

Spaces of desecuritisation: Understanding changing audiences within desecuritisation

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Biography

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Abstract

Securitisation theory is at the centre of understanding how an issue becomes accepted as a threat. A concept that has received considerably less attention is “desecuritisation”, the withdrawal of securitisation. This article examines the audience in different types of desecuritisation strategies, where a more comprehensive understanding of the audience is lacking. In considering multiple *spaces of desecuritisation*, this article focuses on the audience's active role in enabling desecuritisation and, as a result, develops a more comprehensive understanding of the audience. In this way, this article suggests a more thorough theoretical understanding of one of the fundamental puzzles within desecuritisation: how and when desecuritisation occurs. The theoretical development concerning the audience is conducted through engaging with a wide range of theories on spatiality, the everyday and the broader critical field of securitisation theory. Instead of what has previously been the case, where the audience was thought of as a passive, static and binary receiver of a (de)securitisation move, the audience in this article is theorised as changing and dynamic. This view of the audience has implications for securitisation theory in general, and for desecuritisation theory in particular. Envisioning the audience as an active part in shaping the conditions of desecuritisation provides a theoretical understanding of how securitisation's logic of particularisation, the distinctive separation between threat and referent object, can be loosened and, eventually, abandoned. Ultimately, this article contributes to the literature on desecuritisation by refocusing attention on the audience and theorising it as an important and enabling actor in the interactive game of desecuritisation.

Keywords: [Securitisation Theory](#); [Desecuritisation](#); [Audience](#); [Desecuritisation Strategies](#); [Space](#); [Everyday](#); [Contestation](#); [Israel-Palestine Conflict](#).

Introduction

At 4:15 a.m. on a dead-end street, a 33-year-old Palestinian man came running from the shadows between buildings with a rickety wooden ladder. He slapped it against the hulking concrete wall and climbed up, hoisting himself the last six feet.

Glanz and Nazzal, The New York Times, 2016

The specific political distinction to which political action and motives can be reduced is that between friend and enemy.

Schmitt, 1996 [1932], p. 26

The nine-metre concrete wall casts long shadows on the dry and dusty ground as I walk along the separation wall. The wall cuts through the Occupied Palestinian Territories on the West Bank, a physical wall that separates Palestine from Israel. Walking alongside the wall, the villages and cities bear signs of the everyday experience imposed by this seemingly impenetrable structure.¹ Movement in, to and from the West Bank is getting increasingly difficult, and roads from cities and villages are being cut off, making social and economic life demanding. After walking along the wall, I take a taxi heading for Hebron. The driver is a young Palestinian man in his early thirties. On the drive south, the wall, the fortified Israeli settlements and the military outposts are present reminders of the ongoing conflict. The unwavering and intrusive architecture is a powerful cue as to why so many academics have deemed an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to be a ‘logical impossibility’ (Roe, 2004, in Olesker, 2014, p. 379). On the journey south through the West Bank, the driver explains that many Palestinians without ID or work permit enter Israel by climbing over the wall. Usually, people will only go to Israel for a few days and then come back the same way they left, he says. Looking into these informal routes into Israel, I understand that this incongruous commute is something that around thirty to sixty thousand Palestinians regularly complete (Glanz and Nazzal, 2016; Mannergren-Selimovic, 2018, pp. 140–141; The Swedish Institute of International Affairs, 2016). The wall, in all its manifested physical inflexibility, instantly seems less inflexible.

In academia, conflict, especially what has been described as ‘ethnic conflict’, is perceived as particularly problematic to resolve (e.g. Rouhana and Bar-Tal, 1998, p. 762). This broad notion of the word “conflict” is commonly used in studies on peace, conflict and security issues in order to understand how identities and ethnic binaries become perceived as existential threats. According to securitisation theory, this is when a group is threatened and when extraordinary measures, such as border walls, violence and extensive surveillance are permitted in order to tackle this perceived threat (Buzan et al., 1998, pp. 12–14). The theory of securitisation has been extremely influential in shaping the understanding of how something, not necessarily physical or objective, becomes constructed as a threat. When exploring Israel’s security

measures on the West Bank, it becomes evident that the tautological theoretical understanding of security is seemingly limited. The informal routes into Israel, the messages of pacifism adorning the separation wall or the common spaces of cooperation existing in parallel to the securitised environment (Gazit and Latham, 2014, p. 75) might be signs of other processes.

This introduction aims to achieve three things. Firstly, it intends to establish the purpose of this article and its contribution to a central conundrum within desecuritisation: how and when desecuritisation occurs. Secondly, it seeks to describe the usefulness of engaging with spatial theories as an arena to capture important, unseen practices of the audience. Thirdly, it presents the main limitations and scope of this theoretical development.

Desecuritisation has received comparatively less attention in academia, which has severely limited its usefulness (Aradau, 2004). Hansen (2012) employs the thoughts of the Algerian-French philosopher Derrida in order to explain securitisation's dominance over desecuritisation, emerging as a 'hierarchical pair [...] as one term is seen as the real, original, or essence, and the other as the supplement' (Hansen, 2012, p. 530). Prior to progressing to this article's contribution to the 'radically underdeveloped' field of desecuritisation (Balzacq, 2005, p. 171), it might be useful to introduce, very briefly, the concepts of *audience and desecuritisation*.

First of all, theorists engaged in securitisation theory argue that to securitise something refers to the justification of certain extraordinary measures for a relevant audience (commonly known as the recipient of a speech act), in which the 'normal rules' are broken (Buzan et al., 1998, pp. 23, 26). On the contrary, *desecuritisation* has broadly been understood as the process of getting out of securitisation. It has been perceived in terms of returning to 'normal politics' or 'the unmaking of securitization' (Huysmans, 1998; Buzan et al., 1998, p. 29; Hansen, 2012, p. 530). The first theorists reflecting on the securitisation process expressed a normative preference for desecuritisation, where securitisation and 'security should be seen as a negative, as a failure to deal with issues of normal politics' (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 29; Wæver, 1995, pp. 75–76). Desecuritisation, however, has, for the most part, been neglected in the midst of broader theoretical developments. As a result, audience practices and their effects on desecuritisation have rarely been considered. Little scholarly work has so far explicitly set out to conceptualise the role of the audience within desecuritisation, although this is still being considered as an 'essential part' of (de)securitisation (Wæver, 1995).

With this definition of the concepts and the stated need for further conceptualisations, we return to the task at hand: presenting the specific aim and purpose of this article. The primary aim is to develop an in-depth (theoretical) understanding of how the audience operates within desecuritisation. In doing so, this article can also address a central conundrum within desecuritisation, namely, how desecuritisation unfolds, which has been at the centre of a variety of debates, including the conceptualisation of *desecuritisation strategies*. Through

an active consideration of the audience, the article contributes to this discussion with a holistic approach to the conditions that enable the unfolding of desecuritisation. Additionally, the theoretical considerations presented here could also be constructive in evaluating why desecuritisation interchangeably fails or succeeds on a “downward scale”.

Secondly, in order to approach and conceptualise the audience in a more comprehensive way, an alternative framework to consider the routine of everyday life has been included. This article makes use of spatial theories, including an understanding of the everyday as ‘the seen but unnoticed’ (Featherstone, 1992, p. 159). For the sake of conciseness, it has been imperative to narrow down the myriad of frameworks considering space. In order to fulfil the purpose of this article, space and the everyday should only be regarded as perspectives which allow to explore the, perhaps mundane, interactive game between a receiving relevant audience and a (de)securitisation speaker.

Finally, following this line of inquiry allows this article to contribute to the cumulative understanding of (de)securitisation theory by categorising the scattered debates on desecuritisation and considering the effects of audience practices. This broad scope needs to be narrowed down. The key limitation of this work is its specific focus on the “societal sector”. The already established framework of securitisation, often referred to as the “original” framework, conceptualises five sectors of security. These correspond to political, military, economic, societal and environmental contexts (Buzan et al., 1998, pp. 7–8). In the literature concerning the societal sector, the referent object is most often perceived to be the ‘collective and national identities’ (Snetkov, 2017, p. 260; McDonald, 2008). In this article, however, one is aware of the difficulty in separating the sectors, as these are regularly interrelated (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 142). The particular question that has been at the centre of debate regarding the societal sector is that securitisation creates a threatening “Other” from which the “Self/We” needs to be protected. In desecuritisation, this has been associated with the revoking of the ‘friend’ and ‘enemy’ distinction (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 143; Jutila, 2006, p. 173; Roe, 2004, p. 280), which stems from the Schmittian dichotomy where a securitising actor divides the world into one of ‘friends’ and ‘enemies’. This dichotomy has been fundamental within (de) securitisation theory and its implications will be further considered later on (Schmitt, 1996 [1932], p. 26; Buzan et al., 1998, pp. 143–144).

The in-depth theoretical focus of this article limits any large-scale empirical consideration. The article does, however, provide two shorter empirical illustrations of spaces of desecuritisation located in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. While the empirical illustrations are seemingly limited, the aim is rather to visualise the theoretical relevance of the proposed concepts and illustrate where spaces for audience practices might enable desecuritisation. Thus, in contrast to other analyses focusing on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, this article does not aim to unpack the empirical intricacies of the securitised “Other” in the conflict. Instead, through these empirical illustrations, it sets out to theorise the audience as an active, important and

enabling actor in the interactive game of desecuritisation.

Theoretical overview

Our understanding of how desecuritisation unfolds and what the process entails is somewhat of a conceptual battlefield. Divided into three subsections, this theoretical overview aims to disentangle the different concepts of desecuritisation and the role of the audience within them. The first section provides a more extensive understanding of securitisation theory and, more specifically, the debates about the different roles of the audience. The second section clarifies the concept of desecuritisation and the theoretical position of the audience. The final section examines previously identified problems with desecuritisation in the societal sector, and primarily how the audience's identity becomes intertwined with securitisation.

