Security (studies) and the limits of critique:
Why we should think through struggle

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This paper addresses the political and epistemological stakes of knowledge production in post-structuralist Critical Security Studies. It opens a research agenda in which struggles against dominant regimes of power/knowledge are entry-points for analysis. Despite attempts to gain distance from the word 'security', through interrogation of wider practices and schemes of knowledge in which security practices are embedded, post-structuralist CSS too quickly reads security logics as determinative of modern/liberal forms of power and rule. At play is an unacknowledged ontological investment in 'security', structured by disciplinary commitments and policy discourse putatively critiqued. Through previous ethnographic research, we highlight how struggles over dispossession and oppression call the very frame of security into question, exposing violences inadmissible within that frame. Through the lens of security, the violence of wider strategies of containing and normalizing politics are rendered invisible, or a neutral backdrop against which security practices take place. Building on recent debates on critical security methods, we set out an agenda where struggle provokes an alternative mode of onto-political investment in critical examination of power and order.

Keywords: security, struggle, Foucault, violence, critique

Introduction

This paper addresses the political stakes of knowledge production in those strands of critical security studies (CSS) that are influenced by post-structuralism. For these approaches *critical* security studies "is not about identifying and analyzing security *problems,* but rather security *problematizations* as the ways in which things come to be viewed as security problems" (Aradau et al. 2015, 6). They step back from taken-for-granted notions of security to examine the effects of schemes of knowledge through which security

practices are authorized. They ask questions such as: how are categories produced and lines drawn so that certain lives are deemed worthy of protection while others are rendered disposable? What might we find if we look within these lines (Huysmans and Pontes Nogueira 2012, 2-3)? Where are sites of rupture that unsettle patterns of order that security sustains (cf. Ashley and Walker 1990; Bigo and Walker 2007; Bigo 2012)? Central here is "the shared assumption that security threats and insecurities are not simply objects to be studied, but the product of social and political practices" (Aradau et al. 2015, 1). This sensitivity to practice has generated sophisticated methodological engagement and suspicion of top-down moves from 'theory' to 'method'. Methods themselves are increasingly recognized as politically-laden practices, infused with theory but with the potential to rupture established frames (see contributions to Aradau et al., eds. 2015).

These perspectives offer vital correctives to definitions of CSS that simplistically equate criticality with commitment to abstract notions of 'emancipation' (e.g. Booth 1991). The latter have rarely involved sustained examination of the meaning of 'security', but have extended the concept, adding on a series of goods to be 'secured' – the individual, the eco-system etc. (cf. Huysmans 1998, 226-7). Likewise, 'emancipation' is not interrogated: if an intervention is organized around life-affirming values (the human, the social and so on), it is considered automatically emancipatory. Other critical perspectives, by contrast, lend themselves to recognition that not only insecurities but also emancipatory politics are defined within social and political practices. Putatively emancipatory interventions by international organizations and NGOs routinely reinforce oppressive power relations (e.g. Drainville 2005; Coleman 2013). Moreover, as some critical scholars of resistance have underscored, even what emerges 'from below' may bolster the very power relations it seeks to undermine (e.g. Coleman and Tucker, eds. 2012). Post-structuralist critical perspectives on security lend themselves to the recognition that the politics of emancipation needs to be unearthed from within situated practices of struggle (see e.g. Huysmans 2006; Nyers and Moulin 2007; Aradau 2008, 98-117).

Post-structuralist CSS[1] represents an important intervention in another regard. Outside of IR, Foucault's work on governmentality has often been taken up into strikingly benign accounts of (neo-)liberal regimes, which invite "justification of a particular form of liberalism, combining security and liberty" (Bigo 2008, 111; see also Valverde 2007, 173). By contrast, CSS highlights violences and exclusions performed through security as the flip-side of freedom. From different directions, the critical force of CSS is found precisely in a refusal to take for granted what appears benign, legitimate or emancipatory.

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[1]From hereon, when we say 'CSS' we mean those approaches influenced by post-structuralism.

Nonetheless, we argue that CSS still limits its own critical potential by being *overly* preoccupied with violences and foreclosures enacted through practices of security. Inasmuch as it fails to adequately situate security within complex entanglements with other technologies of power, CSS undercuts its own criticality. There are widespread tendencies to read pernicious politics through the lens of 'security' – which is to say *obvious,* or self-declared technologies of managing threat (or risk, or circulation, or disruption). While security is subject to sustained critique, such critiques seldom appreciate the extent to which security practices are enmeshed with other means of domesticating and containing politics, nor the violences performed and concealed by wider strategies of control. Paradoxically, by starting with security, CSS implicitly reproduces distinctions between 'liberty' and 'security' as part of the self-definition of political modernity. The political stakes of focusing critique on just one of these poles are immense. This paper focuses particularly on the entanglements between security practices and the production and regulation of freedom through less visible political economic and epistemic strategies of control. Elsewhere, however, we have made related arguments regarding struggles over nature and forms of knowledge (Coleman and Rosenow 2016b; Rosenow 2017), struggles over law and rights (Coleman 2015a) and strategies of control operating through gendered power relations (Coleman and Bassi 2011).

