

CRITICAL APPROACHES TO SECURITY

An introduction to theories and methods

Edited by

Laura J. Shepherd



Critical Approaches to Security

Focusing on critical approaches to security, this new textbook offers readers both an overview of key theoretical perspectives and a variety of methodological techniques.

With a careful explication of core concepts in each chapter and an introduction that traces the development of critical approaches to security, this textbook will encourage all those who engage with it to develop a curiosity about the study and practices of security politics. Challenging the assumptions of conventional theories and approaches, unsettling that which was previously taken for granted – these are among the ways in which such a curiosity works. Through its attention to the fact that, and the ways in which, security matters in global politics, this work will both pioneer new ways of studying security and acknowledge the noteworthy scholarship without which it could not have been thought.

This textbook will be essential reading for advanced undergraduate and postgraduate students of critical security studies, and is highly recommended to students of traditional security studies, International Relations and politics.

Laura J. Shepherd is Associate Professor of International Relations at the University of New South Wales, Australia. She is author/editor of four previous books, including *Gender Matters in Global Politics* (2010).

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Foreword

Ken Booth

Security – feeling or being safe from dangerous threats (to one’s body and way of life generally) – is not just a word. It is what the philosopher Philippa Foot would have called a ‘fact of human existence’; in other words, it is a condition that is rational for humans to want because in its absence to any significant degree we cannot sustain social life, whether we are attending to babies, teaching children, or developing communities. As the referents for security extend beyond individuals and families, the more explicitly does the notion of security become imbued with ‘politics’. In the political arenas of states, governments, and organizations, and in the academic contexts of ‘International Relations’, ‘World Politics’, ‘Peace Studies’, ‘Global Politics’, and so on, security is a word that is supercharged with power. It makes things happen, it is deeply politicized, and consequently is a source of much disagreement.

The very idea of security in explicitly political contexts implies a referent (who or what is to be secured), particular sources of actual or potential threats to that referent, and strategies for trying to overcome or mitigate those threats. How we think about these matters in particular situations involves political choices deriving from our fundamental political ideas and theories. These ideas and theories implicitly or explicitly shape the choices we make about the referent to prioritize (particular collectivities or individuals?), the threats and risks to be balanced (which danger is most pressing?), and the strategies to be pursued (how much is enough?). This book helps you think through what it means to think about these things.

During the Cold War, the study of security flourished. Its primary concerns were (military) strategic relations between states. Pedagogy was equally conservative in approach, working for the most part in the straitjacket of a compelling but constrained understanding of realism. Security Studies – hardly surprisingly during history’s most potentially destructive era – was ‘Strategic Studies’ writ large. Paradoxically, Security Studies did not atrophy with the endings of the Cold War; instead a different – broader and deeper – notion of Security Studies developed. New theorizing about ‘security’ (now often necessarily in scare quotes) pointed to different referents, dangers, and strategies. The talk was of ‘non-traditional’ or ‘new’ security issues, though these issues had always been security problems for somebody. They were new only to the observers: as ever, the brain needs to train the eyes to see what is before them.

As somebody who lived and worked through both these phases of Security Studies, I was pleased to be invited to write a foreword to this book. Not least, it gives me a platform to emphasize that there is less new in the post-Cold War phase than many imagine, and there is more to be learned from the Cold War phase than many assume. More important is the opportunity to endorse the aim of the book, namely to contribute to teaching and learning about security.

The book is a reminder to readers that particular theories and methods exclude or marginalize, and that this is as true of alternative approaches to Security Studies as it is of mainstream realism. Readers are warned about this, just as they are encouraged to embrace *critique* when they contemplate the politics of knowledge production. This is a healthy attitude to teaching, as opposed to the laying down of dogma. And the emphasis on pedagogy in general in the book is particularly welcome these days, when teaching is too often seen as the poor relative of research in higher education.

The book invites its readers to an academic commitment to critique, and in this respect I am bound to say that there is a great deal in the chapters below with which I disagree: this includes some of the characterizations of different approaches, some conceptualizations of security, specific interpretations of texts, and certain claims made on behalf of different schools and ideas. These disagreements do not matter, for those of us committed to critique can never be satisfied, even with close intellectual allies. What does matter is making *reflexivity* a way of life, and being given the resources and the encouragement to think (and act) critically; and this book, written by a group of scholars with interestingly diverse takes on how to theorize and research security, does this admirably.

A book such as this can only be a beginning however. While it offers a broad menu of schools of thought, pertinent issues, interesting methods, and a reminder of the importance of pedagogy, it also raises issues (which it was not its aim to finally settle) about some of the limits and weaknesses of critical approaches to security. For me three are particularly pertinent.

First, critical approaches to security are far too prone to put the theory cart before the empirical horse. I want to see critical approaches to security much more issue-driven rather than driven by an interest in questions of theory. As it is, projects associated with critical approaches are invariably somewhat lacking in ambition, choosing predictable topics in the intellectual comfort-zones of their own academic tribe. It is difficult to think what – in terms of original and reference-point work – the nearly two decades of critical theorizing has contributed to our understanding let alone praxis regarding such big issues of world politics as global governance, nuclear proliferation, or the international political economy. During the Cold War, Strategic Studies offered sophisticated ideas about the theory and practice of nuclear deterrence, arms control, limited war, and the rest: where are the counterparts in critical Security Studies?

Second, an old mentor of mine used to advise: ‘If you are going to be academic about anything, you might as well be academic about something important.’ In that respect, I urge those drawn to critical approaches to security not to turn their backs on the traditional concerns of International Relations. World politics are ‘post-international’ in one sense in this era of globalization (‘International Relations’ is not the whole of the story) but the international level still continues to exert enormous ‘causal weight’ to use Kenneth Waltz’s apt term. This is why, when there is so much general agreement in principle on climate change, nuclear proliferation, the future of the Eurozone, the desirability of international development, the responsibility to protect, and so on, it is still so difficult to make progress in actual practice. The dynamics of international politics (the prioritizing of the so-called national interest) remains a major obstacle to world order and global security. To date, critical projects in security have generally avoided working at this level.

Third, we all need to do our best to resist the temptation of being drawn into methodology wars and academic tribal rivalry. Different schools and approaches should be understood from the inside. In this regard, I would particularly emphasize the importance of knowing realism, which in my own work I have spent so much time criticizing. In meeting the

challenge of engaging with the critical international level of world politics, there is much to learn from engaging seriously with realism (as opposed to relying on the usually flawed summaries by textbook writers). In particular, I would urge readers to engage with realism's founding figures, whose views about global reform would surprise those students whose only acquaintance with 'Morgenthau', 'Carr', and others is through barely recognizable textbook caricatures. Instead of blind loyalty to one's own academic tribe, one will often discover that the most interesting ideas are across borders. My advice is to eschew what I call 'schoolism' (a commitment to the purity and defence of particular approaches) in the interests of better analysis and more helpful prescriptions relating to interesting and important challenges facing real people in real places.

These comments reflect disappointment (that others share) about what the first two decades of critical approaches to security have delivered. Less has been achieved than was hoped for. Certainly these approaches have become more sophisticated, and have contributed to more theoretical self-awareness on the part of mainstream approaches. But is theoretical knowledge and analytical rigour enough? What about real issues (long and short term) and the exercise of political judgement? Knowing which ideas to apply to which situations is more an art than a science, and critical approaches struggle to help here. It is far too soon to describe critical approaches to security as a failed project, but it is certainly not too early to raise some warning flags. Critical approaches no longer have to struggle for disciplinary recognition, but they do have to rise to the challenge of making serious inroads into global problem solving. To this urgent task this book makes a valuable contribution.

1 Introduction

Critical approaches to security in contemporary global politics

Laura J. Shepherd

This is a book about methodology. There is a difference between *theory* and methodology, and there is a difference between *methods* and methodology. Theories, as I discuss in more detail in Part I, can be seen as packages of ideas about how the world works. Some are considered persuasive and become dominant for one reason or another; some are contested and ultimately marginalized, again for any number of reasons. All theories are, however, packages of ideas. Methods, on the other hand, are devices that we can use in the research process to collect and analyse data (or ‘stuff’, which is the highly technical term I tend to use with my own students). We can gather data (in a number of ways, as the chapters that follow demonstrate) and then analyse this data using a range of techniques (again, as shown in the following chapters). Strategies within both of these phases of research are known broadly as ‘research methods’, and all methods construct knowledge about the world (through the collection and analysis of ‘stuff’) in different ways. What is often not discussed, in the social sciences at least, is the politics of different methods, but this book aims to engage this question directly. This is why I suggest that this is a book about *methodology*, because the book investigates the ideas that inform the methods and techniques that we use in Security Studies. In a way, therefore, we can consider *methodology* as theory *about* method, because ‘there is no methodology without *logos*, without thinking about thinking’ (Sartori quoted in Gerring 2011: xix, emphasis in original). Although the book is divided into ‘Theories’ and ‘Methods’, this book is also engaged in discussions of methodology throughout, as all of the contributing authors reflect on how the ideas that they have about the world that we live in, alongside the ideas that they have about how and why and when they can or should collect and analyse data about that world, create the knowledge claims that they are then able to make. The process and publication of research is a fundamental knowledge practice, and therefore is inherently political, a view shared by all authors in this volume.

This book aims to equip you with knowledge of the theoretical foundations and techniques necessary for the conduct of independent critical research in the field of Security Studies. You may find some chapters more useful than others, depending on your own political and ethical position(s) in relation to the study of security, but each of the contributions to this volume is designed to provide an overview of the specific theory or method with which it is concerned. Each chapter shows how conducting research informed by or founded upon that theory or method allows you to include certain issues or objects of study while simultaneously making you aware of what it might exclude or marginalize. Each chapter, in short, provides a discussion of the politics of theory and/or method. This chapter is slightly different, however, as I use this introduction to provide a foundation for the chapters that follow.

In the next section, I provide an overview of the conventional account of security according to the discipline of International Relations (IR),¹ an account which is organized around the

three 'S's of state, survival and self-help. This theoretical account provides a clear indication of what should – and what should not – be ascribed the status of a 'security issue', although in contemporary Security Studies, a 'sub-discipline' of IR, scholars and policy-makers recognize a plethora of threats not only to the survival of the sovereign state but also to the survival of the human subject. As conventional theories of security have been unable (and, at times, unwilling) to engage effectively with these 'new' security threats, we have seen the proliferation of theories of security aimed at providing a firm theoretical platform from which to address non-traditional security issues. These are the theories we discuss in this book, theories – or 'approaches' – that we might term 'critical'. In the second section of this introduction, therefore, I discuss the content of the book in more detail, in an effort to explain in the third and final section how and why both theory and method (*methodologies*) have a profound influence on how we (think we) know what we (think we) know about security in contemporary global politics.

On security

Political realism derives its authority and legitimacy from association with some of the great thinkers of Western modernity, including Thucydides (a Greek historian, who lived c.360–395 BC), Thomas Hobbes (a British philosopher writing in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (also a philosopher but from the eighteenth century). Hobbes, in particular, has been very influential in the development of Security Studies, largely due to his writings on political organization and social life in his book *Leviathan*. This book was the earliest expression of what became known as 'social contract theory', part of which was the theory that humans would agree to submit to the authority of a government if that government provided them with security. This trade-off was necessary because without a sovereign power ('government', monarchy or dictatorship), keeping their natures in check, people would tend to be quite unpleasant. In the absence of 'a common power to keep them all in awe', Hobbes famously suggested, humans were destined to live 'in continual fear, and danger of violent death' and life itself would be 'solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short' ([1651]2008: 86).

These ideas about political authority in IRs were foundational to the intellectual development of realism in IR, which relies heavily on Hobbesian imaginings of human behaviour and, further, sees these imaginings as illustrative of state behaviour. As Robert Gilpin argues, 'political realism itself . . . is best viewed as an attitude regarding the human condition' (1984: 290). In effect, according to political realism in IR, the state is 'man' writ large, and behaves accordingly, engaging in wars of 'all against all' without an authority higher than the sovereign of each state to prevent such violence. As the object of analysis for IR realism is the state, and states by definition are sovereign, the international system is deemed to be anarchic (from the Greek *anarkhia*: 'an' [without]/'arkhos' [leader]), absent from any form of unifying political authority.

According to conventional representations of realist theories of security (e.g. in textbooks such as this one), the state is the object to which security policy refers, and states live in 'continual fear' of extinction because although within the state there may be a sovereign power, outside of the state there is no such thing. Further, it is the sovereignty of the state that defines its existence as a state. The state must remain sovereign and it must sustain territorial integrity (it must *survive*), or else it will cease to be a state. Security practices are therefore aimed at ensuring survival. Further, as states cannot rely on any higher authority to intervene in, mediate or manage international affairs, they must 'chart their own courses' (Waltz

1979: 96) and be prepared to do whatever is necessary to help themselves. The ‘continual fear’ identified by Hobbes surfaces in the writings of those that have conventionally been identified as both classical and neorealist security scholars: Hans Morgenthau, John Herz, Kenneth Waltz, Stephen Walt and John Mearsheimer among others.

For realist IR, survival can only be assured by the accumulation of power, leading Morgenthau (1973) to argue that the ‘national interest’ of the state can be *defined* in terms of power: this simply means that there can be no higher interest than the accumulation of power as power will guarantee survival. To illustrate this view, Herz’s conception of the ‘security dilemma’ is explicitly premised on these assumptions regarding self-help. The dilemma

stems from a fundamental social constellation . . . where groups live alongside each other without being organised into a higher unity . . . Since none can ever feel entirely secure in such a world . . . power competition ensues and the vicious circle of security and power accumulation is on.

(Herz 1950: 157)

The central security issue, then, according to realism, is the threat of ‘power competition’ among all states, none of whom are able to ‘feel entirely secure’. Threats are, by definition, external to the state and derived from a very narrow conceptualization of security (as survival) and power (as defined in military terms).

The changes in the global political landscape that were produced by and productive of the post-Cold War era included the dissolution of the USSR, the emergence of the USA as a sole remaining ‘superpower’, the release of the United Nations Security Council from Cold War ‘deadlock’ and the proliferation of both ‘new wars’ and ‘humanitarian intervention’. (I would like to add a caveat at this point that these ‘changes’ are premised on a vision of IRs from the Global North [or ‘minority world’]. Their articulation presupposes several things: that the ‘Cold War’ was indeed cold, which was not the case for the populations of, to give just a few examples, the Dominican Republic, Afghanistan, Lebanon or Nicaragua; that ‘new wars’ are qualitatively different from conflict throughout history; that the UN Security Council is now functioning effectively and as intended; all of which are deeply problematic and deserving of critical scrutiny.) These shifts in IRs led to what one notable scholar referred to as a ‘renaissance of Security Studies’ (Walt 1991), as those interested in the politics and practices of security undertook the challenging task of reorienting intellectual endeavour to take into account ‘sudden’ transformations in global politics.

What’s ‘critical’ about critical approaches to security?

One of the key dimensions of critical approaches to security is their desire to challenge the conventions of Security Studies research. Critical approaches to security endeavour to challenge and unsettle anything that is taken for granted in the research process, including their own assumptions and politics. The process and publication of research is a fundamental knowledge practice, and therefore is inherently political, a view shared by all of the authors in this volume. Before I turn to discuss the contents of this book, therefore, I want to comment briefly on the issue of ‘critique’. In explaining what’s ‘critical’ about critical approaches to security, we might first wish to examine the concept of ‘theory’, which I mentioned briefly at the beginning of this chapter.

To situate this discussion, we can revisit the foundation of IR as an academic discipline, a discipline that considers itself to be part of the social *sciences*, and which therefore has

conventionally had a very definite view on what constitutes an appropriate theoretical approach to the study of IRs:

For the last forty years the academic discipline of IRs has been dominated by positivism. Positivism has involved a commitment to a unified view of science, and the adoption of methodologies of the natural sciences to explain the social world.

(Smith 1996: 11)

Despite over a decade having passed since Steve Smith wrote that IR ‘has been dominated by positivism’, his words still ring true. Adherence to the tenets of positivism – empiricism (the belief that reliable and ‘true’ knowledge can only be generated through rigorous and value-free observation of evidence), progressivism (the idea that social science knowledge exists to further the progression of humankind), a commitment to a secular humanist philosophy and a belief in the unity of scientific method (see Halfpenny 2001: 372–373) – had ensured that IR as a discipline has retained a very narrow view of what constitutes an appropriate theoretical approach to the subject and a similarly narrow view of what constitute appropriate research methods. Theories in IR, and in conventional Security Studies, have tended to be *foundationalist* (i.e. theories that assume there is an objective reality to the social world that exists independent of our perception, which acts as the foundation for our knowledge claims) and methods have tended to be *quantitative* (although as Laura Sjoberg and Jeffrey Horowitz point out in Chapter 9 of this book, the distinction between qualitative and quantitative methods is often over-emphasized).

In the 1980s, however, discussion about the dominance of positivism emerged into the mainstream of IR literature with the publication of an important article by Yosef Lapid (1989) titled ‘The Third Debate: On the Prospects of International Theory in a Post-Positivist Era’, and there followed extensive deliberation of the possibilities of ‘post-positivist’ approaches in IR, and by association, in Security Studies. While contributors to this debate were not agreed upon various aspects of ‘post-positivism’ nor necessarily on its ‘value’ over positivism (hence the existence of debate), there was some consensus on the ‘shared sense of *critical* purpose which binds together the scholarship of those otherwise differentiated by disciplinary training, emphasis and style’ (George 1989: 269–270, emphasis added). Both IR and Security Studies have continued to wrestle with these debates, questioning whose knowledge counts as knowledge, how reliable are various different methods of generating knowledge, what (if any) are the ‘facts’ on which scholars can base their theories of contemporary global and security politics. As Smith later explained, ‘[t]he stakes are high in such a debate . . . because of its [positivism’s] role in underpinning theory and, ultimately, serving as the criterion for judging between theory’ (1996: 12–13).

The ‘third debate’, as it became known, has illustrated the imbrication of politics in theory. That is, it illustrated that theory is always political, because it always involves claims about knowledge. Far from being ‘objective’ and ‘value-free’, post-positivists (as this group became known, although ‘anti-positivist’ might be more accurate) argued that ‘theory is always for someone, and for some purpose’ (Cox 1986: 207). Since the 1980s there has been a proliferation of different approaches to the study of security politics that have all, in some way, challenged the positivist conceptualization of theory as an explanatory tool, separate from and not implicated in the political processes of everyday life. This series of challenges led to a corollary series of debates about how we should conceive of ‘theory’ in IR, which I do not have space to discuss here. However, despite their variety, the different critical theories are minimally united in their recognition of the implication of theory in the constitution of what

we recognize as ‘everyday life’ (for an excellent discussion of the various conceptualizations of theory see Zalewski 1996) and the need to challenge and question these constitutive processes. This questioning is what makes critical approaches ‘critical’ and also makes sense of their variety:

It is not pluralism without purpose, but a *critical* pluralism, designed to reveal embedded power and authority structures, provoke critical scrutiny of dominant discourses, empower marginalized populations and perspectives, and provide a basis for alternative conceptualizations.

(Biersteker 1989: 264, emphasis in original)

As I recognize that this book also contains a plurality of voices, in the remainder of this section, I provide a very brief sketch of the book as a whole and explain how the different chapters fit together.

Part 1: Theories

The first part of the book (Chapters 2–8) is devoted to the discussion of theories. While a theory (or package of ideas that you believe in) about the world might result in certain *methodological* commitments, it will not necessarily provide you with methods – or devices – to collect and analyse data. Theories, therefore, are perhaps best thought of as more or less coherent representations of the world that enable you to make sense of the world in all its messy complexity. In Chapter 2, for example, I explain what it means to take a feminist approach to security and show how security policies and practices make sense when we take seriously the idea that gender matters. The way that I see the world leads me to believe that ‘assumptions about bodies are intrinsically, inherently related to the study and practices of global politics, because *global politics is studied and practiced by gendered bodies*’ (Shepherd 2010a: 6, emphasis in original). Chapter 3 discusses human security as an approach, which was defined by the UN Development Program as ‘safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression’ (UNDP 1994: 23) and has been described as ‘a potential response to the growing insecurity of security’ (McDonald 2002: 227). Natalie Florea Hudson, Alex Kreidenweis and Charli Carpenter discuss human security through the lens of human trafficking to show how multiple sources of insecurity affect the lived experiences of much of the world today.

In Chapter 4, Emma Foster highlights the ways in which conceiving of the earth as the referent object of security policy and practice fundamentally shifts the way that we think about (how) security matters in contemporary global politics. ‘[E]nvironmental change may increase the risk of violent conflict, [undermine] the territorial integrity and economic growth of states, and [create] human insecurity’ (Barnett 2010: 123), but as Foster suggests, there is more to green security theory than this account, which remains anthropocentric (i.e. it still places the human subject at the centre of its concerns about security and the environment).

Jonna Nyman provides a critical account of securitization theory in Chapter 5 of this book, drawing on Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde’s (1998) *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, as it represents something of a ‘bridge-building’ exercise between objectivist and interpretivist (‘positivist’ and ‘post-positivist’) approaches. This highly influential text attempts to extend the ‘sectoral’ approach to security mapped out in earlier work (Wæver *et al.* 1993) that identifies security politics and practice across a range of sectors:

military, political, economic, societal and environmental. Nyman uses the case study of the ‘Unocal affair’ to show how securitization theory can be operationalized in a research project.

Some scholars have claimed that the ‘concrete utopias’ (Wyn Jones 2005) offered by the body of theory sometimes known as the Welsh (or Aberystwyth) School of Critical Security Studies constitute security. Soumita Basu and João Nunes engage with this conceptualization of security in Chapter 6. Their chapter illustrates the insights and transformative potential of Ken Booth’s (1991) formulation of Security as Emancipation (SAE). Drawing on Frankfurt School, and more broadly (neo)Marxist, insights regarding the progressive potential of immanent critique and the power of people as agents of their own emancipation, SAE places the focus squarely on the political elites who create and perpetuate systemic inequality and violence, including states and state proxies. In their analysis of the industrial accident in Bhopal, India, in 1984, Basu and Nunes show how the material realities of inclusion and exclusion, of privilege bestowed and denied to communities of people (particularly class communities and the economic core and periphery, in both local and global terms), can be identified as matters of security.

Anthony Burke, in Chapter 7, investigates the ways in which discourses of security reproduce narratives of identity and ontology – a sense of being in the world – and explores the performance not only of sovereign states as bounded territorial entities, but also of international institutions and the ‘international community’. A post-structural approach ‘rests on the assumption that representations of the world make a difference . . . and that there is no natural or neutral arbiter of a true representation’ (Huysmans 2002: 50). Violences and threats, as much as states and in/security, are interpreted through the practices that enable individuals to make sense of their social locations and identities. In contrast to Steven Walt’s charge – levelled against post-structural approaches to IR and Security Studies – that ‘issues of war and peace are too important for the field to be diverted into a prolix and self-indulgent discourse that is divorced from the real world’ (Walt 1991: 223), post-structural analyses of in/security problematize the ways in which ‘the real world’ comes to be recognized as such, and argue that ‘security . . . is first and foremost a performative discourse constitutive of political order’ (Campbell 1998a: 199).

Efforts to think through a post-colonial theory of security often begin from a similar premise, as explained in Chapter 8 by Shampa Biswas in her analysis of nuclear weapons proliferation and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (1968). In post-colonial theories of security, scholars draw attention to the ways in which conventional accounts of security unproblematically derive their ‘core categories and assumptions about world politics from a particular understanding of European experience’ (Barkawi and Laffey 2006: 330). Many critical approaches to security think security Otherwise and in doing so skilfully remind us that what we take to be the ‘realities’ of security according to orthodox accounts (the state, the desire for survival, the existence of external threat and the need to pursue policies of self-help) can be seen differently.

Part 2: Methods

In the second part of the book, the chapter authors discuss a range of techniques for the collection and analysis of data (although these sometimes overlap). In Chapter 9, Laura Sjoberg and Jeffrey Horowitz discuss the distinction between qualitative and quantitative methods of collection and analysis, where the former collects data that is not reducible or reduced to numbers and analyses it using interpretative techniques and the latter quantifies

the data with which it is concerned. They argue that quantitative methods of data collection and analysis are not necessarily prohibited for those pursuing critical projects in Security Studies, and use the case of economic sanctions against Iran analysed through game-theoretical modelling to show how quantitative techniques can achieve critical outcomes.

Chapters 10–13 discuss various devices for gathering qualitative data. Marc Froese uses archival research in his investigation of historical security policy in Canada in Chapter 10, while Chapter 11 provides an overview of the ethnographic techniques used by Cai Wilkinson during research on political protest movements in Kyrgyzstan. Elizabeth Shannon Wheatley and Eric Hartmann offer a nuanced and challenging account of participatory action research in New Mexico that focuses on migration in Chapter 12 and, in Chapter 13, Ruth Blakeley explains the tensions inherent in interviewing policy-makers and political elites involved in the formation of security policy in the USA. Through insights into the ways in which the chapter authors have enacted these devices in their own research, these chapters offer a number of strategies of data collection that can be operationalized in independent research, while acknowledging the pitfalls and limitations of each.

The book's discussion of data analysis begins in Chapter 14 with Oz Hassan's explanation of how to use computer software packages such as *NVivo* and *DiscoverText*, which allow the researcher to analyse large amounts of qualitative data (such as field notes, interviews or speeches, which may run to many hundreds of pages) with relative ease. Hassan draws on his own research into the 'Freedom Agenda' to show how computer-assisted qualitative data analysis creates the possibility for critical scholars to draw on a wealth of qualitative data while retaining a commitment to interpretative work. Raluca Soreanu and Anca Simionca provide a very different approach to analysis in Chapter 15; their discussion of social network analysis also uses computer modelling to construct images of social networks and they work through the example of the relationship between the USA and North Korea to illustrate the potential of this technique.

In Chapter 16, Linda Åhäll and Stefan Borg use the popular television series *24* to show how analytical devices derived from post-structural Security Studies (in this case, the analysis of predication, presupposition and subject-positioning) can illuminate the logics that organize a given text. This discussion is extended in Chapter 17 by Penny Griffin, who draws specifically on the works of French philosopher Jacques Derrida to explain deconstruction. Griffin uses her research on the 'global financial crisis' to show how a deconstructive approach can be put to work in critical Security Studies. The final chapter on data analysis is by Cerwyn Moore and Chris Farrands; in Chapter 18 they discuss visual analysis and the ways in which an approach derived from an appreciation of aesthetic dimensions of security can lend power to critical approaches.

Lee Jarvis offers a summary of the process, practices and ethics of research in Chapter 19, encouraging us all as researchers to take seriously the political and ethical dimensions of the work that we do. All chapters, including Chapter 19, offer questions for further debate and suggestions for further reading, while the companion website (www.routledge.com/cw/Shepherd) not only hosts links to chapter-specific websites but also has seminar exercises for each chapter available to download.

Why we should care about methodology

To my mind, the question of how we (think we) know what we (think we) know is always the most directly political, and all of the chapters in this volume engage in some way with this question. Whether the discussion relates to the theoretical framework supporting research on

a given topic, or the methodological decisions and techniques used in the undertaking of that research, each contribution to this textbook takes seriously the need to account for the politics of knowledge production. We all hope that you will not only find these discussions interesting and thought-provoking but also that they will assist you as you seek to make your own interventions in debates about security in contemporary global politics.

This book hopes to encourage all those who engage with it to enhance their curiosity about the study and practices of security politics. Challenging the assumptions of conventional theories and approaches, unsettling that which was previously taken for granted – these are among the ways in which such a curiosity works. In turn, we assume that you are as curious about security politics as we are and intend, either now or in the future, to contribute to the development of new knowledge about matters of security in contemporary global politics.

How you do this is ultimately up to you, and there is no ‘right answer’. This book will hopefully enable you to devise your *own* answer as well as making you aware of the multiple possibilities that exist. As mentioned above, we see this critical pluralism as a good and productive thing. After all, little unites the research undertaken by the contributors to this volume other than a commitment to critique, as explained above. The process of critique is inherently political and

is concerned with assumptions, limits, their historical production, social and political effects and the possibility of going beyond them in thought and action. That [process] is something that takes place every day in a multitude of sites, including our own classrooms, intellectual labours, texts, lives, social interactions and public commitments.

(Campbell 2005: 133)

The contributors to this volume encourage you to develop your own ‘ethos of political criticism’ (Campbell 2005: 133) and hope that this book goes some way towards helping you do so.

Note

- 1 In this chapter, and in the book as a whole, we follow usual practice of referring to the political practices, processes, and negotiations that occur in the realm of the ‘international’ using lower case letters (‘international relations’) and capitalizing the initial letters when referring to the academic discipline that studies these ‘relations’ (‘International Relations’).

Part 1

Theories

How do we see the world?

2 Feminist security studies

Laura J. Shepherd

Chapter summary

This chapter uses the case study of rape in war to explore the ways in which gender matters to contemporary critical approaches to security. After providing an overview of the theories of gender that might support Feminist Security Studies (FSS) research, I outline the case study and discuss the issue of rape in war through the lenses of different feminist theories. I conclude by commenting briefly on the limitations of employing a FSS approach.

Learning outcomes

On completion, readers should be able to:

- provide a persuasive analysis of the claim that ‘gender is not a synonym for women’ (Carver 1996);
- explain what it means to see gender as ‘not only a noun . . . and a verb . . . but also a *logic*’ in Security Studies (Shepherd 2010a: 5, emphasis added);
- demonstrate the strengths and limitations of a feminist approach to security.

Introduction

In 1996, Terrell Carver published the highly influential book, *Gender is Not a Synonym for Women*, in which he suggested that ‘[i]n many contexts one finds that a reference to gender is a reference to women, as if men, males, and masculinities were all unproblematic in that regard – or perhaps simply nothing to do with gender at all’ (1996: 5). Carver goes on to argue that gender ‘has also become a euphemism for sex, that is, male or female, M or F, man or woman, as biologically, socially, and legally defined’ (Carver 1996: 5), by which he means that people (including academics, activists, advocates, policy-makers, practitioners – basically everyone involved in the practices of global politics) might *say* ‘gender’ but they *mean* either ‘women’ or ‘biological sex’. In this chapter, I proceed from the understanding that both of these slippages – from gender to ‘women’ and from gender to ‘sex’ – are problematic, and that illuminating the ways in which such slippages occur in order to challenge them is part of what Feminist Security Studies (FSS) aims to do.

There is much debate about what FSS is and no easy answer to that question. (There are also other questions that are similarly tricky: What is its research agenda? Its methodologies? Its ‘contribution’ to knowledge in the field of critical approaches to security?) There are basically two ways in which gender is treated in FSS: on the one hand, gender can be treated

as a variable; and on the other hand, it can be seen as a noun/verb/logic. To treat gender as a variable means to treat it as a stable descriptor of identity (effectively, to conflate it with sex) and to examine whether gender identity has an impact on security politics and practices. In an excellent example of this type of research, Mary Caprioli and Mark Boyer (2001) analyse whether female leaders are more or less likely to pursue aggressive foreign and security policies in times of crises.

They acknowledge that the data available regarding the militarism of women in political power is too limited to extrapolate general findings, but they integrate the variable of gender (whether the state leader in question is male or female) into a broader study of whether higher levels of domestic gender equality correlate with more aggressive policy decisions made by ‘crisis actors’ (state leaders). Crucially, ‘the presence of a female leader increases the severity of violence in a crisis’ in the data analysed (Caprioli and Boyer 2001: 514), but the authors are careful to note that this should not be taken as evidence of a general tendency (Caprioli and Boyer 2001: 516). They do conclude, rather more robustly, that ‘a domestic norm of tolerance and equality . . . seems to be mirrored in states’ international behaviour at least with respect to the level of violence used during international crises’ (Caprioli and Boyer 2001: 516). The decision to treat gender as a variable has been represented both as strategic (see Carpenter 2006: 6–10) and as common sense, in that it ‘enhances [the] explanatory capabilities’ of FSS (Caprioli 2004: 266).

This approach is not unproblematic, however, and its critics ‘argue that there is epistemic violence in “nonfeminist” approaches to gender and security’ (Carver 2003; Kinsella 2003; Zalewski 2003 cited in Sjoberg and Martin 2010). By ‘epistemic violence’ these authors mean that treating gender as a variable has a negative effect on what – and how – we can *know* about gender in contemporary global politics, with ‘epistemic’ coming from the Greek word *ἐπιστήμη* meaning knowledge. In short, those that treat gender as a noun/verb/logic argue that FSS needs to retain a commitment to recognising that the gender ‘variable’ can only provide very limited insights into the power relations that organise human behaviour, while seeing gender as a noun/verb/logic entails recognising that *gender itself is a power relation*. That is, gender is a noun (a word that we use to name identity categories), but it is also a verb (as we can ‘gender’ Security Studies in order to illuminate the ways in which various security politics and practices rely on logics of gender) and a logic (because it acts within our cognitive frameworks to attribute certain characteristics to certain objects and subjects and also to posit relationships between them). On the basis of the characteristics and relationships posited by the logics of gender, we make judgements about our social realities.

To think through the implications of gender as a noun/verb/logic, imagine that you were in a public place and you wanted to wash your hands. You look around you and see two doors bearing the signs shown in Figure 2.1. Which door do you go through? If you have an answer to that question, then you know that gender works as a noun (e.g. we name bodies ‘male’ and ‘female’, and behaviours ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’) and also as a verb, because in this instance your decision about where to wash your hands is *gendered* – it is a decision you make on the basis of the figure with which you have learned to identify. Gender is a logic because the figure on the door that you eventually go through might not actually bear any resemblance to the way that you actually look but you understand that you are expected to recognise yourself in one sign or the other *and then behave accordingly*. While where you wash your hands might not seem at first to have anything to do with Security Studies, we can extend these ideas and examine the ways in which assumptions about gender organise security politics, practices and behaviours in contemporary global politics, and, through doing so, explore the strengths and limitations of FSS.

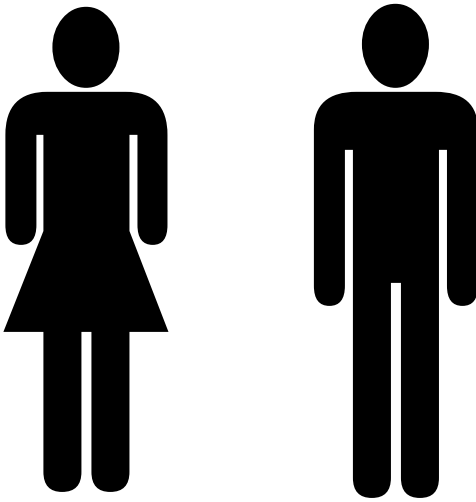


Figure 2.1 Common signs for female and male.

Source: Reproduced from Wikimedia Commons, American Institute of Graphic Artists (AIGA) images in the public domain.

Different theories of gender

You have certain ideas about how your body organises your social behaviour (not only where you wash your hands but also what you wear/study/do in your leisure time and how you interact socially/professionally/sexually with people around you); feminist scholars have organised their ideas about how bodies organise behaviour into a number of theories of gender. Any typology of theory is necessarily partial and runs the risk of not only creating arbitrary divisions in a field of knowledge but also making the differences between theories seem greater than the similarities. With the caveat in place that all feminist theories agree that gender matters in global politics, although they might disagree on how, and why, and under what circumstances this manifests, we can consider theories of gender as broadly falling into three categories: essentialist, constructivist, and post-structuralist. These different theories offer different explanations of the relationship between body and behaviour, and in this section I discuss them each briefly because before beginning an investigation supported by a feminist theoretical framework, it is important to identify what kind of feminist theoretical framework you find useful.