This summary draws upon a limited selection of the numerous critiques that have been posed against the so-called Copenhagen School of securitisation theory. This selection has shaped the following section in which the article presents its theoretical understanding of the audience. While drawing on the most cited scholars in securitisation theory with a focus on desecuritisation and the audience, it is acknowledged that there are other relevant theoretical insights that could expand the understanding of the audience. The theoretical suggestions in this article should only be considered as initial steps towards the explicit inclusion of the audience within desecuritisation, meriting further development and critique.

(De)securitisation theory and the audience

Desecuritisation was developed 'in tandem' with securitisation (Hansen, 2012, p. 529). Thus, much of how it is understood is drawn from the framework of securitisation (ibid.). Therefore, a short introduction to securitisation is needed and, in particular, an introduction to the audience's role.

Securitisation theory is an analytic tool that explains how an issue becomes discursively constructed into an (existential) threat (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 25; Taureck, 2006). The theory primarily attempts to explain 'when, why and how' an issue becomes (de)securitised, rather than if it 'should' be (Taureck, 2006, p. 55). As identified in the influential work of Wæver (1995), titled *Securitization and desecuritization*, threats are understood as 'the sheer product of a subjective perception' (Roe, 2004, p. 286; Wæver, 1995). Scholars following this line of thought have become known as the Copenhagen School (McSweeney, 1996, p. 81). In order to securitise a threat, an actor with social capital or authority, henceforth referred to as *elite or speaker*, needs to articulate a threat that is accepted by an enabling audience. Once securitised, the securitising speaker gets 'permission to override the rules that would otherwise bind it' (Buzan et al., 1998, pp. 23, 26). It is this intersubjective process between audience and speaker that is of great interest in this section.

Although Wæver (1995; 1998; 2003; Buzan et al., 1998) argued that the audience was a crucial part of securitisation theory, it has remained ‘radically under-determined’ (Salter, 2008 in Zimmerman, 2017, p. 228; Stritzel, 2007, p. 362). In addition, it has been noted that there is a tendency to equate the audience with the general public (Buzan and Wæver, 2003, p. 12), although the audience tends to be more dynamic and varies depending on the context and what is being securitised (Wilkinson, 2007, pp. 5, 7). The Copenhagen School and the subsequent adaptations of the theory have primarily focused on the moment of immediacy, or when the extraordinary measures are implemented, which has left the audience in the background of the development of the theory (Balzacq, 2005, p. 179).

The original understanding of securitisation, considering its intersubjective nature, has been criticised by the “second-generation” securitisation scholars. This group of thinkers, frequently referred to as the Paris School, argues that the social and contextual practices inherent in the intersubjective nature of securitisation have been left unaccounted for within the Copenhagen School (Lupovici, 2016, p. 415; Stritzel, 2012, p. 553). Balzacq (2005), a prominent second-generation scholar, argued that the Copenhagen School has a tendency to become self-referential, so much so that the audience is excluded from the framework (Balzacq, 2005, p. 179). Following this critique and alternative conceptualisations, the understanding of the audience has become increasingly diversified and nuanced (Topgyal, 2016, p. 167). Some scholars, however, including Côté (2016), maintain that the treatment of the audience is ‘inconsistent and at times non-existent’ (Côté, 2016, pp. 542–543). The second generation’s understanding of the audience shifts depending on what issue is being securitised and what position the elite holds to articulate a threat (Salter, 2008, p. 322). Thus, it oscillates between different locales and contexts. As such, the audience might, for example, be associated with parliamentary approval of military commitments, public opinion supporting a suggested security measure, or an allied state whose support is needed to carry out a particular military operation (Roe, 2008; Zimmerman, 2017, p. 229). In sum, the audience can take on a number of different constellations and is hopefully not limited to the ‘general public’ with a binary and fixed identity (cf. Buzan et al., 1998, p. 119). The audience, as the ‘recipient of a securitizing move’, is rather understood as changing based on *contextual factors*. One might wonder then, what do these quite vague “contextual factors” involve, on which the second generation places that much emphasis? Any securitisation move needs to convince the audience based on its identity produced by ‘social process[es], power relations, context, background knowledge, and discourse’ (Lupovici, 2016, p. 415). Alternatively, in Balzacq’s (2005) words, a securitising actor needs to tailor their speech ‘based on what it [the audience] knows about the world’ (Balzacq, 2005, p. 173). Securitisation is, thus, understood to be dependent on a specific social context. Both Vuori (2008) and Salter (2008) have studied audience reactions and the role of cultural and sociological factors in determining its response. Salter (2008, p. 322) adopts Foucault’s ‘regime of truth’ to take account of the sociological and psycho-cultural disposition of the audience, where a securitisation act is performative, based on what the audience knows. Accordingly, once securitised, the performative nature of securitisation

maintains and continually produces the legitimacy for that securitisation (Stritzel, 2007, p. 370). Still, it is debatable whether a securitising actor aims to ‘convince as broad an audience as possible’ (Balzacq, 2005, p. 185) or rather targets a specific narrow audience (Léonard and Kaunert, 2011, p. 61; Salter, 2008, p. 327). Nonetheless, these representatives of second-generation securitisation scholars bring to the foreground an essential insight for this article: relevant audiences might change depending on contextual factors. This is a simple idea that is crucial in attempting to answer the question of how the audience acts within desecuritisation.

Keeping these contextual factors in mind, is it possible to separate context from identity and vice versa? Identity in the societal sector is central since both the threat and what needs to be protected (the referent object) are in themselves both identities. The vulnerable Self is constructed in relation to the dangerous Other. The Copenhagen School treats identity somewhat rigidly, recognising it as ‘the self-conception of communities, and those individuals who identify themselves as members of a particular community’ (Wæver, 1995, p. 67) or a ‘we feeling’ (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 119). This ‘we feeling’ is threatened when a group is ‘no longer [...] able to live as itself’ (Wæver, 1995, p. 67). This has been conceptualised alongside the understanding that ‘security is articulated only from a specific place, in an institutional voice, by elites’ (Wæver, 1995, p. 57). This focus on an elite’s assumed relationship with an audience presumes the existence of a fixed, monolithic entity of a state or groups where securitisation takes place. Securitisation theory, thus, assumes the existence of a coherent society where elites are ‘strategically located’ to articulate a threat for an already determined audience (Doty, 2007, p. 129). This state-centric approach to the audience–elite relationship consequently limits the potential for identifying and understanding alternative positions of audience–speaker. In this article, identity is considered as more complex and mutable, thus altering the position or role of the audience(–speaker) in (de)securitisation.

The next section takes this debate on securitisation further, to its opposite: desecuritisation. It shows that much of the understanding of the audience has been derived from securitisation. Additionally, it demonstrates how opening the (otherwise) fixed position of audience–speaker, perceiving securitisation moves as elite articulation, is particularly beneficial to our understanding of desecuritisation.

Desecuritisation

This section will begin by establishing desecuritisation in its academic context, namely how it has been understood among scholars, and will introduce the typologies of desecuritisation. This general introduction will allow the subsequent sections to engage in more depth with the gaps in the existing desecuritisation strategies.

The desecuritisation process is defined by Buzan et al. (1998) as the ‘shifting of issues out of the emergency mode and into the normal bargaining process of the political sphere’ (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 4). Desecuritisation is commonly used in the societal sector of security to

understand a threatening ‘Other’ (Åtland, 2008, p. 289; Huysmans, 1998; Morozov, 2004; Roe, 2004). Against this setting, desecuritisation has been described by theorists as the unmaking of a ‘threatening institutionalisation’ (Huysmans, 1998, p. 572) or the questioning of a particular ‘regime of truth’ (Aradau, 2004; Salter, 2008). Ultimately, the employment of, and focus on, desecuritisation in the societal sector has been associated with a loosening of the threatening identity of the ‘Other’ (Roe, 2004, p. 280).

Wæver (2000) conceptualised three ways or, as referred to in this article, strategies of desecuritisation. The first strategy concerns the avoidance of speaking in the language of security, specifically avoiding to speak about issues in terms of threats (Wæver, 2000, p. 253). The second strategy can be described as ‘desecuritisation through management’ (Åtland, 2008, p. 292) or attempting to manage an issue without causing a security dilemma (Wæver, 1989, p. 52; Wæver, 2000, p. 253). Finally, the third strategy focuses on the transformation of a securitised issue, which means actively initiating desecuritisation, moving an issue back into the realm of ‘normal politics’ (Wæver, 2000, p. 253). Among these different conceptions of how to desecuritize, the first two have received criticism as rather concerning ‘non-securitisation’, since they do not address the complexities of escaping emergency politics (Floyd, 2015, pp. 127–128; Roe, 2004, p. 285). The critique of not addressing the root problem of securitisation is still valid, with the concept receiving ‘scant attention’ and still holding an ‘underdeveloped status’ (Aradau, 2004, p. 389; Hansen, 2012, p. 527; Floyd, 2007). Next, this section provides an updated understanding of Wæver’s (2000) third strategy of desecuritisation.

The conceptualisation of desecuritisation has gone through different stages of interpretation. Bourbeau and Vuori (2015) identified three different debates concerning desecuritisation. The first concerned how desecuritisation occurs (e.g. Huysmans, 1995; Wæver, 2000). This was followed by a discussion on the ethical or normative obligations within (de)securitisation theory (e.g. Aradau, 2004; Floyd, 2015). The final debate, where this article is primarily located, is concerned with the strategies of desecuritisation (e.g. Roe, 2004; Jutila, 2006) and indirectly with how these unfold (Hansen, 2012; Rumelili, 2015, p. 61).

