Copenhagen School: Revisions

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Outline

- Securitization: assumptions

- Internal inconsistencies (Balzacq 2005):
  - speech act vs. pragmatist act
  - speaker-audience relationship

- External insufficiencies (Stritzel 2007):
  - discursive context
  - threat-texts
  - power positions: embedded agency

Security as a social construct

- There is **no "essence"**, no universal feature of security.

- **But:** according to CS follows **logic of survival** (Ciuta 2009)

- Security is **socially constructed** and **intersubjectively shared**.

- Security is **a self-referential practice:** an issue becomes a security issue only by being labeled (via appellative act) as one.

  → Focus on **discursive construction** of security issues.

Securitization

non-politicized   politicized   securiticized
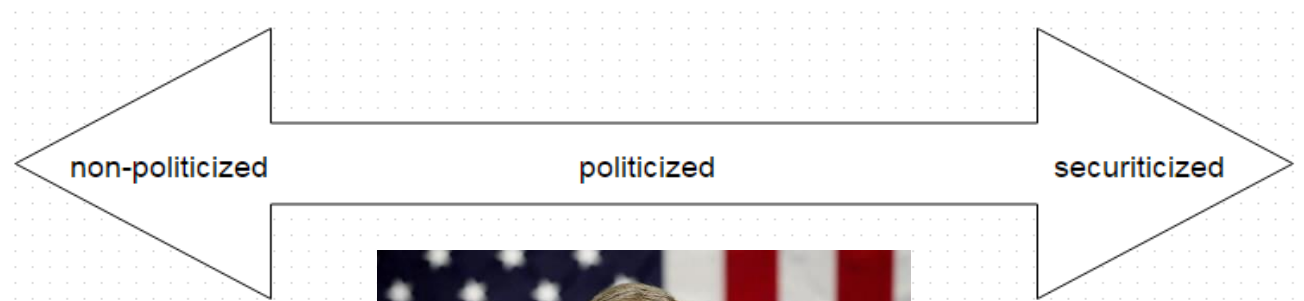
- Framing
  - standard (depoliticized)
  - politicized
  - securitized

- **Securitization actors:** ones that declare – via appellative speech act – existential threat towards a particular referent object.

- **Functional actors:** ones that significantly affect the dynamic of the security environment (sector).

- Audience acceptance

- Exceptional measures

- Linkages

Speech acts

- **Constantive act:** the literal meaning of the utterance.
- **Appellative act:** the social function of the utterance, for what purpose it is used in a given context.
- **Performative act:** the effect of the utterance in a given context.

"I warn you, the oil is running out!"

- Constantive act: made vocal sounds, said that with a Czech accent.
- Appellative act: making a warning about (an existential) threat.
- Performative act: made you (audience) feel insecure (or amused).

Facilitating (felicity) conditions

1. The speech act is following the **grammar of security** (i.e.: existential threat to referent object requires extraordinary measures)

2. The **relationship between speaker and audience** (i.e.: the speaker has a privileged/authoritative position in relation the audience)

3. **Features** of the alleged threats that **either facilitate or impede securitization** (i.e. information about the alleged threat outside of the speech act)

Buzan et al. 1998 in Stritzel 2007: 364

Balzacq's revision

- Distinguishes between **brute** and **institutional** threats.
  - **Institutional** threats: depend on social construction / intersubjectivity
  - **Brute** threats: do not depend on social construction (natural catastrophes)

- **Reduction of speech acts to appellative acts** is misleading.
  → does not allow interaction with the audience (performative effects)

- **Solution:** broader concept of a **pragmatic act**
  - strategic use of language centered at a specific audience
  - cultural embeddedness ("clues from 'the real world'")

Balzacq's revision: pragmatic act

The processes of securitization – a **pragmatic act** – consist of:

1. A relatively stable **system of discursive resources** (metaphors, images, stereotypes, etc.),
2. **mobilized by an agent** (securitization actor), who
3. strategically **targets the audience** to build
4. a coherent **network of implications** that convene with actor's actions, by
5. portraying the **referent subject** (entity that threatens) in a way that
6. a **customized political act** must be taken to block its development
7. within a **specific social and space-time context**

Balzacq's revision: situated interactive activity

- The speaker and the audience need to engage in responsive activity → the speech act is just **"a blueprint"** based on which **audience fleshes out missing meanings/details**.

