THE PRESIDENTIAL PERFORMANCE: SECURITIZATION THEORY, AESTHETIC TURN, AND OUTSIDER LEGITIMACY

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Submitted to

Central European University

Department of International Relations

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

Supervisor: Professor Paul Roe

Word Count: 11,844

Budapest, Hungary

2020

Abstract

Since its original formulation by the Copenhagen School, the securitization theory received significant attention as an innovative way to analyze issues of security. As it was originally formulated, securitization scholars highlighted how our understanding of security is socially constructed and analyzed various speech acts through which securitizing actors try to acquire the assent of a relevant audience for the adoption of extraordinary measures. Yet, it has been argued that this specific framework has its limitations. In this thesis, I focus on three blind spots, which are embedded in the theory's focus on speech, the politics of exception, and the under-developed concept of the audience. In contrast, this thesis seeks to put forward an understanding of securitization that draws on the insights from the so-called aesthetic turn in international relations. First, instead of speech, I focus on politics as multisensory. Second, instead of the language of urgency and extraordinary measures, I focus on popular culture seen as part of the politics of the everyday. Third, instead of assuming securitizing actors and audiences as established categories, I analyze how they were performed into being. Instead of asking: how do security problems emerge? I elaborate on the question: how do securitizing actors emerge? I argue that once securitizing actors acquire the legitimacy to speak on security issues, they have already gained a privileged position in the intersubjective field of power. I contend that we must consider the (everyday) politics of becoming a securitizing actor as a multisensory performance, and as part of the process of securitization. I then outline possible ways of conducting such analysis on the case study of Donald Trump's performance in the reality TV show *The Apprentice*.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Paul Roe, as well as Erzsebet Strauzs, and academic writing instructors Vera Eliasova and Robin Bellers for their feedback and guidance. I would also like to thank all my classmates for the wonderful two years, Flora Rencz for our late-night conversations, and my family for their constant support.

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Introduction

"My point is not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous, which is not exactly the same as bad."[1]

When the first generation of securitization scholars outlined securitization theory as a new framework for the study of security, they argued that everything can be seen as security if it has been constructed in discourse as a security issue. In fact, their intervention into the field of security studies was so successful that it might seem that securitization is the same as security. After all, the main task for these scholars, as the title of Thierry Balzacq's book suggests, is to study "how security problems emerge and dissolve."[2] In the last two decades, scholars from the so-called second-generation securitization highlighted the limitations of the securitization framework. Most recently, securitization analysis has been moving towards analyzing how securitization leads to re-shaping the power relations between securitizers and relevant audiences. In this respect, Lise Philipsen argues that "we must open up *who* can speak security, seeing how speaking security can be used to take authority, rather than viewing authority as a precondition for speaking security."[3] However, it is not just enough to securitize; one has to have already acquired legitimacy to be taken seriously on security issues. After all, securitizing actors first get to be seen, to be heard, and most importantly, to represent others, before they get to securitize. Therefore, instead of asking how do security problems emerge, my research question deals with the issue: how do securitizing actors emerge?

[1] Michel Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress", interview with Michel Foucault, in Paul Rabinow, ed, The Foucault Reader. (London: Penguin, 1991), 343.
[2] Thierry Balzacq, Securitization Theor : How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve (Milton Park, Abingdon: Routledge, 2010.).
[3] Lise Philipsen, "Performative Securitization: From Conditions of Success to Conditions of Possibility," Journal of International Relations and Development 23, no. 1 (March 2020): 139.

My goal in this thesis is to answer this question while showing how the so-called aesthetic turn in international relations could help to advance securitization theory on at least three accounts. Firstly, I argue that it could help us move past the focus on speech to the appreciation of politics as a multisensory experience. Secondly, I highlight how we could move beyond the language of urgency and extraordinary measures to the appreciation of the relevance of the politics of the everyday. Thirdly, I contend that the aesthetic turn could strengthen the inter-subjective aspect of securitization embedded in the relationship between the securitizing actor and the audience by analyzing how these roles are performed into being. All in all, my argument is that we must consider the (everyday) politics of becoming a securitizing actor as a multisensory performance, and as part of the process of securitization.

If, as Michel Foucault once famously noted, "everything is dangerous," why does securitization analysis so overwhelmingly focus on the study of extraordinary measures and language of urgency.[4] What if the dangerous lies in the most mundane practices of the everyday? What if it lies in a reality TV show? In the case study, I outline possible ways of seeing and analyzing Donald Trump's performance in the reality TV show *The Apprentice*. My argument is that Donald Trump performed his way into becoming the president of the United States. While drawing on various aesthetic and performative concepts, including Guy Debord's concept of "The Spectacle" and Pierre Bourdieu's concept of "symbolic capital," I argue that through this performance Trump then acquired "outsider legitimacy," which he then translated into his bid for the presidency.

This thesis is divided into two parts: the theory and the case study. The theoretical part will be structured as follows. I will first briefly introduce the literature on securitization theory

[4] Michel Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics", 343.

as it was originally created by the Copenhagen School. I will subsequently briefly introduce the contribution and critiques set against the original framework by the second generation of securitization scholars and outline how these demonstrate three specific blind spots of the original framework of securitization theory. I will then suggest that securitization can be seen as a multisensory performance, which re-shuffles the power relations between the securitizer and the audience and argue that we have to extend the analysis of securitization processes to the ways securitization actors acquire legitimacy to speak on behalf of others on the matters of security, which should take into aspects the everyday, mundane, and vernacular performance of becoming a securitizing actor. Finally, I will outline the main tenets of the aesthetic turn and suggest possible ways through which it could help to advance our understanding of securitization.

I will then continue with the case study, which will be structured as follows. I will start by introducing the reality TV show *The Apprentice* and advancing my argument that Donald Trump's performance in the show helped to set the stage his presidential run. In the following analysis, I will outline how the show served to portray Donald Trump as someone who possesses "outsider legitimacy" and "symbolic capital." Consequently, I will highlight how the show co-opted the discourse of the American Dream while portraying Donald Trump as Karl Schmitt's concept of the sovereign. I will then demonstrate how the show can be read through Guy Debord's concept of "The Spectacle" and that the television show used the images of the contestants as "devoted followers" to increase Trump's legitimacy. In the conclusion, I will summarize the insights from the theoretical part and the case study and suggest possible questions for future research.

Part I: Theory

The Origins of Securitization

When in 1998, Barry Buzan, Ole Weaver and Jaap de Wilde published *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, they altered the discipline of security studies for the years to come. First, they argued that other entities beside the state should be able to make the claim that threats to them are also a matter of security – the so-called deepening of security.[5] Second, they posited that security does not have to deal only with the military but also with other sectors such as the environmental, economic, societal, and political – the so-called widening security.[6] But finally, and most importantly, they engaged in a long debate about the very essence of security. In contrast to the traditional understanding of security, they argued security issues are perceived as such if they have been successfully constructed in discourse as such.[7] For this, they received significant praise. In the eyes of Jef Huysmans, their engagement in this debate constituted "possibly the most thorough and continuous exploration of the significance and implications of a widening security agenda for security studies."[8]

The last point and the one that Huysmans was referring to – the so-called theory of "securitization" – has since become a staple in the security studies' dictionary. Since the book's original release, there have been many revisions of the theory of securitization, but the original framework of the securitization process is still observed by many scholars seeking to apply the

[5] Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Lynne Rienner, 1998), 22.
[6] Ibid. 22.
[7] Ibid. 25.
[8] Jef Huysmans, "Revisiting Copenhagen: Or, On the Creative Development of a Security Studies Agenda in Europe: Review Article," *European Journal of International Relations* 4, no. 4 (December 1998): 186.

theory to empirical research. So, what exactly is securitization? The authors write that "if by means of an argument about the priority and urgency of an existential threat the securitizing actor has managed to break free of procedures or rules he or she would otherwise be bound by, we are witnessing a case of securitization."[9] The referent objects of security – "things that are seen to be existentially threatened and have a legitimate claim to survival" – would then be defined through discourse.[10] To do this, securitizing actors – those that use a specific language of security to frame something as "existentially threatened" – must first possess the capacity and the position to convince the relevant audience to grant them exceptional powers to tackle the threat.[11]