Desecuritisation occurs in numerous ways (Hansen, 2012, pp. 539–545; Huysmans, 1995, p. 57). Conceptual typologies have tried to encapsulate some of the different types of desecuritisation (ibid.). Among these efforts to categorise desecuritisation, Hansen (2012) has envisioned four types. The typology has been developed in depth by later scholars (e.g. Snetkov, 2017, p. 267) but is here used in its original form to provide an understanding of the different types of strategies found in the next section of this article. The four types of desecuritisation that Hansen (2012) identifies are *change through stabilisation*, *replacement*, *rearticulating* and *silencing*. ‘Change through stabilisation’ is envisioned as a ‘détente’ (Snetkov, 2017, p. 267), and focuses on a gradual move out of a security discourse where security is removed for the benefit of politics (Wæver, 2000). ‘Replacement’ is to move one issue out of the realm of security and replace it with another (Bilgin, 2007). ‘Rearticulating’ is created by

offering political solutions to the proposed threat (Åtland, 2008). ‘Silencing’ concerns an issue that does not respond to security discourse. Focusing on silences, desecuritisation is understood to downplay the urgency of an issue. These typologies all illustrate a speaker-focused desecuritisation. Hence, in considering the audience, desecuritisation needs to be scrutinised from the perspective, and specifically focused on the idea, of an active audience.

Importantly, desecuritisation is generally viewed as a gradual process, contrary to the ‘immediacy’ of securitisation (Floyd, 2015, p. 128). Empirically, as well as theoretically, there seems to be a consensus among scholars that the process resembles more an ‘interactive game’ (Vuori, 2011, p. 31). Unlike the immediacy of securitisation, desecuritisation allows for communication between the audience and the desecuriting speaker. Consequently, instead of a passive audience and an active speaker, desecuritisation probably includes several (de) securitising moves and countermoves in a contextually bound space (Salter 2008, p. 333; Stritzel and Chang, 2015, p. 560). Viewing desecuritisation as an ‘interactive game’, there are a few distinct conceptualisations of which to take account. Firstly, does the process occur either through an active desecuriting move (Donnelly, 2015, p. 5) or as a ‘gradual fading away’ (Behnke, 2006, p. 65)? On the one hand, Behnke (2006) argues that desecuritisation happens when a threat ‘no longer exercise[s] our minds and imaginations sufficiently’ (ibid.). On the other hand, Donnelly (2015) proposes that an elite reconciliatory articulation or symbolic act can initiate the desecuritisation process (Donnelly, 2015, p. 5; de Wilde, 2008). While this division does not include the full consideration of Donnelly (2015, p. 927) and Behnke’s (2006) arguments, both acknowledge the difficulty in finding a start or end to any desecuritisation process. This article uses the distinction to differentiate between an elite-initiated desecuritisation and a more passive one (similar to Bourbeau and Vuori, 2015, p. 254; Gustafsson, 2019).

Accepting desecuritisation as an ‘interactive game’ shows the significance of approaching desecuritisation holistically. The exploration of how symbolic acts or a gradual fading away are products of the everyday life of the audience has more explanatory value than envisioned by Hansen’s (2012) typologies.

The next section introduces the existence of audience(s) and presupposes that these are multiple, describing them as both active and passive in accepting/contesting a (de)securitisation in the ‘communicative struggle of adversarial wills’ (Stritzel and Chang, 2015, p. 560). What follows seeks to unpack further this communicative aspect of desecuritisation in a securitised space of “Selves” and “Others”.

The audience, identity and desecuritisation

In the societal sector, the audience becomes interconnected with processes of (de) securitisation. This and the following sections unpack the complexities of desecuriting a threat from the “Self”. As Huysmans describes, ‘if the threat were [sic] really eliminated, the

political identity would be damaged and, depending on how strongly it relies on the threat, it may very well collapse' (Huysmans, 1998, p. 239). Like Huysmans, many scholars have dedicated their efforts to examining how the 'Self' is constituted in relation to an (often alleged dangerous) 'Other' (e.g. Campbell, 1992; Doty, 1996; Neumann, 1996; 1999). Consequently, for desecuritisation to occur, the audience's sense of the "Self" needs to change.

The process of securitising the "Other" often makes (direct, cultural and structural) violence appear rational when dealing with the assumed threat (Galtung, 1990; Hansen, 2006). Thus, securitisation not only allows (violent) extraordinary measures, but it also makes the violence 'look, even feel, right – or at least not wrong' (Galtung, 1990, p. 291). The next section presents a similar notion of the securitising actor's use of violence to order and (re)legitimise a position of authority (Doty, 2011, pp. 609–610).

Wæver (1989, p. 301) notices that different societies' specific fears and vulnerabilities are related to their historical experiences. The coherence of a society, group or nation focuses on a singular identity, whose survival is equal to security (cf. Stern, 2006; Roe, 2004). This singular approach to identity limits the theoretical possibilities for desecuritisation. In the theoretical scope of securitisation theory, this has been recognised as the Schmittian dichotomy of dividing groups into 'friends' and 'enemies' (Buzan et al., 1998, pp. 143–144). This notion, and particularly the idea about unitary groups within the theory, limits any spaces in between the friend–enemy configuration. The idea of identities as fixed or primordial has been widely challenged, often seen as something that lacks a pre-ordained, objectively distinguishable essence (Campbell, 1992, p. 11). In securitisation, the practice of creating "Others" could ultimately be perceived as the state's need to (re)produce its authority and/or identity (ibid.). The *making* of the 'Self' might, hence, rely on 'Othering' or creating an opposite construction of the 'Self' (Neumann, 1996, in Jæger, 2000, p. 23; Said, 1978, p. 43). Thus, the intersubjective portrayal of a threatening 'Other' might construct a discourse about the 'Self' (Wæver, 2000, p. 262). The discourse might, in turn, act performatively on the 'Self' and the 'Other', making them similar in perceptions of the securitised discourse (Topgyal, 2016, p. 182). Focusing on how threats and the "Self" are produced and sustained explains securitisation but gives little insight into the possibilities of desecuritisation.

Kinnvall's (2004, p. 241) work shows how this dichotomy can be destabilised and, eventually, desecuritised. Kinnvall suggests how, by using the concept of 'ontological security', one can find 'ambiguity and uncertainty' that might question the ordering of the 'Other'. Thus, by focusing on the 'stranger', the immigrant, 'Arab' or 'Jew' within a society as both an insider and outsider might illustrate how the binary securitised regime of identities can be questioned (example from Derrida, in Žižek, 2016, p. 302). As Kinnvall shows, however, identity markers are often more complex than those of the friend–enemy configuration. Through problematising the ideas of identity and belonging, this article understands how complex individual identities are not only the concern of states (cf. Hobsbawm, 1983; Mitzen,

2006). Rather, this article perceives alternative identity configurations as having relevance in the (de)securitisation communication between speakers and audiences. The complex webs of identities within any audience might have a transformational capacity. For example, Floyd (2015, p. 127) demonstrates how non-state actors can break the securitised regime and carry out measures that would not be allowed by an elite. Likewise, this article locates possibilities to question the dominant securitised “Other” in the periphery of the speaker–audience relation. This is something that, in the literature at large, has remained outside theoretical understanding.

The notion of breaking away from the common conception of where the audience–speaker is located might be relevant to this article’s main purpose: theorising and developing a more comprehensive understanding of the audience in desecuritisation. The audience identity in (de)securitisation theory has often been linked to broad identities of belonging, e.g. “nation”, “ethnicity” or “religion”, taking on the fact that there might be multiple audiences that horizontally reconfigure possibilities for desecuritisation. At this point, however, it becomes necessary to conceptualise what is meant by periphery and what relevance it has to desecuritisation.

There are reasons to believe that the periphery has been under-appreciated within (de)securitisation literature. In peacebuilding literature, for example, the inclusion of the feelings and interpretations of the periphery of the audience is viewed as a prerequisite for the de-escalation of conflicts (e.g. Lederach, 1997, pp. 34–35). Accordingly, the peacebuilding literature assumes that if not all relevant audiences (including the periphery) are convinced that a threat has transformed (been desecuritised), a society is likely to fall back into conflict. In other words, if the idea about the enemy remains, even only within the periphery of the audience, the conflict continues (Georgi, 2016). The problem remains that, once securitised, groups perceive one another as threats to the “Selves”. Yet, if it is possible to visualise the numerous discrepancies within these binary identity constructions, it might also be possible to enable a destabilisation of this particular ‘regime of truth’, as Salter (2008, p. 322) describes it.

Having shifted the focus to the audience’s role within desecuritisation, one essential question remains. Following the understanding of the second-generation scholars, who argue that securitisation has a performative effect, if the acceptance of a securitising move alters how the relevant audience views the world (Stritzel and Chang, 2015, p. 550), can the audience really retain ‘a capacity to revoke its accept [*sic*] of a securitisation’ (Bigo, 2000, p. 87; Hansen, 2012, p. 532)? According to Hansen (2012, p. 533), desecuritisation must occur through the ‘shifting interrelatedness’ and transformation of both the ‘Self’ and the ‘Other’. Given that desecuritisation cannot exist independently of securitisation (Aradau, 2004, p. 405; Hansen, 2012, pp. 5–7; Roe, 2004, p. 284), any desecuritisation is going to be a response to a partly failed or successful securitising move (Topgyal, 2016, p. 168). It is problematic for a group to

transform its identity and ontological security of the “Self”. Rumelili (2015, p. 54) describes it as a need for the ‘blurring of [the] Self/Other distinction’. This, however, is complicated because the ‘blurring’ may be limited by each group’s freedom and its right to constitute a ‘Self’ (Rumelili, 2015, pp. 64–65). Thus, desecuritisation from a position of power might involve ‘demands that seek to make the “Other” similar to the “Self” as far as is possible: by privileging the so-called “moderates” over the “radicals”’ (Austin and Beaulieu-Brossard, 2017, p. 321). Desecuritisation, according to Austin and Beaulieu-Brossard (2017), works to order ‘Other’ threatening ontologies. Desecuritisation is, thus, about making the “Other” similar to the “Self”. This has been mentioned in the critique against desecuritisation, where desecuritisation is not regarded as something necessarily better than securitisation (Inayatulla and Blaney, 2004; Hom, 2016). Some critics have also pointed out that it is the weak that are affected the most by this binary speech act, hence ‘the paradox [...] that a process – desecuritisation – that has been described as potentially emancipatory, may, in fact, become deeply oppressive’ (Austin and Beaulieu-Brossard, 2017, p. 321). This line of argumentation has also featured prominently in early critiques against the Copenhagen School’s embedded binary oppositions within (de)securitisation (McSweeney, 1996, p. 82). In sum, it would perhaps be counterproductive to approach desecuritisation as a binary process. Again, this shows the need for a holistic take on desecuritisation, as envisioned in this article. The speech act performed by the elite encompasses, according to Rumelili (2015), a fundamental problem of locating the relation between the ‘Self’ and the ‘Other’ on one ‘single axis of sameness-difference’ (Rumelili, 2015, p. 64). Consequently, in suggesting the inclusion of the audience, it becomes paramount to reflect on the possibility that desecuritisation involves multiple different processes.

