Denials ‘From Seabed to Space’: Assemblages of (In)Security and Denial in the Politics of Security

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Abstract
Despite critiques of denials broadly underlying Critical International Relations deconstructions of state, security and subjectivity, there is little explicit exploration of the ontological status of denial, and how denials operate in the politics of (in)security. Animated by the question, why and how web of actors and interests traversing the public and private spheres involved in the provision of security endure despite long-running critique, this article problematises = denials. An explicit theorisation of denial needs to be put centre stage in the study of security. Drawing on Dillon’s theorisation of the unstable duality of (in)security and synthesising it with a Deleuze and Guattarian assemblage approach, it theorises denial in two forms – denial of complicity and denial of the impossibility of security – as ontologically necessary for the politics of (in)security; then proposes that we scrutinise and expose assemblages of (in)security. These assemblages form, endure and expand, by thriving on denials of the impossibility of security and its attendant complicities; forming symbioses of denial traversing the public-private realms. Assemblages of (in)security adapt, expand, and propagate new technologies of (in)security, often ironically by responding to demands from critique. Without an assemblage-based thinking, we are methodologically ill-equipped to trace, expose and critique the politics of (in)security, without unwittingly partaking in denials sustaining it.

Keywords
denial, security, complicity, assemblage, critique

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Des dénis « du fond des océans jusqu’à l’espace » : agencements d’(in)sécurité et déni dans la politique de sécurité

Résumé
Bien que la critique des dénis sous-tende largement les déconstructions de l’État, de la sécurité et de la subjectivité dans les relations internationales critiques, le statut ontologique du déni et la manière dont les dénis opèrent dans la politique d’(in)sécurité sont très peu étudiés explicitement. Cet article problématisant les dénis, motivé par la question de savoir comment et pourquoi le réseau d’acteurs et d’intérêts des sphères publique et privée impliquées dans l’exercice de la sécurité perdure malgré les critiques de longue date. La théorisation explicite du déni doit occuper une place centrale dans l’étude de la sécurité. Partant de la théorie de la dualité instable de l’(in)sécurité formulée par Dillon, et synthétisant avec une approche deleuzienne et guattarienne de l’agencement, cet article théorise le déni sous deux formes : le déni de la complicité et le déni de l’impossibilité de la sécurité, présentés comme ontologiquement nécessaires à la politique d’(in)sécurité ; puis il se propose d’examiner et de mettre au jour les agencements d’(in)sécurité. Ces agencements se forment, se maintiennent et se développent en se nourrissant du déni de l’impossibilité de la sécurité et des complicités qui l’accompagnent ; ils forment des symbioses de déni qui traversent les domaines public et privé. Non sans ironie, c’est souvent en réponse aux demandes des critiques que les agencements d’(in)sécurité adaptent, développent et diffusent les nouvelles technologies d’(in)sécurité. Sans une pensée de l’agencement, nous sommes méthodologiquement mal équipés pour retracer, mettre à nu et critiquer la politique d’(in)sécurité sans participer involontairement aux dénis qui l’alimentent.

Mots-clés
deni, sécurité, agencements

Negar «desde el fondo del mar hasta el espacio»: Agenciamientos de (in)seguridad y negación en las políticas de seguridad

Resumen
A pesar de las críticas de la negación habitualmente presentes en las deconstrucciones del Estado, la seguridad y la subjetividad procedentes de las relaciones internacionales críticas, hay poca exploración explícita del estatus ontológico de la negación, y de cómo la negación opera en las políticas de (in)seguridad. Este artículo problematiza la negación, impulsado por la cuestión de por qué y cómo perdura la red de actores e intereses transversales a las esferas pública y privada implicada en la provisión de la seguridad, a pesar de esta crítica de larga data. Basándose en la teorización de Michael Dillon sobre la dualidad inestable de la (in)seguridad y sintetizándola con el enfoque de Gilles Deleuze y Félix Guattari sobre el agenciamiento, teoriza dos formas de negación —negación de la complicidad y negación de la imposibilidad de la seguridad— como ontológicamente necesarias para las políticas de (in)seguridad; a continuación, propone analizar y exponer los agenciamientos de (in)seguridad. Estos agenciamientos se forman, perduran y se expanden, alimentándose de la negación de la imposibilidad de la seguridad y en sus complicidades concomitantes; formando simbiosis de negación que atraviesan lo público y lo privado. Los agenciamientos de (in)seguridad se adaptan, se expanden y propagan nuevas tecnologías de (in)seguridad, a menudo, irónicamente, respondiendo a las demandas de la crítica. Sin un pensamiento basado en los agenciamientos estaremos mal equipados metodológicamente para rastrear, exponer y criticar las políticas de (in)seguridad sin participar involuntariamente en las negaciones que lo sostienen.

Palabras clave
negación, seguridad, agenciamientos
Introduction

[N]ations and peoples have an inalienable right to look after their own defence. . .if [we]. . .do not provide countries with means of defending themselves, we will see a proliferation of uncontrolled and unregulated arms sales free from oversight or inhibitions. . .[That] would be vastly irresponsible.¹

This statement was made by then-UK International Trade Secretary Liam Fox at the Defence and Security Equipment International (DSEI) arms fair in London in September 2017. It was within the long British government tradition of framing its arms exports as morally justifiable, while claiming stringent regulation and adherence to international law.² An extreme recent manifestation of this was Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt insisting it would be ‘morally bankrupt’ not to sell arms to Saudi Arabia.³ Both were responding to mounting anti-arms trade critique, including accusations of UK complicity in war crimes and the humanitarian disaster in Yemen through its arms sales to Saudi Arabia and other ‘repressive regimes’.⁴

Relatedly, campaigners have pointed to ‘revolving doors’ between government officials and the arms industry; and both activist and academic critique have lamented lack of transparency, accountability and oversight. What often unites critics are accusations of various complicities and exposing of web-like relationships across governmental and private actors. The notion of web-like relations presents in several heuristic frames: ‘military-industrial complex’; ‘revolving doors’; and ‘arms cycle’.⁵ However, as commentators lament with bewilderment, despite such critique, these webs grow in both scale and complexity.⁶

1. Liam Fox quoted in Ewen MacAskill, ‘Liam Fox Hails Britain’s Arms Exports at Opening of Weapons Trade Show’, The Guardian, 12 September 2017. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/sep/12/liam-fox-hails-britains-arms-exports-weapons-trade-show-london. Last accessed May 15, 2019.
2. See Anna Stavrianakis, ‘Legitimising Liberal Militarism: Politics, Law and War in the Arms Trade Treaty’, Third World Quarterly 37, no. 5 (2016): 840–65.
3. Jeremy Hunt, ‘Yemen Crisis Won’t be Solved by UK Arms Exports Halt’, Politico, 26 March 2019. Available at: https://www.politico.eu/article/conflict-war-un-yemen-crisis-wont-be-solved-by-uk-arms-exports-halt/. Last accessed May 15, 2019.
4. Jamie Doward, ‘British Arms Sales to Repressive Regimes Soar to £5bn since Election’, The Guardian, 10 September 2017. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/sep/09/arms-sales-repressive-regimes-saudi-arabia. Last accessed May 15, 2019.
5. For example, Isaiah Wilson III, “Providing for the Common Defense?” The Outsourcing of America’s National Security through the Commercial Sale of Arms and Arms Production’, Democracy and Security 1, no 1 (2005): 73–104; Eliza Egret, ‘The Revolving Door Between the Government & the Arms Trade’, Stop the War Coalition, 4 September 2017. Available at: http://www.stopwar.org.uk/index.php/news-comment/2720-the-revolving-door-between-the-government-the-arms-trade. Last accessed May 15, 2019; Rufan Jordi Rufanges, ‘The Arms Industry Lobby in Europe’, American Behavioral Scientist 60, no. 3 (2016): 305–20.
6. For example, Rupert Cornwell, ‘Ike was Right all Along: The Danger of the Military-industrial Complex’, The Independent, 17 January 2011. Available at: https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/ike-was-right-all-along-the-danger-of-the-military-industrial-complex-2186133.html. Last accessed December 30, 2021.
The wider problem animating this article, and the question often overlooked in public campaigns and scholarship, is: Why and how (i.e. through what mechanisms) do such webs endure and expand despite long-established critique? This problem is too multifaceted to be addressed here comprehensively. Instead, the article develops one entry point into it by problematising denials: critiques are most often inseparable from implicit or explicit accusations of complicity and their public denials by government and private industry. However, I propose to problematise much deeper denial that makes both such enunciations of denial, and the very possibility of the web-like public-private provision of security, possible.

Implicit critiques of denial underlie Critical Security Studies and poststructuralist and postcolonial International Relations (IR). Yet, the ontological status of denial, and how they operate in the politics of (in)security, have received little explicit theorisation. Neither are any of the implicit conceptions of denials adequate for such explication. This article contributes to Critical IR and Security Studies literature by theorising denial and exploring its mechanisms in the politics of security. Explicit theorisation of denial and its empirical exposure must be put centre stage in the study of security; while reckoning with its implications must inform a revised epistemology of critique in both scholarship and activism.

