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Bourdieu, International Relations, and European security

Trine Villumsen Berling

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Abstract This article takes the failure to grasp fully the paradigmatic case of European security after the Cold War as an example of how International Relations (IR) would benefit from reformulating not only its empirical research questions but also several of its central conceptual building blocks with the aid of Bourdieusian sociology. The separation between theory and practice and the overemphasis on military power and state actors blind IR from seeing the power struggles that reshaped European security. Instead, a Bourdieusian reformulation adds new types of agency, focuses on the social production of forms of power, and stresses the processual rather than the substantive character of social reality.

Keywords NATO · Doxic battles · Theory/practice · Think tanks

Despite promising attempts to apply the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu to International Relations (IR),[1] the field could still profit from unexplored potential in his thinking for understanding pivotal theoretical and empirical puzzles. The failure to fully grasp the paradigmatic case of European security after the Cold War is an example of how IR would benefit from reformulating not only its empirical research questions, but also several of its central conceptual building blocks with the aid of Bourdieusian sociology. Bourdieu himself was reluctant to apply his conceptual apparatus beyond the nation state. I argue, however, that the work of Bourdieu, when viewed as a dynamic theoretical constellation of fields, capital and agents can make a significant contribution to understanding international processes.

The article is structured as follows: In the first section, I sketch the recent changes in European security, the two broad approaches within IR that have grappled with

[1]Throughout the article, I use "international relations" to mean the empirical subject matter beyond the nation state and "International Relations" or "IR" as signifying the academic debate.

T. V. Berling (✉)
Centre for Advanced Security Theory, Department of Political Science, University of Copenhagen, Øster Farimagsgade 5, P.O.B. 2099, DK-1353 Copenhagen K, Denmark
e-mail: tvb@cast.ku.dk

those changes, and the alternative argument put forth in this article. In the second section, I briefly review promising attempts to adopt Bourdieusian concepts to the international realm within the IR and Security Studies debate. I conclude that while important Bourdieusian concepts have been used, a comprehensive discussion of how these can alter IR studies remains to be developed. In particular, the concept of capital has not yet been systematically thought through as an analytical device for understanding the international. The third section discusses the central Bourdieusian concepts that are needed for formulating a new Bourdieusian framework for analysis in IR: field, capital, and *doxa*. Throughout the article, European security illustrates the importance of the conceptual apparatus for asking new empirical questions and for challenging basic assumptions. The conclusion summarizes the framework for analysis laid out in the article, and highlights the added value of studying European security and other international phenomena through the prism of the Bourdieusian "action framework."

The case of European security and IR

European security in the 1990s remains one of the paradigmatic cases for understanding changes in international relations. The area underwent such profound and unexpected transformations after the end of the Cold War that it continues to be a source of wonder and contestation in IR and Security Studies. Overall, the orthodox and heterodox positions changed from mutual agreement on a militarily defined nature of threats, on states as the primary actors, and on a conception of change as one of recurring conflict. The difference in position lay in whether arms control, détente, dialogue, or "common security" was a strategy to be pursued (heterodoxy) or whether military balancing was seen as the only or most viable way forward (orthodoxy). Peace research occupied a position of heterodoxy whereas states, NATO and national foreign policy institutes occupied orthodox positions (Villumsen 2008). After 1989 these positions gradually changed. An understanding of security broader than military threats came to structure the field and spurred new orthodox and heterodox positions. The orthodoxy focused on the possibility of qualitative change in IR and on a strategic environment constituted by civilized, democratic space (Rasmussen 2003), while Samuel P. Huntington's (Huntington 1993) heterodoxy demarcated space culturally ("the West against the rest") and coupled it with an understanding of the impossibility of change and a return to recurring war. Both agreed, however, that security was about more than military capabilities and threats and that change could be brought about through active security politics (Buzan and Hansen 2009, chapters 4–7; Stefano Guzzini and Jung 2004; Huysmans 2006; Krause and Williams 1997; Risse-Kappen 1994; Villumsen 2008; Wæver and Buzan 2007). While the new orthodox position grew out of a weak heterodox trend in the 1980s to focus on a broader concept of security (Buzan 1983), the solidification and acceptance of the position only occurred after the end of the Cold War (see, e.g., NATO's Strategic Concept 1991). The changes to European security thus took place on all levels: the nature of threats changed, the logic with which the strategic environment was understood to function was altered, and with it the means by which security could be obtained. Notably the role of NATO was put under pressure during this

period of time. Having been the guarantor of military security in an environment of potentially recurring conflict, the Alliance had built a *modus operandi* of balance of power. But with the new understanding of threats, security, and the strategic environment, novel practices and agents were called for.

Within IR, two broad approaches offered explanations of the situation of NATO after the demise of the Soviet Union: the rationalists and the reflectivists (Keohane 1988). The rationalist model—often known as variants of (neo-)Realism—emphasized rational state actors and an international system dominated by balance-of-power and alliance-building (e.g., Walt 1987; Waltz 1993, 2000). To this approach, the end of the Cold War came as a surprise: what seemed to be a stable, but delicate, balance of power situation in a bipolar structure suddenly ended. A (re)turn to a multipolar world was the only thinkable outcome (Mearsheimer 1990) and the dissolution of NATO was seen as a logical consequence of the lack of an external, balancing enemy to the Alliance. Opposed to this explanation stood variants of reflectivism. Generally, a distinction has been made within reflectivism between what has been called "soft constructivism" (or mainstream/modernist constructivism) and "radical constructivism" (Emanuel Adler 2002; see also 1997b). Soft Constructivism lets norms play a role as an intervening variable in rationalist-type arguments (Emmanuel Adler and Barnett 1998; Emanuel Adler 1997a; Risse-Kappen 1996; Schimmelfenig 1998), whereas Radical Constructivism more explicitly focuses on the role of language as *constitutive* of social reality (Toews 1987, pp. 881–882). Along these lines, the transformation of European security and the survival of NATO was understood as an example of the persistence of shared norms in security communities (e.g., Emmanuel Adler and Barnett 1998; Pouliot 2006), or as the formation of a distinct NATO security discourse, narrative, or identity that reconfigured international relations after bipolarity (e.g., Ciuta 2002; Fierke and Wiener 1999; Hansen 1995, 2006; Neumann 1999; Williams and Neumann 2000).

Neither of these approaches fully captured the symbolic power struggles that went into the transformation of NATO's role in European security. Notably, the roles of social scientific agents and paradigms were important for understanding the transformation of what might be called—with Bourdieu—a European field of Security, understood as a relational field of struggle tied together by a central stake—the power to define European security—and a variety of forms of power to back up bids for legitimacy. Seen from such a Bourdieusian framework for analysis, a focus on the (re-)creation of specific types of capital and practices in a relatively autonomous field, constituted by both material and symbolic forms of power will bring struggles to the fore that have been missed by rationalists and reflectivists alike: the change in the struggles that took place in the European field of security went from a struggle over the distribution of a select number of capitals—notably military—between states or alliances, to a larger field of contest in which struggle occurred over definitions of capital bringing into play new actors, such as think tanks. States were no longer the primary actors. Military was no longer the primary source of power. And change in IR became thinkable. The rationalist state/military prism did not capture this, and reflectivism only grasped parts of the struggles by either remaining focused on states or overlooking the power practices behind norms and discourses. Indeed, theory itself became an important power practice in the European security field when looked at from a Bourdieusian point of view.

It should therefore have come as no surprise to the discipline of IR that then NATO Secretary General, Javier Solana, declared the following when confronted with predictions concerning one of the important initiatives of the Alliance—the eastern enlargement of NATO:

> Indeed, had we listened to theory, we would not have come half as far. Theory told us that NATO enlargement and a NATO-Russia relationship would be mutually exclusive goals. Practice proved otherwise (Solana 1999a).