In the next section of this article, which involves theory development, it is argued how there might be multiple ontologies and overlapping groups that the elite speech act (violently) ‘makes similar’ (Austin and Beaulieu-Brossard, 2017, p. 321). It might be worthwhile to conceptualise several parallel axes of difference. Indeed, the threat–defence sequences of the Copenhagen School and some of the second-generation scholarship do not enable a shift from binary desecuritisation so that it may be possible to visualise the existence of space(s) in between the two opposites. It is within this space that this article searches for alternative positions that might become stepping stones in considering other forms of desecuritisation.

The audience within desecuritisation strategies

The previous section conceptualised the rather under-explored concept of desecuritisation. This section focuses in more depth on the audience and where it is located within the different strategies of desecuritisation. In order to do this, the various strategies will be dissected using two different approaches: firstly, by adopting the above-described framework and locating inconsistencies and contradictions, and secondly, by accentuating the contrast between the different strategies. Such a comparison will allow the identification of current gaps in the understanding of the audience and is where this article will make its contribution.

The material surveyed has been limited to the central debates concerning desecuritisation strategies and the scholarly frameworks that are most commonly cited (see Donnelly, 2015, pp. 915–917; Balzacq et al., 2016, pp. 498–501; Gad and Petersen, 2012, pp. 332–333), which, in turn, will be analysed through a close comparative and critical reading. The section begins by considering the *management* and *reconstructivist* strategies, before moving on to another central strategy, namely the diverse concept of audience *contestation*.

Two of the key desecuritisation strategies are Roe's (2004; 2006) management strategy and Jutila's (2006) reconstructivism strategy. The empirical question that they both attempt to address concerns the issue of desecuritising ethnic conflict. Both Roe and Jutila perceive the audience as embodying a certain degree of agency to resist desecuritisation; however, neither of their works really unpacks this. Rather, their focus lies on how to conceptualise a functioning desecuritisation. Roe (2004) describes the difficulty with desecuritisation as located wherever the audience possesses a certain 'security-ness'. In his account of security-ness, Roe writes that if it were removed, the result would be 'the death of the minority as a distinctive group' (Roe, 2004, p. 279).

Both conceptualisations made by Roe (2004; 2006) and Jutila (2006) have been notably influenced by Huysmans' (1998) perception of desecuritisation as an instrumentally managed process by an elite (Roe, 2004, p. 279; Roe, 2006; Jutila, 2006, p. 169). In his reflection on desecuritisation strategies, Roe (2004) recognises the interconnectedness between the 'Self' and the 'Other'. Moreover, he argues that it might not be necessary to escape security entirely, which might not even be possible. Instead, his conceptualisation of the management strategy illustrates security as a necessary condition to establish order. Thus, within a desecuritisation process, security should be mediated, not removed. The securitisation of the 'Other', therefore, has to be normalised and security is to be 'moderate, not excessive' (Roe, 2004, p. 292). This perspective never explicitly announces the audience's role, although it involves an implicit understanding that an elite must initiate desecuritisation. Hence, it is the understanding of the audience's 'security-ness' that hinders a *full* desecuritisation (Roe, 2004, p. 280), ascribing this idea to the second generation of securitisation scholars. The audience, thus, implicitly holds an intersubjective role in accepting desecuritisation. The management strategy's aim for "normalisation" is, therefore, the gradual shifting of the audience's interrelatedness to the threat.

Jutila's (2006) article responds to Roe's (2004) work, arguing that the management strategy is deterministic. Jutila writes that a reconstructivist approach makes 'state-led multicultural policies' possible. Multicultural policies aim to create a common identity in post-ethnic conflicts (Jutila, 2006, p. 180; Al and Byrd, 2018, p. 613). Thus, the audience's identity needs to be reconfigured to one of belonging. Jutila (2006, p. 168) accuses Roe (2004) of perceiving identities in a primordial fashion, that is, as fixed rather than flexible. In other words, for as long as minority identities are perceived as equal to security, the language of security will

remain. Jutila (2006, pp. 180–181), instead, views identity as flexible through speech acts. Similarly to Huysmans’ belief that ‘to tell a story is to handle the world’ (Huysmans, 1995, p. 67), Jutila (2006) argues that identity is formed by the narrative and discourses within which the audience exists. Based on this flexibility, it is possible to change what the audience ‘knows about the world’. Jutila (2006, p. 175), however, focuses on the authorities’ ability to change the perception of the world through speech acts. Any articulation of transforming one’s identity must come from within the conceived identity group. Connecting this to the wider frameworks, one may assume that there is need for the speech act to resonate with a narrow audience (Léonard and Kaunert, 2011), where some actors might be ‘differently positioned’ to speak desecuritisation successfully (Björkdahl and Buckley, 2016, p. 5). Both Jutila (2006) and Roe (2004) are predominantly focused on the elite’s ability to initiate and instrumentally manage desecuritisation. Neither of the two consider whether the audience has the capability of questioning an ongoing securitisation. It is here that the strategy of contestation could provide insights about how the audience might shape opportunities for desecuritisation.

The concept of contestation is diverse and has been approached differently by various scholars. Here, *contestation* as a strategy is defined as an audience’s horizontal contestation of a securitisation. Drawing from works by Balzacq et al. (2015), Vuori (2008; 2011), and Stritzel and Chang (2015), one observes that different concepts may capture horizontal contestation. Before turning to a more in-depth discussion about this strategy and the ones that have been introduced above, it should be noted that these different conceptualisations are interconnected and, unsurprisingly, there is not one type of strategy *out there*.

In the literature on contestation, terms such as resistance or counter-moves are being used to include similar mechanisms. Approaching these concepts as similar will inevitably lead to a simplification of the more intricate arguments. Nonetheless, it should be noted that the horizontal contestation of a securitisation will not exclude vertical contestation (counter-moves/resistance) from being discussed. The strategy of contestation here focuses on the possibly mundane, interactive game between audience and speaker. Redefining a strategy for contestation is an essential part of providing a framework that is inclusive of the audience within desecuritisation. Balzacq’s (2015, pp. 12–13) edited volume, *Contesting security: strategies and logics*, focuses mostly on audiences’ strategic and intentional vertical contestations (e.g. Marx, 2015; Vuori, 2015). This focus reflects most of the literature on contestation, which might be deceptive because ‘organized and non-organized political actions [might] not [be] separate realms’ (Mannergren-Selimovic, 2018, p. 144). The relationship between vertical and horizontal contestations might be porous, while they merge in co-constitutive ways (ibid.). Contestation in this context includes both unconscious practices and conscious interactions. At any given time within securitisation, there is the likelihood of multiple contestations in different and overlapping audiences. A strategic vertical interaction aims to homogenise grievances among audiences. To the contrary, horizontal contestations are not a negotiation

within or between audiences but rather a creation of parallel *spaces* that might contest an authority's securitisation. It is, thus, necessary to comprehend these parallel and everyday spaces.

As noted above, there are numerous theories that recognise the micropolitics of the everyday but de Certeau's (1984) idea of 'tactics', which aims to capture the less intentional contestations, has been more widely adopted (e.g. Mannergren-Selimovic, 2018). In the following section, de Certeau's concepts are interconnected with the main securitisation scholars' approach to the mundane everyday in order to consider a framework for audience participation. De Certeau's 'tactics' focus on everyday movements such as creating momentary spaces that might subvert an elite authority. In this understanding, space is something flexible, separated from a fixed *place* (1984, pp. 34, 117). Tactics is to 'insinuat[e] [one]self within the space of the other' (Bleibleh, 2015, p. 167), acting within the produced rules and regulations that are never wholly determined. The 'art of doing' mundane practices contains components of contestation against the structures enacted from above (de Certeau, 1984, p. 90). This approach is relevant as it includes, as well as understands, these 'parallel spaces', and also because the focus on vertical contestation has a tendency 'to diminish agency to a reactive response to domination' (Ortner, 1995, in Mannergren-Selimovic, 2018, p. 124), viewing it as the 'weapon of the weak' with a 'tactical' or 'strategic intention' (Balzacq, 2015, p. 13). Instead, using de Certeau's (1984) understanding one can visualise horizontal contestation as parallel spaces that might challenge a dominant authority. Yet, these horizontal, (non)strategic and (un)intentional practices of the everyday do not, by definition, have a purpose other than filling the everyday life of audiences. Nonetheless, in these less determined spaces, the binary audience–speaker boundary might be loosened and may alter where desecuritisation is taking place. Moreover, considering space acknowledges that desecuritisation moves do not necessarily take the form of speech acts. Rather, desecuritisation moves can also take the form of movements and practices.