As CSS tends to revolve around desires *not* to centre 'security' as object of study, we must be clear from the start what we mean. A major impetus of critical scholars has been to *get away* from earlier preoccupations with 'security' *qua* concept (including how to add to that concept in ways amenable to emancipatory agendas). In a well-known paper that set the agenda for much recent critical empirical work, Jef Huysmans (1998) argues that we should consider 'security' within the wider order of meaning in which the term is uttered. The utterance of 'security' articulates a register of meaning that varies across contexts (Huysmans 1998, 288). From this perspective, the focus is on the performative force of security: how narratives of security and insecurity order social relations, and – for Huysmans – how security discourse lays bare a "specific metaphysics of life" (1998, 231) based on mediating death and "reducing ambiguity and uncertainty by categorizing elements" (1998, 241). The article sets out a research agenda reflected in numerous subsequent studies. Increasingly, these have moved away from the word 'security', by centring 'insecurities', for example, by focusing on logics of exception, or by interrogating 'resilience' as that now "subsuming and surpassing the logic of security" (Neocleous 2013, 3). However, even without the word 'security', what holds these studies together is a focus upon logics immediately intelligible as configured around the management of threat, risk, vulnerability, protection, the mediation of death and/or the fixing of political identities by categorizing others in ways that render them sources of threat, risk or vulnerability. These

wider logics of security, their capacity to order social relations, remain at the centre of analysis. From hereon, we will refer to this wider focus on logics of security in the capitalized form – as the study of Security. Even without the word, and even where disciplinary divisions are transgressed (cf. Neocleous 2008, 5-6), it is the logic of Security that is sought when policy-documents are analysed or practices studied.

In what follows, we interrogate the stakes of this foregrounding of Security and put forward an alternative research agenda that builds on the desire in CSS to get at wider logics of epistemic ordering and power. The problem, we argue, is that inasmuch as analysis takes place within a frame of Security, it conceals other, intricately related, ordering practices and logics of power (often designated by CSS scholars to 'social' or 'economic' realms that are mere backdrop to Security). Because Security remains the starting point, logics of Security are too quickly read as determinative of social relations and of the hierarchical ordering of selves and others *in general*. This is the case despite increased attention to practice and experimentation with heterogeneous concepts and objects (cf. Aradau et al. 2015, 7-10).

We will argue that the centrality afforded to Security practices reflects an unacknowledged ontological investment: politics in general is read along the axis of Security. Critical scholars routinely claim not be 'doing ontology' and, indeed, to be challenging desires for "ontological security" (Huysmans 1998, 242) that underpin securitizing interventions against unintelligible Others (Huysmans 1998; Campbell 1998; Walker 1990; Burke 2007). Nonetheless, as William Connolly (1992, 144-5) reminds us, every analysis – even those pertaining to the critique of given ontologies – contains fundamental presumptions about the world that inevitably structure our frameworks of interpretation. These ontological assumptions also have political implications. In many agenda-setting interventions, the axis of onto-political investment is clear. David Campbell (1998, 23), for example, characterizes the problematic of identity/difference as definitive of "our condition" in general, while R.B.J. Walker (1993, 117) sets out an account of the state as mediator of self/other relations as definitive of modernity. In a similar vein, Huysmans (1998, 234-8) frames security as a modern cultural strategy for handling questions of death and fear of others. He does "not want to go as far as Carl Schmitt by arguing that separating friends from enemies is the 'essence' of the political sphere", "but", he continues, "it is certainly is a key part of the self-definition of modern political agencies", for political communities are constituted in the name of the mediation of death (1998, 244).

Yet there is a danger here in assuming that modern political agencies do what they say on the tin.[2] If we focus on the *self-definition* of political practice, then the centrality of Security to political modernity appears self-evident. We will examine how this mode of onto-political commitment to the primacy of Security continues to shape how CSS translates 'essential' security questions of 'life' and 'death', 'threats', and 'friends/enemy formations' into an agenda that focuses on practices of risk management, border control, the securitization of migration, the collection of mass data, counter-terrorist measures, etc.

There is, moreover, much at stake politically assuming Security to be at the core of political modernity. The limits of this onto-political investment are exposed, we will argue, when we *begin* analysis with engaging situated practices of social and/or political mobilisation against injurious logics of oppression, exclusion or exploitation – what we will refer to from hereon as 'struggles'. "[R]esistance", as Tim Cresswell (2000, 258) puts it, can be "an indicator and diagnostic of power". Attention to struggle calls the very frame Security into question, by displacing the objects admissible within that frame. Struggles provide a vital way into making sense of power, because of less-visible violences to which they testify and because they focus attention on heterogeneous technologies deployed to contain and manage disruptive politics (including those of Security). This provides the basis of what, borrowing from Foucault (2003, 30), we can think of as an "ascending analysis of power" (see also Coleman and Tucker 2011, 404; Coleman and Bassi 2011, 208). Read in this way, struggles expose that which Security obscures: the violences of a 'normality' investing wider technologies of pacification and dispossession, a more deeply-etched matrix of lines between lives to be protected or defended and those to be hunted down or allowed to die. In the final part of the paper, we propose that struggles provide entry-points for an alternative mode of onto-political investment in the critical examination of power and order (Coleman and Rosenow 2016a; Coleman 2015b).

Struggles/violences

Explicit openness to the politics of struggle is evident within accounts of resistance to Security. Refusing to relegate Security's 'others' to facelessness and passivity, a series of scholars take struggles over or against Security as a starting point, engaging what Huysmans (2006, 6) denotes "competitions between emancipatory and conservative visions of protection" (see, for example, Aradau 2008, 106-7; Nyers and Moulin 2007; cf.

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[2] Cf. Mark Laffey's (2000, 439) pertinent critique of Campbell's assumption that signification fully represents "the logic of the social".

Aradau and van Munster 2010, 79). However, while Security is broadly conceived (extending to themes such as border and migration regulation, a humanitarian governmentality of care and mobility or exceptional tactics and policing), what is seldom questioned is the frame for these practices. The notion of 'power' is inextricably bound to the power of what is pre-framed as 'Security', the specificity of which resistance is supposed to reveal (for a more detailed discussion, see Coleman and Rosenow 2016a).