In addition to pointing to what was perceived as the inadequacy of Cold War theorizing in the post-Cold War world, this quotation also epitomized central power struggles that took place in European security: a competitive relationship between the theory and practice of European security in which (social) science and politics struggled to define security anew revealed that science is not a detached, neutral practice, but indeed a power practice like any other social practice (Bourdieu 2004). For IR this means that "science" has to be taken into account as a player—and not just as a detached observer—in European security.[2] Within the IR (neo-)Realist mainstream, this feature has been largely overlooked[3] or at least deemed unimportant for the changes that took place, whereas IR reflectivism has argued from a meta-theoretical and philosophical point of view that science is not a detached activity that stands apart from its object of study but instead co-constitutes it (e.g., Smith 2004; Klein 1994; for discussion, see Berling 2012). Bourdieu would of course agree (Bourdieu 2004). But the way science and security practice "hung together" in a more practical sense has not been addressed in any systematic way in IR (but see Büger and Villumsen 2007; Villumsen 2008). Important features of the power struggles that came to change European security were therefore missed.

In this article, I argue that a Bourdieusian practice approach that focuses on the field-capital-agency-doxa nexus can serve as a framework for understanding the changes in European security and the under-explored connection between theory and practice in European security in the 1990s. I argue that social science think tanks and academic experts can be seen as players alongside practitioners such as Heads of State and Government and NATO Secretaries General in a power struggle over the legitimate definition of security in a European field of security. The academic field thus intersects with the field of international relations. Further, this type of analysis can further serve as a guide for how to apply Bourdieu's tools to international relations in general. With such a discussion as background, the contours of the relevant types of agency in European security will appear, and the central resources with which struggles took place will be illuminated. Studies of the international are thereby translated into sociologically-conceptualized *power struggles* that can be studied empirically. Concretely, the article argues that the concept of capital can stand at the heart of such an approach.

[2] For a discussion of the role of science in security politics, see Berling (2011).

[3] It is often discussed under the heading of a "gap" (Eriksson and Sundelius 2005) that is ever widening and problematic (Kruzel 1994; George 1993) for discussion see Büger and Villumsen (2007).

But what is capital? Bourdieu defined capital as "… a weapon and a stake of struggle [which] allow the possessors of that capital to wield a power, an influence, and thus to *exist* in the field, instead of being considered a negligible quantity" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 98). As with Bourdieu's sociology in general, capital was understood relationally, not substantially (see Swartz 2008, p. 48; Emirbayer and Johnson 2008, p. 3)[4]: Capital functions as a social relation of power because it needs to be recognized as authoritative in a specific field in order to be valuable. In other words, it has to become symbolic capital in order to be powerful.[5] Capital is put to work in three different ways in the article. First, instead of assuming the relevant agency and types of power in European security as has been done in IR up until now, the concept of capital can provide a discussion of *points of access* to a certain domain—a *field*—for different types of agency. When military capital was valued, states and alliances possessing military capital were allowed to participate. When social scientific capital became valued in the European security field, new scientific-type actors were able to gain access. In this way, I argue, sensitivity to capital helps *select agency and establish the boundary for participation* in a specific international domain. Secondly, capital also functions, following Bourdieu, as the most important criterion for defining an agent's *position in the hierarchy* in a field. Capital is a "weapon" or a "power-base" that can be used by agents in struggles in a particular field. Following from these points, the article discusses how social scientific types of capital became valued in the European security field alongside other types of capital. An exclusive focus on Bourdieu's concept of capital does, however, not easily allow for an explicit focus on the profound *changes* and instabilities that dominated European security after the demise of the Soviet Union and the fall of the bipolar world order. To fit the framework better to the international case of European security, I therefore stress, thirdly, the *strategic mobilization*[6] of capital in fields under profound change. I call these mobilizations *doxic battles*, drawing on Bourdieu's concept of *doxa*. The doxa involves the very basic structures of the field, the categories by which the field and the world are understood. It is the unspoken, common knowledge that constitutes social reality and exercises a misrecognized structural power on the practices in a field (Bourdieu 1977; Ashley 1989, p. 259). Instead of focusing solely on *accumulation* and *possession* of capital, I argue for focusing on how agents use capital in the *(re)production process* of the basic structures of a given field. This brings the concepts of capital, field, and agency

[4] For a discussion of the need for a relational perspective in sociology and a specification of Bourdieu as an exemplary voice, see Emirbayer (1997).

[5] Bourdieu coined the concept as a way of distancing himself from Marxism, and even though the concept remained rooted in a kind of labor theory of value, labor was understood much more broadly than in Marxism. It could include, e.g., social, cultural, political, religious, and familial labor (Swartz 1997, pp. 73–75). Under specific circumstances these could be converted into one another.

[6] Bourdieu thinks of a strategy in terms quite different from the common sense usage within IR and rational choice theory: To him, a strategy is *social* in the sense that it is "defined by its position in a system of strategies oriented towards the maximizing of material and symbolic profit" (Bourdieu 1990, p. 16). It is a "more or less conscious pursuit of the accumulation of symbolic capital" (ibid.). (For more on types of capital, see section 3 in this article). Strategies are often concealed by a disinterested veil that makes claims to the pursuit of public goods rather than individual interests (Bourdieu 1990, p. 109).

together in a dynamic "action framework" for analysis. With this explicit focus on process and production, the article seeks to emphasize the practice element of Bourdieu's work for demonstrating how the paradigmatic case of European security in the 1990s was a case of power struggles involving hitherto overlooked agency and forms of power that came to change the very basic features of what European social reality consisted of. The discussion pulls IR away from substantive a priori assumptions and pushes it in the direction of process and empirically formulated research questions. In this way, it forms part of the broad trend in social theory known as the "practice turn" (Schatzki et al. 2001), which is still to be fully discovered by IR (Büger and Gadinger 2007; Neumann 2002; Hansen 2006).

Bourdieu in IR: a growing research programme

Within IR, Bourdieu has recently[7] provided inspiration to a growing number of (reflectivist) scholars. The central lessons from Bourdieu have centered on how to include a practical, sociological dimension to IR and security analyses in a discipline prone to remaining detached from micro-practices and staying at the level of assumptions; how to see IR as comprising more than just states as actors; and how to understand power in IR beyond material and military power. The debate so far demonstrates that Bourdieusian sociology can push the IR debate further on these points. But a comprehensive framework for analysis has yet to be developed from Bourdieusian concepts. In particular, the concept of capital holds largely unexplored potential as a significant contribution to understanding the international. I address the IR debate under three headlines: New forms of capital; Security agents; and Doxic practice.

New forms of capital

In classical IR theory, the international system has been taken to be dominated by military and economic capabilities and balance of power practices (e.g., Waltz 1979). Several Bourdieusian inspired studies in IR, however, criticize this narrow understanding of power resources. For instance, Jef Huysmans (2002) has argued that NATO had to attempt to convert its military capital into *humanitarian capital*[8] during the Kosovo crisis in 1998/1999 in order to be accepted as an important player in that crisis. Julian Go (2008) retains a focus on the nation state,

[7] In 2004, Pouliot held that the influence of Bourdieu in IR remained "thin" (2004, p. 8). Since then, the number of scholars and publications using Bourdieu in IR and security studies has been growing gradually. In December 2010, a workshop at the Department of Political Science at the University of Copenhagen even brought together a group of scholars dedicated to re-reading all major IR concepts from a Bourdieusian viewpoint. See, e.g., Berling (Berling 2012).

[8] As a definition, Huysmans offers the following: "The humanitarian technologies are mechanisms of arranging assistance and/or protection (defined in terms of non-refoulement and asylum) of refugees. These consist of institutionalised know-how and procedures. Together with the material resources such as airplanes and vehicles, these mechanisms constitute what could be considered the humanitarian capital" (Huysmans 2002, pp. 605–606).

but argues that historically speaking, states have struggled for both material/coercive power *and* international legitimacy, thus broadening the scope to include symbolic forms of power. Michael C. Williams (2007) emphasizes "the 'cultural strategies' that have been powerfully at work in international security over the past decade and a half" (ibid., p. 23) and argues that the 1990s was a period of extremely important power games, even though constructivists seemed to overlook it: "… important elements of security politics from the late 1980s up to today have involved a reconfiguration of the 'field' of security. In this revaluation, military and material power has remained significant, but it has been repositioned within a broader field, what might be called the 'cultural field of security'" (ibid., pp. 39–40). Cultural and symbolic forms of power existed alongside traditional power sources such as military capability. The focus on different and novel forms of power in IR constitutes the first contribution Bourdieusian sociology can add to IR.