Academic literature often discusses feminist theories in terms of their feminist prefix (e.g. radical feminism, standpoint feminism, ecofeminism and so on; see Table 2.1), but I find it more useful to stay with the relationship between bodies and behaviour because it does not presume prior knowledge about, for example, what is ‘radical’ about radical feminism or what ‘standpoint’ means. The categories I use explain different ways in which bodies come to matter in the world. The first of these categories, essentialism, is in many ways the most straightforward as it posits a directional relationship between body and behaviour. Essentialist theories of gender suggest that you are born into your body and your body is then designated a sex identity on the basis of its physical characteristics: you are *either* female (‘F’) *or* male (‘M’). According to this theory, your sex category determines significant aspects of your social

Table 2.1 Mapping theories of gender to feminist approaches

<i>Theory of gender</i>	<i>Feminist approaches</i>	<i>Relationship of body to behaviour</i>
Essentialist theories of gender	Inform some liberal feminist approaches, some radical feminist approaches.	sex = gender
Constructivist theories of gender	Inform some liberal feminist approaches, some radical feminist approaches, most standpoint feminist approaches, most feminist critical theory	sex = biological gender = social
Post-structuralist theories of gender	Inform feminist postmodernist approaches, most feminist postcolonial approaches	gender = sex

behaviour. If you are designated F, you are more likely to be nurturing, attached and emotionally attuned; if you are M, you are more likely to be assertive (if not aggressive), calculative and rational. These behaviours – and many others, including one’s propensity for militarism, capacity for leadership and skills at peace-building, all of which are implicated in the study of security – are seen to inhere in the bodies of the individuals. That is, each type of body (M and F) is seen to have a specific set of characteristics and behaviours that is *essential* to it. In this way, we can see how essentialist theories of gender effectively collapse gender into sex as categories of analysis, because what they call sex (the F or M descriptor) determines what they call gender (the social behaviours).

Constructivist theories of gender, on the other hand, see sex (M/F) as a biological marker of identity but conceive of behaviours as *socially constructed*. From this perspective, while you may be born F or M, there is no essential or necessary way in which this will determine your behaviour. Instead, you learn how to behave properly through a lengthy process of socialisation, according to your society’s ideas about appropriate behaviour for M bodies and F bodies. You learn, for example, that girls like the colour pink and play with dolls, while boys like blue and play with cars. You also learn the penalties for transgressing socially constructed gender logics.

Constructivist theories of gender provide us with a further component of vocabulary to use in the discussion of FSS: the concepts of ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’. Traditionally, the descriptors ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ have referred to behaviours rather than bodies and, further, have captured the way in which behaviour is influenced by gender. Because there is no deterministic link between sex and gender, constructivist theories of gender allow for F bodies with masculine appearances and behaviours and vice versa. At the thin end of the constructivist spectrum,¹ feminist scholars tend to assume that *most* M bodies have masculine appearances/behaviours and *most* F bodies have feminine appearances/behaviours: that this is what is ‘normal’, it is the norm. Meanwhile, at the thick end of the constructivist spectrum, more variety is allowed, to the extent that scholars begin to question the utility of the F/M distinction at all.

Here is where post-structuralist theories of gender come in. Where essentialist theories of gender collapse gender into sex, post-structuralist theories effectively do the reverse: they collapse sex into gender. Post-structuralist theories of gender do not see the (M/F) body as having any meaning at all prior to its emergence into a particular ‘discursive context’. That is to say, these approaches suggest that we make sense of bodies and ascribe them meaning (F/M) *as a result of* ideas that we have about gender: the body is not ontologically prior to

gendered discourses but rather is gendered as/through part of those discourses. Put simply: first, we call different shaped bodies ‘M’ and ‘F’ because we have learned to identify the different shapes as ‘M’ and ‘F’ (there is nothing inherent (or *essential*) in the body that makes it have the label we give it); and second, ‘M’ and ‘F’ are meaningful labels because we have learned that we can use them to make sense of different shaped bodies.

Judith Butler is probably the most well-known feminist post-structuralist and she explains this perspective as follows:

Sexual difference . . . is never simply a function of material differences . . . The category of ‘sex’ is, from the start, normative; it is what Foucault has called a ‘regulatory ideal’. In this sense, then, ‘sex’ not only functions as a norm but is part of the regulatory practice that produces the bodies it governs. . . . In other words, ‘sex’ is an ideal construct which is forcibly materialized through time.

(Butler 1993: 1)

In Butler’s example, a baby is born and ‘forcibly’ gendered: s/he is given a ‘sex’ based on the ideas we currently have in society about what the bodies of different sexes look like. This ‘founding interpellation’ – the naming of an infant ‘boy’ or ‘girl’ at birth – is then reiterated throughout that individual’s life, as s/he grows from an infant into a ‘woman’ or ‘man’ and is continually asked to reaffirm that s/he is M or F, both formally (when applying for travel documents, a driver’s license or a bank account) and informally (when deciding what to wear or, to return to the example given above, which public bathroom to use). ‘Discrete genders are part of what “humanizes” individuals within contemporary culture; indeed we regularly punish those who fail to do their gender right’ (Butler [1990] 1999: 178). In short, we are recognisable as human because we are gendered, and gender discourses organise every aspect of our lived experience, up to and including the meaning we make of our bodies.

Now that I have discussed, albeit briefly, the three core categories of gender theories, I turn my attention to the specific security issue that I will use to illustrate the utility of feminist approaches to security: the issue of rape in war. The following section draws inspiration from Cynthia Enloe again (see Box 2.1), and asks: How can we make feminist sense of security, using the case study of rape in war?

Rape in war

The vehicle I have chosen for illustrating the insights of FSS is rape in war: the perpetration of sexual violence during periods of armed conflict. Rape in war is multidimensional and its perpetration, prevention and punishment raise a complex set of issues. The United Nations has recently begun to make a concerted effort to streamline its policy responses in this arena, subsequent to rape in war being formally recognised as an issue critical to international peace and security by the United Nations Security Council, with the passing of UNSC Resolution 1820 (2008). The first operative paragraph of this resolution:

Stresses that sexual violence, when used or commissioned as a tactic of war in order to deliberately target civilians or as a part of a widespread or systematic attack against civilian populations, can significantly exacerbate situations of armed conflict and may impede the restoration of international peace and security.

(UNSC 2008: OP1)

Box 2.1 Cynthia Enloe – Making Feminist Sense of Security

Politicising everyday practices, including security practices, or rather, demanding that such everyday practices should be recognised *as* political, is a core aspect of feminist security studies, and is exemplified in the work of Cynthia Enloe.

In the early 1980s, Enloe began asking the questions for which she has become rightly acknowledged as a key figure in FSS, including *Does Khaki Become You?* (1983) and ‘where are the women?’ ([1989] 2000).

The ground-breaking analysis of the gendered politics of militarism presented in *Khaki* laid the foundations for a vibrant and multidisciplinary body of feminist scholarship that engages in unpicking the complex tangle of formal political practices, industrial development, economics, masculinism and mythology that are encapsulated in the term ‘security studies’.

Inspired by her own curiosity about the roles played by women and the functions performed by gender in the militarisation of civilian life, Enloe explores prostitution, marriage, welfare and war-making with an eye to the representation (both political and symbolic) of women.

In *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* ([1989] 2000), perhaps the text for which she is most well-known, Enloe puts her ‘feminist curiosity’ (see Enloe 2004: 3–4) to work, providing the reader with a series of vignettes that function to complicate easy readings of everyday situations, from the beaches central to tourist industry to the diplomatic wives stationed on military bases. All these activities, she argues, constitute international relations, and she concludes that ‘the personal is international’ (Enloe [1989] 2000: 195). This fundamental insight underpins much contemporary FSS scholarship, as it seeks to understand just how the quest for security can render so many individuals insecure. In her own words:

‘The international is personal’ implies that governments depend upon certain kinds of allegedly private relationships in order to conduct their foreign affairs. Governments need more than secrecy and intelligence agencies; they need wives who are willing to provide their diplomatic husbands with unpaid services so those men can develop trusting relationships with other diplomatic husbands. They need not only military hardware, but a steady supply of women’s sexual services to convince their soldiers that they are manly. To operate in the international arena, governments seek other governments’ recognition of their sovereignty; but they also depend on ideas about masculinized dignity and feminized sacrifice to sustain that sense of autonomous nationhood. . . . [I]nvestigations of how international politics rely on manipulations of masculinity and femininity suggest that the *conventional approaches to making sense of inter-state relations are superficial.*

(Enloe [1989] 2000: 196–197, emphasis added)

Excerpt based on previously published work (Shepherd 2010b).

Further, the creation of the post of United Nations Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict in 2010 pursuant to UNSC Res. 1888 (2009) suggests that financial and political resources will continue to flow towards this issue area in the future, and as critical scholars of security it behoves us therefore to seek to understand more about a topic that, at

first glance, may seem unrelated to 'serious' security business of counter-terrorism, military strategy or containing nuclear proliferation.

Feminist work on rape in war is multidisciplinary (as is most – if not all – feminist work) and many of the scholars I refer to here would not necessarily consider themselves to be located in or contributing to the discipline of International Relations, where, as discussed in the introduction to this book, we normally situate Security Studies. Part of the strength of feminist work, however, derives from its multidisciplinaryity; just as feminist theorists insisted that 'the personal is political' (and we need therefore to add insights from sociology, cultural studies and anthropology to political theory and political science), Enloe has shown us that 'the personal is international' ([1989] 2000: 195, see Box 2.1), suggesting that one of the primary strengths of FSS is the ways in which it can illuminate the complex interrelationships of local, national and global scales implicated in the study of security concerns. As both an instance of interpersonal violence and a war crime, rape in war offers the opportunity to explore a security issue with which FSS is engaged and to demonstrate conclusively that 'the concept, nature and practice of gender are key' (Zalewski 1996: 341). In this section, I take the issue of rape in war and analyse it from three different theoretical positions that broadly map on to the three theories of gender outlined above. These are all useful analytical frames that have various strengths and limitations, as will become clear as I proceed with the discussion. The frames envision rape in war as: first, 'violence against women'; second, 'gender violence'; and third, 'the violent reproduction of gender' (Box 2.2).

The first approach I discuss here is compatible with an essentialist theory of gender, as it proceeds from the assumption that being born into a body designated F (or M) will largely define your lived experiences. According to this perspective, rape in war occurs as a result of the inherent power imbalance between men and women such that women are, in the majority, subordinate to men. One of the ways in which this subordination manifests is through rape. During 'peace time', however we might wish to define that phase, men are disinclined to perpetrate rape as a result of the construction of rape as a crime and the likely punitive consequences that would flow from being found guilty of such a crime. During periods of conflict, with the frequent and widespread breakdown of civil, social and juridical forms of order, such prohibitions are removed and men therefore rape women in war because they can.

Rape in war is fundamentally, according to this perspective, an issue of power: men have power over women and rape is a manifestation of this power. This perspective focuses exclusively on female victims of rape in war, as alluded to in the naming of this frame as 'violence against women'. While the existence of male rape survivors would not be denied, this view of rape in war is influenced so strongly by the assumption that men have power and women do not; that male rape is marginalised, with male rape victims assumed to be a tiny minority of total rape victims in any given conflict. Statistically, however, as shown in Box 2.2, one relevant study suggests that the gender gap may not be that significant, with 51 per cent of women reporting at least one incidence of rape during the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo compared with 21 per cent of men (Johnson *et al.* 2010: 557). When the terms of inquiry are changed from rape to 'conflict-related sexual violence', the percentage gap narrows even further, with 74 per cent of women and 65 per cent of men reporting that they had experienced such violation (Johnson *et al.* 2010).

On the one hand, this perspective, through its insistence that the rape of women during periods of armed conflict must be prevented where possible and punished where perpetrated, has been quite influential in efforts to ensure that rape in war is treated by the

Box 2.2 Rape in war

Eleven rebels waited in a queue and raped Jean Paul in turn. When he was too exhausted to hold himself up, the next attacker would wrap his arm under Jean Paul's hips and lift him by the stomach. He bled freely: "Many, many, many bleeding", he says, "I could feel it like water". Each of the male prisoners was raped 11 times that night and every night that followed. . . . Today, despite his hospital treatment, Jean Paul still bleeds when he walks. Like many victims, the wounds are such that he's supposed to restrict his diet to soft foods such as bananas, which are expensive, and Jean Paul can only afford maize and millet. His brother keeps asking what's wrong with him. "I don't want to tell him", says Jean Paul. "I fear he will say: 'Now, my brother is not a man.'"

Congolese rape survivor quoted in Storr 2011

There was also another rape on a young single girl aged 17: M. was raped by six men in front of her house in front of her mother.

H., a 35-year-old Fur man from Mukjar, Sudan, quoted in Amnesty International (2004: 11)

They took K.M., who is 12 years old in the open air. Her father was killed by the Janjawid in Um Baru, the rest of the family ran away and she was captured by the Janjawid who were on horse back. More than six people used her as a wife; she stayed with the Janjawid and the military more than 10 days. K., another woman who is married, aged 18, ran away but was captured by the Janjawid who slept with her in the open place, all of them slept with her.

A., a farmer from Kutum, Sudan, quoted in Amnesty International (2004: 12)

Based on current population estimates in our sample area [of North and South Kivu provinces and the Ituri district in the DRC], 1.31 million . . . women and 0.76 million . . . men are survivors of sexual violence.

Johnson et al. (2010: 561)

These narrative and statistical accounts of rape in war make for painful reading but provide a stark reminder of why we urgently need to understand the ways in which gender is implicated and mobilised in situations of armed conflict.

international community as a serious security concern (see e.g. Amnesty International's *Stop Violence Against Women* campaign). On the other hand, according to this perspective, concerned as it is with violence against *women*, resources flowing in to violence prevention schemes and post-conflict medical care, counselling and social reintegration should 'naturally' be aimed at the amelioration of *women's* suffering. Following the logic of this perspective, women should be protected and men punished, which may have problematic implications both for women's agency and the sensitive treatment of male rape survivors.

The second perspective that deals with rape in war as a manifestation of 'gender violence' is able to counter some of these concerns, although through its delivery of a more nuanced and contextualised investigation into the various experience of rape survivors, both male and female, it does not necessarily enjoy the same degree of policy effectiveness. Policy generally

seeks the clearest, simplest message to communicate to stakeholders; for instance, the recent UN campaign *Stop Rape Now* is a good example of a campaign title that does not invoke women (although both of the public service announcement videos on the homepage of the website talk only of female victims and rape survivors). The approach that conceives of rape in war as gender violence still conceptualises such acts as one of the ways in which power inequalities are enacted but because this approach does not assume that *all* men have power over *all* women there is space within this account to conceive of both women and men as both victims and perpetrators of violence.

With regard to the genocides in Rwanda in 1994, for example, the United Nations Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights reported that, despite the fact that there were ‘no statistics to give, if not an accurate idea of numbers, at least an approximate one’ (UN 1996: Art. 16), it was estimated that between 250,000 and 500,000 women were raped (UN 1996: Art. 16). Women were victims in this conflict, but they were also perpetrators. Adam Jones (2002) mentions several such women, including Pauline Nyiramasuhuko, Minister of Family and Women’s Development under former President Habyarimana, ‘the first woman ever to be charged with rape as a crime against humanity’ (Landesman 2002) as a direct result of her role in inciting militia to rape Tutsi women:

[O]ne of the most recognizable figures in Rwanda routinely travelled throughout Butare in a Peugeot van, using her son as her driver. From a loud speaker, she incited the killing of Tutsi men and the rape and murder of Tutsi women.

(Sperling 2005–2006: 649)

In their nuanced analysis of women’s violence in global politics, Sjoberg and Gentry suggest that ‘the choice to sensationalize them [stories about the roles women played] above and beyond the stories of the majority of (male) genocidaires creates a skewed gender picture of the genocide’ (2007: 160). While I recognise, and am sympathetic toward, the intellectual agenda behind this claim (which is, as I understand it, to highlight and challenge the representation of women’s violence as somehow worse, more horrific and more shocking than male violence), it is important to draw attention to the fact that women can – and have – played an active role in systematic rape in war as the obverse is equally crucial: that men can be – and have been – systematically raped in war.

According to this perspective, combatting rape in war requires thoughtful and systematic interventions to ensure both prevention and punishment. The UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict and chair of UN Action, Wallström, recently argued, in her briefing to the UN Security Council, that ‘[w]hen law and order collapses, rape should be automatically included in contingency plans’ (2010: 3), before outlining her agenda for change, which includes such measures as enhanced coordination between agencies, ending impunity for perpetrators of rape and, crucially, further developing prevention strategies by increasing data-gathering activities in order to ‘prepare an early-warning matrix of risk factors to sound the alarm from the ground up’ (2010: 5). Prevention strategies might include, for example, ensuring that all stakeholders make a contribution to planning the layout and management of refugee camps (recognising that different groups are likely to need use of and access to different parts of the camp at different times and simultaneously recognising that adequate lighting and effective security patrols must be in place), and ensuring that all survivors of conflict have access to a same-sex health care practitioner with whom they can develop a rapport (recognising that sexual violence may be difficult for an individual to disclose and therefore difficult to seek treatment for). Acknowledging that rape in war affects

both women and men, and recognising that both women and men can be perpetrators, ensures that relevant actors can put in place nuanced policy initiatives that do not marginalise male victims of sexual violence nor assume that women are incapable of such violence simply by virtue of their femininity.

The final perspective on rape in war is on one level a more theoretical intervention, as it conceives of rape as a site at which gender identities are reproduced, hence my framing of this account as ‘the violent reproduction of gender’. Whereas both of the perspectives above assume that the gendered subject exists as a stable entity, this perspective, following from the post-structural theory of gender outlined above, sees rape as a part of gender performance; according to this view rape is one aspect of the ways in which gender identity is ‘forcibly materialized through time’ (Butler 1993: 1). This perspective helps explain why rape in war is endemic; as noted by Wallström ‘from the way sexual violence spans history, the burden of proof in war-time should be on those who suggest rape is not rampant’ (2010: 3) and those invested in its prevention and eventual punishment need to address the question of *how* such wide-spread intimate violations become commonplace. Scholars interested in ‘the violent reproduction of gender’ suggest that the core explanatory factor is gender itself: the ways in which societies reward and punish different forms of behaviour depending on the bodies that perform those behaviours; and the prevalence of a fixed and dimorphic conceptualisation of gendered identities (this is simply the assumption that humans can easily be divided into two discrete categories: *di* meaning ‘two’ and *morphic* meaning ‘shape’).

In terms of punishment and prevention, then, this account engages at both the empirical and the theoretical levels. Empirically, in terms of strategies that can be implemented on the ground, policy recommendations made from within this framework are likely to be similar to those listed above, addressing the needs of both male and female rape survivors through, for example: ending impunity for perpetration of rape in war; enhancing provision of medical care, counselling and social reintegration strategies; and ensuring that as much is known as possible about the specifics of different conflict situations such that a nuanced and contextual policy framework can be formulated and implemented. Theoretically, however, because of its ontological assumptions regarding the representation of gender in policy statements, advocacy documents and other pertinent resources, this approach simultaneously engages with critiques of these discursive artefacts, questioning the ways in which key subjects (such as gender, men, women, rape, violence, empowerment and so on) are articulated and, crucially, the kinds of meanings that are constituted in these artefacts. Simply put, ‘the violent reproduction of gender’ as an analytical lens requires a commitment to iterative critique: engaging with, influencing and helping to shape policy addressing rape in war while simultaneously critiquing the conceptual foundations of such policy and illuminating the ways in which well-intentioned policies can function to solidify the gendered inequalities that they purport to ameliorate.

Limitations of FSS

As will have become clear, FSS scholars believe – and have demonstrated – that to construct an account of security politics and practices *without* paying attention to gender is to construct a very thin and partial account indeed. What, then, are the limitations of FSS? I would venture that there are three possible limitations, two of which are structural and one analytical. The potential analytical limitation is founded on that which makes FSS what it is: the centralisation of gender as a category of analysis frequently precludes centralising other power relations and/or axes of exclusion. Much highly sophisticated work pays attention to

the *intersectionality* of gender and other power relations such as class, race, able-bodiedness, and sexuality (see, for a discussion of intersectionality, McCall 2005) but in (most) academic works that are bound by word length and space limits, there is only so much an author can achieve. Put simply, in choosing to focus on gender, there may be other crucial dynamics in play, organising behaviour and influencing how we make sense of the situation, that get overlooked or marginalised, relegated to footnotes which state that such investigations are necessarily important but are beyond the scope of the study in question. Few feminist scholars would ever suggest that it is acceptable to exclude the study of, for example, race and class in an analysis of post-conflict reconstruction, but many would admit that maintaining a central focus on gender means that these other relations are not centralised in their investigations in the way that they deserve to be. Feminist scholars therefore strive to engage with the ways in which markers of identity, perceived not as descriptors but as relations of power, are co-constitutive and therefore demand recognition of their intersectionality, but this is always an ongoing political project.

The structural limitations are twofold: first is the ‘double burden’ of feminist scholarship; and, second, the (perceived or actual) marginalisation of feminist work in the discipline of International Relations. These limitations refer neither to theoretical or conceptual weaknesses in the theories themselves, nor to the analytical framing of FSS investigations, but to the disciplinary mechanisms (in both senses of the word ‘discipline’) that make feminist work hard work sometimes. Feminist scholars in the cognate disciplines of sociology and anthropology as well as those within politics and IR have written about the ‘double burden’ of productive and reproductive labour, the additional unpaid tasks undertaken by those who also contribute to the formal economy. The academic equivalent is the insistence that feminist scholars of security must ensure that they remain conversant *not only* with cutting-edge feminist research in their particular field of research expertise (post-conflict reconstruction and peace-building, migration, nuclear weapons technologies and so on) *but also* with corollary non-feminist research (as well as keeping up to date with contemporary debates in feminist theory – so we might actually call this a triple burden).

The third and final limitation relates to the ‘double burden’ but extends it beyond research engagement to life within the academy of IR itself, and all associated professional practices: teaching, going to conferences, applying for grant funding and promotions. The idea that FSS is marginalised within the discipline is not new and I present it here as a limitation of FSS not because I think that this marginalisation is something that feminist security scholars have brought upon themselves but rather because it is a limitation in the sense that conducting research supported by feminist theories may impede professional mobility. A senior colleague once advised me not to focus on gender in my next big research project, in order that I be taken more seriously as a theorist of International Relations. In that same conversation, my colleague said many very nice things about the intellectual contribution of my work, suggested that my labelling myself as a feminist scholar would mean that my ideas would not reach many people and saw this as a not insurmountable problem that could easily be resolved by my not being a feminist for the next few years.² This, to me, is neither possible nor desirable, but I do recognise that it has an impact on my professional profile. Just as society in general makes assumptions about, and enforces regulations upon, individual behaviours according to gendered logics, so too does academia, such that feminists are assumed *to be* certain types of people and *to do* certain types of research. Being a feminist obviously creates some opportunities that non-feminist scholars do not have, such as access to ‘the halls of power’ when governance institutions require advice on gender mainstreaming in disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programmes or the gendered implications of security sector

reform, for example (see Halley 2006: 21, though I remain convinced that Halley overstates the extent to which ‘feminism rules’), but being a feminist may also close down opportunities, and this is a limitation of FSS of which scholars of all theoretical persuasions should be aware.

Conclusion

This chapter has used the issue of rape in war as a way of explaining how different feminist approaches to security offer different analytical insights but also of illustrating how FSS is by definition a critical project. Although there are different theories of feminism (that I have grouped into ‘essentialist’, ‘constructivist’ and ‘post-structuralist’) and these different theories have different perspectives on both the function and prevention of violence (which is a topic of central importance to Security Studies), these differences should not be perceived as undermining the utility of applicability of FSS. Instead, they are the source of its vitality. One frequently levelled critique of feminist theories more broadly relates to its diversity; this critique of feminist theories suggests that without a unified vision of what feminism *is* there can be no hope of robust feminist analysis or of successful feminist political projects. I would concur with the many eminent feminist scholars who have written extensively, and persuasively, on the diversity of feminism as its core strength and with Marysia Zalewski, who wrote that ‘[t]here is surely no consensus on this question [of how we might ‘think of or use feminism’] – and neither should there be’ (2000: 142) for this lack of consensus does not pose a limitation on feminist work but rather is its conditions of possibility.

Please see the companion website (www.routledge.com/cw/Shepherd) for a seminar exercise.

Questions for further debate

- 1 Which of the theories of gender presented in this chapter do you find most persuasive, and why?
- 2 Are there any analytical limitations to FSS that this chapter does not address?
- 3 Cynthia Enloe has written extensively about the importance of a ‘feminist curiosity’ (2004: 1–8). What do you think she means, and (why) do you think it is important?
- 4 What can we learn about security and violence if we pay attention to gender? What can we learn about gender if we pay attention to security and violence?
- 5 Does gender matter in/to all security issues? Are there any security issues that would not benefit from a ‘feminist lens’? What are they, and why?

Noes

- 1 On the difference between thin and thick constructivism, see the oft-cited work of Alexander Wendt in which he distinguishes thin (social scientific) from thick (linguistic) (1999: 75).
- 2 Other colleagues have advised ‘feminism by stealth’ as a publication strategy, submitting articles that do not contain ‘gender’ or ‘feminist’ in the title (which I have not been very good at).

Sources for further reading and research

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3 Human security

Natalie Florea Hudson, Alex Kreidenweis and Charli Carpenter

Chapter summary

Human security has emerged as a theoretical perspective and an operational framework for solving foreign policy problems in the post-Cold War Era. Under this approach, security policy and analysis are refocused on individuals as primary referents and benefactors. Using human trafficking as an illustrative case, our chapter examines the merits and limits of this approach. First, the chapter outlines how human security attempts to simultaneously broaden and deepen traditional conceptions of insecurity. The first section highlights how a human security approach contributes to the broader transformative agenda of critical Security Studies. The second section explores various critiques of the critical capacity of human security, particularly as a problem-solving tool now frequently adopted by states and state-based institutions. The final section of the chapter explores how a human security approach might serve as a bridge between critical theory and practical policy-making in ways that reflect genuine alternatives to the traditional security paradigm.

Learning outcomes

On completion, readers should be able to:

- demonstrate their understanding of how human security challenges orthodox conceptions of international security in terms of whose security and what is being secured against, and how it therefore enhances contemporary analysis of global security issues;
- explain the limitations of a human security approach particularly as it has been defined and utilized by scholars and policy-makers as a problem-solving tool to date;
- evaluate the ways in which a human security approach can maintain its critical value while at the same time effectively engaging policy-makers in order to ultimately transform international security policy and practice.

Introduction

In the wake of the end of the Cold War and the proliferation of ethnic conflict, intra-state violence, humanitarian disaster and gross human rights violations, traditional approaches to security have become increasingly inadequate for defining and addressing the many forms of insecurity that most people in the world face on daily basis. In the 1990s, consensus began to emerge in both policy and academic circles around the need to focus on the individual as the subject of security, challenging the state's claim to primacy as the referent object. As a result,

the term human security emerged – notably, in the policy world – as a concept that can be compared and contrasted to the more traditional term ‘national security’, thereby directing attention to a wider spectrum of security threats, both within and outside of the state. As this book demonstrates, this concept emerged as the latest in a long series of attempts challenging orthodox (neo)realist approaches to security by broadening what constitutes a security issue and deepening the focus from nation-states to people. This approach, however, is distinct in that policy-makers have adopted the discourse and have used it to generate and justify significant and interesting foreign and security policy initiatives. Importantly, human security-based policy and action takes seriously the notion that threats increasingly lack identifiable enemies and people can be insecure inside a secure state (Hamill 1998). This chapter explores the various meanings attached to the concept of human security, the major critiques of this approach to international security, and finally, the future of human security as a critical discourse with the potential to bridge theory and practice in ways that make a difference in people’s lives. The case of human trafficking is used throughout the chapter to better illustrate the utility and the limitations of a human security framework in research and in advocacy.

The human security landscape

At its core, human security has come to have meaning in terms of the individual, moving beyond purely state-based notions of military and territorial security to include broader concerns particularly in terms of development and human rights. The first significant statement on human security appeared in the UN’s 1994 *Human Development Report*. The politics of security, the report made clear, have ‘for too long been interpreted narrowly . . . it has related more to nation-states than to people . . . [whereby] security symbolized protection from the threat of disease, hunger, unemployment, crime, social conflict, political repression and environmental hazards’ (UNDP 1994: 22). Thus, security policy and analysis must widen its focus and include not only ‘the security of borders [but] also . . . the security of people’s lives’ (UNDP 1994: 23). The radical potential of this conceptualization is its emphasis on ‘the legitimate concerns of ordinary people [for whom] a feeling of insecurity arises more from the worries of daily life than from the dread of a cataclysmic world event’ (UNDP 1994: 22). The report identified seven specific elements that comprise human security: economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security. Indeed, the drafters of the report did not want to establish any definitional boundaries, but rather believed that the ‘all-encompassing and integrative qualities of the human security concept’ were among the concept’s strengths (Paris 2001: 90).

Throughout the 1990s, human security became a way of describing or framing what the UN was in many ways already doing; it allowed ‘a number of disparate policy initiatives to be linked, and to be given greater coherence’ as the UN’s post-Cold War mandate was taking shape (Krause 1994: 24).¹ In this context, the final report from the UN Commission on Human Security (CHS) further defined human security to mean ‘protecting fundamental freedoms . . . protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations’ (Ogata 2003: 4). Thus, human security engaged the broad principles of freedom from want and freedom from fear, encompassing chronic threats such as hunger and disease as well as sudden threats from violence and the use of, or threat of, force.

This distinction set up the broad–narrow dichotomy that has become the basis for much of the human security debate to date. While the UN has largely embraced a holistic vision of human security focused on issues of conflict, fair trade, access to health care and education (among other concerns), other organizations, such as The Human Security Network, have

promoted a more tightly focused vision where human security is about ‘removing the use of, or threat of, force and violence from people’s everyday lives’ (Krause 2007: 4). Even those in favour of narrowing are split on where the focus ought to be. For example, some scholars have argued that the main threat to human security is the absence of the rule of law and organized violence (see e.g. MacFarlane and Khong 2006), while others have promoted a ‘humanitarian’ vision of human security where the emphasis is on the protection of civilians in emergency situations (Hampson *et al.* 2002). In short, these competing visions led to questions in the literature about the validity of using human security as a policy framework and as a category of research, particularly as political practices have led to the creation of long lists of what constitutes human security.

This all-encompassing approach, according to some critics, has made human security too vague to have any meaning for policy-makers. Paris (2001: 88), for example, argues that the concept of human security is nothing more than

the glue that holds together a jumbled coalition of “middle power” states, development agencies and NGOs, all of which seek to shift attention and resources away from conventional security issues and toward goals that have traditionally fallen under the rubric of international development.

As Figure 3.1 illustrates, the human security network as represented on the Internet consists of a wide array of organizations, many of which are development- and rights-based agencies.² Indeed, it may be most appropriate to think of this as a ‘global policy network’ encompassing a variety of distinct though interlinked ‘issue networks’. The network is also characterized by significant organizational heterogeneity, with many organizations working in more than one thematic area and many initiatives that cut across specific communities of practice. For some, the human security network’s breadth is its strength; for others, it leads to significant confusion.³

For example, it is hard to know where human rights and human development end and where human security begins. For all their similarities, important demarcations may be drawn between human security, human development and human rights. For example, Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy (2007: 105) find human security to be an important safeguard against sudden crises which threaten to overturn human development gains. In this way, human development is the ‘purpose or main goal of people’s existence’ while human security ‘stresses the essential conditions for achieving that purpose’ (Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy 2007: 106). Conversely, human rights might be distinguished from human security insofar as, ‘human rights entitle and oblige but human security is a holistic political concept, generally without justiciable obligations’ (Benedek 2008: 14). Furthermore, one of the perceived strengths of human security is that it allows for prioritizing concerns based on extant crises, whereas the indivisibility of human rights obviates such actions (Benedek 2008: 14). Here difference does not render the concepts incompatible. Human security may be a way of recasting human rights objectives in language more convincing and more immediate to a range of important actors including states, Inter-governmental Organizations (IGOs) and Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs).

Thus, it is not surprising that human security has been largely promoted by liberal policy-makers and institutions, like the UN, ‘consistent with the broader international processes of global interventionism to alleviate poverty and resolve the cause of conflict’ (Christie 2010: 171). It became a cornerstone of policy for liberal states, such as Canada, Norway, Japan and Switzerland; these states among ten others have formed the Human Security Network,

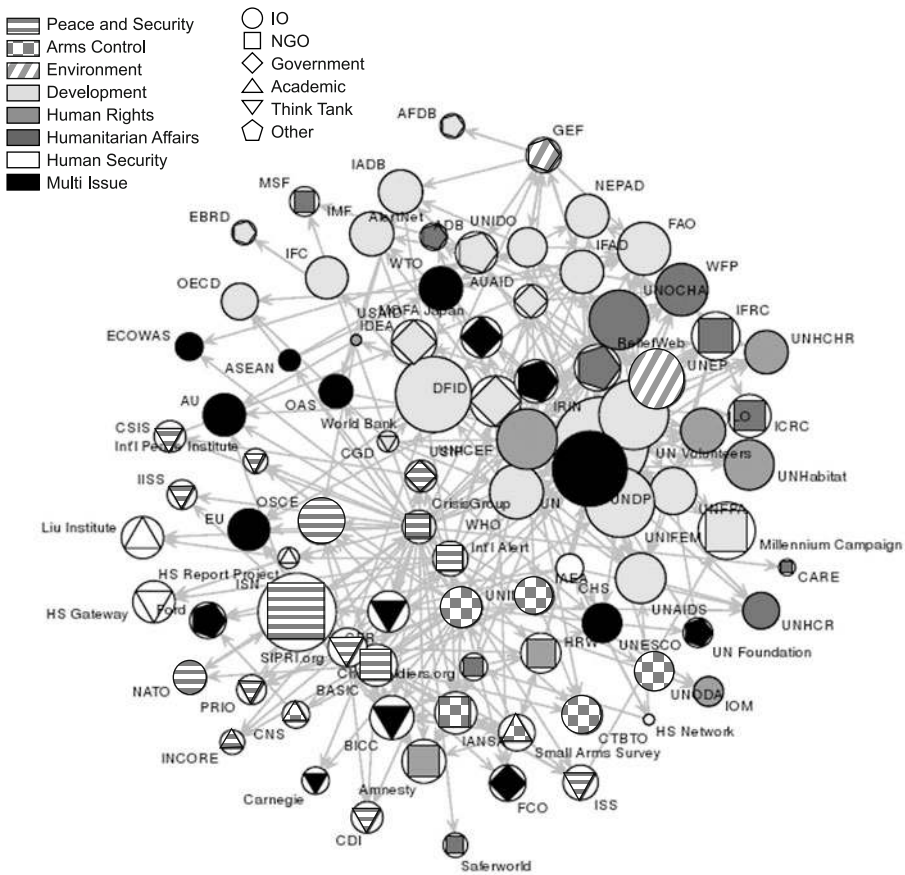


Figure 3.1 Graphic representing hyperlinks among the various organizations involved in human security network.

which has met annually since 1999. More recently, the European Union has utilized the concept in the development of their European Security Strategy (ESS) and the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) in new and innovative ways (Martin and Owen 2010). International organizations from Oxfam to the Worldwatch Institute to the International Action Network on Small Arms have all used the concept of human security to pursue their respective missions. Human security is in many located in the long history of liberal democratic theory, and as Hampson and others argue, serves as a global public good (2002). In some ways, human security appears to offer a little something to everyone, which helps to explain its continuing and expanding appeal for practitioners and scholars alike.

From this perspective, human security does not emerge as an entirely new narrative; many of the issues that fit into this conceptualization are issues that have long challenged the international community. And while the concept has proved opportunistic for many, it is important to recognize that the language does carry some baggage, ‘as it is embedded in prior conceptualizations and concerns of security’ (Christie 2010: 171). Numerous studies have illustrated how the human security approach has been consistent with the preceding

international security policies of the North leading to traditional security solutions to non-traditional security problems (Duffield 2001; Pupavac 2005). This context has led to an often misunderstood and under-examined relationship between human security and national security (as will be discussed in greater detail in the next section). Given that the referent object of security varies between human and national security, the two can at times exist harmoniously and at others times work in opposition.

