, 1999). According to this approach, security theory and practice are mutually constitutive in that security theory helps to constitute security practice and, in turn, security practice shapes and reshapes security theory (Booth, 2007: 284). One of the main goals of security as emancipation is thus to explore how the two are mutually implicated and how exactly they impact upon

existing insecurities. In other words, this theory is committed to lay bare the link between security theories, practices, and the struggles and insecurities of real people in real places. It is in this particular context that we can fully understand the significance of deepening security for emancipatory security thinking. It is through this move that this theory jumps from an engagement with the insecurity of real people in real places to an appreciation of how security is conceptualized and done in practice, as well as a normative assessment of the interests that underpin different approaches to security.

Emancipatory security thinking puts forward a conception of deepening different from that advocated by conventional security perspectives. From a traditional perspective, deepening security was seen as an ontological move. Whilst broadening intended to diversify the security agenda and bring into consideration the potential threats that exist beyond military confrontation, such environmental degradation, pandemics, or ethnic tensions, deepening was about exploring how these threats could impact upon alternative security referents such as individuals, societies, regions, or ethnic groups (Krause, 1998). Still, other referents were only considered relevant insofar as they were intertwined with the stability of the state and the broader international system. The deepening was thus a subsidiary move to the broadening of security. To security as emancipation, this conception of deepening was highly problematic. It not only reified the state as the highest political value to be protected, but it also framed security through a problem-solving logic, that is, as a mechanism with which to smooth the functioning of existing structures and institutions. As such, it did not provide us with an adequate strategy to rethink existing security actors, practices and institutions. Rather, it helped to extend their authority over non-traditional domains of social and political life (Booth, 2007: 149-171).

In contrast, security as emancipation conceived the deepening of security as a political rather than a technical move. That is, according to this theory deepening about unpacking the underlying political assumptions of different conceptions of security (Booth, 2007: 150-169). In practical terms, this mode of deepening shifts the focus from questioning what threatens security referents above and below the state towards investigating what theories of politics underpin different practices and concepts of security. It reflects the idea that the notion of security, when utilized to engage in world politics, does not reflect a neutral, objective, and thus factual representation of reality.

Rather, it reflects the reality of security that is privileged by a particular conception of politics. This is because security is recast by security as emancipation as being a derivative concept, the idea that different concepts and practices of security derive from different theories of politics. To put simply, security theories and concepts are conceived as derivative of political theories. They are constructed upon certain political assumptions which, in turn, help to construct particular understandings and practices of security (Booth, 2007: 247-249).

Analytically, this move requires engaging with the three layers that constitute the nexus between theory and practice of security: the deep structure, the fracture zone, and the outputs. The first is about unpacking the most fundamental assumptions in terms of ontology and politics of different conceptions of security rely; the second explores the sites wherein these ideas are being contested and the actors that promote and contest them; the third concerns the political agenda, policies, and practices that derive from those political assumptions and struggles (Booth, 2007: 154-158). In that sense, security as emancipation argues that the deepening of security should not be seen simply as an attempt to redefine existing security concepts and policies. Rather, it is a strategy with which to critique them and pave the way for their reconstruction (Booth, 2007: 149).

By laying bare the crucial yet unspoken assumptions of existing conceptions of security, deepening naturally helps us to denaturalize security practices. This is because it enables us to unveil the ideological and political interests upon which they are grounded and which they promote once translated into practice. At the same time, however, it is also by deepening the different and often competing conceptions of security that already exist in a given context that it becomes possible to identify that which holds a stronger emancipatory potential. In that sense, this move is the cornerstone for the immanent critique offered by security as emancipation. Deepening epitomizes strategy with which to assess dominant security arrangements and prepare the ground for their reconstruction. Ultimately:

deepening the conceptualization of security not only provides an important means for criticizing traditional security theories, but it also is a vital part of reconstructing the approach on alternative more critically oriented basis (Wyn Jones, 1999: 103).

#### *4.1.2. The limits of deepening security*

The deepening of security was developed by security as emancipation in a particular context and with a specific purpose. In the aftermath of Cold War, the discipline of security studies was largely dominated by traditional security thinking. Despite the systematic attempts to include new referents and threats into the scope of security studies, the limits and possibilities of security studies remained constrained by the meta-theoretical chains of realism and positivism. Within the traditional camp, there was a strong resistance to recognize the problems of the militarist, state-centric, gendered, and elitist assumptions that underpinned conventional modes of theorizing, conceptualizing, and pursuing security (Krause, 1998). At the same time, most attempts to rethink security outside the traditional prism by often left these assumptions untouched. Even if they often questioned the analytical centrality of the state and the preponderance of military affairs in security studies, most of them left unquestioned the quintessential role of the state as the core unit of political life and, equally important, the positivist assumptions that by following the scientific methods and criteria of the natural science, it was possible to provide an objective assessment of security threats (Smith, 1999).

Against this backdrop, the primary goal of security as emancipation was, first of all, to demonstrate that traditional-cum-realist approaches to security studies were not only inadequate to the study the contemporary milieu, but they could also contribute to reinforce violence and insecurity (Booth, 2007:31-37). By naturalizing the state as the primary referent of security and military conflict as the predominant security threat, the traditional view was inherently complicit in the reproduction of existing inequalities and constrain the freedom and well-being of millions. Apart from leaving the insecurities of the most vulnerable outside the purview of security studies, traditional approaches also ensured that the large amount of resources dedicated to security would continue to be funnelled exclusively into the strategic priorities of main international powers, defined in terms of their survival from external military threats. In fact, the state-centric, militaristic, and external-oriented outlook of traditional security conceptions often helped to legitimize insecurity and unfreedom at the domestic level.

By reconsidering security as a derivative concept, security as emancipation was able to both lay bare the interests and assumptions that underly the worldview of traditional security studies and, concomitantly, expose how they had worked to legitimize and maintain the current state of affairs (Booth, 2007: 153). This, in turn, would also create the space for the conceptualization and development of alternative ways of engaging security:

Critical security studies, as it developed through the 1990s, sought to investigate what security might mean in theory and practice from perspectives on global and local politics that start from very different political, methodological, and philosophical standpoints. (Booth, 2007: 29)

However, in its current configuration, the aim of security as emancipation cannot be reduced to that of critiquing traditional security studies. This was just a preliminary but necessary step to open up the space for alternative conceptions, theories, and practices of security. Today, security as emancipation has a more ambitious purpose. It seeks to provide security students with a critical theory for the analysis, assessment, and, if necessary, transformation of security that is oriented by the insecurities afflicting specific groups and individuals and which is grounded upon the alternatives that already exist. Translating this commitment from theory to practice thus requires an engagement with the struggles of real people in real places and an immanent critique of existing security arrangements. It is based upon the engagement with these two layers, insecurity and security, that this theory sets out to provide an assessment of existing problems and an identification of the potential alternatives that already exist to redress them. However, whilst insecurity is explored from the bottom-up, by zooming in and zooming out on real people in real places, the immanent critique of security is built from the top-down, by deepening and extending existing conceptions of security.

Following the tenets of deepening, the immanent critique has been operationalized by engaging with three dimensions of competing security views: the political theories that underly different security discourses, the actors that promote them, and the policies that result from them (Booth, 2007: 154). Building upon that strategy, emancipation-oriented scholars have engaged numerous empirical puzzles. Focusing on the regional dimension of international affairs, for instance, some have problematized the competing views through which it is possible to frame security in Africa, Europe and

the Middle East (Bilgin, 2005). Differently, others have built upon this approach to offer an analysis and reassessment of environmental security in Canada, Brazil, and Australia (McDonald, 2012; Harrington and Lecavalier, 2014). As most of this work makes clear, deepening security offers a powerful strategy with which to map existing approaches to security and, more importantly, evaluate their underlying principles and potential outcomes. In spite of that, it also show that there are some important blind spots in the immanent critique provided by emancipatory security thinking.

The first problem is that security as emancipation assumes that unpacking the political values that underpin a certain discourse about security is sufficient to ascertain the practices that result from it. In fact, the conceptualization of security as a derivative concept is grounded upon the argument that:

how one conceives security is constructed out of the assumptions (however explicitly or inexplicitly articulated) that make up one's theory of world politics (its units, structures, processes, and so on). Security policy, from this perspective, is an epiphenomenon of political theory (Booth, 2007:150).

The debate about human security provides an useful example of the problems resulting from that. As a discourse of security, the idea of human security clearly challenges the predominance of state-centric and militaristic conceptions of security and threat in the global agenda. It reframed groups and individuals as the appropriate referents for security policies, aimed to reduce global inequalities and, even if it did not challenge the primacy of the state, it underlined its role as a security provider rather than receiver. Hence, as a discourse, it shared several similarities with security as emancipation. However, when translated from theory to practice this notion gradually lost its critical edge. Currently, human security is closer to an ordering mechanism with which to reinforce the existing state of affairs rather than a tool to transform it (de Larrinaga and Doucet, 2008; Chandler and Hynek, 2011). Emancipation-work has often pointed the problems in this agenda and its distinctiveness from this idea (Neufeld, 2004). Still, by relying extensively upon an engagement with discourse and political theory, this theory is unable to show how exactly did the practice of human security came to be so different from the assumptions from which it started. In other words, while stressing the connection between theory and practice, the assessment of security is still silent when it comes to show how the later came to be translated into the formed.

Second, deepening does not allow this approach to recognize the extent to which existing security practices often combine different understandings of security and, thus, are underpinned by different political values. In this case, a good illustration concerns the ongoing changes in the management of border security. In recent years, the smartification of borders has been accompanied by the incorporation of numerous actors that have come to complicate the line between public and private security and their responsibility for protecting the state and, consequently, its citizens. Actors such as private security companies, civilians, banks, and airlines are now increasingly involved in this task (de Goede, 2017). In different ways, all of them take part in making and remaking the meaning of security at the border and define the appropriate referents, threats, and practices. However, each of them often adopts a different logic and is motivated by a different purpose. Some are interested in profit, others in efficiency, and others in human rights (Bigo, 2014). By building upon a linear understanding of the relationship between theory and practice and seeing the former as the driving force of the later, security as emancipation becomes unable to address these questions and, consequently, to help us understand the conditions that make possible existing security arrangements.

Finally, by focusing predominantly upon the discursive and theoretical layers of security, this strategy cannot fully demonstrate how existing practices contribute to increasing or reducing the freedom and well-being of real people in real places. This problem results from the adoption of two incommensurable strategies. Whilst the struggles and insecurities of real people in real places is studied from the bottom-up, by zooming in and zooming out on insecurity, security is studied from the top-down, by extending the analytical gaze to include distinctive conceptions of security and deepening to unveil their assumptions, actors, and policies. This, in turn, creates a difficulty when it comes to reveal, empirically, how exactly existing conceptions of security are linked to the freedom and well-being of real people in real places. This issue becomes particularly salient in the division of labor that characterizes security as emancipation: while some authors have adopted this theory to provide an immanent critique of competing conceptions of security, other have use it mostly to explore the struggles and insecurities of real people in real places (cf. Nunes, 2014b; Bilgic, 2015). Still, most of this work is unable to lay bare how the two are connected. In other words, security as emancipation still requires the adequate tools with which it can demonstrate

how exactly do the assumptions that underly current security practices and the actors that promote contribute towards reducing or alleviating the insecurity of real people in real places.

The ethnographic tools introduced in the previous chapter and their concern with participant observation, collaborative work, and self-reflexivity can help to redress this problem. In fact, the mobilization of ethnographic methods is a pre-requisite to develop an emancipatory critique that goes beyond the analysis and assessment of security discourses and theories and engages the activities through which security practices are carried out and implicated upon the lives of real people in real places. As argued, ethnography can enable security as emancipation to better understand the disjuncture between existing security policies and the insecurities that they seek to redress, to unpack more thoroughly the agency of groups and individuals experiencing and resisting them, and to enable this theory to reconsider the real people in real places as co-authors in the production of critical knowledge oriented towards the progressive transformation of security. By allowing us to focus on the ground-level of politics, ethnography represents a quintessential tool with which to start thinking about how security as emancipation can engage with the practice of security from the bottom-up. In spite of that, ethnography by itself is not enough.

Engaging with practices require a substantive level of engagement with the actors through they are carried, but also a solid understanding of the formal and informal rules that structure their actions and relations. A critical and emancipatory analysis of practice not only needs a particular method but also a theoretical vocabulary through which it can systematize current security practices, unpack the power relations through which they become accepted as something natural and necessary and, at the same time, lay bare how they are linked to the struggles and insecurities of real people in real places. The incorporation of ethnographic methods into security as emancipation thus needs to be supplemented by a critical vocabulary that can help us to systematize these relations. In brief, this theory still requires a set of thinking tools with which it can unveil more consistently how certain political assumptions are translated and shape current security practices and how these, in turn, are implicated in the lives of real people in real places. Identifying these thinking tools and integrating them into the theoretical framework of security as emancipation is the goal of the remaining chapter.

## **4.2. Practice thinking and Pierre Bourdieu**

In its current configuration, the immanent critique offered by security as emancipation neglects the everyday activities through which security arrangements are authorized and their underlying assumptions are translated from theory to practice. As a result, it is unable to unpack the conditions that make security possible and to demonstrate how current security practices contribute to reinforcing or reducing the insecurity of real people in real places. This reduces its capacity to provide a critical analysis, assessment, and reconsideration of security. Incorporating insights from the practice turn into security as emancipation can offer some important opportunities to correct this problem. Seeking to pave the ground for that, this section introduces some of the core elements in the theory of practice developed by Pierre Bourdieu. The argument in this section will focus on the key concepts from his theoretical repertoire: habitus, field, doxa, and capital. The following sections explore how these thinking tools have been mobilized to advance the practice turn in security studies and international relations and, finally, assesses how they can extend the analytical, normative, and transformative potential of security as emancipation.

### ***4.2.1. Bourdieu and the theory of practice***

While educated in philosophy, it was in sociology that Pierre Bourdieu emerged and became considered one of the most important social thinkers of the twentieth-century. His practice approach was oriented by three main principles that, to some extent, are also shared by security as emancipation. First, it aimed to develop a theory of practice able to unmask the mechanisms of symbolic domination, that is, the role of symbolic systems in normalizing and reproducing social differences (Bourdieu, 1979). Second, it was concerned with the conditions of possibility for the production, authority, and autonomy of social scientific knowledge (Bourdieu, 2008). Third, it set out to reconceptualize the role and purpose of the intellectual in the public and political life by promoting collaborative modes of inquiry that could help to reveal and redress social inequalities and injustices (Burawoy, 2008). These three underlying principles provided the ground for development of some thinking tools that are particularly suited to engage with and systematize everyday social practices from a critically oriented perspective (Leander, 2008).

More importantly though, his theory of practice speaks directly to the problems faced by the immanent critique of security articulated by security as emancipation. First of which, instead assessing existing social arrangement by moving from the top-down, by focusing upon discourses and texts, a Bourdieusian engagement starts from the bottom-up. It reconceptualizes practices not as the outcome of policy, but rather as the entry point to understand the conditions that make them possible and unearth the set of political assumptions upon which they are grounded. From this perspective, it is by engaging with the actors that are involved in carrying out certain social practices that it is possible to unpack the underlying political interests that are being materialized through their reproduction. Second, and following from that, they allow security as emancipation to avoid framing existing security discourse as stable and coherent wholes, wherein the link between political theory and security policies is linear and straightforward. By reconceiving security as a field of struggle, the thinking tools provided by Bourdieu can help this theory to better grasp the relational character of existing security practices, engage the multiplicity of actors and interests that are involved in current security arrangements, and recognize their asymmetrical position when it comes to define what should be secured, how, by whom, and for what purpose. This can make emancipatory security thinking better equipped to understand the ongoing transformation of contemporary security arrangements, how these are reflected in the everyday practices through which security is pursued, and how the latter contribute to improve or reduce the well-being of real people in real places.

Importantly, the ideas put forward by Bourdieu are not exactly methods of research, that is, strategies with which to collect and interpret information. Instead, they are better understood as thinking tools or concepts that are particularly tailored to help us unveil the set of social rules and relations that structure social practices within different fields of social life, such as education, culture, or photography. The remaining section will focus on four key thinking tools around which the Bourdieusian theory of practice is structured: habitus, field, doxa, and capital. The first directs our attention to subjective assumptions and predispositions of the actors that interact in a particular field of practice. The second and third take us to understand the set of explicit and implicit assumptions that govern their relations. The third illuminates the type of material and symbolic resources that dictate the power and authority of different actors within a given field of practice.

#### ***4.2.2. Habitus and social practices***

The concept of *habitus* is one of the most important thinking tools offered by the practice theory of Bourdieu. It seeks to overcome the dualism between the dominant explanations of social action and their focus on either structures or agents. From a structuralist position, the behaviour of social actors is entirely determined by the structures within which he acts. From a humanist perspective, social actions are the product of an actor's will and intention. While the first leads to a focus on material and ideational structures that neglects the influence of agents upon action, the second leads to a methodological individualism that separates agency from the context within which action takes place. Basically, structuralism generates an objectivist stance wherein material reality exists outside the human mind and humanism creates a subjectivist perspective wherein there is no reality outside it.

The notion of habitus results from a synthesis of both perspectives. It posits that social practices emerge from both a subjective dimension concerning the individual and an objective dimension concerning the broader structure wherein such practices take place. The habitus helps us to recognize that while social structures exert an impact over the subject, the subject also takes an active role in the constitution of social structures. It is defined as:

a system of durable, transposable dispositions which, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operation necessary in order to attain them (Bourdieu, 1990: 53).

According to Bourdieu, it is the habitus that orders social practices. On the one hand, it functions as a 'structuring structure:' it orients the practices and perceptions of the actors in that it both constrains and enables certain courses of action. On the other, it is also a 'structured structure:' it results from the social background of an actor, in terms of past experiences and relations (Bourdieu, 1990: 131). Simply put, the habitus of an actor emerges from the previous social settings in which the actor was formed which, in turn, will delineate the limits of what he or she considers as expectable and acceptable in terms of action. According to Bourdieu, these unspoken assumptions are bodily incorporated and unconsciously internalized by the actors as a result of their

previous experiences in ways that constrain action without being necessarily perceptible. In his words:

The *habitus*, a product of history, produces individual and collective practices - more history - in accordance with the schemes generated by history. It ensures the active presence of past experiences, which, deposited in each organism in the form of schemes of perception, thought and action, tend to guarantee the 'correctness' of practices and their constancy over time, more reliably than all formal rules and explicit norms (Bourdieu, 1990: 54).

In that sense, the habitus cannot be considered as something exclusive to an actor but rather something specific to a broader group of people. Certain groups tend to share a similar habitus when they undergo a similar process of socialization that produces a collective tendency to behave and perceive the world in a similar way. The similarities of the habitus within a group thus reflects the homogeneities in their conditions of existence, their past background, future expectations, and present position within a given social field. As such, the habitus is not only crucial to orienting social practices, but also a key mechanism of social differentiation. This is because the habitus reflects the link between the subjective dispositions of individuals and the objective positions that they hold within broader social structures. Hence, subordinate and dominant groups tend to share a similar set of predispositions, a similar sense set of incorporated assumptions regarding the limits of what is possible, expected, and acceptable in terms of action. However, the habitus is not something static and pre-given but the product of the successive processes through which individuals were formed and socialized.

To sum up, the concept of habitus thus dissolves the idea of action as being either the product of social structures or individual agency. It reconceives social practices as the combination of subconscious dispositions that aggregate both the individual trajectory of social actor and the collective trajectory of a social field. While the first refers to the social background of someone and the predispositions that were developed in that process, the second refers to the set of formal and informal rules that govern the social sphere wherein the individual acts.

More importantly, this concept can enable security as emancipation to offer a more refined understanding of the perceptions, assumptions, and interactions of different actors with the field of security. Instead of merely asking what are the actors involved in dominant and alternative security practices, this theory can investigate: How do the

different sets of actors involved in carrying out existing policies perceive security? How do these different actors interact and relate to each other? To which extent do different actors share a similar understanding of security and how to achieve it? What are the differences between the predispositions of dominant and subordinate groups of actors within the field of security? How have these actors been socialized into this particular forms of perceiving security? In other words, rather than seeing existing practices as the natural outcome of theoretical assumptions and discourse, the notion of habitus can allow an emancipatory critique to see existing practices as the product of relations through which actors are socialized into existing security arrangements and come to understand their role within it as something necessary and natural. In that sense, it can strengthen the analytical capacity of this theory to deconstruct the contingent and intersubjective character of existing security practices and unveil the assumptions upon which these are justified by the different actors responsible for carrying them out.