Security agents

States have long been considered the primary actors within IR (for discussion, see Bigo and Walker 2007),[9] or agency has been downplayed as an analytical category altogether in favor of structures or norms (Kauppi 2003, p. 777; Zehfuss 2001, p. 336). IR scholars have, however, used Bourdieusian insights to widen the focus on agents by including experts and private military companies. To take an example, Didier Bigo has focused on the practices of security experts and carried out analyses of security practices in Europe with a focus on intelligence and surveillance[10] (e.g., Bigo 2005; Bigo and Guild 2005; for a similar analysis, see Huysmans 2006). In so doing, he has shown how a field of European "insecurity professionals" is in the making and is establishing a high degree of hegemony over European security knowledge especially in relation to immigration. The creation of a transnational field of "professionals in the management of unease" (Bigo 2002, p. 64) removes political control over what security means, installing in its place a security logic over a "continuum of threats" (Bigo 2002, p. 63) reaching beyond what was classically a matter of security: international and military questions.[11] The state is hence not seen as the primary actor as experts from different sectors take over the definition of

[9] To some extent, this trend has been reproduced in Bourdieusian approaches to IR: Pouliot (2010) and Ashley (1987) centered their analyses on the primary role of states—indeed Ashley's point was exactly that states were the "natural selection" of the doxic practice in IR (see below). Pop (2007, pp. 398–400) also defines the international states system as a field in which the legitimate actors are states and intergovernmental organizations in her analysis of Romania's relationship with the IMF in the 1990s and Dezalay and Garth (2002) find that the state is still the key unit of analysis in their study of how neoliberal economics and international human rights law was received in Latin America.

[10] In particular, the role of Europol and its competition with Interpol and "some confidential circles of NATO" (Bigo 2002, p. 71). Bigo aptly talks about a "stock exchange of security" in which European countries negotiate their different national understandings of the immigrants (Algerians to the French, Kurds to the German, etc.) by using the label "immigrant" as a common denominator (ibid.).

[11] "The prism of security analysis is especially important for politicians, for national and local police organizations, the military police, customs officers, border patrols, secret services, armies, judges, some social services (health care, hospitals, schools), private corporations (bank analysts, providers of technology surveillance, private policing), many journalists (especially from television and the more sensationalist newspapers), and a significant fraction of general public opinion, especially but not only among those attracted to law and order" (Bigo 2002, p. 63).

security and threats on the subject of immigration.[12] These analyses highlight the value of using the Bourdieusian prism to study hitherto largely overlooked agents in IR. Instead of throwing out the usual net that only captures the role of state agents and alliances, or downplaying the role of agency, a Bourdieusian analysis can capture a far more detailed IR population of relevant players. This is a prerequisite for understanding European security in the 1990s.

Doxic practice

Richard K. Ashley (1984, 1987, 1988, 1989) was the first to draw on Bourdieu within IR. He presented a now classical argument that international relations in general can be studied as a field in which statesmen and "the scholars who proclaim themselves realists" (Ashley 1987, p. 421; for a similar analysis, see George 1993) act according to a "foundational practice" of sovereignty with which all actors agree. Sovereignty, Ashley argued, was a prerequisite for gaining acceptance in the field for practitioners and theorists alike: "It is what one must *do* in order internationally to *be*" (Ashley 1989, p. 257). The distinction between inside the state and the international realm was thus a prerequisite for being heard in the field (see also Walker (1993) for a poststructuralist critique of the distinction between inside and outside). Ashley held that the Bourdieusian analysis enabled "[o]ne … to see what the subjects of global life might not be disposed to see: that the recognizably objective structures of global life, far from being autonomous and pregiven conditions, are arbitrary and contingent *effects* that are imposed in history, through practice, and to the exclusion of other ways of structuring collective existence" (Ashley 1989, p. 253). The realist, sovereignty-focused view of the world was therefore not necessarily synonymous with the "truth" about the organization of international life. Instead it was just the dominant understanding, upheld by theorists and practitioners alike. "…[T]hese rituals administer social time and space" (Ashley 1989, p. 261) in the sense that the international could only be grasped as a field consisting of states and in which war was a recurring phenomenon. This is what Bourdieu referred to as a *doxic practice*: a situation in which the arbitrariness of the structures in a field has been naturalized to such an extent that they become invisible to the actor (Bourdieu 1977, p. 164).

[12] Anna Leander (2005) suggested broadening IR analyses by including private military companies (PMCs) as a means to understanding recent developments in the field of security. Leander shows how "… PMCs contribute to the reproduction of a highly specialised security field in which 'experts' authorise an increasingly technical, managerial and military understanding of the field, which, in turn, empowers PMCs" (Leander 2005, p. 805). According to Leander, the field of security is thereby both privatized and re-militarized—a process that places PMCs centrally in the security business: as agenda-setting, intelligence-gathering, and as lobbyists with close relations to governments. Other examples include Huysmans (2006, pp. 154–155) who suggests including both the security elite described by Pouliot (see below in paper) and security professionals (police, military and intelligence) in analyses of security (for such an approach, see also Bigo 2000, 2002). He bases this on the assumption that the political process involves both a symbolic political struggle and technocratic processes. Williams (1997, p. 289) adds a "knowledge agent" to this: "… the institutions of knowledge and culture which constitute and structure specific knowledge claims and constructions (…) the institutions of education and accreditation which embody, produce and reproduce these knowledge structures and which produce 'legitimate speakers' who instantiate them." He specifically mentions "security studies," think tanks, universities, and ministries as examples of agents that create a "realm of security" (ibid., p. 299).

To a large extent, the doxic practice described by Ashley has dominated the discipline of IR since and has prevented it, e.g., from understanding the transformation of European Security after the end of the Cold War: It has limited agency and focused on just the practices of sovereignty as the only relevant research question for IR to address.[13] And science and scientific agency have been excluded from the list of agents and power practices that have been considered important to IR.[14] My analysis reveals, however, that social science think tanks and models were very important in the restructuring of the field, and that technical science had backed up the doxic practice in the field before the end of the Cold War. Social and technical science came to shape the "thinkable" in the field of European security.

All these studies demonstrate that inspiration from Bourdieu can provide insightful avenues for showing how certain practices uphold doxic understandings of the social world in large scale inter/transnational fields, how new types of agency can be brought into focus, and how concepts such as capital, social hierarchy, and power struggles can form the basis for a reflexive study of the configuration of fields in IR. However, the discussion remains focused on individual Bourdieusian concepts. Instead, a comprehensive "action framework" revolving around the concepts of field-capital-agency-doxa can help set boundaries around a field, focus on agency-selection, and understand the power struggles in a field that can change basic features of a field (*doxic battles)*. These dimensions have been left largely to assumptions and common sense research designs in the rationalist and reflectivist IR debates. Further, and hinted at by the work of Richard K. Ashley, a renewed focus on the power practices of international relations science and scientific agency can enter into IR debates as concrete, sociological analyses.

[13] Vincent Pouliot has picked up Ashley's path-breaking work in a study of a Russian-Atlantic security community (2010). He builds "… on Bourdieu's notion of symbolic power to argue that misrecognised domination is what makes security communities possible in the first place" (Pouliot 2004, p. 9). Similar to Ashley's classical idea, Pouliot argues that the Russian-Atlantic security community can fruitfully be understood as a field in which peaceful means of action have become *doxic practice* (Pouliot calls it the "logic of practicality," see, e.g., 2008). In this setting, military means have become unthinkable in relations between Russia and the West (see discussion with Cox on this issue in Pouliot 2006; Cox 2005, 2006). Rebecca Adler-Nissen has also benefited from the concept of doxic practice in her study of British and Danish Opt-outs in the European Union. She argues that the *acquis communautaire* functions as a doxa that regulates practices in the EU (Adler-Nissen 2009, 2011).

[14] Other Bourdieu-inspired studies should be mentioned: Guzzini has adopted the Bourdieusian framework in an attempt to come to terms with how power works in the international domain (1994, 2000) and how geo-political reasoning has shaped security in Europe after the Cold War (2003). Guilhot (2005) has studied the field of human rights and democracy and Dezalay and Garth (2006) have analyzed the field of human rights. They reveal "… power relationships that are obscured in words like "the international community", "norms" and the "law"" (Dezalay and Garth 2006, p. 231). Niilo Kauppi (2003) has studied the dislocating effects of European integration on Finnish and French national political fields, Ted Hopf (2002) has used Bourdieu in a study of identities and foreign policy in Russia/the Soviet Union. Henrik Breitenbauch (2008) has studied the French intellectual field of IR from a Bourdieusian perspective, and David McCourt (2010) uses Bourdieusian field theory to study the interconnection between the fields of academia and politics in Britain's foreign policy establishment.