The changing roles of audience and speakers in horizontal contestation propose an intricate question about who possesses the authority to (de)securitise. This should be seen in light of the discussion above, concerning whether an audience retains its capacity to withdraw acceptance for a securitisation (Bigo, 2000, p. 87; Hansen, 2012, p. 532). Contestation against a securitising actor, thus, becomes the process through which the elite's legitimacy is contested (Balzacq, 2015, pp. 4–5; Vuori, 2008, p. 93). It also becomes a matter of delegitimising the authorities' right to speak security on behalf of an enabling audience (Vuori, 2011, p. 194). The interactive and gradual process of desecuritisation involves 'moves and counter-moves in a continuous struggle for authority and legitimacy' (Stritzel and Chang, 2015, p. 549). Perhaps in the envisioned horizontal desecuritisation, there are numerous non-elite speaker–audience relationships which are, in turn, gradually shifting an audience's interrelatedness to a specific securitised threat. Against this background, with insights from second-generation scholars, one question to consider is whether the audiences can contest authority/power. The

audience might itself be located *within* power. By focusing on less strategic practices, this question additionally concerns whether the non-intentional can destabilise a ‘regime of truth’ or whether it primarily serves to uphold it. One should note that authority and power are conceived differently depending on different theoretical assumptions. Power, and especially non-sovereign power, is, in the Foucauldian sense, everywhere and often taking a disciplinary form (Foucault, 1980 [1978]; 1980). In addition, this article takes Scott’s perception into account, envisioning how contestation can ‘operate within an autonomous space or create one that remains out of the gaze of the dominant power’ (Balzacq 2015, p. 11). Indeed, by viewing power from this perspective, the everyday is understood to hold the agency to contest or, to paraphrase Foucault, ‘where there is power there is resistance’ (Foucault, 1980 [1978], p. 95). Hence, power and resistance do not exist without embodying ‘the trace of the other’ (Balzacq, 2015, p. 12). Focusing on what Scott perceives as autonomous space makes it possible to see space as multiple, that is, as different spaces which might serve both to defend and resist the dominant modes of power. In Foucault’s words,

[w]e must make allowances for the complex and unstable process whereby a discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart (Foucault, 1980 [1978], pp. 100–101).

There is, thus, a possibility that the everyday becomes a producer of alternative (de)securitising discourses. Conceivably, (de)securitisation is a disorganised process where actors strive to gain legitimacy (Vuori, 2015, pp. 41–42), which includes the various types of desecuritisation strategies and their entanglement and interconnectedness. In the strategies mentioned in this section, the audience is implicitly viewed as either an active or a passive actor. As a result, this article would argue that the audience’s role is often limited to “either/or”, rather than being conceived in terms of “and/or”.

By reviewing the interactive game of desecuritisation, this section has been able to explore how the audience’s role remains disguised, yet considered a key part of the speaker–audience relationship and (de)securitisation. Furthermore, it points to a gap in the literature where desecuritisation might be determined in spaces with less defined authority. The next section takes this “and/or” approach and develops the discussion on the audience in relation to the frameworks introduced above.

An alternative understanding of the audience in desecuritisation

The opening paragraph of this article, containing a short dispatch from the Israel- Palestinian conflict, illustrated how contestation exists in many unknown or everyday spaces. This section aims to develop a framework that considers these numerous locales of contestation. Beginning

with the gaps identified previously, it is further argued here that there are likely ongoing (de) securitisation moves in society which might not resonate with an audience or be articulated in a voice of authority. The predominant focus on an elite speaker–audience interaction hides how desecuritisation becomes facilitated by reconfigurations in the micro-locales of society. This re-conceptualisation is enabled by drawing on work that has already introduced spatial theory to securitisation. Addressing the conundrum of identifying how desecuritisation unfolds from below, de Certeau’s (1984) concepts of tactics and spaces are contrasted with the understanding of space within current securitisation theory. Accordingly, the ‘political aesthetic of everydayness’ (Huysmans, 1998) and ‘the politics of small things’ (Goldfarb, 2006) are considered. With these concepts, this article firmly embeds its contribution on spatial dynamics towards understanding how desecuritisation occurs. The answer is, from a “downward scale”, which considers a fuller aspect of the audience. Here, the concepts of contestation, as audience practice, and reconfiguration are essential to comprehending these numerous spaces.

The introduction of space and horizontal contestation is guided by three articles, including Doty’s two articles on space and (de)securitisation (2007; 2011) and Gazit and Latham (2014). In ‘States of exception on the Mexico–U.S. border: security, “decisions,” and civilian border patrols’, Doty (2007) opposes the Copenhagen School of securitisation. She focuses her analysis on ‘border vigilantes’ on the US–Mexican border, whose actions question the understanding of Schmitt’s sovereign decisions (*ibid.*, p. 128). Her main contribution is the reflection on, and inclusion of, the periphery. She visualises that including the periphery can challenge the idea about *when* the exception (from the rules of the game) can be instigated and *where* authority can be identified (*ibid.*, p. 132). In ‘Bare life: border-crossing deaths and spaces of moral alibi’, Doty (2011) shifts her research focus on an analysis of sovereign powers’ ability to create a ‘space of exception’. The US–Mexico border serves as a moral void, where power can initiate and decide on the exception (*ibid.*, pp. 600, 608). Both articles put human agency at the centre, determining how the seemingly unimportant has the potential of holding large security implications. With the focus on human agency, an understanding can be gained about horizontal contestation in different spaces. The two articles do so through reflecting on the ambiguity and uncertainty in how securitisation (the exception) is established. This inclusion and visualisation of different spaces and actors question the Copenhagen School’s fixed ideas about what is of relevance in the process of (de)securitisation (Doty, 2007, pp. 115–116). Doty’s work creates a conceptual pathway for questioning securitisation and incorporating multiple relevant audiences and their practices. In her work, she does not reflect upon the implications for desecuritisation. She does, nevertheless, acknowledge in passing that the dead bodies of migrants in the borderlands bear signs of contestation, indicating a belief that groups of individuals can contest securitisation through their actions in securitised spaces (2011, p. 605). The unknown death of a nameless migrant might appear as a contestation but is not discussed in terms of having the ability to desecuritize (2011, pp. 607–609).

In the absence of desecuritisation in the theory, this is where Gazit and Latham's (2014) article, 'Spatial alternatives and counter-sovereignties in Israel/Palestine', makes a needed amendment to accommodate practices in the periphery. They envision that different practices might establish alternative authorities, which in turn, through social interaction, challenge the dominant securitisation (ibid., p. 65). This reconfiguration of authority in different spaces is where desecuritisation might unfold. Hence, Gazit and Latham make an essential contribution to how alternative spaces of desecuritisation arise. They incorporate the idea that different population practices, including social, commercial and festive interactions, can produce spaces, where a securitised 'Other' can be questioned and transformed (ibid., p. 72). Gazit and Latham (2014) and Doty (2007; 2011) complement each other and, together with the above-mentioned theoretical insights on desecuritisation, provide a strong conceptual base on which to re-focus attention to the audience.

As noted above, Vuori (2008), among other scholars, argues that the audience contests securitisation in an interactive game of legitimacy. Indirectly, this tends to focus on the vertical struggle against centralised authority. In a somewhat alternative approach, Doty (2007; 2011) shows her readers the importance of focusing on and considering activities in the periphery and how they affect a securitisation process. Doty (2007) illustrates how mechanisms of a securitised exception 'can arise in numerous locales and can be made by seemingly insignificant agents' (Doty, 2007, p. 130). The 'insignificant agents' are those that have been dismissed, and which have no 'position of authority' (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 33). Doty (2007) demonstrates how the vigilantes on the US–Mexico border can impact nationally enacted security policies. She draws upon Huysmans' (2004, pp. 321, 341) thoughts, who argues that securitisation often comes about in 'less spectacular' ways. If these less spectacular events and their everydayness are excluded from the analyses, insights about securitisation and the emergency/threat are obscured.

Moving on to implement these less spectacular spaces into the analysis, it is important to note the critique that earlier securitisation scholars have faced when approaching the everyday as an answer to several theoretical puzzles. Thus, in including these spaces, this article remains wary of the importance placed on the originally envisioned speaker–audience relationship. Of course, identifying the everyday as cutting the Gordian knot of all theoretical hitches might, unavoidably, provide misleading answers. This also applies to Huysmans' (1998) early work that incorporated the 'political aesthetic of everydayness', involving the 'complexity and plurality of daily human practices' (Huysmans, 1998, p. 588) that might desecuritize through the routine practices of interaction (ibid.). Notably, this idea has been scrutinised by several scholars, including Aradau (2004, p. 400), who argues that it is not possible to separate the securitising and desecuritising practices of everyday interaction. In addition, she argues that the everyday might be appealing but also misleading and, instead, may serve to uphold a hegemonic 'logic of particularization' (Aradau, in Balzacq et al., 2015, p. 107). She claims that the everyday might be redundant as 'securitization is only successful when it finds its

support in everyday life' (Aradau, 2004, p. 400). Thus, as demonstrated earlier in this article, the performative nature of securitisation is likely to be sustained by everyday practices. This article, however, maintains that the everyday and the discourses that are produced are diverse. These practices 'transmit and produce power' (Foucault, 1980 [1976], pp. 100–101) but can also undermine and expose it, rendering it 'fragile' (ibid.). The audience might, thus, serve to uphold securitisation but can also envision alternative pathways of desecuritisation.