To understand the problems with Security as a lens for power and political agency, we need a different starting point. In a chapter entitled 'Distance' in the recent *Critical Security Methods* volume, Lara Montesinos Coleman and Hannah Hughes (2015) argue that, if CSS scholars are to pay attention to practice, including practices of contestation, it is not enough to think about methods in terms of how the scholar can gain *proximity* to those practices. Instead, Coleman and Hughes argue that engagement with practice – being 'in the field' – can force us to gain *distance* from the concepts, categories and problems through which the field asks us to interpret practice. CSS critiques of Security practices tend to form a closed system, in which practice is only visible in relation to Security. What if what is most relevant about those practices is not Security at all? What if the relations of power and violence that struggles expose and contest are not intelligible even within the broadest rendering of Security? CSS scholars will accept that oppositional struggles are often directed against practices of economic exploitation and dispossession, for example (e.g. Aradau 2008, 99-100, 107). However, if we engage such struggles ethnographically, what often comes into the foreground is the importance of technologies of control and normalisation that are not intelligible in Security terms, despite being intimately related to Security. It may be through such technologies of power that political agency is channelled into manageable tributaries, fixed within the very parameters of legibility or civility that appears as mere backdrop through a Security lens, part of the horizon of the taken for granted against which it makes sense to privilege Security.

This becomes clear through one of the authors' ethnographic work on peasant struggles against ecological destruction, socio-economic dispossession and militarization generated by BP's Colombian oilfields (Coleman 2013; 2015a). These struggles challenged diverse violences: not only the armed violence against them, but the violences of the economic model foisted upon them. They also exposed the epistemic violence that framed land and oil as mere 'natural resources', rather than part of the fabric of existence, and which made this approach to 'development' appear normal, natural or legitimate. British international development NGOs intervened in order to protect the peasants. They were highly critical about BP's complicity in armed repression and about the insecurity generated by the oilfields, as well as making the case that BP needed to contribute to poverty reduction. Yet the interventions they promoted were perceived by the peasant associations as the

flip-side of armed repression. Because the NGOs took for granted the very way of life whose definition the peasant organizations contested, they promoted corporate social responsibility projects that integrated peasants into global agricultural markets and encouraged them to abandon the very identity of a peasant class. Ecological devastation continued unabated, while people continued to be pre-emptively 'disappeared' so that no one would demand more than participation within these parameters of the taken-for-granted. Protective NGO interventions such as this are not an isolated example. They need to be understood within wider strategies of political control. Over the last three decades, transnationally-networked NGOs have been increasingly absorbed as "civic partner[s]" to governance institutions, and incorporated into a vision of global humanistic purpose (Drainville 2004, 116; 2005, 889).

Crucial for the purposes of our argument are the epistemic politics of these dynamics. The NGOs *could not see* that what was contested was violence invisible through the frames within which they operated. They failed to engage with and understand the politics of struggle. They failed to see how they too were cementing relations of power that fixed people within the processes of dispossession they contested. We need to cast our net wider, beyond Security, to get at these wider dynamics of power and politics. Broader questions of life, of how life is allocated and recognized within particular categories, which write out other ways of living as "part of life" (Butler 2009, 3), are occluded from view through a Security lens. Instead, questions of life are dealt with as questions of 'survival', freedom from fear, protection of life (with 'death' ever present in the background as life's alter ego).

CSS scholars might respond that they are indeed concerned to understand wider assemblages of power beyond those obviously intelligible as Security. In an insightful discussion of the application of genealogical methods to CSS, Philippe Bonditti, Andrew W. Neal, Sven Opitz and Chris Zebrowski (2015, 163, 177) underscore the difference between a discipline-validating history of Security Studies, and "a genealogy that exposes the power relations and stakes involved in constituting 'security' as an object of knowledge". Even here, however, despite framing 'security' as a radically heterogeneous assemblage of knowledges and practices (Bonditti et al. 2015, 160), it becomes evident when the authors turn to a concrete example that this assemblage is *already circumscribed* by that which is visible (to the discipline) as Security. The authors begin with the control of protestors' circulation through the tactic of police 'kettling' – the subject of much critical commentary during the 2010-11 protests against austerity in Britain. They move to situate this specific tactic of crowd control within a within an assemblage involving police, legislation, crowd control expertise, military tactics, communications and so on (Bonditti et al. 2015, 167-8, 171-2, 175-6). Yet Security is still recentered to the occlusion of much

of what is at stake in these policing interventions. This becomes evident, once again, if we begin with the struggles of those subjected to heavy-handed policing. One thing much commented upon at the time by those subjected to such interventions was the trade union opposition to disruptive protest tactics. Trade union-organized marches were not only permitted as orderly circulation (cf. Bonditti et al. 2015, 175), but also authorized as civil and legitimate protest (see Coleman and Tucker 2011, 407). This normalized mode of dissident circulation was inseparable from the policing interventions and surveillance of those activists who did not comply with these contained forms of political expression. It was in relation to this technology of contained resistance that other activists were posited as a threat. For example, the March 2011 arrest of activists who had occupied one of Fortnum and Mason's London shops to shed light on the company's tax avoidance was presented as a violent distraction from the legitimate march organised by the British Trades Union Congress (Coleman and Tucker 2011, 407; Davies and Curtis 2011).

What is crucial to understand is that the normalization of the orderly march is invested by other technologies of pacification, invisible through a Security lens, yet vital for understanding the heterogeneous assemblage within which Security logics are situated. Key here is the longstanding regime of 'social partnership' between capital and labour. This was entrenched within post-WW2 order-building to bring Western trade unionism within the ambit of anti-communist agendas. It delegitimized critique of systemic capitalist exploitation through a mode of reason that insisted on the possibility of mutual gains for capital and labour (see, for example, Waterman 2008, 252). Norms of social partnership continue to set parameters for trade union responses to austerity. The technologies investing social partnership – dialogue, institutional mediation of labour issues through expert proxies and so on – are arguably as central to the management of public order as the more visible policing, exceptional legislation and surveillance within which they are enmeshed.