The rest of the article proceeds as follows. Section two first offers a critical review making explicit the often implicit usages of denial in Critical IR and elsewhere extracting a range of conceptions of denial. It then proposes that denial more fundamentally structures the politics of security than any of these conceptions of denial allow. It proceeds developing a theorisation of denial drawing on Dillon’s ‘unstable duality of (in)security’.7 What I argue to be two co-dependent forms of denials – denial of complicity and denial of impossibility of security – emerge as ontologically necessary for the politics of (in)security. Section three employs a Deleuze and Guattarian-inspired assemblage lens, as the most suited epistemological resource to theorise, explicate and critique what the article calls assemblages of (in)security. If Dillon helps theorise what denial is within a Western paradigm of security, Deleuze and Guattari’s assemblage theory serves a methodology to theorise how such denials can be traced in operation, and therefore how they can, and most importantly should not, be critiqued. Synthesising Dillon’s and Deleuze and Guattari’s theorisations, the section argues that we should scrutinise and expose assemblages of (in)security, i.e. heterogeneous elements, practices and ways of connecting traversing public and private terrains in ways that coalesce around the promise of security. It argues and demonstrates how these assemblages thrive on the twin ontological denials of security, the latter being their condition of possibility from formation, fortification/endurance to expansion. Section four further develops this argument through the exploratory example of the UK arms trade with Saudi Arabia. What we gain from an assemblage lens on denials is that it enables us to pose the question offered above in a new light: What sort of connecting, relationships and mechanisms make the endurance of the arms trade despite critique possible? Thereby, the section traces and makes visible assemblages of (in)security where denials operate through symbioses.

7. Michael Dillon, Politics of Security: Towards a Political Philosophy of Continental Thought (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 116, 121.
government denials forming mutually reinforcing relationships with denials by the arms industry. In turn, mapping and exposing ever-new ways of connecting in relation to critique and activism demonstrates how certain forms of critique unwittingly partake in and deepen denials. It becomes costly not to recognise the generative force of these denials; and to continue offering activist and scholarly critiques of security practices in ways that may unwittingly strengthen the denial upholding assemblages of (in)security.

The main contribution of the article is to Critical IR and Security Studies – through the explicit theorisation of denial’s ontological status in security; and to the field’s ongoing retheorisations of ‘security’. In light of this article, ‘security’ becomes the realm of the propagation of new symbioses, bringing ever-new actors into contact and arrangement. While ‘security’ was already theorised in critical literature as the realm of permanent threats, this article provides insight into the conditions of possibility and into how such permanent threats, and attendant ever-new technologies of security, are produced and justified – from seabed to space – despite, or rather in strong ontological relationality with, dominant forms of critique.

The article also contributes to the more specialised literature on the arms trade: unless the paradigmatic denials of security are confronted, otherwise well-intentioned critique demanding more transparency, accountability, or better-regulated arms trade, may help sustain assemblages of (in)security by demanding the delivery of the very promise of security whose denials had generated and made the assemblages thrive. This demands a revision of our epistemology of critique, informed by assemblage thinking. Thereby, more broadly, the article is a contribution to the on-going debate in Critical IR and Security Studies on the nature and strategies of critique. We must be able to recognise and trace denials in ways that make the ontology of denial developed herein (i.e. how it works and produces the outcomes we are concerned with) inform our epistemology of critique, i.e. how we can critique the politics of denial in security without fortifying the very operational sense propagating assemblages of (in)security. Several directions for future research are proposed at the end.

Theorising Denial in the Politics of (In)security

It is necessary to theorise two aspects of the concept of denial: first, what denial itself denotes – its ontological status in a wider theoretical and empirical analysis; and second, what it is that the denial of we are concerned with. The following two subsections aim to tackle each of these roughly in turn, while cognisant of the limits of separating the two. In the process, I draw out my specific conception of denial which I argue is most appropriate for an explication of the politics of (in)security, by problematising and theorising two co-dependent forms of denial – denial of complicity and denial of the impossibility of security – as ontologically necessary for the politics of (in)security.

Theorising Denial

Poststructuralist and postcolonial treatments of ‘sovereignty’, ‘subjectivity’, ‘security’, ‘state’, and ‘empire’ broadly amount to implicit critiques of what may be called constitutive denial rationalities. Thus, when arguing for ‘national security’ requiring exclusion,
forgetting of that which would destabilise state identity,\(^8\) such studies implicitly render denial as constitutive of national security. Denial is also implicit in critical surveys of sovereignty and subjectivity;\(^9\) and in postcolonial studies exposing Western amnesia on race and constitutive ‘encounters between the West and the rest’.\(^10\) In case of postcolonial ‘amnesia’, the status of denial, while implicit, becomes functionally central: it sustains institutionalised mechanisms of erasure and forgetting (from education to migration) denying relational histories and unequal distribution of power emerging from colonial extraction. In turn, directly referring to ‘denial’, Chandler exposes an ‘Empire in denial’: here, the West is in denial of the power relation in state-building interventions that off-load ‘failure’ onto the locals. However, ‘denial’ itself is loosely and varyingly conceptualised – from broader organising logics of concealment/disguising (the power relation), to evasion (from responsibility); to the effects of such logics – depriving the locals their rights/sovereignty.\(^11\)

More recently, a special issue of Millennium on ‘Failure and Denial’ offered compelling interventions.\(^12\) Engaging resilience debates, Chandler and Joseph propose failure and denial as means for global governance:\(^13\) resilience-based Western development and state-building projects rely on denial of responsibility for failures. However, denial itself remains under-engaged and conceptualised. Given that such governance is done ‘by means of responsibilisation. . . [of] poorer people and countries’,\(^14\) we may extract the status of denial here as an enabling mechanism: it enables resilience assumptions and institutions of monitoring that convert shunning of historical responsibilities into governing mechanisms. Others in the special issue are concerned more with ‘failure’, or else denial inherent in IR as a discipline.

In debates on climate denialism, recent IR interventions explore interlinked forms of denial, e.g. new authoritarian and right-wing movements merging climate denialism, ‘petrocultures’, racism and misogyny. Patriarchal white-supremacist order and fossil fuel industry are mutually sustained beyond what is immediately denied, i.e. climate change.\(^15\) Thus, the status of denial here may be said to be that of a connective across domains.

8. David Campbell, ‘Violence, Justice and Identity in the Bosnian Conflict’, in Sovereignty and Subjectivity, eds. Jenny Edkins, Nalini Persram and Veronique Pin-Fat (London: Lynne Rienner, 1999), 21–38, 131.
9. For example, Jenny Edkins, Nalini Persram and Veronique Pin-Fat, eds., Sovereignty and Subjectivity (London: Lynne Rienner, 1999).
10. Sankaran Krishna, ‘Race, Amnesia, and the Education of International Relations’, Alternatives: Global, Local, Political 26, no. 4 (2001), 401–24.
11. David Chandler, Empire in Denial (London: Pluto Press, 2006), 31, 11.
12. Special Conference Issue on ‘Failure and Denial in World Politics’, Millennium: Journal of International Studies 44, no. 3 (2016).
13. David Chandler, ‘How the World Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Failure: Big Data, Resilience and Emergent Causality’, Millennium: Journal of International Studies 44, no. 3 (2016): 391–410; Jonathan Joseph, ‘Governing through Failure and Denial: The New Resilience Agenda’, Millennium: Journal of International Studies, 44, no. 3 (2016): 370–90.
14. Ibid.
15. Cara Daggett, ‘Petro-masculinity: Fossil Fuels and Authoritarian Desire’, Millennium: Journal of International Studies 47, no. 1 (2018): 25–44, 27.
Substantively most related to the current article, in a recent study on Britain’s arms trade, Stavrianakis explores ‘non-knowledge’ with important implications for engaging, albeit still implicitly, the notion of denial. Here, she argues, an institutionalised process of risk assessments for arms exports actively produces non-knowledge about risks of violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) at the destination of export despite overwhelming evidence (e.g. on Yemen). Non-knowledge is produced through ‘institutional arrangements for assessing risk. . .[that] structure out certain key concerns [and sources of evidence] before the process of risk assessment even begins’. 16 This active production of non-knowledge generates a ‘regime of recklessness’ – pretence of caring by adopting risk as the measure of export licence, while not caring about the actual harm being done. Non-knowledge here refers to ‘the making of things to be not-known precisely so the state does not have to take them into account’. 17 Thus, we may extract an implicit status of denial: non-knowledge in Stavrianakis’ ‘regime of recklessness’ is not conceptually the same as a wider constitutive rationale of denial, nor mere direct denial of knowledge, but is the process of rendering certain knowledges – concerns, evidence, and by implication accusations of complicity – deniable. It is such endlessly produced and reshaped deniability, rather than non-knowledge as such, that makes the regime of recklessness operate.

Elsewhere, most directly, denials have been explored in Genocide Studies and in some IR interventions on genocide. Thus, Akçam reveals how the perpetration of the Armenian Genocide and its denial have been formative of the Turkish Republic by institutionalising denial in the Constitution and Criminal law. 18 Denial here is both constitutive forgetting in national myth-making and a practice of law-making and governance. In turn, contributing to IR debates on ontological security, Zarakol links state denial of historical crimes to the need for ‘a consistent sense of “self”’. 19 Thus, denial is a psychosocial mechanism for Japan’s grappling with its postcolonial condition and relations with the ‘West’, and a means of relating in the international.