- Thus, the speaker's argument has to employ terms that resonate with understandings (by speeches, gestures, images, etc.) of audience.
- → relation to **external reality** (external to securitization process)

- The **success of securitization** is here given by **mutual** (intersubjective) **understanding** and the speaker's ability to identify audience's feelings, needs and interests.
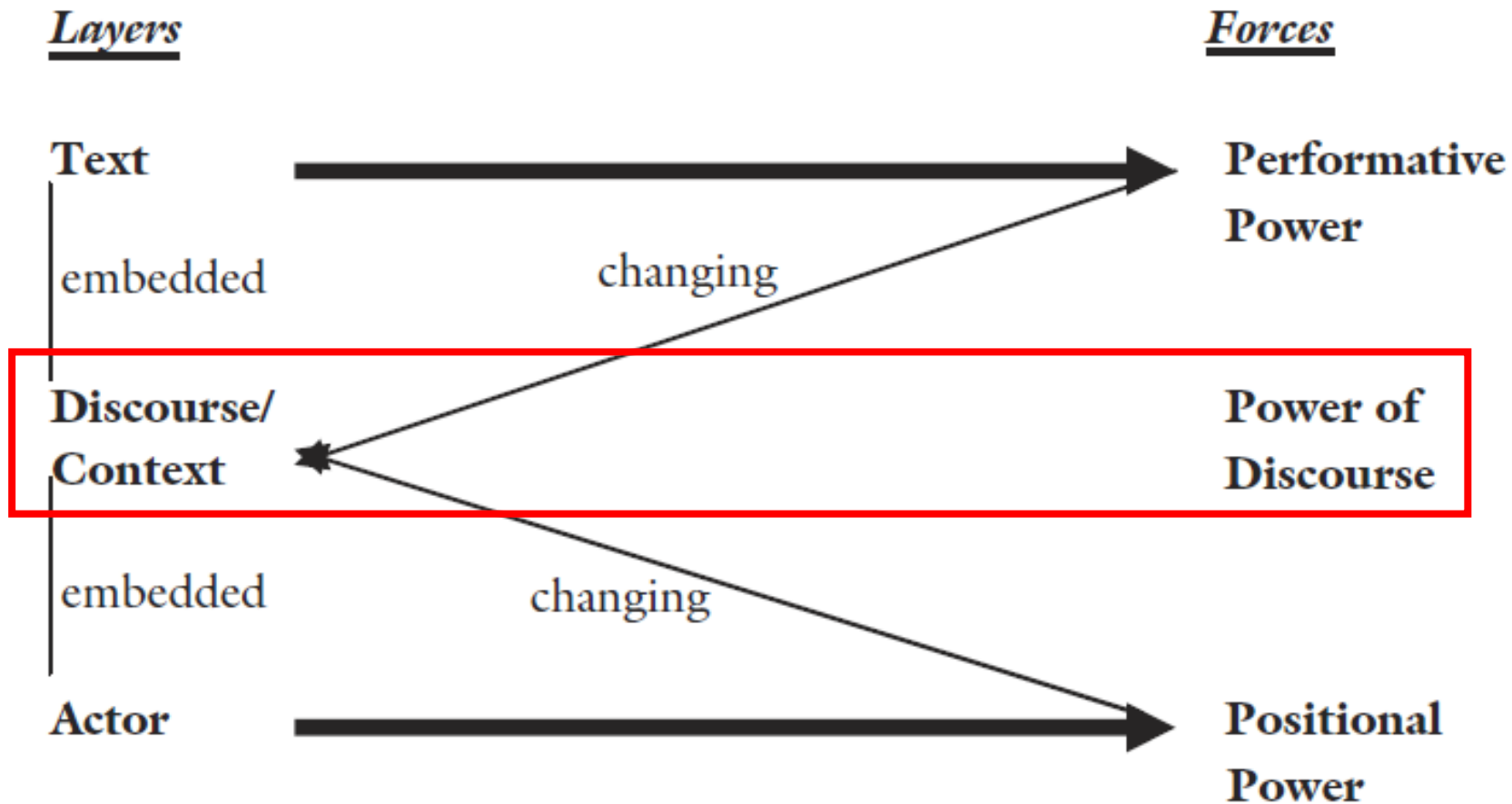
Balzacq's revision: situated interactive activity

Stritzel's revision

- Distinguishes between **internalist** and **externalist** position (compare with Balzacq 2005).