These technologies of pacification are extensive and penetrating. Let us return to the discussion of ethnographic research in Colombia. The peasant struggle mentioned above became part of a broader, networked struggle against the impunity with which transnational corporations benefited from, or actively participated in human rights abuses. This eventually gave rise to series of hearings of the Peoples' Permanent Tribunal into Transnational Corporations and Crimes Against Humanity. One prominent struggle within this constellation was that of the Colombian Foodworkers' Union, who in 2001 filed a lawsuit in the US against Coca-Cola, alleging complicity in the murders of union leaders by state-linked paramilitaries. The union's international campaign was combatted by a counter-campaign spearheaded by the International Union of Foodworkers and

backed in Britain by the Trade Union Congress. These efforts embodied opposition to attempts to prosecute companies in favour of dialogue with corporations. This too, fed into the delegitimation of anti-capitalist unions like the Foodworkers as potentially violent subversives. In Colombia, this lead to the criminalization of union activity and other securitizing interventions that were, quite literally, a death sentence for union members in the context of state-backed counter-insurgency tactics. [3] Meanwhile, in corporate responses to allegations of complicity in armed repression of dissent, technologies of social partnership operated closely alongside those of voluntary social responsibility to position companies as ethical and protesters as irrational – and so to secure business as usual. To focus upon the visible violence of securitizing interventions or the alleged violence of protesters redirects attention from radical critiques - of exploitative labour relations or of how public goods like natural resources and higher education have been appropriated – on which struggles are staked. At a deeper level, however, to understand the wider assemblages of control in which visible Security practices are situated (be they armed repression or criminalization for example), we have to go beyond those technologies easily traceable through Security. We have to unravel the backdrop of 'normality' to see how technologies of normalization, pacification and domestification are produced as to appear as neutral or benign – to seem as if they sustained our very freedom.

As the examples above should make clear, political economic logics are one important part of what tends to be either set aside or read through Security. As Claudia Aradau and Tobias Blanke (2010, 46) have noted, Foucault-inspired CSS literatures have difficulties addressing the "political stakes of security" because they tend to focus on the control of circulation, without interrogating capitalist relations of production. Criss-crossing fields of analysis in a manner that transcends preoccupation with Security, Aradau and Blanke (2010, 58, footnote 2) bring in political economy so as to analyze security as "co-extensive with governmentality in a larger sense" (see Kiersey 2009 for a related discussion).[4] What they don't do is suggest *how* we might analyse Security in all its entanglements with political economic logics such as those discussed. When we interrogate power through practices of struggle, economically-oriented strategies of pacification that appear less important within the frame of Security *cannot but* come into view (as we saw in the case above). Attention to struggle can expose how 'normality' itself is a site of contestation.

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[3] See Coleman 2015a; a full discussion of these dynamics is forthcoming.

[4] While Aradau and Blanke suggest Foucault's own work is the source of the difficulty, the following section of our argument should make clear that problem lies with the conceptual framing of CSS itself.

The neutrality and truth of normality is precisely what is called into question in struggles such as those of Colombian peasants and workers or the anti-capitalist protestors caught in the police kettle.

Drawing on his own participation in UK anti-austerity protests, Amedeo Policante (2011) suggests that the violence of normality is exposed through a poesis of performative violence at play in the direct action of activists targeted by visible police violence. The violence hidden in "normality as peace" (Policante 2011, 426) resists complete inscription within given systems of signification: it is not a violence that is witnessed directly, but one that appears in the guise of neutrality, non-ideology, the 'commonsensical'. Reading Marx through the lens of violence and visibility, Policante (2011, 460) suggests that from the preface of the first German edition of *Capital,* Marx framed his work as a struggle to unveil systemic violence engrained in everyday processes of capital accumulation; "that force, at once subterranean (*unterirdischen*) and violent (*Gewalten),* which he saw operating behind the 'civil peace' of nineteenth-century liberal societies". The vampire, born of primitive accumulation, remains alive as capital thrives on death, but this is "hidden, unexpressed and naturalized by the ideological structure that envelops the metabolism that feeds the beast of capital" (Policante 2011, 460). Marx's vampire metaphor has been the topic of much debate (e.g. Carver 1998, 14-16; Neocleous 2003), but one lesson it teaches us is, for Policante (2011, 461), that "there is something extremely deceiving in the nature of violence". This real but unseen "objective violence" is, in Žižek's (2008, 2) words, "invisible since it sustains the very zero-level standard against which we perceive something as subjectively violent", the acts of violence performed by identifiable agents such as the police. It is this "spontaneously accepted background" (Žižek 2008, 31) that struggle can foreground – enabling the shift in perspective that that makes what appears neutral and harmless reveal its obscenity and ruthlessness (cf. Žižek 2009, 334).

While struggles, in diverse ways, expose hidden violences, the frame of Security risks burying these violences again. This is the case even where the critique of Security extends well beyond critique of identifiable acts of violence and situates such acts in wider apparatuses (of law, communications and so on) whose relation to Security practices is directly traceable. The 'hidden violence' remains hidden. It is the backdrop of normality against which these apparatuses operate. Aradau and Blanke are right that the political stakes of Security are occluded. Yet to get at these stakes we need to decenter Security altogether, as only one part of the violence enmeshed within the cogs of our normalizing institutions. To paraphrase Žižek (2008, 1), we need to step back, to disentangle ourselves from the fascinating lure of Security, to perceive the hidden background of violence that struggles themselves expose. We need to give centre stage to struggle.

Simulating civility: a Foucauldian *dispositif* of security?

The 'silent war' waged within the normality of 'civil peace' was one of Foucault's (2003, 16) most influential provocations. A key theme of his 1975-6 lectures is the need to displace the identification of truth with a pacified universality, a displacement accomplished only from a decentred position. It implies taking sides in struggles over truth (Foucault 2003, 9), stepping back from apparently obvious objects of thought and from our own conditioning within the present (cf. Foucault 2007a, 47; 1994, 448; 1984b, 388; 1984a, 45-6; Strausz 2011). Yet, despite Foucault being so widely invoked by scholars of Security, these Foucault-inspired perspectives repeatedly run up against their limits when it comes to gaining distance from Security itself. Security, as Coleman and Hughes (2015, 142) put it, risks becoming "an 'obligatory grid of intelligibility' that sets limits to what … we can call into question".