Cohen’s seminal sociological study conceives ‘organised denial’ as ‘initiated, structured and sustained by massive resources of the modern state’: cover-up of political violence can lead to ‘entire re-writing of history’, and enunciatively to literal denials of genocide and other forms of violence (‘It did not happen’), or ‘interpretive denials’ (‘it was something else’). 20 Cohen also tackles ‘micro-cultures of denial within. . .organizations’: these ‘depend on forms of concerted ignorance, different levels of the system keeping themselves uninformed about what is happening elsewhere’. 21 Similar to

16. Anna Stavrianakis, ‘Requiem for Risk: Non-knowledge and Domination in the Governance of Weapons Circulation’, International Political Sociology 14, 2 (2020): 233–51, 238.
17. Ibid., emphasis added.
18. Taner Akçam, From Empire to Republic: Turkish Nationalism and the Armenian Genocide (London and New York: Zed Books, 2004).
19. Ayşe Zarakol, ‘Ontological (In)security and State Denial of Historical Crimes: Turkey and Japan’, International Relations 24, no. 1 (2010): 3.
20. Stanley Cohen, States of Denial: Knowing about Atrocities and Suffering (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), 9–10.
21. Ibid., 11.
Stavrianakis’ active production of non-knowledge, but different in actualisation, here micro-cultures of denial produce non-knowledge – deniability – by not structuring out inconvenient sources and evidence, but by structuring in certain disconnects, hierarchies and procedures traversing institutional levels and actors. Thus, Cohen conceptualises denial both as practices of state repression, cover-up and reinterpretation, and as organisational designs (ways of structuring and relations). In turn, Kuper has argued how genocide denial, rather than aberration, is constitutive of the very international order, built into norms purporting to prevent and punish this crime – starkly visible in the omission of states as key perpetrators of genocide from the UN Genocide Convention definition.22

In my recent contribution on genocide denial, I argue for a shift from the conventional focus on a post factum denial to what I theorise as ‘generative denials’, i.e. denials generating the conditions of possibility for the unfolding of genocide itself. I explore this in relation to the Armenian Genocide by Ottoman Turkey at the start of the 20th century: here, several forms of constitutive denials – denial-as-forgetting (of past imperial violence), denial-as-justification (justifying violence while denying wrongdoing based on entitlement to such violence) – coalesced and culminated in the genocide of its Armenian subjects, as a resolution to the Ottoman grappling of its relations with Europe and its renegotiation of sovereignty. Denial here is ‘the condition of possibility for the very production of sovereign power requiring subjectivisation-through-denial, i.e. subjects of denial’.23 The notions of denial as generative and of subjectivisation-through-denial are useful resources I return to below, when theorising denial more specifically in the politics of (in)security.

The above critical review made explicit the often implicit usages of denial in Critical IR, linking them to some of the more explicit studies of denial in IR and elsewhere. A range of conceptions of denial emerge – the ontological status of denial from abstract meta-logics of silence and forgetting constitutive of nation, state, identity; to denial as active practices of legitimation, institution-building, law-making and governance; to denial as generative rather than post factum. Below I argue that denial much more fundamentally structures the politics of security than any of the wider implicit or explicit conceptions of denial unpacked above allow explicating. An explicit theorisation of denial needs to be put centre stage in the study of security. In order to explicate the enduring public-private relations in the provision of ‘security’, we need to uncover the generative capacities of denial.

However, what is the denial of that we are concerned with in the politics of security? I now turn to building a theorisation of denial and its ontological status in the politics of (in)security explored in two forms – denial of complicity and denial of the impossibility of security.

22. Leo Kuper, Genocide: Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 161.
23. Tatevik Mnatsakanyan, ‘Sovereignty, Subjectivity, Denial: The Armenian Genocide, Generative Denials and Postgenocide Politics in Contemporary Turkey’, in Postgenocide: Interdisciplinary Reflections on the Effects of Genocide, ed. Klejda Mulaj (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021).
The Twin Denials of (In)security: Denial of Complicity and Denial of the Impossibility of Security

The first proposition here is that security ontologically relies on the continuous denial of complicity in the production of the very risk-threats it purports to be securing against.\textsuperscript{24} Interpretations of complicity are subject to debates both in legal practice and legal philosophy. Such debates often remain within the long-standing Kantian conception of responsibility, complicity being dependent on individual intentionality and linear causality.\textsuperscript{25} As legal philosopher Kutz has argued, they reflect a compartmentalised view in Western law and ethics that prevents us from recognising our ‘mediated [non-linear] relations to harm’.\textsuperscript{26} Vis-à-vis our concern here, in practice, such conceptions of complicity are conducive to denial (e.g. ‘we did not cause the Yemen crisis’); while in theory they are inimical to explicating collective complicity. Recent engagements on complicity, while re-directing analytical attention from narrowly legalistic and individualistic to a structural understanding, still remain concerned with ‘“Western” individuals’ ability to recognise and avoid their complicity in wrongdoing’ via such structures.\textsuperscript{27}

A concern with complicity, albeit not articulated as such, is also implicit in debates on ‘the sociology of strategic unknowns’ – ‘the multifaceted ways that ignorance can be harnessed as a resource, enabling knowledge to be deflected, obscured, concealed or magnified in a way that increases the scope of what remains unintelligible’.\textsuperscript{28} As McGoey notes, such politics mobilises ambiguity and denies inconvenient facts as ‘the most indispensable tool for . . .exonerating oneself from blame’.\textsuperscript{29}

The denial of complicity that I am concerned with here is much more than denial of blame through such strategic unknowns or the politics of ignorance. Instead, denial of complicity here is a pervasive and paradigmatic rationale and the very structure of the promise sustaining the politics of (in)security. Through what may be called spatio-temporal externalisation, security actors render risk-threats – from ‘terrorism’ to an ‘increasingly insurgent Russia’ – as exogenous to the actor’s spatial reality (‘it strikes us from the outside’), and to its temporal and causal imagination (‘it is not of our making’). Spatiality here is not physical territory (risk-threats can spring-up within ‘us’), but the spatial imaginary (‘nation’, ‘the West’, ‘our civilisation’); while temporal externalisation is denial of the emergent non-linear effects of past pursuits of ‘security’. Decades of such externalisation have obscured the complex

\textsuperscript{24} Given the problematic definitional distinction between “threat” and “risk” and their oft-interchangeable use I will refer to hyphenated “risk-threats” to denote a socially and politically determined continuum. Anna Hammerstadt and Ingrid Boas, ‘National Security Risks? Uncertainty, Austerity and Other Logics of Risk in the UK Government’s National Security Strategy’, \textit{Cooperation and Conflict} 50, no. 4 (2015): 476.

\textsuperscript{25} Christopher Kutz, \textit{Complicity: Ethics and Law for a Collective Age} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 2.

\textsuperscript{27} Afxentiis Afxentiou, Robin Dunford and Michael Neu, eds., \textit{Exploring Complicity: Concept, Cases and Critique} (London and New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), 3.

\textsuperscript{28} Linsey McGoey, ‘Strategic Unknowns: Towards a Sociology of Ignorance’, \textit{Economy and Society} 41, no. 1 (2012): 1–16, 1.

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 3.
non-linear co-production of today’s ‘risk-threats’: from Cold War confrontation reliant on re-iterative externalisations and thus denials of complicity in the co-production of the other side, to externalisations of threats such as ‘Al-Qaeda’ in denial of complicity in Cold War arms transfers, and weaponising of ‘Islamic fundamentalism’ fuelling conflict; from the 1990s US Revolution in Military Affairs and the NATO operation in Kosovo triggering a new arms race, and virtual/virtuous war acquiring a ‘constitutive capacity of its own’, to more recent externalisations of risk-threats such as ‘Iran’ and ‘ISIS’ obscuring complicities arising out of ‘war on terror’. The logic of externalisation itself – often implicit, assumed, structuring – constitutes the denial of complicity. These externalisations and ensuing security practices have compounded realities that are then recalled afresh as exogenous, out there (‘not of our making’), to justify tougher measures, budget increases and strategy enhancements to ‘catch up with’, adapt to, or become more ‘agile’ in face of ‘new instabilities/uncertainties’. Thus, denial of complicity, by dint of being pervasively normalised, is generative – structuring of institutions and relations that enable further security provisions and practices.

However, while resorting to strategic non-knowledge (e.g. ‘new uncertainties’), such denial of complicity through externalising of risk-threats nonetheless relies on knowledge as the ontological foundation of Western politics; just as the strategic non-knowledge of the regime of recklessness described by Stavrianakis can be argued to be still based on knowledge. This is because they deny future complicity (e.g. in Saudi Arabia’s possible use of weapons to violate IHL) by equating ‘not enough knowledge of risk’ with sufficient knowledge to assume compliance of the receiving state and claim legal and moral high ground. These claims would not have been possible without denial of complicity (externalisations) as conceptualised above.

Hence, denial theorised in this article is the fundamental organising logic of security and not one of its strategies or practices as in the politics of ignorance or non-knowledge. This logic then may, and does, enable strategies and practices that combine, prioritise or else oscillate between knowledge claims and strategic non-knowledge. Put otherwise, the denial of complicity underlying security is the rationale that provides the wider condition of possibility for these knowledge and non-knowledge practices. The practices of strategic ignorance, including Stavrianakis’ regime of recklessness; and both the institutional ‘structuring out of certain knowledges’ described by her, and the structuring in of organisational designs promoting ignorance described by Cohen, become some of the mediums to uphold the necessary denial – denial indispensable to security.