It might seem that the Copenhagen School's definition of security is very broad and that anyone can securitize, but they make three important decisions which restrict the theory substantially. First, securitizing actors must possess enough social capital to convince the relevant audience of an existential threat so, as the authors suggest, actors like "political leaders, bureaucracies, governments, lobbyists and pressure groups" will be the main focus of securitization theory.[12] This also means that the analyst can know for sure whether securitization is taking place only after it has already been successful. Second, they bind the theory with speech or more specifically with Austin's concept of the speech act and its performative function – "It is the utterance itself that is the act. By saying the words, something is done (like betting, giving a promise, naming a ship)."[13] And finally, security, in the view of the Copenhagen School, is not just about security as survival but security as "collective survival," which means that the securitizing actor must engage in a political process with the

[9] Buzan, Waever, and Wilde, Security, 25.
[10] Ibid. 36.
[11] Buzan, Waever, and Wilde, *Security*, 25–28.
[12] Ibid. 40-41.
[13] Ibid. 26.

aim of acquiring the assent of the relevant audience.[14] In the words of Buzan at al., "Security (as with all politics) ultimately rests neither with the objects nor with the subjects but among the subjects."[15]

Second Generation Securitization

Since the Copenhagen School published the original securitization framework, many scholars have put forward new suggestions on how to advance the theory further. These scholars generally fit into the category called second-generation securitization. The second-generation scholars represent a large and continuously expanding canon, which is difficult to distill into a single framework as was previously done by the Copenhagen School.[16] Yet, what unites these scholars is the focus on securitization as a continuous process of negotiation, contestation, and resistance. While still taking the speech act as its main focus, these scholars have highlighted the performative aspect of speech acts, i.e. what it is that securitization does as well as pointed towards the notion that security can take on different logics and meanings.[17] In addition, other schools of securitization, along with the Copenhagen School, have emerged. The so-called "Welsh School," particularly influenced by the writing of Ken Booth focuses on security as "emancipation." And the so-called "Paris School," with the principal role played by Didier Bigo, analyzes security as the practices of the "governmentality of unease."[18] Second generation scholars have also pointed towards the importance of starting to take issues like

[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid. 31.
[16] For an overview of the debate see: Thierry Balzacq, Sarah Léonard, and Jan Ruzicka,"'Securitization' Revisited: Theory and Cases," *International Relations* 30, no. 4 (December 1, 2016): 494–531.
[17] Philippe Bourbeau, "Moving Forward Together: Logics of the Securitisation Process," *Millennium Journal of International Studies* 43, no. 1 (September 2014): 187; Paul Roe, "Is Securitization a 'negative' Concept? Revisiting the Normative Debate over Normal versus Extraordinary Politics," Security Dialogue 43, no. 3 (2012): 249; Paul Roe, "Gender and 'Positive' Security," *International Relations* 28, no. 1 (March 2014): 116.
[18] Didier Bigo, "Security and Immigration: Toward a Critique of the Governmentality of Unease," Alternatives: Global, Local, Political 27, no. 1 (February 2002): 63; Ken Booth, "Security and Emancipation," *Review of International Studies* 17, no. 4 (1991): 313.

context, images, as well as emotions and feelings seriously.[19] Second-generation scholars have also expanded on the attempts to de-securitize issues that have been previously accepted as security.[20]

The Blind Spots of Securitization

Similar to any other theory, securitization provides a specific way to analyze world politics, but at the same time, this specific frame has its limits. The theoretical part of this thesis seeks to show how the so-called aesthetic turn in international relations could help to shed light on some of the blind spots of securitization. For the purposes of this analysis, I will focus specifically on three critiques set against the theory and how these can be addressed. In particular, the aesthetic turn can help to push the current understanding of the securitization process on three accounts. First, by moving the focus from exceptional politics to the politics of the everyday. Second, by moving past the understanding of securitization as a simple speech act to the understanding of politics as a multisensory experience. Third, by advancing the inter-subjective aspect of securitization – the relationship between the securitizing actor and the audience.

[19] Felix Ciuta, "Call of Duty: Playing Video Games with IR," *Millenium-Journal of International Studies* 44, no. 2 (January 2016): 197; Felix Ciută, "Security and the Problem of Context: A Hermeneutical Critique of Securitisation Theory," *Review of International Studies* 35, no. 2 (2009): 301; Van Rythoven Eric, "Learning to Feel, Learning to Fear? Emotions, Imaginaries, and Limits in the Politics of Securitization," *Security Dialogue* 46, no. 5 (2015): 458; Lene Hansen, "The Politics of Securitization and the Muhammad Cartoon Crisis: A Post-Structuralist Perspective," *Security Dialogue* 42, no. 4/5 (2011): 357.

[20] Lene Hansen, "Reconstructing Desecuritisation: The Normative-Political in the Copenhagen School and Directions for How to Apply It," *Review of International Studies* 38, no. 3 (2012): 525; Faye Donnelly, "In the Name of (de)Securitization: Speaking Security to Protect Migrants, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons," *International Review of the Red Cross* 99, no. 904 (2017): 241.

From Extraordinary to Everyday Politics

Securitization – as conceptualized by the Copenhagen School – is concerned with the way "policymakers declare a condition of exceptional threat in order to legitimize practices of exceptionalism."[21] When it comes to the distinction between normal politics and a state of exception, securitization theory builds on the work of Karl Schmitt, whose organizing principle of the reconfiguring of the political would then take place along friend/enemy lines of distinction.[22] It is also closely tied with the figure of the sovereign as someone "who decides on the exception"[23] When it comes to the analyses of securitization processes, the transition from the normal sphere of politics to the state of exception, securitization is usually researched by analyzing specific speech acts, which need to convey a certain sense of urgency. At the same time, these speech acts require the audience to give its consent for extraordinary measures to tackle the securitized issue. [24] Seen this way, "securitization does more than just potentially open the politics to groups from the extreme right, for example. It entails structural effects by reconfiguring and ordering societies on the model of emergency exception."[25]

However, according to Huysmans, if we read politics by analyzing specific acts, we are drawing "a sharp distinction between the everyday and the exceptional that links political rupture to a gravitational conception of decision."[26] He argues that this is "problematic for securitizing processes in which little security nothings rather than political speech acts with

[21] C.A.S.E. Collective, "Critical Approaches to Security in Europe: A Networked Manifesto," *Security Dialogue*, (December, 2006) 466.
[22] Ibid. 465
[23] Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty* / Carl Schmitt; Translated by George Schwab; Foreword by Tracy B. Strong, (Chicago; University of Chicago Press, 2005), 5.
[24] Buzan, Waever, and Wilde, *Security*, 25-28.
[25] Ibid. 465
[26] Jef Huysmans, "What's in an Act? On Security Speech Acts and Little Security Nothings," *Security Dialogue* 42, no. 4/5 (2011): 377.

critical weight do the securitizing work."[27] Although Huysmans is here talking about surveillance and technology as a way of securitizing subjects, this leads me to highlight a strand of literature, which studies the politics of the everyday in international relations. For this reason, in order to analyze the entire securitization process, we have to highlight the significance of these "little security nothings," which are part and parcel of securitizing processes. According to Gëzim Visoka, "although the everyday is often associated with ordinary, repetitive, mundane, and vernacular practices, it is profoundly a political phenomenon as it entrails the site, space, and scale where different forms of agencies emerge, which can impact local, national, regional, and international politics."[28] In this respect, choosing the everyday, instead of the exception, as its primary source of analysis, has been one of the defining features of the aesthetic turn.