#### ***4.2.3. Doxa and the field of practice***

If the habitus foregrounds social practices, it is the idea of *field* that captures the broader social context wherein practices take place. Different from a structure, a field is a relational space that does not exist outside the set of norms and interactions that make it possible in the first place. Whereas the notion of structure seeks to capture society as a whole, the notion of field seeks to differentiate between the different social spaces that constitute society and which, consequently, structure the possibilities for practices. A social field is thus neither an organization, institution, a class or a social group but a relational space organized by a similar set of rules and ideas and governed by one or more specific forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1993; 1995). As Bourdieu writes

In analytic terms, a field may be defined as a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions. These positions are objectively defined, in their existence and the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions, by their present and potential situation (*situs*) in the structure of the distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field, as well as by their objective relation to other positions (domination, subordination, homology, etc.) (Bourdieu and Wacquant: 1992: 72-73).

Importantly, the field, any field, is always a field of struggle wherein actors compete for the forms of capital that are most valued within that space. These struggles are both about the production and accumulation of valued forms of capital and struggles for the redefinition of the types of capital most valued within that context.<sup>2</sup> As such, the relations between different actors in a field are not horizontal but always vertical and, consequently, hierarchical. These struggles take place between those in a dominant position with those in a subordinate position. The different hierarchical positions of the actors are determined by the amounts of valued capital that they possess. It is by accumulating the types of capital valued within a specific field that actors can increase their authority within it and thus, their position within the hierarchy of power (Swartz, 1997: 117-142).

Each field is governed by a certain set of implicit and explicit rules that orients and constrains the behaviour of actors, the *doxa*. The *doxa* refers to the taken for granted assumptions or the informal norms and tacit knowledge shared by all the actors within the field regarding the forms of capital valued and the mechanism by which actors can struggle for them within a certain field (Bourdieu, 1990: 69). Importantly, these norms normally reflect the interests of those in a higher hierarchical position (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1994: 15). Accepting the *doxa* is thus a precondition to allow an actor to enter a given field of practice. As Bourdieu (1990: 68) suggests:

Practical faith is the condition of entry that every field tacitly imposes, not only by sanctioning and debarring those who would destroy the game, but by so arranging things, in practice, that the operations of selecting and shaping new entrants (rites of passage, examinations, etc.) are such as to obtain from them that undisputed, pre-reflexive, naive, native compliance with the fundamental presuppositions of the field which is the very definition of *doxa*.

Like the *habitus*, the *doxa* of a given field is not something fixed and definitive. Rather, it results from previous struggles and historical practices that lead to the stabilization of shared assumptions within a given sphere of interaction. In brief, fields are

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<sup>2</sup> The field is relatively autonomous from other fields. That is, the structure and hierarchy of each field can only be challenged by its own mechanisms. The educational, artistic, religious, or cultural fields and so on control the types of capital valued within it and control their mechanisms of struggle. This does not mean that other fields cannot use similar mechanisms of struggle and control, or domination and subversion. Rather, it suggests that in each of these fields these mechanisms take a different form because they are linked to a particular configuration of capital. As fields increase their autonomy from other fields, they also develop their control over the valued types of capital and the mechanisms of struggle.

relational and hierarchical spaces, semi-autonomous from other fields, ordered by a distinctive formal and informal rules and assumptions, and wherein the different positions of the actors within it depend on the types of capital that they possess and the types of capital that are valued by the field.

Incorporating these thinking tools can also strengthen the capacity of security as emancipation to offer a critique of existing security practices. At the analytical level, they allow it to ask what are the shared rules or principles that dominate the field of security? How have they evolved? How do they relate to particular actors? What does the evolution of these rules tell us about the actors that have been authorized to enter into the field of security and the ways in which some of them have rapidly achieved an increasing authority to define the security threats, referents, and practices? How have they challenged the authority of traditional security actors and, in contrast, how have traditional security actors maintained their authority within a field structured by different rules? To which extent have these changes in the broader rules contributed to forbid other actors to enter the field even if their conception of security was more attuned to the interests of the most vulnerable? In sum, the notions of field and doxa can allow security as emancipatory to better recognize the hierarchical relationship that exists between different conceptions of security and the actors that promote them, and to investigate the processes through which certain conceptions and practices of security become dominant whilst others, upholding a stronger emancipatory potential, come to be marginalized.

#### ***4.2.4. Capital and symbolic power***

The notion of *capital* is the glue that holds together the concepts of habitus and field. In practice terms, this concept resulted from three theoretical moves enacted by Bourdieu (1998). The first was to consider that an interest in power was something transversal to every social field of social and political life. For him, the fundamental problem of traditional attempts to reveal the conditions of exploitation lies in their narrow understanding of capital that, by confining the interest in profit and accumulation to the economic sphere, implicitly reinforces that which it seeks to subvert, that is, capitalism. In contrast with the conventional assumptions of economic and social thinking, he posits that the interest in profit and accumulation underpins not only economic action but every form of social action. As a result, he points that it is

impossible to account for the structure and functioning of the social world unless one reintroduces capital in all its forms and not solely in the one form recognized by economic theory (Bourdieu, 1986: 241).

The second move was reconsidering the notion of interest. To Bourdieu, while practices are always invested with an interest in the maximization of power, interests are not necessarily something rational and utilitarian grounded upon conscious calculations. Rather, interests are pre-reflexive strategies embedded within the habitus of the actors and structured by the doxa, or the taken for granted assumptions about the forms of capital valued in a field. An interest is thus a tacit pre-disposition to act in a certain way. Thus, even if every action is interest-oriented, the interests orienting a certain action are not pre-given nor pre-determined. Rather, they result from the subjective dispositions of the actor and its objective position within the field.

The third move was to expand the notions of capital beyond material resources. For Bourdieu, action can be vested with an interest in the accumulation of both material and symbolic resources. This requires broadening the idea of capital to include not only economic but also cultural, social, scientific and other potential forms of capital. Whereas the first refers to the traditional notion of money and material property, cultural capital can be manifest in different forms. It can take the form of embodied dispositions that individuals accumulate and incorporate through past activities, material objects in terms of cultural goods and services such as paintings or books, and institutional recognitions such as academic titles. Social capital, in turn, refers to the social networks that confer authority to actor based on the collective capital of the network, such as nobility, family, or clan (Bourdieu, 1986).

Simply, capital is power and thus the basis for social stratification. It is by broadening the meaning of capital to include every other form of interested action that it becomes possible to grasp the role of symbolic, that is non-physical, mechanisms reproducing social hierarchies and thus relations of domination and subordination. By successfully accumulating the forms of capital valued in a field, actors also accumulate authority within it, and, consequently symbolic capital, or symbolic power. To Bourdieu, it is symbolic power that warrants an actor with the capacity to shape the doxa by providing him or her with the legitimacy to impose the tacit norms and dominant schemes of perception within a given field. In other words, symbolic power is the capacity to delineate the symbolic systems through which social actions and relations are

perceived and structured within a field (Bourdieu, 1991). The result of exercising symbolic power is, in most cases, symbolic violence, a form of violence in which those who are the subject of domination not only fail to recognize but also take an active part in its reproduction.

To conclude, Bourdieu's theory of practice was structured around three core ideas. Through the notion of habitus, he sought to capture social action as a cognitive and embodied structured structure that is shaped by the previous experiences of actors, and as a structuring structure that helps to constitute the field of social relations. Through the concept of field, he intended to map the different social spheres that compose the social and within which social relations take place, as well as the explicit and implicit rules that govern them. Finally, with the idea of capital he aimed to unpack the stakes that guide social action, the objective positions of different actors in the hierarchy of power and, more importantly, the symbolic mechanisms through which power relations are structured and reproduced within a given field.

These ideas can open new avenues in the capacity of security as emancipation to detect fault lines and contradictions within existing security practices, reveal how real people in real places take part in their authorization and, in doing so, illuminate potential ways in which practices that are deemed violent and exclusionary can be challenged and subverted. Before discussing that, however, it is necessary to demonstrate how the practice theory of Bourdieu helped to advance the practice turn in the study of security and international politics. This will be the focus of the following section.

### **4.3. Practice thinking, security and international politics**

In the previous sections, the argument explored the fragilities of security as emancipation when engaging in the immanent critique of existing security arrangements and then introduced some ideas that are central to the practice-oriented sociology of Pierre Bourdieu. This section sets out to explore the practice turn in the study of world politics and security. It illustrates how some of these ideas contributed to advancing the critical agenda by allowing it to move beyond the dominant focus on discourse of policy-makers and engage with the everyday actions and interactions of practitioners. In doing so, this section paves the ground to show how integrating these

thinking tools into the theoretical portfolio of security as emancipation can strengthen its ability to offer a critical analysis and normative assessment of current security practices and investigate how they are intertwined to real people in real places.

#### ***4.3.1. The practice turn and International Relations***

Similar to the ethnographic turn, the practice turn also helped to bring the study of security and international politics closer to the world. But in contrast with the former, in this case the focus was not placed upon the everyday actions of vulnerable groups and individuals. Instead, it explored the routine interactions of diplomats, bureaucrats, experts, and other public and private actors in charge of crafting, negotiating, and implementing policies at the local, national, regional, and global levels. Strongly linked to constructivist and post-structuralist approaches, the practice turn aims to provide a more nuanced perspective of the ways certain norms and hierarchies are constituted, stabilized, and reproduced through the everyday actions and relations of different professional groups. The turn towards practice started from a widespread dissatisfaction with the overwhelming tendency to reduce practices to discourses and, consequently, ground research almost exclusively upon the analysis upon the public states of policy-makers and the official documents of institutions. For practice thinkers, discourses are something important but also insufficient to fully understand the conditions that make possible existing social arrangements, but also their transformation, or even collapse. This speaks directly to the problems identified in the immanent critique offered by security as emancipation.

However, and similar to other critical turns, the practice turn is not a straightforward or coherent movement. In fact, in recent years this agenda brought together an eclectic group of scholars whose scholarship was oriented by different empirical interests and contrasting theoretical underpinnings and which, more importantly, often disagree on the meaning of social practices and, consequently, on how they can be researched (cf. Adler and Pouliot, 2011; Bueger and Gadinger, 2018; Lechner and Frost, 2018). In spite of that, there are at least three common markers that characterize most of the work inspired by the practice turn. First, all of them take practice as the starting point for research. Practice-oriented researchers adopt a relational approach to ontology which conceive social practices as the core unit of analysis (Bueger and Gadinger, 2015). Second, and following from that, they avoid imposing a predetermined set of

assumptions about the forces shaping the practices being researched. For them, it is social practice that gives meaning to theory and not the other way around. Third, they place the focus on practitioners. Practice-oriented research takes certain groups of professionals, such as scientists, experts, lawyers, academics, or diplomats as the main focus of research (Neumann, 2005; Frowd, 2014).

Practice-oriented research thus starts from the ground-up. But instead of placing the analytical focus on regular individuals, it begins by engaging with certain groups of professionals placed between policy-makers and policy-takers. In short

Practice theory involves observing the practices of others, talking about these practices, participating in and reflecting upon them all at once. The aim is not to reduce and present abstract explanations of social phenomena, but to come to a deeper understanding of how the world works in and through practices (Bueger and Gadinger, 2018: 4).

At the meta-theoretical and normative levels, the practice turn is strongly aligned within the critical project, even if some authors see it as a middle ground between rationalist and reflexive approaches to world politics (Adler and Pouliot, 2011). First, while often combining positivist and post-positivist methodologies, practice-oriented researchers reject the naturalist idea that by utilizing the methods of the natural sciences we can produce the same type of insights about the social world. Second, their aim is not to identify a set of universal laws and causal relations that can explain human behaviour. Instead, all of them seek to understand the social and historical conditions through which certain practices emerge, come to be normalized, and change over time. Third, they share a commitment to understanding the role of these practices in ordering social and political life and therefore in challenging or reproducing existing hierarchies of power (Bigo, 2011). That is, they seek to understand how power actually works in and through practice.

The work of Bourdieu has been central to the practice turn in International Relations (Adler-Nissen, 2013). It provided an important source of inspiration for those authors seeking to de-essentialize the international as a distinctive object of study (Ashley, 1984). By foregrounding social practices rather than discourses, his thinking tools allowed for a more systematic appreciation of the ways in which the division between the inside and the outside was enacted through a series of practices and professionals

(Bigo, 2002). It also allowed scholars to challenge the traditional narrative concerning the anarchical nature of the international and, instead, reveal the function of social practices such as diplomacy or post-war intervention in the normalization of hierarchies at the international level (Adler-Nissen and Pouliot, 2014). Moreover, his work also inspired a growing concern with reflexivity among critical scholarship. This literature has been particularly concerned with unpacking the conditions that make possible dissent in the discipline and, concomitantly, forging a deeper understanding of the ways in which subjective predispositions, institutional forces, and the broader political context condition the practice of research (Hamati-Ataya, 2011; Eagleton-Pierce, 2011).

#### ***4.3.2. Pierre Bourdieu and Security Studies***

The thinking tools of Pierre Bourdieu have been particularly useful in developing and more refined understanding of the social construction of security and the multiplicity of actors involved in this process. Before the practice turn, the construction of security was mostly approached from three perspectives: constructivism, poststructuralism, and securitization theory. Despite some important differences between them, they shared at least two distinctive characteristics. First, adopting a discursive conception of practice. Whether concerned with international norms, political speeches, policy documents, books, or images, all of them were essentially preoccupied with discourse and the ways certain conceptions of security were publicly framed, contested, and authorized. Second, they often placed the focus on states and policy-makers. While these were often contrasted and juxtaposed with the narratives of other actors, the voices of political elites were largely considered as the privileged entry point to engage in the deconstruction of security (Hansen, 2006). Critical scholarship thus understood the construction of security through a linguistic, elitist and decisionist lenses.

The thinking tools of Pierre Bourdieu allowed for the development of a more nuanced, bottom-up, and sociological approach of the construction of security (Bigo, 2008). This had important consequences for security research. First, reconceptualizing security as a field of struggle wherein different actors compete for the authority to redefine the doxa and the valued types of capital, these tools allowed scholarship to understand that the construction of security is not a linear and straightforward process but the product of competition as well as cooperation between different actors (Beerli,

2017). Far from sharing the same view of security, actors such as private companies, military personnel, or border guards often advocate a different understanding of what security means and how it should be pursued and compete to impose their approach as the dominant one within the broader field (Bigo, 2014). The thinking tools provided by Bourdieu also proved particularly useful for those seeking to understand the creation of new security agencies, allowing them to reveal the strategies and practices through which they entered and increased their authority within the field of security (Mérand, 2010).

The focus on everyday security practices enabled understanding the ways in which the authority of different security actors increases or reduces over time. For instance, they became capable of disclosing how traditional security actors such as military alliances became increasingly involved in operations outside their traditional scope of action, such as humanitarian assistance, or the strategies through which private companies became legitimately accepted as legitimate security actors (Abrahamsen and Williams, 2011). On the other hand, it also enabled scholars to appreciate how the boundaries between the external and internal dimensions of security became increasingly blurred, as actors such as the police started to be involved in managing international security whilst defense forces increased their role in the management of security at the domestic level (Bigo, 2006).

At the analytical level, these thinking tools enabled an expansion in the scope of analysis from a focus on the discursive strategies through which elites defined security threats and referents towards an engagement with the diversity of bureaucratic and institutional practices and actors through which the constitution of these threats and referents could become intelligible and governable in the first place. In that sense, scholars started to place a strong emphasis on the socialization strategies through which certain conceptions and practices of security circulated and became accepted as necessary and legitimate (Frowd, 2014). This helped them to go beyond stressing that the concept of security was broadened and deepened and, instead, provide a more rigorous analysis of the assumptions and forms of knowledge upon which alternative conceptions of security relied as well as the security practices that they promoted and their effects.

All of this speaks directly with the difficulties of security as emancipation in offering a critique to security that is capable not only to better unpack the multiplicity of actors, relations, and assumptions that are embedded into existing security arrangements, but also to provides with a more systematic investigation of the ways in which existing security arrangements are linked to well-being of real people in real places.

#### **4.4. Practice theory and security as emancipation**

The previous sections explored some difficulties of security as emancipation when providing a critique and reconsideration of existing security practices. Following from that, it introduced some of main thinking tools of Pierre Bourdieu and explained its influence over the practice turn in the study of security and international politics. This section assesses the potential insights that can emerge from incorporating the thinking tools of practice-oriented research into security as emancipation. It explores the extent to which they can help this theory to offer a more robust analysis and assessment of existing security arrangements and make it better equipped to unpack their conditions of possibility, assumptions, modifications, as well as its implications upon real people in real places. After doing so, it problematizes how security as emancipation can open new avenues for the practice turn by supplementing the overwhelming concern with domination with a greater attention to resistance, subversion, and emancipation.

##### ***4.4.1. From language and political theory to the conditions of possibility***

An incomplete engagement with the critique of existing security arrangements creates some important problems for security as emancipation. In its current configuration, this theory grounds the assessment of dominant security practices in a comparative analysis and normative evaluation of their assumptions, actors, and policies. However, the focus upon competing discourses of security results in a limited understanding of the conditions that make existing security practices possible. By overlooking all that is in-between policy-makers and policy-takers, such as the groups of professionals that often negotiate existing conceptions of security and are responsible for implementing them into practice, emancipatory analyses of security end up taking existing security policies for granted without questioning their conditions of possibility.

An example of this is the work of Eli Stamnes (2004), who put forward a framework to evaluate and reconsider the emancipatory potential of current security arrangements. For her, deconstructing security means deepening existing security arrangements by contrasting their assumptions with their practical implications, while reconstruction means evaluating the potential of existing alternatives. Using this framework to explore the peace operations in Macedonia, she points that some of the activities carried out by the UN can be considered as emancipatory in that they reduced constraints to recognition and therefore improved human well-being and development in the region. However, her argument is impaired by the failure to take into consideration the institutional processes and power relations that made possible for the UN to carry out such practices in the first place. That is, it does not bring into question how exactly the external-led intervention in Macedonia came to be considered as something necessary and legitimate by both domestic and international actors. In doing so, it ends up taking the existing security policies and practices for granted.

This raises some issues. Security as emancipation rejects any form of instrumental reasoning. For this theory, the means and ends of security cannot be considered as two different things but rather mutually constitutive parts of a broader whole: means are ends in themselves (Booth, 2007: 255). As a result, the emancipatory potential of current security policies must take into consideration, not only its practical implications, but also the ideas, relations, and practices through which they were made possible in the first place (Booth, 2007: 429-441). Given that social practices are always the product of symbolic forms of violence and inequality, any emancipatory critique and reconsideration of security must be able to demonstrate that the means through which security is made possible is aligned with the ends that it seeks to promote. However, this part of the puzzle is entirely neglected in Stamnes' work.

Using critical literature that also deals with NATO, it is possible to illustrate the openings that are created by incorporating the thinking tools of Bourdieu into an emancipatory critique of existing security arrangements and the practices that they promote. An example is provided by Jef Huysmans (2002), who researched the conditions enabling a growing involvement of NATO in humanitarian crisis. Focusing on Kosovo, he argues that in order to become legitimately accepted as a humanitarian actor, the agency utilized practices such as promoting workshops with humanitarian

actors or creating research centres concerned with humanitarian affairs. Since the end of Cold War reduced the significance of NATO in the governance of European security, its engagement in humanitarian missions also functioned as a strategy to recover its status. That is, entering the humanitarian terrain was not something natural and necessary for NATO. Rather, it was a means to which it could reassert its continued relevance within a new security context wherein security became increasingly associated with the protection of human rights and the provision of humanitarian assistance. In contrast with the emancipation-inspired work, this offers a much more nuanced and in-depth analysis of current security practices. An analysis that goes beyond asking what are traditional security organizations doing within the context of humanitarian assistance, and instead investigates how their involvement and intervention in that context was rendered possible in the first place.

In addition to that, privileging the practices of security actors can also enable us to get a stronger grasp on the evolving link between the theory and practice of security within this context. This is central for the deepening of security, but which the focus on discourse was unable to unpack to the fullest extent. For instance, Trine Villumsen Berling (2013) built on these thinking tools to investigate how the end of Cold War not only reduced the importance of military capital in governing security relations, it also increased the role of scientific capital in the governance of European security. For her, this not only challenged the hegemonic position of NATO, it also changed the relationship between theory and practice of European security, as new actors became involved in contesting its legitimate meanings and means of production. In a context wherein security were increasingly associated with culture and human rights, as previously noted, new think tanks and other institutions such as the EU and the OSCE achieved a privileged position by holding the types of capital through which the new conception of European security could be developed and pursued (Gheciu, 2008).

In this case, a practice-oriented critique of security does not only ask what are the assumptions that underpin existing security arrangements. In fact, it challenges the idea that there is a clear and straightforward relationship between political theory and security practice and, instead, stresses the ways in which both are mutually constituted. Simply, it provides emancipation-oriented researchers with the ability to investigate the evolving assumptions underlying existing security organizations. It enables this theory to show how the discourses through which they are articulated are not merely

the product of objective changes in the character of security threats. Rather, they are the product of a struggle for the authority to define what is to be secured, from what, by whom, and for what purpose. The shift in the underlying assumptions of NATO reflected a broader shift in the types of capital valued within the field of security and which, in turn, prompted a readaptation in the ways this agency positions itself within the broader field of security. Once again, instead of taking the humanitarian role of this agency for granted and assessing the ends resulting from this involvement, a practice-oriented analysis would also assess the processes and means that made this type of involvement possible in the first place.