However to understand why denial of complicity holds such generative force, we must explore a much deeper denial that underlies the very politics of security – denial of the impossibility of security.

30. C. Smith, ‘Light Weapons and Ethnic Conflict in South Asia’, in Lethal Commerce: The Global Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, eds. J. Boutwell, M.T. Klare and L. Reed (Cambridge: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1995), 61–80; John Cooley, Unholy Wars, Afghanistan, America and International Terrorism (London: Pluto Press, 2001).
31. Paul Virilio, Strategy of Deception (London and New York: Verso, 2007), 4; James Der Derian, ‘Virtuous War/Virtual Theory’, International Affairs 76, no. 4 (2000): 771–88; 772.
32. Stavrianakis, ‘Requiem for Risk’.
33. Cohen, States of Denial.
Such denial is inherent in the ‘unstable duality of (in)security’ theorised by Dillon.\(^{34}\) The duality here is not the dialectical opposition where security is defined against insecurity and can be achieved by transcending/mastering insecurity (the modernist promise). The unstable duality of (in)security reveals precisely the impossibility of the delivery of such promise – the very dependence of ‘secur\(\)ing\(^{3}\) as process) upon the continuous non-fulfilment of making ‘secure’ (as fixed condition).\(^{35}\) Such paradigm finds an infinite resource in the non-fulfilment of security to continue promising security and thus engaging in the process of secur\(\)ing.\(^{3}\)

Subsequently, we can argue that this promise simultaneously requires the denial of its very impossibility. It requires denial that the promise has produced technologies and imaginaries ‘profoundly threaten[ing] human being’\(^{3}\), denial that secur\(\)ing is unavoidably violence onto that which it purports to secure, the violent production of the very subjects of security: ‘securing is an assault. . .[since] for something to be secured it must be acted upon and changed, forced to undergo some transformation’.\(^{37}\) Moreover, we may argue that the subject of security is birthed by the very denial of the impossibility of security: the promise of security depends on the concealment of its continuous non-fulfilment of ‘making secure’, just as the production of sovereign subjectivities depends on the concealment of the contingency of sovereignty itself.\(^{38}\) The promise of security relies on the production of subjectivities that deny the impossibility of security; thus requiring subjects of denial. Hence, the denial of the impossibility of security becomes ontologically necessary for the very politics of (in)security.

In turn, this denial is dependent on denial of complicity. To recall Dillon, securing is an assault on ‘the very thing which [it] claims to have preserved. . .[d]estruction, disfiguration, violence, transformation and change. . .that is how the thing to be secured is translated into the object susceptible to be secured’.\(^{39}\) However, this cannot be conceived without the other side of this ‘assault’: the technologies and violence that securing the subject of denial entails simultaneously co-produce – in non-linear and mediated ways proposed by Kutz’s notion of complicity\(^{40}\) – that which the security subject is being secured against, thus becoming complicit. Security ontologically relies on the denial of the impossibility of security and simultaneously on the continuous denial of complicity in the production of the very risk-threats it purports to be securing against. Thus, the co-dependent denials – denial of complicity and denial of the impossibility of security – are the paradigmatic denials of the politics of security.

\(^{34}\) Dillon, Politics of Security.
\(^{35}\) Ibid., 116, 121.
\(^{36}\) Ibid., 10.
\(^{37}\) Ibid., 122.

\(^{38}\) William Connolly, ‘The Complexity of Sovereignty’, in Giorgio Agamben: Sovereignty and Life, eds. Matthew Calarco and Steven DeCaroli (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 23–42.
\(^{39}\) Ibid., 122.

\(^{40}\) Kutz, Complicity.
Indeed, the promise of security itself has undergone qualitative change with the rise of ‘risk’ as technology of governance. As Dillon contends, the biopolitical characterisation of life as emergent and radically contingent leads to different form of securing: if contingency constitutes life itself, life cannot be secured from or against contingency, but must be secured through it – exposed to, rather than shielded, from it. It is through this rationale that the subject is called upon ‘to secure itself. . .by experimental participation’, as practitioners’ mottos increasingly demonstrate: ‘Get more control by controlling less’. Radical contingency is then commodified by regulating and profitably exploiting risk technologies that ‘underwrite security’: the promise of security becomes transactional, offering ‘to trade in one’s exposure to contingency’, while enacting ‘a distribution of exposure. . .[and] of material benefits’. Dillon concludes that paradoxically ‘risk satisfies the desire for security. . .massively increasing exposure to contingency. . .[and] the ways in which everything is open to being addressed, valued and measured in terms of everything else’.

These changes – not a shift from, but coexisting with, conventional rationales of security – have important consequences for our theorisation of security’s paradigmatic denials. The emphasis on emergence itself inheres adaptation of denial of complicity: since things are emergent, subject to radical contingency (a claim closely linked to growing discourses on complexity), then we are not complicit. Indeed, ‘global uncertainty and complexity’ have often been recalled by Western governments and by the global capitalist interest both to justify further intervention and the production of security technologies, and to deny complicity in the non-linear production of the risk-threats they purport to be addressing. However, in light of Dillon’s transactional risk technologies and the denial theorised in this article, it becomes clear that the promise of security is not merely the endless securing while denying the impossibility of being secured. The revised promise of security calls upon the subject of security to share the responsibility for their exposure to contingency and future prospects of complicit outcomes by weighing them against other such outcomes. Thus, we are often asked to trade one possible complicity with another (to be explored below): this transacting in complicities still constitutes denial of complicity by governments and their private partners because the subject of security is called upon to carry the moral burden of failure.

### Assemblages of (In)security, Denial, Critique

However, how do we trace and explicate such politics of denial, as well as make visible and importantly critique it without unwittingly reproducing or strengthening the rationales of denial? This section first contends that without an assemblage-based thinking we are methodologically ill-equipped to trace, expose as well as critique denial in the politics of (in)security: it draws on Deleuze and Guattari to theorise what I call assemblages of (in)security. If Dillon allowed theorising that denial is fundamentally constitutive of...

41. Michael Dillon, ‘Underwriting Security’, Security Dialogue 39, no. 2–3 (2008): 309–32, 314.
42. Ibid., 322.
43. Ibid., 326.
44. Ibid.
the politics of (in)security and why this is the case; Deleuze and Guattari-inspired assemblage thinking provides further ontological resources to theorise and trace how this is the case (i.e. what some of the empirical mechanisms of denial are), and importantly, epistemological resources for critique (i.e. how we may know/trace and critique the politics of denial). Denial as theorised above becomes generative of the very mechanisms and practices that enable not only the assemblage formation, but also its endurance in face of most common forms of critique; as well as its further expansion. An assemblage thinking becomes indispensable to tracing and exposing precisely this process, and the integral part played by critique therein.

**Assemblages of (In)security**

Assemblages of (in)security are here conceived as amalgam of entities and relations variously coming together in both the promise of security and the purported delivery of securing – from government departments (defence, trade, science and education) to private arms producing companies, to their industry associations, public relations (PRs) and lobbyists, to public and private institutions involved in weapons and security technology research and production including of components, apps and algorithms; as well as knowledge production justifying such weapons, or helping their acquisitions appear ethically acceptable.

However, what do we gain by examining these actors and relations as assemblages? Deleuze and Guattari conceive of an assemblage as an arrangement (fr. *agencement*) of heterogeneous elements that rejects ‘unity in favor of multiplicity, and. . .essence in favor of events’.45 Rather than closed systems with internal relations and fixed essence, ‘assemblages are. . .defined solely by their external relations of composition, mixture, and aggregation’,46 and ‘modes of expansion, propagation’.47 An assemblage is not a thing, but the continuous *coming together of elements to ‘establish liaisons, relations between them’, often crucially through new ways of connecting, institutions or behaviour.*48

Deleuze and Guattari caution against asking what an assemblage is, but rather what it *does.*49 Moreover, they compel us to ask a backwards question: given a certain event/output, what type of assemblage was *capable of producing it?*50 This question is in turn inseparable from their concern with durability and change. What Deleuze and Guattari call ‘the politics of the assemblage’,51 i.e. what it does and

45. Thomas Nail, ‘What Is an Assemblage?’ *SubStance* 46, no. 1, issue 142 (2017): 21–37, 23.
46. Ibid.
47. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 239; Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 2010).
48. Gilles Deleuze and C. Parnet, *Dialogues*, trans. H. Tomlinson and B. Habberjam (London: The Athlone Press, 1987), 69.
49. Nail, ‘What Is an Assemblage?’ 24.
50. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 3.
51. Ibid., 33.
how it works, can only be explicated through tracing its durability and change. The theorisation here, too, is concerned not with what assemblages of (in)security are, but how they work. Below, it becomes clear that this ‘how’-question cannot be fruitfully posed without tracing denials: the ontology of assemblages of (in)security becomes intelligible only in conjunction with an explication of denials. Conversely, denials of (in)security cannot be fruitfully traced, and in the final concern critiqued, without resources afforded by an assemblage thinking.

The assemblage lens employed here is conceived contra certain limiting assumptions/misconceptions common in secondary literature: thus, Buchanan cautions against misplaced commitment to ‘multiplicity’ as complete indeterminacy or contingency. While assemblages are heterogeneous and contingent, what they produce is not: an assemblage always tends towards coherence.52 While heterogeneous, assemblages have what Buchanan calls an ‘operational sense’.53 Moreover, and importantly for the current concern, the assemblage lens draws attention to the continuous encounters of assemblages with their ‘milieu of exteriority’: they form and adapt via constantly (re)establishing liaisons and inventing relations in exchange with such milieu. This important point compels us to scrutinise critique as part of the exteriority of the assemblages of (in)security as indispensable to understanding how assemblages of (in)security form, endure, change, and produce certain outcomes.