Gazit and Latham (2014) adopt Goldfarb's (2006) 'politics of small things' to encapsulate the mechanism of the 'routine micro-politics and mundane practices undertaken by a variety of social actors, as well as official agents' (Gazit and Latham, 2014, p. 64). Similar to de Certeau's (1984) concept, these 'small things' of agency among non-elites can transform politics and make it possible to analyse desecuritisation. Returning to Doty's writings, she similarly argues that practices in the periphery have agency and legitimacy to securitise. One of the key questions posed by Doty concerns where sovereignty and the legitimacy to securitise are located. The Copenhagen School assumes that 'security is articulated only from a specific place, in an institutional voice, by elites' (Wæver, 1995, p. 57). In contrast, Doty (2007, pp. 132–133; 2011) views authority as social and argues that it can arise in less institutional and more informal milieus. The articulation of "Self", "We" and "Nation" might arise from 'insignificant' agents and practices. Doty's argument, hence, opposes Schmitt's central understanding within securitisation theory that '[i]n its entirety the state as an organized political entity decides for itself the friend–enemy distinction' (Schmitt, 1996 [1932], pp. 29–30) and that '[t]he sovereign decides whether there is to be an extreme emergency as well as what must be done to eliminate it' (Schmitt, 1996 [1932], p. 7). As for Schmitt, power is at the centre of Doty's analysis; however, this is understood in a significantly different way. She makes use of Agamben and Foucault's conceptualisations. The sovereign, similar to Schmitt's thinking, decides on the subjects and can create *bare life*, understood as a life that can be taken 'without apology, classified as neither homicide nor sacrifice' (Doty, 2011, p. 601). The sovereign/speaker is the one to (re)organise society into who can, and must, be killed to secure the Self. Additionally, however, and in contrast to Schmitt, she explains how these ideas encompass space for contestation. In the securitised space of the exception, there are always possibilities for 'tensions and cracks within which humans practice various forms of resistance' (Doty, 2011, p. 601).

These cracks in practices within articulated securitisations are where this article envisions that horizontal contestation can take place and has the capacity to desecuritize. In contrast to what Schmitt and the Copenhagen School presuppose, these cracks take place in a society that is a single coherent unit. By relying on second-generation securitisation scholars, this article moves away from this distinction. Instead, it sees society and audiences as multiple, contextual and overlapping units.

Against this background, further developments can be made. Returning to the purpose of this section, and by extent the whole article, what implications does this new appreciation of the spaces of desecuritisation have on the audience– speaker relationship? It is commonly presumed that the “crystallisation” of a (de)securitising move does not happen until it is articulated in a speech act. Following Doty’s (2007) argument, however, there would be less need for such crystallising accentuation because sovereignty originates from the people, and the lower echelons of society have the ability, through their actions, to decide who remains included and excluded from the group. The audience can, thus, contest an elite securitisation (Doty, 2011) and, by its local practices, decide on the (perceived) threat and take the necessary measures to tackle it (Doty, 2007). Hence, the legitimacy to act for (de)securitisation might be relocated into a speaker possessing (or appropriating) the identities and experiences of a changed relevant audience. Expanding this notion, the speaker might be interchanging between being part of a relevant audience and a speaker articulating (de)securitisation.

We might, however, not be able ‘firmly [to] locate’ these things. Trying to do so might, inevitably, simplify the speaker–audience interaction. Nonetheless, these different practices are shown to have relevant large-scale implications for (de)securitisation. Located in the periphery, the audience has a capacity to decide on securitisation and reconfigure the world into one of ‘friends’ and/or ‘enemies’ (Doty, 2007, p. 130). As noted at the start of this section, Doty does not take desecuritisation into account, focusing instead exclusively on securitisation. Although the ‘border space’ involves relevant audience and/or speaker practices, as noted earlier, it does not leave much room for contestation. In sum, Doty’s key contribution concerns her way of briefly pointing to spaces of contestation and the ambiguity and uncertainty of (identifying and separating) the ‘Self’ and the ‘Other’ in the periphery.

In considering spaces of uncertainty, Gazit and Latham (2014) are a helpful supplement, discussing places and spaces of non-violent coexistence, with a focus on desecuritisation. They also make many similar assumptions to Doty (2011), namely about the voice of authority in (de)securitisation being social rather than exercised by states (Doty, 2007, pp. 132–133; Gazit and Latham, 2014, p. 68). Their understanding is an excellent addition to comprehending different spaces, where *space* is understood as ontologically given but ‘discursively mapped and corporeally practiced’ (de Certeau, in Gazit and Latham, 2014, p. 67). Desecuritisation might, thus, work differently in various places. Both Doty (2007; 2011) and Gazit and Latham (2014) implicitly regard space as multi-dimensional, where social relations are (re)established as well as produced (Lefebvre, 1974, in Gazit and Latham, 2014, p. 67; Doty, 2007, p. 134; 2011, p. 607). Space can, thus, take the form of ‘the exception’, be ‘geographic’ or ‘the result of social and political practices’ (Doty, 2011, pp. 600, 607). The most relevant insights for this article are that spaces can be desecuritising and that they can (re)establish a ‘less securitized and violent manner with one another’ (Gazit and Latham, 2014, pp. 64, 69). Similar to Doty (2007; 2011), Gazit and Latham (2014) argue that it is through everyday practices, involving contestations, that new articulations can be created to desecuritize a prior construction of

the ‘Other’ (Gazit and Latham, 2014, p. 63). The envisioned dynamic of the audience might contest a securitisation through, for example, (re)establishing social relations that are cutting across the ‘Self/Other’ distinction. In short, contestation or desecuritisation can be viewed as a ‘space making practice’. Through Gazit and Latham (2014), this article can achieve what Doty’s articles could not, namely to illustrate the theoretical alternative spatial formations that might form paths towards desecuritisation. This concept will, in the context of this article, be termed *spaces of desecuritisation*.

Adding to these spaces of desecuritisation, the audience is envisioned to hold a more active role in reshaping spaces and, especially, challenging when and how desecuritisation can occur. The conceptualisation of the *spaces of desecuritisation*, as pointed out earlier, will be illustrated in two empirical cases, given the limited confines of this article. As with Doty, the effort ‘firmly [to] locate’ these practices might, inevitably, simplify the speaker–audience interaction. Thus, these empirical vignettes, firstly, exemplify and locate where the conceptualised desecuritisation can be found and, secondly, point to where it is possible to search for alternative spaces and signs of desecuritisation. The two short illustrations also serve another important task of this article, which is to point out the implications this might have for securitisation theory at large.

Breaking through walls (of securitised identities)

The individuals who are climbing over the separation wall dividing Israeli and Palestinian territory are tangibly breaking through the instigated securitisation measures. This section’s two brief empirical vignettes similarly show spaces where the tactics of the everyday contest a securitisation. Both cases advance a re-conceptualisation of securitisation theory necessary for understanding desecuritisation. They conceive of how desecuritisation can occur in different ways. They also reveal how the practices of everyday life can be transformed into practices that destabilise a current securitisation. The two illustrations have been drawn from a similar setting in the post-2002 context after Israel’s decision to build the separation wall, effectively cutting off any large-scale unregulated movement between the occupied West Bank and Israel.

The first case focuses on the many emerging heterogeneous groups resisting the decision to build the separation wall and makes use of Pallister-Wilkins’ (2011) personal accounts from three villages, Budrus, Biddu and Bilin. The article analyses the reconfiguration of power through the groups of Palestinian and Israelis contesting the construction of the separation wall. The second case is similarly located within the Israel-Palestine conflict but, rather, considers how the practices of everyday, such as going to work in Jerusalem, can be a site of contestation and desecuritisation. In order to capture these mechanisms, the case study uses the ethnographical accounts of Mannergren-Selimovic (2018) on the different tactics used in the divided city of Jerusalem. Although the empirical examples share similar contextual settings, namely the securitised Israeli-Palestinian conflict, one can be seen as a more vertical

contestation (Pallister-Wilkins, 2011) while the other as more horizontal (Mannergren-Selimovic, 2018).

With these two cases, this section introduces a comparative analysis and the visualisation of a more diverse and detailed discussion of different spaces of desecuritisation. It exemplifies how unlikely alternative spaces might be where the audience accesses possibilities or practices of desecuritisation. Importantly, this section does not show how ‘the politics of small things’ can change the system, as is the argument of Goldfarb (2006). Instead, it indicates that even in unlikely spaces, ‘spaces of exception’ (Doty, 2011, p. 600) or ‘hyper-securitization’ (Gazit and Latham, 2014, pp. 64, 66), it is possible to visualise desecuritisating potential in the audience’s everyday tactics. While the term ‘hyper-securitization’ is not entirely unpacked by Gazit and Latham, it is here connected to Doty’s ‘spaces of exception’. While it remains a debated concept, it will not be the focus here. It does, nevertheless, illustrate the specific extreme context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from where the empirical illustrations are drawn. Hyper-securitisation, implicit in Gazit and Latham (2014), refers to an environment where the duration of reoccurring securitisation has been performed to the extent that it has created a space of exception. In this hyper-securitisation, the hostile and dangerous “Other” is not only accepted but expected to be continually securitised by the elites, audiences and institutions of both sides. Thus, a hyper-securitised threat is not desecuritisated even when a majority of actors on both sides acts for desecuritisation. The long duration of the conflict has, according to many academics, been conceptualised as a constant re-securitisation of the ‘Other’ (for an overview, see Lupovici, 2014, pp. 395–397). In this re-securitising process, the “Self” has been intensely intertwined with territory and identity. The potential for a desecuritisation into peaceful coexistence has been seen as problematic, as both sides claim that their security is dependent on geographically intersecting states. The empirical consideration is limited to the post-peace process after the Second Intifada that has been marked by Israel’s creation of the separation wall and the continued and increased support of Israeli settlements on the West Bank (Pallister-Wilkins, 2011, p. 1853). Yet, in this sustained, violent and “hyper-securitized environment”, there might still be space to reconfigure the audience through its local spatial practices.