According to the UN Human Commission on Human Security (CHS) in its report, *Human Security Now* (2003: 4), human security is critical of state security in four respects:

- 1 Its concern is the individual and the community rather than the state.
- 2 Menaces to people's security include threats to the state and conditions that have not always been classified as threats to state security.
- 3 The range of actors is expanded beyond the state alone.
- 4 Achieving human security includes not just protecting people but empowering people to fend for themselves.

The report goes on to argue that human security and state security are 'mutually reinforcing and dependent on each other' (CHS 2003: 6). The report largely fails to address situations where human security and state security might be contradictory, and more importantly how the international community ought to handle such contradictions and trade-offs when it comes to prioritizing resources.

Nowhere is this tension more clear than in the impact of economic globalization on international politics. Globalization is intensifying economic and social ties as goods, capital; people, ideas and information are exchanged across borders at an accelerating pace. These connections have the potential to enhance and threaten human security in new, complex and often simultaneous ways. The global problem of human trafficking illustrates these multiple layers of the human security approach and its complex relationship with the pursuit of national security. While the simultaneous globalization and liberalization of economies throughout the world has generated unprecedented and unequally distributed wealth, it has also cultivated fecund grounds for the mass exploitation and movement of people. In particular, human trafficking in its many forms has emerged as a vast, lucrative industry, generating an estimated \$35 billion in profits annually (Kara 2009). More than a simple issue of transnational crime or gross violations of human rights, the international trade in human beings is indicative of the potential for pernicious tensions between protecting the security of individuals and that of states.

Correlations between human trafficking and economic globalization have been well marked by scholars. Tamara Makarenko identifies the irony in spread of 'market economies and accompanying Western ideals' including fundamental human rights and basic standards of living, even as such ideals 'are inherently undermined as economic and social polarization abound' (Makarenko 2008: 26). Makarenko further posits that 'arguments pointing to the benefits of globalization to comparatively deprived societies have ignored the fact that this process, which has led to exponential economic success in the West, has simultaneously created conditions ripe for human exploitation' (Makarenko 2008: 26). Kara adds, 'globalization's corresponding ills resulted in a rapid increase in global slavery by deepening rural poverty, widening the chasm between rich and poor, promoting social instability, and eroding real human freedoms' (Kara 2009: 24). The complex nature of security is evident in this case, and one can see the contradiction that often emerges when national security threatens the security of its citizens.

Taken in an international context, human trafficking commonly claims its victims through one of two scenarios. In the first scenario, an individual contracts a seemingly licit company which promises steady work in a prosperous economy. Hopeful workers willingly render all personal identification to specious labour recruiters on the pretence that work, housing and travel arrangements are being made. In the second scenario, individuals contract a second party to lead them across international borders illicitly in search for a better life. In millions of cases every year, it is only after individuals are far removed from home and all sense of familiarity that these carefully orchestrated frauds are unmasked. The seemingly licit organization promising lucrative work and improved welfare abroad, or the purported human smuggler, was in fact a front for a human trafficking ring. Now more victim than migrant, individuals are informed of debts incurred to which they did not agree. To repay these debts victims are forced into the sex industry, food service, agriculture, cosmetology or construction under egregious work conditions. Unable to speak the language of the destination country, stripped of personal identification, under constant threats and exercise of violence, victims have virtually no recourse to escape. Critically important questions arise from both of these touchstone scenarios: what drives demand for licit and illicit migration? How does migration connect to human trafficking victims, and how does it result in tensions between human and state security?

For these victims, especially those from developing economies, economic globalization had engendered a steady dwindling of legitimate economic opportunities at home and an increasing sense of economic insecurity. If there were indeed jobs to be had, they did not pay a subsistence wage, or else 'employment' equated to actual slavery as in the case of domestic labour trafficking.⁴ Without access to remunerative work, millions have been left wondering how to feed themselves or their families, how to secure clothing and shelter, how to afford even a meagre education for their children. In short, the personal economic security of many current human trafficking victims had been critically threatened by economic globalization.

Facing dire domestic economic conditions increased the allure for many of today's trafficking victims to migrate into more promising labour markets. As Svante Cornell suggests, 'If the USA and the EU are characterized by high living standards . . . the neighboring countries are not. Hence, unemployment is rife in Morocco, Moldova, and Mexico, and wages are several times lower than an illegal migrant could gain even at the bottom of society in the USA or the EU' (2008: 57). It is little surprise then that millions of unemployed or underpaid workers in such situations chose to move beyond their native homes in search of work, 'economic stagnation, coupled with population growth, increases the incentives for migrants to move to richer lands' (Cornell 2008: 57). In 2008 alone there were 214 million migrants in the world, an increase of 40 million in ten years and more than double the number of migrants in 1980 (Khalid 2010: 303). From the vantage of human security then, widespread economic insecurity as promoted by economic globalization imposes dire circumstances on unemployed workers where migration seems to be the only viable solution. What may seem most prudent to the worker in search of security frequently puts her at odds with the state's pursuit of security; here the conflict of whose security matters most becomes clearer.

The growth of international migration represents the diametric nexus between human security and state security. For states, immigration and border policies fall under the aegis of national security (Adamson 2006: 165). From the perspective of state security, globalization has raised very different spectres than those faced by migrants: transnational organized crime, drugs and arms smuggling, health pandemics and international terrorism to name but a few. Confronted with pernicious new challenges to the state, policy responses by many countries, particularly in the Global North, have made immigration controls more stringent

and narrow, both by controlling who and how many migrants are able to emigrate and by militarizing international borders (Adamson 2006: 178). Higher walls and constricted immigration rules may be aimed at protecting states, but they have come at the expense of migrants' security.

A vast discrepancy now exists between demand for licit immigration and available opportunities. This incongruity is attributable to the widespread economic insecurity of individuals which undergirds labour migration, and curtailed immigration policies in the pursuit of national security. As was seen in the scenarios illustrated above, human trafficking networks have profited handsomely by preying on the preternatural demand for migration (Adamson 2006: 174). Mitigating these deleterious effects of economic interconnectedness has been made vastly more convoluted by the clash of human and state security. Thus, economic globalization, not *prima facie* a security issue, bears upon the human insecurities which promote human trafficking and state insecurity alike.

Fundamental critiques

Given these tensions and ambiguities, human security remains a highly contested and criticized concept, and 'even some of the strongest proponents of human security recognize that it is at best poorly defined and unmeasured, and at worse a vague and logically inconsistent slogan' (King and Murray 2001: 591). Critics often find the concept of human security to be inclusive to the point where it is rendered meaningless. Even for those who find validity in the concept, human security is still an 'underdeveloped approach to understanding contemporary security politics' (Thomas and Tow 2002: 177), in that it falls short of the attempts of some scholars to advance a research programme around what they consider the logical next step for security in the twenty-first century: the recasting of Security Studies (and policies) to emphasize the security of the individual, defined as human emancipation (see Chapter 6 of this book). Human security certainly represents a departure from the narrow militarily focused conceptions of security, however, the 'delimiting position in the human security literature . . . share realists' concern to uphold the conventional social science methodologies that have traditionally governed the production of knowledge about security' (see Walt 1991: 221–222, as cited in Ewan 2007: 184). In this way, a human security approach often operates on the assumption that security is achievable and desirable and, subsequently, threats, real and imagined, can be identified and eliminated. For many critical theorists, this epistemology is problematic in that it sets up a never-ending defensive and offensive construct that thrives upon an underlying fear of engagement with difference (see, for further discussion of difference and politics, Chapter 7 of this book).

A second strand of critique builds on post-positivist work of critical Security Studies that emphasizes the political dangers involved in broadening the concept of security in ways that militarize issues *and* people in problematic ways, having unintended and even counterproductive consequences. For example, gender-based violence is increasingly being recognized in post-conflict situations as an issue relevant to peacebuilding efforts. From Liberia to Kosovo to Burundi, gender-based violence offices have been established in an effort to raise awareness and criminalize the act. While this is a substantial step in broadening the international communities view on what counts as violence, what security means and when conflicts really 'end' for large segments of the population, it does situate the solving of this complex social, economic, cultural and political issue in the hands of the state, particularly the police and the military under the rubric of security sector reform. Gender-based violence undoubtedly qualifies as a human security issue, but a critical reading of this approach might lead us

to ask about the very project of managing violence itself and why the effort always involves those authorized to use force. In this way, human security can then quickly become a project that reifies the state and state-based institutions, like the military and the police, in 'solving' the insecurity issues of individuals and communities.

Relatedly, one cannot assume that just because the approach is rooted in the 'human' that it necessarily recognizes and incorporates all people and their unique security needs. Heidi Hudson notes the danger in collapsing diverse identities into a 'false holism' and the risks of 'masking differences under the rubric of the term "human"' (Hudson 2005: 157). To avoid this 'false holism' (Hudson 2005: 162) then, human security must not overlook location, context and the politics of identity (Hansen 2000). Human security as an approach must remain vigilant to the diversity of ways of living life as a human, such as the various ways in which humans achieve shelter as individuals, families and communities) and the manner in which this can be destroyed by the state. Critics are therefore rightfully wary about the potential masking of different experiences under the term 'human'. In returning to our study of human trafficking, specifically the case of sex trafficking, the human security approach seems to complicate more than it clarifies. For many, sex trafficking is a clear illustration of human insecurity where individuals experience a range of threats from economic desperation, social pressure and physical harm. For others, certain situations of sex trafficking actually represent legitimate sex work, that serve as profitable employment opportunities for individuals, enhancing human security through economic stability and independence.

Critiques of human security most often emerge from the overall ambiguity found in almost all UN treatments of human security. In many international security circles, human development, human rights and human security are used interchangeably, resulting in significant confusion about the added value offered by human security discourse. Further, there has been almost no attempt within the UN system to articulate the difference, both in theory and in practice, between human security, human rights and human development. This ambiguity has not been addressed by either the UNDP or the CHS, and according to Martin and Owen this uncertainty 'is at least tangentially responsible for the Secretary-General adopting the narrow perspective in his 2000 report, and dropping it entirely by the 2004 and 2005 reports' (Martin and Owen 2010: 216). This lack of a clear and workable definition has only further contributed to what MacFarlane and Khong (2005) label 'conceptual overstretch', which can easily lead to false hopes, causal confusions and military solutions to non-military problems. As some scholars have started grappling with the distinction between human security, human rights and human development (Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy 2007), more policy-relevant research is needed. Even more important will be how scholars and practitioners address situations where conceptions of security collide and contradict.

Moving forward: addressing the 'critical theory-policy' gap

Despite its limitations, human security does offer an important counter-discourse to militarized state-centred approaches. It has created political opportunities for some actors who have often been excluded from international security circles to interact with policy-makers, form new relationships, ask different questions, and subsequently get different issues on the international security agenda (Krause 2007). The negotiations and successful passage of Landmines Convention and the Rome Statute for the International Criminal Court illustrate the value of human security as a political tool in matters of international diplomacy (McRae and Hubert 2001). As Frerks (2008: 12) maintains:

Surveying the evidence, the human security approach does justice to the comprehensive nature of current conflict and its required solutions, even though this perhaps comes at the price of complexity and sometimes vagueness. It has played an important advocacy role in putting new ideas and issues on the agenda. It has been able to interlink the different components of security and has brought about a balance between state and people-centered notions of security.

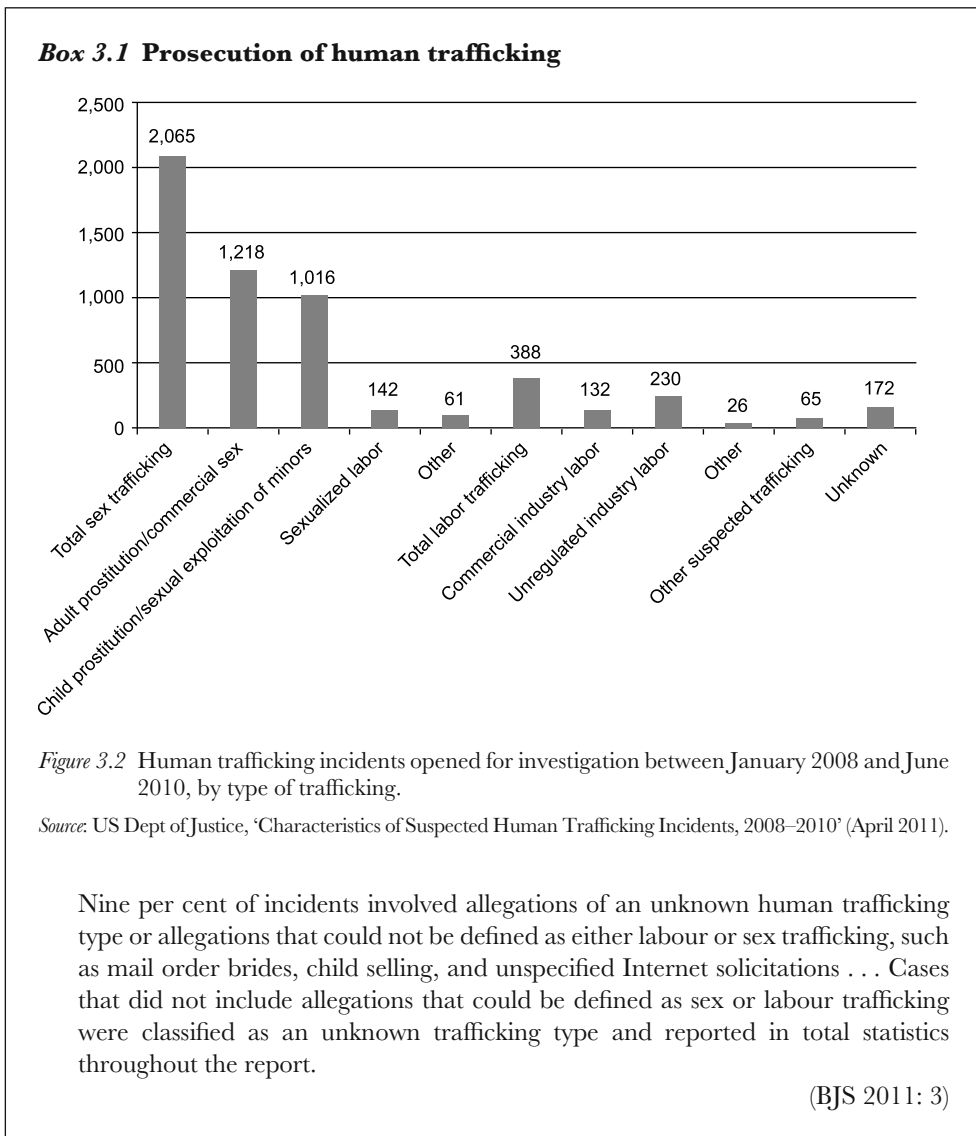
From a critical theory perspective, the greatest weakness of the human security approach may also be its greatest strength. If it can avoid turning all subjects into security threats, human security serves as an accessible concept to bridge critical Security Studies theory and actual practice. Human security assists policy-makers in challenging entrenched ideas about the state as the primary referent and provider of security, and although it does not provide a clear path forward, getting the natural to seem unnatural is the first step in transforming ideas about security. Thus, it seems less important for scholarship to search for definitional parameters and parsimony, but rather embrace the confusion and complexity as a move toward more genuine change. Moving 'towards richer and more contextualised analysis of the historical and political conditions in which diverse forms of human insecurity arise' should be seen as an opportunity rather than a problem (Ewan 2007: 187).

By way of example, applying the human security perspective to anti-human trafficking initiatives could encourage the reform of anti-trafficking endeavours from the global to local levels. At present, the rationale undergirding trafficking advocacy and policy often fails to fully recognize, or take seriously, the interconnections of human trafficking to other trends and problems. Understanding why responses to intractable issues such as trafficking fail often requires ascertaining how the problem is commonly defined. In terms of human trafficking, the most highly recognized definitions are provided by the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (hereafter the Palermo Protocols) enacted by the UN in 2000. For definitional purposes, the Palermo Protocols rely upon the 'Actions-Means-Purpose' (AMP) model. In practice, the AMP model is applied to a suspected instance of trafficking in a rigidly inflexible and standard approach, which usually yields a zero-sum result: particular actions, achieved via particular means, for specific purposes either indicate trafficking or they do not. Proponents of the AMP model make two tacit assumptions. The first is that human trafficking begins with a particular act(s) of a trafficker, thus beginning an ultimately exploitative process. The second assumption is that human trafficking infringes upon a victim's negative human right to be free of enslavement. While these are valid conjectures, taken alone they perilously ignore the human insecurities which contribute to individuals' vulnerability prior to and after enslavement. Bookends of analytical silence which currently surround the issue preclude comprehensive anti-trafficking policies and advocacy.

The AMP model does little to break the silence surrounding circumstances prevalent for victims and traffickers alike prior to the commission of a criminal act. As we have seen, global pressures such as economic globalization undergird the modern slave trade in obvious ways. Neither international criminal law nor human rights, however, perceive anything amiss prior to the commission of an exploitative act. Yet, it is untenable to assume that human trafficking only begins with a malicious action or ends when traffickers are arrested and successfully prosecuted. Additionally, being a product of international law, the AMP model inherently retains the primacy of states as leading anti-human trafficking initiatives. Because the AMP model describes first and foremost a crime by international law, it is necessarily the province of the coercive arm of the state to capture traffickers and recover victims. By the terms of the

Palermo protocols, ‘hard law’ obligations begin and end at investigation of suspected instances of trafficking and prosecution of suspected criminals. Protection of vulnerable populations and prevention of trafficking are left to the discretion of state and local officials, and therefore are rarely addressed at all. Many critics posit that the AMP model has retrenched states’ right to devise and implement policy responses where the primary goal is state security and sovereignty rather than human security (Mertus and Bertone 2007: 44).

The current ‘issue frame’ of human trafficking as a criminal law and human rights centric issue has had direct bearing on what solutions are viewed as appropriate. Many anti-human trafficking actors, states first amongst them, have agreed upon three broad objectives: protection, prevention and prosecution (the ‘3P’ paradigm). As illustrated in Box 3.1 (Figure 3.2),



notable successes have been attained under the auspices of 'prosecution' but the other points of the anti-human trafficking triad receive little play. While further research could offer more concrete reasons for this incongruity, it is not beyond reason to suggest that prosecution is viewed by policy-makers as the most viable policy pursuit. Putting traffickers behind bars promotes the perception of concrete and effective policy action; rehabilitating victims or protecting potential ones is not as easily quantifiable and likely requires vastly more resources to be effective. A human security approach highlights the ways in which these efforts do little to enhance security at individual and community levels.

Existing anti-human trafficking policies then are palliative at best. If one imagines human trafficking as Siddarth Kara does, as 'a disease affecting human civilization', then current state-centred policies do little more than address symptoms without 'understanding its molecular anatomy' (Kara 2009: 6). Anti-human trafficking advocates, often more concerned with ensuring funding for anti-trafficking initiatives and political mobilization, support state-centric policies rather than critically assessing them. In a particularly insightful comment, Kara suggests that, 'the conditions that initially gave rise to the disease must be altered, lest the disease return' (Kara 2009: 6). Creating and promoting antidotes aimed at symptoms do not cure diseases, though they may create illusions of rehabilitation.

Responses to and prevention of human trafficking need to be both informed and strengthened by new analytical perspectives. Human security can enhance both policy-makers' and advocates' understandings of human trafficking and serve as a base of critical assessment of anti-trafficking initiatives. As a foundational matter, human security would recast human trafficking as a product of gross human insecurity. As we have seen, human trafficking is complexly bound to factors such as global poverty, economic liberalization, political and social upheaval and international migration. Human security can help elucidate the linkages between and among these issues and the manner in which one reinforces the others. Additionally, 'securitizing' the issue may lead to less reactionary policies heavily dependent upon prosecution, moving instead to proactive solutions where prevention and protection receive greater priority and resources.

Human security entreats analysts to diffuse responsibility for human trafficking, and thereby challenge state primacy in solving the problem. Human trafficking is motivated primarily by profit and is therefore responsive to the markets forces of supply and demand. For example, labour trafficking is in many respects an indirect function of unconscientious global demand for cheaper goods and services. Demand has rewarded unscrupulous manufacturers who trim down production models until labour is the only cost left to 'zero out'. In highlighting these causal factors, human security helps reassign culpability for trafficking beyond traffickers; consumers and companies must be regarded as pernicious contributors to the problem. In suggesting the behaviour of consumers and the business practices of corporations must change to truly address human trafficking, human security stands a strong challenge against the tacit presumption of states as the 'most favoured' anti-human trafficking agents. From this point we see that human security not only shifts focus on individuals as rightful referents of security, but also beseeches introspection by actors well below the state to regard how they contribute to the relative security or insecurity of others.

Human security additionally offers utility to policy-makers and advocates at the national level. As we have seen, illegal immigration is currently a thematic nexus between human and state security. An analysis of immigration policies from the human security perspective can elucidate the causal linkages between restrictionist policies, the prevalence of illegal

immigration, and, by extension, increased vulnerability of migrants to trafficking. For anti-trafficking advocates this would serve as a cogent counterpoint to anti-immigration advocates in prosperous countries; to stem irregular flows of migrants, and to take a preventative stance against human trafficking, states must give greater attention to the security of people beyond its borders.

Perhaps human security's greatest relevance to anti-human trafficking initiatives would be felt at the local level. Because human trafficking is ultimately a problem manifested at the grassroots, it is no mental stretch to posit that anti-human trafficking initiatives must be at their most vigorous at the local level. Human trafficking denotes variegated forms of enslavement including bonded labour, involuntary servitude, child soldiering, forced or underage prostitution, domestic servitude and chattel slavery. Each of these permutations is promoted by somewhat different factors, though some commonalities such as poverty run across the board. Given human trafficking's multifarious manifestations and wide breadth of contributing factors, it is unlikely that in a given locality all forms of trafficking will be present. Creating effective policies and advocacy campaigns at the local level necessitates flexible analytical tools to identify the endemic differences implied by human trafficking. Human security offers such flexibility as it accepts a degree of subjectivity in what constitutes 'security'. For instance, what is likely to cause insecurity for Egyptians today is unlike what it would be for an impoverished youth in New York City. In other words, the framework for human security is universal or global, but the operationalization is contextualized.

Conclusion

As the case of human trafficking illustrates, human security is a critical project aimed at interrogating the sources of people's insecurity and the roles of the state and other global governance structures this regard. In this way, human security serves critical Security Studies' explicit emphasis on the importance of political advocacy in security discourse (Booth 1997; Wyn Jones 1999). Human security serves as a progressive political tool and analytical research concept. It also has the potential to challenge binary assumptions about public and private violence, protector and perpetrator, conflict and post-conflict situations, etc. Thus, human security analysts and activists must avoid complacency and continue to struggle with complexity, difference, ambiguity and even contradiction. As Heidi Hudson (2005: 172) reminds us, 'the goal of inter-paradigm dialogue is not greater synergy between alternative and mainstream discourse, but rather to create a fractured whole that – when synthesized – is richer and more authentic than the sum of its constituent parts. Now that is theoretical progress'.

Please see the companion website for a seminar exercise.

Questions for further debate

- 1 How does human security offer a counter-discourse to traditional approaches to security? Does this counter-discourse widen, deepen and/or transform the way we think about Security Studies?
- 2 Is it important to distinguish between human security, human rights and human development from a theoretical perspective? What about from a policy perspective? Why or why not?
- 3 Of the numerous critiques of human security, which do you find the most convincing in terms of critical theory?

- 4 Given that human security has been adopted by policy-makers and IGOs, in what ways has the approach sacrificed some of its critical value? How has its critical value been maintained?
- 5 How does human security offer a new way of understanding and addressing the global issue of human trafficking? How is the approach limiting?

Notes

- 1 This is similar to research that has found international financial institutions adopting the human security agenda in places where it was most convenient and compatible with existing organizational mandates (Hampson *et al.* 2002).
- 2 The analysis of hyperlinked organizational websites on which this graph is based does not support Paris' claim, however, that human security represents the subordination of hard security to development as the network is characterized by representation among and synergy between multiple sub-networks including development, conflict prevention, human rights, humanitarian affairs, arms control, and environmental security (see Carpenter *et al.* 2011).
- 3 Here, we use the term 'human security network' to describe the empirically measurable relational ties between organizational websites, and not to refer to the Human Security Network as such (a former group of like-minded states). On the history and fate of the Human Security Network, see Martin and Owen (2010). On the use of hyperlink analysis to operationalize transnational issue networks, see Carpenter and Jose-Thota.
- 4 Many domestic industries have been linked to modern slavery including fishing, agriculture, textile production, chemical production and mining.

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4 Green security

Emma Foster

Chapter summary

This chapter explores the implications of considering environmental degradation as a security threat through highlighting the ways in which security can be defined when related to the environment. First, the chapter maps out the rationale for narrating environmental degradation as a security issue. Second, the chapter looks at the relationship between environmental concerns and security when we consider environmental degradation as a catalyst for conflict and violence both between and within states. Third, the chapter looks at how wider definitions of security (e.g. human security) may be more useful when we consider environmental problems. Finally, the chapter outlines some of the critiques of securitising the environment.

Learning outcomes

On completion, readers should be able to:

- understand the rationale for narrating environmental degradation as a security threat;
- analyse the ways in which green security changes meaning based on different conceptions of (in)security;
- demonstrate awareness of the main critiques of environmental security.

Introduction

From the 1960s to the 1980s environmentalists were depicted as ‘anti-capitalist’ ‘tree hugging hippies’ and ‘pagans’ (Luke 1999). As such, one would be forgiven for thinking that green (or environmental) security was the recognition that environmentalists themselves – with their occasional tendency to conduct acts of ‘eco-sabotage’ or, potentially, ‘eco-terrorism’ – were considered a threat. In actuality, however, when we talk about green security, or the securitisation of the environment, we are acknowledging that environmental degradation is a security threat in itself. In fact, depending on how one defines security, it could be considered one of the gravest threats to security due to the assertion from some environmentalists/ecologists, scientists, social scientists, technocrats and politicians that environmental degradation, in particular that related to climate change, could ultimately result in a complete global holocaust. As such, this threat could be thought of as equivalent to that of nuclear war; a threat which was particularly prevalent during the Cold War.

Historically, as mentioned, the environmental movement was largely discredited due to its anti-capitalist and anti-industrialist undertones (Luke 1999). This meant that environmentalism appeared inconsistent with the drivers of modernity and, therefore, received little real political purchase amongst rich Western/Northern countries. By the 1990s, however, environmental issues appear to become more accepted, and development agencies, driven by the UN consensus on sustainable development exhorted in the manuscript *Agenda 21* (UNCED 1992), adopted the idea that environmental sustainability is important for, or even central to, the success of international development more widely (see Box 4.1).

Box 4.1 Agenda 21 (Chapter 1, Section 1)

Humanity stands at a defining moment in history. We are confronted with a perpetuation of disparities between and within nations, a worsening of poverty, hunger, ill health and illiteracy, and the continuing deterioration of the ecosystems on which we depend for our well-being. However, integration of environment and development concerns and greater attention to them will lead to the fulfilment of basic needs, improved living standards for all, better protected and managed ecosystems and a safer, more prosperous future.

(UNCED 1992, available at: http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/agenda21/res_agenda21_01.shtml)

More recently, there has been a push to get environmental degradation, especially climate change, recognised as a security, as well as a development, issue. For example, in 2007 the British Member of Parliament Margaret Beckett chaired a UN Security Council debate on the environment. At this debate, the first held by the UN Security Council relating to the environment, Beckett stated that:

Climate change is a security issue but it is not a matter of narrow national security – it has a new dimension . . . This is about our collective security in a fragile and increasingly interdependent world.

(quoted in Clark 2007)

Indeed, since 2007 environmental issues have remained on the UN Security Council's agenda (to varying degrees). For example, in June 2011, the introduction of an environmental peace-keeping force (called the Green Helmets) was even discussed, although some countries, such as Germany, felt that it was too soon for the UN Security Council to consolidate its environmental plan of action in this way (Goldenberg 2011).

Despite the growing interest in environmental issues from security organisations like the UN Security Council one has to ask why we should *securitise* the environment when it is already being considered at an international level through development policy-making bodies such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Perhaps the first response to this question would be that narrating environmental degradation and climate change as a threat to security offers a particular status or *gravitas* to the problem and therefore assists in mobilising collective action against environmental harms from individuals, societies, states and the international

community more broadly. As Barry Buzan has noted, that security rhetoric works to 'legitimize exceptional measures of collective action' (1992: 1). Second, and related to the first point, the securitisation of the environment also helps to frame the problem as 'in need of urgent attention', so more than mobilising action from different 'bodies' it also arguably invites those bodies to mobilise immediately: to take action *now* (Aradau 2009). As such, from a pro-securitisation environmentalist point of view, the fact that security narratives work to both mobilise individuals, organisations and institutions and urge immediate responses in protecting the environment can only be considered a good thing – whether the threat of environmental degradation is imminent or not.

These are particularly strategic reasons to securitise the environment. A further strategic reason is exposed when we look at the behaviour of states. In international relations, due to power imbalances and the different aims and objectives of different states, it is very difficult to encourage collective action at the international level. Unfortunately, however, environmental degradation including climate change is regarded as a problem which is considered to require collective action (see Adger 2003) due to the fact that environmental issues transcend borders and potentially affect everybody. This means that in order to solve the problem, states, especially those who emit the largest amount of greenhouse gas, need to agree as to what the solution may be and, also, they need to collectively implement this solution (otherwise the project of environmental protection becomes more likely to fail and/or some states may 'free-ride' on the environmental protection/conservation offered by other states). This is known as a collective action problem. However, as we have seen in all international environmental forums and conferences, such as the Kyoto conference in 1997 (where the USA and other countries refused to sign the protocol) and the Copenhagen conference in 2009 (where China, lobbying in their country's economic interests, brokered a watered down version of the environmental agreement), no comprehensive agreement on the environment has effectively been made. This is because certain states, such as China, have an investment in pursuing their development agendas which, being largely industrial, do not necessarily coincide with environmental principles. Similarly, the USA (ostensibly protecting its economic interests) has also traditionally either diluted or refused to sign up to international environmental plans of action. As such, framing the environment as a security, rather than development or green issue, works to portray the severity and seriousness of climate change and other environmental ills in the hope that collective action problems will be overcome (Soroos 1994: 319).

Securitising the environment may have another effect, however, which relates to the idea that security has traditionally been concerned with nation-states and violent conflict and the main actor within security has been the military (Barnett 2003: 8). However, when one frames the environment as a security issue the point of reference for security becomes blurred 'because of a traditional preoccupation with politico-military notions of security as between states' (Dyer 2001: 442). As such, some authors, such as Daniel Deudney (1990: 461), argue that it is misguided to think of environmental degradation as a national security threat because the traditional focus of security relates to threats of interstate violence and conflict and also because this type of conflict is unlikely to be caused by environmental problems. However, in response to this, others, such as Hugh Dyer (2001: 443) argue that this move towards securitisation opens up the critical potential of Security Studies and practice by challenging 'common-sense, at least in so far as it distances itself from the traditional state-centric security agenda'. Despite Dyer's (2001) view on the critical potential of securitising the environment, it seems that security organisations and agencies, however, still perpetuate traditional notions of security, linking the environment to national state interests and recognising conflict and

violence between people as a by product of environmental degradation. Indeed, returning to the 2007 Security Council debate on the environment, chaired by Margaret Beckett MP:

Britain . . . warned reluctant members of the United Nations that there are few greater threats to global security than climate change, delivering a stark message forecasting armed conflicts over scarce supplies of food, water and land.

(Clark 2007)

Here we can see that the UK's main concern relates to violent conflict driven by competition over resources and therefore, using this traditional security paradigm, one can only assume that military intervention becomes paramount in the fight to defend nature (see Box 4.2, Figure 4.1).

Green insecurity, conflict and violence

There are a number of scholars (see e.g. Homer-Dixon 2001; Postel and Wolf, 2001; Selby 2005) who, in line with more traditional conceptions of security, note that environmental insecurity will lead to conflict and violence as people fight over the provision and allocation of increasingly scarce resources. This fits into a view of security whereby environmental degradation, rather than being a threat in itself, is a catalyst for conflict due to disputes over resource allocation and, potentially, their own survival. Indeed, as has been noted by Dyer (2001: 445), trying to fit environmental security into mainstream and traditional security activities and policies works to add the 'environment to the existing list of security concerns by examining environmental aspects of military activity, and more recently identified threats to the state such as migration'. In other words, the environment here works as an addendum to the list of issues which affect the security of states (in realist terms) through the degradation of the environment and resource scarcity which is, by this rationale, likely to lead to social and political instability, violence and conflict as well as threats relating to borders such as migration. Further, this means that militaries are responsible for 'risk assessing' their own activities in relation to potential environmental damage.

This understanding of environmental security is the one which most closely resembles traditional types of Security Studies. For instance, it has long been noted that competition over resources has been a site of potential and actual conflict within states, such as the conflicts in South Sudan and Nigeria arguably related to oil (see Ross 2004), and between states (see Westing 1986, who argues that a number of wars, including the World Wars, were exacerbated through resource allocation and scarcity issues). Given that resources have been considered a flash point for conflict it is unsurprising that a number of scholars recognise environmental degradation, which leads to a depletion or contamination of resources, as a factor related to armed conflict and war, both civil and international.

That being said, there is a divide within the scholarship related to green security. For example, scholars such as Thomas Homer-Dixon (2001) contend that intra-state conflict will be aggravated by the depletion of resources, whereby the severity of the resource depletion will be matched by the severity of the conflict. Others (such as Postel and Wolf 2001; Selby 2005) maintain that resource scarcity linked to environmental degradation has the potential to fuel inter-state conflict. Interestingly, both sets of scholars tend to cite conflict over scarce oil and (perhaps more surprisingly) scarce water, with the latter scholars noting that the wars in the Middle East, most notably Iraq, are related to the desire to seize the scarce resource of oil. Nevertheless, regardless of the environmental scarcity which is being drawn upon, be it

Box 4.2 The environment and the military

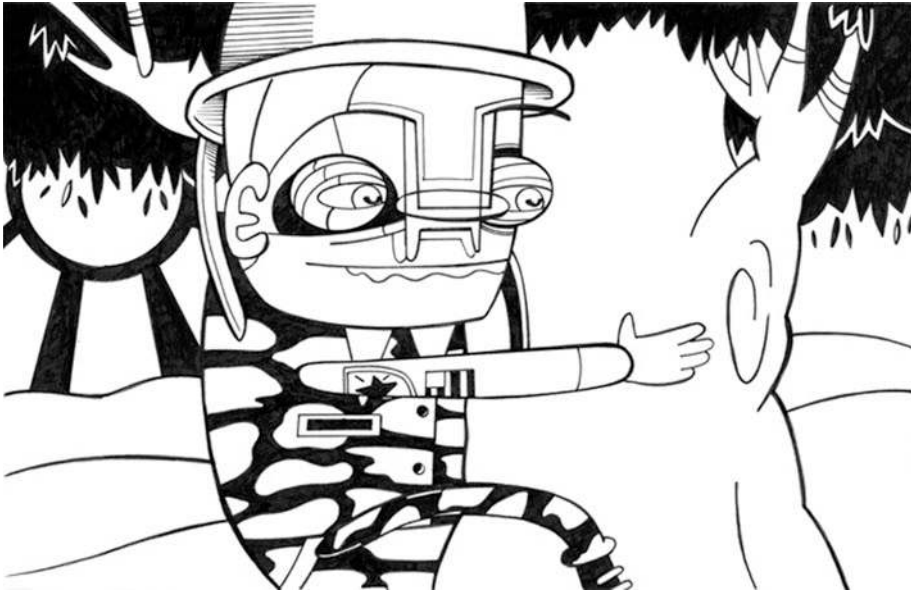


Figure 4.1 Cartoon by Matthew Smith, reproduced with kind permission from the artist.