Politics as Multisensory Experience

The previous section dealt with the blind spots of the act in securitization theory's concept of speech acts. In this section, I will outline the blind spots of the focus on the speech part of speech acts. One of the first critiques to be voiced against the securitization theory, was that of Lene Hansen. Hansen cautioned against the emphasis on speech by highlighting the phenomenon of "security as silence."[29] She highlights this phenomenon using the case study of honor killings in Pakistan, where women cannot even acknowledge they were raped because they run the risk of being penalized for speaking out. In Hansen's words, "an attempt to securitize one's situation would in these cases, paradoxically, activate another threat posed to

[27] Ibid.
[28] Gezim Visoka, "Metis Diplomacy: The Everyday Politics of Becoming a Sovereign State," *Cooperation and Conflict* 54, no. 2 (June 2019): 169.
[29] Lene Hansen, "The Little Mermaid's Silent Security Dilemma and the Absence of Gender in the Copenhagen School," *Millenium-Journal of International studies* 29, no. 2 (2000): 294.

the women by their own society."[30] Through this case, she outlines that the Copenhagen School's "speech act framework has its limitations which prevent the inclusion of gender" – a similar analysis could be also extended to race, class, ethnicity and others.[31] Hansen also highlights that the theory ignores the performative act of the body and quotes Judith Butler, who writes that "the act that the body is performing is never fully understood; the body is the blindspot of speech" adding that "the speech is a bodily act which means that the act is redoubled in the moment of speech: there is what is said, and then there is a kind of saying that the bodily instrument of the utterance performs."[32] Butler's quote points the analyst to the question – what exactly do we analyze when we analyze securitization?

If we analyze only speech, some insecurities will be inevitably concealed. For this reason, we are forced to analyze the relationship between the body and the speech. Drawing on Butler, Hansen argues that in the absence of speech, "security may be spoken through the body" and that "the threat emerges precisely through the act that the body performs while speaking the act."[33] To illustrate this, Elizabeth Dauphinee writes that "images of the body in pain are the primary medium through which we come to know war, torture, and other pain-producing activities."[34] On a slightly different note, the centrality of the speech is also criticized by Claire Wilkinson, who argues that the theory is Eurocentric, contending that "the centrality of the speech-act for securitization to the exclusion of other forms of expression such as physical action" leads to a "simplified and Westernized description of the situation that does not take

[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 11.
[33] Hansen, "The Little Mermaid's Silent Security Dilemma and the Absence of Gender," 302.
[34] Elizabeth Dauphinée, "The Politics of the Body in Pain: Reading the Ethics of Imagery," *Security Dialogue* 38, no. 2 (2007): 140.

into account the specific local socio-political context."[35] Similarly, Michael Williams argues that "as political communication becomes increasingly intertwined with the production and transmission of visual images, the processes of securitization take on forms, dynamics, and institutional linkages that cannot be fully assessed by focusing on the speech act alone."[36] As it stands, regaining sight for the securitization theory would require that securitization scholars analyze the entire visual representation, including bodies and physical action and not just the speech.

In the past, securitization scholars concerned themselves with the study of images. For instance, Hansen argues that securitization analyses should be strengthened by providing an extended post-structuralist framework. In her view, securitization should be structured around three key questions: "through which discursive structures are cases and phenomena represented and incorporated into a larger discursive field? What is the epistemic terrain through which phenomena are known? And, what are the substantial modalities that define what kind of an issue a security problem is?"[37] Matthew Kearns then draws on this framework and analyses 123 photojournalistic images of Afghan women that "enacted a specific visuality through which they became constructed as a legitimate matter of security."[38] Relatedly, Laura Shepherd analyzed the role of visual representations in George W. Bush's administration's attempts to seek legitimacy in the war on terror, highlighting that "it would not have been possible to make meaning of the images if they depicted scenes that did not resonate so strongly with the

[35] Claire Wilkinson, "The Copenhagen School on Tour in Kyrgyzstan: Is Securitization Theory Useable Outside Europe?," *Security Dialogue* 38, no. 1 (2007): 5.
[36] Michael C. Williams, "Words, Images, Enemies: Securitization and International Politics," *International Studies Quarterly* 47, no. 4 (December 2003): 512.
[37] Hansen, "The Politics of Securitization," 357.
[38] Matthew Kearns, "Gender, Visuality and Violence: Visual Securitization and the 2001 War in Afghanistan," *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 19, no. 4 (December 2017): 491–92.

dominant discourses of gender, race, class and sexuality."[39] In conclusion, Shepherd argues that "the global public is also represented in the images, as a necessary presence required to render the images meaningful."[40] Here, the keyword in Shepherd's quote is representation. More specifically, the relationship between what represents and what is being represented and the gap between the representation and the represented is the main focus of the aesthetic turn.

The Concept of the Audience

This also leads me to consider the last blind spot of the securitization theory – the concept of the audience in securitization processes. The Copenhagen School conceptualized securitization as successful only when the audience accepts the securitizing move.[41] But the issue here, as Thierry Balzacq asserts, is that the concept of audience has been paid little attention to by the Copenhagen School.[42] This view is shared by Mark Salter, who confirms that actual politics of the acceptance have remained "largely under-determined;"[43] and, by Matt McDonald, who observes that how we know when securitization happens remains strongly "under-theorized."[44] Balzacq asserts that the audience is one of the "conditions underlying the effectuation of securitization."[45] He then also posits that the situation of the audience would be context-dependent and the relationship between the securitizing actor and the audience would necessarily be a power relation in which one seeks power legitimated by the other.[46] Following the line of Balzacq's argument, Paul Roe distinguishes between "moral support [legitimacy]

[39] Laura J. Shepherd, "Visualising Violence: Legitimacy and Authority in the 'War on Terror,'" *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, (July 11, 2008): 222.
[40] Shepherd, 222.
[41] Buzan, et al, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, 41.
[42] Balzacq, and Ruzicka, "'Securitization' Revisited," 501.
[43] Mark B. Salter, "Securitization and Desecuritization: A Dramaturgical Analysis of the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority," *Journal of International Relations and Development* 11, no. 4 (December 2008): 324.
[44] Matt MacDonald, "Securitization and the Construction of Security", *European Journal of Interna*tional Relations 14, no. 4, (2008): 572.
[45] Thierry Balzacq, "The Three Faces of Securitization: Political Agency, Audience and Context," *European Journal of International Relations* 11, no. 2 (June 2005): 192, h60.
[46] Ibid., 179

concerning the securityness of an issue", usually given by a general public to a securitizing move, and the more important "formal" support [legitimacy], given by the parliament, which concerns the "extraordinariness" of the measures put forward to deal with the threat.[47]

Although securitization can be seen as an inter-subjective process, Adam Côté contends that the audience has been conceptualized as mostly passive – as an "agent without agency."[48] Côté then asserts that the audience has more abilities than to simply accept or reject a speech act and argues that we should conceptualize the concept as active. In particular, he argues that the reactions of the audience influence the shared security understanding and the design of policies meant to tackle the threat and suggests that the audience has a greater possibility to contribute to the creation of security beliefs, ideas, practices and norms.[49] To summarize, Guy Emerson argues that that the relationship between the securitizing actor and the audience can be seen as an iterative process, taking place in an intersubjective field of power, where the securitizing actor is trying to acquire further legitimacy and thus gain more power. [50] Emerson writes that we should move more towards a "process-oriented" account of securitization and adds that the securitizing move is "reliant on the subject/audience and their ongoing investment in the social field."[51] He understands the "investment" as "the belief, expectations and the everyday habituated forms of security that are lived and experienced by the subject/audience" and further expands that "it is through the iterative performance of these roles that both the subject/securitizer and the subject/audience are reproduced."[52]

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[47] Paul Roe, "Actor, Audience(s) and Emergency Measures: Securitization and the UK's Decision To Invade Iraq," *Security Dialogue* 39, no. 6 (2008): 615.
[48] Adam Côté, "Agents without Agency: Assessing the Role of the Audience in Securitization Theory," *Security Dialogue* 47, no. 6 (December 2016): 541.
[49]Ibid. 549–555.
[50] Guy Emerson, "Towards a Process-Orientated Account of the Securitisation Trinity: The Speech Act, the Securitiser and the Audience," *Journal of International Relations and Development* 22, no. 3 (September 2019): 529-531.
[51] Ibid. 529
[52] Ibid. 529–30.