Assemblages, according to Deleuze and Guattari, have three features: their conditions of relations (the abstract machine), their elements (the concrete assemblage), and their agents (personae).55 The abstract machine denotes the conditions of possibility for the assemblage, i.e. the set of relations that hold the given elements together and make them meaningfully related.56 In case of assemblages of (in)security, among others, the relations conditioning dedicated sections within trade ministries promoting arms trade – and the very idea of their possibility – are part of such abstract machine. The concrete assemblage then, i.e. the set of elements of an assemblage, are the heterogeneous actors and institutions described above: these are neither fixed nor finite and are in constant shift and re-assemblage. The agents/personae are ‘the collective subject of an assemblage, . . . that connect the concrete elements together according to their abstract relations’.57

In turn, Deleuze and Guattari conceive of four ‘types’ of assemblages or socio-political machines: Territorial, State, Capitalist and Nomadic.58 Territorial assemblages ‘divide the world into coded segments’. . . (‘codes of kinship, codes of worship’, etc.); while State assemblages arrange relations hierarchically: the State is ‘an apparatus of capture’ (of populations, commodities or commerce) through (over)coding, i.e. inscribing them with

52. Ian Buchanan, ‘Assemblage Theory, or, the Future of an Illusion’, *Deleuze Studies* 11, no. 3 (2017): 457–74, 458, 461.
53. Buchanan, ‘Assemblage Theory’, 463.
54. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 361.
55. Nail, ‘What Is an Assemblage?’ 24.
56. Ibid., 25.
57. Ibid., 27.
58. Ibid. Cf Ian Buchanan, ‘Gilles Deleuze’, in *Histories of Violence: Post-War Critical Thought*, eds. Brad Evans and Terrell Carver (London: Zed Books, 2017), 107–23, 118–19.
significations submitting them to state regulation.\textsuperscript{59} Conversely, the Capitalist assemblage relies on constant decoding: if the State, redistributes coded flows along hierarchised lines, capitalism operates through capturing and evacuating flows of previously established meanings; then commodifies them through imposing the logic of capital.\textsuperscript{60}

However, any actual assemblage works through a mixture of these types of machines.\textsuperscript{61} In turn, this involves asking: ‘how is this arrangement of things justified. . .legitimated, what makes it seem right and proper?’ The assemblage thus becomes the way of connecting, that has a certain logic or ‘operational sense’ producing certain outcomes or preventing their emergence.\textsuperscript{62}

In Deleuze and Guattari’s assemblage thinking, debtor-creditor relations are formative of the State. Here, social relations are arranged hierarchically, while debt is rendered infinite: tributes to the state can never be fully paid;\textsuperscript{63} ‘the debt becomes a debt of existence. . .of the subjects themselves’.\textsuperscript{64} It is here that Dillon’s theorisation on security meets Deleuze and Guattari. It, too, implies infinite debt: the promise of securing, given its non-fulfilment, is an infinite process simultaneously dependent on the denial of its infinity (impossibility); thus an infinite debt to security providers. This is what creates a new way of connecting (agencement) in assemblages of (in)security, becoming their operational sense and, simultaneously, unlimited resource for securing.

To make this more intelligible, we must consider how such denials operate by traversing the four types identified above. Clarifying the assemblages on (in)security vis-à-vis the notion of the ‘war machine’ becomes due here. Deleuze and Guattari theorise how a certain instantiation of the nomadic assemblage type – what they call the ‘war machine’ – has been formative of the State and is in constant change and relation with it. Being historically and conceptually prior to any actualised state, it is a type of relation to space, movement and connecting. This ‘nomadic invention’ exploits movement to escape capture and centralisation/hierarchisation.\textsuperscript{65} Rather than actual wars, its objective is maintaining smooth (unhierarchised) space, preventing State emergence/capture. In a long process capturing flows, the State has appropriated the war machine itself to create the State military.\textsuperscript{66} Today, the two movements (appropriation by and escape from the State) have become indistinguishable: capitalism has integrated global financial, industrial, and military technologies, leading to pervasive militarisation of states, and unlimited wars on omnipresent threats and permanent terror.\textsuperscript{67} The global war machine has appropriated the

\textsuperscript{59} Deleuze and Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, 479.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., 226; 449; 452–53.
\textsuperscript{61} Buchanan, ‘Assemblage Theory’, 472.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., 463.
\textsuperscript{63} Buchanan, ‘Gilles Deleuze’, 118–19.
\textsuperscript{64} Deleuze and Guattari, Anti-Oedipus, 197–8.
\textsuperscript{65} Deleuze and Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, 222-23; 351–422; Paul Patton, Conceptual Politics and the War-Machine in “Mille Plateaux””, SubStance, 13, no 3/4 (Issue 44-45): 61–80, 72.
\textsuperscript{66} Julian Reid, ‘Deleuze’s War Machine: Nomadism Against the State’, Millennium: Journal of International Studies 32, no 1 (2003): 57–85, 61.
\textsuperscript{67} Deleuze and Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, 466–7; Sibertin-Blanc Guillaume, (trans. Daniel Richter) ‘The War Machine, The Formula, and the Hypothesis’: Deleuze and Guattari as Readers of Clausewitz. Theory & Event 13, no 3 (2010): N_A.
State, ‘tak[ing] charge of its aim, worldwide order,. . .and assum[ing] increasingly wider political functions’. However, while ‘war machine’ describes a type of relations between State and nomadic assemblage as ideal types, assemblages of (in)security are concrete configurations of actors, relations and practices traversing ideal types of assemblages, upheld by the very appropriation of security’s promise and its twin paradigmatic denials.

These assemblages of (in)security sustain themselves through movements of both escape from the State (regulation) and appropriation of the unstable duality of security and its attendant denials, thus traversing the Capitalist, State and Nomadic assemblage types. They operate through a double movement: decoding and commodification of security (hence – the recent proliferation of outsourcing security functions to private firms justified by the logic of ‘value for money’); and simultaneously re-encoding. Re-encoding occurs through private actors assigning meanings to services and technologies by incorporating the promise of security and its attendant denials, through e.g. lobbying, influencing research and knowledge production, self-promotion, and responses to critique. Deleuze and Guattari had argued that capitalism relies on constant decoding: social and state codes still work but ‘require only our obedience, not our belief’. However, the above suggests, and the illustrations below demonstrate, that private actors involved in security do require our belief, already in the promise of being secured. Thus, the much-critiqued expansion of the arms trade, and the increasingly new ways of private actors’ involvement in security operate not through decoding alone (commodification through emptying of meaning), but crucially by re-coding – through the appropriated promise of security and its attendant denials. In promising infinite securing, private actors in such relation render themselves infinite creditors akin to the State.

In assemblages of (in)security, the twin denials become the binding-together of elements coalescing around the promise of security, and profiting from its infinite ‘delivery’. Thus, the twin denials of security become the operational sense for assemblages of (in)security around which multiplicity of actors and practices coalesce.

And this is where the ontological insights drawn from Deleuze and Guattari translate into epistemological tools: if denials as theorised above fundamentally structuring Dillon’s unstable duality of (in)security have become the operational sense – the way of connecting and coalescing – of various private and public actors and practices around the promise of security, then we must be able to recognise and trace denials in ways that make the assemblage ontology, along with the ontology of denial developed above (i.e. how it works and produces the outcomes we are concerned with), inform our epistemology of critique, i.e. how we can critique the politics of denial in security without fortifying the very operational sense propagating assemblages of (in)security.

### UK Arms Sales to Saudi Arabia: Symbioses of Promise and Denial

This section continues the discussion through the example of the UK’s arms sales to Saudi Arabia. Rather than comprehensive case study, this illustrative and exploratory

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68. Ibid., 421.
69. Buchanan, ‘Gilles Deleuze’, 120.
example serves to illustrate how the above-theorised notion of denial and its role in the assemblages of (in)security help explicate empirical problems and situations; and also serves a via media for continued theoretical exploration. The section unpacks dynamics around the UK arms sales to Saudi Arabia by demonstrating a) a growing symbiosis of denials across government and private arms industry; b) the appropriations of security’s paradigmatic denials by private actors, and c) how this assemblage of (in)security adapts and endures in relation to critique. This was chosen as a suitable example for the following reasons. The UK arms sales to Saudi Arabia have been a theme of controversy for decades while becoming most ‘overtly politicized’ since the latter’s involvement in Yemen since 2015, attracting accusations of UK complicity in Saudi Arabia’s violations of IHL by NGOs, campaigners and journalists. The case is also given a lot of prevalence and centrality in the narratives and strategies by anti-arms campaigners; while their accusations of complicity have been most publicly and vehemently denied by the UK government and arms producers. And yet, despite such overt politicisation and visible public exchange, the deeper basis – the conditions of possibility – for such public (articulated) denials, and the role of critique therein, is least understood. This is evidenced by continued astonishment at the on-going arms sales despite all evidence of violations and critique by journalists and scholars. Thus, it is chosen as a most publicly visible case, and ‘most likely’ case of the structuring status of denial. Conversely, at the end of this section, I briefly touch on the example of US development of marine organisms (e.g. dolphins, microbes) for military purposes as a least publicly visible example to reflect on some of the implications of the above theorisations and arguments for future research – to explore how (in)security’s paradigmatic denials, as well as adaptation in relation to critique, may be present in the least visible and least likely of places.