Source: <http://www.matthewsmithart.net>

This figure was drawn to illustrate an article from an established US pacifist organisation, *The War Resisters League*. The article, by Richard Farrell, raises serious concerns over the Pentagon's interest in the environment as a US security issue when the military has been heavily involved in creating vast environmental damage and destruction. As you can see the picture shows a soldier hugging a tree, which is a very different image to the tree-hugging hippy stereotype outlined in the opening sentences of this chapter. As such, this illustration is indicative of the turn in thinking about the environment to an idea of militarised environmental conservation. Indeed, amongst scholars and policy-makers there are a variety of interpretations of green security; some include militarisation and others do not. The following two sections of this chapter outline these perspectives which ultimately promote or question the role of military involvement in conservation.

water, oil or another primary resource, the tendency from policy-making bodies, such as the UNEP, leans towards the idea that security threats over resources are more likely to be located within states and regions as opposed to between states. Further, the UNEP, in line with Homer-Dixon (2001), asserts that these conflicts are also shaped by ethnic divisions, which have become more volatile since the end of the Cold War.

The UNEP recognises the environment to be a key factor in aggravating or even causing security threats. The 2007 press release from the UNEP related to the conflict in Sudan suggested that environmental degradation, this time that of soil erosion and drought, has

been a key factor in this civil war due to increasingly displaced populations and increasing aggression over fresh water, forest and agricultural resources (Box 4.3).

This leads to a second point about this understanding of green (in)security. By this rationale, conflict over scarce resources and environmental degradation is likely to mainly

Box 4.3 Environmental degradation triggering tensions and conflict in Sudan

Investments in Management and Rehabilitation of Natural Resources Central to Conflict Resolution and Peace Building in Sudan Says UN Environment Programme

Geneva/Nairobi, 22 June 2007 – Sudan is unlikely to see a lasting peace unless widespread and rapidly accelerating environmental degradation is urgently addressed.

A new assessment of the country, including the troubled region of Darfur, indicates that among the root causes of decades of social strife and conflict are the rapidly eroding environmental services in several key parts of the country.

Investment in environmental management, financed by the international community and from the country's emerging boom in oil and gas exports, will be a vital part of the peace building effort, says the report.

The most serious concerns are land degradation, desertification and the spread of deserts southwards by an average of 100 km over the past four decades. These are linked with factors including overgrazing of fragile soils by a livestock population that has exploded from close to 27 million animals to around 135 million now.

Many sensitive areas are also experiencing a 'deforestation crisis' which has led to a loss of almost 12 per cent of Sudan's forest cover in just 15 years. Indeed, some areas may undergo a total loss of forest cover within the next decade.

Meanwhile, there is mounting evidence of long-term regional climate change in several parts of the country. This is witnessed by a very irregular but marked decline in rainfall, for which the clearest indications are found in Kordofan and Darfur states. In Northern Darfur, for example, precipitation has fallen by a third in the past 80 years says the report by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and its Post-Conflict and Disaster Management Branch.

The scale of climate change as recorded in Northern Darfur is almost unprecedented, and its impacts are closely linked to conflict in the region, as desertification has added significantly to the stress on traditional agricultural and pastoral livelihoods. In addition, 'forecast climate change is expected to further reduce food production due to declining rainfall and increased variability, particularly in the Sahel belt. A drop in crop yields of up to 70 per cent is forecast for the most vulnerable areas', says the Sudan Post-Conflict Assessment.

Achim Steiner, UN Under-Secretary General and UNEP Executive Director, said: 'This report encapsulates the scale and many of the driving forces behind the tragedy of the Sudan. A tragedy that has been unfolding for decades touching the lives of millions of people and thousands of communities.'

(UNEP 2007)

happen in countries in the 'global South', already marked by forms of ethnic tension and above all reliant on primary goods (such as oil, gems or agricultural goods). This leads one to question how these threats are interpreted in the North. From this perspective, the issue is often related to threats associated with increased migration to Northern countries. Migration from environmental refugees is considered a threat as it could challenge and destabilise borders and, by that rationale, national and global politics (Aradau 2009: 184). Whilst this is the case in the North, in the South it is arguable that environmental security is not about protecting borders but more a question of survival (Aradau 2009).

Overall, this view of environmental security is the most frequently put forward through security organisations and agencies. However, this only relates to the potential military threats related to environmental degradation (this chapter will later explore the critique of the militarisation of environmental security). Indeed the threat of environmental degradation is not reducible to military threats of inter- and intra-state violence and conflict alone. As such, in relation to environmental security it is compelling, and perhaps more appropriate, to engage in a wider notion of security – namely human security.

Green insecurity and development (human security)

The very character of environmental threat means that securitisation needs to be re-examined and broadened. For example, according to Hugh Dyer (2001: 445) the inclusion of the environment as a threat to security raises a number of interesting questions, such as:

What exactly is being secured, and against what threat: existence, life ideals, beliefs, territorial integrity and well being against war, revolution, civil strife and non-military threats.

Moreover, Dyer notes that due to the fact that threats from environmental degradation both transcend borders and do not originate from a clear political actor (as one must remember the environment is not an actor in itself or a threat in itself but is, rather, threatened by human activity). Therefore, state-centric notions of green security are not sustainable (Dyer 2001: 446) and military intervention (like that represented by the cartoon above) is not necessarily the correct way to tackle problems.

If we broaden our understanding of security, beyond resource conflict, states, ethnic conflict and borders, to include questions of individual survival then we also have to broaden our notion of security threats posed by environmental degradation and crisis. In other words, we have to move away from an understanding of green security as a catalyst or aggravator of conflict over scarce and corrupted environmental goods to a perspective which recognises environmental degradation as a threat to one's survival in itself. For example, water shortages caused by climate change (as seen in the previous section in relation to Sudan) may not result in or exacerbate armed conflict within or between states but, rather, may threaten the survival of certain individuals. This movement away from thinking about the security of states to thinking about the security of the individual relates to another critical security approach, namely human security (for a broader explanation of this see Chapter 3).

When we think about human security we do not just think in terms of mortality; some scholars, such as Sen (1992), and international organisations, such as the UNDP, expand this concept to include the security of individual dignity, welfare and even freedom. This moves away from ideas of state-led and militarised conceptualisations of environmental security to

***Box 4.4 An extract from the 1994 Human Development Report:
New Dimensions of Human Security***

The concept of security must thus change urgently in two basic ways:

- From an exclusive stress on territorial security to a much greater stress on people's security.
- From security through armaments to security through sustainable human development.

(UNDP 1994: 24)

a notion of security which is better served through development agencies and programmes, because the threat is re-orientated away from issues of armed conflict and towards issues of wealth, health and happiness (or rather the lack thereof). In line with this, the UNDP (1994) Human Development Report has been considered as central to launching the idea of human security. (See Box 4.4.)

This broadening of the conception of security is important as it opens the door to consider environmental issues as a risk to security in themselves. In fact, in the 1994 UNDP report a number of interdependent security problems are included under the remit of human security. Indeed, amongst economic security, food security, health security, personal security, community security and political security, environmental security is included (albeit fourth on the list).

Within the 1994 Human Development Report, the section on environmental security (UNDP 1994: 28–30) largely focuses on the scarcity of safe drinking water in developing countries, air pollution in developed countries and, to a lesser extent, the impact of environmental disasters (such as the explosions at the nuclear power plant that occurred in Chernobyl, Ukraine, in 1986 or the leak at the Union Carbide India Limited processing plant in Bhopal, India in 1984). Rather than highlighting the potential conflicts that may arise from water scarcity and other environmental ills, the report focuses on threats to actual individuals that are not focused on state security or related to armed conflict. The report notes that environmental degradation and natural disasters undermine the security of individuals by exacerbating issues such as poverty and undermining standards of living. For example, the report states that:

Disasters in developing countries are an integral part of their poverty cycle. Poverty causes disasters. And disasters exacerbate poverty. Only sustainable human development – which increases the security of human beings and of the planet we inhabit – can reduce the frequency and impact of natural disasters.

(UNDP 1994: 29)

Overall, then, human security has been a popular framework for thinking about environmental security as through this paradigm:

Environmental threats are linked to their overall impact on human survival, well-being and productivity – in other words, aspects of human security. Human beings and social

relationships become the objects, or preferably subjects, that are to be secured from environmental threats – not states.

(Khagram *et al.* 2003: 293–294)

However, from this viewpoint the environment, rather than being an addendum to traditional state focused views of security, becomes an aspect of a wider notion of human security, which is interlinked with the broader ideas of human development. The environment and environmental problems are thus reduced to one aspect of a human security which focuses on how individuals are vulnerable to a variety of threats or risks. Nevertheless, this approach does indicate a move away from military intervention towards a ‘development’ approach to environmental security. Nonetheless, the framing of the problem as a security issue still invokes the idea of the ‘tree-hugging’ soldier rather than the ‘nature-loving’ NGO worker.

Critiques of the securitisation of environmental issues

This section of the chapter reviews the three main critiques of securitising the environment. The first of these critiques relates to the military implications of constructing the environment and environmental problems as security issues. The second critique discusses the anthropocentrism inherent in environmental security approaches to environmental conservation and preservation. Finally, the third critique discusses the potential problems associated with using security rhetoric to encourage modified behaviour patterns.

Militarisation

Constructing the environment and environmental degradation as a security issue implies to many, including scholars and international and national policy-makers, that response to these problems should be dealt with by the military or other security organisations (Tennberg 1995: 242; Aradau 2009: 196). Indeed, many environmental security proponents see a strong role for the military in assisting the protection of the environment through its technological capabilities in monitoring the planet, through satellite and other types of surveillance (Singh 2004: 2). Others recognise that the military would act quickly to respond to environmental disasters. However, this potentially has the impact of streaming additional funds to military bodies which may have negative impacts on other areas of government spending, such as non-military environmental agencies and initiatives, social security and welfare and so on (Aradau 2009: 196–197). Indeed, some NGOs and states such as China and India argue that environmental problems should be dealt with by development agencies and through non-military means (Aradau 2009), as opposed to being dealt with by the UN Security Council and national security agencies.

That being said, security agencies and militaries have been, at least ostensibly, aware of environmental problems and there is a growing ‘environmentally responsible’ approach to national and international security. For instance, the US Department of Defence, in 1996, released a plan of action, titled the Environmental Security Program, to mitigate environmental harm (potentially) caused by military activity. Other defence and security departments, such as the UK’s Ministry of Defence (see MoD 2004), have signed up to similar action plans relating to environmental responsibility (Box 4.5).

Box 4.5 The Environmental Security Program of the USA

The USA's Environmental Security Program fulfils four overriding and interconnected goals. The first is to comply with the law. The second goal is to support the military readiness of the US armed forces by ensuring continued access to the air, land, and water needed for training and testing. The third goal is to improve the quality of life for military personnel and their families by protecting them from environmental, safety, and health hazards and maintaining quality military facilities. The fourth goal is to contribute to weapon systems that have improved performance, lower cost, and better environmental characteristics. DoD invests in pollution prevention to reduce the cost of cleanup and compliance, to promote technology innovations to obtain better and cheaper environmental performance, and to support community revitalization with fast-track cleanup of closed or realigned facilities.

The Environmental Security Program fulfils its mission through eight programmes:

- Pollution prevention to stop pollution at the source whenever possible and properly manage, recycle, or dispose of potential pollutants.
- Technology to fulfil all DoD environmental security objectives more efficiently and economically.
- Safety and health protection of civilian and military personnel and their families.
- Conservation to protect and preserve the natural and cultural resources DoD holds in public trust.
- Compliance to ensure that DoD operations adhere to environmental, safety, and occupational health laws, regulations, and standards.
- Cleanup to restore DoD facilities and reduce risk from contaminated sites.
- Explosive safety to prevent explosive incidents and to protect people, equipment, and facilities from the effects of accidental explosion.
- Pest management to protect DoD personnel from vector-borne disease and to assure proper use of pest control methods.

(Department of Defence 1996)

This leads to a second, but related critique of military involvement in environmental protection, namely that historically the military has been a major culprit in degrading the environment through wars and the technological and destructive technologies employed in conflict and training for conflict. For instance, Barnett (2003: 13) noting the relationship between the military and climate change outlines the statistics on CO₂ emissions related to military activity, ultimately arguing that, by this rationale, 'militaries are a problem rather than a solution to environmental insecurity'. In fact, a number of authors, for example the ecological feminist Joni Seagar (1999) and the environmental scholar Mattias Finger (1991), have vehemently argued against military intervention relating to environmental matters on this very basis.

Another critique of environmental militarisation relates to global security more specifically, as we may create a more insecure world generally if we broaden the remit of events and issues to which militaries are expected to respond. Environmental security has the potential to redefine the scope of security to include non-military threats, and it could therefore be argued that this leads to a demilitarisation of security overall, both in theory and in practice.

However, particularly when the environment is tagged onto traditional views of militarised and state-centric security, the end result could be the very opposite: that military responses become more widespread to include non-military threats, thereby exacerbating global insecurities. Or, more precisely, as Tennberg (1995: 242) notes:

Focusing on the connection between the military and the environment may distort the analysis of the situation. In this way, defining environmental problems could contribute more to the militarization of environmental politics than to a demilitarization of traditional security thinking.

Overall, then, environmental security, when it is linked to military involvement (which to some extent it inevitably will be) tends to cause concern amongst environmental scholars for a number of reasons: (a) it potentially sidelines the involvement of other organisations (such as development agencies) which may be better equipped to deal with environmental issues, (b) it may mean that funds could be directed at the military for environmental protection and therefore other environmentally relevant policy areas and actors may be financially neglected, (c) the belief that the military should be key actors in protecting the environment ignores the fact that militaries have traditionally been (and remain to be) major contributors to environmental degradation and (d) the militarisation of the environment may lead to a more militarised, and subsequently insecure, world.

Not only there are some antagonisms towards the concept of military responses to environmental issues from those proponents of sustainable development but also, within security organisations themselves, there are a number of concerns over the adoption of the environment as a security issue. This is because the concept of green security works to dilute the meaning of security, which has traditionally been about the defence of states from other states or (internally) from rebellious factions within nations (Soroos 1994: 318). As Soroos (1994: 319) notes, sectors of the military are sceptical of environmental security because 'the concept of security loses clarity and meaning when it is used more broadly to include threats other than those of a military nature'. Further, it seems the sceptics within the military share concerns with others, including some environmentalists and development scholars/practitioners, because environmental issues are considered very different from military threats and subsequently should be dealt with using different means (such as through NGOs and related development and environmental agencies (Soroos 1994)).

In sum then, it appears that both environmentalists and traditional security scholars and actors are sceptical of the 'tree-hugging' soldier represented in the cartoon above. Within both schools of thought there is a certain element which is concerned with allying environmental problems to military responses.

Anthropocentrism and technocratic responses to environmental problems

The above critique of environmental security relating to militarism is largely directed at those who wish to tag the environment on to traditional conceptions of security. However, the following critique relates to both the traditional and the human security approaches to the environment. Both of these approaches engage in anthropocentrism. Anthropocentrism is a belief that humans are of central importance to, in this case, environmental degradation and action. In other words, it is anthropocentric to claim that one should protect the environment for humankind and the instrumental value humankind might reap from environmental goods

(for a good summary of anthropocentrism see Smith 1998). Many environmentalists propose that anthropocentrism itself is central to environmental degradation and that holistic or ecocentric (nature centred) approaches should be adopted instead in order to protect the environment (see e.g. Fox 1990; O’Riordan 1981; Eckersley 1992; Naess 2002).

Having reviewed the main approaches to environmental security what is striking is that humans, as populations of a nation-state with regard to traditional notions of security and as individuals with regard to the concept of human security, are always the referent point of security, including the environmental aspects of said security approaches. As such, the securitisation of the environment privileges humans as above the rest of nature, seeking to protect it for current and future generations. Indeed, this rubs against the grain of ecocentric environmental thinking which argues that we should not save the environment for humans and the usage future humans may get out of it but, rather, we should protect the environment as it has a value in its own right, a value ecocentrics refer to as intrinsic value. This belief is certainly at odds with the notion of environmental security as part of human security as in this approach the environment should be protected for the wider security of human life and dignity (see the UNDP 1994 Human Development Report).

Further, and unsurprisingly, ecocentric environmentalists are also critical of technocratic responses to environmental degradation. As the well-known ecocentric theorist Timothy O’Riordan (1981: 1) famously noted:

Ecocentrism preaches the virtues of reverence, humility, responsibility and care; it argues for low impact technology . . . The technocentric ideology, by way of contrast, is almost arrogant in its assumption that man is supremely able to understand and control events to suit its purposes.

Ecocentric environmentalists, critical of human and technocentrism also find the militarisation of environmental problems highly problematic and demonstrate suspicion over the techno-fixes offered by the military in the service of environmental protection. Indeed, another consideration is the fact that the security approaches outlined earlier in the chapter tend to locate the threat as the environment itself. It is, however, largely agreed that humans have undermined and compromised the security of the environment, not that the environment is a threat to humans (Dyer 2001: 446). As such, framing the environment as a security problem tends to neglect the fact that environmental degradation is anthropogenic (i.e. man-made).

The critique derived from ecocentrics, however, has led to a further reimagining of environmental security which is worth noting here. The reframing of environmental security to respond to these criticisms is that of ecocentric security. Ecocentric security means that security should be sought for all life, both human and non-human. Arguably this makes a military component of security more difficult to justify as one seeks to maintain non-human life including habitats. As Clifton (2009: 6) notes:

[E]xtending considerations of interests to non-human species in other than mere human instrumental terms makes the justification of military conflict or activities such as military exercises and weapons testing virtually impossible to justify in any context.

Not only does this reframing of security as ecocentric potentially work to undermine the military’s role in providing environmental responses, negating the role of the soldier caricatured in the above cartoon, it also, further, devalues the importance of individuals, states and

state boundaries as the perspective moves from the human and the state as the referent point of security to consider non-human (as well as human) life and the biosphere to be within the security remit (Dyer 2001, 442).

Securitisation as a way to control populations

The following critique relates to a general concern over the use of security rhetoric at all. At the beginning of the chapter, it was noted that security problems are framed as such to invoke certain actions from states (in other words to overcome collective action problems) and from individuals. In ‘developed’ countries the actions encouraged with regard to individuals tend to relate to making consumption sustainable. People are told to minimise the usage of electrical goods, recycle their rubbish, ensure their houses are as energy efficient as possible and so on. They are encouraged to do these things in order to protect the environment and, subsequently, the insecurities that may be caused by environmental degradation. In other words, individuals are advised to modify their behaviour in order to prevent an environmental disaster or even holocaust (see Luke 1999; Sandilands 1999; Foster 2011). Indeed, ‘the pressures to modify behaviours through discourses of environmental insecurity are highly apparent in sustainable development policy activity’ (Foster 2011: 139). As such, the security/insecurity language used to frame environmental issues works to encourage changes to behaviour; which, admittedly, in the case of ‘developed’ countries does not appear too disturbing.

However, when this same approach is targeted at ‘developing’ countries the securitisation rhetoric becomes much more problematic. As is noted above the language of security attached to environmental degradation and climate change suggests that one should modify their behaviour otherwise global catastrophe becomes increasingly likely. However, in ‘developing’ countries, as well as highlighting modifications on how one consumes (and produces) goods and services, there are concerns over how one reproduces. The environment is contextualised as a problem related to consumption and production patterns and over-population with the latter being constructed as a problem exacerbated by non-Western countries (Bretherton 1999). As such, when we apply the securitisation language to issues of population, it may be concluded that certain (non-Western) people’s reproductive (read: sexual) behaviour is being scrutinised and encouraged to change because if it does not environmental ruin may well ensue. Given that environmental forecasts are driven by an uncertain science, and over-population and notions of the earth having a carrying capacity are not definite, this call for regulation of reproductive/sexual behaviour ‘or else’ is potentially very problematic indeed due to its racialised and gendered implications. In other words, as control of reproductive/sexual behaviour is mainly targeted at women from developing countries, the security rhetoric which calls for said changes in behaviour should be met with some caution.

Conclusion

This chapter began by setting out the rationale, from international organisations, some states and some security and environmental scholars, for securitising the environment. Mainly this rationale relates to overcoming collective action problems and speeding up responses to environmental issues. Indeed, the main way in which state actors interpret green security is closely related to traditional security approaches, whereby environmental degradation works to undermine the security of states and aggravate conflict and violence. As such, this

interpretation of green security leads to the conclusion that the military needs to be involved in environmental responses. However, the militarisation of environmental security has been largely criticised, partly because the military are better known for destroying, as opposed to protecting, environments. Also, this view of green security tends to focus on military threats yet environmental degradation arguably perpetuates non-military threats to individual human life and dignity. As such, human security has been considered a better way to frame environmental issues. Many environmentalists, however, remain unconvinced about both forms of environmental security due to their focus on humankind and security leading to a more ecocentric approach – namely ecocentric security – which includes securitising the entire planet, not just the aspects of nature which are instrumental to humans. Despite the various frameworks of environmental security, however, the very terminology of security invokes the idea in the general consciousness (including the consciousness of many state actors) that a military response is the way to combat environmental issues. Given these assumptions, ultimately the relationship between the military and security, when applied to the environment, may well end up rendering the very environment which one is seeking to protect even more insecure.

Please see the companion website for a seminar exercise.

Questions for further debate

- 1 To what extent does the securitisation of the environment work to overcome collective action problems?
- 2 Should the environment be an addendum to traditional security issues? Why/Why not?
- 3 Does the military have any role to play in environmental protection/conservation?
- 4 To what extent does greening securities potentially change our understanding of security?
- 5 Should environmental degradation be a security or a development issue? Are the two mutually exclusive?

Sources for further reading and research

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5 Securitization theory

Jonna Nyman

Chapter summary

This chapter analyses the contributions of securitization theory as a critical approach to security. It uses the Unocal affair as a case study, looking at the securitization of energy by elite US actors to show how securitization theory can be used to illustrate threat constructions and to interrogate and question these processes. The case study illustrates securitization in practice, highlighting both the contributions of the theory to critical security approaches more broadly conceived and its limitations.

Learning outcomes

On completion, readers should be able to:

- explain and identify the basic mechanisms of securitization theory;
- evaluate the usefulness and contribution of securitization theory;
- apply securitization theory to international security issues.

Introduction

Hacking and other Internet crimes pose a threat not only to network security but also to national security and public interests (China Daily 2011).

Climate change is threatening America's security . . . it exacerbates existing problems by decreasing stability, increasing conflict, and incubating the socioeconomic conditions that foster terrorist recruitment.

(senior US military leaders, quoted in Masia 2010)

AIDS today is a threat to security . . . the impact of AIDS on international, national and community security has become significant, with many more people dying of AIDS than as a result of war or conflict. The AIDS epidemic is claiming not only human lives, but destroying structures of governance that ensure human security.

(UNAIDS 2003)

An ever-increasing number of security threats appear daily in the public space as new issues are added to an expanding security agenda. Securitization theory was developed by the Copenhagen school, so-called because it formed at the Copenhagen Peace Research Institute (COPRI). The school originally consisted of Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de

Wilde, who co-authored *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (1998), henceforth *Security* (see Box 5.1). *Security* built on Wæver's earlier essay, 'Securitization and Desecuritization' (1995), and Wæver *et al.*'s *Identity, Migration and the New Security Agenda in Europe* (1993). It played a key part in the early development of critical security approaches, and made two central contributions. First, securitization theory aimed to broaden security beyond the traditional political and military sectors, introducing five sectors of security: military, environmental, economic, societal and political security. Second, it provided a 'constructivist operational method' for understanding and analysing how and when issues become security issues (Buzan *et al.* 1998: vii). Securitization refers to the process through which an issue is labelled a 'security' issue by an (elite) actor, a process which moves the issue out of the normal political sphere and into the security sphere. Labelling something a 'security' issue affects policy, and as such 'security' is a 'speech act' (Wæver 1995: 55), the meaning of which I explain further below. For the Copenhagen school, security issues are not objective and external but 'determined by actors' and 'intersubjective and socially constructed' (Buzan *et al.* 1998: 31). Since its inception securitization theory has become increasingly popular as an approach to security, and it has been used to study the securitization of a range of issues, from minority rights to immigration, trafficking, HIV-AIDS and the environment (Doty 1998; Huysmans 2000; Roe 2004; Elbe 2005, 2006; Trombetta 2008, 2010; MacKenzie 2009).

Box 5.1 *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* – the contribution of the Copenhagen school

The Copenhagen school's work on securitization theory during the 1990s resulted in a ground-breaking work with widespread influence in critical security studies. *Security* marked the beginning of the emergent field of securitization theory. The book attempts to bring together calls for widening the scope of security beyond the traditional political and military sectors with a constructivist understanding of security, developing an analytical framework for distinguishing how issues become security issues. While often perceived as a part of critical security studies, the book retains some assumptions of traditional security studies, in particular in retaining a role for the state in security. Through this the authors claim to 'analyse international security without losing sight of its original purpose' (1998: viii). Securitization was developed as a theory for identifying security issues once they are moved out of the traditional military sector into the new sectors developed. The book also attempts to use securitization to retain some traditional aspects of security, to avoid the concept becoming so broad it loses meaning. Instead of expanding security indefinitely, *Security* attempts to define it in opposition to the political, basing security on what differentiates it and securitization from the political and politicization (1998: 5). For threats to be considered valid security issues they have to meet clear criteria differentiating them from the political: 'they have to be staged as existential threats to a referent object by a securitizing actor who thereby generates endorsement of emergency measures beyond rules that would otherwise bind' (1998: 5). Beyond securitization theory, the book focuses on developing the concept of security sectors, widening security to military, environmental, economic, societal and political sectors. Understanding security in terms of sectors also allowed recognition of new referent objects of security beyond the state, with referent objects varying in different sectors from individual actors to sovereignty to the global environment or economy, though the state retains privileged importance within this framework.

Securitization and desecuritization

The Copenhagen school defines security in International Relations as different to security in an everyday sense – in International Relations, it is necessarily linked to power politics, and ultimately, it is about ‘survival’ (Buzan *et al.* 1998: 21). This makes security threats different to threats more broadly; they pose an ‘*existential threat*’ to a particular referent object – they threaten its very existence (Buzan *et al.* 1998: 21, emphasis added). The referent object, that is, the ‘thing’ under threat, was traditionally equated with the state, but this was extended by the Copenhagen school to include a range of possible referent objects, depending on the sector of security to be considered (in environmental security, for example, the global environment is often the referent object under threat). Securitization is the discursive process through which ‘an issue is dramatized and presented as an issue of supreme priority; thus by labelling it as security an agent claims a need for and a right to treat it by extraordinary means’ (Buzan *et al.* 1998: 26). As such, security is a ‘speech act’, ‘the utterance *itself* is the act’ (Wæver 1995: 55) – by speaking ‘security’ the securitizing actor moves the issue out of regular politics and into the security sphere, thereby legitimizing the use of extraordinary measures to deal with the threat (if the securitizing move is successful). Consequently, whether or not the threat is ‘real’ does not matter – securitizing an issue has nothing to do with the ‘reality’ of the threat but of the use of discourse to define it as such, and thus is always a ‘political choice’ (Buzan *et al.* 1998: 29). In the words of Wæver, ‘something is a security problem when the elites declare it to be so’ (Wæver 1995: 54). Actors in a position of power are more likely to be successful in securitizing by virtue of the added legitimacy of their position, though this does not guarantee that the audience will accept the securitizing move (Buzan *et al.* 1998: 31).

Once securitized, issues become addressed in particular ways: with ‘threat, defense, and often state-centred solutions’ (Wæver 1995: 65). In this way, if we accept that the label of ‘security’ changes the status of certain issues, securitized issues become too important to be subject to open debate and regular political procedure; instead, they should be prioritized over other issues by the state’s leaders or governing elite (Buzan *et al.* 1998: 29). It is important to note the role of the audience in securitization, as an issue only becomes securitized once the audience accepts a securitizing move as valid. In theory securitization can ‘never only be imposed’ (Buzan *et al.* 1998: 25). If the securitizing move has not been accepted to a point where emergency measures are possible, it remains a securitizing move but not a successful securitization (Buzan *et al.* 1998: 25). It is important to mention that it is not the word security itself that is necessary, but the designation of an issue as an existential threat in need of emergency action and the audience accepting that designation – sometimes the word ‘security’ is used outside of this logic, and some issues are securitized to a point where ‘security’ and priority are always implicit and do not have to be articulated as securitization has become institutionalized, such as ‘defense’, which always implies priority and security (Buzan *et al.* 1998: 27).

Securitized issues are recognized by a specific rhetorical structure stressing urgency, survival and ‘priority of action’ (Buzan *et al.* 1998: 26). The Copenhagen school suggests that securitization should be studied by looking at:

discourse and political constellations: When does an argument with this particular rhetorical and semiotic structure achieve sufficient effect to make an audience tolerate violations of rules that would otherwise have to be obeyed?

(Buzan *et al.* 1998: 25)

There are three key facilitating conditions that make successful securitization more likely: the speech act itself following the ‘grammar of security’ emphasizing priority, urgency and survival; the securitizing actor being in a ‘position of authority’ to maximize audience acceptance; and the features of the alleged ‘threat/s’ (Buzan *et al.* 1998: 33). Securitization theory distinguished security and securitization against regular politics and politicization, and presented a scale for identifying the status of issues, ranging from non-politicized to securitized, as shown in Figure 5.1 (Buzan *et al.* 1998: 23).

Securitization frames issues as exceptional politics or above normal politics and decision-making processes, justifying ‘actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure’ (Buzan *et al.* 1998: 24). As such ‘security should be seen as negative, as a failure to deal with issues as normal politics’ (Buzan *et al.* 1998: 29). Reflecting this, the Copenhagen school also developed the concept of desecuritization, the process which occurs when issues are moved out of the security sphere and back into the political sphere. Because of the particular connotations and history of the concept of ‘security’, the Copenhagen school argued that ‘defense’ and ‘the state’ remain central to the concept in International Relations; securitizing an issue inevitably ‘evokes an image of threat-defense, allocating to the state an important role in addressing it’ (Wæver 1995: 47). While security is thus to an extent seen as a negative, as a failure of regular politics, it also has advantages; securitizing an issue tends to give it extra priority, both in terms of allocating extra attention by key policy-makers and extra funds (Buzan *et al.* 1998: 29). When deciding on whether to securitize an issue, therefore, officials need to compare ‘the always problematic side effects of applying a mindset of security against the possible advantages of focus, attention, and mobilization’ (Buzan *et al.* 1998: 29). Because of the negative aspects of applying a mindset of security to particular issues desecuritization is presented as ‘the optimal long-range option’ (Buzan *et al.* 1998: 29), but securitization is not ruled out. Because of the problematic side effects of securitization, securitization theory does critique the idea that security is necessarily a positive, arguing that desecuritization should be the aim, shifting issues back into regular politics with its accompanying bargaining processes (Buzan *et al.* 1998: 4).

Since the publication of *Security* in 1998, securitization theory has developed in various directions. It has been applied by a range of authors to an increasing number of issues in International Relations and in an increasing number of ways. Because of the relatively open nature of securitization theory as an analytical framework, it has been interpreted and used in many ways. Some have argued that in their focus on security speech acts, securitization theory should not be limited to focusing on securitizing ‘speech acts’, but



Figure 5.1 Issue scale, derived from Buzan *et al.* (1998: 23).

should also look at physical action (McDonald 2008: 9), images and other forms of ‘visual representation’ (Hansen 2000b: 17; Williams 2003; Hansen 2010). Balzacq has argued that securitization theory and research applying it needs to pay more attention to the role of the audience in securitization (Balzacq 2005, 2011a), as audience acceptance is necessary for securitization to be successful. Likewise context and timing of securitization has been emphasized. Others still have argued that desecuritization has been under-theorized and should be emphasized more (Aradau 2004: 389; Hansen 2010), while Roe has argued that desecuritization is in some cases ‘logically impossible’ (Roe 2004: 208). Buzan and Wæver have themselves attempted to reconsider scale in securitization analysis, pointing to securitizations above the state level as macrosecuritizations (Buzan and Wæver 2009). Securitization theory has also been said to be Western-centric and therefore problematic when it comes to studying non-Western states (Wilkinson 2007a). Overall Balzacq argues that securitization theory has evolved in two distinct directions, with a sociological and a post-structural branch. It is arguably in the development of critiques of securitization theory that securitization really starts to move into the realm of critical Security Studies rather than a constructivist approach that aims to be compatible with neorealism, so the section on limitations of securitization theory further deals with the evolution of securitization.

Sectors of security

The sectoral approach to security was initially explored in *People, States and Fear* (Buzan 1991), and further developed in *Security* (Buzan *et al.* 1998). Under this approach, security should be broadened beyond the traditional political-military understanding to include the sectors below, recognizing new types of threats. *Security* argued that whichever sector a threat is placed in, to be considered as security threats issues have to ‘be staged as existential threats to a referent object by a securitizing actor who thereby generates endorsement of emergency measures beyond rules that would otherwise bind’ (Buzan *et al.* 1998: 5). As such while each sector has ‘distinctive security dynamics’ (Buzan *et al.* 1998), all the threats considered concern existential threat – threats to the survival of something (referent object). The referent object differs depending on the sector, though the state is privileged overall by the Copenhagen school.

The military sector

In this sector the sovereign state is the most important, though not the only, referent object. The government is the key securitizing actor and retains the right to use force, but many voices may attempt to securitize even in the military sector, including pressure groups. The threat/s is/are usually external to the state but they can be internal too. Examples of referent objects beyond the state include religion, such as in the ‘threat of Islamism’ discourse, and during the Cold War NATO was a referent object of military security. Overall threats in this sector are usually military threats to the territorial integrity or survival of the state. In *Security*, military threats are considered the primary existential threat, as they threaten society as a whole (Buzan *et al.* 1998: 58). The threat is also urgent and immediate, compared with many threats in the environmental sector for example. However, the military sector is becoming less important today because of increasing ties between countries and in particular between ‘advanced industrial economies’ who have developed a form of security community (Buzan *et al.* 1998: 62).

The environmental sector

Often ignored completely by traditional security approaches, the environmental sector unsurprisingly focuses on threats against the local/national/regional/global environment or ecosystem/s, but in many cases concern for the environment is linked to preserving existing levels of civilization (Buzan *et al.* 1998: 75). Threats include environmental threats not directly linked to human activity (though this link or lack thereof is contested) such as earthquakes and volcanic activity, as well as those more clearly attributable to human activity, such as greenhouse gas emissions. Securitizing moves occur on every level of analysis, from local to global, though the global level features the most. A good example here would be the UN Security Council's recent debates on climate change, in 2007 and 2011. Overall, the environment is increasingly securitized (see Trombetta 2010; Floyd 2010; and Chapter 4).

The economic sector

The economic sector is 'rich in referent objects' from the global market to states, classes and individuals, with much overlap (Buzan *et al.* 1998: 100), and securitizing actors are similarly varied and can be located on any of these levels. A good recent example of a security threat in the economic sector would be the recent global financial crisis, starting in 2007, which has been securitized on a number of levels by a range of actors, and said to be threatening the existential survival of referent objects from the global economy to individual livelihoods. It is important to note that in some cases, 'the language of securitization is a way of taking economic nationalist positions without having to abandon superficial commitments to the liberal consensus' (Buzan *et al.* 1998: 115). Economic activity often also triggers security and survival issues in the other sectors, creating an 'overspill effect' (Buzan *et al.* 1998: 116).

The societal sector

For the Copenhagen school, the societal sector is about identity and the security of identity, and 'societal insecurity exists when communities of whatever kind define a development or potentiality as a threat to their survival as a community' (Buzan *et al.* 1998: 119). As such, the referent objects in the societal sector are communities which self-identify as communities based on a sense of shared identity. The relevant types of threats depend on how the identity is constructed and what it depends on to survive, a shared language, culture or religion for example (Buzan *et al.* 1998: 124). As such, migration and immigration could be considered threats. Another good example of a societal security threat would be attempted securitizing moves in Britain constructing EU integration as a threat to British identity. By this logic, anything that helps a competing identity can be considered a security threat in the societal sector.

The political sector

The political security sector focuses on non-military threats to state sovereignty, though it can also include other unit-level actors such as the EU, state-less groups and transnational movements able to get 'supreme allegiance' from its members, such as the Catholic church (Buzan *et al.* 1998: 145). It could also include the UN as a system-level referent object. The sector has a lot of overlap from other sectors, as according to Buzan *et al.* all security is to

some extent political (1998: 141). Securitizing actors tend to be state leaders or unit leaders as well as international mass media or NGOs.