If we then combine the insights from the two previous sections, securitization can be seen as a multisensory performance. In this respect, we are drawing on Emerson, the literature on the aesthetic turn, the literature on performativity, and the so-called "practice turn." On a related note, Benjamin Moffit and Simon Tormey argue that populism can be seen as a "political style."[53] In particular, they draw on Frank Ankersmit, one of the main inspirations behind the aesthetic turn, who argues that "aspects of political reality itself, as denoted or referred to by the notions of "content" and "style," tend to interfere and interact with one another […] style sometimes generates content, and vice versa."[54] Similarly, Moffit and Tormey contend that the "contemporary political landscape is intensely mediated and stylized, and as such the so-called aesthetic or performative aspects are particularly [increasingly] important."[55] Relatedly, other scholars have observed a phenomenon of the so-called "celebritization" of society and politics.[56] In their conceptualization of populism "as political style," Moffit and Tormey highlight that populism is "performed" or "enacted" and "relational," i.e. dependent on the relevant audience accepting the performance.[57]

[53] Roland Bleiker, "The Aesthetic Turn in International Political Theory," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 30, no. 3 (December 2001): 509–33, Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible* / Jacques Rancière. Translated with an Introduction by Gabriel Rockhill. With an Afterword by Slavoj Žižek, Reprinted (London: Continuum, 2009); F. R. Ankersmit, *Political Representation, Cultural Memory in the Present* (Stanford University Press, 2002); Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble : Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (Routledge, 2006); Rebecca Adler-Nissen, *Bourdieu in International Relations : Rethinking Key Concepts in IR, The New International Relations* (Routledge, 2012).

[54] Franklin R, Ankersmit, *Political Representation*, (2002) cited in Benjamin Moffitt and Simon Tormey, "Rethinking Populism: Politics, Mediatisation and Political Style," *Political Studies* 62, no. 2 (June 2014): 388.

[55] Ibid. 388

[56] Swapnil Rai, "'May the Force Be With You': Narendra Modi and the Celebritization of Indian Politics," *Communication Culture & Critique* 12, no. 3 (September 2019): 323–39, "The Celebritization of Society and Culture: Understanding the Structural Dynamics of Celebrity Culture," *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 16, no. 6 (November 2013): 641–57.

[57] Ankersmit, *Political Representation*, 388.

To summarize, Ankersmit argues that "performance can go so far as to bring political subjects into being."[58] Similarly, Janelle Reinelt and Shirin Rai write that "representation is not so much institutionalized as it is performed."[59] In this respect, the literature from gender studies has heavily invested in the concept of performativity, with Judith Butler's theory of performativity gaining significant influence. Drawing on Foucault, Butler argues that performativity plays a key role in establishing how judicial power "produces" what it aims to represent and contends that "feminist critique ought also to understand how the category of 'women', the subject of feminism, is produced and restrained.[60] Building from this, the mechanisms through which specific representations, roles, performances are enacted, are constitutive of a specific practice of representation. In order to make clear the connection between the aesthetic turn and the argument of my thesis, I will now come back to my argument and highlight how it relates to the previous blind spots of securitization, while arguing that we have to analyze the everyday politics of becoming a securitizing actor.

The Everyday Politics of Becoming a Securitizing Actor

Previously, securitization scholars have already opened up the question of how securitization can lead to the re-shaping of power relations among subjects. Philipsen argues that "we must open up *who* can speak security, seeing how speaking security can be used to take authority, rather than viewing authority as a precondition for speaking security."[61] Coming back to Hansen's critique of "security as silence," some actors would not be represented and hence would not have a chance to securitize. For this reason, I agree that we should focus on the issue – who gets to speak security? And also, to study the performative effects of

[58] Ibid.
[59] Shirin M. Rai, and Janelle Reinelt (eds.), *The Grammar of Politics and Performance* (London: Routledge, 2015), 13.
[60] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 2.
[61] Lise Philipsen, "Performative Securitization: From Conditions of Success to Conditions of Possibility," *Journal of International Relations and Developmen*t 23, no. 1 (March 2020): 139.

securitization, which can lead to increasing one's authority/legitimacy, but I disagree with the suggestion that this is a question of either/or. Acquiring authority to speak security and to increase one's authority through securitization are part of the same process of securitization. The issue here is that the majority of securitizing actors first get to be seen, to be heard, and most importantly, to represent others, before they get to securitize. What is more, Phillipsen's argument, to some extent, presupposes that the relationship between the securitizing actors and audiences is that of equals when in fact this is mostly not the case.

In sum, I argue that the securitization process does not start with the actual speech acts in which security is uttered but once an actor acquires the possibility to represent others on matters of security and to be listened to by others on security matters. Securitization would then be only part of the entire multisensory performance through which the actor acquired visibility in the intersubjective field of power. In fact, once actors acquire the power to securitize and be taken seriously, they have already acquired a privileged position within the intersubjective field of power. I contend that we must extend the analysis of securitization processes to the established practices of acquiring legitimacy through social conventions such as elections, which endow actors with legitimacy to represent others on the matters of security. If one of the central questions of the politics of securitization is who gets to speak and who does not, it is here that I argue that the literature from the so-called aesthetic turn in international relations can help us better conceptualize the relationship between the securitizing actor and the audience as well as to appreciate the politics of the everyday as a multisensory experience.

Similar analyses have already been done in international relations. In "Metis diplomacy: the everyday politics of becoming a sovereign state," Gëzim Visoka explores "the role of everyday prudent and situated discourses, diplomatic performance and entanglements

in the enactment of sovereign statehood."[62] Visoka does this by examining the way Kosovo sought international recognition through a broad variety of performative actions, which were shaped by "the global assemblages of norms, actors, relations and events." He starts with the assumption that "performance gives life to sovereignty."[63] And contends that "through performative acts, states gain internal and external legitimacy and generate status", adding that "power needs to be performed and performances are acts of power."[64] For this reason, he analyzes various practices and events such as "press conferences, foreign policy speeches, diplomatic cables, and political meetings" to make sense of the way statehood is performed or enacted.[65] Similar to Visoka, in this thesis, I seek to shed light onto the everyday performative actions of becoming a securitizing actor, which I see as part of the process of securitization. At this point, before moving to highlighting the potential of the aesthetic turn for the study of security, I will outline the main tenets of the aesthetic approaches to the analysis of world politics.

The Aesthetic Turn in International Relations

"Consider, by way of illustration, the similarities between the work of a painter and a social scientist," argues Roland Bleiker, adding that "both portray their objects through a particular mode of representation.[66] Bleiker explains that even a naturalistic painting is still a form of representation – "it cannot capture the essence of its object."[67] He illustrates this on René Magritte's famous pipe painting. Magritte chooses to bring the viewers' attention to the fact that the drawing is not an actual pipe by placing a short line above the drawing, which

[62] Gezim Visoka, "Metis Diplomacy: The Everyday Politics of Becoming a Sovereign State," *Cooperation and Conflict* 54, no. 2 (June 2019): 169.
[63] Visoka, 172–73.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Bleiker, "The Aesthetic Turn in International Political Theory," 512.
[67] Ibid.

reads "Ceci n'est pas une pipe [This is not a pipe]."[68] In recalling Magritte's painting, Bleiker makes a point about how reality is always richer than whatever theory, concept, or word we choose to describe it. Seen this way, securitization would be just one of many representations of security and it would not be security itself.[69] When an issue is successfully securitized, a specific portrayal of security has just been drawn. The advantage of the aesthetic readings of politics, drawing on Bleiker, is that "they engage the gap that inevitably opens up between a form of representation and the object it seeks to represent." And, it is precisely in this gap that we can find "the location of politics."[70]

In bringing to the fore the politics of aesthetics and the power of representation, Bleiker is building on the work of Jacques Rancière. Rancière argues that we are situated in the so-called "system of the sensible."[71] We experience the world and world politics through an array of senses. But our senses also have their limits. We cannot possibly feel for something or someone that we have never heard of. Rancière understands politics as the framing of a particular "sphere of experience."[72] Based on the distribution of our "sphere of experience" we then navigate how we act and perceive our actions and actions of others as legitimate, ethical, thinkable, or unreasonable.[73] But naturally, our distribution is never fixed and can be re-structured.[74] Coming back to securitization, the reading of politics as aesthetics highlights that the politics of securitization would be also about what is excluded, not seen, not spoken about, or felt for. As it stands, the aesthetic approach to world politics points our attention to the practices of power that shape the distribution of the sensible.