An action framework for IR: the capital-field-agency-doxa

European security went from having been defined largely by military power and state actors during the bipolar world order to being constituted by new actors and practices in the 1990s. These changes can be captured through a comprehensive discussion of fields, capital, agency, and doxa.[15] With these concepts at hand, novel empirical questions will arise and basic assumptions will be challenged. While not discussing the concept of *habitus* in detail, the concept of course remains important to the points I make as it points toward agency beyond rational actors.[16] The international field of European security does not, however, easily allow for an analysis of habitus due to the extremely divergent backgrounds of agents in the struggle. The focus here is therefore put on the doxa of the field and the mobilization of capital as the *analytical lens* that will capture struggles in international fields. To illustrate my points, I refer to the European security field.

The field

> "… different fields … like magnetic forces, attract a multiplicity of agents, and polarise them around specific stakes" (Bigo and Walker 2007, p. 732)

A field is a less institutionalized social space than an institution: Bourdieu sought to develop a concept that could cover social worlds in which practices were weakly institutionalized and boundaries were not well established.[17] At least four features are central to understanding Bourdieu's concept of field and for distinguishing it from more common usages of the term (e.g., the "field of international relations:"). First, fields were seen as conceptual constructions based upon a *relational* mode of reasoning in which *conflict* and *struggle* played a major part. The term "field of power" (*champs de luttes*) signals these competitive features. With the concept of a field in hand, the researcher can turn attention to practices of struggle and to latent as well as visible elements of conflict and competition in any arena regardless of degree of institutionalization. Materialist causalities and naïve positivism are replaced with a potent prism for seeing how every practice is produced in systems of social and intellectual distinctions. "Even the seemingly most neutral of ivory-tower cultural practices are, according to Bourdieu, embedded …" in conflictual patterns (Swartz 1997, p. 119; see also Krais 1994, pp. 112–115). The concept of a field of struggle

[15] Leander (2008) bases her discussion on fields, habitus, and practices, Kauppi (2003) bases his discussion on field, capital, and habitus and Swartz (2008, p. 45) specifies habitus, capital and field as "Bourdieu's master concepts."

[16] Bourdieu defined habitus as "systems of durable, transposable dispositions" (Bourdieu 1977, p. 72) and as "determined by past conditions which have produced the principle of their production, that is, by the actual outcome of identical or interchangeable past practices" (ibid., pp. 72–73). The habitus "links individual action and macro-structural settings within which future action is taken … and links past fields to present fields through individual actors who move from one to the next" (Emirbayer and Johnson 2008, p. 4). In general terms, practices "flow from the intersection of habitus with capital and field positions" (ibid., 48).

[17] The concept was meant as a correction to three central debates in sociology at the time: positivism, materialism, and idealism (Swartz 1997).

thus potentially thrusts science into the foreground as a power practice in a relationally constituted field. This holds promise for understanding the power struggles of European security in the 1990s. The struggle element in a field did, however, not mean that transformation was easily reached: "… fields capture struggle within the logic of reproduction" (Swartz 1997, p. 121). There is thus a conservative tendency in field struggles. Secondly, a field is a structured space in which dominant and subordinate positions based on types of capitals and paradigmatic distinctions are pivotal.[18] A change in one position changes the boundary to other positions as if a field were a magnetic field (Bourdieu 1971; Swartz 1997, p. 123). Whereas the common sense or doxic practice of European security had been dominated by Realism during the Cold War according to Ashley (1988), changes in this position occurred post-Cold War and changed the power relations in the field altogether. A tight fit between the conventional truth of Realism and NATO's practices based on military capital, which had proven a viable and strong position during the 1980s, was suddenly a potential disadvantage in the field: NATO initially seemed at risk of withering away after the demise of the Soviet Union. Because NATO practices required a balancing enemy to remain relevant, most commentators agreed and expected that NATO would disintegrate (see, e.g., Chalmers 1990; Hassner 1990; De Santis 1991; for debate, see Duffield 1994; for general statements, see Walt 1987; Waltz 1981, 1993; Sagan and Waltz 1995). Some even argued that NATO was *bound* to disintegrate and that multipolarity was inevitable (Mearsheimer 1990). There was disagreement as to how long this would take, but disintegration was fully expected. An alliance had one purpose that kept it together: a common, external threat that needed to be balanced. In the event that this threat no longer existed, the members of the alliance would no longer see the need for upholding the costs of cooperation, since no obvious returns were envisioned. This understanding was the common sense of security in 1990. It built on the "foundational practice" discovered by Ashley and the symbolic violence exerted by the structure of military and scientific capital in the field. NATO's powerful experience of the Cold War was therefore transformed into a new struggle for survival. This time the enemy was not a clearly defined military threat to be balanced, but instead a threat within the field of European security itself—involving scientific capital (Villumsen 2008, pp. 139–140). The doxic practice of the field came under attack as the Realist common sense view of balancing power relations was challenged. NATO's dominance together with Realist conceptions of security waned as other social science positions became powerful. Thirdly, agents in a field share an underlying assumption that the struggle is worth engaging in and therefore (unknowingly, perhaps) accept that the field imposes certain ways of struggling. Both subordinate and dominant actors agree to this. "Every field stimulates a certain interest, an *illusio,* in the shape of an implicit recognition of what is at stake in the field and how the actors in the field play the field power game" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 2004 [1996], p. 103; Bourdieu 2005, p. 9). This *illusio* stimulates agents to think that "the game is worth the candle, that it is worth playing" (Bourdieu

[18] "The most important … modus operandi is the field's organization around two opposite poles: the protagonists of change and the apostles of law and order, the progressives and the conservatives, the heterodox and the orthodox, or the challengers and the incumbents" (Kauppi 2003, p. 778). For instance, Bourdieu mentioned the distinction between orthodoxy and herecy in cultural fields and between "curators of culture" and "creators of culture" in intellectual fields (Swartz 1997, p. 124).

2004, p. 50) and creates a belief in the naturalness of the affairs in the field. The field thus exerts symbolic power on agents in subordinate positions—they "misrecognize" their position and uphold central distinctions in the field through practices of reproduction. In general terms, what is at stake in any field is "the right to monopolize the exercise of 'symbolic violence'" (Swartz 1997, p. 123; Kauppi 2003, p. 779). In the European security field *gaining authority over the definition of European security* held the field together (Villumsen 2008, p. 92). The underlying logic to the game was thus a question of the power to define. Bigo found a similar stake in the field of (in) security professionals, where agents are "… in competition with each other for the monopoly of the legitimate knowledge on what constitutes a legitimate unease, a 'real' risk" (Bigo 2006, p. 111).[19] Fourthly, fields are structured by their own *internal mechanisms* and are in Bourdieu's language "relatively autonomous." This means that Bourdieu often analyzed the internal dynamic of a field as if it were a closed circuit even though he thought of fields as tied together with the broader "field of power" and with other fields.[20] This point also means that a position of importance in one field does not translate directly into such a position in another field. Academic experts and think tanks may have gained a position in the European security field, but neither does this mean that their power could be transferred smoothly to other fields, nor does it mean that the actions of individual states were made redundant.

So instead of seeing European security as a billiard table on which rational, unitary actors (states) seek survival with an exclusive focus on material capabilities (Neorealism), or studying the role of international norms in the re-organization of European security with only limited attention to agency and power (Constructivism), the focus of a field-approach orients the study of European security to the struggle over a central stake: the power to define the legitimate security logic in Europe. In this struggle, a range of different actors took part, and a variety of different resources were in play. Material capabilities and norms can therefore both be re-read as specific forms of capital in the European security field and the role of both "theory-agency" and "practitioner agency" in European security can be captured. The academic field of IR/security did not stand apart from the struggles in the field, but intersected with the field of European security.