Third, incorporating these practice-orienting thinking tools can also enable security as emancipation to grasp more fully how the shifts in the meaning of security not only result in different security practices, but also involve practices through which these can be translated into different context. For instance, Michael Williams and Iver Neumann (2000) argued that the renewed salience of NATO was made possible by placing questions of culture and identity at the heart of European security. For them, this was what enabled the agency to reformulate its political mission from protecting the West from external military threats towards protecting it from social and political instability within its current and potential members. This, in turn, allowed for the transformation of NATO which shifted from an alliance grounded on pragmatic interests to a security community underpinned by normative values. By linking culture with security, the agency reinforced its role in European security and justified its continued political significance, but now in terms of protecting the liberal-cum-Western community from fragmentation. What practice-oriented thinking allows a critique of security to do, is to unpack how exactly that process unfolded, that is, to which extent was the change in the conception of security upheld by this agency made possible the transformation of security practices.

This was illustrated by the work of Alexandra Gheciu (2005a, 2005b), who explored the practices through which NATO socialized former Soviet countries into the liberal and democratic security community. Her analysis identified three dominant modes of socialization: teaching, persuasion, and role-playing. Teaching was pursued through a series of educational activities that could help domestic societies to forge a consensus regarding what was acceptable in terms of both domestic and international behaviour. Persuasion encouraged policy-makers to adopt a series of legislative and institutional

reforms that reflected those ideas, and role-playing helped to reshape the perceptions of future leaders and military personnel. By using the thinking tools of Bourdieu, she was able to empirically demonstrate the practices through which NATO socialized former communist states into the liberal community by inscribing liberal ideals in their political discourse, implementing legislative changes that reflect them, and altering their behaviour at the domestic and international level. Simply, the agency preserved its political salience by becoming involved in the formation of liberal democratic societies, which required expanding the security practices of NATO to include not only humanitarian assistance but also cultural promotion and civilizational protection.

Overall, these examples show how, by privileging practice as an entry point for research, security as emancipation is better equipped to provide a critique of existing security practices that can, in turn pave the way for strengthen its ability to assess them and, when necessary, evaluate the possibilities that already exist for its transformation. First, instead of taking existing policies at face value, a practice-oriented engagement can allow this theory to better understand the set of strategies that make existing security arrangements possible. Second, it opens the possibility of seeing this not simply as the product of a shift in the meaning of security, but as the outcome of struggles for the authority to define the meaning of security and the most appropriate modes of pursuing it. In doing so, this theory is better prepared to investigate not only the extent to which the assumptions of security actors constrain their practices, but also how their pragmatic needs contribute to reshape their underlying interests and conception of security. Finally, by reconceiving security as field of practice, these thinking tools allow this theory to investigate empirically, the everyday strategies and interactions through which the conceptions of security of security actors are translated into specific context and come to authorize specific practices of carrying out security. In that sense, with the thinking tools suggested, emancipation security thinking will be better prepared to assess not only the ends of security, that is the practices and implications of existing security arrangements, but also the means by which they are made possible in the first place.

#### ***4.4.2. Linking security practices with the subjects of insecurity***

Security as emancipation seeks to provide a critique and reconsideration of existing security practices grounded upon the struggles and insecurities of real people in real

places. This involves both demonstrating the problems of current security practices as well as assessing the alternatives that already exist to replace them. But while the engagement of emancipatory security thinking with the insecurity real people in real places has been carried out from the bottom-up, the immanent critique of security has been mostly approached from the top-down. Up until now, the literature inspired by this approach has been overwhelmingly focused in contrasting competing discourses about security, unpacking their assumptions, and assessing the policies that they promote. This, however, has not only meant that this literature has failed to provide a detailed analysis of the actors engaged in conceptualizing and implementing security, but also to demonstrate the concrete ways in which their activities contribute to curbing or reinforcing the insecurities of real people in real places. This blunts the capacity of this approach to demonstrate how exactly current security practices and policies have contributed to marginalize certain groups or individuals.

Crucially, this represents another gap in the immanent critique offered by this theory which constrains not only its ability to judge existing security arrangements but also to assess their emancipatory potential. This tendency is illustrated, for instance, in the work of Ali Bilgic (2013) who developed a framework to study irregular migration in the European context. Similar to the previous framework, this also provides insufficient detail regarding the deconstruction of security. Specifically, it takes for granted the connection between existing practices of border security and the insecurities that afflict thousands of irregular migrants. In fact, while showing that existing security policies are articulated upon a series of problematic assumptions about migration and even suggesting that they naturally result in problematic policies to border security, his analysis does not explore how those assumptions and practices were made possible nor how they take part in creating exclusion and perpetuating the insecurity of protection-seekers. That is, how is it that the ideas that underpin European migration policy are translated from theory to practice and become directly implicated in reproducing an unequal state of affairs? In this case, contrasting the narratives of European migration policy with the insecure journeys and livelihoods of migrants is a powerful way to convey the message but it does not necessarily show the ways in which the two are mutually implicated.

The thinking tools of practice thinking can be particularly useful to help security as emancipation to tackle this problem. By moving the focus from elites and policy-

documents into the routines of security professionals, they allow for a more nuanced understanding of the connections between the assumptions that make up security policy and the practices that normalize insecurity (Balzacq et al., 2010). As the literature on the governance of border security suggests, taking a practice-oriented approach to migration can help us to ask: How do certain theoretical and political assumptions are enacted through the everyday practices of security professionals? How exactly are the current security practices and practitioners implicated in the marginalization of certain groups and individuals? Through which processes and relations are new practices of security authorized? Building a critique of security that starts from rather than discourse and theory means that the focus should be placed upon:

the practices of the plurality of power-brokers involved in the securing of borders. Border security is addressed from the angle of the everyday practices of those who are appointed to carry it out; considering border security as practice is essential for shedding light on contemporary problematizations of security (Côté-Boucher et al., 2014: 195).

But how can this strengthen the immanent critique of security provided by security as emancipation? First, incorporating elements from practice thinking allows us to understand how different conceptions of security are enacted differently and which in doing so constitute different forms of insecurity. An example is the work of Didier Bigo (2014), who explored the different security practices that compose the field of European border control. For him, this field incorporates three groups of security professionals, each of which understand and enact border security differently. The first is the military universe through which borders are militarized, patrolled and contained thereby forging a metaphoric wall across the Mediterranean. The second is the universe of border guards, for whom mobility is not to be contained but managed as security is enacted through retention centres, biometric systems, and passports. The third is the universe of information technology specialists. Distant from the physical border, here the goal of security is neither control or management but to prevent and anticipate potential risks and dangers through sophisticated software and large databases (Bigo, 2008).

More crucially however, what this work shows is that it is only by engaging with different professionals and practices through which security is enacted that we can

understand how they contribute, in practice, to marginalize certain groups and individuals. For instance, in the third universe security practitioners are not concerned with what migrants are doing, as the military, or who they are, as border guards, but rather with what they might do in the future (Amoore, 2011). They work by translating humans and insecurity into numbers and statistics through the enactment of different categories of travellers: normal, abnormal, and banned. The first can cross the border quickly and with minimal control, the second are placed under constant surveillance and often retained, and third are not to cross the border. These distinctions are made by algorithms that collect and organize data in order to anticipate potential security threats. Crucially, enacting them helps to constitute different subjects of security and condition the daily life of all of those crossing the border, by making it smoother for some, putting others under surveillance, and stripping the remaining from their own identity as human beings. The consequences of this are clear, as this last group:

will never see Europe – not because they have already been there and been expelled, but because people ‘like them’, with very similar profiles, have done so. This ‘data-banned’ population is the category of victims within this line of thought of cloudy borders who are the most invisible and simultaneously the most numerous. These people number in the millions. They have been made undesirable in the name of predictions concerning their future behaviour, predictions that are constructed from the actions of others. They become prisoners of data-double associations and virtual anticipations (Bigo, 2014: 219).

However, security practices do not emerge out of nothing. This particular mode of enacting the border and the resulting exclusions also require certain conditions in order to become possible. They are negotiated through a series of processes that, latter, allow them to be implemented into existing security arrangements. As Phillippe Frowd (2014) argues regarding the remaking of border security management in Mauritania, implementing new practices of bordering often requires the active participation of numerous actors and processes through which certain ideas and practices about how to govern the border can be translated from one context to another. There, pedagogical practices such as workshops held two crucial roles. First, they helped to forge a new consensus among different agencies regarding the importance of adopting an integrated approach to border management, which facilitated the adoption and standardization of new bordering practices (Leese, 2018). Second, they facilitated the

transfer of certain knowledges and technologies that were already adopted by developed countries.

This shows that bordering practices that enact security by controlling, managing, or anticipating potential threats are not merely created and implemented. They result from a complex political economy of security actors and practices through which they gradually become accepted as the only possible alternative to deal with an issue. In turn, this helps to consolidate particular conceptions of the nexus between migration and security uniformize the ways in which border security is understood and enacted across the globe. But even that particular vision of how to control and anticipate insecurity at the border had to be accepted and authorized within the broader field of security before it was translated and implemented into that context. Privileging practice as an entry-point for research and seeing the field of security as one of struggle for capital can also help us to shed light into that process and appreciate how certain understandings about how to measure and tackle potential security threats came to be accepted and authorized, before they are implemented into practice. In this regard, one important issue is that the collection of large quantities of data and the use of statistical methods have become increasingly present in the delineation of security policies and practices, thus holding direct impact not only on how security is governed but also on the subjects of security itself (Aue, 2020).

The thinking tools of practice thinking can be particularly helpful in engaging with that process. They allow us to understand how is that numbers and quantitative expertise have become increasingly involved in redefining the agenda of security and the practices through which it is pursued. With Bourdieu, Monica Beerli (2017) demonstrates the mundane struggles that take place between research centers over the monopoly for the production of knowledge on humanitarian insecurity. Focusing on the everyday practices that are enacted by research centers she shows how these struggles often result in the production of documents, statistics, indicators, maps, or datasets. These, in turn, influence the distribution of humanitarian aid, delineate the priorities of humanitarian agencies, shape the practices that will be privileged by external and domestic actors, and produce a certain common sense about certain countries and regions as inherently dangerous and potential sources of threat. Far from providing a neutral and objective analysis of insecurity, these quantitative modes of analysing, measuring, and classifying insecurity result from struggles for epistemic

authority that end up, in turn, normalizing certain places as risky and insecure, reifying them as objects of external-led intervention, and determining the quantity and quality of assistance that they will receive from the international community.

In sum, security as emancipation still demonstrates some difficulties in linking the critique of existing security arrangement with the insecurities of real people in real places. This is something that cannot be achieved by simply contrasting the discourses of powerful elites with the insecurities of vulnerable groups. Incorporating the thinking tools of practice thinking and engaging with the everyday routines and interactions of security professionals can help security as emancipation to better unpack this connection. First, it enables us to unpack the different actors and practices through which contemporary understandings of security are enacted, as well as the types of knowledge, practices, and security understandings through which they differentiate security subjects. Second, it allows us to reveal the inter-institutional dynamics through which these practices are incorporated and socialized into current security arrangements. Third, it allows us to take a step back a detail the minute struggles through which these practices and the underlying conceptions of security emerge and are authorized as legitimate ways of classifying, measuring, and defining the priorities of security policy and practice. Equipped with these tools, therefore, security as emancipation is better prepared to analyse and evaluate security practices, unpack the political assumptions and interests upon which they rely, as well as to identify and assess their practical effects.

#### ***4.4.3. Uncovering the habitus and recognizing misrecognition***

Up until now, the argument focused on showing that incorporating the thinking tools of Bourdieu practice-oriented thinking can strengthen the capacity of security as emancipation to better understand the construction and transformation of existing security practices as well as how they are implicated upon the insecurities of real people in real places. This sub-section broadens that endeavour but also asks how exactly security as emancipation, once equipped with these thinking tools can add something important to extant discussions and, in fact, push it to go further in connecting the insights from critical and pragmatic sociology. It is argued that, by allowing security as emancipation to see security theories as something embodied and not simply as a set of abstract assumptions, the concepts of Bourdieu can shed further

light upon the ways through which abstract ideas are translated into concrete practices that function to reinforce or challenge the current state of affairs. In fact, the concepts of habitus and misrecognition are particularly helpful to grasp how individuals incorporate and normalize particular ideas about the world that subsequently shape their perceptions and condition their behaviour in ways that are not necessarily explicit. This can hold important insights regarding both those responsible for enacting security practices as well as those that are subjected to them.

First, the focus on practices can allow us to understand how certain theoretical assumptions and political interests are embodied in the predispositions and are materialized through the actions of practitioners. By moving the focus away from the discourses of policy-makers and the experiences of policy-takers, practice-oriented engagements enable it to better appreciate how the actors involved in conducting security understand their role in that practice. This is illustrated by the work of Nina Perkowski, whose research argues that despite being key actors in the management of European border security and having contributed for long to the securitization of protection-seekers, the practitioners of Frontex tend to understand and justify their practices mostly in terms of human rights promotion and protection (Neal, 2009). Importantly, she shows that this framing of human rights as the dominant concern of the agency and its practitioners is that which allows them to not only see their work in a positive light (Perkowski, 2018). For them, the work carried by Frontex has been that of saving protection-seekers and securing European citizens. But in addition to that, the humanitarian logic that is both exalted by the institution and incorporated by its practitioners also allows them to reduce their responsibility for human rights violations and place it onto the shoulders of other actors.

In addition to that, practice-oriented thinking can help security to avoid framing the subjects of security as either passive victims of security or actively resisting to its practices. Specifically, the idea of misrecognition provides a potential way to understand the role of the subjugated in reproducing their own conditions of existence. For Bourdieu, symbolic violence is only possible because it is misrecognised as such. While physical violence makes visible the power between actors, symbolic violence dissimulates this relation. It constrains those it affects, but it works exactly because these are accepted as natural and even necessary. This, in turn, makes unequal power relations even more stable and consistent, as they emerge as part of a seemingly natural

state of affairs. Since actors take these social differences for granted, they are less prone to challenge or resist them. Put simply, symbolic violence works through misrecognition. Misrecognition thus refers to the process whereby agents are, to some extent, aware of the truths that underlies their actions within the social order but fail to grasp their role in normalizing the arbitrary distinctions and inequalities that this order produces.

By failing to recognize the arbitrary character of the distinctions ordering social relations, subjects accept and indeed authorize those relations and, in turn, legitimate the negative implications that they create. An excellent example of this in the context of security is the introduction of biometric systems at the airports, including passports and scanners for instance. These new security measures at the airport are conventionally presented as a natural improvement in that they facilitate border crossing and, at the same time, make airports more secure from potential security threats such as terrorist attacks or even pandemics. But these systems also justify the collection of a growing amount of information about the passengers which, in turn, allow for new and often more pervasive forms of management and control by security officers. Most passengers are not only likely to accept but actually welcome these innovations, in that they make their travel swift but also grant them a stronger sense of security. In doing so, they often fail to recognize the social and political implications that go beyond this particular moment. That is, for instance, how these technologies reduce their privacy, authorize the privatization of security, or both rely upon and thus reinforce gendered and racial bias that reinforce violence and discrimination (Stachowitsch and Sachseder, 2019).

This is exactly how misrecognition works. On the one hand, passengers willingly accept these measures as something necessary and legitimate based upon a growing concern with security threats and the need to manage a growing number of travellers. On the other, they are also implicitly accepting the naturalization of a broader regime of global surveillance and the arbitrary forms of violence and exclusion it creates. However, stressing misrecognition does not amount to shifting the blame and responsibility of domination away from the powerful to the powerless. Rather, it creates new openings for judging existing relations of insecurity and allows us to identify potential opportunities for critical intervention and resistance. This is because

it discloses the crucial yet unrecognized assumptions that make the subordinate complicit in their own domination. As Bourdieu (1990: 141) points:

mis-cognition, unaware that it produces what it recognizes, does not want to know that what makes the most intrinsic charm of its object, its charisma, is merely the product of the countless crediting operations through which agents attribute to the object the powers to which they submit. The specific efficacy of subversive action consists in the power to bring to consciousness, and so modify, the categories of thought which help to orient individual and collective practices and in particular the categories through which distributions are perceived and appreciated.

The subversive potential of recognizing misrecognition can have important benefits for security as emancipation. Currently, this theory either sees unequal security arrangements as the exclusive product of powerful elites and policy-makers. Whenever this approach engages with the powerless, it focus mostly upon revealing the insidious effects and implications of those discourses or the ways in which they seek to contest them (Bilgic, 2015). Incorporating this idea can allow it to extend this effort and search for unconscious assumptions that the subjugated take for granted and which, directly or indirectly, make them a crucial part in reproducing their own conditions of existence. In this sense, the notions of habitus and misrecognition enable this theory not only to better dissolve the nexus between theory and practice but also, by seeing theory as something embodied, to turn the body into a potential entry point to transgress the subjective dispositions through which dominant practices are authorized.

Importantly, this opens a path that is yet to be engaged with by the practice-oriented literature in critical security studies (see Bueger and Gadinger, 2018). Up until now, the large majority of works engaging in the practice turn has placed the attention exclusively upon bureaucrats and practitioners. Practice, thus, has been equated with professionals (Bueger and Gadinger, 2015). In contrast, the literature inspired by the ethnographic turn and which was previously explored, has engaged almost exclusively with those systematically placed in a position of insecurity. It is as if as the focus has been reduced to either study victims or perpetrators. This means that there is still important work to be done regarding all that is in-between, such as the broader public upon which the authority of existing security policies and practices and necessary and legitimate. If, in order to be accepted, security practices must be turned into common

sense and their effects become misrecognized, this means that it is also important to understand how exactly that happens and to what extent regular individuals can also contribute to disrupt those practices whenever they are deemed unjust and violent. The latter of which is something that has been frequently pointed as a major limitation in the work of Bourdieu and the broader strand of critical sociology. Specifically, he has been accused of overemphasizing oppression and domination and thus promoting a worldview wherein individuals are seen as passive and powerless victims that are complicit with their own domination. This, in turn, results in a perspective according to which scholars are the exclusive source of critical knowledge that can help to detect forms of symbolic violence and pave the way for their transformation (Latour, 2005, 139).

These limitations have been engaged with and addressed by the work of pragmatic sociologists, such as Luc Boltanski, who expressed an evident concern with renewing the critical potential of emancipation and with foregrounding questions of justice (Boltanski, 2011). His underlying concern is to show that individuals are conscious of structural injustices and inequalities and often place themselves against broader structures and ideologies through which these are reproduced. In contrast to Bourdieu, his aim is exactly to explore the conditions under which this happens, that is, under which conditions do individuals or groups that are concerned with such injustices translate their indignation into individual or collective action that seeks to subvert it. Similar to security as emancipation, pragmatic sociologists also underline the ability of individuals to reflect upon their own conditions of existence and put forward a normative judgement about it. In fact, Boltanski (2011) is clearly concerned with reinvigorating the critical and potentially disruptive value of everyday knowledge and reconceive individuals not simply as subjects of domination but as competent and reflexive actors, that articulate their own theories and modes of critique and are willing to public denounce injustices with the aim of provoking institutional and social changes.

Engaging his work can thus open important possibilities for security as emancipation that speak directly to existing debates within critical security studies. The first of which concerns the emergence of a growing concern with democratizing the critique of security, that is, bringing into question the myth that critique is something exclusive to academic scholarship and, instead, recognize that everyday actors from individuals,

to journalist, and activists enact critique through their everyday practices and relations, often reshaping the limits and possibilities of being critical in the traditional-cum-academic sense (Austin et al., 2019). Given its concern with emancipation and resistance, the theory of security as emancipation is particularly well placed to explore more fully the potential of pragmatic sociology and the ways in which supplements the insights of critical sociology. In other words, this theory can help to bridge the gap between elitist or top-down approaches to practices concerned with the routines and logics of security professionals practitioners with vernacular or bottom-up approaches that concerned with the narratives of common individuals seeking to expose suffering and injustice, and in doing so destabilize the institutions and actors through which these instances are normalized. This would be something important to extant debates. In fact, with few exceptions, Boltanski continues to be largely neglected by the broader field. His ideas, up until now, are yet to be linked to the emancipatory potential of everyday critique or from discussions about the research agenda of critical security studies (Bueger and Gadinger, 2018).

## **Conclusion**

This chapter questioned the tendency of security as emancipation provide an immanent critique of security that does not fully engage with the conditions of possibility, practices, and implications of existing security arrangements. The first section argued that, whilst this theory is underpinned by a concerned with unpacking the relationship between the theory and practice of security, it is yet to systematically engaged with latter. It was pointed that the idea of deepening security should be complemented by a greater attention to the everyday practices and routines of security professionals, through which such ideas are materialized and embedded into existing security configurations. To redress this issue, the chapter suggested that emancipation security thinking could benefit from incorporating some ideas explored in the practice turn. Starting from there, some key concepts of Pierre Bourdieu's theory of practice were introduced: field, capital, habitus, and doxa. The common ground of the practice turn was then explored in the following section, detailing how the engagement with Bourdieu helped security scholarship to advance a more refined understanding of the

role played by security professionals in the construction and reconstruction of existing security arrangements and their underlying assumptions.