**Symbioses of Denial**

The UK arms sales to Saudi Arabia have been extensively scrutinised both by campaigners and scholars; and basic background will not be reproduced here. Suffice it to recall the problematisation posed at the start, namely, why (through what mechanisms) has the arms sales continued despite vehement critique by campaigners and scholars? In light of the above theorisation, we can return anew to this question: instead of asking why arms trade and related public-private webs of relations continue despite concerted long-term critique, we should more specifically ask: What sort of assemblage is capable of producing such outcomes? In turn, this question involves asking: ‘how is this arrangement of things justified. . .legitimated, what makes it seem right and proper?’

The main argument in this analysis is that an assemblage of (in)security makes possible the continued arms sales to Saudi Arabia because it has formed, continues to operate, as well as adjusts/adapts in relation to critique, precisely by making the paradigmatic denials of (in)security theorised above its primary operational sense. This first of all requires the appropriations of the promise of security by private actors.

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70. Stavrianakis, ‘Requiem to Risk’.
71. Buchanan, ‘Assemblage Theory’, 463.
Appropriations of the promise of security here are found chained together across actors and contexts forming *symbioses* – here understood as merging/aligning of institutional mechanisms, functions and rationales; as well as enunciations across public-private domains striving for coherence, thus mutually fortifying the public and private entities’ responses to critique. Such symbiosis in terms of mechanisms, functions and rationale is salient between commercial arms industries and governments/military of arms producing and exporting states, such as the UK and the US. While these governments claim to depend on the arms industry for updating their defence capabilities at reduced cost of ownership, in turn, to make their business financially viable, the industry is dependent on these governments for deals in foreign markets. Both claim that only if the home governments assist in lucrative trade deals and sustain such foreign markets, can the arms industry provide them with often-subsidised weaponry/technology and reinvest in research and production. In the UK, this bargain is delivered through the Department for International Trade’s Defence and Security Organisation (DIT DSO) licensing and promoting deals through arms fairs and other channels. This economic justification is often deployed in conjunction with justifications invoking the provision of local jobs. In turn, both justifications are inseparable from the imperative of ‘fighting terrorism’. Thus, former UK Prime Minister Theresa May, in response to critique, cautions that Saudi intelligence ‘has saved the lives potentially of hundreds of people in this country’, thus commanding the security subject to pay a debt of existence both to the state and its associates.

However, the promise of security unavoidably means appropriation of the twin denials of security, as the theorisation of the paradigmatic denials of security proposed. The enunciative symbioses of the promise of security (and of spending efficiency, and of jobs) mutually fortify public and private actors’ denials of complicity. Thus, both logics – that we rely on Saudi Arabia for our security’, and that ‘they have the right to their own defence’ – symbiotically bind with the denial statements of arms producers. Responding to accusations of complicity, the arms producers demand that the debt of existence be paid to them for contributing to national and international security. For example, BAE Systems urges, ‘we manufacture equipment in order to ensure that those who protect and serve us are equipped appropriately’, thus engaging in the promise of

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72. Wilson III, “‘Providing for the Common Defense?’”, 99.
73. Ibid.
74. See for example, Billy Briggs, ‘Scottish Government Hands £3m to Arms Firms Profiting from Yemen War’, *The Ferret*, 6 May 2019. Available at: [https://theferret.scot/arms-firms-leonardo-mw-scottish-enterprise-yemen/](https://theferret.scot/arms-firms-leonardo-mw-scottish-enterprise-yemen/). Last accessed May 15, 2019.
75. Robin Merrick, ‘Jeremy Corbyn Accuses UK Military of “Directing War” by Saudi Arabia in Yemen’, *The Independent*, 7 March 2018. Available at: [https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/jeremy-corbyn-saudi-arabia-yemen-war-arms-supplies-uk-theresa-may-latest-a8243916.html](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/jeremy-corbyn-saudi-arabia-yemen-war-arms-supplies-uk-theresa-may-latest-a8243916.html). Last accessed May 15, 2019.
76. Lizzie Dearden, ‘BAE Systems “Does Not Know” if British Weapons Used to Commit War Crimes, Chairman Admits’, *The Independent*, 12 April 2018. Available at: [https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/saudi-war-crimes-yemen-british-weapons-bae-systems-know-agm-values-a8347736.html](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/saudi-war-crimes-yemen-british-weapons-bae-systems-know-agm-values-a8347736.html). Last accessed May 15, 2019.
security and in the same externalisation of risk-threats that constitutes the paradigmatic denial of complicity in security.

Importantly, the articulated form of such denial reveals further insights into the nature of the assemblage. Thus, BAE Systems claims: ‘we are not an aggressive company. We don’t conduct wars’; further asserting that they do not load bombs on planes dropped on Yemen but only supply them to those having the right to defend themselves. This is despite evidence that BAE provide both the bombs and the technology and training to those who drop them on Yemen. They continue: ‘We separate ourselves from the war itself. . .[and] supply equipment government-to-government to enable the job to be done as seen fit’. Claiming separation between the manufacture and end use of arms – a separation that itself denies complicity – they also externalise the risk-threat in Yemen on behalf of the Saudi government, and by extension the UK; thus denying complicity through reliance on the statist promise of security. Simultaneously, they deny complicity through establishing a distance from responsibility for the violence of securing, by assuming the commodified role of a supplier of means to governments.

This demonstrates how private actors in this assemblage of (in)security sustain themselves through a double movement. On the one hand, this involves decoding – commodifying their role symbiotically hinging on the logics of cost-efficiency and the provision of jobs to government while escaping responsibility for end use. On the other hand, it involves encoding (classically, what a State assemblage does) – through assigning meanings to their services and technologies by incorporating the statist promise of security nationally and internationally, and with it, unavoidably, security’s paradigmatic denials.

Such appropriations of the promise of security by arms companies constitutes capture of the Statist imaginaries (of social contract and national security); but also imaginaries of the ‘international’. Thus, BAE claims that providing arms to the Saudis, ‘will avoid [sic.] others being aggressors’, chiming with the government justification that opened this article: ‘If [we] . . .do not provide countries with means of defending themselves, then we will see a proliferation of uncontrolled and unregulated arms sales free from oversight or inhibitions’. The appropriation reinforces a self-given obligation of the UK as a superior global actor providing regulated and responsible arms sales while relying on security’s twin denials – denials of complicity and of the impossibility of security.

Crucially, the denials of security make possible not only the arms companies’ own enunciations. Fundamentally, these denials drive the knowledge production on security, risk-threats and required technologies of securing by associated actors involved in the assemblage of (in)security. These are research branches of the arms companies themselves, external think-tanks and university projects financed by arms companies and/or jointly by government; lobbying and PR firms contracted by both; and arms industry

77. Ibid.
78. Ibid.
79. Dearden, ‘BAE Systems “Does Not Know”’.
80. MacAskill, ‘Liam Fox Hails Britain's Arms Exports’.
associations. Saliently, this list also involves academic projects ironically aiming to establish ‘ethical’ grounds for the provision of security.81

Having traced some of the actors and ways of the appropriations of both the promise and the attendant denials of security, it is important to emphasise that these actors become part of the assemblage of (in)security precisely through and by dint of such appropriations; in other words, through establishing/amending ways of connecting (agencement), thus forging the operational sense of the assemblage. This reveals itself through not mere appropriations but how the enunciations – of legitimation/justification and of responses to critique, by both government and the arms industry and other private actors, symbiotically bind through denials of the impossibility of security and of complicity. It is here that we witness private actors becoming part of the assemblage of (in)security. Indeed, Deleuze and Guattari caution that assemblage is ‘defined not by its elements, nor by a center of unification. . . [but by being]. . . already composed of heterogeneous terms in symbiosis’.82 This means, elements are not merely ‘added’ but become part of the assemblage by dint of having entered into symbioses. This is what brings the assemblage about. Thus, private actors become part of the assemblage of (in)security of the UK arms trade not merely by becoming state clients and business partners for procurement, or by corrupting influence onto politicians (assumptions of campaigners and analysts thinking through ‘military-industrial complex’, ‘revolving doors’ and similar heuristics), but precisely because they appropriate and successfully employ the promise of security, and its attendant denials as a new way of ‘establish liaisons’, symbioses; ‘producing new institutions or behaviour’.83

This symbiosis goes even further. As theorised above, with the promise risk technologies, denial of complicity itself has become transactional – transacting in future complicities assigned to risks. Thus, the UK government is warning: if you [arms trade critics/the security subject] do not let us sell arms, other nastier forces will anyway, and the world ‘will see a proliferation of uncontrolled and unregulated arms sales free from oversight or inhibitions’. And this, in the Trade Secretary’s ominous warning, ‘would be vastly irresponsible’.84 This move is charging the security subject in a potential future complicity in harm if they prevent the arms sales, which in turn would be85 Similar cautioning is heard in BAE’s justifications: cautioning the security subject not to commit complicity in a future global calamity (‘proliferation of uncontrolled arms sales’), and thus of a collective complicity-to-come, BAE simultaneously denies complicity in the present, along with the government, not only in direct effects of the arms in Yemen, but also more diffuse complicity in decades of co-production of global dynamics sustaining both the need for and the sources of provision of such ‘unregulated’ arms. Along with the capture of statist promises – of ‘national security’, but also of ‘economic efficiency/optimal use of taxpayer money’, and

81. For example, the defence industry-sponsored Centre for Ethics and Law at University College London. Jamie Doward and Greg Bennett, ‘Defence Contractors Hand British Universities £40m’, The Guardian, 1 April 2018. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/mar/31/defence-contractors-british-universities-funding. Last accessed May 15, 2019.
82. Deleuze and Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, 249.
83. Gilles Deleuze and C. Parnet, Dialogues, trans. H. Tomlinson and B. Habberjam (London: The Athlone Press, 1987), 69.
84. Quoted in MacAskill, ‘Liam Fox Hails Britain’s Arms Exports’.
85. Hunt, ‘Yemen Crisis Won’t be Solved by UK Arms Exports Halt’.
‘welfare/jobs’ – these private-public symbioses of denial also demonstrate private actors’ appropriation of the international demarcation of inside/outside, and hierarchies of moral superiority. These are symbiotic appropriations of the political mythologies of the State; and the moral imperative to provide an ‘international public good’ through well-regulated arms to those who ‘need to defend themselves/us’.