For the researcher, this type of approach means turning studies of the social world solidly empirical:

> The theory of the field orients and governs empirical research. It forces the researcher to ask what people are 'playing at' in this field (…) what are the stakes, the goods or properties sought and distributed or redistributed, and how they are distributed, what the instruments or weapons that one needs to have in order to play with some chance of winning. (Bourdieu 2004, p. 34)

Studying international fields thus involves studying what the main struggles are and with what means they are supported. And contrary to common sense usage of the term, to talk about a European security field in a *Bourdieusian* sense means seeing

[19] This type of stake follows Bourdieu's analysis of the cultural and literary field where the legitimate definition of literature and literary practice was identified as the illusio (Johnson 1993, p. 19; Bourdieu 1993, p. 42).

[20] It goes beyond the scope of this article to discuss this issue in detail. Suffice to say that Bourdieu coined the central feature of this relationship as a "homology" between fields and positions in fields.

European security as a *field of struggle* in which power is unevenly distributed. An agent may be deprived of the right to speak in the field of European security, if certain types of capital are not possessed or certain ways of playing the game are not followed. Because social identity is referential and oppositional, the agent needs to be recognized as a player in a field in order to become one. This constitutes the relational character of the struggle.

Former Secretary General to NATO, Willy Claes, can be taken as an example of an agent not possessing valued capital and not following the recognized rules of the game in the European security field in the 1990s. He tried to fill the void left by the Soviet Union with a new enemy: that of Islamic fundamentalism in order to demonstrate the sustained centrality of NATO in European security. During the Cold War, NATO had become accustomed to a world split between NATO and a massive, material, and political counterpart. This world had been understood through a tight fit between (Realist) scientific and military capital. With the disappearance of the Soviet Union, NATO still held on to balancing the military capabilities of the former enemy for some time ("field struggles are captured within the logic of reproduction,") because the dominant logic of security remained one of balance of power and military capabilities. So when then Secretary General Willy Claes voiced his views in 1995 about the greatest threat in the future, he was still thinking in terms of a world split in two, organized by the presence of military capabilities and working according to strategic[21] balancing; NATO was defined by its counterpart. Claes stated: "Muslim fundamentalism is at least as dangerous as Communism once was…. It represents terrorism, religious fanaticism" (Fisk 1999, p. 2; see also Droziak 1995; Behnke 2000, p. 3; Bilski 1995). In his thinking a new threat of the same magnitude as the Communist threat during the Cold War, which could be countered through military means, gave NATO a clear and legitimate purpose for remaining relevant in the post-Cold War European field of security. However, this attempt to define a new common threat created more problems than solutions for the Secretary General. It turned out not to be *comme il faut* in the changing European field of security to place religiously demarcated groups as a new counterpart to NATO. It was not recognized as a valid move in a field, that increasingly believed—contra strategic balancing—that "security is what we make of it" (Solana 1999b: see also below) and that military capital was part of the problem—not the solution. Following from this, he was either ignored or discredited in numerous ways by other agents in the field. Willy Claes felt a solid field effect.[22]

Boundary-setting and agency selection

But what does this field consist of? How can it be demarcated? In the IR literature, a priori drawings of boundaries prevail. Pouliot argues that "only a few social agents are allowed to step in to partake in the social construction of international threats"

[21] Strategic is here understood as tied to the rational actor model adopted by Kenneth Waltz (1979) and his followers, and not as strategic practice in a Bourdieusian sense. Bourdieu did not invest his term with rational actor assumptions and eventually—in response to criticism—began replacing the term with the term *illusio*. I would like to thank an anonymous reviewer at *Theory and Society* for clarifying this point.

[22] Willy Claes resigned soon after the statements for unrelated reasons. He was charged with corruption in Belgium (dating back to the time when he was member of the Belgian government) and chose to resign.

(Pouliot 2004, p. 9),[23] while Buzan et al. (1998, p. 31) argue that "… security is … very much a structured field in which some actors are placed in positions of power by virtue of being generally accepted voices of security, by having the power to define security."[24] Powerful agents are defined thus:

> In the contemporary era, security élites are the handful of individuals who gather at the highest level to make the ultimate arbitration regarding foreign and security policies: in addition to heads of state and government, security élites are comprised of senior ministers and top foreign policy officials and diplomats. Some high level officials from security-related international organisations should also be added…. (Pouliot 2004, p. 10)

But why are they powerful? By what standards are their voices considered powerful? I argue that these claims are based on an *assumption* about a powerful elite and not on an empirical investigation into the specific elites that actually operate in a specific field.

This type of argument has come to be the standard answer to the selection of agency in many reflectivist analyses of the international and also remains central to rationalist common sense approaches. Even though the answer is theoretically founded and carries weight, it is too static and exclusive for capturing the novel practices in the European security field after the fall of bipolarity. It is inattentive to historical variability and in fact takes the Cold War historical context as taken for granted rather than as historically contingent. This means that the default selection of actors hinges on a Cold War taken-for-granted assumed centrality of these actors. Centrally, it focuses almost exclusively on state actors and leaves out important scientific actors such as social science think tanks and academic university experts who also struggled for the power to define European security after the Cold War.[25] Instead, I argue that a Bourdieusian approach with a special focus on the concept of capital can turn the question of powerful agency into an empirical analysis in which different types of *field-specific* capital serve not only as power bases in the struggles in a field, but also as *points of entry* to the field for different types of actors.[26] As capital can take a variety of forms, this multi-dimensional analysis of power allows for a range of newcomers and struggles over boundaries while retaining a central focus on the stakes. Capital thus helps set boundaries and select recognized agency in the course of the empirical analysis.

According to Bourdieu, "Any effort to establish precise boundaries between fields … derives from a 'positivist vision' rather than the more compelling 'relational' view of the social world, for boundaries are themselves objects of struggle" (Swartz 1997,

[23] "In other words, social reality is constructed in such a way that only a very restricted group of individuals are legitimised to authoritatively define international threats: I call them 'security élites'" (Pouliot 2004, pp. 9–10).

[24] The argument is tied to the concept of "securitization" and how actors perform successful securitizations.

[25] Bourdieu (1993, p. 29) argues that social agents can be "… isolated individuals, groups or institutions." An agent is thus not only equivalent to a person—although an agent can be a person. See also Swartz (1997, p. 123). Field positions can be occupied by individuals, social networks, social groups, institutions, and formal organizations (Swartz 2008, p. 49).

[26] Although, e.g., Williams (1997, p. 302) hints at the importance of a study of capital in IR, no such analysis has yet been carried out–nor has it been tied directly to boundary-drawing and the selection of agency. As noted above, Bigo (2000) even rejects the study of capital in his bureaucratic field of security professionals.

p. 121).[27] Instead, Bourdieu argued that boundary shifts and struggles over drawing boundaries around a field are key factors in social change: "… changes within a field are often determined by redefinitions of the frontiers between fields, linked (as cause and effect) to the sudden arrival of new entrants endowed with new power resources. This explains why the boundaries of the field are almost always at stake in the struggles within the field" (Bourdieu 2004, p. 36). This is an important point. The default setting of boundaries—either by relying on the distinction between inside and outside,[28] high and low politics, geographical areas, or by selecting powerful agency (e.g., states or security elites) before the empirical study—will risk overlooking important aspects of international power struggles (for discussion see Bigo and Walker 2007; Villumsen 2008). The massive changes European security underwent during the 1990s clearly indicate that the boundaries around the European security field were under fierce negotiation. This means that field boundaries and relevant agency should be posed as questions and not offered as definitions in an analysis of the field.

But if boundaries are fluid and newcomers are always a possibility, how can the concept of a field direct an empirical analysis? How can it help select agency? In a Bourdieusian analysis, the central issue in determining the relevant agents is keeping an eye on the central dynamic of the field: the struggle. The initial research question therefore becomes: struggle over what? In the case of European security in the 1990s, the struggle was over the right to define European security in the face of the loss of the central demarcating enemy, the Soviet Union. Elsewhere, I have demonstrated how an empirical analysis of this struggle came to the conclusion that social science think tanks and academic experts were as important to the field as were central actors, such as NATO, the WEU, and the EU, and how the natural locus of security thinking—the state—turned out to play a rather limited role in its own right in the European security field (Villumsen 2008; Berling forthcoming). To illustrate, a number of European think tanks made strategic moves in the field that came to co-constitute the changes that took place. Arguing in favor of the centrality of the EU as opposed to NATO, the London-based, leading think tank *Centre for European Reform* challenged common sense strategic thinking and military capabilities as a thing of the past. In a publication concerning the possible accession of Turkey to the EU, Steven Everts (senior research fellow and director of CER's transatlantic programme) spelled out the "European way" as opposed to an exclusive military focus: "The EU's approach is the opposite: indirect, underwhelming and economic-legal in nature" (Everts 2004, p. 1). The *underwhelming* power of the EU consisted in a long-term transformation from instability and self-interest to European, civilized

[27] This also explains why Leander (2005), Bigo (e.g., 2006), Pouliot (2010), Villumsen (2008), and Williams (2007) can speak about a security field, an international security field, and a European security field. The fields are related and actors may take part in both, but all work according to their own illusio and value field-specific types of capital. This also means that actors will have different positions in the hierarchies in the different fields. By way of example, the EU figures prominently in the European security field in the 1990s, but is less powerful in the international security field.