[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible* / Jacques Rancière. Translated with an Introduction by Gabriel Rockhill. With an Afterword by Slavoj Žižek, Reprinted (London: Continuum, 2009), 10-12.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid. 12-15.

The Promise of the Aesthetic Turn

It is here that I argue that applying the insights from the aesthetic turn on securitization theory could provide a novel lens to the study of securitization that – instead of analyzing security as it appears – analyzes securitization as a practice of representation. In seeking to address the three blind spots of securitization that I have identified, the analytical frame applied in my case study is informed by the aesthetic turn on three accounts. First, regarding the move from extraordinary to everyday politics, I have chosen to analyze in the TV show – something that is usually not associated with extraordinary politics and acts of securitization. Second, instead of analyzing language of security, I analyze the performance of Donald Trump, framed and staged in a particular way. Third, the analysis centers on the way the show serves as a mediation between Donald Trump's performance, and the audience watching the TV show – highlighting how the legitimacy that he acquired through the performance could have then translated into his run for the president of the United States.

When it comes to the promise of the aesthetic turn for the study of security in more general terms, the aesthetic reading of world politics highlights that which is excluded, invisible, and ignored by analyzing representation as practice. Because of this, methodologies developed under the banner of the aesthetic turn also allow for the study of multisensory experiences, including images of bodies, and their positionality within discourse. Some analyses provide a methodology of visual research, others deal with the philosophical roots of the aesthetic turn, with visual diplomacy, or with the ethics of visual research.[75] What is more,

[75] For examples see: Elizabeth Dauphinée, "The Politics of the Body in Pain"; Roland Bleiker, "Pluralist Methods for Visual Global Politics," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 43, no. 3 (June 2015): 872–90, https://doi.org/10.1177/0305829815583084; Costas M. Constantinou, "Visual Diplomacy: Reflections on Diplomatic Spectacle and Cinematic Thinking," *Hague Journal of Diplomacy* 13, no. 4 (December 2018): 387.

the aesthetic turn also holds a promise for the more traditional questions of securitization because it helps to advance the empirical analyses of securitization.

Among other things, the aesthetic turn provides tools that can be used to analyze speech as a part of an entire array of sensory experience, including the performative images of bodies, emotions, affect, and visual diplomacy. As visuals and sounds are becoming ever more important – with new strategies and technologies of communication gaining ground – securitization theory could draw on the insights from this growing body of literature to understand securitization as one of the practices of representation. While drawing on these sources and many others, the promise of the aesthetics is that it can be a fruitful way to study the underlying questions of the politics of securitization such as How do securitizing actors acquire the legitimacy to securitize? How are audiences and securitizing actors constituted? And, most importantly, how can we find new ways to re-write, re-tell, and de-securitize the all too familiar stories of security?

The aesthetic turn also highlights that security can be found in the places of people's everyday lived experience previously largely ignored by security studies. One of these sites is the realm of popular culture. In line with the growing body of literature, this paper seeks to tap into the growing body of studies of the politics of everyday life, which also concerns itself with the study of popular culture and expand on the relationship between popular culture and politics of securitization. In this respect, Jutta Weldes writes that "popular culture is closely intertwined specifically with politics, as the plausibility and persuasiveness of official representations of issues depend on the way publics understand them."[76] She also argues that "state policy has a

[76] Jutta Weldes, "Popular Culture, Science Fiction, and World Politics", In: Jutta Weldes (eds) *To Seek Out New Worlds*, (Palgrave Macmillan, New York., 2003): 7.

pervasive cultural basis" and "is made commonsensical through popular culture."[77] Similarly, David Cambell writes that popular culture is the site "where the politics of affect, emotion, feeling and reaction challenge cozy assumptions about rationality.[78] If, as Weldes highlights, the representations of world politics are constructed not just through official state rhetoric, but also through popular culture, what is then the relationship between these two orders of representations?

Iver Neumann and Daniel Nexon distinguish between first- and second- order representations, which seek to "directly represent political events."[79] Although first order representations seem as if they were a "direct representation" of the "real world," a speech by a politician is only a representation, in a specific way, of certain facts and figures. Popular culture is then a second-order representation because it represents fragments of "social and political life through a layer of fictional representation."[80] They also argue that second-order representations can be more significant sources of knowledge about the world and can have a more powerful impact on audiences than news reporting.[81] Those who develop a critical ear for anything that comes out of a politician's mouth, can be much less attuned to do so in the case of their favorite TV character. As it stands, the goal of this thesis is to analyze the way certain actors acquire the legitimacy to securitize by focusing on the underlying conditions that allow for speech. Or, in other words, instead of looking at the language of urgency and extraordinary measures, I am trying to delve into the everyday politics of becoming a securitizing actor.

[77] Ibid., 118 - 119.
[78] David Campbell, "Political Prosaics: Transversal Politics and the Anarchical World" in M.J. Shapiro and H.R. Alker (eds.), *Challenging Boundaries: Global Flows and Territorial Identities*, (Minneapolis, 1996, MN: University of Minnesota Press), 24.
[79] Daniel H. Nexon and Iver B. Neumann, *Harry Potter and International Relations* / Edited by Daniel H. Nexon and Iver B. Neumann. (Lanham, Md.; Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 6–8.
[80] Nexon and Neuman, 6-8
[81] Ibid., 6-8

The analytic frame of the aesthetic turn allows me to paint a more thorough picture of his performance through which we can analyze the staging of *The Apprentice*. I will now briefly introduce possible ways of seeing the show and the concepts that I have uncovered while watching it. I will elaborate and further explain these concepts as I delve into the actual analysis of the show. What is more, by analyzing the interaction of micro and macro politics within the staging of the show, I will follow the writing of Guy Debord's concept of "The Spectacle" and Pierre Bourdieu's concept of "symbolic capital." When it comes to the concept of symbolic capital, Bourdieu argues that symbolic capital is established when other kinds of capital such as cultural, economic, or social are socially recognized.[82] Debord then argues that society in late capitalism can be seen as "an immense accumulation of spectacles."[83] At the same time, while building on Visoka's argument, I will suggest possible ways of seeing the show's portrayal of Donald Trump as, in the words of Karl Schmitt, "sovereign is he who decides on the exception."[84]

[82] Pierre Bourdieu, Loic J. D. Wacquant, and Samar Farage, "Rethinking the State: Genesis and Structure of the Bureaucratic Field," *Sociological Theory* 12, no. 1 (1994): 8.
[83] Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle and Other Films* (Rebel Press, 2005.), 8.
[84] Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty* / Carl Schmitt ; Translated by George Schwab ; Foreword by Tracy B. Strong., (University of Chicago Press, 2005), 5.