Thus, denials binding the assemblage of (in)security become transactional – transacting in the distribution of potential charges of complicity, and in turn producing claims to normative horizons (Britain as the morally superior guardian of regulated international arms trade). The latter puts critique centre stage in trying to understand both denials and how assemblages interact with their milieu of exteriority, and therefore adapt, change and endure.

**Critique and Reproductions of Denial**

It is in light of the above that the most recurring forms of academic as well as activist critique become paradoxical, as it becomes visible how they may inadvertently reproduce and deepen the very denials that hold together assemblages of (in)security. Among such recurring forms of critique are frequent calls for increased transparency, accountability and legitimacy dominant in both scholarship and activism on the arms trade. For instance, Rufanges, having exposed an ‘arms cycle’ in the European Union (EU) arms trade of actors and practices from research to production to end use of weapons, ends up lamenting that the arms industry lobbies ‘are not as transparent as they should [be]’.87 This type of critique unwittingly demands the normalisation of arms lobbying and its expected part in democratic process, thus legitimising its operation. Another analyst is concerned with ‘good conduct’ in arms exports to ensure that ‘one does not wilfully arm and support repressive or belligerent states’.88 These critiques imply a differentiation between ‘good’ arms exporters (assumedly, Western democracies) and ‘bad’ ones (lacking democratic scrutiny); but also between acceptable and non-acceptable destinations for arms. In turn, this trend dominates resistance activism, illustrated by the UK-based Campaign Against the Arms Trade (CAAT), consistently framing arms trade as unethical to countries ‘with human rights abuses’ or to ‘repressive regimes’. This trend has been critiqued by Stavrianakis, and Rossdale for reproducing hierarchical North-South relations, and for normalising war.89

However, in light of the theorisation and empirical analysis above, such forms of critique become problematic in a much more fundamental way: they reproduce the very paradigmatic denials that are key to the formation and endurance of assemblages of

86. These are taken to include those self-identifying as anti-war, anti-arms trade, anti-militarism/militarisation; and academic and activist demands for regulation, transparency and accountability for arms trade and PMSCs.
87. Rufanges, ‘The Arms Industry Lobby in Europe’, 318.
88. Frank Slijper, ‘The emerging EU Military-Industrial Complex: Arms industry lobbying in Brussels’, Transnational Institute Briefing paper No 1 (2005). Available at: https://www.tni.org/files/publication-downloads/eumilitary.pdf. Last accessed
89. Anna Stavrianakis, Taking Aim at the Arms Trade: NGOs, Global Civil Society and the World Military Order (London and New York: Zed Books, 2010); Chris Rossdale, Resisting Militarism: Direct Action and the Politics of Subversion (Edinburg: Edinburg University Press, 2019).
(in)security. By demanding transparency and accountability, as well as assigning ethical/unethical arms traders, these moves inadvertently demand ‘better delivery’ of the promise of national and global security. Hence, these critics become themselves engaged in the denial of the impossibility of security, and thereby in denial of complicity as its inseparable corollary. This does not underestimate the vast constraints and strategic compromises campaigners have to make. But it shows what such moves do to assemblages of (in)security. If denials, as argued, fundamentally structure the unstable duality of (in)security, and have become the operational sense of assemblages of (in)security, i.e. the way of coalescing of various private/public actors and practices around the promise of security, then we must be able to spot/recognise and thereby trace denials making the assemblage possible. In turn, such ontology of assemblage of (in)security must inform our epistemology of critique, i.e. how we can come to critique the politics of denial in (in)security in ways that does not strengthen this very operational sense.

Instead, what we see in the predominant modes of critiques of the arms trade is the reaffirmation of precisely what makes assemblages form, adapt and endure. The moment such critique recognises actors and interests as web-like relations, it falls back into reinstating hierarchies – ‘legitimate’ vs ‘non-legitimate’ provision of security; ‘good’ vs ‘bad’ arms exporters, ‘ethical’ vs ‘unethical’ arm trader – and thereby demanding the delivery of security – a promise ironically appropriated and creatively utilised by private actors precisely to create and sustain the assemblage. Moreover, demands for better delivery of security do not merely reproduce the denials of security but more consequentially enable assemblages of (in)security to fortify, adapt and expand through establishing new liaisons with critique itself. This is so because by re-enforcing the statist promise of security, these critics assign private actors the role of security providers, thereby creating new pathways for private entities for renewed capture of these promises, thus helping propagate ever-new symbioses thriving on denials.

Thus, through their reliance on the same operational sense that ties together the assemblage of (in)security, these critics unwittingly produce resources for the assemblage to capture and fortify itself. Most visibly this unfolds through responding to critiques’ various demands by both private and public actors, which generates ever-more creative ways of asserting that they are indeed ‘transparent’, ‘accountable’, ‘legitimate’, or by re-inventing what the latter mean. For example, recent arms industry moves towards voluntary codes of conduct; adoption of sustainability, human rights and other ‘ethical’ commitments.

Deleuze and Guattari’s main concern with assemblages was how they change (through adapting), or how they transform (by becoming something else): in this distinction, an assemblage changes through adaptation in order to maintain and reproduce; whereas transformation emerges out of processes that create a new assemblage, e.g. through a revolutionary movement. The above-explored forms of critique not only reproduce denials, but thereby actively create mechanisms, through their demands, for the very

90. See for example, the ‘Sustainability’ page on BAE Systems website, at https://www.baesystems.com/en/our-company/sustainability. Last accessed April 5, 2021.
91. Deleuze and Guattari call these ‘relative negative and relative positive deterritorialisations’ respectively. Nail, ‘What Is an Assemblage?’ 34–6.
adaptation and thus fortification of assemblages of (in)security. In turn, how both assemblages of (in)security and critique may undergo transformation is beyond the scope in this article. However, it may be suggested that in assemblages of (in)security what are often claimed by actors as transformations (e.g. the sustainability turn) are further adaptations and thus fortification of assemblages of (in)security.

Moreover, the type of critique described above enables further change and fortification of the assemblage through amplifying risk-based logics: by demanding a risk-based regulatory system of arms trade (risk here assumed to be assessed for and in relation to distant humans and their rights/well-being), these campaigners and critiques unwittingly promote the assemblage’s adaptation and reinvention of denials. This happens already through commodifying and re-coding of contingency itself, allowing what Dillon noted to be the paradoxical satisfying of the desire for security – through ‘massively increasing exposure to contingency...[while] engendering an exponential increase in the ways in which everything is open to being addressed, valued and measured in terms of everything else’.92 This is how the assemblage of (in)security explored above both responds to critique and at the same time re-invents the denials of its operational sense that allow its endurance and adaptation, by proposing that not selling arms would be morally bankrupt. This is done not only through ‘[c]alculatively commodifying contingency’93 (in this case, justifications such as ‘Saudis are likely to comply with IHL because past violations have been exceptions,94 but if they don’t, life is contingent anyway and this could not have been predicted’), but also through valuing and thus giving meaning to this commodification against and in comparison to other claimed risks: if you (the critic, the security subject) refuse to bet on this small risk of potential violation, then you will fail to avert a much surer and bigger risk – the catastrophe of unregulated global arms trade; and for that you will be complicit.