[28] As Walker (1993) has shown, the international has been defined as the absence of identity, negatively as the "not national," and as the opposite of a "social world." Reframing the study of the international through the concept of a field can strengthen the poststructuralist critique on this point.

space. This made it more powerful than brute, military power. Mark Leonard (then director of CER) confidently stated that “[w]e can see that a new kind of power has evolved that cannot be measured in terms of military budgets or smart missile technology. It works in the long term, and is *about reshaping the world* rather than winning short-term tussles” (Leonard 2005, p. 5, my emphasis). The underwhelming power of the EU thus clearly challenged the traditional type of military capital that NATO possessed so much of (and the EU so little): According to the CER, NATO could only hope to win short-term tussles! The EU would be the new long-term agency of power to contend with, devaluing the role of states to one of narrow self-interest: NATO as the primary agent and military capability as the key capital in Cold War thinking were thus cast as problems to be transcended.

To substantiate the claim that the interventions of, e.g., the CER were indeed powerful and helped reconfigure the European field of security, I studied “practical patterns of interaction” in the field, determining which types of contacts existed between relevant actors and how this had changed over time. I went through annual reports of think tanks, documents, and the agendas of the NATO Secretaries General from 1990–2003. Bourdieu’s research question was often *how* actors were related—rather than *if* they were related. But when international fields under profound change—such as the European security field—are the objects of study, the presence of relations between the relevant actors in a field had to be established for the analysis to be supported: Were relations between the actors indeed present? Were the types of relations diversifying? And did new actors gain access to the field in the sense that they were accepted as legitimate voices in the struggle over the definition of European security? (Villumsen 2008, pp. 174–220).[29] The situation of profound change in European security highlighted the importance of posing the question of which actors were related how.[30] The *Centre for European Reform* was a well-connected think tank to be reckoned with in Europe in the 1990s. Its connections with especially former Secretary General of NATO and later High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana, made the CER a centrally placed think tank in the practical patterns of interaction constituting the European field of security (Villumsen 2008, p. 254). In fact, my analysis showed amongst other things that relations in the form of meetings and social networks between the NATO Secretary Generals and research centers/think tanks in general skyrocketed in the middle of the 1990s when Javier Solana held the position. From having been conceived of as a field configured largely by states and military capabilities, the 1990s revealed that different types of social and technical science had in fact played an integral role in the field for a long time. But the type and weight of science shifted. During the Cold War, the (Neo-)Realist school of thought had developed simultaneously with—and had confirmed the value of—NATO practices of balance-of-power, and an ensuing focus on technical military integration had made

[29] Bigo (2000) takes a different path. He builds on more than 100 interviews with liaison officers in order to substantiate his claim about a European security field in which police and military officials’ interests are merging.

[30] This is always an important question to ask in a Bourdieusian analysis. But the situation of profound change made it even more important not to cut corners and select actors by default.

the role of technical types of science important.[31] The alliance created close links with research environments[32] that assisted NATO in solving practical problems with hardware and developing new approaches to defense systems (Nierenberg 2001). The end of the Cold War saw a relative rise in the power of social science approaches, notably reflectivist IR and security studies, which focused on the possibility of changing the security logic of the European region through the spread of democracy and the rule of law.[33] Evidenced by the way new approaches were included in the flagship publication *NATO Review* and how they were invited to join the NATO science programmes, these new types of science were gaining ground as legitimate voices in the international field of European security (Villumsen 2008, pp. 207–210). Redefined scientific and social capital (in the form of networks) was gaining importance and allowed a new type of agency access to the high ranks of the field.[34]

Hierarchy

These redefined and new types of capital also shifted the hierarchy of the European security field. Guzzini asks "… who is authorised to speak in the first place and which authority (roles, institutions and the taken-for-granted understandings) supports the claims?" (Stefano Guzzini 2005, p. 51). According to Bourdieu, the answer would be who has the symbolic capital, that is, a type of capital widely recognized as legitimate? I will rephrase: which types of capital authorize certain actors to participate in the field and hold a powerful position in it? I found in the European security field that when military capital was valued, actors with great military capabilities such as heads of state and government and NATO Secretary Generals were recognized as speakers in the field and gained a high position in the hierarchy (such as NATO during the Cold War). When new forms of scientific capital became valued, a different type of agency was accepted as legitimate speaker in the field. The default selection of high-level officials therefore needed to be replaced by an analysis of whether actors

[31] The Group for Aeronautical Research and Development (AGARD) was established in Paris in 1950; the training centre for Experimental Aerodynamics was established in Brussels; The Air Defence Technical Centre was formed in The Hague and, according to Nierenberg (2001, p. 364) the most ambitious undertaking, the Underwater Research Centre was created in La Spezia in Italy.

[32] NATO had created links to think tanks and research environments through a series of programmes for several decades. The NATO Science for Peace and Security Programme was established in 2006 on the basis of a merger of two former NATO science programmes: "The NATO Security through Science Programme" from 1956 and "The Committee on the Challenges to Modern Society" from 1969. The initial aim of the latter was to address problems affecting the environment of the nations and the quality of life of their peoples. The former programme was established after the report submitted by the "three wise men" (Harmel Report 1967) had concluded that developments in the fields of science and technology could be decisive for the development of the security situation for the allies (see also Nierenberg 2001; Carvalho-Rodrigues 2001). The NATO Science Programme was established to promote scientific collaboration, and such collaboration between scientists in NATO countries was supported for the next 40 years through various measures. The focus was on the technical and natural sciences (for a description, see Garfield 1987; for discussion, see Nierenberg 2001).

[33] See Büger and Villumsen (2007) for an analysis of the importance of democratic peace theory in the restructuring of US and NATO security policies in the 1990s. See also Williams (2001).

[34] For discussion of how social networks gain value as a form of capital, see Emirbayer and Johnson (2008).

actually held (or successfully mobilized, see below) the valued types of capital in the field. When these types were identified by seeing who actually participated in the central struggle over "who gets to define European security," the boundary-setting and selection of recognized agency materialized. This allowed for the analysis of relations between recognized actors (practical patterns of interaction), and thereby for a solidly empirical evaluation of the field.

The possession of capital is thus important for being accepted as a player in a field (capital is *boundary-setting*), but also for understanding the positions and power bases of agents and thus the *hierarchy* in a field: "It is therefore not *what* you say but *where* you say it from that matters" (Leander 2005, p. 612; 2006, p. 4).[35] "Where you say it from" means with what capital—what resources or power—do you speak in the field? The hierarchization and existence of different types of capital are ultimately empirical questions related to the specific field under study. Where Bourdieu often focused on the interplay between economic and cultural capital in his analytical work and described economic capital as the "dominant principle of hierarchy" and cultural capital as the "second principle of hierarchy" (Swartz 1997, p. 192),[36] this dichotomy always needed adjustment and specification in concrete fields.[37] The European security field was traditionally structured by military capital (backed up by economic capital) and (Realist) scientific capital, but the valued types of capital were under reconfiguration in the 1990s. Other types of capital were becoming important: new forms of social scientific capital and social capital (in the form of the establishment of new networks) played an increasingly important role and reshuffled the hierarchy.