Both the Israeli and Palestinian sides have ascribed to the traditional view on sovereign power over geographic places as the inevitable end goal of the conflict. Thus, geographic space has been, and continues to be, deeply interconnected with ontological and physical security (Olesker, 2014, p. 376). Rumelili (2015), for example, argues that the management of Jerusalem has been raised to a matter of survival. Similar to this, other scholars within securitisation theory on the Israel-Palestine conflict (e.g. Olesker, 2014; Coskun, 2010, p. 295) argue that desecuritisation is improbable. Even if the physical separation wall was to be removed completely, it would remain as a ‘mental separation’ for a long time (Klein, 2014, p. 215). Indeed, trying to identify one moment of transformation would potentially be misleading, and certainly obscures theoretical insights about complexity and ambiguity.

Similarly, the sole focus on discourse might be too narrow, restrictive and marginalising of other elements in society (Balzacq, 2005; Hansen, 2006; Stritzel, 2007), as is the focus on discourse concentrating on the ‘silent’ practices of the everyday (MacKenzie, 2009). Therefore, any consideration of desecuritisation must be inclusive of practices, movements and narratives as alternative ways of understanding audience reconfigurations. Thus, this overview of different spaces only illustrates spaces where more in-depth work is needed.

Given ‘the complex, multitudinous, and fragmentary nature of sovereignty’ (Gazit and Latham, 2014, p. 67) especially in the Israeli-Palestinian context (*ibid.*), this article’s perspective on the conflict follows the methodological considerations of challenging the ‘representational hegemony’ that places Palestinians as either heroes or victims (Mannergren-Selimovic, 2018, pp. 132–133). This enables this article to go beyond ‘acute pessimism’ (Gazit and Latham, 2014, p. 66), as well as to refrain from a heroic narrative about contestation. Still, Israeli disciplining measures in the Israeli-occupied territories have been met by violent and non-violent agentful contestations (Mannergren-Selimovic, 2018, pp. 132–133).

Before going into the two specific cases, it is important to provide some background and, more specifically, place these cases within the larger historical context. Israel and the occupied territories have a history of contestation and securitisation (Mannergren-Selimovic, 2018, pp. 138–139). After the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, Israel annexed East Jerusalem, which prior to this had been under Jordanian jurisdiction as a result of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. Israeli authorities view East Jerusalem as part of a united Israeli capital; yet, this area is not recognised as such by the wider international community (Gazit and Latham, 2014, p. 69). In April 2002, Israel decided to create a permanent structure around and inside the occupied West Bank to separate it physically from Israel. The wall in urban areas is made up of nine-metre-high concrete blocks and was built under the pretext of decreasing terrorist attacks (Pallister-Wilkins, 2011, p. 1856). The wall has limited the movements of the Palestinian population of the West Bank and has also made it easier to annex Palestinian lands for Israeli settlements. In the following paragraphs, the everyday interactions (which tend to be disregarded) within the state-centric securitisation dynamics are taken into account.

The first empirical illustration is drawn from Pallister-Wilkins’ (2011) account of the joint Israeli and Palestinian groups contesting the separation wall. Pallister-Wilkins’ article focuses on an understanding of how different relations of power become (re)initiated in the conflict, and the type of contestation they enable. The article maintains that elite and state-centric approaches ‘fail to capture the complex reality of constantly shifting terrains of power’ (2011, p. 1859). Pallister-Wilkins focuses on three villages in close proximity to the separation wall that have become places where a collective movement of contestations has been established including both Israelis and Palestinians (2011, p. 1851). The article is primarily interested in investigating how power and contestation are reconfigured, based on the idea that contestation is ‘capable of generating its own structures of power’ (2011, p. 1856). What is interesting in

Pallister-Wilkins' (2011) account in the scope of this article are the horizontal processes of contestation. Rather than focusing on the groups' joint resistance to the imposed Israeli occupation, this horizontal relationship is only mentioned briefly. For this article, however, the process of creating a space opposing a centralised securitised issue becomes the most interesting aspect. In order to illustrate these horizontal contestations, through the practice of ignoring a securitised binary, a few examples were taken from Pallister-Wilkins' (2011) article.

Israeli activists engaged in weekly solidarity visits to the OPTs [Occupied Palestinian Territories] and had house meetings with occupied Palestinian activists. The physical act of entering a Palestinian's home in solidarity was radical in and of itself without even thinking about what was actually discussed and planned at these meetings (Pallister-Wilkins, 2011, p. 1867).

It is through these kinds of 'solidarity visits' that this type of horizontal desecuritisation is argued to be present. In such manifestations of solidarity, it is possible to identify the mechanism of discrediting the legitimacy of the securitised "Other". Rather than the more evident vertical contestation, this mechanism exists in the challenges of the Palestinian and Israeli "Selves", and in how small groups of cooperation might transform the wider narrative and discourses. In the words of an interviewed Israeli citizen, Kobi Snitz:

This type of work of Palestinian-led struggle requires [...] deprogramming in Israeli society. We [...] exist in Israel and [...] like it or not, we inherit in our group some features of Israeli society and we need to be aware of that enough to try and weed that out (in Pallister-Wilkins, 2011, p. 1875).

Undeniably, it is rather paradoxical that the physical manifestation of power, such as a separation wall, at the same time creates spaces of contestation. Connecting this case back to theoretical understandings of everyday activities in the spaces of exception, in the words of Doty (2011, p. 610), the physical manifestation of power is filled with 'cracks and fissures' where the light gets in. The clear non-metaphorical image of the borderlands for Doty (2007; 2011) and, in this example, the separation wall of inclusion or exclusion, can also be spaces where binaries of states and identities are questioned. In this particular case, one crack is the establishment of joint Palestinian and Israeli cooperation that might change who the relevant audiences are and where they are located.

The case of groups contesting the separation wall illustrates how alternative movements of cooperation are enacted simultaneously with securitisation. These social practices might question the distinction of the 'regime of truth' about the "Self" and the "Other". The above

example has a noticeable and self-evident flaw worth pointing out. The groups and individuals that contest a state-mandated securitisation are, perhaps most often, not part of a traditional enabling audience or elite. Hence, the focus is placed on joint contestation, as it formulates its own space that might speak desecuritisation. What Kobi Snitz is reflecting over is the ‘Self’s’ security-ness (Roe, 2004, p. 279). Thus, the idea of the nation (imagined or not) seems to have a certain ‘stickiness’ (cf. Andersson, 1991; Varshney, 2007, pp. 288–290). Accordingly, and going beyond the analysis of Pallister-Wilkins (2011), simply acknowledging these spaces of contestation, or even of co-existence, could be viewed as a desecuritisating space, either as a place from where securitisation starts to ‘fade away’ or as practices that speak to other audiences (Donnelly, 2015; Behnke, 2006). ‘Deprogramming’ in individuals and groups is part of this very central idea of spaces of desecuritisation. It is important to note, then, that even if these practices of contestation do not initiate desecuritisation, they still constitute a space of desecuritisation, where a certain regime of truth about the features of the “Self” and the “Other” is actively attempted to be ‘weed[ed] out’ (Pallister-Wilkins, 2011, p. 1875). In terms of horizontal or vertical contestation, it seems that this case is leaning more towards an organised vertical contestation, even if this section has shown its horizontal desecuritisating aspects as well. The next case, instead, illustrates how the unintentional horizontal actions of the everyday can become an unintended speaker of desecuritisation.

The second case highlights the work of other researchers on the Israel-Palestine conflict (e.g. Jean-Klein, 2001; Rosenfeld, 2004; Abu-Zahra, 2008), who have underlined contestation and desecuritisation in the daily routine of confronting economic and political repression. In this process, and definitely in the everyday practice of living through occupation, there are fragments of possibilities for changing the relevant audiences and what elites ‘know about the world’. The below case illustrates how the everyday practice of going to work in the city of Jerusalem can be a space of desecuritisation.

Mannergren-Selimovic’s (2018) article develops a theoretical framework to understand everyday audiences through a framework of *place*, *body* and *story*. This article includes remarkable ethnological accounts. It visualises the unnoticed practices that might change the disposition of the population and the legitimacy of a securitisation. One of her many vigorous accounts reflects the story of a young Palestinian woman, who unintentionally defies a checkpoint when trying to get to work. The act of trying to escape the checkpoint becomes, through a video recording and postings on social media, a shared intersubjective experience. The video depicts the violent arrest of the young woman. She is thrown down on the ground by Israeli police officers, her hijab falls off and her hair becomes visible as she is dragged away through a crowded lane in the Old City. This short event is seemingly insignificant for the understanding of desecuritisation in the wider framework of securitisation theory. The experience reveals, instead, what is to be expected with the securitised measures of “flying checkpoints” enabled during occupation. Yet, the small, seemingly insignificant, event can be approached within the framework of this article. As the woman explains, the intent was

not to question or contest anything:

she just really needed to work, and thought that she could probably talk her way through the checkpoint. It was a judgement call and it went wrong (Mannergren-Selimovic, 2018, p. 141).

This calls our attention to how the unseen and ordinary can be turned into an intersubjective experience, in this case, through the assistance of social media. Of course, the use of social media to spread this unintentional contestation in a securitised city is worth reflecting on. Addressing the informal networks established in various digital channels might alter who can practise (de)securitisation. Here, in a shifting digital landscape, the audience and speaker might interchangeably switch between being a speaker and/or audience. In this setting, fragments from the lived everyday securitisation can be shared through videos, images and stories. These fragments might affect how different audiences perceive a securitisation. Of course, as with the video of the woman being arrested, how this is understood is based on the psychological disposition of how the audience views its role in the world. The video is not viewed in a vacuum but from the standpoint of a particular discourse. Thus, in the intersubjective process of sharing a fragment of the everyday, interpreting what is viewed might require a negotiation among multiple audiences. While this negotiation is not within the scope of this article, it is highly interesting. What becomes relevant here is, instead, the ease with which a binary divide in a securitisation can be transcended. Perhaps, a negotiation among audiences will not result in desecuritisation, but engaging with, and seeing or feeling a securitised “Other” might create a space where the ambiguities about a binary opposite can be contested or ‘deprogrammed’. This brief case shows how the unintentional contestation of a securitisation can be found in numerous locales, as part of the daily routine of getting to and from work in Jerusalem and the Palestinian Occupied Territories. The everyday moment can, thus, be interconnected with the exceptional and vice versa. Through different processes, it can create momentary audiences and spaces of desecuritisation.