If the exploratory example engaged with above was chosen as a most visible and ‘most likely’ case of the generative force of denial, future work could fruitfully explore how (in)security’s paradigmatic denials, and adaptations in relation to critique, become generative in least publicly visible contexts, having received least direct campaigner and activist attention. One area could be the development of marine organisms for military purposes, tracing how these practices rely on the paradigmatic denials of security; what sort of assemblages they help form; and how they form symbioses of denial across the public-private realms. One such US project breeds and trains dolphins for military purposes,95 as part of its promise to ‘rapidly deliver cyber warfighting capability from seabed to space’96 to respond to enemies lurking in every terrain; another one, through a network of private and public actors, develops capabilities to use marine organisms – from bacteria to fish – as

92. Ibid.
93. Dillon, ‘Underwriting Security’.
94. See Stavrianakis, ‘Requiem for Risk’.
95. International Marine Mammal Project, ‘Navy Dolphins Suffering and Dying’, 2 May 2017. Available at: http://savedolphins.eii.org/news/entry/navy-dolphins-suffering-and-dying. Last accessed May 15, 2019.
96. Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command, ‘Mission’. Available at: http://www.public.navy.mil/spawar/Pages/Organization.aspx. Last accessed December 10, 2018.
underwater ‘spies’, promising to make the US ‘the initiator and not the victim of strategic technological surprises’. Both of these projects, while least publicised and critiqued by campaigners nonetheless thrive – in the shadows – on the same generative denials of (in)security – both of the impossibility of security and the complicities induced by the infinite pursuance of securing. The imperative is to investigate how such assemblages of (in)security in the least visible contexts interact with their ‘milieu of exteriority’, beyond the obvious/expected critique akin to anti-arms trade campaigns, through what appear to be exchanges with and responses to ever-increasing new actors and forms of critique and activism – from protests against poor living conditions of the dolphins, and their treatment as ‘property’; to campaigns against the potential harms of genetically modified marine organisms on human health. Research must scrutinise how such critiques may potentially enable the assemblage to further obscure the ontological denials of (in)security through prompting it to respond and incorporate more promises (beyond the familiar ‘transparency’, ‘regulation’, etc.), here already for safeguards on humane treatment of dolphins; GM-free marine organisms, etc., thus appearing legitimate/ethically acceptable in ever-new ways.

Conclusions: Denials ‘From Seabed to Space’, and Epistemology of Critique

This article proposed that by taking seriously the ontological status and modes of circulations of denials in the politics of security, we gain an indispensable entry point into the otherwise vast question posed at the start of this article. A starting point for this was an explicit theorisation of the twin denials – denial of complicity and denial of the impossibility of security – as the ontological basis of the politics of (in)security, drawing on Dillon’s conception of security. Denials as theorised here are ontologically necessary generative mechanism that helps explicate the forging, endurance and the expansion of assemblages of (in)security.

Through a Deleuze and Guattarian assemblage approach, it was proposed, rather than asking why webs of public–private actors and interests emerging around the arms trade and more broadly the provision of security endure despite long-standing critique, we should ask: what sort of assemblage is capable of producing such outcomes? The main finding and argument was that assemblages of (in)security thrive on denial in ever-new and creative ways: through private actors’ appropriations of the statist promise of security, and thereby the twin denials of security, such appropriations form symbioses of denial with governmental and other actors.

In turn, mapping and exposing ever-new ways of connecting in relation to critique and activism demonstrated how certain forms of critique may unwittingly deepen denials. It becomes costly not to recognise the generative force of these denials; and to

97. DARPA, ‘About DARPA’. Available at: https://www.darpa.mil/about-us/about-darpa. Last accessed December 10, 2018.
98. International Marine Mammal Project, ‘Navy Dolphins Suffering and Dying’ (May 02, 2017). Available at https://savedolphins.eii.org/news/navy-dolphins-suffering-and-dying. Last accessed December 20, 2020.
99. See, e.g., DARPA, ‘PALS turns to Marine Organisms’.
continue offering activist and scholarly critiques that may serve the endurance of such assemblages.

The article contributes to several current debates. First, it contributes to Critical IR literature on state, sovereignty, subjectivity and security by making explicit their implicit critiques of denial; and by offering a theorisation of denial as ontologically necessary for the politics of (in)security. Second, more specifically, it contributes to Critical Security Studies’ on-going retheorisations of ‘security’: in light of this article, ‘security’ becomes the realm of the propagation of new symbioses, bringing ever-new actors into contact and arrangement (agencer); forging ever-new institutions and behaviours. While ‘security’ was already theorised as the realm of permanent threats, this article provides insight into the conditions of possibility – how such permanent threats are produced and justified. To return to Deleuze and Guattari’s proposition, it shows what assemblage is capable of producing such effects.

Related is the issue of new forms of power. Assemblages of (in)security produce a peculiar form of power diffusing denial itself. This is the ultimate form of de-politicisation: complicating the politics of the permanent state of emergency where ‘[y]ou cannot . . . debate emergency’.100 The politics of denial gives pretence of debating, ironically, often of denial itself – through abundance of public accusations of complicity, their public and routinised denials, and demands for more transparency and accountability. Simultaneously, we are deprived of new imaginaries beyond the promise of security and its unstable duality.

Third, the article contributes to the literature on the arms trade: unless the paradigmatic denials of security are confronted, otherwise well-intentioned critique demanding transparency, accountability, or better-regulated arms trade may help sustain assemblages of (in)security by demanding the delivery of the very promise of security whose denials had generated and made the assemblages thrive. Literature concerned with worrying effects of the arms trade must not only be more cognizant of their own implicit assumptions and thus own denials, but also commit to continuous tracing, disentangling and confronting the symbioses of denials, that sustain assemblages (in)security.

Several implications ensue for future scholarship and activism. First, is for further theorising of assemblages, especially concerning what Deleuze and Guattari propose as two socio-economic assemblage types – the State assemblage and the Capitalist assemblage – having distinct relations to coding. The theorisation of denial in security, and the twin denials as the operational sense holding the assemblages of (in)security together suggest the following: the Capitalist assemblage as a decoding/commodifying machine, at least when it comes to security and the arms trade, becomes impossible in itself: my argument showed that not only it is often combined with re-coding – giving meaning, and requiring our belief in the statist promise of security – but the very decoding comes into existence via/by dint of this very appropriation of the statist promise.

Second, wider implication is for further theorisations of assemblages. I demonstrated how the twin denials of security had become the ‘operational sense’ of the assemblages of (in)security – the holding-together of various elements and relations coalescing around

100. Dillon, and Julian Reid, The Liberal Way of War: Killing to Make Life Live (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), 86.
the promise and delivery of security; and that such operational sense is driving not only the formation, but also the expansion of these assemblages, and thereby the propagation of ever-new technologies of (in)security. Any assemblage – even nomadic ones – would inhere, and rely on, some form of denial; but the challenge would be to unpack the specifics of such denial and their ontological status case-by-case: What forms of denials does the holding-together (agencement) of an assemblage rely on and what this means for understanding both the politics of the given assemblage (how it changes and endures) and ways of confronting them?

Third, the empirical explorations point at further research that must scrutinise and critique the multiple ways through which the twin denials of security not only condition the formation and endurance of assemblages of (in)security, but also crucially enable their expansion, by drawing in new elements, forging new institutions and behaviours; as well as the propagation of new technologies of (in)security. Especially fruitful areas for research could be the rising warfare race in human genome technology of soldier ‘augmentation’. It would be pertinent to scrutinise such practices, cognisant of the generative force of security’s paradigmatic denials in relationality with critique. Yet another area would be the relatively-new realm of ‘environmental security’ pushing for major military risk analysis and the militarisation of climate change. The latter has produced the increasingly-alarming trend casting climate change as ‘threat multiplier’ – from insurgencies to resource conflict and failed states to terrorism – in distant places requiring ‘our’ (Western) intervention, resulting in new forms of military preparedness; innovation in technologies and practices. ‘Threat multiplier’ models rely on externalisation as denial of complicity, and constitute a new mode of environmental denialism: while its proponents do not deny climate change, they produce denials that externalise responsibility for climate change while producing multiple externalisations of threat-risks (thus denying complicity). The third, more overarching, implication of this article relates to the status of critique. At a time when the public sphere is saturated with accusations of complicity, it is imperative not to restrict treatments of denial to enunciative dismissals of ‘wrongdoing’ but to expose what mechanisms and institutionalised symbioses enable such dismissals. Crucially, a shift of thinking is imperative: denial must be exposed and critiqued not as a post factum matter of rebuttal, but as generative of the very practices. This must be done through an assemblage-based approach that takes seriously the relationality with critique – something that has most often remained a blind-spot, and little-scrutinised in academic and activist critique.

The critical task must be a shift to an assemblage-based epistemology of critique, i.e. commitments to reiteratively consider how our practices of critique interact with assemblages of (in)security thriving on the twin denials; and search for modes of critique that avoid fortifying the very operational sense upholding assemblages of (in)security. This

101. Yusef Paolo Rabiah, ‘From Bioweapons to Super Soldiers: How the UK is Joining the Genomic Technology Arms Race’, The Conversation, 29 April 2021. Available at: https://theconversation.com/from-bioweapons-to-super-soldiers-how-the-uk-is-joining-the-genomic-technology-arms-race-159889?utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Facebook#Echobox=1619776120. Last accessed May 10, 2021.

102. Simon Dalby, ‘Rethinking Geopolitics: Climate Security in the Anthropocene’, Global Policy 5 No1(2014): 1–10, 3.
would be a form of postcritical approach, however with a decidedly assemblage-based thinking – confronting not only denials implicit to own critique, but also how these enable the production of subjects of security as subject of denial, and enable the formation, adaptation/endurance, and expansion of assemblages of (in)security. Such epistemology of critique would pursue strategies that, rather than prioritise factually arguing against enunciated denials and proving complicity, would reflect on what these critiques are doing to the assemblage, and thereby pursue more nomadic forms of critique – forging escapes from, and destabilise, the hierarchised statist promise of national and international security. Doing so would involve refusing transacting in complicities that makes critique complicit in denial.

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103. See Elizabeth S. Anker and Rita Felski, eds., Critique and Postcritique (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2017), 14.