CSS uptake of Foucault's (2007b) own comments on 'apparatuses of security' in the first lectures of *Security, Territory, Population* provides a pertinent example. The way Foucault tends to be inserted into the field reveals the lure of Security. For Foucault's notion of 'security' does not coincide with that invoked by CSS Foucauldians. Foucault (2007b, 8-9, 21; cf. 139-40) introduces the concept of 'security' to frame the emergence of a focus on population as the target of what he elsewhere calls biopower. 'Security' here refers to the technical means of governing risks by "incentiviz[ing] certain economic activities" (Valverde 2007, 168). For Foucault (2007b, 63-5), technologies of security promote an optimal exercise of freedom for the maintenance of order (see also Dean 1999, 116-7). Security's "essential function … is to respond to a reality in such a way that this response cancels out the reality to which it responds – nullifies it, or limits, checks or regulates it" (Foucault 2007b, 47; cf. Bigo 2008, 96; Dillon and Neal 2008, 11-12). Whereas "the law prohibits and discipline prescribes", Foucault (2007b, 48) suggests that "freedom is nothing else but the correlative of apparatuses of security". Foucault is not merely talking of the visible strategies of containing and managing risk whose logic CSS scholars seek to unpack.

Foucault's reflections on 'security' provide fertile terrain for exposing the underside of civil order. Within the terms of these apparatuses, individuals and groups of individuals are not pertinent – "or rather…will only be pertinent to the extent that, properly managed, maintained, and encouraged, it will make possible what one wants to obtain at the level that is pertinent" (Foucault 2007b, 42). Foucault's example here comes from political economy: eighteenth century thinking on the prevention of food shortage. Here,

the need to work with ebbs and flows of food supply and price fluctuation demands that some must be allowed to starve. Indeed, the "scarcity that causes the death of individuals not only does not disappear, it must not disappear" (Foucault 2007b, 42). This rendering of security points us to the underside of optimizing life in accordance with political economic reason as governmentality's "major form of knowledge" (Foucault 2007b, 108). Foucault points to what Warren Montag (2005, 11) calls the necro-economic logics of early liberal thought, where 'the market' rations life itself. Those who do not count within the terms of modern governmentality are simply abandoned to death (Selmeczi 2009, 520; Coleman 2013, 175).

Foucault's brief sketches of a logic of 'security' provide a way in to examining that which looks benign. Foucault draws attention to a logic of government aimed not at disciplining or outlawing conduct, but at working with the reality of phenonmena: it may be more effective *not* to try to repress or prevent crime, sickness or – for our purposes – political dissent, but to work with the problem to keep it within optimal limits or allow it nullify itself (Foucault 2007b, 30-45). When 'security' crops up again in the following year's lecture series (Foucault 2008), it is well outside the terrain of 'security studies': in relation to the need to foster optimal forms of freedom, such as in the form of a politically disarmed workforce (2008, 65). Here, Foucault's 'security' hints at the silent war within an apparently pacified universality, the invisible violences within the civic peace. This logic of 'security' is found today in the regime of social partnership discussed above, as well as efforts to foster an optimal exercise of political freedom by incorporating NGOs as counterparts to governance.

Foucault himself did not pursue this line of analysis. He hesitated, Didier Bigo (2008, 98) suggests, "at the magnitude of the consequences of his thought": that 'security' both nullifies freedom and simulates freedom – or aims to be freedom, to become the basis of emancipatory claims. Foucault had almost abandoned 'security' in favour of 'governmentality' by the fourth lecture of the 1977-8 series (Valverde 2007, 168; cf. Dillon and Neal 2008, 11-2; Bigo 2008, 94, 101). It is the "fallow field" (Bigo, 2008) left by Foucault's tentative reflections on security that various CSS scholars have sought to cultivate. Yet they do not engage the consequences of Foucault's thought that Bigo so rightly highlights. Despite concerns not to reproduce overly sympathetic accounts of liberal governmentality, the idea that security simulates freedom is largely absent and replaced with a focus on more obvious forms of violence and securitization, manifest for example in the literature on border security, anti-terrorist legislation, and refugee politics (Vaughan-Williams 2010; Amoore 2011; Amoore and de Goede (eds) 2008; Aradau 2008). Even where other fields – such as that of finance – are engaged by Foucauldian CSS

scholars (Boy 2015; Amoore 2011; Cooper 2004; de Goede 2010; Langley 2015 and 2013), this tends to be based on the argument that (pre-given) logics of 'security' can be identified in those fields. The 'grid' that has been established takes Foucault's *dispositif* of security to be about the management of circulation based on the calculation of risk. It is then applied to other policy arenas, instead of questioning the grid as such (for an exception, see Boy 2015).[5]

Even Bigo, after his precise exegesis of the lectures, goes on to apply Foucault's insights to the field of policing, calling for scholars to do what Foucault failed to do, which is to "continue to investigate the relations between town, violence, security, surveillance and war" (2008, 102). This reflects a wider tendency among CSS scholars who – despite acknowledging that Foucault's notion of 'security' diverges from traditional state-centred and militaristic concerns – confine its relevance to fields characterized by more disciplinary mechanisms of state power or mechanisms overtly directed to managing populations in the face of risk: those technologies which *self-represent* in policy literatures as being about risk, danger or 'security'. Foucault's change of direction in *Security, Territory, Population* is judged a "frustration" and "failure" (e.g. Bigo 2008, 94-5; Dillon and Neal 2008, 1), on the basis that we must "analyse security as a concept", centre Security as "the object of reflection" (Bigo 2008, 94).