- **Internalist position:** speech acts are capable to transform understanding of a certain issue (if the felicity conditions are fulfilled): "*By saying the words, something is done.*" (Buzan et al. 1997: 26)

- **Externalist position:** securitization is **a process** – not just a particular speech act - that takes place in concrete **socio-temporal context**.
  - Broader discursive environment
  - Production of "threat-texts"
  - Power positions (field)

Stritzel's revision

Layers | Forces

Text → Performative Power

embedded · changing

Discourse/Context · Power of Discourse

embedded · changing

Actor → Positional Power

Discursive context / embeddedness

- The speech acts and texts ("threat-texts") are embedded within a **network of constitutive rules and narratives** that surround them. (Stritzel 2006: 369)
- The (security-related) **meanings do not come "out of nowhere"** or just from securitization actors' heads.

  → involved actors/audiences need to **understand a speech act** (or a threat-text)

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- Actors exploit **discursive contexts as stocks** of ideas, images, analogies, metaphors or – **historical/cultural traumas** (Sztompka 2000).

Historical/cultural trauma (Sztompka 2000)
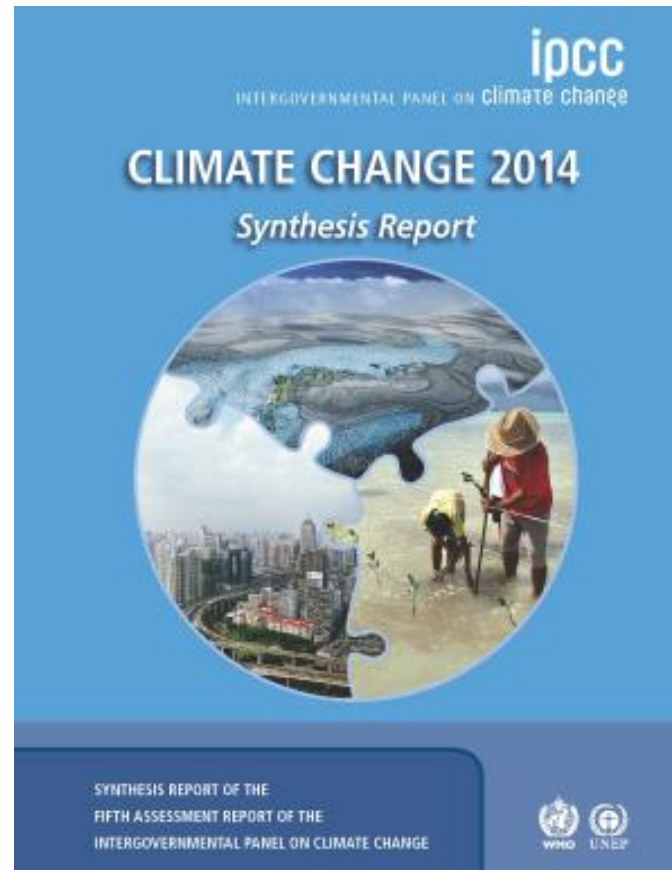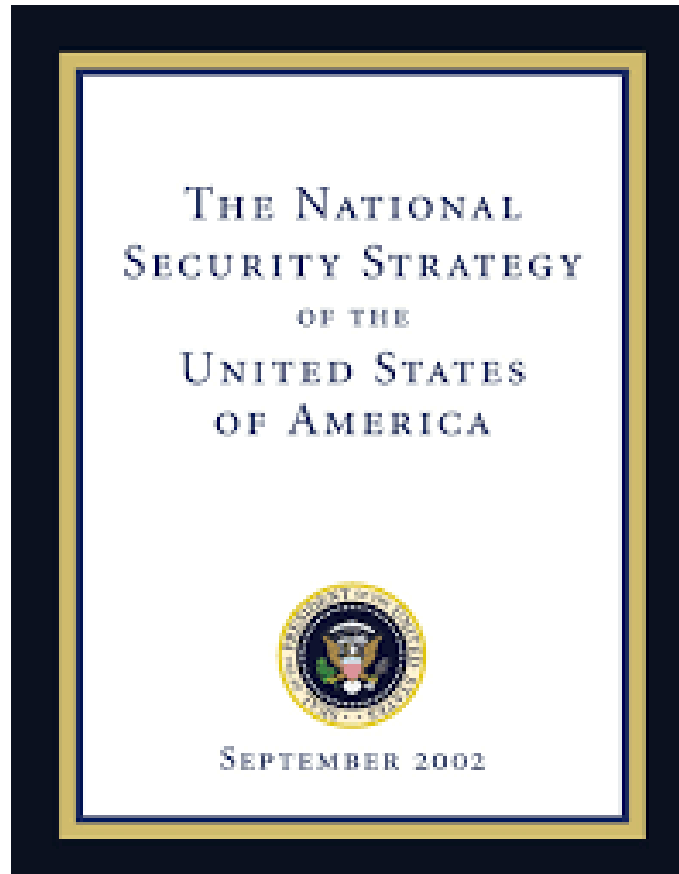
Stritzel's revision
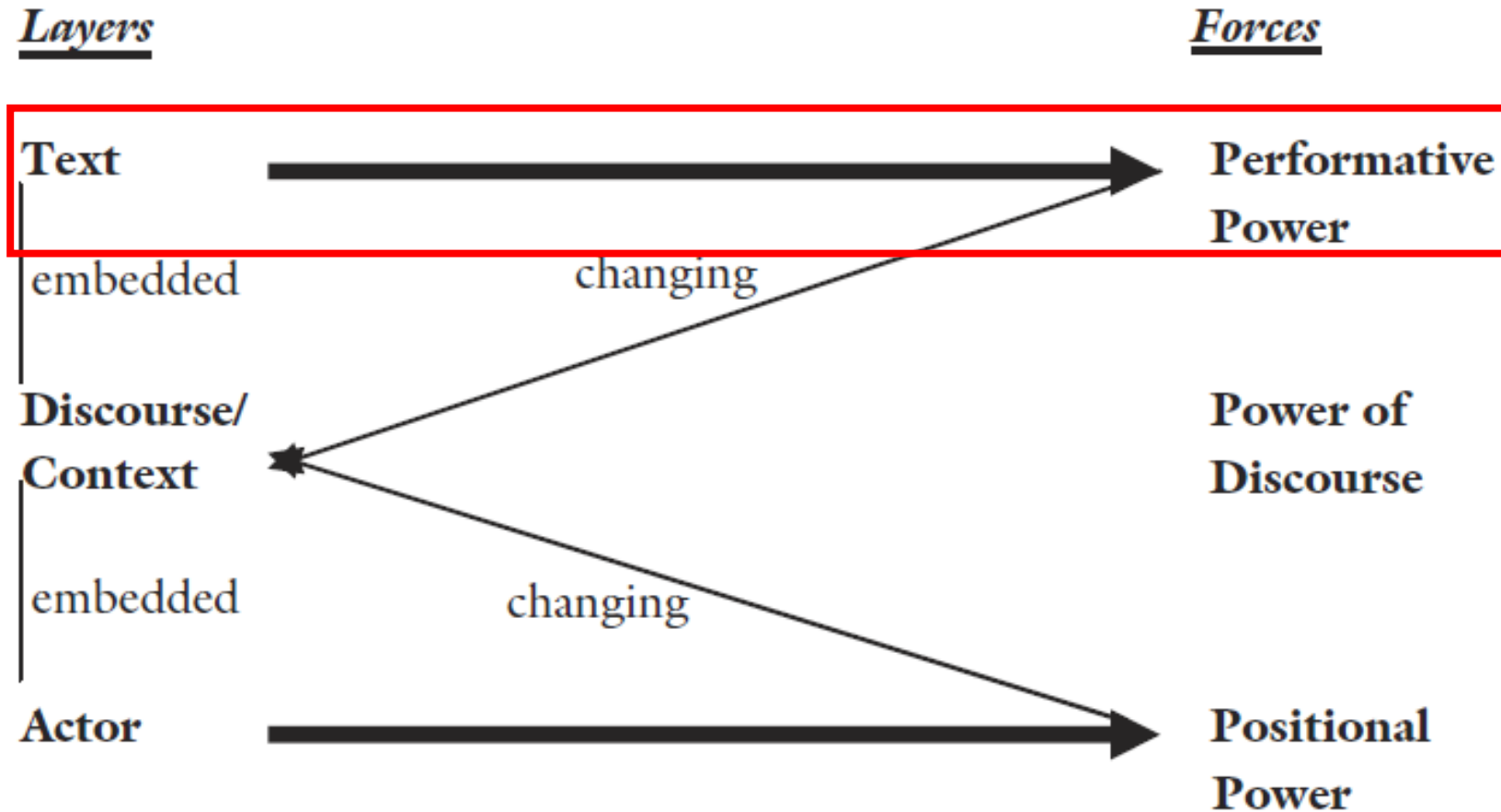
Text / speech act

"Threat-texts" (Stritzel 2007)

- In contrast to exceptional speech acts, threat-texts **evolve over longer periods of time** and have **performative force** that shapes discourse as well as (consequently) power-relations.