Part II: Case Study

The Presidential Performance

"Money, money, money, money, money [2x]

Some people got to have it
Do things, Do things, do bad things with it
Dollar bills, yall
For that lean, mean, mean green
Almighty dollar"

[O'jays – For the Love of Dollar]

Each episode of *The Apprentice* begins with the tune "For the Love of Dollar" by the O'jays. As the catchy groove "moneymoneymoneymoney" sets in, images of money appear in front of the audience's eyes and other images soon follow. A sudden sea of skyscrapers. Donald Trump entering his private jet. A helicopter with Trump's name on it. Donald Trump in an expensive suit. The Trump Tower. Trump Taj Mahal. Profiles of contestants. A line that reads "it's nothing personal." Followed by another one that goes "it's just business." Donald Trump looks into the camera. *The Apprentice* logo appears. The music stops. The intro is over, and the show begins.[85]

Since *The Apprentice* first aired on NBC in 2004 much has changed. Donald Trump became the president of the United States and is currently in charge of the country's response

[85] Daily Motion, The Apprentice US Season 01 Episode 01, 03:15 – 04:15, Accessed May 13, 2020, https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x31hd6c

to the Covid-19 outbreak. Many scholars, writers and journalists have commented on the importance of *The Apprentice* for Trump's election. Emily Nussbaum summarized for the New Yorker, what she calls "the media truism" that if *The Apprentice* "did not make Trump elected, it is surely that it made him electable."[86] Because of this, my aim is to look into the relationship between Donald Trump's performance along with the staging of the show and his subsequent run for the president's office. My question here is: what were the aesthetic and performative mechanisms of the practice of representation through which the show staged Donald Trump's performance in *The Apprentice* and how could that translate into his run for the presidential office? My aim is to shed light onto the everyday politics of becoming a securitizing actor.

My argument here is that the aesthetic and performative mechanisms deployed in the *The Apprentice* had set the stage for Donald Trump's bid for the White House by helping him to acquire "symbolic capital" and "outsider legitimacy." These concepts will be defined in the case study. What is more, this chapter will identify a repertoire of aesthetic and performative concepts and mechanisms that can be used to study the relationship between the audience and the representation of Donald Trump such as "the Wrestler," "the Spectacle," and "the Devoted followers."

The Apprentice

The Apprentice is a reality television show, which ran in different formats on the American television station, NBC, between January 2004 and January 2017. The creator of the show, Mark Burnett, made his name as the creator of a successful reality TV show *The Survivor*, and adopted a similar format also for *The Apprentice*. The first seven seasons were based around young aspiring businesspersons, who were flown into New York to compete over

[86] Emily Nussbaum, "The TV that Created Donald Trump," *The New Yorker*, Published on July 31, 2017, accessed on May 13, 2020, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/07/31/the-tv-that-created-donald-trump

who gets to run one of Trump's business projects. This was followed by an eight-season spin-off called *The Celebrity Apprentice* which featured celebrities and the money they won was redistributed to charities of their choosing. The first fourteen seasons were hosted by Donald Trump and the final season in 2017, after Trump announced his bid for the President's office, was hosted by the actor and former governor of California, Arnold Schwarzenegger.[87] The show was an instant hit, with 20.7 million on average watching each episode of season one, and final episode being watched by almost 28.1 million people.[88] The show managed to continue attracting high numbers of viewers in the following years, but still saw a steady decline of its numbers nonetheless.[89]

This analysis will deal primarily with the original format of *The Apprentice* and not its spin-off, with a special focus on Season one, which has been the most popular. The relative success of the first season was likely the cause why the format of the show stayed the same for the following seasons. The show features fourteen to eighteen contestants, referred to as the "candidates," who are divided into two teams, referred to as "corporations", and compete over various tasks. These tasks usually take one or two days. At the beginning of each task, each team has to select a "team manager," who should be the team leader during the task and who is, to some extent, held responsible for the team's success or failure. The tasks usually consist of either selling a specific product or advertising a brand or a product. The winning team is either the one that sells the most or the one that did a better job at the task according to the client. The winning team gets rewarded, whereas the losing team has to go to the "boardroom," where the contestants must discuss what went wrong. Each episode ends in the boardroom,

[87] IMDb, "The Apprentice USA," IMDb, Accessed May 13, 2020, https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0364782/
[88] ABC Media Net, "Viewership numbers of primetime programs during the 2003-2004 television season", Published June 02, 2004, Accessed May 13, 2020, https://web.archive.org/web/20070930155240/http://www.abcmedianet.com/Web/progcal/dispDNR.aspx?id=060204_11
[89] IMDb, "The Apprentice USA, " Accessed May 13, 2020, https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0364782/

where Trump picks one of the contestants, who is kicked out from the competition. Here, Trump always uses the phrase "You're fired!" The final winner of the show becomes Donald Trump's "Apprentice," whose prize is a one-year work contract worth 250,000 dollars and the opportunity to run one of Donald Trump's business projects such as Trump Tower Chicago (season 1), Palm Beach Mansion (season 3), or Trump Soho (season 5).[90]

Performing "Outsider Legitimacy"

Compared to the previous American presidents, Donald Trump's experience would not fit into the traditional script that was followed by so many presidents before. Joosse writes that "every one of the 44 presidents of the United States came into office with some experience in government or military service." [91] In contrast, Trump relied on his experience as a businessman, often referring to running the country as running a business, and repeatedly pointing to his corporate record as evidence of how successful he would be at running the country. Upon opening the Trump International Hotel in Washington D.C. as part of his presidential campaign in October 2016, he said "Under budget and ahead of schedule. So important. We don't hear those words so often, but you will," adding that "Today is a metaphor for what we can accomplish with this country."[92] Relatedly, Joosse argues that he managed to distinguish himself by the aesthetic and performative aspects of his political style, which allowed him to acquire the so-called "outsider legitimacy."[93] In other words, Trump managed to re-define the "performative terrain" of what kinds of qualities a President is supposed to have and represent, effectively rendering his rivals as "inexperienced," "ill-equipped", and

[90] IMDb, "The Apprentice USA, " Accessed May 13, 2020, https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0364782/
[91] Paul Joosse, "Countering Trump: Toward a Theory of Charismatic Counter-Roles," *Social Forces* 97, no. 2 (2018): 930.
[92]Lisa Lerer, Jill Colvin, "Trump: 'I'll run America like my business. Clinton: let's not", *The Denver Post*, Published October 26, 2016, Accessed May 13, 2020, https://www.denverpost.com/2016/10/26/donald-trump-hillary-clinton-business/
[93] Joosse, Countering Trump, 930.

"outmoded" in this new set of criteria for legitimacy. [94] At the same time, Joosse also argues that Trump brought with him an immense amount of "entertainment value," which "simultaneously outraged and enthralled audiences, while ensuring maximum press coverage."[95] After all, Trump was an experienced performer.

The staging of *The Apprentice* has been crucial in establishing the portrayal of Trump as a successful businessman as well as someone who is good at delivering content. For the entire premise of the show to work, it needs a successful businessman, and the entire dramaturgy of the show is based on this idea. The format of the show is about finding the right apprentice, someone who would be a good student. For this reason, the audience is constantly led to question the ability of the contestants and whether they have what it takes. But for there to be an apprentice, there needs to be a master, someone, whose quality is accepted, who found the recipe for success. For this reason, the show can never question Trump's status, and has to constantly reinforce it. Without the audience believing that Trump epitomizes the idea of a successful businessman, the entire premise of the show collapses. Here, the answer to the question why Trump was the right candidate for this show lies in Trump's previous performance – the many years he has spent years in the business world, associating his business brand with his name. Seen in this context, the show's appeal for Trump would be in increasing the value of his Brand. After all, as it is illustrated already in the intro, Trump's name as a brand is seen everywhere throughout the show: on buildings, planes, helicopters, or casinos.