From the perspective advanced here, however, what is so interesting about Foucault's rendering of 'security' is that he is able to get at a specific logic of intervention *precisely because* he does not privilege a particular concept. The label 'security' emerges from the analysis, with different inflections at different moments, to pin-point something at play in concrete practices. These logics – of incentives generated at the aggregate level, of channelling freedom within optimal limits, of simulating the normality of civil peace – might go in practice by other names. This is what is missed when we hone in upon Security practices. In the process, the critique of Security is disarticulated from the critique of the invisible violences of political economy – generative, for Foucault, of political modernity (Donzelot 2008, 117; referring to Foucault 2007b). Even those who acknowledge both the centrality of economy for Foucault himself, and his reflections on war as an analytic for politics, return to emphasize Security and war in a literal sense. Michael Dillon and Andrew W. Neal (2008, 5-6), for example, maintain not only that "the

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[5] For a recent example outside of finance, see Collier and Lakoff 2015. Although their object of study – systems of transportation, electricity and water – is quite close to Foucault's own object of study, it is only insofar of interest to them as it relates to questions of national security, vulnerability, and the role of infrastructure in national emergencies.

defence of society" [by war] and "dispositifs of security" are *as* "generative" for modern power and rule as "the birth of political economy", but that "security" and "war" are objects *distinct* from political economy (Dillon and Neal 2008, 11). In the analysis of Security, political economy is black-boxed. Marx's vampire, once again, leaves no reflection. The fascination with Security encumbers the desire to expose the violences hidden within liberal normality.

If we want to understand how Security logics are enmeshed within wider technologies of power, we need to address ourselves not only to Security, but to the 'silent war', to the means of naturalizing violence and neutralizing struggle that are invisible within the Security frame. If we start with struggle, with an eye to the variegated techniques through which resistance is contained and neutralized, we can situate visible Security technologies within wider "pragmatic assemblages" (O'Malley 2001, 14), or *dispositifs* made of heterogeneous elements that are immanently related and are not based on 'freestanding ontologies' (Jones 2014, 165). When we start from struggle, we find what looks benign is not so benign, is not the 'other' of Security, but the measure of normality, the simulated civility against which deviance and risk is identified and dealt with.

Perhaps one of the scholars who has come closest to picking up on this logic of intervention is Mark Duffield, in his work on development as a "liberal technology of security" which contains the potentially destabilising "surplus population" produced by global capitalism (2007, 24). Duffield (2007, 18) argues that development frames Southern populations as "essentially self-reliant" and aims to foster this self-reliance. As such, development operates a racialized division between underdeveloped populations and those in the core, who have historically had access to some form of social security (Duffield 2007, 55, ix, 16-18). Duffield throws into relief one aspect of the apparently benign background against which violence occurs: development, he says, is a liberal alternative to extermination or eugenics, which maintains the gulf in life-chances between North and South (2007, viii).

Yet Duffield's analysis is also instructive for a slippage in the 'security-ness' of development. On the one hand, there is resonance with Foucault's less visible 'security': since the post-war 'problematization of poverty' the development enterprise has been a means of managing populations without permanent supervision, keeping poverty within an acceptable bandwidth for the maintenance of order (cf. Escobar 1995). On the other, development as a technology of 'security' is also named as such because of an explicit linkage of development and 'security' in policy documents (Duffield 2007, 1-3). This is where the discussion slides back into the Security box. Duffield draws his analysis of

contemporary practices from a specific field of intervention – development aid geared toward promoting the livelihoods of the poor – *already framed* in the self-representation of practice as necessary 'for security'. As a result of this starting point, only certain practices fall within his gaze. These are then equated with liberal means of managing Southern populations *in general* – a "liberal way of development" (Duffield 2010, 55). Resistance meanwhile is presumed *not* to be contained by liberal means but to provoke illiberal tactics (Duffield 2007, 225).

Once again, if we foreground struggle and decenter Security, we find a more heterogeneous array of developmentalist technologies of control – all with equal claim to embody liberal/neo-liberal rationalities. For instance, Duffield's discussion of development as technology of security has much in common with the interventions to integrate Colombian peasants into agricultural markets so as to neutralize resistance: here too, peasants were encouraged to be self-reliant and to see themselves as individual entrepreneurs. However, not only were these interventions explicitly linked to the problem of resistance (and operated alongside the armed repression that Duffield highlights), but they were represented in policy and practice not as being about 'security' but about corporate social responsibility and promotion of human rights (Coleman 2013, 181). Corporate responsibility and discourses of rights were, moreover, part of a heterogeneous assemblage geared toward containing opposition to a neo-liberal model. Importantly, the recognition of rights embodied in these strategies involved the privatization of rights, their reduction to precarious private contracts underwritten by corporations. This strand within a wider assemblage can be picked up again when we consider means of containing workers' resistance through technologies linked to social partnership. The approach to labour rights that the International Union of Foodworkers promoted against the Colombian Foodworkers' Union involved the severance of rights from law (as seen in their opposition to the lawsuit) and the promotion of rights based on market rationality as necessary to a sustainable business (Coleman 2015a, 1070). If we follow the thread, we find that the latter is also part of the ILO's approach to Decent Work in the face of globalization. This, in turn is a key part of the post-Washington development agenda. The web proliferates further when we take up the thread of post-Washington development discourse. Paul Cammack (2004) has argued that at the core of World Bank approaches to poverty reduction are strategies to incorporate populations into global commodity chains as cheap labour through proletarianization, simultaneously pacifying dissent through policies of controlled participation.