The final section assessed the added value that can result from incorporating these thinking tools into the framework of security as emancipation. First, by focusing on traditional security institutions, it was shown that foregrounding practice rather than theory can help this approach to achieve a much more nuanced understanding of the conditions that make certain security discourses and practices emerge as necessary and legitimate in the first place. Second, by looking at migration and border security, it was argued that a more systematic engagement with practitioners can help this theory to better appreciate how security practices and the assumptions upon which they rest contribute to normalize the exclusion and subordination of certain subjects of security. It was then suggested that they allow security as emancipation to grasp the ways in which professionals and regular individuals are complicit in naturalizing dominant conceptions of security and, consequently, reifying the insecurities that they create. Finally, it was pointed that security as emancipation is particularly well positioned to advance the practice turn in that it can provide the backdrop against which to link the insights from critical and pragmatic approaches to practice and, in that sense, balance the attention given to the communities of security with a greater attention to the communities of resistance. In doing so, the practice turn could move beyond the concern with oppression and domination and also engage more frequently with matters of subversion and emancipation in a way that can further the democratization of critique in security studies.

## **5 Security as emancipation and the posthuman turn**

As suggested in the previous chapters, there are still some important issues hampering the critical potential of security as emancipation. Up until now, this thesis explored how this theory could be improved by incorporating ideas from the ethnographic and practice turns in critical security studies. This chapter extends this effort by pushing security as emancipation to engage with the posthuman turn in critical security studies. This unfolds from the previous discussions. Chapter 3 noted that this theory still does not have the necessary tools with which to engage the struggles and insecurities of real people and real places. Chapter 4 argued that, in its current configuration, the immanent critique offered by security as emancipation was unable to assess how these struggles and insecurities are linked to existing security arrangements. Through an engagement with posthuman thinking, Chapter 5 seeks to broaden the capacity of this approach to understand the intertwinement between the human and non-human layers of security politics, that is, between real people and real places.

The argument starts by demonstrating that, whilst seeking to put forward a critical theory of world security, the ability of this theory to deliver upon this promise is hampered by its anthropocentric conception of the world. Given the increasing role of non-human things in current security arrangements, upholding a human-centric vision reduces the ability of security as emancipation to function as a resource with which to assess the current state of affairs and, when necessary, identify the possibilities that already exist to improve it. After exploring the anthropocentric world of security as emancipation and identifying potential problems that can result from that, the argument will introduce some ideas and concepts from posthuman social thinking that can help security as emancipation to redress this problem.

This will be followed by a discussion of the main ways in which posthuman insights have advanced critical discussions about security and international relations. It will explore the extent to which they have helped to complicate some of the core

assumptions underpinning the disciplinary field. Building on that, the final section sets out to assess how incorporating elements from posthuman thinking can expand the analytical, normative, and transformative potential of security as emancipation. It will be argued that posthuman ideas can help this theory to develop a more comprehensive and nuanced approach to world security in three ways. First, by expanding its ability to appreciate the political force of technology. Second, by allowing it to unpack the intertwinement between the systematic destruction of real places and the struggles and insecurities of real people. Third, by pushing security as emancipation to take into consideration interspecific forms of subjugation and the ways these are linked to the systematic insecurity of certain groups and individuals. In addition to that, security as emancipation can allow researchers to bridge the gap between anthropocentric and post-anthropocentric analyses of insecurity, as well as to reduce the overwhelmingly abstract and idealist character of current engagements with planetary justice.

## **5.1. Security, emancipation and the human**

The first section explores the centrality of the human in security as emancipation and discusses the analytical, normative and praxeological limitations resulting from that. It argues that despite seeing itself to a theory of world security, the world for security as emancipation is still depicted through an anthropocentric gaze in which the human represents, simultaneously, the ontological basis, analytical starting point, and ethical horizon for the analysis, normative judgement, and political reconsideration of both security and insecurity. Consequently, all that is non-human can only be seen as either a threat to the human or an instrument to secure it. The second part builds upon the debate regarding the Anthropocene to demonstrate the importance of accounting for the active and affective role of non-humans when engaging critically with security and insecurity. It argues that, against the backdrop of climate change and increasing biodiversity loss, failing to engage with the non-human layer of politics can bring into question the capacity of security as emancipation to function as a critical theory of world security. This paves the way for reconsidering this approach through a systematic engagement with the posthuman turn in social and political thinking in the following sections.

### *5.1.1. An anthropocentric theory of world security*

Security as emancipation sees itself not simply as a theory of security but as a critical theory for world security (Booth, 2007). Nonetheless, whilst going beyond the traditional categories of security thinking, such as national, regional, or international security, the idea of world security advocated by security as emancipation does not go beyond the human. This is because the theory of security as emancipation is still underpinned by a strong anthropocentric conception of the world and therefore, by a human-centric view of both security and insecurity. In its current formulation, humans, whether individually or in groups, are simultaneously the basis for thinking about security, the main referent to be secured, and the means to achieve it. Humanity, narrowly defined, embodies the analytical, normative, and transformative limits of emancipatory security thinking. This, in turn, results in a conception of world security wherein non-humans can only be conceived in three ways: as enabling or constraining human action, as threats to human security, or as instruments to secure the human.

There are several instances wherein the human-centric or anthropocentric vision of security as emancipation is particularly salient. First, as was previously noted, security as emancipation is underpinned by a strong commitment towards understanding and improving the security of real people in real places. For this theory, the everyday, concrete, embodied insecurities afflicting vulnerable groups and individuals represent the entry point for thinking about current security arrangements. Humans and the insecurities that reduce their freedom to decide about matters pertaining to their own lives are considered as the only insecurities that truly matter. However, one needs only to open a newspaper to understand that the security of the world goes way beyond the lives and bodies of human beings. Bees, coral reefs, whales, insects and many other species of animals and plants are also under threat and, importantly, their insecurity and potential extinction will certainly have an impact on human life. In focusing exclusively on human beings, this theory becomes unable to capture the violence that is systematically enacted towards non-humans but which, directly or indirectly, has been shaping the past, present, and future of humanity. This in itself, represents a critical blind spot in emancipatory security thinking.

In addition to that, security as emancipation also puts forward a human-centric conception of agency. Specifically, this theory suggests that, while social structures

and biological factors can create limits and possibilities for social action, it is only human consciousness that can provide the basis for social change (Booth, 2007: 202-219). For this theory, structures are an important part of world politics, as they encompass the material and ideational boundaries to transform the social order. However, non-human things can only influence change, they cannot determine its direction. Because structures are based on ideas and ideas are created by humans, only humans can provoke radical transformation in social, political, and economic life. Since they are the only beings with the capacity to consciously reflect upon their own condition, humans are also the only actors with the capacity to have an impact upon the world (Booth, 2007: 215). Agency is thus dependent upon consciousness. But once again, the world tells a different story. Every day we are made to act in certain ways by things that are not necessarily human. Just look at traffic signs, smartphone applications and nuclear weapons. They change how people and states behave, they change how things are, they reshape the state of affairs, and they do so in ways that are not necessarily intended. Simply, they make a difference in the current state of affairs. By considering humans as the only source of agency, security as emancipation cannot fully appreciate and unpack how and under what conditions are non-humans involved in making and remaking the world.

Third, this theory defines emancipation exclusively in human-terms. Security as emancipation does not merely seek to contest existing security arrangements but also help us identify the ways in which, when considered unfair, these arrangements can be changed. There is, clearly, a strong ethical commitment underlying this theory. That commitment is emancipation. But emancipation is not something static, fixed or a universal concept; it is a contingent, open-ended, and contextual process; it is a gradual process not an end-point (Booth, 2007: 113). Emancipation is something to strive for but not something that can be achieved, for as the world changes, so does the meaning of emancipation (Booth, 2007: 112). But while the meaning of emancipation can be fluid, there is one element to it that remains unchallenged: the centrality of human beings in it (Bourne and Bulley, 2011). Emancipation, for this approach, is opposed to the systematic reproduction of insecurities and vulnerabilities. It seeks to reduce them. However, if insecurity is only human, only human is all that emancipation can be. This is because the first and the later are umbilically connected. How we define the first will inherently constrain how we can conceive the latter (Wyn Jones, 1999).

In sum, in its current formulation the theory of security as emancipation suggests that insecurity concerns the set of structural, relational, and subjective conditions that determine the life of particular groups and individuals (Nunes, 2014b). Emancipation, in turn, concerns the freedom from such constraints (Booth, 2007: 102). The idea of world security that anchors security as emancipation is thus exclusively about the security of human beings and, because of that, so is its concern with emancipation. As Ali Bilgic (2016: 46) pointed:

Perhaps contradicting its name, world security is practically concerned with individuals: their rights, freedoms, and their peaceful co-existence with each other and with other living and non-living environments. What constitutes 'world security' as an ethical global approach is the ontological primacy of individuals and their togetherness.

### ***5.1.2. The Anthropocene and the limits of security as emancipation***

The Anthropocene provides a useful illustration of the problems resulting from anthropocentric assumptions. Broadly, the idea of the 'Anthropocene' (Crutzen and Stoermer, 2000) was coined to identify the beginning of a new geological epoch characterized by a new balance between the human and the earth system processes upon which humanity depends. Rising sea levels threatening entire cities and states, melting icebergs and plastic islands endangering marine life, rapid deforestation and the decline of biodiversity, or the increase in global temperatures are just some of the most dramatic examples commonly used to illustrate this point. While this notion is still disputed, it has helped to make the global community aware about the permanent scars that human action is leaving on the planet. The Anthropocene seems to signal a point of no return, a threshold where the continued existence of human life is brought into question. By being about the well-being of humans and the survival of humanity, the Anthropocene is also about security.

The idea of the Anthropocene underscores the harmful consequences of the dominant structures, relationships and subjectivities that organize social and political life. It brings into the light the idea that traditional conceptions of progress and development showing that they are no longer adequate, if they ever were, to ensure the survival and well-being of humans, since the global spread of industrialization, capitalism, colonialism, and consumerism represent some of the key drivers that led to this critical

junction (Chandler, 2018: 4-5). Once we focus on the depletion of natural ecosystems, the rising levels of pollution, and the potential implications that this is having upon the health and well-being of human beings, modernity is recast not as the hope for progress but as the cause for the unprecedented biological, geological, atmospheric, and hydrological changes that we are witnessing today. In other words, the Anthropocene reveals that abstract ideas and structural forces can be some of the most real threats to our planet and, consequently, to our survival as a species.

Apart from that, the notion of Anthropocene forces us to reassess how we relate to each other and to the non-human beings upon which our very existence relies. It pushes us to care not simply for other people, but for our environment as something composed by multiple species of plants and animals without which our existence and well-being are no longer possible (Harrington, 2017: 90). It requires us to recognize that our existence is entangled with the planet, to take responsibility for the systemic harm done to non-human things, and to broaden our empathy towards them even if they cannot express their suffering (Mitchell, 2014). Finally, the Anthropocene makes us reassess our own perceptions about life and the ways that we chose to live it. We are forced to reconsider the choices that we do on a daily basis, from using plastic bags, to consuming meat, driving diesel cars, or choosing our toothbrush. In sum, the Anthropocene underlies the umbilical connections and feedback loops between everything, at every level (Dalby, 2018).

But in doing so, the material and ideational crisis epitomized by the Anthropocene also poses a major challenge to our conventional categories of thought. Specifically, by bringing into light the fragile balance between human and planetary activity, the Anthropocene forces us to recognize that there is no clear-cut distinction between nature and society (Mayer, 2012). Humans are also geological agents, and nature is also endowed with agency, for it does things, even if they are not under human control. In fact, what the Anthropocene highlights is exactly that point, that in the attempt to master the world, humans are making it unliveable. The Anthropocene, thus, not only suggests that we should think more deeply about the world, it shows that not doing so might make it impossible to secure our existence. As our survival is brought into question, so are our most fundamental assumptions about what is real about the world. The Anthropocene shows that in order to secure the world we need to rethink the categories that we have traditionally adopted to think about it (Burke et al., 2016).

Acknowledging that the human cannot secure the world by itself will have clear implications for critique and thus, for the critical study of security (Dalby, 2007). First, this crisis is the ultimate blow to traditional security thinking. It shows that security can no longer be treated as a technical strategy for maintaining the status-quo (McDonald, 2017). Concomitantly, it reveals that the ontological division between humanity and the planet can no longer provide us with an anchorage to secure the world (Harrington, 2016). But it also forces us to reconsider our traditional notions of time, space, nature and, naturally, security (Grove and Chandler, 2017). In this context, the significance of critical security thinking gains a new practical edge as critical theorizing will not only will be crucial to understand our current predicament, it will also be pivotal to identify the immanent possibilities for making the world secure, as a whole.

In its current formulation, the theory of security as emancipation is unable to engage with this issue, let alone address it. The analytical and normative privilege warranted to the human places this theory among the security discourses which bypass almost completely the active role of non-humans in world politics (Mitchell, 2014). Security as emancipation is committed to providing a holistic understanding of the world: an approach capable of recognizing the existence of multiple security threats, multiple security practices, and multiple referents of security (Booth, 2007: 4). Despite that, the anthropocentrism that underpins this theory makes it unable to recognize the influence of non-human beings upon the security of groups and individuals. Nature and technology, for security as emancipation, are still considered as structural features of reality that co-constitute each other but which only relate dialectally. They are seen as features that can either enable or constrain a course of action. However, the final choice, that which makes a difference in the organization of social and political life, is always made by humans.

In its current form, security as emancipation does not recognize non-human agency. For security as emancipation, cognition is always the first step in changing social and political life. Structures cannot change structures, it suggests, but what about non-human beings? Are they unable to change how we structure our life? The narrative of the Anthropocene points that they can and that, indeed, they are already doing it. Every year, thousands are displaced by natural disasters. They are made to move, as the planet turns their lives into a different direction. In these instances, fires, earthquakes,

hurricanes not only constrain or enable people to do things, but they also make them do it. When this happens, nature ceases to be a structure and becomes an agent, it has an effect, it takes over action (Latour, 2005). A critical theory for world security must take this into account.

By considering the non-human world as something that can simply facilitate or endanger our security, security as emancipation also fails to capture that humans and humanity do not exist independent from the non-human things. Buildings, places, objects, animals or images are not just something to make our actions more or less likely, they are not simply a collection of artefacts surrounding the human, they are things through which our lives are made meaningful, that is, things that have value in and off themselves. The overarching focus on the human means that non-human things, like those mentioned, only enter the world of security as emancipation when they represent a potential threat to humanity or a potential tool with which to secure it. They only become referents for security once they endanger human life and threaten its existence. In this case, their security only matters insofar as it secures the human. They become things to be protected so that the human can be secured. They become instruments of human and not world security.

In sum, humans are not alone in making the world. The Anthropocene suggests that security can no longer be thought and achieved in human terms. The picture of the world provided by security as emancipation does not allow for an appreciation of the ways that humans and non-humans are entangled in creating and recreating the conditions of security and insecurity, thereby reducing its potential to function as a critical theory of world security. If understanding the world requires rethinking our most basic assumptions about politics, securing it demands rethinking our assumptions about ethics. The human is not the only subject of security. The human, alone, cannot be the ultimate referent for security. Security and insecurity are also made by other things that evade the anthropocentric gaze of security as emancipation. However, the human-centric character of this theory does not allow it to see this. In the following sections, the argument will explore how incorporating insights from posthuman thinking can help us resolve this problem. But first, we must also explore the different strands that co-exist within the broader label of posthuman thinking.

## **5.2. Posthuman thinking and social theory**

Having clarified the anthropocentric assumptions of security as emancipation and laid out some of its most direct implications, this section explores some elements of posthuman thinking that are particularly suited to help this approach improve its capacity to function as a critical theory of world security. The argument starts by introducing the shared assumptions of posthuman thinking and, following from that, delves into three distinctive but interconnected strands of posthuman thinking through a focus on their main issues of concern: the agentic role of technology, the affective capacity of objects, and the moral status of non-human species.

### ***5.2.1. The posthuman turn in social and political thinking***

The posthuman label is something particularly elusive. It combines two distinct but interrelated concepts: post-humanism and post-anthropocentrism (Braidotti, 2013: 3). While the first rejects the human as the core representative of humanity, the second concerns the idea that the human is morally superior to any other form of non-human life. Hence, posthuman thinking does not refer to one particular approach but to a spectrum of concepts and ideas that seek to decentre the human within social theory and practice and, in doing so, push us to better appreciate the complexity that composes social and political life. Basically, the posthuman turn signals a move towards non-human things and beings that brings together an eclectic group of approaches such as new materialism, posthumanism, immanent naturalism, new vitalism, object-oriented metaphysics, among others (Preda, 1999; Cetina, 1997).

Each of which represents a particular way of looking at the world through a less anthropocentric lenses, and each of which raises important issue not only in terms of analysis but also, in terms of politics and ethics, that is, in terms of we should think about and related with things that are not human and how we should reorganize existing social and political arrangements in order to accommodate those relations. The idea of a posthuman turn thus opens different possibilities. For some, adopting a posthuman perspective means turning our attention exclusively towards the life of non-humans, to others it means to explore what it means to be posthuman, and another group it simply means to better account for the ways in which non-human beings and things impact, relate and compose the world. For that reason, the turn towards the

posthuman encloses within itself other turns, such as the material, animal, vegetal turns, speculative, or even non-human turn (Grusin, 2015).

Despite some important differences, what all posthuman approaches seem to have in common is the underlying desire to reconsider the role of the non-human in social and political thinking. For them, social life is not only shaped by human beings but also by other living and non-living things. Technology, objects, organisms, artefacts, animals, plants and so on do not simply exist in the background of social relations; rather, they interfere, condition, affect, sustain, mediate, resist and therefore transform social order (2005). Together, this array of approaches thus seek to go beyond anthropocentrism and provide us with an alternative, posthuman or more-than-human perspective, of agency, ontology, ethics, and politics (Connolly, 2013).

In spite of that, there are three major lines of inquiry orienting posthuman work and which are particularly relevant in this context. The first line is strongly inspired by the developments in actor-network-theory and seeks to rethinking the nexus between technology and society, reconsidering agency as something more-than-human. The second turns our attention to inter-species hierarchies and relations, pushing us to reconsider more thoroughly the moral value of non-human nature and beings. The third stresses the affective role of objects and explores inter-object relations. Each of them can add something important to security as emancipation and help this theory improve its capacity to offer a framework with which to analyse, assess, and transform world security. The argument will now briefly unpack each of these approaches.

### ***5.2.2. Actants, networks and technology***

Posthuman debates are decisively linked to the growing impact of technology in our everyday life. In this regard, the posthuman turn seeks to reconsider the essentialist assumptions that have dominated our understanding of technology and thus the tendency to see technology in of two ways: either as a positive or negative force in social order or, alternatively, as a tool in the hands of human beings. For posthuman thinkers, technology is neither part of the structural backdrop against which social and political relations take place nor just a vehicle through which meanings can be transported and reproduced. Instead, it is an active element involved in the practices that make and remake social structures, subjects and relations. Simply, technology is an element involved in actively composing the world. Posthuman considerations of

technology thus leads us to move beyond the human both at the levels of ontology and agency by stretching the world beyond dialectics and intersubjectivity.

In this regard, some of the most influential posthuman insights have inspired by actor-network-theory and two distinctive ideas it puts forward (Mol, 2010). First, this approach reconceptualizes social groups as networks or associations. Second, it frames non-human things as potential actors, or actants (Latour, 2005; Law, 2009). Each of these will be briefly explored and illustrated.

In the attempt to open up agency to non-humans, the first move enacted by actor-network-theory is to challenge the anthropocentric view of the social as human-bound and reconsidering it as composed by an assemblage of more-than-human networks. This unfolds in three moves. First, by opposing the rigid separation between society and technology. Instead, it suggests that social groups are not exclusively human but rather hybrid associations composed by human and non-human elements wherein both can change things (Callon, 1986; Law, 1987). Second, by suggesting that networks do not exist in themselves but are made to exist through the relations and maintain them. They are not stable and fixed things but provisional and contingent, for if these associations cease to take place so does the network (Law and Callon, 1992). Thus, networks only exist through the connections that hold them together and multiple things can take part in that process. Third, if networks are more-than-human and their features cannot be taken for granted, then neither can the elements that compose it. Instead, it is only by following the more-than-human relations that make a network possible that we can know the things that are actively involved in its making (Latour, 1987).