- Again, **"fit" of the threat-text** with the **existing discourse** (its **resonance**) is crucial for its influence.
- → **localization** (Stritzel 2011): re-interpretation of a threat-text in a particular context where it meets a new (local) audience.
- **Thus:** what counts as a security practice in one period or locale, does not necessarily count in the same way in other periods/locales (ibid.).

"Threat-texts"

Stritzel's revision
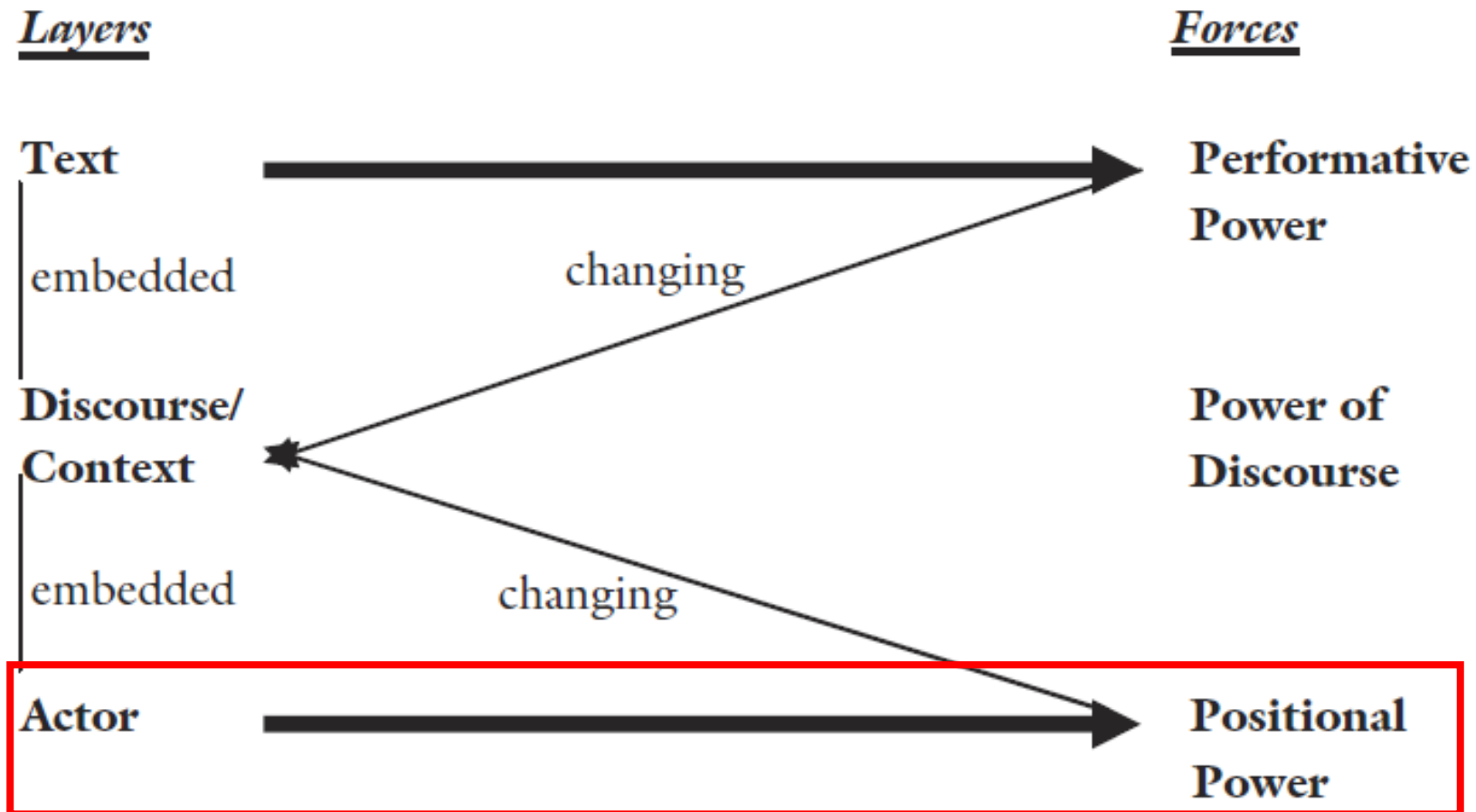
Power positions: embedded agency

- Agency is embedded **sociopolitical context** where actors occupy different **power positions** defined by access to cultural (knowledge), moral (legitimacy), and formal (capability to make decisions) resources.