(Neo)liberal ways of development extend far beyond the strategies to contain the circulation of those superfluous to global capitalism that come into view when

development is approached through the lens of Security. We need to situate Duffield's racialized division between insured and uninsured life within a meshwork of dividing lines between those 'in' and those 'out', those lives to be fostered and promoted, those to be killed or allowed to die. This assemblage of techniques of controlled participation, proletarianization, Decent Work, the recognition (and simultaneous privatization) of the rights of workers and stakeholders in the operations of transnational corporations bares close resemblance to the logics of 'security' Foucault identified (simulating freedom, working with the reality of social and political excess so that these phenomena are cancelled out). Nonetheless, they take us well beyond the remit of what policy documents or the discipline identify as Security.

Security field/Security fetish

At play here, in part, is what Hannah Hughes (Coleman and Hughes 2015, 143) calls "the field's force on our thinking". Scholarly lenses are directed only at certain practices, which are assumed to exemplify modern forms of power and rule in general. Such concerns present themselves even where scholars insist that we avoid assuming that we know 'what security is' and pay attention to the constitutive effects of "[h]ow the discourse of security…operates as a historical formation" (Bonditti et al. 2015, 159). Indeed, we might extend to Security Cynthia Weber's (2010) observations on Richard Ashley's undoing of traditional realist IR, in which the continuous focus on concepts such as sovereignty and anarchy "does as much to centre the discipline around realism's core concerns…as it does to decentre these ideas" (Weber 2010, 984). CSS scholars know that the liberal preoccupation with Security serves to mask and betray. They recognize that Foucault was talking about something other than Security. They know, but they keep on doing it as if they did not know (cf. Žižek 1989, 30-1).

The very juxtaposition critical/Security carries a double risk. First, it gives Security a tacit, unacknowledged ontological privilege in understanding power and politics. Of course, critical perspectives on Security acknowledge that it is not 'all' about security. Of course critiques are made of capitalism, colonialism, racism, heterosexism and patriachy, within critiques of Security. Yet, as the discussion above has illustrated, there is a tendency to proceed by assuming the centrality of Security. Secondly, the juxtaposition critical/Security runs the risk of focusing too heavily on the visibly violent side of liberal regimes. Despite attempts to unravel the wider and heteogeneous logics of Security and to situate Security within broader assemblages of power, analyses still center on obvious

processes of maintaining order in the context of threat. In other words, CSS still focuses too much on what policy-makers themselves regard as 'security' practices.

Indeed, given the way in which the field draws its key concept from policy (even where the word is absent the focus is on those practices recognizable in policy terms as Security), we also need to consider how the 'we' interested in Security is invested by liberal ideology more widely. Routine intellectual predispositions highlight the extent to which that ideology is entrenched. As Meera Sabaratnam (2013, 264) aptly points out in relation to the critical literature on 'liberal peace' in the postcolonial world, the ongoing focus on liberal discourses (at the expense of, for example, practices of those targeted by peace-building) reflects the ongoing unacknowledged investment in the idea of "'Western' agency" being, as per its own self-representation, "the terrain of the political". Despite the desire to critique liberal regimes, the ontological privilege given to Security in the CSS literature reflects what Policante (2011, 461) calls the a priori "myth", the (liberal) identification of normality with peace and neutrality. The perpetual recentering of Security reflects a fetishism. It solidifies an ideological fantasy by constantly repeating it in practice (cf. Žižek 2009, 170), diverting attention from unspeakable violences that sustain the problematization of Security.

Central to this Security fetishism is the question of method. Despite the influence of Foucault, the tendency to recenter the 'question' of security along an ontological axis shaped by the discipline's self-reference to liberal ideology, stands in tension with Foucault's ethos of enquiry (Coleman and Hughes 2015, 147). This ethos lies precisely in the pursuit of a "way out" (Foucault 1984a, 42-3) from given frames of thought, and in resisting temptations to think as part of a "'we'… whose consensus, values, whose traditions constitute the framework for a thought and define the conditions in which it can be validated" (Foucault 1984b, 385).

When Foucault's own methods are taken up within CSS, their critical force is often evacuated. Take genealogical methods. The pursuit of a security *dispositif* through the example of the police kettle (Bonditti et al. 2015) stands out for the extent to which the empirical discussion contrasts with the exceptionally thoughtful discussion of genealogical methods that precedes it, in which the authors acknowledge history itself to be an effect of struggle (Bonditti et al. 2015, 175). In the practice of empirical analysis, however, the authors cannot get away from the pull of Security. There is little room for surprise. This is not a problem unique to CSS. Pat O'Malley (2001) makes a similar critique of governmentality scholars, who have produced even smoother (and we might add more sympathetic) accounts of liberalism and neoliberalism. It is, complains O'Malley (2001, 15), as if the object "is known unproblematically, directly from experience", making

"examination" of historically contingent practices "largely the search for exemplars". If genealogical analysis is driven (even implicitly) by concepts such as 'security' or 'neoliberalism', rather than by contingent connections between problematizations across diverse domains of thought and practice, then it is easy to miss what may be important 'on the ground'. Elsewhere too, starting with a concept quickly results in overly smooth historical narratives; as with studies of the 'genealogy of resilience' (e.g. Walker and Cooper 2011). Analysis tends to follow the surface speak of policy texts, selected on the basis of the concept that the analysis revolves around. The result is "an over-emphasis on systematization" that fails to take into account the "oppositions and inconsistencies, contingencies, diversity of voices" that led to the end-result – "especially those voices silenced by political struggle and the subsequent rewriting of history" (O'Malley 2001, 19). Adaptations of genealogy in studies influenced by Foucault seldom entertain Foucault's (2003, 7) own desire to recover an "insurrection of subjugated knowledge's". This understanding of "genealogy as struggle" is still, as William Walters (2012, 132, 134) notes, "somewhat rare".