The second move enacted by actor-network-theory is to broaden the conception of agency in order to include non-human actors as actants (Johnson, 1988). First, this theory posits that non-human things do not simply reflect, constrain, enable or reproduce actions and relations. Instead, they can also interfere, disrupt, or mediate them. Things such as airplanes, vessels, or water-pumps can form new networks and relations and transform older ones (Law, 1986; 2002; de Laet and Mol, 2000). Put simply, if non-human things can take over action, they can have agency (Latour, 2005). Second, they can do it in ways that were not necessarily anticipated nor intended. When action is more-than-human, the causal link between will and outcome

is no longer linear. Action is no longer transferred from one place to another but rather translated. Actors are no longer considered simply as intermediaries but as mediators (Latour, 2005: 37-42). Third, and because of that, both actors and action cannot be taken as a given nor defined in human terms. To be considered as an actor, some-thing, whether human or non-human, has to make a difference (Latour, 2005: 43). Things, human or otherwise, are only actors if they are actively involved in the constant work required to enact, stabilize, or dissolve a network. The term actant is coined exactly to capture this move and thus broaden the categories of both actor and agency (Latour, 2005: 54). The first is no longer seen as only human and the second is not necessarily the product of human will.

These two moves, however, are often captured together. An example of this is Michael Callon's (1986) research on a peculiar subject: a project carried out by marine biologists and which sought to, through the development and incorporation of a new breeding device, recover the population of scallops in St. Brieuc Bay. What the scientist did not account for in their project, was that neither the scallops would seek to use the device nor that the local fisherman would be willing to collaborate and respect in protected areas. This not only showed that networks are made up of both human and non-human elements, but also that the outcome of human action is not the only motor of agency. The project failed not only because fisherman did not collaborate but, mainly, because scallops resisted to human intentions. Still, it was the work of Bruno Latour on an even more inconspicuous subject, a door-closer, that shed further light on non-human agency (Johnson, 1988). He used this device to problematize how mundane non-human things help to structure human everyday actions, but also how they often come to replace what was previously the function of a human being, to control the door, to check who gets in and out. By stressing the agentic character of non-human this approach opens the possibility of, among other things, achieving a deeper understanding of the way in which technologies carry within them political force.

### ***5.2.3. Nature, species and humanity***

In addition to that, posthuman debates have sought to reconsider the division between humanity and animality; in other words, they have been concerned with issues of interspecificity. More specifically, much of the work building on posthuman thinking seeks

to decentre the human and create the possibility of appreciating the social, political, and affective significance of other living beings such as animals, organisms, or ecosystems. Often focusing on interspecies relations, this strand of posthuman thinking has systematically questioned the modernist dichotomy between nature and society wherein the first is depicted as a given and the later as construction (Youatt, 2016; Livingston and Puar, 2011). On the one hand, it posits that human and non-human beings are entangled in ways that require a much more complex vocabulary than that offered by humanist thinking. Culture and nature are not essentially different (Latour, 1993). Rather, they co-exist in a spectrum. On the other hand, they reject the tendency to reproduce the link between humanity and animality and the self-other dichotomy between civilized and barbaric, wherein the moral and ontological superiority of the first legitimates its control over the later.

This opens up the space for recognizing that humanity, as a moral community, is made up of multiple and fragile entanglements that our world and obligations are, arguably, much more-than-human (Haraway, 2003). Briefly:

Responding to the ever deeper enmeshment of human life into ecological processes, the intensification of animal production and biological management, and a troubling set of intra-human political developments that rely on the species concept, interspecies analyses tend to share an interest in decentering human agency, both as an analytic matter and as a normative and theoretical project (Youatt, 2016: 211).

Naturally, this strand of posthuman scholars foregrounds ethical issues and, as such, has been particularly concerned with advancing the idea that our rights and obligations should not be restricted to assisting and protecting humans. They question the crucial proposition that the human is essentially different and autonomous from other species because it is endowed with a more advanced set of cognitive capacities, namely, consciousness. Instead, they argue that our moral commitments should be expanded to other species of sentient beings, that is, non-human animals with interests (Sunstein and Nussbaum, 2004). Non-human animals, put simply, have a moral status and, consequently, that humans have moral and ethical obligations towards them. The rights of non-human animals mean that there are certain ethical limits regarding how we can treat them, either in the persecution of individual interests, such as in what we want to eat for dinner, or broader collective goods, such as the use of animals in medical laboratories (Galvão, 2011).

Despite some intricate nuances that might exist within this particular form of posthumanism, the normative concern underlying this particular line of inquiry is crystal clear: to curb human wrongs against non-human forms of life (Calarco, 2008). This is made evident not only by laying bare the ways in which non-human animals and organisms are often implicated in establishing and maintaining human hierarchies of power and subjugation but also, and more critically, by showing how they are systematically treated as mere instruments in the advance of human interests, including emancipatory interests. Ultimately, the intention that underlies this strand of posthumanism can be defined as broadening the cosmopolitan concerns with harm, violence, and vulnerability beyond our species and reconsider our duties and responsibilities towards the non-human others.

#### ***5.2.4. Objects, meanings and relations***

But within the posthuman turn, efforts to go beyond the human and protect the non-human are not confined to inter-species relations. In fact, a different way to expand humanity is not only to pay attention to our relationships with nature but also to appreciate its link umbilically to materiality. This third strand of posthuman work seeks to underline the active and affective role that non-human things such as objects, artefacts, buildings and infrastructure have in creating and transforming the possibilities of being human (Coward, 2009). It posits that humanity does not exist only within and through the human, but is also constituted by the material environment wherein human life takes place and gains meaning. It suggests that things such as photographs, houses, books, or public spaces are not simply part of the material layer of reality. Instead, they carry within them the ideas, stories, values, affections, and connection through which humanity is made meaningful. They embody fragments of what it means to be human. As such, when they are damaged, forgotten, or erased so is a piece of what makes us human in the first place. In this case, the underlying concern is to emphasize that practices of violence against humanity cannot be grasped exclusively in human terms. It is not enough to pay attention to the people directly placed under threat. It is also crucial to acknowledge the systematic destruction of the things through which their living conditions were possible, the things that sustained their way of being (Bevan, 2006).

In addition to that approach, a more radical strand of posthumanism, often termed as object-oriented-ontology has turned the emphasis exclusively to non-human relations (Harman, 2002; 2005). In this case, the aim is to break more thoroughly the subject-object dichotomy and offer a speculative philosophy that seeks to understand the ways in which inter-object relations take place, that is, how do objects experience, relate, and affect each other. Simply, it seeks to capture the agency and relationality of objects, regardless of their human connections. Naturally, this opens an impasse concerning the limits of human knowledge and its capacity to reason over the worlds that it does not experience. Speculatively of course, this strand of posthuman thinking argues that things can create their own meanings. In this case, however, it is not only agency but meaning that is taken away from the human. But how can we apprehend the experiences of that which is beyond what we can experience? How can we see the world from the perspective of a passport, computer, drone, or an electric-grid? While generating a much more ambiguous project, it is only through this standpoint that the human becomes almost entirely decentred (Sheldon, 2015; Behar, 2016). Yet, this offers its own set of limits and contradictions (Lemke, 2017).

### **5.3. Posthuman thinking, security, and international politics**

The previous sections pointed some of the limits resulting from the anthropocentric assumptions of security as emancipation and, following from that, introduced some key strands of posthuman thinking that speak directly to this issue. This section seeks to explore how posthuman ideas have been mobilized into the critical study of security and international politics and helped scholars to reconsider dominant understandings of technology, on the one hand, and the links between security and the environmental concerns, on the other. It is based upon this assessment that it is possible to lay bare the different ways in which incorporating insights from posthuman scholarship can strengthen the analytical, normative, and transformative potential of security as emancipation and, in doing so, consolidate its ability to function as a critical theory of world security.

### *5.3.1. Posthuman thinking and security*

Within the study of international politics and security, the posthuman turn has been animated by three core commitments. The first has been that of challenging the anthropocentric or human-centric foundations of both more conventional and critical thinking. In this regard, posthuman scholarship has sought to complicate the dichotomies that underpin both traditional and critical projects, such as the divisions between nature and culture, society and technology, matter and meaning, and human and non-human. Second, they have sought to reveal the complicity of anthropocentric categories in existing forms of violence and insecurity. This has been pursued, for instance, by disclosing the ways in which human-centric ideas resulted in social, political, economic, and environmental problems. Third, posthuman scholarship also displayed a commitment towards developing alternative, that is, less anthropocentric, ways of thinking about and engaging with the world politics and security (Youatt, 2014; Cudworth and Hobden, 2015). Far from a mere gesture towards the non-human, the posthuman turn has involved a systematic reconsideration regarding matters of ontology, agency, politics, and ethics (Coole, 2013; Mitchell, 2016).

In the specific context of security studies most posthuman literature has followed two particular lines of inquiry. The first utilizes and experiments with posthuman thinking to investigate the interconnections between society, science, and technology. Despite some differences in scope and focus, this group has been strongly motivated by the growing introduction and utilization of technological devices in the practice of security. In this regard, attention has been given to investigate how they emerge, stabilize, and transform existing security arrangements as well as how they impact upon the subjects of security (Mutlu, 2013; Aradau et al., 2014). In contrast, the second line saw in posthuman thinking an opportunity to make better sense of the entanglement between nature and society and the relations between human and non-human species, that is, interspecificity (Cudworth et al., 2018). Specifically, this group has turned the ongoing ecological crisis into a springboard to showcase the limits of anthropocentric thinking, reconsider what it means to be human, and explore more-than-human conceptions of politics and humanity (Mitchell, 2014).

### *5.3.2. Turning towards technology*

Posthuman thinking inspired a radical reconsideration of technology in the study of security and international relations. By foregrounding more-than-human agency and relationality, with the strong support of actor-network-theory, this line of inquiry created new avenues of research that allow security scholars to displace some of the anthropocentric assumptions and limits that continued to shape the critical project and, in doing so, develop a research programme and methodology more attuned to its postpositivist commitments. Whilst not providing rigid templates for research but rather some insights on how to reconsider agency and ontology as something more-than-human, studies inspired by posthuman thinking have so far engaged with an eclectic gamut of topics including drones, terrorism, or torture (Leander, 2013; de Goede, 2017; Austin, 2017). Yet, the most significant impact of this turn was that it afforded critical scholars to reconsider the role of technology in current security arrangements whilst, at the same time, avoiding to replicate the deterministic accounts provided by the two mainstream approaches to the nexus between technology and security: instrumentalism and essentialism (McCarthy, 2018: 3-9).

The first approach, instrumentalism, saw technology as value-neutral. From this perspective, technology works as a tool, that is, a means for human action. Humans build it and use it according to their own purpose, values and interests. While seeing technology as opening up multiple possibilities for action, instrumentalist conceptions fail to account for the normative and political choices that are already embedded within technological devices. The second approach, essentialism, upholds that technological innovation follows a predetermined and inescapable logic that forces social actors to behave in a certain way regardless of their intentions. From this perspective, in contrast, technological change is seen as the underlying force driving social, political and economic transformations. Essentialist accounts can thus see technology as something that will lead to positive change or as having a detrimental effect in society. Regardless, all of them agree upon the premise that technology controls the faith of humankind. Technology is destiny (Wyn Jones, 1999: 108).

Despite the incommensurable differences between instrumental and essentialist arguments, both are informed by strong anthropocentric assumptions. On the one hand, they maintain the radical separation between technology and society, with the

difference being which of the two holds the upper hand. Humans and machines exist in interrelated but essentially different worlds. On the other, both rely upon a pre-given and deterministic account about the source of social agency: while instrumentalists suggest that agency is entirely human, by conceptualizing technology as something neutral or value-free, for essentialists humans do not have agency, in that technology is not only an enabler but the determinant of social action. Either society determines technology or technology determines society. Ultimately, both provide a deficient take on technology which affords no space for nuance, takes the location of social agency for granted, and offers a defective guide to political practice.

By rejecting the separation of technology from society and conceiving non-humans as a potential source of action with social and political force, posthuman thinking has been particularly productive in helping students to redress some of these problems. Specifically, it afforded the possibility of reconceptualizing social practices as something more-than-human and, in doing so, reduce the overwhelming concern that critical security studies placed on language, intersubjectivity, and representation (Aradau, 2010). Posthuman thinking made it possible to problematize the political salience of matter and thus develop a more balanced take on the relationship between meaning and materiality (Lundborg and Vaughan-Williams, 2015). In that sense, posthuman insights have also enabled critical scholars to better appreciate some of the intricate ways in which technological devices are designed and introduced into security arrangements, as well as how they help to stabilize and maintain security networks and, beyond that, how they have transformed security practices and its subjects (Bengtsson et al., 2019).

In the first case, critical scholars have explored the process through which technological devices are designed, developed and later introduced into existing social arrangements. Rather than taking them for granted and starting the analysis once they are already part of social practice, they delve into the practices through which they have been negotiated and assembled to fit particular roles, and thus investigate the interests and values that underlie the construction of technology (Bourne et al., 2015). In the second instance, they have delved into the ways in which, once in place, such technologies can help to authorize and stabilize existing social arrangements. Instead of accepting the utilization of new technologies as a natural and legitimate solution for a technical problem, they foreground the ways in which such devices are selected and

utilized exactly because they reinforce the authority of those in charge (Jeandesboz, 2016). In the third case, students have explored the instances in which these technologies transform these networks and relations, that is, how they have an effect upon them (Lisle, 2018; Adler-Nissen and Drieschova, 2019). Ultimately, the posthuman turn opened up technology and unveils the ways in which it succeeds or fails to connect the different elements that the thing we call security comes into being.

### ***5.3.3. Turning towards ecology***

A second group of scholars inspired by posthuman thinking has been more interested in overcoming the tendency to adopt a human-centric gaze to understand the link between security and environmental issues. Broadly, the environment-security nexus has been approached from two different angles: traditional and critical perspectives. The first approach engages with the environment through the prisms of national, international, and human security (McDonald, 2013). From a national security perspective, environmental changes are considered as security threats due to their potential implication upon state stability, such as the devastating consequences of natural catastrophes in increasing the number of internally displaced people and environmental refugees, but also the violent conflicts that can result from the dynamics of resource extraction (Homer-Dixon, 1991; Meyers, 1989; Ullman, 1983; Deudney, 1991). This vision is intrinsically tied with international security approaches which emphasize the spillover effects of environmental problems at broader levels, for instance by exacerbating regional tensions and increasing the pressure over developing states with limited resources to deal with humanitarian crisis. Finally, from a human security perspective environmental degradation and climate change are considered a legitimate and urgent security threats in that they have a negative impact upon the development and well-being of some of the most vulnerable groups on the planet (Page and Redclift, 2002).

In contrast, critical security approaches seek to understand how the environment-security nexus has been socially constituted with an eye on identifying the interests underlying this process and assessing the practices and relations it put in place. While risking some simplification, most critical accounts have been anchored to the lenses of constructivism, securitization, and feminism. Constructivist works have mostly focused on researching the development of the conventions, regulations, and

institutions that form the backbone of the global environmental regime (Pettenger, 2007). Securitization scholars, in turn, focused on the discursive practices through which this link has been reproduced and explored the narratives through which different groups have conceived or rejected environmental issues as existential security threats (Trombetta, 2009). Finally, feminist researchers have been particularly interested in gendering environmental security discourses, exposing how women's voices and concerns are systematically absent from the agenda, and demonstrating how environment-related vulnerabilities intersect and increase with other forms of inequality and insecurity (Detraz, 2009).

Whilst traditional approaches can conceive this issue from different angles and thus privilege different security referents and practices, all of them take the link between environment and security as something natural and self-evident. This, in turn, results in practical strategies to deal with this issue that not only reproduce existing power asymmetries but also neglect the deeper, structural forces, at the heart of environmental problems. They adopt an instrumental understanding of non-human nature, for the environment is relevant insofar as it can threaten the human. In contrast, critical approaches denaturalize this nexus by unveiling the intersubjective processes through which environment-related concerns were represented, legitimized, and accepted as security threats and, following from that, laying bear the consequences of this process for the practices of security and the subject of insecurity. Yet, in this case, it is the intersubjective focus making it impossible to appreciate the entanglement between nature and culture and the ways in which the former also shapes, affects, and composes the later. As a result, both traditional and critical standpoints depict the environment-security nexus through an anthropocentric gaze that replicates an ontological separation between nature and society as two distinctive and autonomous spheres wherein only the later holds agency.

By broadening agency and foregrounding inter-species relations, posthuman thinking has been considered as a fruitful avenue to redress this problem. It forced students to recognize that nature and non-human animals can no longer be understood as something external, distinctive, and autonomous from society and, for that reason, from humanity itself. This held at least three major implications for how we think about security and international politics.

First, by broadening the gamut of analytical referents beyond the human, they opened up the space to appreciate the ways in which not only humans are systematically made vulnerable to violence and insecurity (Cudworth and Hobden, 2015). Nature became, in that sense, a legitimate referent for the theory and practice security. It was moved from the status of a threat to be secured into being something to be protected. Second, and associated with that, they made it possible to recognize the intricate ways in which human and non-human insecurities are entangled (Mitchell, 2014). As a result, we are forced to recognize that we are not so autonomous after all, and neither our future nor our planet are entirely under our control. Instead of controlling we must care, instead of adapting we must change. We do not exist in the world; we exist in relation to it. How we relate, thus, is crucial for our future. Third, they questioned what it means to be human and stretched humanity beyond human lines. Assertions about who we are and what we might become were made into pieces, only to recognize how we threaten the things that make us possible (Pereira and Saramago, 2020).

#### **5.4. Posthuman thinking and security as emancipation**

Building on the previous discussion, the aim of this section is to assess the potential benefits that can result from incorporating posthuman insights into security as emancipation. It argues that it can help to rectify some of the limitations previously identified in this theory and, in doing so, expand the capacity of emancipatory security thinking to provide a critical theory of world security. Through examples from critical literature from within and outside security studies, the argument begins with a reconsideration of the nexus between security and technology. It then explores how this theory can deepen its understanding of insecurity by reassessing the relationship between violence and materiality. Finally, it will show how incorporating posthuman ideas can help this theory broaden its current understanding of insecurity, as well as to develop a more inclusive vision of cosmopolitan rights and duties. Concomitantly, security as emancipation can help to reduce the gap between anthropocentric and post-anthropocentric engagements with insecurity, as well as to ground current arguments about planetary justice upon the possibilities that already exist within the current state of affairs.

#### ***5.4.1. Technology, relationality and security***

The role of technology in existing security arrangements has been a central concern for security as emancipation. In one of the most important works inspired by this theory, Richard Wyn Jones (1999) developed a synthesis of essentialist and instrumentalist perspectives in order to put forward an emancipatory perspective of technology. According to him, a critical take on technology is not only useful to illustrate the deficiencies and limitations in dominant strategic thinking, it also allows us to grasp the problems and possibilities that technology creates for security and emancipation. But while his approach foregrounded the mutually constitutive relationship between technology and society, he still conceived them as part of two distinctive spheres wherein only the latter holds the capacity to have an effect upon the world, that is, only the human can hold political force. Technology can constrain and make possible certain courses of action, but it cannot change them by itself. As a result, society is the only actor who can decide if technology will work to either reinforce or alter existing power relations:

Technology does have a logic in that it simultaneously creates and constrains the choices available to society, yet technology does not predetermine which one of those particular choices is made. That decision is a social one, and as such reflects a whole series of social, cultural and power relations (Wyn Jones, 1999: 88).

Technologies, in that sense, are not seen as something neutral but rather reflective of prevailing interests and values, in that the elements that compose and the particular ways in which they are assembled embody deeper power relations and dominant social configurations. The effects of a particular technology, for security as emancipation, are thus not natural nor unavoidable but rather the outcome of those configurations. In practical terms, the approach envisioned by Wyn Jones means that emancipatory security research should focus on how the processes through which technology was developed, justified and applied mirrored certain interests within society, as well as their social and political implications. However, not only does his work maintain the ontological dualism between technology and society, but it also does not provide operational indications about how it is possible to unpack the values that are embedded within technology or its effects, nor does it offer a view of how technology can be linked to emancipation.

Technology is increasingly important in the contemporary security configurations. Beyond the more traditional concern with military strategy, technological devices, systems, and expertise have assumed a markedly prominent role in the governance of security, either at the global or local levels. From the increasing utilization of police body cameras, to the collection of thermal imaging and biometric data at the border, the risk assessment of humanitarian interventions, the mapping of pandemics, or monitoring climate change, technology has become an ubiquitous feature in contemporary security policy and practice. Yet, in its current formulation security as emancipation stills lacks the adequate resources with which to engage technology critically and with an eye on emancipatory possibilities. Not only was this engagement limited to the realm of national security and military strategy, it still demonstrates some important limitations at the analytical, normative, and transformative levels. That is, in its current formulation this theory is still unable to provide us with an empirical examination of the process through which technologies are developed and applied, an assessment of their social and political implications upon real people in real places, and a discussion of its potential to further progressive change.