Securitization in practice: the Unocal affair

Box 5.2 The Unocal affair – what happened?

What will here be referred to as the ‘Unocal affair’ occurred in June 2005, when the Chinese (partly state-owned) energy company China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) put forward a bid to buy US energy company Unocal. CNOOC’s bid for Unocal led to extensive protests by various elite US actors, including Congress and the House Armed Services Committee, calling the sale of a US energy company to a Chinese energy company a ‘national security’ issue. Protests resulted in House of Representatives Resolution 344 which called for the president to take action and review the CNOOC bid. Before such emergency measures could be taken, CNOOC withdrew the bid, citing ‘political opposition’ in the USA as the reason.

Over two months, the bid by the China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) to take over US Energy Company Unocal (see Box 5.2) was subjected to a process of repeated securitizing moves, leading to successful securitization of the issue in the USA. The process clearly shows the rhetorical structure of securitization, with acts following the ‘grammar of security’. In this way, what could have been considered a commercial takeover by one business of another became successfully securitized as energy was directly linked to national security. The initial securitizing move was undertaken by two US Congressmen, Richard Pombo and Duncan Hunter, in a letter sent to President George W. Bush on 17 June 2005, urging the President to take action to ensure national security. The letter stated that the CNOOC bid ‘raises many concerns about US jobs, energy production and energy *security*’ (Hunter and Pombo 2005, emphasis added). It also pointed to ‘the implications for American interests and most especially, the *threat* posed by China’s governmental pursuit of world energy resources’ (Hunter and Pombo 2005, emphasis added). The letter was widely reported in the media. The discourse in this letter clearly shows the beginning of the rhetoric of securitization which later became even more explicit.

The letter was followed by further securitizing moves, most importantly by the House of Representatives which produced House of Representatives Resolution 344 on 30 June 2005. The debates preceding the resolution showed statements like ‘a Chinese government acquisition of a critical United States energy company could impair our *national security*’, likewise ‘this acquisition could mean less energy for the United States’ (Congressional records 2005: H5576, emphasis added). Statements like these worked as security speech acts, resulting in Resolution 344, passed by 398 to 15. Resolution 344 was a non-binding resolution which called for a presidential review of the potential CNOOC ‘acquisition, merger or takeover’ of Unocal on the basis of ‘national security’. The security speech acts in Resolution 344 are clear: the discourse is securitized and emphasizes urgency, threat and priority, calling on the President to take action. The discourse is securitized throughout and the resolution clearly follows the rhetorical structure of securitization. There is constant reiteration of the words ‘national security’, and the opening sentence sets up the external reality as one where securitizing CNOOC’s bid is essential, if not common sense: ‘oil and natural gas resources are

strategic assets critical to national security and the Nation's economic prosperity'. It uses a traditional understanding of security, continually appealing to the role of the state, repeating the words 'national' and 'Nation'. The phrase 'strategic assets' with its military connotations works to reinforce this. 'Critical' is used to emphasize urgency and priority needed to validate securitization. The existential nature of the threat is returned to at the end of the resolution, where it declares that were the deal to be accepted by Unocal, it could 'pose a direct threat to the national security of the United States'. Following this is a direct and explicit call for emergency measures, calling on the President to review the deal, going beyond the established rules and lifting it above normal politics.

Likewise, securitizing moves took place in the House Armed Services Committee, which held a hearing on 'the national security implications' of the merger. One of the statements given is particularly interesting, as it was given by Richard D'Amato, head of the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission (USCC) (see D'Amato 2005). The statement attempts to convince the audience, the House Armed Services Committee, of the necessity of securitization. It warns of implications and the need to take action stating that the bid should be treated as 'a non-commercial transaction with other motives and purposes' – it is an exceptional case. It is linked to national security in the next sentence, 'if it affects the national security of the United States, intervention by the US government must be seriously considered'. This is an open call for exceptional treatment, emphasizing the need for emergency measures.

Besides repeated securitizing moves following the grammar of security, the successful securitization of Unocal affair was also helped by a number of facilitating conditions. The securitizing actors were in a clear position of authority, making their claims appear more legitimate to the audience, in this case the US general public, which made their acceptance of securitization more likely. The features of the alleged threat and the timing of the Unocal bid also made successful securitization feasible, as it came during a 'sensitive' time in US-China relations (Jiang 2005: 1). Likewise the discursive context was conducive to audience acceptance of securitization, as the Unocal affair occurred against a backdrop of ever-increasing attention on the security implications of energy supplies and increasing acceptance of the phrase 'energy security'. If energy is already accepted as a security issue, securitizing the CNOOC bid is likely to be easier.

Interestingly the Unocal affair also showed attempts at desecuritization by Chinese actors. China's Ministry of Commerce released a statement saying that 'We think that these *commercial activities* should not be interfered in or disturbed by political elements' (MOFCOM 2005a, emphasis added). Likewise, the Foreign Ministry stated in July 2005 that 'We demand that the U.S. Congress correct its mistaken ways of politicizing *economic and trade issues* and stop interfering in the *normal commercial exchanges* between enterprises of the two countries' (Goodman 2005, emphasis added). Desecuritization attempts were most likely not effective because of the lack of legitimacy these actors hold with the US audience, and the bid was still securitized in the USA.

So how can we tell that securitization was successful? First, emergency measures were made possible by the securitized discourse, though CNOOC withdrew the bid before such measures could occur. The issue was placed above normal politics, and moved into the security sphere where emergency measures were enabled. Second, there was some evidence of audience acceptance of securitization. During the Unocal affair, one poll showed that '73 per cent of US nationals disliked the potential deal' (Jiang 2008: 306), suggesting the audience would tolerate violation of regular rules. While this is not conclusive evidence of audience acceptance, it does give some indication. In this case securitization also had

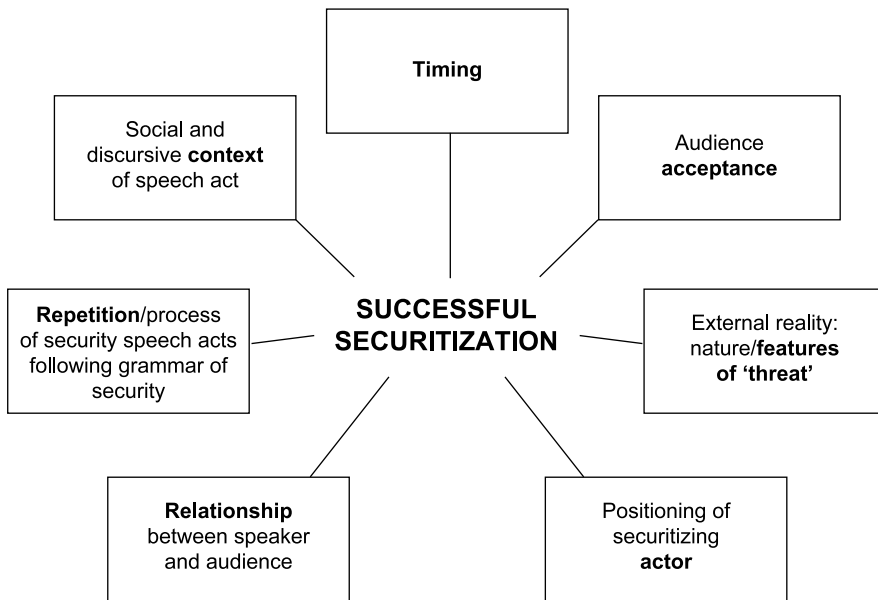


Figure 5.2 Factors contributing to successful securitization.

long-term implications in terms of policy changes, leading to the Pombo amendment to the Energy Policy Act 2005, placing restrictions on sales and necessitating a national security review of international energy requirements. It also extended the time period for such a review in the case of investment in US companies by Chinese companies (Energy Policy Act 2005: 56) allowing both the President and Congress to review reports. Clearly this successful securitization (see Figure 5.2) enabled emergency action ‘outside the normal bounds of political procedure’ (Buzan *et al.* 1998: 24).

So what does this mean, and how does this show the contribution of securitization theory to critical approaches to security? Applying securitization theory to a case study like the Unocal affair shows how an issue was moved out of normal bargaining processes of regular politics and into the security sphere. Instead of suggesting this was an inevitable process dependent only on an ‘objective’ threat, it shows that it was made possible through the use of security speech acts. By showing how CNOOC’s bid was constructed as a security issue and as a threat requiring emergency measures, it highlights the socially constructed nature of threats – ultimately, ‘security is what actors make of it’ (Buzan and Wæver 2003: 48). By highlighting the process of securitization and threat construction, it also provides researchers with a possibility of conceptualizing change, as security and securitization is not inevitable. The following section will discuss some of the most common criticisms (see further reading list for more detail and sources).

Limitations of securitization theory

Securitization theory has been subject to a number of critiques and revisions in different directions. First, as securitization theory has increasingly been incorporated under the

broader heading of critical approaches to security, many critics have argued that it simply does not go far enough and that it is too accepting of traditional assumptions about security (see, for example, Booth 2007; McDonald 2008). Simply, securitization theory is not ‘critical’ enough. It is still to an extent wedded to (neo)realism, and its attempts to ‘incorporate some of the traditionalist position’ (Buzan *et al.* 1998: 4) are problematic. While extending security beyond the state as a referent object the state remains privileged – a key critique from human security approaches, for example.

It is also criticized for having no clear normative agenda (see, for example, McDonald 2008; Hansen 2010). This criticism is more problematic. Securitization theory does not tell us whether securitization, in the Unocal case or any other case, is ‘good’ or ‘bad’, or indeed preferable to ‘desecuritization’. While suggesting that desecuritization is often preferable, it never rules out securitization as an option but rather suggests it is sometimes necessary. Overall there is ‘a silence on which situations call for “the responsibility” to securitize rather than desecuritization; and absence on the question of which securitizations might be more desirable than others’ (Hansen 2010: 1). Securitization theory in a sense removes the possibility of a normative agenda in analysis by stating that securitization is ‘a political choice’ (Wæver 1995: 81), moving it out of the hands of analysts and leaving them as passive observers, though Wæver rejects this criticism (Wæver 1999). Moreover, it could be argued that this criticism is itself problematic, as while the Copenhagen school explicitly refrains from normative choice they do say that a normative agenda is ‘complementary’ to securitization analysis (Buzan *et al.* 1998: 35). Consequently, it could even be considered an advantage as it leaves the details of this normative choice to analysts themselves, rendering the analytical framework much more flexible and adaptable. As a result it has been successfully used with normative agendas and particularly with critical (security) agendas. More important then, is McDonald’s criticism that securitization theory depicts ‘security as a failure of ‘normal politics’ rather than recognizing security as a site of contestation and therefore for (even emancipatory) change’ (McDonald 2008: 19). By removing or making more difficult a positive conceptualization of security, the Copenhagen school may limit analysts’ ability to use ‘security’ as a basis for positive change. Another avenue for normative change to ‘security’ as it stands may lie in desecuritization, as outlined by Aradau who sees it as a site for democratic emancipatory change and argues that there is a need to rework desecuritization ‘through a politics of emancipation as democratic politics’ (Aradau 2004: 405). Again, however, the hitherto under-theorized nature of desecuritization makes this difficult.

Another limit of securitization theory could be said to be its ambiguous understanding of the speech act – it is simultaneously defined as ‘an intersubjective process of constructing a threat and as just an “utterance itself”’ (Stritzel 2007: 364). If the speech act is defined as a single utterance it is unlikely to explain the entirety of the social process that follows successful securitization; in most cases it is rather a case of ‘a *process* of articulations’ (Stritzel 2007: 377). There is a tension between the Copenhagen school’s desire to have both ‘a social sphere (with ‘actors’, ‘fields’, ‘authority’, ‘intersubjectivity’, ‘audience’ and ‘facilitating conditions’) and a (post-structural/postmodern) linguistic theory based on Derrida and performativity’ (Stritzel 2007: 377). This could also be part of the reason why securitization theory has evolved in two distinct directions, with a sociological and a post-structural turn. However, this tension could be at least partially resolved by a greater emphasis on discursive context. Furthermore, a ‘focus on the moment of intervention only’ also ignores gradual processes of security construction (McDonald 2008: 3).

Perhaps the most central limitation of securitization theory is its focus on speech and language. It effectively ignores ‘non-verbal expressions of security’ (Wilkinson 2011: 94) and

the fact that language is ‘only one (albeit the most central) means through which meaning is communicated’ (McDonald 2008: 7). As a result, both physical action (McDonald 2008: 9) and ‘visual representation’ (Hansen 2000: 17; also Williams 2003: 14) are neglected. Apart from the problematic effect this has on securitization analyses which ignore non-verbal securitizations and privilege security speech acts, causing a problematic analytical bias, it also creates a power problem for securitization theory. It ignores ‘potential silences’ in the form of ‘discursive and political structures that delimit what can be said’ (Hansen 2000: 30). It marginalizes ‘the experiences and articulations of the powerless in global politics, presenting them at best as part of an audience that can collectively consent to or contest securitizing moves, and at worst as passive recipients of elite discourses’ (McDonald 2008: 13). ‘If security is a speech act’, Hansen suggests, ‘then it is simultaneously deeply implicated in the production of silence’ (2000: 306). Problematically, those who cannot speak security are neglected by securitization theory. This also leaves a normative problem of ‘leaving power “where it is” in security terms’ (McDonald 2008: 4). Problematically, this leaves non-Western experiences of security silenced (Wilkinson 2007a), and a notable absence of gender in securitization theory (Hansen 2000).

Balzacq (2011a) in particular has pointed to the lack of emphasis on the audience in securitization theory (see also Roe 2008), while its acceptance is said to be necessary for successful emergency measures (Buzan *et al.* 1998: 33). For Balzacq, securitization is ‘audience-centred’ and ‘the challenge of a securitizing agent would be to convince the audience (e.g. a nation) to recognize the nature of a symbolic referent subject’ (Balzacq 2005: 184). Securitization theory also suffers from a lack of clarity when it comes to defining the audience: who is and who is not part of the audience? The importance of the audience when studying securitization can be difficult to incorporate in research, however. Most research in Security Studies focuses on elites, and this is particularly true for securitization theory. Once the audience has been defined, to actually confirm audience acceptance of securitization in practice is difficult, both methodologically and empirically. As a result, securitization theory tends to approach this issue in an abstract, reverse order, focusing analysis on successful securitizations. By the logic of securitization theory, the audience must accept securitizing moves for securitization to be successful, so if a successful securitization is studied the audience must have already accepted it. This logic is problematic. Besides the audience, it is also important to note external context as an important factor, in particular timing and external reality (Balzacq 2005: 182).

Last, securitization theory suffers from a ‘confirmation bias’ (Balzacq 2011b). This derives from the Copenhagen school’s emphasis on successful securitizations, which in turn has led to a ‘selection bias’ where only successful securitizations are selected for analysis. This can ‘understate or overstate the relationship between the dependent and independent variable’, resulting in a ‘confirmation bias’ (Balzacq 2011b). Most simply put, studying securitization in this way in practice never actually tests the theory, as researchers simply find what they look for – instances of successful securitization. However, this exaggerates the scope of securitization theory as it was originally developed purely as an analytical framework to study securitization(s), rather than as a broader theoretical framework with which to analyse international security.

Conclusion

Securitization theory has made a number of contributions to critical approaches to security. Applying it to a case study like the Unocal affair shows how an issue was moved out of the

normal bargaining processes of regular politics and into the security sphere, and how this in turn affected how the issue was dealt with. Instead of suggesting this was an inevitable process dependent only on 'objective' reality, it shows that it was made possible through the use of security speech acts. This highlights the social construction of 'threats' and 'security'. Though like the most theoretical approaches it has limitations, it remains a useful tool for studying the process by which issues become security issues.

Please see the companion website for a seminar exercise.

Questions for further debate

- 1 Who speaks security, and what determines who can speak security?
- 2 What has securitization theory added to critical approaches to security?
- 3 How 'critical' is securitization theory?
- 4 Should securitization theory have a normative agenda?
- 5 To what extent is securitization theory Western-centric?

Sources for further reading and research

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6 Security as emancipation

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Chapter summary

The chapter provides a conceptual introduction to the notion of Security as Emancipation (SAE), originally identified with the ‘Welsh School’ of Critical Security Studies (CSS). The three key tenets that characterize this approach are: recognition of individuals as ultimate referents of security, emphasis on the political underpinnings and implications of security praxis, and a normative commitment towards emancipatory transformations. Employing the case of the 1984 industrial accident in the Indian city of Bhopal, the chapter demonstrates how SAE is useful to understand and act politically upon a specific security issue. The chapter also reflects upon the significance of SAE in CSS, while recognizing its methodological implications and some of its limitations.

Learning outcomes

On completion, readers should be able to:

- identify the main assumptions underlying the idea of SAE, as well as the features that distinguish it from other critical approaches;
- use emancipatory approach in the study of a security issue, with appropriate research questions and methodological tools;
- assess the contribution of the emancipatory approach to an increasingly interconnected field of CSS.

Introduction

On the night of 2 December 1984, a chemical factory set up in the Indian city of Bhopal by the United States-based Union Carbide Corporation (UCC) leaked around 42 tons of Methyl Isocyanate (MIC), a toxic pesticide ingredient, into the surrounding environment. There are no certainties as to how many people died in the hours after the leak, although the estimates range from five thousand to four times that number; official statistics from 1984 locate over half a million people in the gas-affected areas (Government of Madhya Pradesh 2010). Many have died since the disaster from its long-term effects (illnesses such as lung cancer or kidney failure) and others have suffered from genetic mutations and birth defects. According to official figures from compensation tribunals, more than half a million people were affected by the events of that night.

In both International Relations publications and international policy circles, industrial accidents such as the Bhopal case have seldom been identified as security concerns, in spite of the growing list of security challenges identified for the twenty-first century including terrorism, nuclear proliferation, climate change, depletion of energy resources and migration. In light of this, the choice of the Bhopal case for this chapter is unusual because it does not fit into the usual range of security concerns. It is, however, well-suited to discuss the notion of ‘Security as Emancipation’ (SAE).

The focal point of an emancipation-oriented approach to security is the normative commitment towards what Ken Booth has termed the ‘condition of insecurity’ (2007: 101). According to this approach, the study of security must be oriented towards the identification, analysis and redressing of the insecurities affecting individuals and groups in particular contexts. An account is deemed emancipatory insofar as it seeks to contribute to the achievement of security by garnering existing potential for transformation and informing the practical transformative strategies of specific political actors. Importantly, the achievement of security in an emancipatory sense is intrinsically connected with broader political transformation that opens up space in people’s lives, so that they can make decisions and pursue courses of action beyond mere survival.

The industrial accident in Bhopal may not have led to domestic instability or conflict between states of the magnitude that would attract the attention of security scholars. Neither can it be considered to be a successful case of securitization (see Chapter 5). The lives of the Bhopal survivors, however, continue to be largely defined by the events of December 1984. Notwithstanding the security concerns (in the dominant scholarly usage of the term) that would normally be associated with people from India (e.g. the India–Pakistan conflict, terrorism and insurgencies), the ‘security’ of the people of Bhopal (here referring to their ability to have control and predictability over their lives and surroundings) is more intimately linked to the accident. With its interest in the ‘real’ lived experiences of insecurity of individuals and groups, the SAE perspective seeks to address the gap between these two notions of security.

Bhopal investigation can yield important lessons for the study and practice of security, beginning with the need to recognize complex networks of social relations and structures, which systematically place some groups in positions of vulnerability and disadvantage (and others in positions of privilege). It reaffirms the need for a human-centred understanding of security, in light of the absolute unpredictability and absence of control in the lives of individuals and groups as a result of government and corporate decisions and/or inactions. Finally, the Bhopal case calls for an unashamedly normative understanding of security, one that is able to identify the ways in which socio-political arrangements are implicated in the production of threats and injustices, and one that is able to identify existing potential for political transformation.

This chapter has three aims: (a) to introduce and discuss the main themes and concepts in SAE, (b) to demonstrate the extent to which this approach can be used to illuminate dimensions of the Bhopal industrial accident that are frequently left out by other approaches and (c) to highlight, using the case study, the implications of conceiving SAE within critical approaches to security.

Security as emancipation: key themes

Critical approaches to security developed out of a desire to ‘broaden the neorealist conception of security to include a wider range of potential threats from economic and

environmental issues to human rights and migration’ and to ‘deepen the agenda of Security Studies by moving either down to the level of individual or human security or up to the level of international or global security, with regional and societal security as possible intermediate points’ (Krause and Williams 1996: 230). Building up from these insights, Richard Wyn Jones proposed that the concept of security be *broadened* as suggested above, *extended* to include referents other than the state, *deepened* in order to reflect ‘deeper assumptions about the nature of politics and the role of conflict in political life’, and *focused*, crucially on emancipation as the prism through which both theory and practice of security should be viewed’ (1999: 166, emphasis in the original).

It is in this context that the origins of ‘security as emancipation’ can be located (see Box 6.1). Since the publication of Booth’s article ‘Security and Emancipation’ (1991), this approach has affirmed its specificity by combining three sets of ideas: the focus on individuals as the ultimate referents of security, the idea that security understandings and practices are political in their assumptions and implications, and the normative commitment towards the redressing of insecurity and towards emancipatory transformations of the political realm.

Box 6.1 ‘Welsh School’ origins and beyond

The emancipatory approach to security is commonly identified with the so-called ‘Welsh School’ (Smith 2005) or ‘Aberystwyth School’ (Wæver 2004) of Security Studies, because some of its most important proponents (such as Ken Booth, Richard Wyn Jones and Pinar Bilgin) were based at Aberystwyth University in Wales, UK, at some point in their academic careers. These markers have stuck, and in a recent review of the field this approach to security was described as ‘Booth and Wyn Jones and their Aberystwyth students and collaborators’ (Buzan and Hansen 2009: 205). Booth was, indeed, the first to formulate the idea of security as emancipation, which he defined as ‘the freeing of people (as individuals and groups) from those physical and human constraints which stop them carrying out what they would freely choose to do’ (1991: 319). This definition has been elaborated more recently (e.g. Booth 2007: 112) but the basic idea remains: security is a means towards achieving a life less determined by contingent and structural impediments upon the lives of individuals and groups.

The Aberystwyth/Welsh marker is important but should not be overstated. Scholars around the world now use different aspects of security as emancipation in the context of different agendas. More importantly, one needs to go beyond seeing security as emancipation as a school of thought. ‘Schools’ denote doctrines, hierarchical relations, teachings being passed on and reproduced – connotations that are antithetical to the critical spirit of permanent unease. At the same time, the organization of the field of Security Studies along geographically determined schools of thought is now doing more harm than good, by reproducing artificial separations and impairing the circulation of ideas.

For these reasons, we prefer to define this approach as ‘security as emancipation’ (SAE), and to conceive it as a network of scholars from different locations who, in the course of different theoretical and empirical pursuits, have drawn on a critical, human-centred and transformation-oriented understanding of security – while combining these inspirations with their own ideas and with other approaches (such as feminism, post-structuralism, Marxism, human security or others).

The focus on individual human beings must be read in light of a desire to engage, as faithfully as possible, with ‘real’ conditions of existence, and thereby produce ‘truer’ knowledge about the world. SAE puts forward an ontological and epistemological challenge to dominant thinking about security, setting out to reconsider ‘what is real’ and ‘what we can know’. The version of reality put forward by SAE is predicated upon the idea of the individual as an irreducible unit of political life. As Booth (2007: 225) has put it,

[p]olitically speaking, individual human beings are primordial in a manner that groupings such as nations and sovereign states are not. I therefore consider individuals logically to be the ‘ultimate’ referent for thinking about security in a way contingent groups cannot be.

At this point, it is important to note that while the concept of human security also focuses on individual referents, there are fundamental differences between the subjects of SAE and human security (see Box 6.2). More importantly, it must be stressed that the notion of humanity put forward in SAE does not correspond to some liberal idea of abstract individuality, but to an embodied and fundamentally open conception of what ‘human’ means. Rather than a set of characteristics of what it should entail, being human means having a body with a certain set of needs, a body that is always embedded within a social background and within an environment that makes life possible. At the same time, being human implies the capability to reflect about one’s own position and to make choices about one’s own idea of a ‘good life’ – once pressing concerns about immediate well-being or survival are alleviated. As Booth (2007: 378–386) has argued, being human is above all the ability to become, or invent oneself as, human.

The proponents of SAE thus suggest that security scholarship should seek to identify and redress the structures and relationships that prevent human beings from exploring this potential. In this process, they seek to engage with the ‘real’ conditions of existence: the ‘corporeal, material existence and experiences of individual human beings’ (Wyn Jones 2005: 227). Insecurity in this context is seen as a multifaceted condition – constituted of a network of oppressive relations and structures (economic, social and political) – that determines the lives of individuals and groups. Threats can ‘range from direct bodily violence from other humans (war), through structural political and economic forms of oppression (slavery), into more existential threats to identity (cultural imperialism)’ (Booth 1999: 49).

This leads to another important theme in SAE: the way in which insecurity is conceptualized and embedded in a narrative about the relationship between security and politics. The ‘politics of security’ includes an awareness of the political assumptions that underlie understandings and practices of security; of the processes and struggles through which they are reproduced and contested; and of the effects they have at the level of social relations, political community and the political sphere more broadly.

To begin with, taking on board the politics of security entails that practices of security are seen not as the necessary and natural response to a given situation, but rather as the result of social interaction and political struggle, with different political actors putting forward their own claims to security. Faithful to the post-positivist guiding principle of enquiring into the conditions in which knowledge is produced, SAE sees understandings of security as social products and processes, which derive from political interests, reflect existing opportunities and constraints, result from power struggles and are oriented towards political goals. Even though knowledge about security is ultimately geared towards addressing identifiable

Box 6.2 A human-centred approach

With its insistence on the insecurities of individuals and groups, and with its focus on issues that are normally considered to fall within the remit of development – such as poverty, illiteracy or ill health – SAE overlaps with the human security agenda. On the one hand, the ultimate concerns of SAE can be described as human security ones; on the other hand, some authors identified with the human security approach have used the concept of emancipation to describe their political goals (see, e.g. Thomas 2001).

Despite these similarities, it is nonetheless important to reaffirm the specificity of SAE. This specificity is clear when one looks at the philosophical assumptions that underlie this approach: its commitment to post-positivism and Marxism, for example, or its desire to question the politics behind the ontology of security. SAE also distinguishes itself for its all-encompassing approach towards the scope/meaning of security. Specifically, it sees human security issues as part of a wider context: the global organization of political community (the Westphalian system), the interconnection of political and economic relations (capitalism), social relations of discrimination, prejudice and inequality (patriarchy, racism, etc.). By taking into account the ways in which this legacy constitutes the ethical boundaries of political action, SAE sees the achievement of security as predicated upon broad political transformation, starting at the local level but engaging wholeheartedly with the big issues of world politics. By combining this critical attitude with its dual focus on local politics/world politics, SAE establishes its difference in relation to common definitions of human security, which arguably are content with solving particular issues.

Rather than a form of human security, the emancipatory approach can more aptly be described as human-centred: it takes individuals as the ultimate referents of security and the alleviation of their insecurities as a moral reference point. Moreover, SAE is human-centred in its insistence on denaturalizing dominant understandings. Following from the Marxist critique of fetishization, SAE argues that current arrangements are not natural or necessary, but rather the creation of human beings with particular interests at a particular point in time. In this sense, emancipation involves reclaiming the control over social and political processes, by bringing these back to public debate and democratically accountable political action.

insecurities, the content and relevance of different ‘facts’ about the world is always established by political negotiation.

In addition to being political in their underlying assumptions and in the ways in which they are legitimized, security understandings are also political in their implications, in that they influence the self-perception of actors and the way they relate to each other. More broadly, ideas about security contribute to shaping the political realm by defining the limits of what is seen as possible and desirable. Security is a political phenomenon that, in turn, shapes politics. The ‘politicization’ of security (Fierke 2007: 33) thus entails an acknowledgement of the role of security knowledge in supporting predominant arrangements, or, alternatively, in questioning and transforming them.

Building on this comprehensive understanding of the politics of security, SAE sees itself as a political intervention in the world, committed to the realization of emancipatory alternatives for the identified referents of security. According to the proponents of this approach, knowledge is a form of political *praxis*, that is, a political activity in its own right ('praxis' is the process of practising or enacting theory). A critical account of security has two tasks: first, it must investigate the assumptions, structures and relationships that are implicated in the production and maintenance of insecurities and second, on the basis of this, it must identify existing potentialities for transforming predominant arrangements and seek to contribute to the realization of this 'immanent potential' (where 'immanent potential' means the possibilities of resistance that are inherent within any socio-political organization, such as a state). The activity of studying security is always implicated in the political status quo: it can either contribute to maintaining it or choose to challenge it. As Booth writes, a critical theory of security 'goes beyond problem-solving *within* the status quo and instead seeks to help engage with the problem *of* the status quo' (2005: 10, emphasis in the original).

Given the multiple insecurities affecting individuals and groups in the world today, the emancipatory approach is normatively oriented towards transformation. The transformation of the political state of affairs towards more emancipatory arrangements is, obviously, a slow and painstaking process. Emancipation does not come about automatically, nor there is a universal and unidirectional historical pathway towards an emancipated end-state. Rather, emancipation has been defined by Booth, Wyn Jones and other proponents of SAE as a localized and unfinished process, one that can only be determined by local stakeholders in concrete situations. Indeed, there can be no 'Emancipation' but rather more or less emancipatory options for a given situation, i.e. options that are more or less conducive to opening up space in people's lives so that they can decide and act for themselves. This means that, although the language of emancipation has been at times mobilized to justify the imposition of universalist views, there is nothing inherently 'top-down' about the localized politics of emancipation. Emancipation, as a political process, is about the social interactions of 'real people in real places', and the ways in which they can (or cannot) exercise control over their lives.

Security is important in the process of emancipation. On the one hand, security ultimately refers to a condition in which individuals and groups do not have to fear for their own survival. When people are secure in the sense of survival, they are not immediately worried, for example, about where their next meal is coming from, or whether they will be gunned down by drug cartels, or whether they will suffer from a rampant cholera epidemic. These situations are constraints upon life given that they do not allow individuals and groups to make meaningful decisions or take courses of action to fundamentally alter the course of their lives. All attention is turned to the bleak reality of survival. Emancipation thus *entails* security; further, it involves recognizing and supporting the agency of those whose security is governed – and whose lives are determined – by more powerful actors (Basu 2011: 101). Only by being secure in this sense can people freely decide and act for themselves.

On the other hand, given the importance of security to political identities, relations and communities, it becomes clear that political transformation in emancipatory directions must include a reconsideration of the way in which security is understood and practised. Notions and practices of security undeniably play a prominent role in the current political climate whereby security is used to justify forceful measures including wars and (often exclusionary) legislation (as well as heightened public attention to issues of health, food, water and energy). Without aspirations for emancipation, these policy developments may well introduce or reproduce the condition of insecurity of individuals and groups. In contrast,

an emancipatory understanding of security, through the knowledge it produces, can be an important instrument in broader political transformations.²

In sum, the idea of 'SAE' is a *praxis-oriented approach* that undertakes a critique of ideas and practices of security by looking at their political assumptions and effects. In these circumstances, the achievement of security requires that attention be geared towards experiences of insecurity and the way in which they are socially embedded. Security then entails the transformation of structures and relationships of vulnerability through localized political action, aimed at the creation of spaces in people's lives so that they are enabled to make decisions and act beyond mere survival.

The Bhopal industrial accident (1984)

Bhopal is the site of many contesting narratives (see Box 6.3 for timeline); it is the narratives of the people who were worst affected by the accident that are privileged in SAE security analyses. Indeed, it is their vulnerabilities and experiences that form the basis upon which we can begin to think of the Bhopal case as a security concern. The emancipatory approach includes not only the aftermath of the accident but, importantly, the context within which the insecurities have unfolded. To proceed with the security analysis, we must first examine the structures and relationships of vulnerability that delineate the lives of the people of Bhopal, and then highlight the potential for transformations that is immanent in the existing condition of insecurity, including efforts to envision and realize these changes.

Ours is not the first attempt to frame Bhopal as a security concern. In a short write-up titled 'Bhopal is also about security', Ajay Lele (2010), Research Fellow at the Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses in New Delhi, suggests that Bhopal is 'beyond politics', presumably because the human costs of the incident are so obvious. Although he makes a reference to human security in his concluding remarks, Lele's main interest is in discussing the threat of the deliberate use of poisonous gases like MIC in 'chemical terrorism'. Others have highlighted long-term health concerns and environmental damage due to the gas leak, making a case for looking at health and environmental security in the area (Rajan 2001; WHO 2007: 29). More broadly, Ward Morehouse, founder of the International Campaign for Justice in Bhopal, has invoked security with reference to human referents: 'The Bhopal accident deprived people of their right to life, as well as their rights to health, livelihood and security of person' (2001). Here, he uses a rights-based approach to advocate for justice for the people, bringing attention to the impact of the Bhopal incident on them. Commenting on the work of activists like Morehouse, anthropologist Kim Fortun writes that they are 'progressive advocate[s]' who 'try to sell new definitions of health, security and fairness. They help define what counts as relevant, and who and what should be seen in relation' (2001: 299).

While disparate, the efforts to identify the Bhopal gas leak and its aftermath as a security concern rely on distinct *effects* of the accident on health, environment, human rights and indeed national security (the case of 'chemical terrorism'). That the language of security is or can be employed in all these respects is testimony to the 'broadening' and 'deepening' of the notion of security in theory and practice. However, little effort has thus far been made to link these discussions to the significant body of literature – activist, journalist and in the fields of sociology and anthropology – that examines the structural (political, cultural and economic) contexts which surround the accident and defined the experiences of the victims and survivors (see Fortun 2001: 188, 195–203). From the SAE perspective, an exploration of these contexts is the starting point for security analyses. In the case of

Bhopal, structural vulnerabilities of individuals in the community may be examined by looking at their location within the society, the state and *vis-à-vis* the power of Multinational Corporations (MNCs).

Box 6.3 Bhopal timeline (1969–2012)

1969: UCIL plant, designed by UCC, begins operation in Bhopal.

1978: MIC unit installed at the UCIL plant.

1981–1983: Periodic leaks lead to hospitalization of workers and nearby residents, including one fatality.

1982–1983: Safety risks of the UCIL plant written about in local media; attempts to challenge the plant through legal channels.

2 December 1984: Water enters the MIC tank leading it to split, releasing 42 tons of MIC in the night air.

3 December 1984: As per the initial police report, 3,828 die, 30,000 are injured, and 2,544 animals are killed. (The actual figures turn out to be significantly higher in later counts.)

1985: Parliament of India enacts the Bhopal Gas Leak Disaster (Processing of Claims) Act, 1985, making the Union of India ‘the sole plaintiff in a suit against the UCC and other defendants for compensation arising out of the disaster’.

1989: The Supreme Court of India approves settlement of \$470 million compensation arrived at in the case between UCC and the Union of India. All criminal proceedings are dropped.

1991: The Supreme Court upholds the compensation settlement but the criminal proceedings are re-initiated.

1992: Senior UCC management, proclaimed offenders, fail to appear before the Bhopal Chief Judicial Magistrate (CJM).

1994: UCC sells its shares in UCIL, part of which is diverted to the Bhopal Hospital Trust set up by UCC.

1998–1999: Soil and water contamination of the area is confirmed by the state government of Madhya Pradesh (where Bhopal is located) and Greenpeace.

2001: Dow Chemical Company acquires UCC.

2004: Rashida Bee and Champa Devi Shukla, two activists from Bhopal, are awarded the Goldman Environmental Prize.

2004: Following a petition by activists, the Bhopal CJM makes Dow party to the criminal case.

2009: CJM Bhopal re-issues warrant against Warren Anderson, CEO of UCC at the time of the accident.

2010: CJM Bhopal holds guilty eight accused persons (all Indians) but all granted bail.