Thus, the concept of capital can analytically be used in IR as *points of entry* for different kinds of actors and for establishing boundaries around a field. Capital serves as an "entry ticket" to the struggles and is thus boundary-setting. Further, capital helps structure the analysis of which sources of power are important in different fields and how this affects the hierarchy/stratification in the field. Capital analysis is therefore also a means to knowing "which voice will be likely to carry weight" in the struggles. But yet another—third—dimension of the concept of capital will prove valuable when applying the field perspective to IR. Bourdieu's concepts have often pointed IR in the direction of conservation and stabilization of fields. After the Cold War, we have, however, come to accept the pivotal role of change—not least in European security. A central challenge for applying Bourdieu to IR therefore concerns the question of change. Given this, the concept of capital may become a straightjacket that favors stasis over process for IR. But by explicitly focusing on the strategic mobilization of capital—by getting closer to the practice element in Bourdieu's work—this peril may be avoided. This involves including a focus on how

[35] In Bourdieu's (1998, p. 2) words: "While it is no doubt true that agents construct social reality and enter into struggles and transactions aimed at imposing their vision, they always do so with points of view, interests, and principles of vision determined by the position they occupy in the very world they intend to transform or preserve."

[36] This dualism was related to the analysis of the different fields in French society and was linked to an overarching analysis of the field of power (see, for example, Bourdieu 1986 [1979], 1993, 2005).

[37] Swartz (1997, pp. 78–80) contends that Bourdieu himself did not have a clear hierarchization of types of capital. Economic capital, however, was often conceptualized as a "root type of capital."

agents seek to optimize their position (or guarantee their survival as in the case of NATO) in moves involving specific forms of capital. I turn to that below.

Conversion, redefinition, and doxic battles

As Wacquant (1998, p. xvi) reminds us, we cannot limit the analysis "to drawing an objectivist topology of distributions of capital." An analysis of how participants in various social worlds "perceive and actualize (or not) the potentialities they harbor" (ibid.) is needed. I agree. And Bourdieu did point us in the direction of the strategic practices of agents. He argued that different types of capital could be *converted* into new power bases in the field and that struggles over *definitions* of what was to be considered the most valued resources in a field were central (see Swartz 1997, p. 123). This underscores the value of zooming in on how agents mobilize capital in their quest for centrality in a specific field. Such a dynamic understanding of the capital-field-agency combination adds important insight to the stable and static image of Bourdieusian analysis by calling attention to process in field analysis.[38]

But the profundity of change in fields where the *basic structures* are under pressure, and in which the limits of autonomy in classification struggles (Bourdieu 1986 [1979], pp. 483–484) are arguably less restraining than in stable fields, calls for specific attention. The very assumptions underlying the European security field were under reconfiguration in Europe in the 1990s. The strategic mobilizations that took place in this field, hence, had the effect of changing basic, taken-for-granted knowledge. I call this type of strategic practices in fields under profound change *doxic battles.*

Conversion and redefinition of capital

An important aspect of the strategic mobilization of capital concerns the extent to which the different types of capital can be used in other settings than the obvious one: military capital can quite obviously be used for the purpose of deterring and fighting a war. But could military capital provide a powerful position in a situation in which the overarching threat had disappeared? Did a position at the top of the hierarchy in European security after the end of bipolarity follow from NATO's possession of military capital? Could military capital be converted into other forms of capital more appropriate to the new situation faced by NATO in the post-1989 period?[39]

Some types of resources will be more valuable for certain tasks than others and some will be more fungible than others. But the ranking and fungibility of resources must (in a Bourdieusian vocabulary) always be considered in the context of a field. No a priori ranking can be determined and no resources have inherent qualities that

[38] A sustained point of criticism often directed at Bourdieu within IR holds that his theory is too static and slides towards objectivism and reification (Pels 1995, p. 88).

[39] In a similar sense, Baldwin talked about the *fungibility* of power resources, meaning whether a power resource could be used in different settings with few transitional costs (Baldwin 1989, 2002). He found it important to recognize that no political power resource begins to approach the degree of fungibility of money (Baldwin 2002). Military power was judged fungible to some extent, whereas political power was more easily used in different domains (Baldwin 1989).

make them power assets (for discussion, see Baldwin 1999; Art 1996, 1999).[40] As Baldwin put it, "what constitutes a 'good hand' in card games depends on whether one is playing poker or bridge" (Baldwin 2002, p. 179).[41] NATO had a good hand in balance-of-power and deterrence terms, but in the new risk society, it was less obvious how good the alliance's hand was. Determining whether an agent has a "good hand" thus depends on the nature of the game being played and the fungibility of its capital. While the game in the European security field remained one of "security" (a type of politics) and the agents pursued the power to define security and security practice (cp., Calhoun 2003, p. 277), NATO was put on the defensive when military capital was devalued as a valuable asset in security after 1990. But some of the already-possessed military capability remained an asset (and thus valued capital) for NATO: the structures already in place for decision-making in the field and the institutionalized links between the political and military branches of the Alliance remained a power resource, since they could rather easily be converted and function in the new security setting. This was NATO's strongest asset when the alliance attempted to convert its Cold War military capability to crisis management capabilities or to *humanitarian capital* during the Kosovo crisis (see Huysmans 2002) and later, when NATO and the EU fought over the leading position in European security.[42] But the EU became an important actor in security matters as well, through a strategy of first capital conversion and then redefinition. Spearheaded by the interventions made by the think tank the *Centre for European Reform* (CER) described above, economic capital was recast a new type of military capital, which was superior to the power of military capabilities (Villumsen 2008, pp. 253–258). Strategically mobilizing the "underwhelming power" (Everts 2004, p. 1) of the European Union was thus an attempt to convert economic capital into a redefined type of military capital, while also clearly challenging the traditional type of military capital. According to CER, the EU was set on a course that would explain "Why Europe will run the 21st century" as a CER publication was entitled (Leonard 2005).

Doxic battles

A more deeply rooted dimension of an analysis of change in international fields concerns the concept of doxa. "… the doxa stands for the faith or belief in the presuppositions of a field …" (Schinkel 2003, p. 77), or "a 'strategic reserve' of self-evident yet ambiguous knowledge" (Ashley 1989, p. 256). In the world of doxa,

[40] For a general analysis of the concept of fungibility, see Guzzini (1994).

[41] Leander (2008, p. 16) talks about the existence of an "exchange rate" for capital in an overarching field of power.

[42] EU's move in the European security field concerning military capabilities was based on a strategy of accumulating military capabilities. The ESDP project was launched at the June 1999 European Council Meeting in Cologne and further specified at the Helsinki European council meeting the same year. The new institutions of the ESDP were laid out and the "Headline Goal" involving the creation of a European armed force capable of humanitarian, crisis management, and peace enforcement operations was formulated. This was a direct answer to NATO's attempt to gain a role in humanitarian crises and crisis management through the conversion of its military capabilities in connection with the Kosovo crisis (cp., Huysmans 2002).

things "go without saying because they come without saying" (Bourdieu 1977, p. 89; cited in Ashley 1989, p. 262).[43]

Doxic battles are analyzed as the mobilization of different types of capital in a field in which fundamental assumptions (doxa) have been or are called into question. While the doxa will of course always be undergoing incremental changes, the term "doxic battles" signifies a situation in which these changes are more abrupt and profound.

The European security field during the Cold War was structured by a belief that threats could be measured materially and ideologically, and that the "nature" of the international system caused war to be a recurring phenomenon. In other words, the "space" of European security was largely defined by weapons and geographical distance, whereas "time" was understood in cyclical terms. These were the deep, doxic structures of European security, which, as described earlier, also led Willy Claes to seek a new enemy in Islamic fundamentalism to replace the old enemy of the former Soviet Union. But as we saw, the field no longer accepted moves that drew on these basic features in the mid-1990s. The taken-for-granted assumptions—the doxa—had changed: The situation after the end of the Cold War had exposed a doxa in the field of European security, which could no longer be upheld. Military security and balance of power—the traditional objectives of the European security field, at least as seen through the eyes of realism—no longer captured the situation in which Europe found itself. This opened the possibility for newcomers[44] to the field and for new definitions to take over from old Cold War definitions. Ashley unknowingly foretold this situation:

> If this boundary [of the doxa] is not sustained in practice, if totalizing and formalizing discourses encroach upon and politicize the ambiguous zone of doxa, and if, therefore this zone of practice loses its natural, self-evident character, then the rituals of power constituted therein lose their capacities to orchestrate the enframing and discipline of collective possibility. Their arbitrariness exposed, they are deprived of instantaneous and unquestioning recognition, and they are called upon to prove their legitimacy by appeal to universal grounds. (Ashley 1989, p. 273)

Seen from the perspective of NATO, its role was uncertain after 1990. Having thrived on the space/time classifications of the Cold War, a new world with no clear enemy and where peace suddenly seemed to prevail made NATO seem obsolete. The Alliance therefore threw itself into a battle over definitions of valued scientific capital, social capital, and the role of military capital after the Cold War, which,

[43] The concept of doxa is contested in the literature. Myles (2004, p. 98) argues that there are at least two different versions of the concept of doxa in Bourdieu's work: first, the notion of the undiscussed, common sense that underlies all actors' ways of acting in the world; and second, an epistemological concept of reflexivity. Most commonly in the literature, however, the doxa is associated with Myles's first reading of doxa. Nick Crossley equates the doxa with "… what we know without knowing that we know it …" (Crossley 2004, p. 100); and Anna Leander argues that it is "… the inter-subjectively shared, taken for granted, values and discourses of a field …" (Leander 2006, p. 9).