The resources developed by the posthuman turn are particularly tailored to help us redress these issues. In fact, there is already some literature that demonstrates how exactly the ideas of networks and actants can enable those inspired by emancipation to go beyond the analysis of the ways in which technological innovations and devices publicly framed and authorized, and also consider the conceptualization, integration, and utilization of technology as potential entry points for critique and reconstruction of existing security arrangements. With these tools, emancipatory security research is better equipped to: investigate the socio-technical process through technologies are mediated and integrated into security arrangements; unveil the normative concerns that are embedded into such devices during its conceptualization and development; map the different ways in which introducing new technologies can contribute to authorize, stabilize, transform, or broaden current security arrangements; and, finally, appreciate the extent to which technological devices are entangled with contemporary forms of inequality and structural insecurity.

First, turning technological development into a focal point for critical research can help us to unpack how certain normative values are embedded into security devices. This is clear from the work of Govert Valkenburg and Irma van der Ploeg (2015) who

research the development of a new airport security scan. They show the exact ways in which concerns not only with security but also privacy, health, safety, time, and space are incorporated into that technology and, more importantly, how this device later translates these concerns into practice by delimiting the range of practical possibilities that this device can produce in advance of its application. Tracing the steps that take place when a new technology is being developed, can thus allow the theory of security as emancipation to grasp how exactly technologies are made to fit a certain conception of security and the ways in which non-human elements take part in this process. In turn, making the design of technology into a legitimate site for investigation can also open important avenues for normative assessment and reconsideration. As they point:

The processes of constructing security technologies are sites of politics. Once these politics are articulated and foregrounded, and their blind spots identified, these sites can be identified as the provenance of particular moral problems – problems that would otherwise appear as no more than ethical problems in the application of a security device (Valkenburg and van der Ploeg, 2015: 332).

Additionally, the ideas of actant and network can help security as emancipation to engage with the role of technologies in reordering and stabilizing emerging security arrangements. By stressing the constant relational work required to maintain and reproduce a network, they push us to investigate the multiple actors and relations that allow for the reproduction and transformation of existing security arrangements. Peer Schouten (2014), for instance, utilized these ideas to explore how the distrust in airport security management that resulted from a failed terrorist attack was resolved through the introduction of new technological measures. While understood both as a human and technical problem, the solution focused almost exclusively on technology. As the global airport security governance relies upon a series of key performance indicators, the administration opted by taking an approach that could better translate the measures taken to deal with this issue into concrete statistics and numbers. The consequence was the introduction of a new body scanner to reduce the controversy surrounding the airport and stabilize the security arrangement. In that sense, posthuman thinking can help this approach to explore not only how the growing use of technological devices in security practices delimits the scope for policy options at the practical level, but also how technologies take part in mediating public concerns and debates about security.

The posthuman gaze can also be useful to help security as emancipation to better appreciate the impact of technology in the persistence of insecurity among vulnerable groups and individuals. For instance, the same author utilized these ideas to research the role of state-owned technology and infrastructure in perpetuating social instability and human insecurity in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Schouten, 2013). Like several developing states, this country is also characterized by the absence of governance technologies thereby making it impossible to manage human and material resources efficiently. More critically, the lack of technology at the level of government is translated into a limited capacity to ensure citizen rights and enforce state regulations, thereby contributing to keep DRC in the bottom places of the human development index. Naturally, the chronic instability and structural insecurity afflicting this region are also the product of other dynamics that go way beyond, and are arguably more important than, the importance of technology in upholding the social contract. Nonetheless, by accounting for technology or the lack of it, he shows that insecurity is not only conditioned by the material resources of those insecure but also by the sociotechnical systems that are available to those responsible for ensuring their rights and well-being.

In addition to that, incorporating posthuman elements can enable security as emancipation to engage with emancipatory possibilities opened up by technology, that is, with appreciating the role that some devices can have in improving the everyday livelihoods of vulnerable groups and individuals. An example is provided by Marianne de Laet and Annemarie Mol (2000) who researched the effects of a water pump installed in some regions of Zimbabwe. For them, the pump reveals how material innovations can create new affective connections and exert agency in ways that were not necessarily intended. The device does not simply provide water. Rather, it actively works to forge the community, to bring it together, to improve its health and well-being. The community not only use the pump but is invested in all the steps involved in installing it: from deciding its place, to assembling the device, and maintaining it. The well is not simply a technological device, but a place where people come together, where they speak and dance, and wherein new social and cultural rituals emerge, that is, where communities are forged. Here, it becomes clear, the pump does not work without the community, but when it works it also makes a difference in the

community. The security, health, and well-being of these communities is not simply dependent upon the bush-pump but is actively promoted by the device.

Lastly, posthuman thinking can help security as emancipation not only advocate for the reduction of harm and inequality but also materialize the progressive, counter-hegemonic, and localized change it envisions. As Jonathan Austin (2019) argues, in a world wherein technology is increasingly involved in social and political life, scholars can seek to turn matter into a means of ethic-political intervention. He puts forward an applied mode of critique wherein the epistemological insights of critical thinkers are not simply published or circulated, but also embedded into material things utilized in everyday life. Beyond writing and reading, he posits, critical scholars can become involved in conceptualizing and constructing things that can exert a transformative impact upon social and political relations. This does not mean dismissing traditional modes of critical knowledge production and dissemination but to make them more meaningful, impactful, and useful. An applied mode of critique is an extension to the means and methods of the critical project rather than a modification to its meaning. It does not seek to reinvent the wheel, but to make it turn. Simply, it seeks to improve the chances of critical insights to become materialized and applied to practice. Materializing critique could thus broaden the transformative potential of security as emancipation by turning it into a project that:

takes the world in its own hands and goes beyond delegating praxis to politicians and civil society groups by instead becoming directly (if riskily) involved in redesigning the contours of international relations (Austin, 2019: 982).

This speaks directly to the type of intellectual and ethical posture adopted by those drawing upon security as emancipation, and there are already some more practical examples showing its potential in practice. For instance, the Transborder Immigrant Tool, an app developed to enhance the security of vulnerable migrants, demonstrates how material interventions focused on technology can assist migrants taking control over their own decisions and increase the control over their own lives (Amoore and Hall, 2010). Designed with a focus on the Mexico-US border, it offers a mechanism with which migrants can identify the safer routes and reduce the imminent dangers of this journey. It allows them to have more information before deciding where, when, and how to cross the border. Other similar applications have been already been crucial to improve the well-being of irregular migrants and refugees: some help them to learn

a different language, others allow them to receive donations, and others show the public services available in the immediate surroundings of migrants. In that sense, they are useful once the migrants have settled by providing critical information aimed at making their integration in society smoother. By engaging more critically with the active role of technology, security as emancipation would not only be better positioned to grasp the active role of technology in contemporary security arrangements, it would also become capable to be directly engaged in the construction of the devices and practices that can potentially contribute to forge a different, more inclusive, world.

All of these works place technology front and center of critical analysis. However, and in contrast with security as emancipation, they show that technological devices do not simply exist in the background of social relations. They actively interfere in it, making possible but also mediating existing security practices and relations. But they also demonstrate how we can unpack, with the support of posthuman ideas, the ways in which technology is embedded with values and takes part in the authorization and stabilization of current security arrangements, or how technologies are connected with contingent and structural insecurities and the extent to which they help to redress them. This is particularly important because security, technology and emancipation are umbilically connected. In a context wherein the relation between technology and society is rapidly intensifying, thinking about this link is crucial to understand existing security arrangements and problematize the prospects for their progressive change. In fact, if emancipation means reducing the constraints that prevent people from taking free decisions about their own lives, then the historical role of technology in increasing or reducing them holds crucial significance for this approach. Posthuman ideas can help this theory to redress this problem and enrich its ability to both analyse and assess the role of technology in contemporary security relations and, in addition to that, open up new avenues for the practical and transformative portfolio of emancipatory security politics. Moving beyond technology, the next sub-section focuses on the link between materiality and insecurity.

#### ***5.4.2. Materiality, space and insecurity***

Space and place provide the material context of systematic violence and insecurity. The vulnerability of certain groups and individuals is often intensified through the systematic destruction or neglect of the material and environmental conditions that

sustain their livelihood and upon which their security and well-being depends. The intentional targeting of materiality, whether this means public infrastructures, households, books, or plants, and whether it is carried out with missiles in Syria or with bulldozers in the Amazon rainforest, represents a form of violence and harm that is intended to provoke insecurity upon certain groups, disrupting their livelihoods to a point wherein they can no longer continue, at least in the same way. The destruction of real places is intended to constrain the ability of real people to choose how to carry out their lives. But materiality is also strongly connected to the everyday efforts carried out by individuals and groups to resist and transform the current state of affairs: from public protests to the everyday practices of those recurrently placed in a position of vulnerability.

This should be important for security as emancipation. However, up until now, the literature inspired by this approach is yet to engage with the intertwinement between the experiences of insecurity and their material conditions of possibility: that is, with the link between real people and real places. Posthuman categories are particularly useful to tackle this issue. They can enable this theory to appreciate the link between the deliberate and systematic destruction of non-human things and the insecurity of human beings, but also the potential role of materiality in the process of resistance and transformation. In practical terms, they enable security as emancipation to open a set of research questions that speaks directly to its core concerns: How does the destruction and neglect of real places contribute to intensify the insecurity of real people? How is the systematic targeting of public infrastructure, buildings, or households utilized as a means of conditioning their possibilities of alternative futures? How can a reconsideration of the ways in which spaces and places are conceptualized, designed, and assembled contribute to forge more inclusive and pluralist communities? How is materiality involved in everyday efforts to resist systematic vulnerability and insecurity?

There are some works that offer fruitful insights about the ways in which attention to materiality expands the potential of security as emancipation. A good starting point is the work of Martin Coward (2009a; 2009b), who researched destruction of urban infrastructure during the violent conflicts that resulted in the dissolution of Yugoslavia. His work shows how the deliberate targeting of the material things that make the urban fabric, such as buildings, bridges, mosques, or museums, can be seen

as a distinctive form of violence in itself: urbicide. By focusing explicitly on the violence enacted against the city, he was able to reveal the significance of material things in creating and nurturing the conditions of plurality and heterogeneity within which, in that case, multi-ethnic societies could coexist and flourish. In other words, attention to violence against the city reveals how humanity as something that is plural and heterogenous is also constituted and made possible by non-humans. Hence, in cases like this, an emancipatory understanding the violence and insecurity threatening humanity cannot be achieved by thinking in human terms. It must also consider the violence that is frequently enacted against the things that sustain and materialize the conditions for the development, coexistence, and flourishing of human beings.

In fact, violence against humans is often based on the systematic depletion of non-human things. This works not only as a strategy of asserting control over the other and what he or she can do. It is also a method of denying what they can be. Crucially, it is not something exclusive of war-times and is neither focused exclusively on broader symbolic infrastructures. This type of violence can be directed towards anything that makes life possible. In Gaza, for instance, strategies of land and air control have been accompanied by methods of ‘infrastructural warfare’ that include:

demolishing houses and cities; uprooting olive trees; riddling water tanks with bullets; bombing and jamming electronic communications; digging up roads; destroying electricity transformers; tearing up airport runways; disabling television and radio transmitters; smashing computers; ransacking cultural and politico-bureaucratic symbols of the proto-Palestinian state; looting medical equipment (Mbembe, 2003: 29).

For an emancipatory perspective, if it is important to take note of human suffering, it is also crucial to understand the practices that make it possible in the first place. The livelihood of human groups and individuals might be the targets of this violence, but they are not what is being directly targeted. Non-human things are the intermediaries, the means through which violence is enacted and against which it is carried. Adopting a more-than-human gaze can allow us to better understand this process and thus strengthen our assessment of insecurity. In fact, it allows us to better understand the different forms in which violence against the human is often linked to the destruction of material things.

A broader example of this is provided by Robert Bevan (2006), who conceptualized the systematic destruction of architecture and cultural artifacts as a specific form of violence. In his work, the unmaking and remaking of architectural buildings becomes a privileged entry point to understanding systematic attempts of denying collective memory and, in doing so, erase the conditions of existence of particular groups, or what he calls memoricide. The systematic targeting of architecture has been an intrinsic part of past and current practices of ethnic cleansing as well as of recent terrorist attempts which seek to destroy the architectural symbols of the current hegemonic order. But it is not only when buildings are physically destroyed that violence is taking place. In fact, the neglect of buildings is also a practice of cultural domination and subordination, as is the construction of new monuments through which definitive accounts of previous violence are publicly materialized, authorized, and remembered. Basically, the focus on materiality tell us something important about how attacks on the past and the things through which it materializes are, first and foremost, attacks on the future. By destroying who we were and who we are, they also constrain who we can be. Memoricide is not only a form of violence towards some group; it is an aggression against what it can become.

Foregrounding matter can thus shed critical light upon contemporary forms of violence and insecurity and broaden the ability of security as emancipation to analyse and assess existing insecurities and their link to security discourses and practices. However, posthuman ideas not only capture the limitations of anthropocentric conceptions of violence. They also advance more humane forms of redressing insecurity and inequality, stressing the significance that materiality can play in restructuring the possibilities of social and political life. In fact, the intentional destruction of material things reifies existing forms of inequality and insecurity can also be turned into a springboard to illuminate the possibilities that already exist to reduce them and forge the conditions that are necessary to the development of more inclusive and pluralistic forms of living.

The relationship between materiality and resistance is particularly salient within the context of political protests and social movements. As Ali Bilgic (2016) argues, collaborative practices of resistance often appropriate places that symbolize that which is being challenged: the occupation of Wall Street when resisting to neoliberalism or the protests in Tahrir Square when resisting to dictatorship are two examples of that.

In those instances, resistance is crafted within a dialectical relationship between space and social movements. Engaging with spaces that represent hegemonic interests is meant to challenge the status-quo and undermine the legitimacy of the dominant configuration of power. It reconfigures space in that it functions by disrupting the normal state of affairs, attracting attention from public opinion, and reshaping the site of protest from a symbol of the prevailing system into a symbol of resistance to it. In tandem, spaces provide the material basis for the development of a common identity for the movement. These are spaces wherein alternative ways of practicing politics can be created, developed, and articulated, making possible a more representative and agonistic practice of politics.

Yet, the link between materiality and everyday struggles against systemic forms of insecurity and vulnerability is not confined to public space. Everyday struggles to counter precarious conditions and reduce vulnerability are a common staple in unequal societies. Daily, millions of people are forced find and craft ingenious ways to protect their well-being and ensure a modicum of safety, often through improvised strategies. Focusing on everyday practices of repair and recuperation in Santa Filomena, a precarious neighbourhood in the outskirts of Lisbon, Giacomo Pozzi (2020) shows how land grabbing practices and the construction of informal housing by the community not only functioned to reduce their condition of systemic vulnerability and insecurity. Rather, it also prompted the construction of a shared identity among its members, most of which have lived in a precarious conditions since they arrived there more than three decades ago. In this case, his work demonstrates how the bibliography of precarious households can reveal the transgressive potential of makeshift urbanism. It shows how collective identity and social relations came to be gradually consolidated in parallel with the use of increasingly durable materials in construction process, from the early use of cardboard and wood, to the use of concrete. In that neighbourhood and against the backdrop of systemic insecurity and neglect, everyday practices of material repair and recuperation amounted to emancipatory strategies of resistance and community-building.

All of these examples touch upon issues that are crucial for a critical theory concerned with the insecurity of real people in real places: the systematic destruction of cities and cultural artifacts, the erasure of memory embedded within buildings, but also the struggle against injustice and vulnerability. In bypassing materiality security as

emancipation is also bypassing an important part of the things that makes us human, and thus, neglecting a crucial aspect of world security. In fact, if the starting point for security as emancipation is insecurity, then these examples show us that what insecurity means, does, and is reproduced, cannot be entirely understood if we look exclusively towards the human. In the deliberate attempt to erase or subjugate specific cultures and populations, humans are not the only target. In turning humans into oblivion, we erase the things through which they are made to exist. The destruction of matter takes a crucial part in that process. Material things do not simply enable or constrain; rather, they hold an affective role, they create and sustain meanings and meaningful connections. They glue the memory of the past with the possibilities of the future. Hence, meaning and matter, things and experiences, people and places, cannot be so easily kept apart. By revealing the humanity that is embedded in materiality, posthuman thinking can help security as emancipation to address this issue and see that world security goes beyond the human.

In sum, up until now it was argued that posthuman ideas can strengthen the capacity of security as emancipation to, on the one hand, unpack more critically the imbrication between technology and existing security practices and, on the other, the way in which the well-being of real people is often curtailed through the systematic destruction and neglect of real places. In addition to this, engaging posthuman thinking can strengthen the capacity of this theory to broaden its understanding of insecurity, reconsider our moral duties and obligations towards non-human beings, as well as revise the meaning of emancipation along more-than-human lines. This will be the subject of the next and final sub-section.

#### ***5.4.3. Insecurity, more-than-human rights, and emancipation***

Adopting a posthuman lenses to investigate security and insecurity can help us to reconsider and strengthen some of core tenets underpinning security as emancipation. From a posthuman view, insecurity is not something exclusive to human beings nor can it be seen as merely the product of intersubjective relations. Rather, violence and insecurity is something also interspecific, that is, it also takes places between human and non-human species (Youatt, 2016). By framing the human as the legitimate referent of security, security as emancipation sought to destabilize traditional conceptions and practices. Nonetheless, this is still insufficient to capture the more-

than-human links through which insecurity is produced and reproduced, as well as the non-human forms of insecurity that are entailed in that process. This, in turn, reproduces an instrumental view of security according to which non-human nature can only be conceived either as a threat to the human or a means to secure it. Incorporating insights from posthuman thinking can help security as emancipation to redress this problem.

First, by complicating the division between humanity and animality, an interspecific gaze can allow this theory to reveal the imbrication of human violence and non-human suffering. This is illustrated by Erika Cudworth and Steve Hobden (2014), who argue that war has always been more-than-human. As they suggest, during periods of war, animals have been commonly utilized as weapons, transport, sensors, as well as research subjects or morale boosters. They have been tamed, trained, instrumentalized and made into tools of war and, in some cases, subjected to weapons testing. But animals have also shaped the very own character of war due to their ability to carry heavy loads, to cross military lines undetected, or to detect potential threats. A posthuman perspective can thus help security as emancipation to recognize the interspecific hierarchies and relations upon which security practices rely and through which they are reproduced and made to appear as something natural and legitimate. This reconsideration of insecurity naturally leads to a reconsideration of the ethical horizons of emancipatory security thinking.

A core argument of posthuman approaches is that the human cannot be considered as the only referent to be secured. Currently, security as emancipation engages with the subjective, intersubjective, and structural conditions that make possible to insecurity of real people in real places (Nunes, 2014b). This paves the ground for an intersectional analyses that links existing conditions of insecurity to questions of race, gender, and class (Basu and Nunes, 2013). This theory also extends the gaze of critique in order to engage with the security of other referents such as states, regions, or the world as a whole (Booth, 2007). Despite that, the subject to be protected is always defined in human-terms. As a result, this theory is unable to conceptualize non-human nature as a legitimate subject to be protected, that is, as something whose vulnerability should also be considered when assessing the alternative possibilities that already exist within the current state of affairs. By foregrounding the harm and violence to which

non-humans are systematically subjected to, posthuman insights can also be particularly useful to address this issue.

Specifically, the normative resources offered by posthuman thinking can help us to reconsider the cosmopolitan ethics that underlies security as emancipation. This is pointed out by Mathew Leep (2018), who utilizes the systematic eradication of stray dogs in the aftermath of Iraq war to discuss a posthuman approach to international ethics. For him, by pushing us to recognize that being human does not mean being-in the world but being-with and being-for the world, a posthuman gaze can broaden the ethical horizons of cosmopolitan hospitality and belongingness. As he suggests, an approach that recognizes the mutual vulnerability between human and non-human beings and everyday relations through which they become-with and affect each other, can offer the basis upon which to advance a posthuman form of cosmopolitan belongingness that expands the duties and responsibilities of governments and foreign actors during times of war. In that sense, through an engagement with the posthuman turn security as emancipation is better equipped to engage with the question of how, within a context in which the systematic destruction and vulnerability of non-humans can threaten the existence of human beings, the moral status of non-humans can be thought and our ethical duties towards them instantiated. Engaging with insecurity beyond the human is thus a necessary step entry point to bring non-human beings more fully into the 'cosmopolitan project' of security as emancipation, and make this theory better prepared to help us 'reconstruct a more cosmopolitan future' (Booth, 2007: 428).

Third, adopting a more-than-human lens can also expand the conception of human rights upheld by security as emancipation. In its current form, this theory still relies upon a conception of human rights that is based upon a strict separation between humans and non-human species (Booth, 1999: 32; 2007: 381-392). This, in turn, leads to an arbitrary exclusion of non-human beings and makes their security relevant only to the extent that it can threaten the human. By questioning the basic premise of human rights, the primordial character of human beings as the distinctive feature of humanity based on their cognitive capacity to make choices, posthuman thinking uncovers how far from something natural and universal, the attribution of rights to humans is but the outcome of a process that legitimizes interspecies hierarchies and domination (Cochrane, 2013). In doing so, it also erases our moral duties towards non-human

forms of life. By engaging posthuman thinking, security as emancipation can start to explore the limits and possibilities of rethinking human rights beyond the human. It can put forward a perspective according to which, rights are held by, and responsibilities are held towards, all of those beings that can be harmed as a direct result for the action or inaction of human beings.