- → There is an **uneven distribution of opportunities and constraints** to the actors.

- → This embeddedness poses **objective** (in sense actor-independent) **limitations** (objective context according to Balzacq) to securitization moves.

Power positions: embedded agency
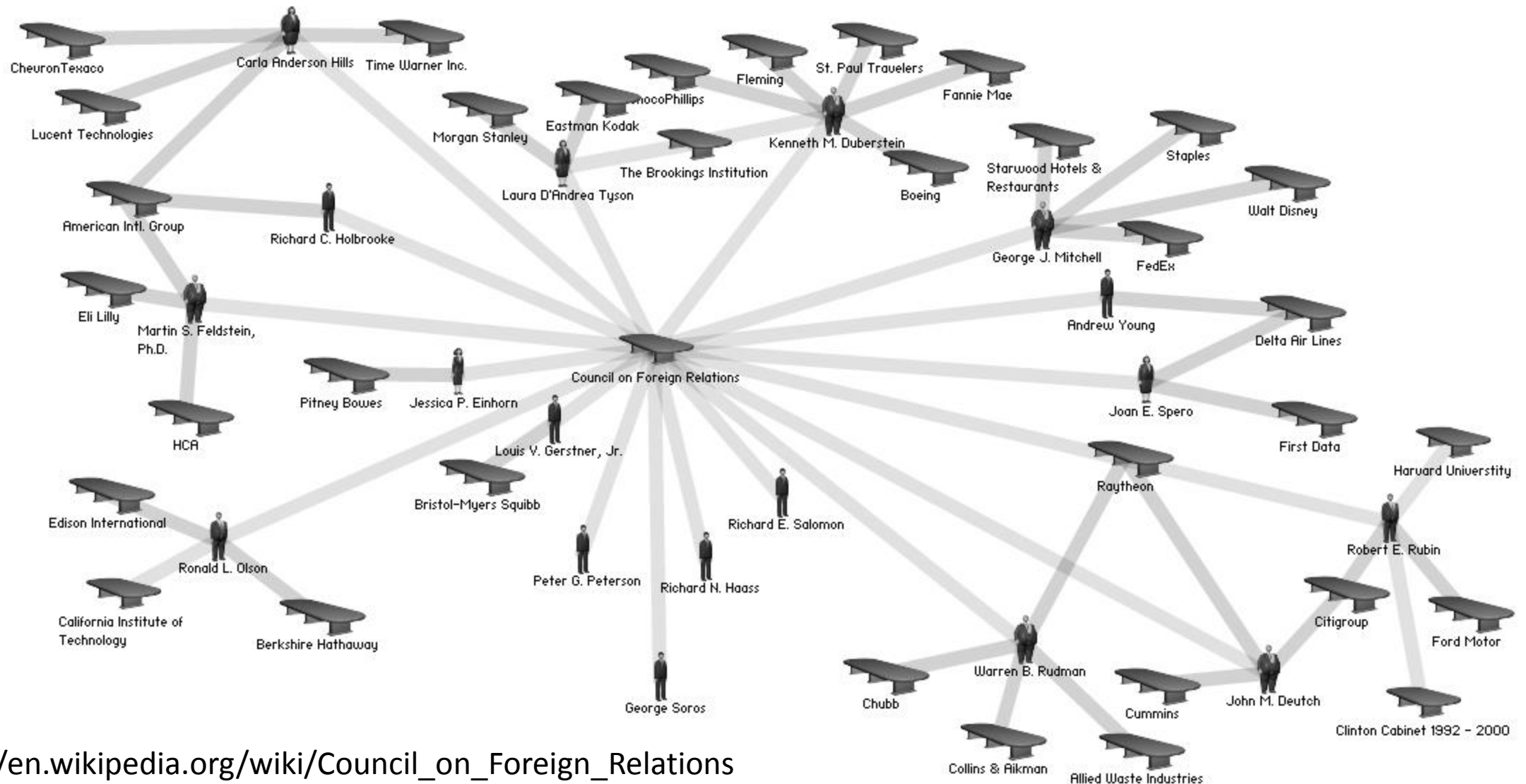
Conclusions

- Internal inconsistencies:
  - speech act vs. intersubjectivity (securitization actor – audience)
  - what is the position of securitization theory within the whole framework? (Eclecticism of the Copenhagen School)

- External insufficiencies:
  - is contextual understanding of securitization necessary?
  - is there added value of the introduced concepts in comparison to facilitating conditions?

- Your thoughts? What to do with the CS? How does this influence our understating of security?