[44] Bourdieu often found that the distinction between the established, reproductive elite and the upcoming, younger agents who lack institutional distinctions stood at the center of fields of struggle (see especially Bourdieu 1988; Fisher 1990). This distinction lay at the heart of Bourdieu's analysis of the boundary between scientific and ordinary knowledge in *Homo Academicus*.

together with other agents' strategic moves, led to fundamental changes in the field of European security on the dimensions of space and time. Security practices were exposed as arbitrary and basic assumed classifications of space and time, which had exercised symbolic violence on actors and had guided NATOs military strategy, were questioned. By opposing NATO against "theory," Solana, as the earlier quotation suggests, was devaluing the scientific capital of the Cold War kind and with it the firm belief in the "nature" of the international system as inherently cyclical and war-prone.[45] The wisdom that had guided NATO throughout the Cold War was called into question as was its attempt to convert NATOs Cold War military power into a valuable resource in the new security situation. This involved devaluing the dominant theoretical understanding of what an Alliance can do, but also implicitly the fundamental issues of time and space, which had limited the relevant actors and threats to states and military capability (space) and the inevitability of recurring conflict as the condition of the international system (time): Instead, a different type of scientific capital was mobilized: "Security in the 21st century is what we make of it. The future can be shaped …" (Solana 1999b: pp. 3–4), Solana wrote in 1999 before Lord Robertson took over as SG of NATO. He thereby made it clear that security was no longer based on the doxic understanding of recurring conflict and that relations with relevant actors in security could be transformed. Put analytically, his understanding of *time* was far from cyclical, but constructivist and his understanding of the strategic environment of the alliance (*space*) was plastic rather than static.[46] But he also signalled in no uncertain terms that he was familiar with the vocabulary of the social constructivist paradigm, which was becoming ever more influential in Security Studies in Europe.[47] This was a central feature of the European security field in the 1990s: social science became a factor—a type of capital—which agents with no institutional, scientific backing sought to mobilize in their quest for domination in the field. This helped produce a new doxa in the field. But in addition, social science also became an actor in European security.

Bourdieu saw *social* science as intimately related to society. "… sociology, whether it wants to or not … is an actor in the struggles it describes" (Bourdieu 2004, p. 88). Social scientific actors were indeed granted actor status in the European security field. This was underscored by changes in concrete practices of the NATO SGs such as Solana. He accumulated social capital by calling on scientific expertise provided by certain think tanks in order to back up the new valued scientific capital (on taste, see Bourdieu 1986 [1979]) and thereby helped a new type of actor gain access to the struggles in the field. In the process, doxic space/time structures of the European security field changed. The international system was now understood as transformable, and space was defined in terms of democratization and values rather

[45] Solana had previously made similar statements concerning the role of "theory" or "commentators," e.g.: "Some commentators have predicted problems for NATO …" (Solana 1997, p. 5). Admiral Norman Ray, Solana's Assistant Secretary General, also held that, "Among some analysts, there is the view that somehow NATO has to 'choose' between NATO enlargement and good relations with Russia" Ray (1997).

[46] Reading through texts from 1990s security in Europe gives the impression that states were no longer the primary actors of security and that security could be achieved through peaceful, non-military means, e.g., democratization (Büger and Villumsen 2007).

[47] His quote of course paraphrases Alexander Wendt (1992) who held that "Anarchy is what states make of it."

than by external material threats. These were massive changes. But the stake in the field—and hence the magnetic force that held the field together—remained the same: the power to define European security. The definition had just been so stable during the Cold War that we ceased to reflect on it: strategic balancing and military capital were parts of a misrecognized structure in the field and the dominant scientific paradigm—Realism—had contributed to upholding this state of affairs.

Conclusion

The paradigmatic case of European security in the 1990s had not been adequately explained by the two dominant strands of thought within IR: rationalism and reflectivism. Through a discussion of fields, agency, capital, and doxa, this article tried to formulate an "action framework" that offers a more compelling explanation and set a new agenda for the study of international relations. This new agenda challenged IR to pose empirical questions in a new way, and challenged a basic epistemological assumption that excluded science from being an object of study.

Concretely, I argued that in an "action framework" the concept of capital could be understood as working in three ways. First, different types of capital provided *points of access* to the field for different types of agency. If military capital was valued, states and alliances possessing military capital would be allowed to participate. If scientific capital became valued, scientific-type actors would be able to gain access. In this way, capital could be seen as an analytical lens for selecting agency and setting the boundary for participation in fields. This allowed for an analysis of practical patterns of interaction. Apart from serving as an entry point to the struggles in the field, capital functioned, secondly, as the most important criterion for defining an agent's position in the hierarchy in a field. Capital was a "weapon" or "power-base" that could be used in struggles in a particular field and determined the hierarchy in the field. Focusing on capital thus provided a prism through which to see the patterns of practice in the field and the boundaries surrounding it: The contours of the relevant types of agency appeared, and the central resources over which power struggles took place were brought to the fore. Thirdly, a discussion of the mobilization of capital in fields in which the taken-for-granted—the doxa—had been challenged was added because of the pivotal role ascribed to change in International Relations. In this way, the production process of the doxa came into focus.

The framework developed in this article let me shed light on processes in the European security field after the Cold War. Theory and practice were reconceptualized as types of agents in a power struggle that helped reshape doxic understandings in the field. Bourdieusian sociology thus helped redirect not only the empirical direction of research, but also posed the basic distinction between theory and practice as a research question: Social scientific knowledge was recast as a type of capital in the hands of agents and social science agents entered the struggles as agents in the European security field.

Apart from serving as an addendum to theorizing about theory and practice in IR, the discussion in the article also highlight the value of turning selection of agency and boundaries into empirical questions rather than offering them as a priori definitions. The default selection of states and security elites as practiced within mainstream IR

turned out to rely on doxic practices in European security prior to the end of the Cold War. The profound changes that the field underwent in the 1990s made it an anachronism to take this as a starting point for understanding practices in the field after the Cold War. Bourdieusian sociology thus holds the promise of significantly challenging IR in ways that will lead to new knowledge about the international. The framework for analysis put forward in this article sought to foster such a development.

Looking ahead, this new framework for analysis raises a set of questions. First, what are the relations between the national fields in Europe, the EU as a political field, and the security fields described by Leander (2005), Bigo (e.g., 2006), Pouliot (2010), Villumsen (2008), and Williams (2007)? Further, to what extent are social scientific actors (still) considered legitimate voices in international security? And how does this affect the way we do social science on security? The Bourdieusian framework requires that we ask difficult and empirically demanding questions. But with this framework in hand, IR will stand a better chance of fully grasping the symbolic violence and structures that govern the international.

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Dr. Trine Villumsen Berling is a postdoc researcher at the Centre for Advanced Security Theory (CAST) at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark. She holds a PhD in Political Science from the University of Copenhagen and has been a visiting researcher at the European University Institute in Florence, Italy, and the Graduate Institute for International and Development Studies in Geneva, Switzerland. Her main research interests concern the security science/practice nexus and the dilemmas this relationship creates. She is currently working on a project about the performance of security expertise in a number of European countries. Among others works, she is the author of "Science and Securitization. Objectivation, the authority of the speaker, and mobilization of scientific facts," *Security Dialogue, 42*(4–5) (2011), and the forthcoming monography *The International Political Sociology of Security: Rethinking Theory and Practice* (New International Relations), London: Routledge.