[94] Ibid., 930
[95] Ibid., 930

The Capital and The Spectacle

This leads me to consider the relationship between the increasing role of media and capital in late-capitalistic societies – the main occupation of the French situationist Guy Debord. While offering a new theoretical perspective to understanding mediation, Debord argues that, as I have already suggested, societies in late-capitalism are represented as an "immense accumulation of spectacles."[96] According to Debord, "the spectacle is not a collection of images, it is a social relation between people that is mediated by images."[97] The spectacle is also "the ruling order's non-stop discourse about itself, its never-ending monologue of self-praise, its self-portrait at the stage of totalitarian domination of all aspects of life."[98] Understanding *The Apprentice* as part and parcel of the society of the spectacle can then draw our attention to how, in Debord's words, the show is "both the result and the goal of the dominant mode of production" as it seeks to persuade the audience about what the world of business in New York looks like, while at the same time serving to increase consumption of Trump's brand.[99]

Yet simultaneously, while increasing economic capital, the spectacle is also a tool in mediating Trump's attempts to increase his symbolic capital. Pierre Bourdieu suggests that we can distinguish between economic, cultural, symbolic and social capital.[100] Bourdieu writes that "the different forms of capital, the possession of which defines class membership and the distribution of which determines position in the power relations constituting the field of power […] are simultaneously instruments of power and stakes in the struggle for power."[101] Here, as

[96] Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle and Other Films* (Rebel Press, 2005.), 8.
[97] Ibid., 7.
[98] Ibid., 13.
[99] Ibid., 8.
[100] Michael Grenfell, *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts*, vol. 2nd ed, Key Concepts (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2014), 101–4.
[101] Pierre Bourdieu, I*n Other Words: Essays towards a Reflexive Sociology* (Polity Press, 1990), 112.

I have already said, the key to acquiring power is in acquiring symbolic capital. This happens when cultural, economic, or social capital is legitimated as socially recognized, thus taking the form of symbolic capital. To summarize, Bourdieu et al. argue that symbolic capital can be seen as "any property (any form of capital whether physical, economic, cultural, or social) when it is perceived by social agents endowed with categories of perception which cause them to know it and to recognize it, to give it value."[102] As I have already suggested, the staging of *The Apprentice* is centered around the importance of representing Trump as someone, who possesses an abundance of all of these types of capitals. The medium of television here serves as a tool to communicate attempts of translating various kinds of capital to the audience watching the show, which can then recognize it as legitimate.

Throughout the show, Trump's wealth (economic capital) is constantly put on display. What is more, each episode portrays Trump as someone who has acquired a vast amount of business knowledge while also having a distinct educational component embedded in it. In particular, each episode includes a quote read directly by Trump to the audience, in which he is trying to convey his recipe for success. In episode 9, Trump preaches:

> You've gotta believe in what you sell. If you don't believe it. If you don't really believe it yourself, it'll never work. It'll never sell, and you're gonna be miserable.[103]

To add to this, the show displays Trump's social capital primarily through Trump's business networks. On the one hand, these instances serve as a way to increase the branding value of Trump's business friends and attract new customers or investors, while also showcasing that Trump has friends in all the right places. An important aspect here is that Trump knows everyone, and everyone knows Trump. This is even more visible in the spin-off *The Celebrity*

[102] Pierre Bourdieu, Loic J. D. Wacquant, and Samar Farage, "Rethinking the State," 8.
[103] Youtube, "All Donald Trump Quotes from the Apprentice (Seasons 1 – 5), Youtube, 02:27 – 02:39, Published April 1, 2018, Accessed May 13, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lzKUJ3a4rwU&t=83s

Apprentice, which shows various American celebrities competing for money for charity organizations. The show also features other members of the Trump family, including Ivanka Trump and Donald J. Trump, which also increase their various kinds of capital through the performance.[104] However, things are more complicated here as Bourdieu writes that various forms of capital "are unequally powerful in real terms and unequally recognized as legitimate principles of authority or signs of distinction."[105] This leads me to consider the various mechanisms of Trump's performance and how they could then lead to acquiring legitimacy in the eyes of the audience.

Performing the American Dream

To explain the relationship between the audience and the actor in the latter's attempt to acquire symbolic capital, we have to first analyze the way that the representation of Trump in the show was able to tap into the long-established and popular myth/ethos/discourse of the American Dream. The term "American Dream" was popularized by the American writer James Truslow Adams in his 1931 book *Epic of America*. Adams writes that the American Dream is "dream of a land in which life should be better and richer, and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement."[106] In other words, the American Dream is centered around the idea that America is special, because it is the land of opportunity; a country, where if you work hard enough, you can achieve success beyond comparison – the ultimate meritocracy. This is also where the format – a reality TV show – plays its role. After all, to some extent, it represents "reality." In particular, the audience does not question the underlying premise of the American dream, because it has been socialized into believing it. Meanwhile, the show also actively reinforces the discourse of the American Dream. What is

[104] IMDb, "The Apprentice USA, " Accessed May 13, 2020, https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0364782/
[105] *Pierre Bourdieu, Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Routledge, 1984), 315–16.
[106] Adams, James Truslow, *The Epic of America* (Little, Brown, and Co. 1931), 214 – 215.

more, by co-opting this powerful discourse, this also increases the legitimacy of Trump's performance and the value of his various forms of capital, including symbolic capital.

A key aspect of the show is then to use various aesthetic and performative mechanisms to frame Trump as someone, who is self-made, who earned his success. This "aesthetic gap," as Ankersmit would call it, between the representation and the represented, becomes especially evident when contrasted to the hundreds of millions of dollars and a vast real-estate empire that Trump inherited from his father Fred Trump.[107] In this respect, Trump's introductory speech in episode one of season one, in which he demonstrates that he is the right person for the role stands out. Trump says:

> New York. My city. Where the wheels of the global economy never stop turning. A concrete metropolis of unparalleled strength and purpose that drives the business world. Manhattan is a tough place. This island is the real jungle. If you are not careful, it can chew you up and spit you out [images of a homeless man sleeping on a bench], but if you work hard, you can really hit it big. And I mean really big [images of the Statue of Liberty].[108]

The show is here setting the stage for what is about to come. New York is "the real jungle," where only the fittest can survive. New York is also portrayed as the center of the business world and Trump owns that city. It is also the city which is tied with the American dream. The Statue of Liberty is the symbol of New York. This is what immigrants saw when they were arriving in the United States in search of the American Dream. All of these things are not just told, but also shown to the audience. Trump then continues with his story:

> My name is Donald Trump and I am the largest real-estate developer in New York [images of Trump riding in a limousine]. I own buildings all over the place. [continues to list his real estates, which are accompanied by images] It wasn't always so easy.

[107] *Franklin R. Ankersmit, Aesthetic Politics: Political Philosophy beyond Fact and Value* / F. R. Ankersmit, Mestizo Spaces (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1996), 44.
[108] Daily Motion, The Apprentice US Season 01 Episode 01, 00:10 – 00:42, Accessed May 13, 2020, https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x31hd6c

> About thirteen years ago, I was seriously in trouble. I was billions of dollars in debt, but I fought back, and I won. Big league. I used my brain. I used my negotiating skills, and I worked it all out. [continues to list his achievements] As the master I want to pass along my knowledge to somebody else. I am looking for – the apprentice.[109]

Obviously, Trump is boasting, but his story fits other purposes as well – namely, for the overall narrative of the show as well as co-opting the discourse of the American dream by binding it with his success. Trump worked hard, "fought back," and eventually also won "big league." It seems that all that Trump wants is also to help others to have a chance with their American Dream, but only to the ones who really deserve it. Seen this way, the show does more than just to support the Trump brand, its entire premise is built on and reinforces the aesthetic gap. The audience sees the contestants who – with their hard work, cunning, and intellect – win the challenges and are then greatly rewarded. The lavish trips and rewards are then used as additional advertising for Trump's assets. A flight in Trump's private jet. A visit to a penthouse in Trump Tower. In episode eight of the first season, the winning team goes on a tour of New York in Trump's personal helicopter.[110] In episode ten of the first season, Trump even acts as cupid by sending two of the contestants, Nick and Amy, who have feelings for one another on a private yacht ride.[111]

Throughout the show, Trump often distinguishes between "winners" and "losers." And those who lose are then sent to the boardroom, the design of which screams business and sovereign power. A dark room with no windows, at the top of the large tower, Trump's red throne standing behind a massive wooden table, on each side sits one of Trump's advisors.