Towards a research agenda

It needs to be recognised that recent work in CSS has expressed the desire to go beyond the deciphering of Security logics, and to build a more complex picture (e.g. Amicelle, Aradau and Jeandesboz 2015, 300). CSS scholars are increasingly concerned to situate Security within wider assemblages and within hybrid logics of Security practice, for example, by examining specific material security 'devices' and moving from there to "socialization processes and social contexts of action" (Amicelle, Aradau and Jeandesboz 2015, 302). This may prompt moves from specific security practices to the reproduction of social inequalities (e.g. Sing 2015) or to the occlusion of class struggle (e.g. Grove 2015). Feminist research in CSS, which explicitly starts from an onto-political commitment to feminist politics and an attentiveness to embodied experiences of struggle, is one set of literature that increasingly (although very far from universally) turns back to critique Security as starting point for analysis (e.g. Grove 2015; Duncanson 2016).

We want to open a research agenda that takes analysis beyond Security by taking struggle as a starting point. This speaks to longstanding concerns in CSS to critique the violences of liberal order and to consider struggles of forgotten 'others'. It begins, however, from a more explicit recognition that onto-political commitments invest the practice of method.

We noted in the introduction the turn in CSS to engaging method as practice, and the consequent critiques of the well-rehearsed trek down a "cascading path" from the abstract to the concrete, from theory down to methodology, then on to practical questions of method (Aradau et al. 2015, 2; see also Mutlu and Salter, eds. 2013). In the *Critical Security Methods* volume, methodology itself is converted into "a way of experimenting with an assemblage of concepts, methods and empirical objects" (Aradau et al. 2015, 7). "Experimental" here, does not imply hypothesis-testing or controlled conditions, but "a more freely combinatory approach to methods … assembling various concepts, methodological techniques and data without being shoehorned into prescribed requirements of coherent alignments of methods, meta-theory, theory and research problem" (Aradau et al. 2015, 19). It implies a "rhizomic knowledge practice, which emphasises momentary interference in various sites, trying things out for a while, moving on to other sites, inflecting other combinations" (Aradau et al. 2015, 7). This, note the authors, "contrasts with understanding knowledge practice as growing a solid tree from ontological and epistemological roots" (Aradau et al. 2015, 7).

The approach we advocate here shares this understanding of method in terms of assemblage and experiment. However, what has to be underscored on the basis of our discussion is the extent to which ontological assumptions and political commitments already invest the starting points of our experiments in knowledge production. Returning to Connolly's reminder at the start of this paper, we cannot escape onto-political assumptions. Indeed, the point for Connolly is to make those assumptions explicit, reflective, committed. When it comes to *critical* methods, our ontological assumptions also need to be provisional, open-ended, subject to persistent revision in the light of engagement with practice.

Even if method is approached as experimental engagement, it also is important to consider how *unacknowledged* onto-politics may invest the starting points of our experimentation with practice. Starting with struggle, rather than with Security, implies another way in. Here, onto-political commitments are projected in an explicit, but nonetheless reflective and open-ended way. From the perspectival lens of struggle, we are forced to decenter our gaze. "The more I decenter myself", says Foucault (2003, 53) "the better I can *see* the truth" (emphasis added; see also 51-3). Engagement with struggle focuses attention on how struggles themselves intervene within the politics of truth. Struggles over oppressive power relations are not only struggles 'for' or 'against' something already recognizable in terms of readymade categories and taken for granted frames of thought: they often undermine given categories and ontologies (see Coleman 2015b; Rossdale 2015; Coleman and Rosenow 2016a). When we change our position from

the perspective of struggle, the object (Security) is displaced and other violences come into view. Moreover, as one of us has argued elsewhere (Coleman 2015b), struggles themselves can also be thought of as a sort of experiment within relations of power/knowledge. Struggles may begin with a preliminary understanding of 'what they are up against' but in the process of trying to intervene upon and manipulate those power relations – in meeting with attempts at repression, cooptation, domestification and so on - they are forced to reconfigure their own frames of reference. In the process, struggles themselves create new concepts and objects, they shift and deepen understandings of power, politics and ethics (Coleman 2015b, 276). In this experimental engagement, struggles reveal fractured and contingent assemblages of power and violence in all their heterogeneity.

We are not alone in turning to struggle as an analytic. In a critique of "the domestication of Foucault" in benign accounts of liberal and neoliberal governmentality, Ansgar Allen and Roy Goddard (2014, 28) suggest "militant genealogy" as an approach more faithful to Foucault's own impetus to think so as to "broaden the scope of political struggle". This, they argue demands "engagement with the process of struggle itself." It is, moreover, this engagement that brings into view "the continued violence of power even when it becomes codified in governmental devices" (Allen and Goddard 2014, 36). Such a genealogy would open terrain well beyond genealogies that begin with Security and which only follow that one thread in tracing assemblages of power and control.

While genealogy, conceived in this way, traces the emergence and erasure of subjugated knowledges, the empirical work on which the argument of this paper draws is based on ethnographic practice. The involvement of an author in sites of struggle can not only draw attention to heterogeneous assemblages of power simultaneously revealed and critiqued in practices of resistance, but also highlights 'gaps' between the practices studied and the categories available for making sense of them (Coleman 2015b). Instead of attempting to close these gaps, the gaps should be embraced so as to resist the pull of readymade frames of interpretation – be they disciplinary frames or reified categories of thought in political practice (Coleman 2015b; see also Coleman and Hughes 2015). Beyond ethnographic engagement, however, research that engages struggle with an ethnographic sensibility to stories of actually lived lives and struggles lends itself toward distance from readymade frames of analysis (see, for example, Rosenow 2017; 2012; Coleman and Rosenow 2016b). Ethnography is often not a process of getting close to an object framed in advance, but of 'unlearning' what it was we thought we knew, and changing the questions we wanted to ask (Coleman and Hughes 2015; Coleman 2015b). Trajectories of struggle are by definition open-ended and contingent, they persistently grapple with assemblages of

power that transcend given domains of analysis and which cannot be captured within one frame.

Acknowledgements

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