2011: Indian Council of Medical Research releases technical report confirming long-term consequences of ‘cyanide toxicity’.

2011–2012: Bhopal activists protest Dow’s sponsorship of London Olympics 2012.

Adapted from Hanna *et al.* (2005): xxiv–xxviii;
see also Muralidhar (2004)

An effective starting point is to look at the environment in which the accident happened. As is generally the case with the location of manufacturing units, the plant was set up in the poorer neighbourhood of Bhopal (Rajagopal 1987; Rajan 2001: 390). The workers and the neighbouring community had little or no understanding of the hazards of the plant and were not given information on the dangers of MIC (BBC 2004; Hanna *et al.* 2005: 10–11; Mukherjee 2010: 29).³ Further, it is reported that, in later years, as the plant stopped being feasible, necessary attention was not paid to its maintenance and safety standards (Rajan 2001: 386; Tully 2004; also see, Keswani 2005 [1982]). The people who were, by virtue of proximity, most at risk from the plant did not have the knowledge or the power to negotiate its entry, functioning, or subsequent exit. The fact that the majority of the affected citizens of Bhopal had no voice in, not enough information about, and little control over their surroundings meant that they were not prepared to deal with the gas leak and its long-term consequences.

The structural vulnerabilities that were present at the time of the accident are well illustrated by the homogeneity of the people who were affected: ‘with almost miraculous precision, the victims were poor and illiterate’ (Rajagopal 1987). Further, as Mukherjee (2010: 29) has argued, ‘[t]he factors that made the poor vulnerable were class specific: poverty, illiteracy, poor sanitation, crowded and ill-constructed dwellings, and total dependence on the state to reduce their vulnerability’. In addition to allowing for a class-based analysis of the insecurities of the citizens of Bhopal, a SAE approach can also focus on gender, by investigating the ways in which women and men were affected differently by the accident, as well as the latter’s impact on social relations in the community (on SAE and gender, see Box 6.4). Chronic respiratory illnesses have made it difficult for men (the traditional breadwinners) to work, leading also to depression. Women have had to bear the overwhelming costs of a community suffering from health and environmental repercussions due to the accident.

Furthermore, a SAE approach also allows us to take a ‘macro’ perspective and look at the global context in which the Bhopal case unfolded. Indeed, this case illustrates the implications of unregulated neoliberal economic relations: the increasing reach of MNCs; the inability (or unwillingness) of ‘traditional’ political authorities to render global capitalist forces accountable and subject to democratic scrutiny; the social consequences of the prioritization of economic and state interests over the welfare and security of individuals and communities.

This is evident in the ways in which the Indian state managed the crisis, particularly in its unwillingness to let the Bhopal narrative develop in a way that would discourage future foreign direct investment (see Rajagopal 1987; Mathur and Morehouse 2002).⁴ Further, following the accident, the Indian government made a ‘full and final’ settlement with UCC on behalf of the Bhopal survivors. The Supreme Court of India in 1989 approved \$470 million compensation for the survivors. All criminal proceedings against UCC officials and others were dropped. While criminal charges were later revived, the Supreme Court upheld the validity of the settlement based on the principle of *parens patriae*, that is parent of the nation, whereby the state has the power to act as the parent of any citizen in need of protection (generally used in the context of children). In effect, this paternalistic approach took away the agency of the survivors. With the exception of the proactive city legislature of Bhopal, by and large, the government failed to adequately secure the interests and needs of its own people.

On its part, UCC disposed of its share in UCIL, its Indian subsidiary, in 1994 and left India. It maintains that the State of Madhya Pradesh (where Bhopal is located) assumed

Box 6.4 Gender and SAE

As a relational concept, gender is integral to security analyses from a SAE perspective (see Basu 2011). To begin with, SAE is concerned with identifying relations and structures of inequality which systematically place some groups in situations of disadvantage, and which silence and marginalize alternative views. The concept of gender, by highlighting the hierarchical relationship between masculine and feminine values and its political implications, provides a holistic understanding of the experiences of ‘real people in real places’. Indeed, drawing on feminist work, SAE proponents recognize patriarchy – which systemically marginalizes women in society – as one of the ‘ideas that made us [the human society]’ (see Booth 2007).

In addition to analysing power relations, as Jacqui True (2001: 231) points out, feminist approaches have employed gender as a ‘normative standpoint from which to construct alternative world orders’. As such, gender not only provides a better understanding of the condition of insecurity but also works as a theoretical tool for envisioning and realizing emancipatory transformations to which SAE is committed.

Depending on the particular understanding of gender employed for analyses (based on the particular strand of feminism that is used), it may be possible to identify two further overlaps between SAE and feminist approaches to security. First is the recognition that the private and the political cannot be easily separated. The decisions of policy-makers have far-reaching and sometimes unexpected implications for the lives of individuals, families and communities, often well beyond the ‘constituency’ initially envisaged. Second, the connection between the private and the political is also present in the way in which the researcher sees their role in the world. Indeed the reflexive awareness of one’s place and responsibilities towards the world is important to both feminist and SAE scholarship.

responsibility for cleaning up the site in 1998, and that ‘no further legal claims are outstanding against Union Carbide’ (BBC 2004; Union Carbide Corporation 2012).⁵ In 2001, UCC was acquired by Dow Chemicals, which claims to have no legal liabilities from the accident (BBC 2004).⁶

In sum, there was a structural inequality between UCC and governmental authorities on the one hand, and the local communities of Bhopal on the other hand, which constituted what SAE would term a ‘condition of insecurity’, that is, a network of vulnerabilities and hierarchical power relations. These vulnerabilities were not only present before the accident, but also determined the immediate reactions to it and continue to characterize its aftermath.

Against this background, much of the support for the people of Bhopal has come from civil society groups. Satinath Sarangi, a prominent Bhopal activist, identifies three phases of people’s movements in the city: ‘spontaneous protests in the immediate aftermath, organized under middle class leaders for the following two years and finally the formation of survivor led organizations’ (2005 [1994]: 175). While, as Sarangi also points out, the civil society initiatives have been periodically racked by conflicting interests within and between organizations and entanglement with regional party politics, the latter day survivor organizations have been of much significance in addressing issues of rights and justice (see Sarangi 2005 [1994]; Mukherjee 2010: 112).

Women have played a particularly important role in spearheading the survivors' efforts. The women's organization *Bhopal Gas Peedit Mahila Udyog Sangathan*⁷ is one of the biggest and most effective initiatives in this respect. In addition to advocacy, civil society initiatives also seek to address relief and rehabilitation needs of the community. For instance, the Sambhavna Trust – co-founded by Sarangi – provides medical support to the Bhopal survivors. The Bhopal issue has also found support internationally with organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (for a limited time, immediately after the accident), Greenpeace and Amnesty International, and with the formation of the International Campaign for Justice in Bhopal (a coalition of civil society organizations).

For the Bhopal survivors and their families, their association with the pesticide factory continues to be a lived reality because of the intimate ways in which it continues to affect their lives. For instance, they are forced to use groundwater that has a high level of toxic content. The Bhopal Medical Appeal terms this groundwater pollution from the factory a 'second disaster' (see also CSE 2009: 18; BMA 2012). At the same time, medical support is difficult because of the nature of the illnesses and an insufficient understanding of the same. Security for these people of Bhopal would entail institutional responses to these problems; also wider transformations, not only in the relations between the state and its marginalized citizens but also in the socio-economic relations between people and corporations, which are increasingly determined by the latter. It becomes clear that redressing the structures of vulnerability that constitute the condition of insecurity of the Bhopal survivors means much more than a compensation for the events of 1984; security is about broader social and political transformation encompassing issues of citizenship and justice. Further, security involves the transformative processes through which the Bhopal survivors seek to achieve greater control over their lives.

In this context, the work of various civil society groups and organizations – at local, national and international levels – on a broad range of issues, including corporate accountability, social and economic justice, medical support for the survivors and their families, and environmental assessment and treatment of the affected area are illustrative of the multiple pathways that have been taken to address the current 'condition of insecurity' of the Bhopal survivors. Importantly, at the local level, the survivors' experience of negotiating their future with governmental bodies, with UCC/Dow and among themselves within civil society has engendered changes in their lives. For instance, the societal upheaval following the Bhopal crises has opened up spaces for women to participate in public debates on Bhopal. Following this, many of the Muslim women have chosen to give up their veils and envisage more empowered spaces for the younger women in the community (Mehta 1996; also see, Mukherjee 2010: 162).

While the Bhopal incident is one of the biggest cases of industrial disaster, there are other comparable cases across the world. Indeed, 'other communities recognize their problems in the history of Bhopal, as the impunity of corporate actors becomes an increasingly familiar story' (Hanna *et al.* 2005: 209). In practice, some communities lead chronically insecure lives as a price for their society's quest for better standards of living, visible in various 'development projects'. At a time when such high value is attached to individual freedom and choice, people's everyday lives are actually being increasingly determined by MNCs and states in the name of prosperity and security. Social factors such as race, gender and class make some people particularly vulnerable to the decisions made by powerful institutions. In this context, an emancipatory approach to security helps us, on the one hand, to recognize and understand these processes and the way they sediment into structures and relationships; and, on the other hand, to envisage and realize positive transformations.

Conclusion

Both in scholarly literature and the wider political arena, sovereign states are no longer the sole referents or agents of security. Indeed, their employment of security discourse as the rationale for exclusionary policies has been increasingly put under scrutiny. Against the background of these developments, SAE not only offers a critique of dominant security practices but also important analytical tools to envision alternatives with ‘real-world’ value. It does so by taking as its starting point the condition of insecurity, reflected in the experiences of insecurity of individuals and groups; and by upholding a normative commitment towards the transformation of the relations and structures that constitute the identified condition of insecurity. Being secure is ultimately about the referents of security having the potential to think, decide and act beyond basic survival. Following from this understanding of security, SAE provides a unique combination of insights for security analyses.

First, security issues can be recognized by investigating the claims of different actors and their relative positions within socio-political structures. This means that analysts should seek to identify the relations and structures of inequality that underpin these claims, and which systematically privilege some groups while placing others in positions of vulnerability. It also means that security claims should be interpreted as elements in a political struggle, implying forms of power and attempts at identity construction.

Second, understandings and practices of security should be approached as political in their assumptions and implications – and therefore susceptible to transformation. These understandings and practices are underpinned by notions about how society and politics should be organized, and contribute to reproducing or challenging political arrangements.

And, third, the study of security should be informed by the intent to identify potential for emancipatory transformation. Transformation is deemed emancipatory when it contributes to providing security, that is, an enabling ‘space’ for decisions to be made and courses of action to be pursued beyond mere survival. There is no end-state of emancipation where claims and needs can be harmonized. However, as Booth argues, it is almost always possible to identify options that are more emancipatory than others.

The epistemological privileging of referents’ narratives is central to SAE analyses. In the Bhopal case study presented above, the focus was thus placed on Bhopal survivors’ experiences of insecurity. This was elaborated upon by examining the structural inequalities that made the survivors particularly vulnerable to the accident and its consequences, as well as the role of Indian governmental bodies and the role of UCC/Dow. Clearly, any fundamental changes in the state and the corporation’s response would involve re-structuring state–citizen relations and market-centric global economic relations, which is difficult to envision at this time. However, the assumption in SAE that changes in the condition of insecurity are possible and that individuals have the agency (even if latent, at times) to realize change, opens up space to recognize transformations – engendered and immanent – in a given context. In this context, the role of civil society groups, especially survivors’ organizations, was here acknowledged as crucial to addressing immediate concerns and advocating long-term transformations.

A range of methodological approaches and tools can be employed for conducting research using an emancipatory approach to security as long as these are consistent with the epistemological premise of SAE, specifically: the subjectivity of the analyst; recognition that knowledge is used to marginalize particular sections of society while privileging others; and interest in immanent critique. With the focus on individuals and groups as referents of security, ethnographic tools (see Chapter 11) are particularly relevant to approaching

security claims, as are different methods of discourse analysis (see Chapters 16 and 17), which can help analysts investigate the assumptions and implications of these claims. Participatory action research (Chapter 12), with its explicit commitment to supporting positive changes in the community where research is conducted, would make for a good fit within the SAE mandate but is yet to be explored. Further, mapping tools developed by sociologists are also helpful when identifying the structures and relations surrounding security problems, especially the way in which they are embedded in institutions.

The research agenda of SAE requires the continuation of empirical studies that can show how the politics of security works in practice, both in its dominant and emancipatory ways. The conceptual framework of SAE also requires further elaboration, via an engagement with theoretical resources that have been neglected until now. So far, this approach has had little to say, for example, about political economy and the role of class in the reproduction of insecurities. There is also need for more detailed exploration of power and its complexities in relation to the politics of security. These theoretical developments can be facilitated by more systematic dialogue with other contributions in the critical security field, a dialogue in which SAE is yet to participate fully.

In spite of its current limitations, SAE – as it stands – can contribute to the critical security field by acting as a reminder that the study of security is ultimately about the experiences of ‘real people in real places’. It does so by calling attention to the security claims that are often silenced and marginalized. Further, SAE shows: how these claims are embedded within social relations and structures; that it is possible to recognize the violent and undesirable effects of some ideas and practices that use the vocabulary of security, while maintaining that the politics of security is ultimately dependent upon specific interactions and contexts; and, finally, that the critique of security can be both deconstructive (denaturalizing and problematizing) and reconstructive (engaged in political struggles for transformation).

Please see the companion website for a seminar exercise.

Questions for further debate

- 1 Can one be free without feeling safe from threats to life and well-being? In other words, can there be emancipation without security?
- 2 How can one deal with conflicting and/or contradictory claims to emancipation?
- 3 Who is suspicious of the concept of emancipation and why? To what extent have these suspicions been addressed by the proponents of SAE?
- 4 To what extent does the critique of security require an assumption of what is desirable and undesirable?
- 5 What are the scholarly benefits and limitations of the broad security ambit of SAE?

Notes

- 1 We thank Laura Shepherd and Jayashree Vivekanandan for their helpful comments on an earlier draft of this chapter.
- 2 We agree with Matt McDonald (2012) that there is nothing inherently and inevitably violent and exclusionary in security – the ‘logics’ of security is the result of the interaction of actors within certain social and cultural contexts. Here, our argument diverges from the move by Aradau (2008) and Peoples (2011) to conceive emancipation as separate from security.

- 3 Indeed, with its promise of employment, development and prosperity, the establishment of the plant was welcomed by the local community.
- 4 Bhopal continues to be factored into the dynamics of India–US foreign relations. In 2010, an email exchange between Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Deputy Chairman of the Indian Planning Commission, and Michael Froman, US Deputy National Security Advisor for international economic affairs, was released in the Indian media. Ahluwalia had written to Froman requesting US support on a matter relating to India's borrowing from the World Bank. In his response, Froman pointed out that they had been 'hearing a lot of noise about the Dow Chemical issue' and suggested avoiding 'developments which [could] put a chilling effect on . . . investment relationship' (see TNN 2010). This was construed as a threat by the Indian media and analysts, even as both Ahluwalia and Froman played down the email exchange.
- 5 For an account of the different measures and lines of argument taken by UCC in the aftermath of the accident, see EPW (1987). The UCC public-relations involvement with the Bhopal case continues to this day, as is evidenced by its ownership of the Internet domain www.bhopal.com
- 6 Dow Chemicals, however, has been unable to escape the legacy of Bhopal, as evidenced in the debates around its sponsorship of the 2012 London Olympics (see Alexander 2012; Chakraborty 2012; Suroor 2012).
- 7 This may be translated as the Bhopal Gas Affected Women Workers' Organization (Mehta 1996).

Sources for further reading and research

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7 Post-structural security studies

Anthony Burke

Chapter summary

This chapter outlines the contribution of post-structuralism to Security Studies in three ways. It shows, first, how security is enabled by particular kinds of language and signification that in turn structure and shape lived realities; second, how security functions through particular strategies and modalities of state and social power; and third, how claims about security underpin larger systems of identity and existence that structure relations between communities in antagonistic and problematic ways. It concludes by suggesting how post-structuralism offers ethical resources to help reshape security politics and practice.

Learning outcomes

On completion, readers should be able to:

- explain the range of ways that post-structuralist scholars have understood and researched security;
- demonstrate how security and insecurity are enabled by language and its distinctive strategies of power;
- account for how models of feminist and post-structural ethics could improve security policy and speech.

Introduction

The most far-reaching contribution of post-structural approaches to security is to have brought the very idea of security under fundamental scrutiny. Consider a range of key framing comments from key scholars in the field: ‘security has to be brought into question’ (Dillon 1996: 12); ‘security no longer possesses a credible wholeness’ (Burke 2007b: 27); ‘security cannot be defined in objective terms’ (Buzan and Hansen 2009: 33); ‘security [is] performative’ (Shepherd 2008a: 55); ‘security is about the political imaginary as much as it is about facing threats’ (Bleiker 2005: xl); and ‘security is a political construction in specific contexts’ (Dalby 2002: xxii). Such a critical orientation to security can be summed up in the question posed after the Cold War by R. B. J. Walker: ‘What are the conditions under which it is possible to think, speak, and make authoritative claims about . . . security?’ (Walker 1997: 61).

This chapter is about the way in which scholars in Security Studies have sought to answer Walker’s question. However, this form of research and style of critique gives rise to a

dilemma. If the first claim post-structural approaches make is that ‘security is not a “given”’, i.e. something we can take for granted, then what *is* security, if anything? What are we to make of it, do with it, and how do we make such a decision? How are we to respond to it? Can we *make* security in a positive way, or merely maintain a permanent critical distance from it? Can we participate in a new vision of security as a politics and practice, or just circle warily around it from a position of permanent ontological suspicion?

This chapter outlines the key analytical and philosophical insights of post-structural approaches to Security Studies by working through these questions, which are all enabled by this original denaturalising move. If we refuse to accept how security is given to us, as a political imperative and protective promise, we can better understand how it is made and how it makes us: both how it works as a complex and detailed set of practices, and how it is intimately woven into the architecture of our politics and the structure of international society. This, in my view, then provides an opportunity to enter more effectively into a broader normative argument about the ‘goods’ security claims to provide, within a broader social and institutional architecture of global dimensions (an argument that has traditionally been led by those that see security as emancipation, sometimes known as the Welsh School of Critical Security Studies, see Chapter 6). This argument has arguably been neglected by much post-structuralist theory in Security Studies, despite the important critical resources it can bring to bear.

Security as language

Signification

Security is one of the most powerful signifiers in politics, meaning that it ‘stands in for’ a set of very powerful ideas: it is rich with meaning, and these meanings enable powerful actors and institutions not only to amass resources, control agendas, use violence, but also to do well. At the same time, security is a signifier whose meaning is often plural and in practice never quite realised. In fact, some scholars argue that security’s meaning in part hinges on its failure to realise itself – on its ability to postpone its own realisation and thus operate as a structure of deferred and perpetual hope.

The term ‘signifier’ comes from the linguistic or semiotic theory of Ferdinand de Saussure (‘semiotic’ meaning ‘relating to signs and symbols’), who understood the linguistic sign as a two part social process termed ‘signification’: the ‘sign’ is the mark, word, sound or image that refers to something, and the ‘signified’ is the mental idea of the thing to be represented. The relationship between them, argued Saussure, was ‘arbitrary’, which implied two things: first, that it was social and linguistic conventions and rules which relate a sign to its signified; and, second, that exactly *how* signs came to connote particular meanings was an important – and intrinsically political – process.

This model challenged positivist or essentialist models of a tight marriage between the sign and its referent (the ‘thing’ to which the sign refers), as these models saw the task of social science to be a neutral and accurate reflection of interpretation of a real that was external (or prior) to language. According to these models, the essential desire of human beings for security – which was thought, from Hobbes onwards, to be a fundamental human need – flows automatically into a natural function for the state, and thence into practices of deterrence, threat, violence, welfare, and warfare. Positivist Security Studies might, therefore, want to understand such processes in detail, to improve or control them, but they assume a foundation of facts that cannot be brought into question: the contained human ego, the nation-state and perpetual conflict or antagonism.

Speech acts

Three developments of the insight that security is a system of signification were of particular importance for Security Studies. One, associated with the Copenhagen school (its place within ‘critical’ Security Studies is contested), saw security in J. L. Austin’s terms as a ‘speech act’ (see Chapter 5 of this book). One of the school’s founders, Ole Wæver, argues that the ‘speech act’ of security ‘does not refer to something more real; the utterance is the act’ (1995: 55). In turn he argues, after Jef Huysmans, that an issue only becomes successfully put onto the security agenda when an audience accepts it as such (Buzan *et al.* 1998). In this formulation, security’s meaning is contingent, contested and subject to the play of power. ‘[S]omething is a security problem when elites declare it so’ (Wæver 1995: 54) and

the way to study securitization is to study discourse and political constellations: When does an argument with this particular rhetorical and semiotic structure achieve sufficient effect to make an audience tolerate violations of rules that would otherwise have to be obeyed?

(Buzan *et al.* 1998: 25)

The speech acts of security, argued the Copenhagen school in their work *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, imply a particular kind of move and process which they term a ‘securitization’: to signify some problem (such as environmental disruption, a disease pandemic, or the movements of immigrants or asylum seekers) as a ‘security’ problem lifts it from the realm of ‘normal’ to ‘extraordinary’ politics where ‘traditionally, by saying ‘security’, a state representative declares an emergency condition, thus claiming a right to use whatever means are necessary to block a threatening development’ (Buzan *et al.* 1998: 21). If this were an historical description of what often occurs when elites use the language of security, the Copenhagen school’s argument would be unproblematic. However, they close off the deeper potential of their critique in two ways: by arguing in a very positivistic fashion that the most credible referent of security is the nation-state, which must be ‘existentially’ threatened and by allowing for the securitization of identity with a referent of *societal security* (potentially threatened by immigration, intra-state cultural competition, and projects of national or regional integration). Coercive, xenophobic and exclusivist approaches to refugees and others can then be legitimised, and the Copenhagen school’s theoretical framework provides no normative or moral guidance about how to make such decisions. These are the reasons why a post-structural approach differs from the approach taken in securitization theory.

Truth and power

The second development is associated with the work of the philosopher and historian Michael Foucault. Here too, security would be seen as performative (i.e. something that is always in the process of being enacted rather than something that just ‘is’), but would be freed from the Copenhagen school’s more technocratic concerns with policy into a more generalised concern with how claims and significations about security are *political* – how they become drawn into social struggles over power. Foucault offers a way of both understanding how knowledge is organised formally into sciences, disciplines and (policy, economic and educational) institutions – according to rules for its verification, testing, classification, production and reproduction – and how knowledge and ‘truth’ is a product of a dynamic clash of social forces and interests rather than rational progress. Foucault spoke of a societal

battle 'for truth' or at least 'around truth' – it being understood . . . that by truth I do not mean the 'ensemble of truths which are to be discovered and accepted', but rather 'the ensemble of rules by which the true and the false are separated and specific effects of power attached to the true'.

(Foucault 1984: 74)

Foucault concluded that there is a battle 'about the status of truth and the economic and political role it plays' and that there are 'regimes' of truth that are 'linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which [such regimes] induce and which extends [them]'

 (1984: 74)

I do not take Foucault to be saying that we cannot share the enlightenment concern for the improvement of knowledge and the better understanding of important phenomena, so long as we keep under scrutiny the processes of scientific verification and approval that accord new facts and theories with legitimacy, and are aware of the way in which scientific knowledge serves particular social and power interests when they are taken up by militaries, corporations, the law, governments, prisons, hospitals and other institutions. Furthermore, in forms of knowledge that are less 'scientific' and more inherently normative – such as policy analysis, political ideology and social science – claims to truth will always be imbued with struggles over power from the outset. No knowledge is neutral: at some point in their own process, they all enable particular social, political, cultural and technological possibilities and imply (good or bad) ethical choices, hence Foucault's formulation of 'power-knowledge'. A critical Security Studies project that ought at the same time to understand security as a mode of exercising power, and keep open the hope that it could constitute a form of scientific and ethical progress, is thus engaged in a difficult balancing act.

After Foucault, it is possible to understand security discourses and practices (they are in fact closely intertwined) not as governed by a rational concern for good outcomes, but as the product of struggles over power exercised in the name of security that relate to the very question of *being* (whether the being in question is a state, a community or an individual). Whether the results of this struggle can be described legitimately as 'security' remains an open question – a question that lies at the heart of all critical approaches to security. In this way, a post-structuralist perspective can not only demonstrate why (dysfunctional or destructive) security discourses have such social and political power via their status as 'truth', but how their power and influence lies in their claim to derive from, express and protect our very being, the deepest actuality of our existence.

Incommensurability and communication

The third development derives from the work of Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida. They argued that there is an inherent instability in the process of signification, one that has both a formal and an historical quality. Formally, Derrida built on Saussure to argue that 'the signified concept is never present in and of itself, in a sufficient presence that would refer only to itself . . . every concept is inscribed in a chain or in a system within which it refers to the other, to other concepts, by means of the systematic play of differences' (Derrida 1982: 11). Meaning is produced not only by a set of relations between elements of a sign, but between signs and social systems of verification and association – between a sign and other signs – including and especially between the sign and the thing or things that it is *not*. The identity and stability of the sign relies on oppositions and *dichotomies*, in which a term ('security') relies for meaning on a devalued term to which it is bound ('insecurity') and a

chain of associated terms ('communist', e.g., or 'illegal immigrant', 'terrorist', 'insurgent', 'jihadist' and so on) which provide further context and meaning for the idea of insecurity: its sources, features and qualities. To use another phrase of Derrida's, we might say that *security* is an 'original or transcendental signified [that] is never absolutely present outside a system of differences' (2002: 354). Meaning is relational, and contingent on time and place and point of view. Seen in this light, an idea like 'security' is a very powerful sign that helps organise others around it in a larger chain of meaning, but also is utterly dependent on them for its signifying and social power. This 'system' then can become an object of scholarly analysis and the location of a strategy of subversion, critique or reform.

In his work on authorship, Barthes (1978) suggested that texts (formal performances of signification such as literature, film, advertising, scholarship, media and policy) are irrevocably 'plural': the meanings produced by a text are multiple and cannot be controlled or directed by their 'author'. This has important implications for Security Studies. One is that, whatever security's power as a signifier, its meanings will be plural and more or less effective with particular audiences and publics. This will play out within a state – where a national security agenda may resonate with some sections of the community, and offend or alienate others – and internationally, where security behaviours and agendas (indeed, entire securitizations) will be contested and refused.

Such *incommensurability* of values, meanings, interpretations and norms then becomes an important structuring fact for global security relations – a strategic *and* social fact – that affects how states interact, and how non-state and civil society actors behave. Incommensurability will manifest itself in destructive patterns of war, conflict, tension and suffering. At the same time, it can also manifest important disputes about the kinds of values, forms of life and politics that different actors and communities believe security should express or protect, and undermine the hegemonic power of particular visions of national or collective security. This perspective also allows us to understand material practices (such as political violence, coercion and terrorism) as forms of *communication*. After Derrida and Barthes, however, we can no longer understand such practices as controlled, *strategic* communication that links intentions and results (or signifier and signified) in a directed way. Rather, such communication may be non-linear: it can express incommensurability and be subject to unpredictable feedbacks and consequences (Burke 2008). The message intended may not be that received, which in turn has profound implications for global security events and processes.

Security as technology, power, and politics

Foucault understood power as having two key features: it is discursive and it is relational. Power can be repressive, can take the form of what he termed 'major dominations', but it is also productive – of knowledge, subjectivities (ways of experiencing and understanding the self), social forms, cultures and institutions. Power also exists in a perennial state of contingency; it was, Foucault said, always in play and always at risk. This then led him to explore certain structures, arrangements, and concrete practices of power that operate both to construct institutions and systemic knowledge, but also operate in detail on the bodies and minds of individuals within particular social arrangements of power, rationality and organisation. Four particular strategies he sought to explore at some length (but are in fact historically interrelated) were 'discipline', 'sovereignty', 'governmentality' and 'biopolitics'.

Having this analysis of power enabled scholars to reconceptualise security away from its traditional claim to being a state of being (a settled thing or form of existence, exemplified in the phrase 'I am secure') to a set of practices and strategies that may have the effects of being

(identity, nationhood and subjectivity) but are not reducible to it. I have defined security ‘as an interlocking system of knowledge, representations, practices and institutional forms that imagine, direct and act upon bodies, spaces and flows in certain ways’ (Burke 2007b: 28). In this form, security is what Foucault termed a ‘political technology’. This in turn has opened up a whole range of inquiries into security’s representational strategies and practices: warfare, border control and detention, surveillance, foreign policy, identity-production, othering and exclusion, repression and persuasion. From within a post-structural perspective, strategies, techniques and effects of security can be exposed and laid open to question.

Each of the categories Foucault sought to highlight – ‘discipline’, ‘sovereignty’, ‘governmentality’ and ‘biopolitics’, see Table 7.1 – form elements of a security politics, but have also generated distinctive lines of inquiry. Below I will unpack these lines of enquiry and their relationships.

We know that state ‘sovereignty’ is a key figure in International Relations; it is a crucial category in international law, conferring rights on states and admitting membership to international organisations and treaties, and, for most realists and liberals it is a key indicator

Table 7.1 Key Foucauldian ideas

Discipline	<p>‘Discipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience)’ (Foucault [1975] 1977: 138).</p> <p>Requirements of discipline (ibid.):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enclosure/limits (spatial and temporal); • Hierarchical observation; • Normalising judgement; • Training.
Sovereignty	<p>‘Is it not precisely those who talk of the state, of its history, development and claims, who elaborate on an entity through history and who develop the ontology of this thing that would be the state? What if the state were nothing more than a way of governing? What if the state were nothing more than a type of governmentality? What is all these relations of power that gradually take shape on the basis of multiple and very diverse processes which gradually coagulate and form an effect, what if these practices of government were precisely the basis on which the state was constituted? Then we would have to say that the state is not that kind of cold monster in history that has continually grown and developed as a sort of threatening organism about civil society . . . the state is an episode in governmentality’ (Foucault [1978] 2007: 248).</p>
Governmentality	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Integration of population, political economy and security; 2. Specific apparatus and knowledge; 3. The transformative from the state of justice to the administrative state. <p>(Foucault [1978] 2007: 108–9)</p>
Biopolitics	<p>‘[T]he set of mechanisms through which the basic biological features of the human species became an object of a political strategy’ (Foucault [1978] 2007: 1)</p> <p>‘[N]umerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations’ (Foucault [1976] 1998: 140)</p> <p>‘. . . a sort of undecidability, or a double-faced phenomenon in which life and politics are joined . . . why does the politics of life always risk being reversed into a work of death?’ (Esposito 2008: 7–8)</p>

of political community, a unit of action and a locus of ‘national interests’. For realists in particular, state sovereignty is also a container for power, which can be amassed and exercised by states. Foucault wanted to contest the theory of power he saw implicit in such a ‘juridical’ model of sovereignty, in which power took the form of a system of domination and consent accruing by right either to a royal or imperial ruler or a democratic government. He instead wanted to see power as a ‘network’ that ran ‘through’ individuals, rather than something solely exercised over them that constrains their freedom (2003: 34, 29). Our freedom is a function of power, and can only be exercised through and with it. From this we could focus on the discrete classification and disciplining of individuals at the level of their bodies, and of groups at the level of the ‘social body’, and of forms of self-government taught to subjects (‘governmentality’) which work to enable liberal economic relations and non-coercive forms of power and desire.

However some security scholars questioned the implications of his move, suggesting that we could use post-structuralist analysis both to challenge this crude model of state power while also showing how it did in fact function, and more importantly, how it was related to the desire and promise of security. They found in Foucault’s work on governmentality, security and population a model that linked the detailed tactics of individualisation (discipline, desire and governmentality) to the more sweeping powers exercised by governments over populations and empires. This ability – through security discourse – to organise populations and construct powerful images of *being* is explained further.

Since the 9/11 attacks, an important body of research has arisen in Security Studies linking a critique of sovereignty with an enquiry into what Foucault termed ‘biopolitics’. The inspiration for this work was the philosopher Giorgio Agamben. He linked a critique of the political theory of Carl Schmitt with an inquiry into those forms of power that took the living being – the human species – as their object, and sought to apportion, guide, preserve, risk and destroy human life for political, economic and strategic ends. The biopolitical analyses pursued by Foucault and Agamben have commonalities but are also distinctive (Dillon 2010: 67).

Schmitt sheds light on the ontological framework of sovereignty in two ways. First, he argues that the essence of politics inheres in the ‘distinction between friend and enemy’, which illuminates the self-image of many states and the state of emergency that drives much mainstream security policy. In such forms of politics, conflict is understood not in terms of struggles over ideology or injustice, but in terms of hard identity constructions and opposition. In Schmitt’s ontology, war is not so much a rational strategy (this is not ruled out) as a permanent existential possibility (Burke 2007a: 10). Second, Schmitt argues that a sovereign (this could be a dictator or the executive branch of a democratic state) must have the power to suspend the normal legal order to meet ‘a danger to the existence of the state’. In contemporary global politics, we can interpret the ‘military commissions’ established by the United States to try terrorism suspects, the abductions and imprisonment in Cuba, the renditions of suspects to incarceration and torture by foreign intelligence services, and the practice of extrajudicial killing by remote controlled drones through this lens. Schmitt’s argument here goes beyond a utilitarian justification (that the security ‘ends’ justify the repressive ‘means’) to embed such extrajudicial practices in an ontological image of the *essence* of sovereignty.

Agamben argues that biopolitics (as the ability of politics to enter and define the sphere of life) is less the evolution of a new technique of power, as Foucault contends, than one inherent in sovereignty from antiquity: ‘the production of the biopolitical body is the original activity of sovereign power’ (1998: 6). In this way, politics (and thus security politics) can create lives that are degraded and ‘bare’, like the inhabitants of the Nazi concentration camps marked for death even if their lives were prolonged while they remained useful. Updating this

argument for the War on Terror, Judith Butler writes of lives that are ‘unliveable’ and ‘ungrieveable’ within dominant modes of politics and foreign policy, lives excluded from a recognised community of the human (2004: xv, 57). Agamben’s metaphysical account remains controversial because of its ahistorical quality in comparison with Foucault’s (Dillon 2010: 67), and because it arguably closes off forms of political ethics and agency that might help us to resist or constrain the abuses of sovereign power – whether they are carried out in the name of security or some alternative political desire. Because Agamben holds a fatalistic view that human being has been appropriated by sovereignty from birth and cannot be thought outside its frame, it is hard to see how one might resignify – and redignify – life in a way that could drive and support an alternative set of practices.

However, whatever the problems with Agamben’s theory, his insights have their own historical force that has been important for Security Studies. To be able to show how a practice that claimed to preserve and protect life may in fact have the intention or effect of degrading and destroying life has helped critical Security Studies to make a very powerful set of insights. Likewise, it is important to be able to see how the promise of security has been bound up with the idea of modern state sovereignty as defined by Hobbes and Locke. For them, men abandoned the violence and insecurity of the state of nature to join their ‘wills’ with that of the sovereign, who forms a ‘Mortall God’ and a ‘body-politic’ that incorporates the body and will of the citizenry within its own. Thus, in security politics, the ‘totalising’ forms of power exercised by states over populations developed complex enabling relations with ‘individualising’ forms of power which defined the scope of individual experience and freedom.

Critical Security Studies can then focus on a range of concerns: how claims about security enable (and are the object of) such a biopolitical system of power; how such a system may embody dangerous costs, and forms of exclusion and privilege; how it may be structured by particular gender images and biases; and how it may create drives to use or manage violence. The dangerous political implications of this Hobbesian political philosophy (one that has become a kind of political ‘common sense’ within the West, entering into the hidden core of modern ideas of nationalism and state constitutionalism) are discussed further below, but both Agamben and Foucault offer insight here. This Hobbesian model of the state as a ‘body-politic’ (which is also termed the ‘social contract’) was an *historical* development, but its metaphysical staging also casts it as happening outside history, in mythic time that now stands as the very ground and essence of what it is to be human. Challenging such metaphysical claims and interrogating their practical political consequences lies at the core of the post-structuralist enterprise. This is where post-structuralist methodologies of *genealogy* (which traces the historical ‘conditions of possibility’ for particular articulations of knowledge-power to emerge and change) and *deconstruction* (which contests the silent metaphysical claims of discourses of truth, being and identity, see Chapter 18) can be usefully deployed within a common critical apparatus.