[109] Daily Motion, The Apprentice US Season 01 Episode 01, 00:47 – 01:45, Accessed May 13, 2020, https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x31hd6c
[110] Daily Motion, The Apprentice US Season 01 Episode 08, 26:20 – 27:00, Accessed May 13, 2020, https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x35e50a
[111] Daily Motion, The Apprentice US Season 01 Episode 10, 28:40 – 29:20, Accessed May 13, 2020, https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x7525bq

Contestants are shown waiting in the lobby for Trump to accept them. He does not stand up when they enter the room. In the boardroom, Trump is depicted as being at the center of it all, he is the prize, the game, the judge – sovereign power embodied.[112] In other reality television shows, such as *The Survivor*, the contestants decide who leaves the competition, but not in *The Apprentice*. In this show, the lesson is that it is only Trump, who is the sovereign that "decides on the exception."[113] The goal is not just to be the best businessperson but also to please Trump with their performance.

The Devoted Followers

The representation of the contestants serves as part of the aesthetic gap. It performs a specific function within the show. While drawing on Weber's and Bourdieu's writing on the concept of charismatic counter-roles, Joosse analyzes the role of what he calls "devoted followers" in Trump's charismatic performance. "Devoted followers" are conceptualized as a counter-role because they affirm the value of the leader and the message the leader represents.[114] Joosse contends that this can be visualized as a triangular relationship between the actor, the "devoted followers," and the audience to the charismatic performance.[115] What happens is a constant reaffirmation of the status by the devoted followers, which potentially inspires the audience watching the performance to join the ranks of devoted followers. Yet, in order for this to be successful, "devoted followers" have to be made visible to the audience

[112] Daily Motion, The Apprentice US Season 01 Episode 01, 46:00 – 57:00, Accessed May 13, 2020, https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x31hd6c
[113] Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty* / Carl Schmitt ; Translated by George Schwab ; Foreword by Tracy B. Strong., University of Chicago Press ed (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 5.
[114] Joosse, "Countering Trump", 921.
[115] Joosse, 927.

watching the performance.[116] At the same time, other kinds of footage, in which contestants would question Trump's legitimacy is not shown.

During his presidential campaign, Trump repeatedly called on the camera crews to "turn the camera around" so that it shows the crowd of Trump supporters.[117] Trump has also been famous for being obsessed with his polling numbers. Always presenting them as a big success and never as a failure.[118] The exact same situation also occurs in *The Apprentice*, where all of the contestants can be seen as "devoted followers" of Donald Trump – the businessman. They repeatedly flatter Trump on his business acumen and show signs of devotion. This is made visible not just through their speech, but also through their body language – the joy, sadness, relief, fear in the camera images shown to the audience watching the show.

In fact, the dramaturgy of the show is actively trying to force emotions out of contestants. In particular, the staging of the show is created in a way that they enter conflicts. While in the boardroom, Trump shoots questions at the contestants, pitting them against one another, expecting them to fight among themselves. The show often uses polarizing strategies and controversial mechanisms to ensure that audience keeps on watching. These instances also serve to portray Trump as a sovereign. In episode six, as he is deciding who will be "fired," Trump actively tries to stoke conflict among contestants: Omarosa Manigalt and Jessie Conners. He says:

> Do you like Omarosa, the way she just talks to you? I mean do you like her?" When Conners says that she actually likes Omarosa. [Trump continues pitting them against

[116] Joosse, 927.
[117] FOX 10 Phoenix, "FNN: The Media Finally Pans The Cameras At the Donald Trump Rally in Grand Rapids, Michigan", YouTube, 00:00 – 01:02, published December 21, 2015, Accessed May 13, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UbsPqImym84
[118] Nick Gass, "Donald Trump's polling obsession", Politico, published October 12, 2015, accessed May 13, 2020, https://www.politico.com/story/2015/12/trump-polls-216640

one another] "How can you like her? The way she is talking to you. You know she's got a very sharp edge.[119]

Trump's attempts to entice conflict has been especially visible during his presidential campaign. In this respect, Twitter has been Trump's main social medium, which he used to start conflicts. Similar to the reality TV show, Joosse argues that Trump's sexist, racist, and xenophobic remarks have assured constant press coverage and helped to represent Trump as someone who brings entertainment.[120] When it comes to Trump's polarizing performance, Christina Blankenship analyzes Trump's Twitter behavior between January and April 2017 and argues that "the construction of his presidency parallels the Barthian mythos of "the wrestler."[121] Roland Barthes argues that "The Wrestler" is an "immediate pantomime" through which "spectacle of excess" and figure that is "overly aggressive" and characterized by "grandiloquence".[122] Same as the show, Blankenship also notes that Trump's spectacles rely on seeing the world through the lens of "winners" and "losers."[123]

In sum, understanding the relationship embedded in subject constitution between the audience and the actor – the emergence of securitizing actors – was the main purpose of this chapter. For this reason, I outlined a range of aesthetic and performative mechanisms of the practice of representation of Donald Trump's performance in *The Apprentice* and put forward possible ways how these could then translate into Trump acquiring "outsider legitimacy" and "symbolic capital." I argued that we can use concepts such as "The Spectacle," "The Devoted followers," or "The Wrestler" to make sense of the various mechanism scripted within his

[119] Chris Benderev, Kelly McEvers, "6 Lessons About Trump From Season 1 of 'The Apprentice', Published October 6, 2017, Accessed May 13, 2020, https://www.npr.org/2017/10/06/555218514/6-lessons-about-trump-from-season-1-of-the-apprentice
[120] Joosse, "Countering Trump," 930.
[121] Christina M. Blankenship, "President, Wrestler, Spectacle: An Examination of Donald Trump's Firing Tweets and The Celebrity Appresident as Response to Trump's Media Landscape," *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 44, no. 2 (April 2020): 117.
[122] Barthes Roland, *Mythologies* (New York, NY: The Noonday Press, 1957): 8 cited in Blankenship, 118.
[123] Blankenship, 117.

performance. By connecting his story with the power of the American dream discourse, Trump managed to co-opt this powerful discourse and increase his symbolic capital. At the same time, Trump's performance relied on providing entertainment for the audience, while also portraying Trump as a sovereign. In doing these performative moves, Trump was also actively constructing a new script of "outsider legitimacy." What is more, as I have tried to highlight by using the concept of "The Spectacle," the popularity of Donald Trump is largely tied with the way politics in the society of the spectacle is mediated through appearances that reinforce the perpetual discourse of a society about itself. This raises a series of questions about Trump's role within the society of the spectacle and his agency. Judging from the 15 seasons of *The Apprentice*, Trump can keep the performance going for some time. But this also opens up a number of questions. Among others, can the audience get tired of Trump's performance? If he wanted to/tried to/had to change, can he escape this script? Is Trump only a symptom of the increasing importance of style over substance in the society of the spectacle? And what is the role of the language of security in the overall performance?

Conclusion

This thesis was about highlighting significance. It was about highlighting the significance of the aesthetic turn, of the need to extend our analysis of securitization, and of one man's performance in a reality TV show. My argument was that we should consider the (everyday) politics of becoming a securitizing actor as a multisensory performance, and as part of the process of securitization. In particular, I argued that recognizing the relevance of the aesthetic turn this could help securitization scholars move forward on at least three specific grounds. First, we stop focusing only on speech and appreciate politics as a multisensory experience. Second, we move beyond the language of urgency and extraordinary measures also

to the analysis of the everyday. Third, we strengthen the inter-subjective aspect of securitization embedded in the relationship between the securitizing actor and the audience by analyzing how these roles are performed into being. In asking how securitizing actors emerge? I shifted the attention of the securitization analysis beyond the focus on securitizing speech acts to the importance of seeing securitization in the context of the entire multisensory performance. In the case study, I highlighted how we could draw on a range of aesthetic and performative mechanisms to explicate the constitution of securitizing actors and audiences as well as to understand securitization as a practice of representation, in which actors first need to acquire legitimacy to represent others. Besides offering new tools to study this practice, the aesthetic turn also bears promise for the study of security in more general teams. The aesthetic reading of world politics highlights the excluded, invisible, and ignored by analyzing representation as practice, seeing the gap between the representation and the represented as the very location of politics. Among other things, future analyses could go even further in asking how the aesthetic turn could also help us find new ways to re-write, re-tell, and de-securitize the all too familiar stories of security.

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