Apart from that, posthuman thinking also enables this approach to rethink questions of resistance and emancipatory communities. In its current form, this theory conceives communities as the spaces wherein emancipatory struggles can be realized (Booth, 2007: 138-139). Still, this concept is also seen as something human-bound. Foregrounding the moral status of non-humans beings and the ways in which human and non-human nature are entangled could also open new possibilities to address this issue, that is, to see community, the space of emancipation, as more-than-human. For instance, to Cudworth and Hobden (2018), posthuman emancipation can only emerge within posthuman communities. They define it as heterotopic spaces of interspecies co-existence and wherein alternative ways of being-with and relating to nature are explored. Such communities are envisioned as settings wherein anthropocentric ways of thinking and being are contested and resisted and, at the same time, alternative ways of organizing interspecies relations are brought into being, horizontally, from the bottom-up, and with an eye on minimizing existing forms of violence and subjugation. This clearly speaks to the concerns of security as emancipation. However, a more-than-human engagement inspired by this theory would go beyond interspecificity. Specifically, it would focus not only how these communities transform inter-species relations but also how they incorporate other aspects of insecurity related to gender, class, or race within their discourses, relations, and practices.

Equally important, security as emancipation could also add something important to posthuman debates concerned with security and international politics. Up until now, the posthuman turn has been particularly concerned with exploring the analytical and ethico-political openings that are created by different post-anthropocentric approaches. As previously suggested, there have been three dominant perspectives in this discussion: the first reconsiders the agentic role of technology, the second rethinks the ethical and ontological divide between nature and society, and the third problematizes the affective character of non-human objects. In spite of their promises to provide us with a post-anthropocentric ethics and framework for analysis, the

overwhelming concern with going beyond the human espoused by these approaches has resulted in two problems that can be tackled by security as emancipation.

First, not only have they reified a fundamental distinction between humans and non-humans, but they have also often warranted analytical privileged to the latter over the former (Mitchell, 2014). This means that whilst they are better equipped to reveal the agency, affective role, and moral status of non-humans within existing social configurations, this is often carried at the expense of the human. In fact, each of these approaches often ends up to disqualifying the other.

By foregrounding the links between the insecurity of real people, the destruction of real places, and systematic violence inflicted upon non-human nature, an emancipatory engagement with insecurity could reduce the imbalance between anthropocentric and post-anthropocentric analyses of insecurity. In fact, by taking into consideration the inter-specific and socio-material character of existing social arrangements, this theory is in a privileged position to enable extant discussions about environment-related insecurity to better understand the connections between the inter-species domination and the systematic insecurity experienced by the most vulnerable groups and individuals. Security as emancipation can thus provide the backdrop against which to help develop a more-than-human mode of understanding violence and insecurity that does not warrant analytical privileged to either humans or non-humans, but rather to the relationships through which the insecurities of the former are intertwined with the destruction of the latter.

Second, posthuman-thinking stills shows difficulties when it comes to linking post-anthropocentric ethics and politics. Specifically, current discussions about planetary justice have either remained at normative level or, in contrast, put forward institutional arrangements that are not grounded upon real-world possibilities (Kashwan et al, 2020; Burke and Fishel, 2020). Security as emancipation puts forward a methodological framework that is particularly well-tailored to assess the various posthuman approaches and practices that already exist. Specifically, immanent critique provides scholars with a research tool that can help them to shed light upon the multiple conceptions of posthuman security already circulating at both local to the planetary levels, identify the actors that are better positioned to promote them, and reflect upon their potential limits and pitfalls. This not only strengthens their capacity

to link normative arguments for planetary justice to the conditions of insecurity afflicting both human and non-human beings. It would also provide them with a theoretical resource with which to further engage with and advocate political and planetary arrangements that are not to be imposed from the top-down but from the bottom-up. Simply, immanent critique offers a critical mode of analysis, normative judgement, and political reconsideration that can reduce the idealistic and overly abstract character of extant debates about planetary justice and, in doing so, increase their chances of producing political change.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter engaged with some of the difficulties limiting the capacity of security as emancipation to function as a critical theory of world security. The first section showed that this theory is reliant upon an anthropocentric view of agency and ontology that curtails its ability to function as a critical security theory. By looking at the Anthropocene, the argument raised some practical and important illustrations of this issue, suggesting that, in its current formulation, the theory of security as emancipation is incapable of capturing the entanglement between nature and society, as well as the agency of non-human things. Following from that, it introduced some elements from posthuman thinking that can help to redress this issue. This was followed by a brief assessment of the ways in which posthuman thinking has contributed to reinvigorate discussions about security and international politics through a focus on technology and environmental politics. In the final part, it illustrated how incorporating ideas from posthuman thinking can improve security as emancipation.

First, it was suggested that the ideas of actor-network can provide the conceptual tools to help security as emancipation develop a more refined understanding of the role that technology plays in world politics. This move can help this theory to better recognize the ways in which normative elements are embedded into security devices, how they shape the emergence, stabilization, and transformation of security configurations, as well as the transformative possibilities immanent within those technologies. Second, it was argued that by attuning to materiality and considering it as a constitutive part of humanity that can be utilized as an entry point for critical research, security as emancipation can broaden its understanding of violence. This, in turn, creates new

opportunities to search for ways in which certain forms of violence and the suffering in which they result can be mitigated, prevented and transformed. By laying bare the political force and affective role of technology and materiality, incorporating the insights from the posthuman turn consolidates the ability to offer a critique and reconsideration of existing security arrangements that is grounded upon the struggles and insecurities of real people in real places.

Finally, it was argued that engaging with posthuman thinking can help security to adopt a more inclusive conception of insecurity that recognize the entanglement between the conditions of insecurity experienced by groups and individuals are linked to the systematic violence enacted towards non-human beings. In addition to that, it provides this theory with the normative resources with which to develop a more inclusive conception of cosmopolitan ethics wherein the non-human comes to figure not simply as a security threat or an instrument to secure humanity, but as bearer of rights for whose safety the human holds responsibility. In turn, an emancipatory approach to security can help redress two issues that persist within posthuman approaches to security and international politics: first, it can help it to reduce the analytical imbalance between anthropocentric and post-anthropocentric engagements with insecurity by pushing it to focus upon the ways in which the struggles and insecurities of real people in real places are intertwined with the systematic destruction of non-human nature; second, it provides it with a framework for analysis, assessment, and advocacy of posthuman conceptions of planetary justice that is grounded upon the immanent possibilities that already exist.

## Conclusion

This thesis emerged out of two tendencies identified in the critical security literature. The first was that, after the emergence of critical security theories (Floyd and Croft, 2011), the agenda of critical security studies redirected its focus towards critical security turns (Salter and Mutlu, 2013). Still, up until now, there has been little or no interest in integrating critical security theories and critical security turns. This helped to increase the fragmentation of critical security studies and replicate some exclusions within the literature. Secondly, while being at the heart of the critical security project, the theory framework of security as emancipation (Booth, 2007) has been increasingly marginalized from critical security debates. The emancipation-oriented literature has already proven that this theory can add something important to the critical security agenda (Bilgin, 2005; McDonald, 2012; Bilgic, 2013; Nunes, 2012). By emphasizing the reconstructive promise of critical security studies (Nunes, 2015), this approach is particularly well placed to help scholarship to bridge the critical analysis, normative assessment and political reconsideration of security (Stamnes, 2005; Bilgic, 2013; Nunes, 2014a). In spite of that, in recent years there has been an increasing reluctance of critical scholars to consider security as emancipation a valid theoretical alternative to look critically at security (Hynek and Chandler, 2013).

Against this backdrop, this thesis set out to achieve two goals. The first was that of reinvigorating the analytical, normative, and transformative potential of security as emancipation. In doing so, the thesis sought to help re-establish this approach as an important theoretical alternative within critical security debates. The second was to connect security as emancipation with critical security turns. Despite the development of emancipatory security thinking in the last three decades, this theory is yet to fully engage with critical security turns (Wyn Jones, 1999; Booth, 2007; Nunes, 2014a; Bilgic, 2015). Concomitantly, and with few exceptions (Nyman and Burke, 2016), debates about critical security turns have bypassed a systematic engagement the reconstructive promise of critical security studies (Bueger and Gadinger, 2018;

Aradau et al., 2015; Andersen and Vuori, 2018). Building upon that, it was argued that linking this theory with critical security turns can be a productive avenue to redress the problems that persist within security as emancipation in a way that speaks to extant discussions within the field of critical security studies. Building upon that, this thesis set out to address the following question: *how can the critical turns in security studies help us to redress the insufficiencies of security as emancipation and expand its capacity to provide an analysis, assessment, and reconsideration of security?*

## **Research Findings**

Addressing this question required a systematic engagement with the commitments that underpin security as emancipation as well as the insufficiencies that persist within this theoretical framework. First, it was necessary to clarify the commitment that underpin emancipatory security thinking and assess the extent to which it has been able to deliver upon them. Second, it was necessary to identify the analytical, normative, and transformative possibilities that critical security turns could open for security as emancipation and, building upon that, the avenues that once equipped with resources from critical security turns, this theory can open for critical security studies.

### ***The insufficiencies of security as emancipation***

The first set of research findings thus concerns the insufficiencies the insufficiencies that persist in security as emancipation and the extent to which they constrain its potential to function as a critical security theory. As argued in Chapter 2, security as emancipation seeks to provide a theoretical framework for the analysis, normative assessment, and political reconsideration of existing security arrangements. This, however, must be grounded upon an engagement with the struggles and insecurities of real people in real places. However, the first problem identified in security as emancipation was the lack of research tools with which to engage with the struggles and insecurities of real people in real places (Nunes, 2014b; Bilgic, 2015). Chapter 3 argued that this results from an imbalance in this theory between its focus on methodology and its neglect of methods. Up until now, security as emancipation is yet to go beyond questioning the methodological tenets of traditional security thinking and clarifying the methodological principles that orient this theory (Wyn Jones, 1999;

Basu, 2011; Stamnes, 2005). Still, extant debates have demonstrated that engaging with method is not only crucial to make critical research more transparent and attuned to its commitments (Shepherd, 2013; Salter and Mutlu, 2013; Mutlu, 2015). Rather, reconsidering method from a critical perspective is also crucial to reinvigorate the transformative potential of critical research (Aradau and Huysmans, 2013; Aradau et al., 2015). It was argued that exploring the synergies between security as emancipation and ethnographic methods represented a promising avenue to strengthen the capacity of this theory to critically engage with the struggles and insecurities of real people in real places.

The thesis detected other insufficiencies that persist in the theory of security as emancipation. According to this approach, engaging real people in real places is not a goal in itself. Rather, exploring the struggles and insecurities provides this theory with a normative anchorage for the immanent critique of existing security arrangements (Booth, 2007; Basu and Nunes, 2013). In its current form, the immanent critique offered by security as emancipation relies upon the deepening and extending of security in order to reveal the assumptions, actors, and policies that are promoted by different conceptions of security (Wyn Jones, 1999; Bilgin, 2005; Williams, 2007; McDonald, 2012; Bilgic, 2013). Chapter 4 argued that these strategies are insufficient to translate the commitments of security as emancipation from theory to practice. Deepening or extending security does not allow security as emancipation to understand the conditions that make possible existing security arrangements to emerge as something natural and necessary. More critically, they render this approach unable to demonstrate the extent to which these are linked to the struggles and insecurities of real people in real places. In other words, the immanent critique provided by security as emancipation still demonstrates some difficulties when it comes to revealing the extent to which extant practices of security contribute to reducing or increasing the security, well-being, and freedom of certain groups and individuals.

Building upon that, Chapter 5 further problematized the link between real people and real places within security as emancipation. Specifically, it posited that this theory lacks the resources with which to assess the intertwinement between the security of real people and real places. The argument started by addressing the commitment of security as emancipation to function as a critical theory of world security and offer an approach capable of engaging with multiple referents and objects of security at

different scales (Booth and Vale, 1997; Booth, 2007; 2014; Bilgic, 2016). In spite of that, it was argued, in its current form security as emancipation still relies upon human-centric conception of ontology, agency, and ethics that constrains its ability to engage with non-human. Drawing upon discussions about the Anthropocene, the argument suggested that this constrains the ability of security as emancipation to appreciate the political force of non-humans, assess the multiple ways in which the security of human beings is entangled with the materiality, and recognize the moral status of non-human nature. This constrains the critical potential of security as emancipation and turns it into a theory according to which the non-human can either be conceived as a threat to the security of the human or an instrument to secure it.

In sum, this thesis argued that the theoretical framework of security as emancipation still has some important fragilities that, if left unaddressed, can bring into question its ability to provide an analysis, assessment, and reconsideration of existing security arrangements grounded upon real people in real places. Currently, this theory lacks the methodological resources to engage the struggles and insecurities of real people in real places, demonstrates difficulties when engaging and critiquing current security practices, and upholds an anthropocentric conception of the world that makes it incapable of unpacking the intertwinement between the human and non-human layers of security. It was based upon this assessment that the argument explored the critical security turns that are better positioned to help reinvigorate security as emancipation a reconnect it with extant debates in critical security studies.

### ***Linking critical security theories and turns***

The second set of research findings therefore relates to the different ways in which critical security turns have contributed towards the agenda of critical security studies and, more importantly, how linking them with the theory of security as emancipation can strengthen its ability to deliver upon its promises.

Chapter 3 explored how security as emancipation could benefit from incorporating the methodological resources offered by the ethnographic turn. First, the argument introduced and assessed two methodological strategies with which ethnography has critically engaged with real people in real places: autoethnography and collaborative ethnography. Then, it assessed the extent to which it contributed to advance the agenda of critical security studies and international relations. The ethnographic turn, it was

argued, entailed a simultaneous move inwards intended to complicate the relation between the researching subject and the subjects of research, as well as a move outwards allowing for a more nuanced engagement of the former with the agency, experiences, and concerns of the latter. Building upon the literature inspired by this turn, the argument illustrated the ways in which incorporating strategies from critical and applied ethnography can extend the critical edge of security as emancipation. It was argued that ethnographic methods allow this theory to develop a horizontal and participatory strategy to assess and reconsider security and develop a more nuanced analysis of the struggles and insecurities of real people in real places.

Chapter 4 investigated the analytical, normative, and transformative benefits that can result from integrating insights from the practice turn into security as emancipation. Specifically, the argument started by mapping some key thinking tools put forward by Pierre Bourdieu in his theory of practice. It then laid out the most substantive ways in which his work contributed towards the practice turn within the critical security literature. By foregrounding practice rather than discourse, his thinking tools enabled a richer understanding of the professional struggles and relations through which current security arrangements have been socially constructed and authorized as being necessary and legitimate. Specifically, practice-oriented thinking allowed researchers to capture the multiple strategies through which traditional actors have been able to maintain their authority within a markedly different context but also how new actors entered the field of security and helped to reshape its meaning and practices. Next, it was argued that incorporating these thinking tools strengthens the capacity of security as emancipation to tackle the two problems identified: understanding the conditions that make certain security practices possible and, more importantly, the ways in which they reduce or reinforce the insecurity of real people in real places.

Chapter 5 investigated the extent to which security as emancipation can strengthen its critical potential by incorporating insights from the posthuman turn. Through an engagement with different strands of posthuman literature, the argument started by showing that posthuman thinking offers novel possibilities with which to grasp the active role of technology in shaping social and political relations, appreciate how human livelihoods are given meaning by and through material artefacts, as well as reconsider the ethical and moral status of non-human beings. In critical security debates these arguments have been particularly important to help scholars overcome

the human-centric character of the literature that explores the role of technology in security and the nexus between security and environmental concerns. The final section argued that, by engaging this literature, security as emancipation is better equipped to unpack the link between the security of real people and real places, problematize the ethical status of non-human nature and, and put forward a more nuanced critique and reconsideration of the increasing role played by technology in contemporary security practices, as well as of the possibilities that technology opens in terms of resisting and transforming existing social arrangements.

In brief, the thesis addressed the research question by showing that engaging with critical security turns can help to redress some of the insufficiencies that persist in the theoretical framework of security as emancipation. The ethnographic turn provides this theory with methodological tools with which to engage with the struggles and insecurities of real people in real places. In addition to that, the practice turn allows security as emancipation to link these struggles and insecurities more consistently with its critique of existing security arrangements. Finally, the posthuman turn reveals that real people cannot be so neatly separated from real places and that in order to promote the security and well-being of the former it is necessary to acknowledge the agency, meaning, and moral status of the latter. The analytical, normative, and transformative gains resulting from that will now be discussed with more detail.

## **Reassessing security as emancipation**

The dialogues that unfolded through the thesis identified some important tensions that continue to loom in security as emancipation. Apart from pointing the insufficiencies that persist in this theory and which constrain its ability to deliver upon its promises, the thesis suggested that security as emancipation should seek to incorporate resources from critical turns that do not always sit comfortably with the idea of emancipation. Posthuman thinking inherently complicates the status of human beings as the perennial elements of social and political life and, consequently, the extent to which ideas of emancipation or rights can be based upon the criteria of language and consciousness. In addition to that, practice-oriented research has been particularly reluctant to engage with the emancipatory struggles despite its overwhelming concern with providing us with tools with which to identify and tackle contemporary forms of symbolic violence.

Finally, the crisis of ethnography also urged a serious reflection about the extent to which its methods have been complicit in numerous attempts to manage and control vulnerable populations and reify relations of inequality, violence, subjugation.

Given these tensions between emancipation and these critical turns, it also necessary to assess the extent to which the theoretical reconsiderations conducted in this thesis can potentially undermine the fundamental commitments of security as emancipation or, in contrast, make it better equipped to provide a critical analysis, assessment, and reconsideration of security and reflect upon its own limits and possibilities. In other words, do the resources mobilized from critical security turns subvert this theory, or do they reinvigorate its potential to offer a critical security theory grounded upon the struggles and insecurities of real people in real places?

The first step is thus to assess the extent to which this exercise challenged the core concern of this theory. According to this approach, the meaning of emancipation is not static. It is the product of the dialectic relationship between structures of oppression and domination and the very real, concrete struggles through which these are contested and subverted in particular places, opening the space so that certain groups that have been systematically placed in a marginalized position can live less determined lives (Basu, 2011; McDonald, 2012; Nunes, 2014b; Bilgic, 2015). Nonetheless, the concept of emancipation has also been instrumentalized to legitimize the reduction in the freedom and well-being of certain groups and individuals (Kennedy-Pipe, 2004). At the same time, a larger number of resources dedicated to security does not necessarily lead to an improvement in the current state of affairs. In the name of security, millions have been killed, rights have been curtailed, freedoms have been suspended, and entire countries have been put under the external control. Still, this idea has also been deployed to bring attention to blatant insecurities that often go unnoticed and, in doing so, to redirect attention and resources into issues that, up until recently, have remained systematically neglected (Elbe, 2006).

As discussed in Chapter 2, security as emancipation is aware of this impasse. In spite of the common criticisms faced by this approach, all the authors that subscribe to this approach have recognized that emancipation is not a utopian idea or a blue-print to be imposed from the top-down (Booth, 2007). Rather, any attempt to engage critically with existing security practices from an emancipatory perspective starts from the

assumption that any emancipatory claims must be grounded upon the immanent potentialities already present within the current state of affairs (Williams, 2001; Stamnes, 2005; Basu and Nunes, 2013). Emancipation is a matter of taking small steps that can gradually remove the constraints upon freedom and well-being of groups and individuals in the short, medium, and long-term (Booth, 2007). It was also pointed that in order to pursue that goal there needs to be an idea of what progress might mean in practice. Still, this cannot be predefined nor imposed by external actors: it must be based in the assessment of the concrete struggles and interests of those placed in a position of insecurity (Nunes, 2014b). This engagement with real people in real places is thus starting point for emancipatory analysis of security, as well as the anchorage upon which to evaluate current security practices and the alternatives that already exist (Bilgic, 2013).

Chapter 3 provided security as emancipation with a set of critical research methods that are particularly tailored to pursue this endeavour. The modes of inquiry adopted by the ethnographic turn speak directly to the core concern of this theory: to provide a critique and reconsideration of security that is grounded upon an engagement with real people in real places. As argued, they can further the ability of emancipatory security thinking to contextualize the insecurities and struggles of real people in real places, appreciate how they are actively seeking to improve their own conditions of living, investigate the extent to which current policies take them into consideration, identify the alternatives that already exist to improve them, but also engage with the different conceptions of security articulated and prefigured by real people in real places, both individually and collectively. In doing so, these methods offer powerful strategies with which to strengthen the burgeoning interest of security as emancipation to investigate the conditions of insecurity of real people in real places as well as their struggles and practices of resistance (Nunes, 2014b; Bilgic, 2015).