Security as being

The concern of post-structuralist Security Studies with sovereignty, governmentality and biopolitics has opened up an important line of critique and inquiry: an inquiry into questions of subjectivity, identity and being. This line of inquiry focuses on how individual and community identities (sometimes called subjectivities) are constructed within politics and foreign policy, including security policy, and how they in turn affect security behaviours and

outcomes. More problematic have been questions of whether it is legitimate to securify identity – as the Copenhagen school sometimes believes – or whether the linkage of security with identity is inherently dangerous and divisive. Whereas realists often argue that ‘national security’ is aimed at securing the territory of the state and its interests, post-structuralists will argue that it is often more accurate to see the national *identity* (and often a highly contested version of it) being constructed, mobilised and enforced through security discourse and policy, so that ‘national identity’, not people, is the real object to be secured. Such constructions of identity are mobilised, through narrative and representation, within the exercise of and struggle over power.

The modern sovereign state makes two very powerful claims that form the very root of its purpose: to unify and solidify identity, and to provide security. As the political philosophy of Hobbes and Locke demonstrates, the narrative of the social contract claims that to provide security and order in the face of the lawlessness of the state of nature men give up some of the freedom to become part of a single body. They termed this body a ‘body-politic’ and argued that the sovereign embodied their collective will – this body we now think of as the nation-state. National security then secures sovereignty and the nation, and ontologises them as rigid and eternal states of being in fundamental alienation from other states and peoples, with whom they can cooperate but never be one. This very powerful ontology – one that is reflected in the legal status of states in international law and in realist philosophies of International Relations – exists in some tension with more cosmopolitan, global and universalistic visions of ‘humanity’ in international law and global politics, so much so that many influential cosmopolitan theories still have not adequately disentangled themselves from it.

The problem is then not merely that national security mobilises a whole series of dichotomies that make it meaningful (security/insecurity, self/other, nation/world, male/female, war/peace and so on) but that the nation-state is secured against, and at the expense of, various internal and external *others*, whose security may be violated as a necessity. This arguably reproduces the ‘war of all against all’ that Hobbes argued determined the ungoverned state of nature, this time *within* the operations of sovereignty: within a security structure in which suffering and violence are objects of management (deterrence, limited war, counter-insurgency, counter-terrorism, border control). The links with the critique of biopolitics are obvious. It should be of concern to both critical and traditional scholars of security that – in a world characterised by human-induced climate change, bitter interstate tensions, weapons proliferation, radical Islamist terrorism, insurgency and ethnic cleansing – it is exceedingly difficult to control and manage violence and suffering; they tend to spill across the cognitive, national and physical boundaries we use to delimit our worlds.

The discursive and ontological interweaving of security with identity has numerous real-world effects that are of great concern to critical security scholars, ranging across both the traditional and non-traditional security agenda. In interstate conflict, constructions of identity in opposition to national or ethnic *others* – often through elite and popular discourses that demonise the other side – can combine with military conflicts or security dilemmas to heighten military tensions and block efforts at conflict resolution, dialogue and peace. Roland Bleiker (2005) has explored this phenomenon at length in relation to North and South Korea, David Campbell (1998a) in relation to US foreign policy during the Cold War, and Lene Hansen (2006) in relation to the wars in the former Yugoslavia. It is also arguable that the conflicts between China and Taiwan, Israel and Palestine and its Arab neighbours, and between India and Pakistan have been greatly worsened by hostile narratives and associated threats and violent acts perpetrated by actors on all sides. In some cases (political and cultural)

difference cannot be allowed; in others it is magnified and twisted in ways that fuel hatred and alienation, and deny commonality and interconnection.

Within states, security-identity discourse can be mobilised to enable genocide and ethnic cleansing, to repress political groups or ethnic minorities, and to oppose claims to political autonomy and secession. It can also be mobilised against the sovereignty claims of indigenous peoples, asylum seekers and refugees, and multicultural models of national community. These mobilisations can in turn be tactics in efforts by particular political actors to marginalise opponents and cultivate popular sympathy for extremist ideology. All such discourses work through boundary drawing around particular kinds of bodies, identities and political subjectivities and through the differential assigning of meaning and value (i.e. political and ontological *signification*) that, at its worst, hinges on the value of the lives of a particular group of beings. And all beg the question of how more dignified, peaceful, heterogeneous and ethical forms of (co)existence can be thought and enacted, which concern is taken up in the conclusion.

Conclusion

Some critical theories of security (notably those that have been inspired by Marxism and Frankfurt School Critical Theory) have been overtly shaped by a self-consciously reconstructive agenda that assumes that people have real needs for security and that it must be rethought in ways that promote emancipation and justice. Furthermore, writers such as Ken Booth and Richard Wyn Jones have directly criticised post-structuralist writers for a perceived failing to adequately set out a political or reform agenda. Booth charges that

the poststructuralist approach seems to assume that security cannot be common or positive-sum but must always be zero-sum, with somebody's security always being at the cost of the insecurity of others. [Hence] security itself is questioned as desirable goal . . . [Poststructuralists] also tend to celebrate insecurity, which I regard as a middle-class affront to the truly insecure.

(2005a: 270)

In *Theory of World Security*, he concludes that 'if the postmodern/poststructuralist mode of thinking had not entered the academic study of International Relations . . . we would have had to have invented it: but as a provocation not as a politics, and as a mental irritant not a road-map towards security, emancipation and community' (2007: 178). While some post-structuralist security theory may be vulnerable to such charges, it neglects the important resources that these critiques offer for strategising and resistance amid the power-knowledge relations of security, and especially the new ontological and ethical possibilities for reframing a common existence in a deeply unjust and violent world. What might a postmodern ethics of security then look like, and can it take its name?

The feminist theorist Vivienne Jabri (2004: 271) set out the challenge in an essay:

late-modern transformations require a retheorization of the 'political.' To retheorize the political also implies a problematization of subjectivity, of what it means for the self 'to be in the world,' how the self interacts with others, and how these complex relationships relate to the political problems of our time

Security, as outlined above, defines what it means to be in the world, and how we interact with 'others'. Post-structural theory has challenged those dominant images

radically. Two major contributions to a postmodern ethics of security could be labelled, respectively, as ‘an ethics of resistance and critique’ and ‘an ethics of relation’. The first reorients political agency in the wake of our understanding of security as a politics and techniques of power. These techniques (discipline, surveillance, violence and repression) can be challenged and resisted, changed, denied or abolished; and such tactics can be the focus of political projects from activist protest, lobbying by NGOs and human rights organisations, to efforts at reform from within power structures. They can challenge the logic and claims of such practices, make them visible and scandalous, and enable subjects to see either how they are bound up with them or bear responsibility for their operation.

Such tactics, however, are not sufficient to grapple with the larger ontologies (the systems and significations of identity, otherness and being) that such security techniques are often tied up with and enable. Identity itself (the kinds of relations it creates, and how these relations then engender complex social and historical realities) must be challenged and rethought. Post-structuralism offers ways to rethink the self and its relations with others, and its critique of security has shown how dangerous its models of politics and safety can be. Hence like critical IR theory and its cosmopolitan ethics, it envisages relations among different cultures, people and states that downplay hard boundaries and borders, emphasising differential forms of connection, interdependence and solidarity.

This ethics (which draws on influences from the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas, Martin Buber, Jacques Derrida, William Connolly, Judith Butler, Moira Gatens, and Julia Kristeva) begins by decentring and deconstructing the model of being (individual, collective, national) based on the self-contained and self-referring ego, one that seeks mastery over its environment, nature, and other human beings. Instead, it asserts that we in fact do not exist as contained units and that it is both ethically wrong and imprudent to act and decide as if the self came first. We are all radically dependent on other people, and on economic, political, social and environmental processes that are a result of our collective decisions. All of these writers describe this process differently, but they are concerned to understand how we in fact exist, and how our relations, within and across borders, from the local to the global, across differences and antagonisms, can be made more just and mutually supportive. This may offer a new way of thinking about security, of signifying and practising it in ways that truly reflect both our diversity and our interdependence.

Please see the companion website for a seminar exercise.

Questions for further debate

- 1 How would you respond to the suggestion that post-structural Security Studies represent ‘a prolix and self-indulgent discourse that is divorced from the real world’ (Walt 1991: 223)?
- 2 What is the difference (or relationship) between theory and practice, according to a post-structural approach to security?
- 3 Does post-structural Security Studies suggest better ways of behaving, making policy and organising global life that would produce more security?
- 4 Do you agree with Ken Booth that if post-structuralism in security did not exist, we would have had to invent it? Can, and how can, it be more than a provocation?
- 5 How should we conceive, and manage, the relationship between self and other in global security politics?

Sources for further reading and research

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8 Post-colonial security studies

Shampa Biswas

Chapter summary

Organized around ‘great power politics’, the field of security politics has been largely blind to the ways that ‘small’ and/or ‘weak’ states have conceptualized their own security needs and interests. Many critics of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, for instance, have pointed out that the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) institutionalizes and legitimizes the possession of nuclear weapons by a small group of powerful states – the ‘permanent five’ (P5) members of the United Nations Security Council – while prohibiting other states from pursuing nuclear security. Approaching the question of security from the perspective of those states that see themselves as marginalized by an unequal global security architecture (India, Pakistan, Iran, and North Korea), this chapter will explore how a post-colonial approach to the study of security complicates contemporary approaches to nuclear non-proliferation and global disarmament.

Learning outcomes

On completion, readers should be able to:

- explain the specific contributions of post-colonial Security Studies and the ways in which these contributions challenge conventional, Euro- and state-centric approaches to the study of security;
- explain why the nuclear NPT is perceived as unequal by many non-Western states;
- explain how progressive, cooperative attempts to secure global peace can play a part in the production of an unequal world, thus requiring linking peace to justice.

Introduction

An analysis of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) from the perspective of those who feel marginalized to it reveals the presence of a whole series of Eurocentric assumptions in efforts to create global security and peace. Political realists are generally forthright about the centrality of ‘great powers’ in the maintenance of a balance of power that yields international security and stability. Although prominent neorealist Kenneth Waltz departed from most realists in famously and controversially arguing that ‘more is better’ – i.e. that if nuclear weapons create security for existing nuclear weapons states through the logic of deterrence, their proliferation to other states can only extend such forms of security and stability globally – most realists betray fairly conventional fears of proliferation to irrational third world states,

and argue for bolstering non-proliferation efforts and often also against the pursuit of nuclear disarmament by existing Nuclear-Weapons States (NWS) (Waltz 1981).¹ Political liberals, on the other hand, who are generally more invested than many realists in ridding the world of nuclear weapons, sometimes appear to miss the deep structural inequalities and prejudices undergirding existing international regimes and treaties that they see as ‘progressive’ attempts to mitigate the effects of state anarchy. For instance, while William Walker (2007) is certainly cognizant of the inequalities of the NPT and berates existing NWS for their nuclear hypocrisy, his celebratory account of the enlightenment-order inaugurated by the NPT appears to give short shrift to these inequalities and hypocrisies, ultimately missing the ways that the enlightenment itself was deeply exclusionary in its aspirations. It is this sort of blindness to the material and normative structures of global hierarchy that a post-colonial approach to International Relations points out. Indeed, Barkawi and Laffey (2006) have compellingly argued that Eurocentric categories and assumptions about world politics underlie most International Relations approaches to security, including realism, liberalism, and even Critical Security Studies. How, then, might a post-colonial approach to security help us reconceptualize the dominant narratives, as well as the pressing problems and issues of global security? What sorts of questions and problematics can we ‘see’ when we look at the world from the perspective of the ‘weaker’ players in the international system?

At the most basic level, a post-colonial approach to security beckons us to take seriously the historical importance of colonialism in the shaping of our contemporary world. There are several important imprints of the erasure of colonialism from most accounts of International Relations. First, the dominant narrative of World War II, seen by most IR scholars and especially political liberals as a defining moment for the generation of our most important international institutions, casts the victorious Allies as the triumphant bearers of the ‘good’ that defeated the ‘evil’ of the Axis powers, notwithstanding the fact that many of the Allied Powers were brutal colonialists simultaneously inflicting considerable pain and suffering on massive numbers of people in Asia and Africa. To draw attention to such an alternative narrative of World War II might help us understand why the institutions emergent from the end of that conflict continue to carry traces of colonialist prejudices. Second, as already mentioned above, not much attention seems to be given in discussions of nuclear security to the status of the USA as the only state to have ever used a nuclear weapon. If the massive devastation and suffering of the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki had a prominent place in our accounts of international security, perhaps one might understand why the massive nuclear arsenal in the hands of the USA (and other powerful states) does not appear to produce the same sense of safety and stability to other states that realists often assume militarily and economically powerful hegemons can provide.

In other words, a post-colonial approach can help draw attention to the ways that security is ‘perceived’ by those who consider themselves the victims of great power politics. To use a post-World War II example, it is important to recognize that the ‘Cold War’ – so central in most discussions of international security – was experienced as quite ‘hot’ by the people of Vietnam, Korea, Afghanistan and the many others states that served as ‘proxies’ for super-power rivalry. Taking seriously those widespread feelings of insecurity throughout the course of the Cold War might help explain some of Iran’s so-called ‘paranoia’, given that it is surrounded by the presence of US troops and weapons in its neighbouring states and was itself a victim of Cold War US interventions in the past. In a similar vein, much has been made recently in the IR literature of the ways that the events of 11 September 2001 in the USA have changed the trajectory of global security. A post-colonial approach might suggest that what those terrible terrorist attacks also did was democratize and globalize to the West

the sense of vulnerability that most people have lived with around the world during and since the end of World War II. Recent discourses on proliferation have generated considerable anxiety about the spread of nuclear weapons to 'irrational' and 'undeterrable' terrorists, with little attention to the global exploitation and oppression that helps manufacture and sustain terrorism. A post-colonial approach alerts scholars and policy-makers to the hierarchies and inequalities that differentially distribute insecurity and vulnerabilities across the world, and hence motivate different actors to pursue their own paths to security.

Recognizing the absence of colonialism from most IR theory, post-colonial theorists urge us to take stock of the role of the third world in the co-constitution of modernity. Many of these authors point out that the Westphalian state system, sovereignty, most international organizations, our notions of humanitarianism, all emerged from the encounter between the West and the non-West, and unsurprisingly, carry the imprint of that colonial relationship. Regimes and treaties of international security are no different, and as I suggest through my analysis of the nuclear apartheid argument, are perceived as biased and prejudiced by those who feel excluded by them. Interrogating the Eurocentricity of most contemporary theorizations of international security provides us with a fuller and more adequate understanding of global security.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty: enlightenment or exclusion?

In the complex regime erected to stall and eliminate nuclear weapons possession, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) has had a prominent place. Signed in 1968, the NPT came into effect in 1970 and is currently a treaty with almost universal reach. All but four countries (India, Pakistan, Israel, and North Korea) in the world are party to the treaty; despite all the concerns about the 1998 Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests, the North Korean possession of nuclear weapons, and the current fears of Iranian nuclearization, the NPT has long been considered to be quite effective in preventing the spread of nuclear weapons around the world. Amongst some of its strongest supporters on the left, it has also been celebrated for enshrining the principle of disarmament in the form of a commitment by existing nuclear weapons states to work towards a nuclear-free world. Thus, for many, the nuclear NPT plays an integral role in holding together a regime whose overall commitment is to make the world safe from the terribly destructive power of nuclear weapons. In one of the most celebratory defences of the NPT offered recently, William Walker (2007) has even suggested that the NPT helped instantiate a liberal 'enlightenment order' based on progressive values of human reason and rationality.

Yet the NPT has also faced a certain level of resistance from some quarters. When India declared itself a nuclear power in 1998, followed shortly by Pakistan, it did so by charging the international community of practising a 'nuclear apartheid' that divided the world between 'nuclear haves' and 'nuclear have-nots'. Against criticisms from many supporters of the NPT, the US and Indian governments negotiated a nuclear fuel deal in 2006 that, in effect, legitimizes India's nuclear programme despite India's blatant opposition to the NPT. This de-facto legitimization of the Indian nuclear programme has renewed charges of 'nuclear apartheid' from those such as Pakistan that continue to be treated as pariah states for pursuing nuclear programmes, even though as non-signatories to the NPT, they are not in violation of any legal obligations. Similar charges of discrimination have also emanated from Iran and North Korea on different occasions. While setting aside the question of what causes or motivates particular states like India, Pakistan, Iran, and North Korea to pursue nuclear

weapons – a question that scholars have answered with a variety of responses that require taking account of regional security dynamics as well as domestic political exigencies – it might be worth considering what is at stake in such charges of ‘nuclear apartheid’, a racially loaded signifier that evokes memories of colonial discrimination and violence. That such charges against what may be considered a decidedly well-intentioned and progressive treaty invested in the creation of global peace have a certain political resonance behoves us, at the very minimum, to take those charges seriously and interrogate more thoroughly the deep and abiding global inequalities suggested by a post-colonial perspective on global security.

This chapter uses post-colonial theory to understand the apparent puzzle that the NPT poses: How can a universal, progressive treaty invested in the production of global peace be seen as a mechanism for sustaining a deeply hierarchical world? Critical scholars of security within International Relations have raised and problematized quite compellingly the questions of ‘whose security’ and ‘what kind of security’ nuclear/military security provides. This includes a critical examination of a more expansive understanding of existential threats that includes economic, environmental, ethnic, gender dimensions, as well as a problematization of the state as the (sometimes unspoken) referent ‘to be secured’ in much of mainstream Security Studies. Post-colonial Security Studies take that discussion further by interrogating the colonialist prejudices that structure our contemporary understandings of global security by asking ‘whose security’ and ‘what kinds of security’ really *matter*.

Interrogating the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

The explicit purpose of the NPT (see Box 8.1) is quite simple – to prevent the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons, i.e. proliferation to states and actors that do not currently possess nuclear weapons. Recognizing the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, the treaty enables non-nuclear weapons signatories to partake in such benefits by requiring nuclear weapons states to share technology and materials that could be put to such use (Articles IV and V). In return, Non-Nuclear Weapons States (NNWS) bind themselves to the agreement to not obtain or build a nuclear weapons capability (Article II) as well as accept International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) jurisdiction to inspect their peaceful nuclear facilities (Article III), and nuclear weapons states are prohibited from transferring any nuclear weapons technology or any fissionable, weapons-grade material to NNWS (Article I).

On the one hand, the central aim of the NPT to prevent the proliferation of weapons as dangerous and abhorrent as nuclear weapons is, indeed, laudatory. But on the other hand, the NPT quite clearly reflects certain aspects of the hierarchy that characterize the contemporary global order and the presuppositions that go with that. Let us review some of the specific characteristics of the treaty. First, the treaty recognizes 1 January 1967 as the cut-off point for the division between two central categories of states: ‘nuclear weapons states’ (NWS) and ‘Non-Nuclear Weapons States’. In other words, all countries that publicly demonstrated nuclear weapons capability before that date are automatically entitled to retain such weapons and all other signatories barred from such acquisition. Five states – the USA, Russia,² Britain, France, and China – are thus recognized as NWS by the terms of the treaties, and all other countries are automatically attributed the status of NNWS. It is not lost on many that these states also comprise the P5, the five permanent members with veto power in the Security Council of the United Nations. Hence, as stated above, the accusation by many (including Indian government spokespersons) of the creation of what has been called the ‘nuclear club’, demarcating and legitimizing a set of ‘nuclear haves’ against a set of ‘nuclear have-nots’ through the explicit and legal recognition imparted by the terms of the treaty.

Box 8.1 The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

In the aftermath of failed postwar disarmament negotiations a number of countries successfully proliferated (the USSR, 1949; the UK, 1952; France, 1960; China, 1964) spurring concerns about global nuclear stability and security and disproving early assumptions regarding the difficulty in mastering nuclear technology. Amidst estimates of two dozen nuclear weapons states by the end of the 1970s, the UN adopted a 1961 resolution (proposed by Ireland) calling on all states to conclude an international agreement on nuclear proliferation. On 17 August 1965, the United States submitted a draft non-proliferation treaty to the Eighteen Nation Committee on Disarmament (ENDC) which outlined the basic provisions of the future NPT. Despite significant disagreements over the nature of United States nuclear commitments in Europe, both the USA and the USSR submitted identical drafts of a non-proliferation treaty to the ENDC on 24 August 1967. Negotiations of the treaty proper then began.

These negotiations focused on several issues: first, the specific operations of IAEA; second, reservations by non-nuclear weapons states about forswearing nuclear weapons without reciprocation from the existing nuclear powers (which led to Article VI and legally binding security assurances served as a sufficient compromise); third, seeking of guarantees from non-nuclear weapons states that nuclear renunciation would not place them at a significant military disadvantage (a UN resolution thus promised assistance from the nuclear weapons states to non-nuclear weapons states in the event of nuclear threats and the USA, the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom adopted negative security assurances not to use nuclear weapons against any non-nuclear weapons state). The NPT became open to signatures on 1 July 1968 and entered into force on 5 March 1970 after US ratification (which was delayed due to a Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968). Article VII commits the parties to a review conference every five years, with the most recent taking place in May 2010.

Significant Articles:

Article I prohibits existing nuclear weapons states from providing any nuclear material for use in explosives 'to any recipient whatsoever'.

Article II prohibits non-nuclear weapons states from receiving or manufacturing nuclear explosives.

Article III provides for safeguards and examination of all declared nuclear facilities in non-nuclear weapons states by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Nuclear weapons states are not required to accept the safeguard agreements (though many voluntarily do so).

Article IV allows for the research and development of peaceful nuclear technologies by all treaty members. Significantly, the treaty commits the nuclear weapons states to share peaceful nuclear technology with non-weapons states.

Article VI commits the nuclear weapons states to the cessation of the nuclear arms race and continued efforts towards total nuclear disarmament.

Article X allows parties the right to withdraw from the treaty with three months' notice.

Full Treaty Text:

<http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Magazines/Bulletin/Bull104/10403501117.pdf>

Second, there is no provision in the treaty to prevent *vertical* proliferation, that is, expanding and/or upgrading the nuclear weapons capacity of existing nuclear weapons states. Despite the efforts by many disarmament advocates, as well as by disaffected states such as India, to push for the inclusion of a time-bound commitment on the part of NWS to move towards complete disarmament, all the treaty includes is a fairly weak statement of purpose in the form of Article VI that encourages NWS ‘to pursue negotiations in good faith’ towards complete disarmament. There is considerable disagreement among scholars as to the centrality of this commitment in the actual negotiations of the treaty, but it is clear that while the NPT urges NWS to move towards disarmament, there is no binding commitment on them to actually do so.

Finally, on 13 May 1995, at the end of the 25-year period for which it was originally negotiated, and with considerable pressure from the existing NWS, the NPT was extended for the indefinite future. This indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995, without any substantive amendments to the treaty, has resulted in what could be called the indefinite ‘freezing’ of the nuclear status quo. Periodic reviews of the treaty are still held – as stipulated in the treaty – but, as useful as these reviews might be, the indefinite extension of the treaty has meant the eradication of any deadline that could be used to exert pressure to make good on the faith bestowed on NWS by NNWS. In other words, the structure of the NPT provides no explicit mechanism to hold NWS accountable for playing their part in making a world free of nuclear weapons, leaving any actions towards disarmament to their good sense and judgement.

Attending to the nuclear apartheid argument

It is these features of the NPT that are often referred to by those who wield the charge of nuclear apartheid. It may be useful, in this context, to discuss the global distribution of nuclear weapons and the ‘progress’ that has been made in curtailing their levels. While there have been reductions since the level of global nuclear weapons arsenals peaked in 1986, Robert Norris and Hans Kristensen estimated in 2010 that there were still 22,400 intact nuclear warheads in existence (2010: 77). Of these, approximately 95 per cent are in the US and Russian arsenals. Nearly 8,000 warheads are operational to some degree and ready to launch on a relatively short notice, and roughly 1,880 warheads are on different levels of alert (Norris and Kristensen 2010). The USA currently possesses roughly 9,400 intact warheads, of which the Pentagon has roughly 5,000 (2,468 operational) and another 3,500–4,500 retired weapons held by the Department of Energy that are slated to be dismantled by 2022 (Norris and Kristensen 2010: 79). In addition to Russia, which still has approximately 12,000 nuclear weapons, the United Kingdom has roughly 225, France another 300, and China about 240. Of the four states that now possess nuclear weapons but are not party to the NPT, India is estimated to have 60–80 warheads, Pakistan another 70–90, Israel has approximately 80 warheads, and North Korea likely has enough fissile material for around 8–12 bombs (Norris and Kristensen 2010: 78). Although the total number of nuclear weapons in the world is declining, largely due to reductions in the huge US and Russian arsenals, this obscures the fact that ‘eight out of the nine nuclear weapons states continue to produce new or modernized nuclear weapons and all nine insist that nuclear weapons are essential for their national security’ (Norris and Kristensen 2010: 82).

The question, then, that obviously emerges is: Why does the possession of the ‘relatively few’ nuclear weapons by India, Pakistan, and North Korea cause the kind of stir that the massive numbers of nuclear warheads, many on active alert, in the USA hardly ever invoke? It is also important to point out here that the dominant historical narrative of the US role in

Second World War has imparted a certain kind of 'aura of responsibility' on the US decision to use an atomic bomb, so that the US's unique position as the only country ever to have *used* a nuclear weapon is rendered beyond ethical reproach, while these other states' mere possession of it becomes questionable. If such a sense of '(un)safety' is not simply a product of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, but also has to do with 'to whom' these weapons proliferate (hence the much greater focus on horizontal, rather than vertical, proliferation in treaties like the NPT) then what prejudiced criteria make the P5 unthreatening to, and indeed in some renditions the guarantors of, safety in a way not deemed possible for other countries? If nuclear weapons are considered necessary for the security of the already powerful states of the world, why would it be considered illegitimate for weaker states that perceive themselves as facing a threatening security environment to think of such weapons as useful for their own security? Why, if it is not about a certain kind of racism, do treaties like the NPT that do legitimize both structural inequities and the presuppositions that make those possible not appear preposterous to scholars, commentators and activists who find 'progress' in the institutionalization of international norms? Is it not possible to argue that the strategic objectives of treaties like the NPT have less to do with peace and more with maintaining a monopoly on nuclear violence, a monopoly that is not just fundamental to the undemocratic nature of the world order, but can be used to sustain and maintain the hegemony of a few states?

What all these questions suggest is that the nuclear apartheid argument does need to be taken seriously, at the very minimum for revealing a discriminatory and flawed non-proliferation regime that sets different standards of national security for different states. Not only does it point to the hypocrisy inherent in the proliferation position taken by powerful countries that continue to expand their own arsenals, it also points to Orientalist assumptions (see Box 8.2) that underlie such positions and the responses generated by the proliferation of nuclear weapons to third world countries. That the very term 'nuclear proliferation' conjures up the image of the spread of such weapons to irresponsible and non-Western 'rogue states' and 'terrorist groups' is telling of the way the term is articulated within official and popular discourse. Providing abundant examples, Hugh Gusterson (1999) demonstrates how widely shared the general perception of third world, and especially Islamic, nuclear irrationality is *vis-à-vis* the perceptions of the safe and reliable possession of nuclear weapons by Western nuclear democracies. This rarely questioned, taken-for-granted 'common sense' pervades media coverage, exists amongst politicians, policy-makers and even nuclear scientists, occurs in respected journals, and frequently spans the political spectrum, and exists despite all the evidence of safety mishaps, close calls and aggressive nuclear behaviour among existing NWS. Rejecting the 'nuclear alarmism' that exaggerates the threat of contemporary nuclear proliferation while downplaying the dangers of the Cold War security environment, Gavin (2009/10) suggests that current 'rogue states' such as Iran and North Korea may be no more dangerous than the Soviet Union or the PRC were during the Cold War, and, seen in terms of local imperatives, are facing quite similar security issues to those faced by France or Israel at the time of their nuclearization, yet they generate very different kinds of anxieties. This colonial discourse that Gusterson calls 'nuclear Orientalism' casts an infantilized 'third world' given to impulse, passion and fanaticism as untrustworthy custodians of nuclear weapons within a Western geopolitical imaginary that positions the West as policing agent of any proliferation transgressions (cast as 'crime' and 'theft'). It is thus that the NPT 'has become the legal anchor for a global nuclear regime that is increasingly legitimated in Western public discourse in racialized terms' (Gusterson 1999: 113).

In that sense, the 'nuclear apartheid' argument may be seen as an attempt to point to the continuing exclusions and marginalizations faced by people of colour in third world

Box 8.2 Orientalism

Generally attributed to the pioneering work of postcolonial theorist, Edward Said (1978), *Orientalism* refers to the imaginative geography that produces ‘the Orient’ as the site of Western fantasies and fears. Based on an ontological and epistemological division between ‘the Occident’ (generally Euro-America) and ‘the Orient’ (generally referring to the non-West), and embodied in various institutions of modern learning and policy-making, Orientalism emerges from the historical encounter of Europe (and America) with its non-Western others, and includes a whole host of deep-seated prejudices about third world cultures and peoples.

countries in a global order dominated and controlled by privileged whites in first world countries. Now it is clear that this black/white distinction is problematic. Not only can China, as one of the nuclear five, clearly not be categorized in the latter category, but it is also problematic to conflate state boundaries with racial boundaries, despite the racial implications of all boundary-making exercises. However, the articulation of ‘whiteness’ with power is deep and compelling for many, and draws on a particular post-colonial logic. Let us, for instance, hear the words of a scholar on Indian security writing just before the Indian nuclear tests:

there continues to exist three ‘White’ nuclear weapons states as part of the Western alliance to which in all likelihood a fourth one, Russia, may be added when its ‘Partnership for Peace’ merges into NATO. It may be recalled that following the Indian atomic test of 1974, President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto of Pakistan had reportedly said that there was a Christian bomb (US, Britain and France), a Marxist bomb (Soviet Union and China), a Jewish bomb (Israel’s bombs-in-the-basement) and now a Hindu bomb (India), but no Muslim bomb. Likewise, India could possibly complain now that there were four White bombs, one Yellow or Beige bomb, but no Brown or Black bombs, an unfair and unacceptable situation. While China may continue to show some defiance against the policies of the West on occasion, the nuclear distribution indicated the continuing domination of the traditional White imperialists in an overwhelmingly non-White world.

(Thomas 1998: 285)

Similarly, J. Mohan Malik, in reference to the nuclear apartheid position, says that ‘(a)n unstated reason behind India’s nuclear ambivalence had been the belief that the possession of nuclear weapons by “white” nations implied their racial and technological superiority that could not go unchallenged’ (Malik 1998: 201). It is this sense of racial discrimination in a post-colonial world that is invoked by a spokesman for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the Hindu nationalist party in power at the time of the tests, when he says ‘(w)e don’t want to be blackmailed and treated as oriental blackies’ (a BJP spokesman in 1993 quoted in Perkovich 1998: 16). Resentment towards the discrimination of the NPT-centred non-proliferation regime, expressed as a form of post-colonial grievance against global inequality, has emerged from other places as well. In a scathing and compelling critique of US policy towards Iran, Ogultarhan (2010) concludes that the root of US errors on Iran is rooted in Orientalist perceptions of Iranian irrationality and stems from deep-seated Orientalist understandings

of East vs. West which see the Iranian state as incompatible with Western democracies. It is not surprising for Iran or North Korea themselves to invoke their place within a global hierarchy of states to justify their nuclear weapons programmes.

The point here is *not* that 'nuclear apartheid' causes proliferation, and India, Pakistan, Iran, and North Korea should in no way be seen as deliberately attempting to rectify global hierarchies of class and race through their pursuit of nuclear weapons. Indeed, numerous scholars have spent considerable time studying the multiple causes, motivations and factors that drive proliferation. These often include, in addition to whatever security rationales there may be, the interests of various military-industrial complexes, as well as a good bit of domestic nationalist posturing and global status seeking. It should come as no surprise that such forms of national and global posturing are quite well served by the nuclear apartheid argument wielded as a strategic post-colonial weapon. The charge of nuclear apartheid has muscle in legitimizing proliferation to both domestic and foreign audiences, and there is plenty of evidence of the cynical manipulation of the hypocrisy argument by self-service statistics interests.

Conclusion

That nuclear weapons are dangerous should not need reiteration. There are far too many nuclear weapons, capable of destroying all of humanity several times over, already existent in the world. This does not even include the possible weapons that may be produced in the future by potential proliferators that generate so much concern, whether those be uranium-enriching states such as Iran or other 'latent' or 'breakout' states such as Japan that have the capacity to produce nuclear weapons without much difficulty but have, for the time being, chosen not to do so. Some of those who believe that it is not the NPT, but other factors that have inhibited proliferation foresee the number of nuclear weapons states in the future rising, perhaps at the rate of one or two additional NWS every decade. A publication by the Brookings Institution suggests that with wide global dispersal for all the building blocks for a nuclear arsenal including through the black market, the world stands at the brink of a 'nuclear tipping point' (Reiss 2004). To add to the already massive stockpiles of global weapons, whether by existing nuclear weapons states or NNWS, is folly of the highest order, imperilling the security of all. Yet, there is a sense among many recent commentators that the NPT is in crisis, and its unravelling will only accelerate the proliferation of nuclear weapons. This fear has renewed calls for universal nuclear disarmament, and even once fierce defenders of nuclear weapons for existing nuclear weapons states have joined the efforts to urge these states to work towards eliminating their nuclear arsenals. So for instance, two former secretaries of state (George Shultz and Henry Kissinger), one former secretary of Defence (William J. Perry), and one former chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (Sam Nunn) – all well-known cold warriors in the USA and architects of nuclear deterrence doctrines that justified the possession of those weapons – have together mounted a fairly visible public relations campaign to persuade current leaders and policy-makers of the wisdom of moving to global nuclear zero.³

There appears to be very little actual progress towards disarmament. It appears that every hopeful sign such as the New START signed and ratified recently by the USA and Russia, or declarations such as President Obama's 2010 Nuclear Posture Review or his April 2009 Prague speech calling for a nuclear-free world is greeted by a flurry of excitement amongst commentators and arms control and disarmament activists, even leading the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* at the University of Chicago to move the minute hand on the 'Doomsday Clock' (a

metaphorical device used by the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* to portend how close to nuclear destruction the world is positioned at any particular time) by a minute or two. That clock, reflecting the disappointment with any follow-up to these hopeful signs, has once again been moved back to stand at five minutes to midnight. In other words, the problem of nuclear weapons is a dire one, and taking a post-colonial approach to security allows us to understand the ethical and political nuances and complexities of the issue. After all, in the event of a nuclear war or a nuclear accident, it is those most materially vulnerable in the world that are likely to be the most severely affected and find themselves with the fewest means of recourse. One can also agree that newly emerging nuclear weapons states with relatively under-developed command, control, communications and intelligence systems are more vulnerable to nuclear dangers without resorting to assumptions about non-Western irrationality. Given these dangers, for those who believe that universal nuclear disarmament is an impossible utopian goal, efforts such as the NPT that aim to curtail the number of nuclear weapons in the world are to be applauded, even if they are seriously flawed in many respects.

Even if one accepts that there is a middle ground between what is seen as the ‘impossibility’ of complete global disarmament and the ‘horror’ of unrestricted proliferation, and that this middle ground of some kind of ‘realistic’ arms control arrangement is certainly more attractive than its absence, the nuclear apartheid argument does call on us to interrogate how indeed what becomes ‘realistic’ within this terrain of the ‘middle ground’ is produced through the workings of power in the international realm. This is one sense in which the nuclear apartheid argument makes it possible to unsettle some of the taken-for-granted assumptions about rationality, stability and formal sovereign equality in accounts of International Relations. A post-colonial approach to international security makes us aware of the deep prejudices and hierarchies that underlie current frameworks and structures of global security regimes, and helps us understand how such prejudices and hierarchies might well serve as obstacles in efforts to create true and lasting global peace. In most mainstream IR accounts, the pursuit of security has often shelved the question of ‘justice’ in favour of what is seen as the higher and more immediate interest of securing peace. A post-colonial approach suggests that achieving sustainable global peace requires putting issues of justice at the very centre of analysis and policy-making.