The cases discussed include both a vertical and a horizontal contestation, illustrating how groups organise themselves and view the “Other”. Where a predominant part of the literature focuses on repressive state power, this section indicates a need to view the everyday as created through power, but also how it embodies potential to reshape power and space. The two cases, and the dispatch about the Palestinians travelling over the separation wall in the introduction, show tactics on how to overcome repressive securitising measures. These tactics in any securitised environment embody ideas about a space of desecuritisation. The cases show the existence of spaces of desecuritisation (or destabilisation), which, in turn, might intersubjectively change the disposition of other individuals in the same web of structures. Of course, concentrating on these ‘cracks’ does not address the possibility that elites might appropriate these contestations to maintain legitimacy and speak (de)securitisation. Given the “insignificance” of the described event, however, it is likely that there are various and

recurring iterations in a multitude of spaces. The instability of these numerous spaces of (de) securitisation makes it unlikely for any actor to appropriate them fully, as any articulation is likely to create other spaces connected to different audiences. Considering how desecuritisation could unfold from these different spaces of desecuritisation, if a desecuriting idea about the “Other” is appropriated by a critical number of audiences and speakers, perhaps it can gain traction to change what is known about the world and withdraw the instigated securitising measures.

Theoretical implications

This article has involved an in-depth elaboration and (re)conceptualisation of the audience within desecuritisation. The (re)conceptualisation has several theoretical implications for the study of securitisation theory in general and the role of the audience within desecuritisation in particular. Perhaps the most significant implication concerns this article’s contribution to the role of audience practices in desecuritisation. Further, this article has challenged the Copenhagen School’s binary logic centrality within (de)securitisation theory. These considerations are not “complete”, in the sense of a fixed theoretical framework, but hopefully can encourage certain questions that may generate academic curiosity for future scholars to engage in and contribute to a cumulative understanding of desecuritisation.

By exploring the numerous locales of the audience’s agency, this article has visualised how the audience can enable ‘something new’ through its speech and actions (Mannergren-Selimovic, 2018, p. 134). Indeed, by understanding the audience in this way, it is conceptualised as an actor (or, rather, as multiple actors) capable of generating new relations and realities (Honig, 1995, p. 149). Hopefully, through integrating this more comprehensive perception, it becomes possible to gain a better understanding of the audience’s role in (de)securitisation processes.

Further, by combining desecuritisation strategies with the works of Doty (2007; 2011) and Gazit and Latham (2014), this article has produced a necessary discussion between these different concepts and has also been able to illustrate the active role of the audience. This audience-centric discussion and framework might leave out the role of the speaker or elite in (de)securitisation. Such an inclusive discussion, however, is probably not necessary here, as the speaker or elite have already received most, if not all, the attention of previous (de) securitisation theorists.

The article has focused on the audience’s role in desecuritisation. Still, this understanding of the audience should not be seen as solely useful to understanding desecuritisation. The active role of the audience, as something more than a ‘facilitating condition’ of securitisation (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 17), is likely to be beneficial for other theoretical developments. Certainly, the conceptualisation of this article could also provide a valuable contribution to the understanding of how unsuccessful (de)securitisation can be explained. As noted by, among others, Topgyal (2016, p. 168), there is a tendency to focus primarily on successful (de)

securitisation, something which might omit relevant theoretical insights drawn from failed attempts to (de)securitise. Therefore, focusing on the audience's role and practices might be an opportunity to understanding why desecuritisation fails.

It would be interesting to explore where and when alternative spatial configurations can be established and how elite articulation affects desecuritisation. This updated notion about the role of the audience within desecuritisation could be used advantageously to update the understanding of desecuritisation in peace initiatives (Wæver, 1995). Using a framework sensitive to the audience might be able to, for example, explain the prior failures of peace talks in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Perhaps the popular revolts against these efforts might be an indication that they have been lacking horizontal desecuritisation.

Additionally, this article noted that there is a problem with elite desecuritisation due to the implicit dynamics of the binary speech act (Austin and Beaulieu-Brossard, 2017, p. 321). Following this assumption, the elite speech act will always “make similar” and, thus, simplify the complex identities that are the result of multiple interactions. This is evident not least in the, so-called, ‘hyper-securitized’ empirical case (Gazit and Latham, 2014, pp. 64, 66). Any peace initiatives in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, or peacebuilding at large, tend to “make similar” the two opposites, here Israelis and Palestinians. This might be a reason to re-engage with the desecuritisation strategies originally envisioned by Wæver (2000), and accounted for in the theoretical section of this article. Wæver's first strategy of desecuritisation was to avoid framing issues in the language of security, and the second was to manage an issue without generating a security dilemma (Wæver, 2000, p. 253). The common theme of the two strategies is for elites to refrain from articulating issues in terms of security. Wæver (2000) focused on issues that have not yet been securitised but his strategies could, perhaps, be adapted to a securitised issue as well, seeing as the elites avoid engaging in (de)securitisation. While Roe (2004, p. 285) critiqued these strategies for incorporating ‘non-securitization’ rather than desecuritisation, this elite passiveness might hold the possibility to open alternative spaces of desecuritisation. This could, at least as the start of a desecuritisng process, avoid tearing apart the delicate alternative spaces of overlapping and blurring identities. These spaces of desecuritisation might, thus, constitute stepping stones, not of similarities but of differences, or one might even argue, of *différance* (Derrida, 1976). It might not be an original unit of the “Self” and “Other” but a condition of possibilities where one does not try to “make similar” the two groups. If the elite refrains from uttering the “We” against the “Them”, the “radicals”, it just might leave space for *différance* to emerge in the spaces in between groups.

Conclusion

As stated above, this article has explored and reconceptualised a theoretical inclusion of the audience(s) different role(s) within desecuritisation. The article first established the current under-developed status of the audience and desecuritisation. Through comparing the implicit role of the audience within the current academic strategies of desecuritisation, the concepts

have been defined and developed. With the inclusion of different theoretical understandings, alternative to the instrumental and managerial state-centric positions, desecuritisation strategies have been criticised. Instead, an alternative theoretical understanding of desecuritisation has been conceptualised through the use of everyday spaces as an arena in which to explore how the audience is rearranged through horizontal contestation. This contestation has allowed for a consideration of how securitised audiences operate and change. The article offers a conceptual pathway to understanding the audience's interconnection with context and practices as a priorly unnoticed area. Exploring these spaces of the everyday has allowed for an appreciation of how desecuritisation can occur differently in changing spaces, captured in this article as *spaces of desecuritisation*.

This study has, hopefully, been able to advance the understanding of the different roles of the audience in the spaces of desecuritisation. In its limited scope, however, it is likely to disregard scholarship important for future developments. An identified gap where more work will be needed relates to the inclusion of spatial theory. It is the article's belief that a thorough examination and integration of the many new additions in the field of spatiality, together with ethnographical accounts, could bring novel insights to securitisation theory. Hence, this article has not been able to integrate fully earlier scholarship on the politics of the everyday that exists within security studies. Space does not focus explicitly on the speaker–audience dynamics but holds essential insights into how culture, practices and context are shaped. Illustrating this in relation to the physical separation wall visualises contestation and makes it possible to identify these spaces (of desecuritisation). The non-metaphorical separation wall, as seen in the adopted empirical illustrations, tends to create clear vertical securitised oppression, against which contestation becomes identifiable. The (re)construction of subjects is evident in this asymmetrical relationship. In challenging this, future works will need to take into account less evident acts of securitisation, forced upon subjects and those rendered excluded and disposable. The article recognises that there are several types of contestation, here categorised as vertical or horizontal. While both are likely to be interconnected and interdependent, this article maintains that horizontal contestation holds a particular, under-appreciated potential to contest or destabilise the idea about the ontologically securitised “Other”. More work is needed in the societal sector's periphery to take account of the mechanism of (unconscious) negotiation among multiple audiences. Hopefully, this article has generated the necessary academic curiosity to examine the, at times uncharted, terrain of desecuritisation.

The credibility of this work is, evidently, dependent on the frameworks and theoretical approaches that it has included. With the vast emerging body of literature on securitisation, there is a multitude of arguments that could have been included. For instance, while this article has been able to involve some significant thinking on the topic, others might find it productive to dive deeper into the second generation's emphasis on culture, practices and context. In their theories, there is likely to be an abundance of important ideas that need to

be adapted and incorporated into desecuritisation.

Finally, this article encourages future scholars to appreciate the role of the lower echelons of society. The puzzling lack of attention to these mundane practices has certainly motivated and shaped this article's purpose. Of course, in theoretical debates, the dominance of securitisation over desecuritisation might remain, not least because these spaces of desecuritisation always face the risk of being torn apart by (re)securitisation. For instance, direct physical violence instigated and "made right" through securitisation might cut through these more delicate horizontal spaces of desecuritisation. The production of alternative spaces, thus, always runs the risk of being absorbed by a speaker's securitisation that is reordering societies according to the divide between dangerous "Others" and vulnerable "Selves". Still, even if the audience's sense of 'security-ness' is increased, the objective should be to search for moments of political transformation. This could be especially important currently, when the global elite rhetoric of the "enemy", "illegal migrant" or "infected" "Other" is attached to the dominant discourses that fuel movements and actions of hatred. The audience can uphold securitisation but also, as shown in this article, enable desecuritisation. It might, thus, be worth considering that the 'political distinction to which political action and motives can be reduced [might not be] between friend and enemy' (Schmitt, 1996 [1932], p. 26) but can be found instead in various overlapping spaces in between.

Notes

¹ Impression gathered from living in the region during 2019.

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