In addition to that, applied ethnography provides this theory with a set of participatory research methods that make possible to operationalize an analysis, assessment, and reconsideration of security whilst including real people in real places into the different stages of research. Collaborative ethnographic methods allow emancipatory analysis to start from the ground-up and be carried out side by side with those whose insecurities are at stake, through a participatory strategy that enables them to take an active role in both constructing the problematique but also in problematizing the

alternatives that already exist (Lassiter, 2005). Far from undercutting the emancipatory impulse underlying this theory, engaging the ethnographic turn seems to be a natural and necessary step in allowing it to be more consistent when delivering upon its promises. Ethnography thus provides this approach with resources through which it can more fully translate its analytical, normative, and transformative commitments from theory to practice.

The same can be said about the practice-oriented thinking. Apart from a sophisticated engagement with real people in real places, an emancipatory analysis requires an in-depth analysis of existing security arrangements and, when necessary, an assessment of the possibilities that already exist to transform, improve, or replace them. For that reason, engaging in the immanent critique of security has been the main focus of several authors inspired by this approach (Bilgin, 2005; Stamnes, 2004; Williams, 2007; Bilgic, 2013). This literature has demonstrated the added value of adopting a reconstructive outlook when engaging in the critique of security and the importance of assessing alternative conceptions of security. In spite of that, up until now this literature continues to reveal some difficulties when it comes to, first, offering a rigorous analysis of existing security arrangements and, second, clarifying the extent to which these are intertwined with the struggles and insecurities of real people in real places. As suggested, by overemphasizing discourses, policies, and political theory, security as emancipation in its current configuration does not hold the critical tools with which to link the engagement with real people in real places in real places with the critique and reconsideration of existing security arrangements.

Seeking to redress this issue, Chapter 4 introduced a different way of engaging in the critique and assessment of security. By incorporating tools with which to reconsider the everyday practices of security professionals as the entry point for research, security as emancipation is better equipped to offer critique of existing security arrangements. It argued that using the thinking tools developed by Bourdieu can broaden the capacity of emancipation-oriented research to appreciate the relations and struggles through which certain security practices come to be authorized and accepted as something necessary and legitimate. Focusing on the literature inspired by the practice turn, it was showed that rather than taking existing security arrangements for granted, this theory can be better prepared to unpack the strategies through which new actors enter into the field of security and more traditional actors adapt themselves to preserve their

authority within it. More importantly, however, a practice-oriented engagement can enable this theory to lay bare more fully the link between current security practices and the conditions of insecurity experienced by real people in real places, as well as their struggles to resist it. By incorporating resources from the practice turn this, theory is therefore better positioned to empirically assess security arrangements and evaluate the extent to which they are complicit in reproducing or redressing insecurity.

Nonetheless, security practices are not exclusively human. Existing arrangements are increasingly reliant upon sophisticated devices and software that enacts security in certain ways while neglecting others. From drones to body scanners, technology is ubiquitously involved in the assemblages through which security is governed at different scales (de Goede, 2017). Technological devices and advanced software are utilized help to map risks, anticipate threats and, in doing so, they take an active role in decision making, be that in terms of policy making or in the everyday practices of border officers (Frowd, 2014; Bigo, 2014). This has important consequences for real people in real places. Chapter 5 engaged with this issue which, up until now, has been largely overlooked by the agenda of security as emancipation. The argument offered some insights about how this theory can start to rethink the ontological, political, and ethical role of that which is non-human in the politics of world security. It argued that incorporating some resources from the posthuman turn can expand the critical edge of security as emancipation.

Three major insights resulted from this this discussion. First, it was argued that the ideas introduced broaden the capacity of security as emancipation to understand the minute ways in which technological devices function to authorize security practices and naturalize certain assumptions about what should be secured, how, from what, and for what purpose. In contrast, it can also reconsider technology as a potential entry point to craft an applied mode of emancipation-oriented critique, tailored to expand the capacity of real people in real places to resist and subvert practices deemed harmful and unjust. In addition to that, incorporating posthuman insights can also broaden the ability of this theory to capture how existing insecurities are often perpetuated through the systematic destruction and neglect of the material surroundings of certain groups and individuals. Destroying buildings, squares, or homes is not only about making people feel insecure. It is also about making them feel that they can no longer be in charge of determining their future and choosing how to live. By erasing that which

gives meaning to the past and makes everyday life possible, these actions are shape the possibilities for the future. If security as emancipation seeks to understand the struggles and insecurities of real people, it necessarily needs to pay more attention to how they are connected with real places. Engaging with the posthuman turn opens up the possibility of doing so.

In addition to that, engaging posthuman thinking can make security as emancipation better prepared to overcome a major problem that persists in this theory: that of seeing non-human nature as either a threat to the security of human beings or an instrument to secure them. In this regard, posthuman ideas can broaden the capacity of this theory to assess the intertwinement between the insecurities experienced by real people, the destruction of non-human nature, and the violence enacted towards non-human beings. It provides this theory with the tools to recognize not only the intersectional character of insecurity but also its interspecificity. This, in turn, offers a privileged starting point to take into account both the human and non-human implications of existing security arrangements and, equally important, reconsider the safety of non-human beings when assessing the possibilities that already exist to transform them. More critically though, against the backdrop of ecological decline and climate change, posthuman resources provide fruitful starting points from which to reconsider the cosmopolitan ethics to which this theory subscribes and develop a more inclusive conception of human rights. Simply, through this move security as emancipation is better equipped to account for the link between human and non-human insecurity and, building on that, rethink the moral status of the later vis-à-vis the former.

In sum, in Chapter 3, 4, and 5 this thesis showed that incorporating resources from the critical security turns does not weaken the commitments of security as emancipation. Instead, it provides this theory with resources particularly well-tailored to recognize its analytical, normative, and transformative insufficiencies and numerous tools with which to redress them. Ethnographic methods expand the ability of this theory to analyze assess the struggles and insecurities of real people in real places and provides it with the tools to start working side by side with the insecure to transform the current state of affairs. Practice-oriented concepts allow it to understand how these struggles and insecurities are intertwined with current security arrangements. Posthuman thinking creates the possibility of taking into account the entanglement between real

people and real places and, concomitantly, lays the ground so that this theory can develop a more-than-human view of both insecurity, security, and emancipation.

### **Reengaging security as emancipation and critical security studies**

Overall, this thesis has demonstrated that linking security as emancipation with critical security turns can offer promising insights to this approach. Incorporating the critical resources developed in the context of ethnographic, practice, and posthuman turns can strengthen its ability to analyse existing insecurities, assess current security practices, and evaluate between the alternatives that already exist to improve them. This effort goes a long way in helping security as emancipation to be more consistent in relation to some of its core commitments, but it also opens up new lines of inquiry that can consolidate its engagement with the insecurity of real people in real places and the immanent critique of existing security arrangements. Apart from that, it can also add something important to critical security turns by pushing them to also consider the reconstructive aspect of critique, that is, the underlying commitment to help us assess existing security practices and evaluate between the already-existing alternatives that are most appropriate to replace them. However, what does this mean for those seeking to engage with security as emancipation in their research? What type of questions does this engagement allow this theory to ask? How do the reconsiderations of security as emancipation strengthen the critical potential of this theory?

#### ***Future avenues for security as emancipation***

An emancipatory approach to security must necessarily be grounded the struggles and insecurities of real people in real places (Bilgic, 2015). They provide the analytical starting point, normative ground, and transformative orientation of emancipatory security thinking (Booth, 2007). Equipped with the ethnographic tools introduced, emancipation-oriented research will be better prepared to deliver upon this promise and shed critical light upon questions that speak directly to its core concern. Specifically, this theory is better prepared to ask: How exactly are these everyday insecurities that are often reproduced through practices of security experienced by real people in real places? How, in practice, do security discourses and practices contribute towards alleviating or increasing these insecurities? How are they being resisted, and which visions of security are being reimagined through the everyday actions of those

most afflicted by them? Nonetheless, the struggles and insecurities of real people in real places must always be understood within the broader context (Nunes, 2014b).

In addition to that, this thesis provided important insights that can orient emancipatory research focused on the links between existing struggles and insecurities and the material conditions within which they take place. By putting a stronger emphasis on the relationship between real people and real places, this theory can now be equipped to investigate: How does the destruction or neglect of real places contribute to intensify the insecurity of real people? In which ways does the systematic targeting of public infrastructure, buildings, or households condition the possibilities of alternative futures? How can a reconsideration of the ways in which spaces and places are conceptualized, designed, and assembled contribute towards the forging of more inclusive and pluralist communities? How is materiality involved in everyday efforts to resist forms of systematic vulnerability and insecurity? This not only goes a long way in helping to consolidate this approach as a privileged avenue with which to explore the more localized conditions of insecurity and resistance, it pushes this theory to further recognize that any critical assessment and reconsideration of security should always take into account the active and affective role played by materiality.

The thesis also stressed the importance of accounting for the relationship between the subject of research and the researching subject. This is something crucial to make this theory more transparent about its goals but also more reflexive about its potential limits and implications. To do so, and through the ideas advanced by autoethnographic methods, emancipatory security research can seek to take more thoroughly into consideration questions such as: How are the struggles and insecurities being researched entangled with our everyday life as researchers? To what extent are our theoretical assumptions and methods adequate to engage with that particular issue? Can these assumptions and methods provoke harm and reinforce certain stereotypes upon the subjects being studied? Should they be revised in order to redress this issue? Do these insecurities and the broader context that makes them possible cast new light upon the limits and insufficiencies of security as emancipation? To what extent do they bring into question the overarching assumptions that underpin this approach?

It is one thing for security as emancipation to explicitly seek to change the world, from the bottom-up. It is a completely different thing not to recognize that this endeavour

will always carry with it certain problems and contradictions, some of which can only be overcome with the help of other critical resources. By foregrounding the self and seeing security research as something more than linear procedure of data collection and interpretation, these autoethnographic questions allow emancipation-oriented researchers to better account for the serendipity and uncertainty of that process, to acknowledge the taken-for-granted ideas that are shattered, as well as the affective connections and ethical dilemmas that emerge through it. It forces them to be clear about ethical and methodological choices, but also about its own uncertainties and limitations. Through these questions, security as emancipation is better equipped to appreciate how security practices permeate our own lives, how certain disciplinary assumptions shape our ways of being and writing, and how the subjects of insecurity are not some distant beings that must be saved, but someone with which we can share deep affective connections.

Nonetheless, the normative commitment of security as emancipation also requires an in-depth and sophisticated critique and reconsideration of existing security practices (Bilgin, 2005; Bilgic, 2013; McDonald, 2012). In this regard, a practice-oriented engagement can also extend the capacity of this literature to better unpack the political assumptions that underlie existing security practices and how they are linked to the experiences of insecurity of real people in real places. As showed, equipped with these tools, emancipatory security research can start to delve more thoroughly into: How do certain theoretical and political assumptions are enacted through the everyday practices of security professionals? How are these contending views of security negotiated between different actors? To which extent do these practices reinforce problematic assumptions about security but also about certain regions, states, or groups? How are security practices implicated in the marginalization of groups and individuals, and through which processes and relations are new practices of security authorized? All of this speaks directly to researchers seeking to draw upon security as emancipation in order to offer a critical analysis, assessment, and reconsideration of security.

The resources put forward not only strengthen the capacity of this theory to lay bare the links between security practices and real people in real places. They also create the opportunity of developing a set of research questions that takes into account the socio-material character of these practices and role that technological devices take within

them. Incorporating the insights offered by posthuman thinking, emancipation-oriented researchers can set out to investigate: How and for what reason are certain technologies incorporated into existing security arrangements? What particular set of assumptions about security do they help to contest or reinforce? How exactly do they mediate these arrangements? To which extent do they contribute to normalize practices of violence and exclusion? Going beyond that, however, this line of inquiry also raises other questions that are particularly relevant for security as emancipation: to which extent and under what conditions certain technologies can help to reduce the structural insecurities experienced by real people in real places? And ultimately, how can they be conceived in a way that supports their struggles to challenge and transform the status-quo?

These questions refer to issues that were already at the center of emancipatory security thinking. Nonetheless, they further the ability of this theory to, on the one hand, cast light upon existing struggles and insecurities and, on the other, assess and reconsider existing security practices. In addition to that, this thesis was also interested in showing that, once this theory is linked to these three critical security turns, it can also add something important to current debates in critical security studies. As such, it is still necessary to clarify how can the reconsideration of security as emancipation put forward in this thesis extend the critical edge of critical security studies.

### ***Future avenues for critical security turns***

As pointed in Chapter 1, the field of critical security studies encloses a two-fold concern with deconstructing and reconstructing security (Krause and Williams, 1997). Still, much of the work that emerged out of critical turns has been predominantly concerned with the former whilst frequently neglecting the latter. Turns have been particularly productive in helping us to unpack the multiple ways through which security threat, referents, and objects are constituted. They have also shed critical light upon the increasing role of technologies in this process, and the socio-technical character of security practices. In addition to that, turns offered new ways of engaging the agency of those placed in a position of insecurity, shed light upon the corporeal dimensions of security and insecurity, but also on the creative strategies of resistance and subversion through which existing security arrangements are being contested and resisted. Despite that, they have remained hesitant to engage in the reconsideration of

existing security practices and the normative assessment of the alternatives that already exist to replace them (Aradau et al., 2015; Salter and Mutlu, 2013).

An engagement between security as emancipation and critical security turns can help to redress this issue. Equipped with resources from applied ethnography, emancipatory security thinking can help us to take existing discussions about visuality in critical security studies to the following level (Andersen and Vuori, 2018). Even if visual turn has been one of the most productive and sophisticated debates in the field, it has been overwhelmingly concerned with the semiotic role of images in relation to security (Williams, 2003; Hansen, 2011; Bleiker, et al., 2014). As discussed in Chapter 3, up until now, the attention of critical security researchers has been placed almost exclusively in investigating how images are utilized to reproduce or disrupt hegemonic meanings and subjectivities. Strongly anchored to poststructural insights, images and other visual signs have been seen as a privileged vehicle with which to understand the performance of security and insecurity or, in contrast, the meanings through which certain actors seek to challenge dominant understandings of this notion. In addition to that, there has also been a growing interest in exploring the pedagogic potential of visuality in the class-room.

Security as emancipation can take this debate further. Given its concern with starting the critique of security through an engagement with real people in real places, this approach can help to further consolidate the use of visual methodologies as a legitimate mode of inquiry (Andersen and Vuori, 2018). A collaborative analysis requires the adopting of research strategies and methods through which the subjects of research are not simply considered as informants but as co-producers of critical knowledge (Holmes and Marcus, 2008). In other words, it stresses the need to involve them in the discussions about the problem-definition and the potential alternatives to redress it. This, in turn, speaks directly to a small number of authors that are already seeking to position visual methodologies into the context of IR, but which are yet to link these debates more explicitly to critical security studies (Harman, 2016; Callahan, 2015).

In addition to that, ethnographic methods also place this theory in a strong position to extend the methods turn in critical security studies (Wilcox, 2016). Apart from exploring the methods better suited for different critical theories, this discussion

advanced three overarching arguments. First, that methods contain in them assumptions about the world, help to reproduce hierarchies of knowledge, and authorize certain practices with concrete implications for the subjects of security (Krause and Williams, 1996; Hansen, 2004). Second, that critical scholarship should not conceive research as a linear and straightforward process that starts with defining meta-theoretical promises and theoretical approaches, selecting the adequate methods, and applying them empirically (Salter and Mutlu, 2013; Mutlu, 2015). Rather, if we are to capture the complexity of social and political relations, methods should be seen as experimental assemblages that can help us to address critical questions (Aradau et al., 2015). Third, that research methods have the potential to help expose and subvert existing power relations and support marginalized ways of knowing and being in and with the world (Aradau and Huysmans, 2013).

However, up until now, the argument about the emancipatory potential of critical methods remains almost untouched (but see Åhäll, 2018). By engaging with method, security as emancipation can bring this latter question to the fore. In fact, the strategies of collaborative ethnography are particularly tailored to advance this discussion. They not only contest the conventional modalities of data extraction and interpretation, but also push us to think more systematically about how critical security knowledge can have a greater impact upon the existing state of affairs (Lassiter, 2005; Schensul et al., 2008). Through methods such as photo-voice, it was pointed, it is possible to conduct critical security research in a way that stresses the agency and reflexivity of research subjects. This offers the opportunity of producing a more dialogical engagement with those systematically placed in a position of vulnerability, but also a way in which their worldviews can be mobilized to inform public discussion and potentially, to reform policy-making.

In addition to that, a revised version of security as emancipation can also extend the critical edge of the practice turn in security studies (Bueger and Gadinger, 2018). Being also one of the most successful turns within critical literature, practice-oriented research has been largely successful in pushing research to go beyond the analysis of official documents and the discourses of political elites. It pushed research to engage with other actors. From diplomats to security analysts and border officers, practice thinking enriched not only the vocabulary of security researchers but also opened the door to a more nuanced understanding of the ways in which security is constructed

through minute, almost invisible, routines and actions (Balzacq et al. 2010). Despite that, this has done very little to correct the elitist bias within security studies. Security is still studied from the top-down. In other words, it still places the focus of research predominantly upon policy-makers and those that are responsible for crafting, translating, and implementing them (Bueger and Gadinger, 2018).

Security as emancipation can add to this agenda by pushing the debate to also engage communities of practices and practitioners that are mostly concerned with resisting rather than implementing existing security arrangements. This approach is particularly tailored to open the space for an engagement with practice that is not only focused on domination but also sheds light upon the conditions for contesting and subverting existing security arrangements. An emancipatory approach would not only seek to reveal the implicit assumptions upon which these communities operate and how their practices contribute to normalize certain forms of exclusion, violence, and insecurity. Rather, it would also require an engagement with agency and the instances wherein certain actors seek to disrupt existing arrangements and the conditions that can promote such behaviour. Security as emancipation can thus provide the backdrop to link a critical approach to practice developed by Bourdieu with a pragmatic approach as developed by Boltanski. In other words, and as argued in Chapter 4, approaching practice from the perspective of security as emancipation would require an effort to study both practices of oppression and those of resistance and subversion.

Finally, it was argued that security as emancipation is in a privileged position to correct some limitations in the posthuman turn. Up until now, posthuman thinking in security studies has been largely successful in two particular aspects. First, by emphasizing the political force of the non-human, it led to a reassessment of technology within security beyond instrumentalist and essentialist views (McCarthy, 2018). Stressing the socio-technical character of security relations, posthuman insights paved the ground for analysing the processes through which certain devices come to be implemented into existing security practices, their role in normalizing certain assumptions about security, and their implications upon the subjects of security (Frowd, 2014; Schouten, 2014). Second, by questioning the ontological divide between nature and society, posthuman literature led to a reconsideration of anthropocentric conceptions of non-human nature within the security literature (Cudworth et al., 2018; Pereira and Saramago, 2020). Specifically, it pushed researchers to recognize that nature can no

longer be seen as either a security threat or an instrument of security. Rather, from a post-anthropocentric perspective, non-human nature must be considered first and foremost as a referent to be protected, not only due to its entanglement to the safety and well-being of humanity but also due to its intrinsic moral value. (Mitchell, 2016)

Security as emancipation can advance this discussion in at least two ways. First, by stressing the need to link any assessment of existing security practices to the struggles and insecurities of real people in real places, this approach can bridge the gap between anthropocentric and post-anthropocentric critiques of security. In fact, security as emancipation is particularly well-positioned to help us develop a more-than-human understanding of violence and insecurity that does not warrant analytical privilege to either humans or non-humans but rather focuses upon the relationships through which the insecurities of the former are intertwined with the destruction of the latter. Second, by stressing the need to link normative debates about security and world politics to possibilities that already exist within the current state of affairs, the immanent critique advocated by security as emancipation can help us to reduce the idealistic and overly abstract character of current problematizations of planetary justice. Specifically, it provides a tool that links the normative judgement and political reconsideration that is envisioned by the proponents of planetary justice to the alternative potentialities that are already immanent within existing social and political configurations.

In sum, the field of critical security studies resulted from a widespread dissatisfaction with the assumptions, scope, and methods of traditional security studies. This led to the development of critical security theories and, in a later stage, the emergence of critical security turns. Whilst consolidating the critical project as a valid alternative to the traditional security studies, both theories and turns ended up reproducing certain silences and exclusions. They reinforced the gradual fragmentation of critical security studies and the imbalance between the deconstructive and reconstructive agendas of critical security studies. This thesis demonstrated that exploring the synergies between critical security theories and critical security turns is a powerful strategy to start redressing this situation. It was argued that security as emancipation is particularly well positioned to advance this endeavour.

Incorporating critical resources from the ethnographic, practice, and posthuman turns can help us to strengthen the capacity of this theory to engage with the struggles and

insecurities of real people in real places and, based upon that, provide an immanent critique of existing security arrangements. This improves the capacity of security as emancipation to function as a critical theory for the analysis, assessment, and reconsideration of security. Once equipped with these resources, security as emancipation can also add something to critical security debates and push them to take into further consideration their reconstructive potential. Ultimately, engaging critical turns can both reinvigorate the critical potential of this theory and, in doing so, re-establish security as emancipation as an alternative for critical security studies.

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