Please see the companion website for a seminar exercise.

Questions for further debate

- 1 Why is the nuclear NPT perceived as unequal by many states around the world?
- 2 Should treaties whose purpose is to make the world safer and more peaceful take into considerations issues of global inequality and justice? Why or why not?
- 3 What does a post-colonial approach to security reveal about the study and practice of International Relations?
- 4 Should one worry about the possible development of nuclear weapons by Iran? How can one articulate that worry in a way that does not reproduce a prejudiced worldview?
- 5 What would be most important steps toward the creation of a nuclear-free world? Who should carry the most responsibility for the creation of such a world?

Notes

- 1 Waltz even suggests the presence of ethnocentric prejudices influencing anti-proliferation views.
- 2 The three other nuclear-weapons possessing states that emerged from the dissolution of the Soviet Union – Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan – all transferred their nuclear weapons for dismantlement to Russia, thus leaving Russia as the only nuclear-weapons state that emerged out of the ex-Soviet Union.
- 3 The now widely circulated *Wall Street Journal* op-ed column by this ‘gang of four’ first appeared in January 2007. A video titled ‘Nuclear Tipping Point’ that is largely based on conversations with this group was reportedly shown to President Obama in April 2010.

Sources for further reading and research

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Part 2

Methods

Collecting and analysing data

9 Quantitative methods

Laura Sjoberg and Jeffrey Horowitz

Chapter summary

This chapter uses US-led economic sanctions on Iran to demonstrate the utility of employing quantitative methods in critical, emancipatory analysis in Security Studies. It critiques the purely positivist application of quantitative tools that dominates the field, and suggests that quantitative (particularly mathematical) methods can serve critical ends. By way of an example, it uses game theory to demonstrate that a state's sense of self (or 'ontological security') can create incentives for the use of harmful sanctions even when such sanctions may run against their own material interest (and against the interests of others). It then suggests other mathematical methods that would be useful in a critical analysis of the sanctions regime on Iran.

Learning outcomes

On completion, readers should be able to:

- recognize the potential for using quantitative methods for reflective and constitutive research;
- explain the ways that quantitative methods can aid critical Security Studies research specifically;
- evaluate the genesis and pitfalls of the 'quantitative/qualitative' divide in theorizing security.

Introduction

Scholars interested in critical Security Studies often locate their understanding of the discipline in the grouping broadly identified as 'post-positivist', understanding knowledge as situated (relative to one's perspective) and scholarship as inherently political. As such, critical approaches to security are often assumed (by practitioners and opponents alike) to have an affinity with 'qualitative' methods. This is an epistemological claim as it relates to the question of how we (think we) know what we (think we) know. Many scholars derive from those epistemological commitments, then, the idea that the appropriate methods of critical security research include ethnography, discourse and dispositive analysis, visual analysis and other similar strategies. On the other hand, scholars interested in 'traditional' Security Studies, broadly defined, often express epistemological commitments to causal and predictive analysis. Many such scholars derive from those epistemological commitments that the

appropriate methods for their work include predictive formal models and large-N regression analysis of empirical observations.

As scholars and teachers of security, then, we often perpetuate the understanding that the ‘quantitative’ and ‘qualitative’ divide maps onto the epistemological divide between ‘scientific’ research and ‘post-positivist’ research in Security Studies. Though qualitative methods have been employed towards both ends, Security Studies continues to see ‘quantitative’ methods as mapping to positivist/normal social science, suggesting that the ‘best’ (most valid/robust) social science is large-N data analysis, and, further, that anything with numbers in it must be positivist social science. Patrick Jackson (2010: 67) addresses this problem when he notes: ‘I place the terms ‘quantitative’ and ‘qualitative’ in scare-quotes here largely to underscore the extent to which I think the ‘quantitative’/‘qualitative’ divide to be a distinction without a difference – a distinction of *method* without a difference of *methodology*’ (emphasis in original). Jackson goes on to explain:

Whether one uses numerical or non-numerical data, or whether one considers a small or large number of empirical cases . . . *Large-n ‘quantitative’ and small-n ‘qualitative’ research in IR are fundamentally the same*, in that it is basically all neopositivist in approach.

(Jackson 2010: 67, emphasis in original)

With Jackson, we argue that the ‘qualitative versus quantitative’ divide offers an incomplete representation of the potential of both method and inquiry in Security Studies. Particularly, it undersells what ‘quantitative tools’ (including statistics, mathematics and modelling) have to offer the critical study of security. It is a widely held myth in political science that ‘mathematics’ is purely positivist, stemming perhaps from the (frequent if incorrect) grouping of ‘statistics’ and ‘mathematics’ under the heading ‘quantitative methods’.

These categories themselves, we believe, need to be questioned, given that different tools within the ‘quantitative’ and ‘qualitative’ toolboxes have different epistemological (and even ontological) utility. Particularly, we are interested in the value of tools traditionally grouped as ‘quantitative’ research for critical approaches to security. The surface level tension between ‘objective’ social science and ‘interested’ critical research can be navigated and negotiated in different ways, including but not limited to the use of increasingly sophisticated techniques that account for subjectivity and even intersubjectivity, the heuristic use of formal models, agent-based modelling, constitutive uses of statistical methods and so on (see also Chapter 15).

We are not the first to suggest the critical use of quantitative methods in social science analysis. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari use the geometric construction of the ‘rhizome’ to capture complex webs of semiotic chains (where ‘semiotic’ means sign or thing that signifies) in political interactions, where a rhizome is conceived of as multiple in form, heterogeneous and interconnected in complex and relational ways: ‘[a] rhizome ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles’ (1987: 7). Crucially, a rhizome, unlike a tree or root mass, has no point of origin or departure, for ‘any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). They use this imagery to sketch an ‘*an exact yet rigorous*’ approach to how global politics works (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 367, emphasis in original), encouraging scholars to produce:

a map and not a tracing. . . The map is open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed,

adapted to any kind of mounting, reworked by an individual, group, or social formation. It can be drawn on a wall, conceived of as a work of art, constructed as a political action or as a meditation.

(Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 12, emphasis in original)

In addition to scholarship by (and inspired by) Deleuze and Guattari, Matthew Hoffman (2003) and others have used complexity theory and agent-based modelling to explore constructivist approaches to dynamism and change in global politics. Building on the work of Hayward Alker, Renee Marlin-Bennett (2011) has advocated the use of emancipatory empiricism not only to understand but also to work to improve global politics. A number of feminist theorists have suggested dialogue between positivist, quantitative analysis and the goal of gender emancipation, but few have explored the use of non-positivist methods, techniques like ‘hi-tech hermeneutics’ (Sylvan 2011), quantitative critical discourse analysis (Wodak 2009), and ‘fuzzy set’ analysis (Ragin 2006). Some scholars have also looked at identity as a variable in statistical analysis to try to get at some of the normative and ideational dimensions of International Relations generally or international security specifically.

We propose that the use of quantitative methods in critical analysis in Security Studies is productive, and should expand. Rejecting the ‘hegemony of the scientific method’ and ‘highlighting the importance of interpretive strategies’ (Price and Reus-Smit 1998: 261), critical approaches to security have been said to share ‘a fundamental critique of traditional (realist) approaches to security . . . a concern with the politics of security, [and] . . . with the ethics of security’ (Browning and McDonald 2011, see also Chapter 1). While quantitative methods are often employed in Political Science by scholars with positivist epistemologies, there is nothing inherent in the use of mathematical methods that assumes the existence of objective knowledge, discrete variables, or the appropriateness of dominant discourses of epistemology and ontology. Instead, quantitative methods can be used to examine normative questions, to explore discursive and performative relationships, and to increase the creativity and depth of critical theorizing. The rest of this chapter takes a critical security approach to analysing the sanctions regime on Iran, employing quantitative methods.

Introducing sanctions

In the last few years, sanctions have been imposed on Iran in response to that state’s often-recalcitrant policies regarding nuclear energy and weapons of mass destruction (O’Sullivan 2010). Iran’s political opponents express concern that ‘Iran’s nuclear programme edges closer to weapons capability’ (Esfandiary and Fitzpatrick 2011: 143). The USA holds a trade and investment ban on Iran, with a law that authorizes penalties against foreign firms that choose to trade with Iran. The USA has also been a key advocate and author of a robust United Nations sanctions regime as well. While the US measures are the broadest, UN sanctions are comprehensive, and several other states, such as Australia, Canada, and Japan have stricter sanctions on Iran than the UN Resolution requires (Esfandiary and Fitzpatrick 2011: 143). Despite understanding that Iran’s economy is ‘under increasing strain’ from the sanctions (Fassihi 2010), sanctions experts have been concerned that the sanctions regime on Iran is likely to fail for a number of reasons: a ‘lack of strategic direction’ (O’Sullivan 2010: 11), Iranian determination to become a nuclear power (Edelman *et al.* 2010), insufficient economic impact (Farrar 2011) and miscommunication (Murray 2010). Whether or not sanctions on Iran *particularly* are likely to fail to obtain target compliance, sanctions *generally* fail at least two-thirds of the time if not more often.

So, when it comes to sanctions on Iran, the behaviour of the USA, its allies and even the United Nations Security Council becomes puzzling. If economic sanctions generally fail at least two-thirds of the time if not more often, why do states pursue them as a policy option in high-risk situations like that of Iran's efforts at proliferation? Perhaps even more puzzling, why do they pursue this low-success policy option when its humanitarian and political costs are often understood as unbearably high? We believe that critical approaches to security can provide important insights into the question of why states generally, and the USA specifically, have chosen the problematic (and likely unsuccessful) strategy of sanctioning Iran. Looking at states' justificatory discourses for economic sanctions, we often see claims about right and wrong, and the fundamental importance of the ethical principles that sanctions are being implemented to defend. Sometimes, the goal and function of these condemnations is shaming a state that cares about its reputation into behaving differently (as was the case in South Africa with regard to apartheid in the 1980s). Alternatively, scholars have argued that it is 'the *symbolic* use of sanctions independent of the instrumental use of sanctions' for domestic audience benefits (Whang 2011). Still, Whang laments that many claims that sanctions have a 'symbolic' function lack both theoretical and empirical rigour.

This conundrum in the sanctions literature is precisely why it is important to explore not only critical approaches to traditional security problems, but also the use of quantitative methods in those analyses. After briefly justifying the pairing of critical Security Studies and quantitative methods, this chapter suggests that the concept of 'ontological security' can account not only for why states impose brutal and ineffective sanctions against their material interest, but also for how such policies might be discouraged successfully in the future. By using game theory to produce a model of the decision-making process, we demonstrate the incentive structure behind the sanctions regime on Iran specifically and low-success sanctions regimes more generally. The chapter concludes by going over some of the other potential benefits of quantitative methods for critical approaches to security, both in the case of sanctions against Iran and more generally.

Critical approaches to security and sanctions on Iran

Critical Security Studies have many things to contribute to analysing and understanding the economic sanctions regime on Iran, including but not limited to understanding sanctions as a social interaction, seeing the imperialism in the punishment message of sanctioning, understanding the strategic advantage of the signification of sanctions as 'not war' even as they are as brutal as (or more brutal than) 'actual' war, and examining the human security implications of sanctions regimes.

In this chapter, we focus on one potential contribution of critical Security Studies to understanding this sanctions regime. Particularly, we are interested in what critical approaches can tell us about question of *why* the economic sanctions regime on Iran is being implemented, not only by the USA, but also by the United Nations Security Council and a number of other countries and organizations, despite the odds being stacked against the sanctions actually stopping Iran from pursuing a nuclear weapons programme. We suggest that the implementation of the sanctions regime is not exclusively, or even primarily, intended to change Iran's nuclear weapons policy. Instead, the choice to sanction Iran is as much if not more about the identity of the sanctioning states as it is about the behaviour of the target state.

We find the concept of 'ontological security' useful in understanding why the states sanction Iran (Mitzen 2006; Steele 2008). As Steele explains, 'while physical security is (obviously)

important to states, ontological security is more important because its fulfilment affirms a state's self-identity' (2008: 2). In this understanding, 'the "Self" of states is constituted and maintained through a narrative which gives life to routinized foreign policy actions' (Steele 2008: 3). Ontological security theorists note that, sometimes, states act against their material interests in service of a sense of national identity. States have, in Giddens' terms, a 'narrative of the self' or a 'story or stories by means of which self-identity is reflexively understood, both by the individual concerned and by others' (Giddens 1991: 243; Steele 2008: 10). States seek to affirm these self-identity narratives, to increase their credibility (through honour), and to defend them from threats (or shame) (Steele 2008: 11). Ontological security works at the state level because 'state agents seek to satisfy the self-identity needs to the states which they lead' (Steele 2008: 19). In this view, 'identity construction is a political project' (Steele 2008: 31) which is constantly iterated in foreign policy-making. In this sense:

When we say that an individual is 'insecure,' . . . we do not mean that his or her survival is at stake, unless that individual is so unsure of himself or herself that he or she is suicidal. Rather, 'insecurity' in this sense means that individuals are uncomfortable with who they are. Ontological security, as opposed to security as survival, is security as being.

(Steele 2008: 52)

In addition to material needs for survival, then, states have senses of self, and relatedly, senses of self-esteem, honour, shame and pride. A critical approach to ontological security focuses not only on how socially constructed state-identity leads states to aggressive or destructive behaviour, but also on how those self-identities can be problematized or even deconstructed (Steele 2008: 65). In this approach, 'by drawing a connection between the practices of a targeted state and its professed self-identity' it is possible to 'lay bare' the Self of a state' (Steele 2008: 65). In Steele's view, there are 'four sets of interrelated factors important in ontological security-seeking behaviour: (a) reflexive and material capabilities, (b) crisis assessment, (c) biographical narrative and (d) discursive framing by co-actors'. The biographical narrative is a key part, 'important to self-identity because it is the locus through which agents "work out" their understanding of social settings and the placement of their Selves in those settings' (Steele 2008: 71). States seek to affirm their biographical narratives at all costs, including sometimes at the expense of their material interests, or even, in extreme circumstances, their physical survival. This is because states' interests and capabilities are defined as much by self-identity as by traditional sources of power and interest like economic worth, military capacity and governmental stability.

In ontological security terms, then, a state's sense of self not only constitutes (and is constituted by) domestic policy but influences (and is influenced by) states' interactions with other states. Foreign policy can be seen as material and symbolic, but also as *expressive*. Seeing economic sanctions on Iran as *expressive* of the identity of the USA, the United Nations Security Council, and other states participating in the sanctions regime helps us to see several important features of the sanctions regime and makes it make more sense. Instead of being bewildered by states enacting *yet another* sanctions regime unlikely to be 'successful' by obtaining the concessions from the target state, we can ask what it is that the sanctioning parties are expressing when they implement the sanctions regime.

Looking particularly at the USA might be a good place to start to flesh out this argument. The USA's sense of self-identity is constituted by a sense of morality in foreign policy-making,

as evidenced by statements from those as far apart on the political spectrum as George W. Bush ('the United States will confront evil where it exists in the world') and Hilary Clinton ('the United States [seeks] . . . to construct an architecture of values that spans the globe'). US foreign policy-making discourses include frequent references in policy statements to 'American values' like 'promoting freedom and democracy and protecting human rights around the world' which the Department of State website characterizes as 'central to US foreign policy'.

This is perhaps not unrelated to the fact that the USA is the largest user of economic sanctions in global politics. Of the 54 cases of economic sanctions between 1990 and 2000, for example, the USA was a/the sender nation in 33 of them (61 per cent of cases), more than 30 per cent of which were unilateral actions. During that time period, the USA used economic sanctions more than all the other nations in the world combined. Of the 33 cases that the USA was involved in, 24 of them can be characterized as being primarily justified by moral or ethical reasons (i.e. more than 70 per cent of the times that the USA chose economic sanctions as a policy the justification was primarily expressed using moral or ethical discourse).

If promotion of a particular understanding of what it means to be 'good' abroad is a key feature of the United States' sense of self, then it is easier to understand the frequency with which it employs economic sanctions *even when they are unlikely to change target state behaviour*. This is because the sanctions regimes are not primarily about changing the behaviour of the target state. Instead, in this understanding, the United States' sanctions regimes are about maintaining the identity of the sender state as a moral authority in global politics, a self-identity that would crumble if, for example, the USA was to ignore behaviour that fit within its definition of evil or lawlessness (and thus not impose sanctions) or it was to put the full force of US military capacity behind changing that behaviour and still fail (by 'losing' the subsequent war). In other words, the primary function of moral-purpose sanctions regimes in this understanding is to *express* and *re-affirm* United States' self-identity. This sense of self for the state creates an incentive structure to choose sanctions. While they are an ineffective policy when evaluated by the changes in the target's behaviour, they may well be an effective tool for reinforcing a state's biographical narrative involving morality (in this case), or peace, justice, cooperation, international stability or some other values important to that state's sense of self.

This appears to be the case for the USA in Iran. Instead of focusing on nuclear weapons and inspections, recent US policy statements about sanctions on Iran claim goals like to 'show Iran there is a price to pay for its deception' (Susan Rice quoted by the Associated Press 2011), to stop 'human rights abuses' (Cassata 2011), to condemn 'silencing criticism and punishing dissent' (Klapper and Lee 2011), and to save 'people living under the yoke of a fundamentalist, tyrannical regime' (Kam 2011). Though the policies from the USA and a number of states in the European Union (EU) are on paper very similar in terms of the breadth and depth of sanctions regimes, the justificatory statements coming from states in the EU have very different content. EU justifications for increasing the sanctions on Iran in December 2011 focus on Tehran's failure to protect the British embassy there from a recent attack – emphasizing the common foreign policy and defence interest of the EU (Vogel 2011). The USA and a number of its European allies are key advocates and enforcers of a United Nations Security Council sanctions regime on Iran. When promoting its sanctions policy, however, the Security Council discourse focuses more on questions of legality, peace and security, consonant with its identity and formal purpose. Security Council statements, in turn, focus on characterizing Iranian activities as 'illicit' and reiterating its mission of the protection of 'international peace and security' along with the obligation to 'make it clear' to Iran that violations of that peace and security will not be tolerated (Associated Press 2011).

While significantly more empirical evidence would need to be gathered to establish the link between ontological security and sanctions regimes as an expression of ‘sender state’ identity (the identity of the state or organization imposing the sanctions), these policy statements suggest that sender motivations differ, and are tailored to potential elements of senders’ senses of self. Even if justificatory claims for the sanctions regime differ, it is hard to tell whether actual motivations for the sanctions differ, given that justificatory claims do not always match actual motivations in foreign policy-making, and actual motivations can be obscured. Still, going back to the question that inspired this theoretical exploration can provide some insight. Previous work on sanctions shows that they ‘work’ to obtain concessions (at most) one-third of the time, something that is in game-theoretic terms ‘common knowledge’ by virtue of having been established by previous research. If it is ‘common knowledge’ that sanctions do not usually obtain concessions, then the assumption that actors would use them to obtain concessions is not justified. Instead, an alternative assumption is that there are one (or more) other reason(s) why actors use sanctions.

This is where ontological security becomes an interesting explanation to explore. In this argument, states implementing sanctions on Iran object to (and desire to stop) its development and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, but do not reasonably hope that a sanctions regime (however strict) will accomplish that end. Instead, the substance of the sanctioning is in the act of imposing sanctions and the message it sends (to the target and to others) about the sender’s identity. For the USA that could be about moral right (specifically, human rights and democracy). For member states of the EU that could be about their solidarity in a time of trouble (standing up for each other despite the financial crisis). For the United Nations Security Council, that could be about advocacy for and enforcement of lawfulness.

Ontological security meets quantitative methods

Game theory involves using mathematical models of conflict and cooperation to explore decision-making. It can be used in the study of security to examine the circumstances under which actors will behave in particular ways, by attributing values to various outcomes derived from previously attributed probabilities of various decisions. As game theory assumes that actors are rational and seek to achieve the best outcome under normal conditions (i.e. the outcome that is valued most highly), we can derive from game-theoretic modelling an understanding of why an actor might behave in a way we find counter-intuitive. In the example we offer here, we can utilize game theory to understand why a state or institution may choose to use sanctions even though sanctions do not seem effective. A game-theoretic model of the incentive structure for instituting sanctions policy that takes account of the potential influence of the ontological security of the sender serves as an initial probe for the argument that sanctioning actors are actually looking to express and reinforce their senses of self in implementing sanctions regimes. The purpose of such modelling is ‘to identify what reality would be like if the assumptions of the model held perfectly true’ which would ‘aid intuition’ about the messier, less predictable ‘real world’. Formal models are especially useful when the policy problem to be explored is somewhat counter-intuitive to conventional wisdom on the subject, where ‘the application of formal models is a useful way to interrogate conventional wisdom in IR’ to ‘generate new ways of thinking about . . . given situations in IR’ (Barkin 2010). That is what we hope to do by formalizing the potential ‘payoff structures’ for sanctions regimes (the different outcomes) when ontological security is taken into account, meaning that we can use game theory to calculate the costs and benefits of various actions and decisions.

In a game-theoretic representation of the choice to implement a sanctions policy, which is ultimately illustrated in Figures 9.4–9.6, two ‘players’ are making choices, the Sender and the Target. The Sender is a country that values something (a ‘norm’, such as, in this case, the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons) and the Target is a country that desires to violate that norm. In game theory, ‘players’ in the game (Senders and Targets) are attributed certain characteristics according to decisions made prior to this particular policy-making process. This is known as the ‘nature’ of the players. In game-theoretic approaches to sanctions so far, ‘nature’ decides the type of ‘player’ the Sender will be: the Sender will either be ‘tough’, ‘medium’ or ‘weak’. Our ‘game’ adds another characteristic by ‘nature’: the relationship of certain norms to a state’s fundamental sense of self or ontological security. If a norm is fundamental to Sender’s sense of self, it is called a primary norm; if it is a part of Sender’s sense of self but not fundamental to it, it is called a secondary norm.

There are a couple of key features of a game-theoretic model aimed at exploring the incentive structure for Senders to implement sanctions. The first is that, like in the real world, players cannot observe the decisions in/of nature fully, so it is a game of incomplete information among players (similar to the way that actual sanctions policies are made, where the Target is not certain of Sender toughness or attachment to particular norms, and the Sender is not sure of the response of the Target).

In the sanctions ‘game’, the Target begins the decision-making portion of the game by deciding whether or not to commit the violation of the norm at issue (see Figure 9.1).

If the Target does not choose to violate the norm, the game ends. If the Target does choose to violate, the Sender observes this action and decides on the appropriate response. The Sender has three options then: (S1) to do nothing, (S2) to impose strong sanctions or (S3) to impose lenient sanctions (see Figure 9.2).

If Sender chooses to do nothing in response to the violation of the norm, the ‘game’ ends. We assume that the Target can observe which move the Sender makes, and that the Target will stand firm in the face of lenient sanctions but yield if Sender proceeds with the imposition of potent sanctions. So for the game to continue beyond the initial violation, the Sender must choose option (S2) or (S3).



Figure 9.1 First stage of sanctions ‘game’.

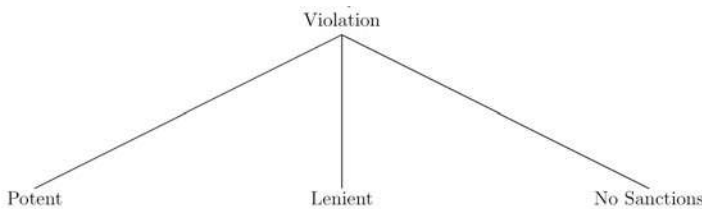


Figure 9.2 Second stage of sanctions ‘game’.

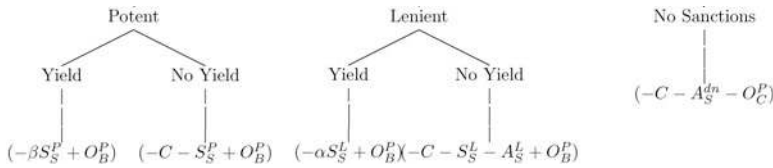


Figure 9.3 Final stage of sanctions ‘game’.

If the Sender imposes sanctions (strong or lenient), the Target must then decide on a response (whether or not to yield) and this step ends the ‘game’ (see Figure 9.3).

If the Target yields, the Sender lifts the sanctions. If the Target does not yield, we assume that the sanctions remain in effect indefinitely into the future. Each point where a ‘player’ makes a decision is called a node, and each node that serves as a possible endpoint for the ‘game’ is called a terminal node. At each terminal node, ‘payoffs’ exist for both Sender and Target that reflect their gains and losses from taking the possible path towards an eventual end of the ‘game’ in question.

In previous models produced by other scholars, these gains and losses have been calculated entirely as material. The first is the literal monetary cost of lost commercial exchange between the Sender and the Target as a result of the trade sanction. For cases where the Target does not yield, these variables are set up as S_T^L (lenient sanctions; target) and S_T^P (potent sanctions; target) for the Target where $S_T^P > S_T^L > 0$, since logically potent sanctions will have a greater burden on the target nation than lenient sanctions would. In cases where the Target does yield, the costs are αS_T^L and βS_T^P respectively. α is the multiplier for lenient sanctions and β is the multiplier for potent sanctions (differentiated using different symbols although they could in practice be the same number) and where α, β are two constants such that $0 < \alpha, \beta < 1$. (They have to be less than 1 because they are a multiplier used to generate a percentage. For example, if the Target yielded to the imposition of potent sanctions after a short period of time and incurred a minor cost of lost commerce estimated at 15 per cent, then $\beta = 0.15$ in that instance.)

Using similar notation for the sake of simplicity, Sender costs are represented as S_S^L (lenient; sender), S_S^P (potent; sender), with αS_S^L and βS_S^P defined in the same manner as the costs above. Another cost to account for is the perceived ‘audience cost’ that can be created from pressure domestically to respond to some international situation. Specifically in potent Sender nations, there exist many political lobbying groups that heavily support the use of potent sanctions in response to these sorts of situations regardless of the severity of the crisis. The Sender incurs some audience cost in situations where (a) the Target violates the norm and does not yield to the imposition of sanctions or (b) the Target violates the norm and the Sender does not enact potent sanctions. The audience cost is represented by A_S^{dn} if the Sender does nothing, and A_S^L if the Sender imposes only lenient sanctions. Both must be positive values, for the assumption is that there is a cost incurred in both cases. We also assume here that lenient sanctions are preferable to no action in this regard, according to the audience, so $A_S^{dn} > A_S^L > 0$. Ideationally, the logic here is that these domestic groups are willing to accept (a) a successful perceived outcome where the Target yields or (b) an unsuccessful outcome if the Sender imposes potent sanctions representing the harshest response available.

Right now, we are mostly interested in the payoff structure for the Sender, as we are interested in why Senders use sanctions when there is a reasonable expectation that Targets will not yield. Material calculations of gains and losses for the implementation of

sanctions show that Senders never benefit from the implementation of sanctions in perfect information ‘games’, and rarely benefit from the implementation of sanctions in imperfect information ‘games’.

This is where the inclusion of the ontological gains and ontological losses of the policy become key parts of the game. We are interested in whether a Target’s ontological security concerns change the payoff structure of violating the norm, and whether a Sender’s ontological security concerns change the payoff structure of implementing (potentially ineffective) sanctions regimes. The first key variable, then, is the relationship between the Target’s decision to violate a norm and the Target’s sense of self or ontological security. If the decision is superfluous to the Target’s sense of self, the Target receives little to no ontological gain from violating the norm. If the Target’s decision is fundamental to the Target’s ontological security, the Target receives significant ontological gain (or avoids significant ontological loss) in violating the norm. The second key variable, then, is the ontological cost to the Sender of the Target violating the norm. If the norm that the Target chooses to violate is superfluous to the Sender’s sense of self, then the Sender incurs little ontological cost from the violation of the norm and stands to gain little ontological benefit from enforcing or appearing to enforce the norm. If the norm that the Target chooses to violate is fundamental to the Sender’s sense of self, then the Sender incurs significant ontological cost from the violation of the norm and stands to gain significant ontological benefit from expressing its disdain for the violation of the norm and/or enforcing or appearing to enforce the norm. The ontological benefit from the violation of the norm for the Target (B) and the ontological cost of failing to express disdain with the violation of the norm for the Sender (C) are assumed, in our model, to be greater than 0 always, but sometimes negligible and other times significant. In the ‘game’ of sanctions implementation, the Target only gains B if it does not yield, and the Sender only suffers costs if it does not impose sanctions and/or if the target does not yield.

In the realm of sanctions policy, a country faces certain costs to its international image should it ignore the violation of international norms, especially those key to its sense of self (a primary norm in this model), and similarly the nation stands to gain ontologically from supporting these such international norms through the symbolic use of economic sanctions to defend the country’s ideals and values. Therefore, we define the O_B^p and O_B^t to be the ontological benefit that the Sender stands to gain from supporting a primary or secondary norm, respectively, and these benefits can be gained through either the use of a lenient sanction or a potent one (since it is based on how the nation sees itself). However, there are also ontological costs, O_C^p and O_C^t defined in the same manner, for not enacting some sort of sanction in the wake of violating an international norm by the Target. Therefore every terminal node of the model will either have an ontological cost or benefit added onto it for Sender, with the exception of the nodes where the Target chooses to never violate the international norm in the first place.

The game we are using for illustration here turns out to be fairly complicated, with 36 terminal nodes illustrating the combinations of different a priori (‘nature’) properties and different decisions made by the Target and the Sender in the game. For the purposes of calculating payoff structures, we assume that every a priori or ‘natural’ property is equally likely, and every choice by the Sender and the Target is equally likely, producing 36 equally likely results. The ‘game’ can be illustrated in terms of three 12-node games with individualized payoffs, separated by the Sender being tough (see Figure 9.4), medium (see Figure 9.5), or weak (see Figure 9.6). The payoff for the Sender is positive when the ontological cost of allowing the violation of the norm to go unaddressed outweighs the combination of the trade cost and audience cost of sanctioning, which is the case when a norm is primary

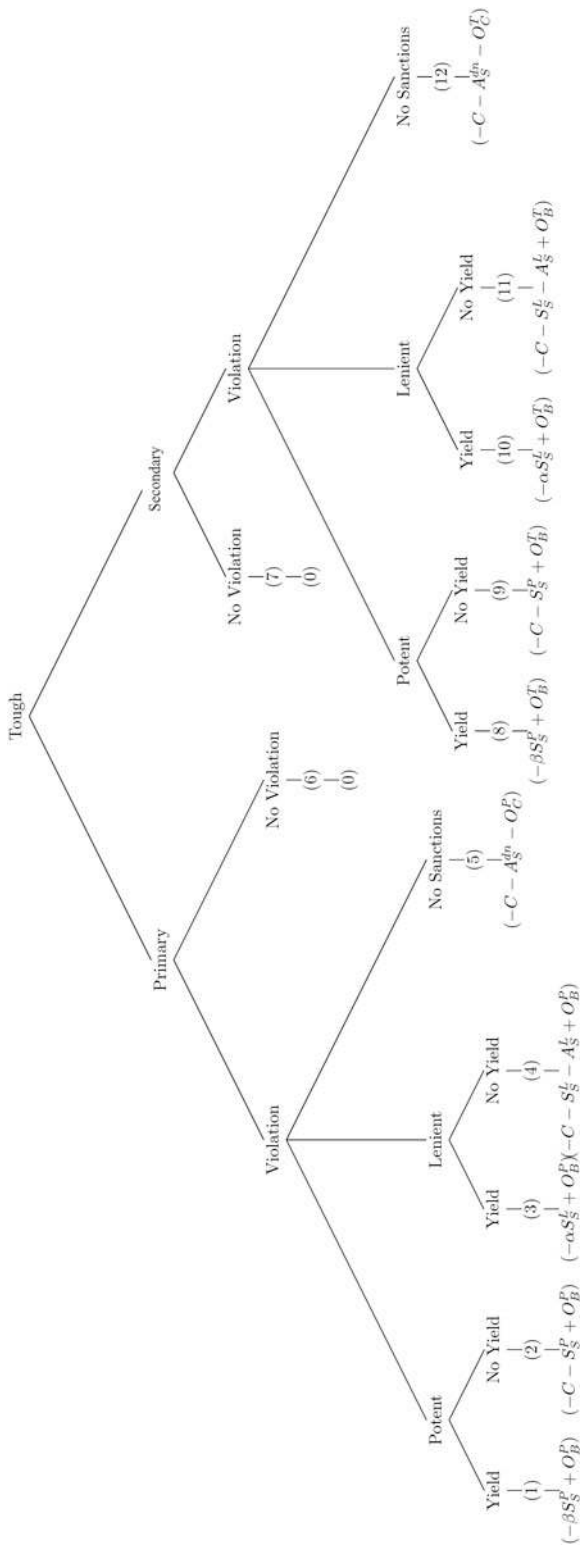


Figure 9.4 Illustration of 12-node game, tough Sender.

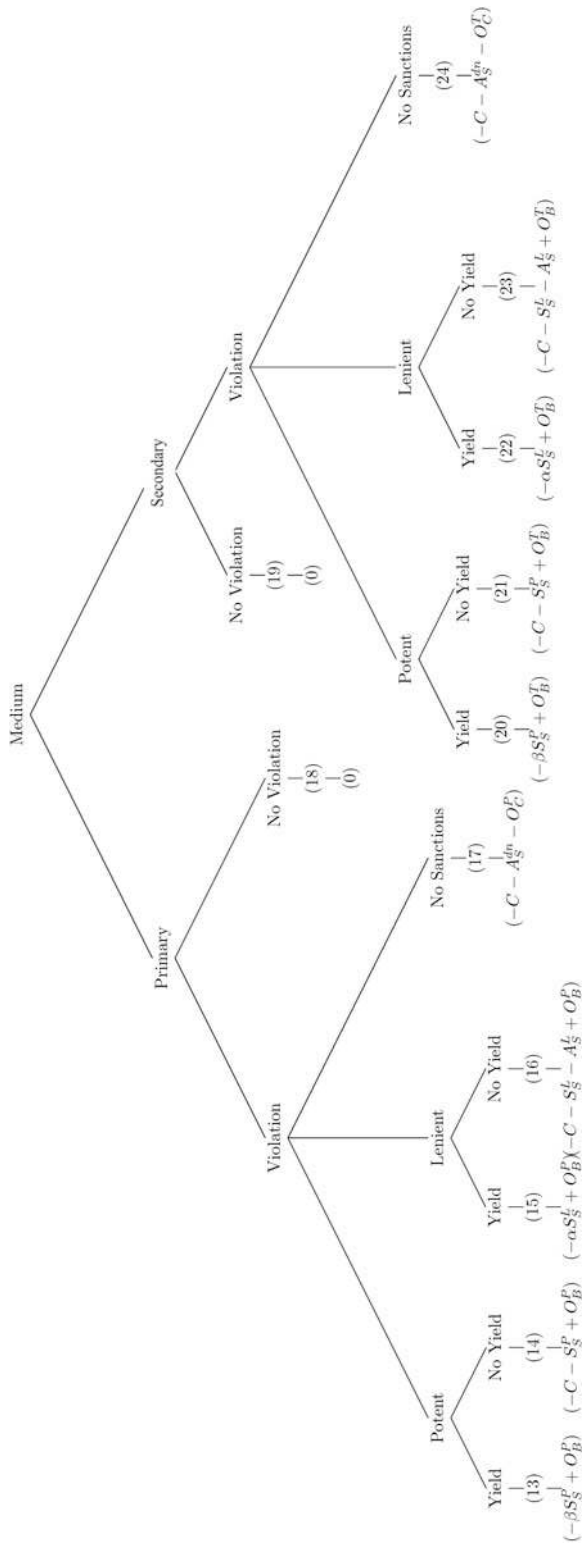


Figure 9.5 Illustration of 12-node game, medium Sender.

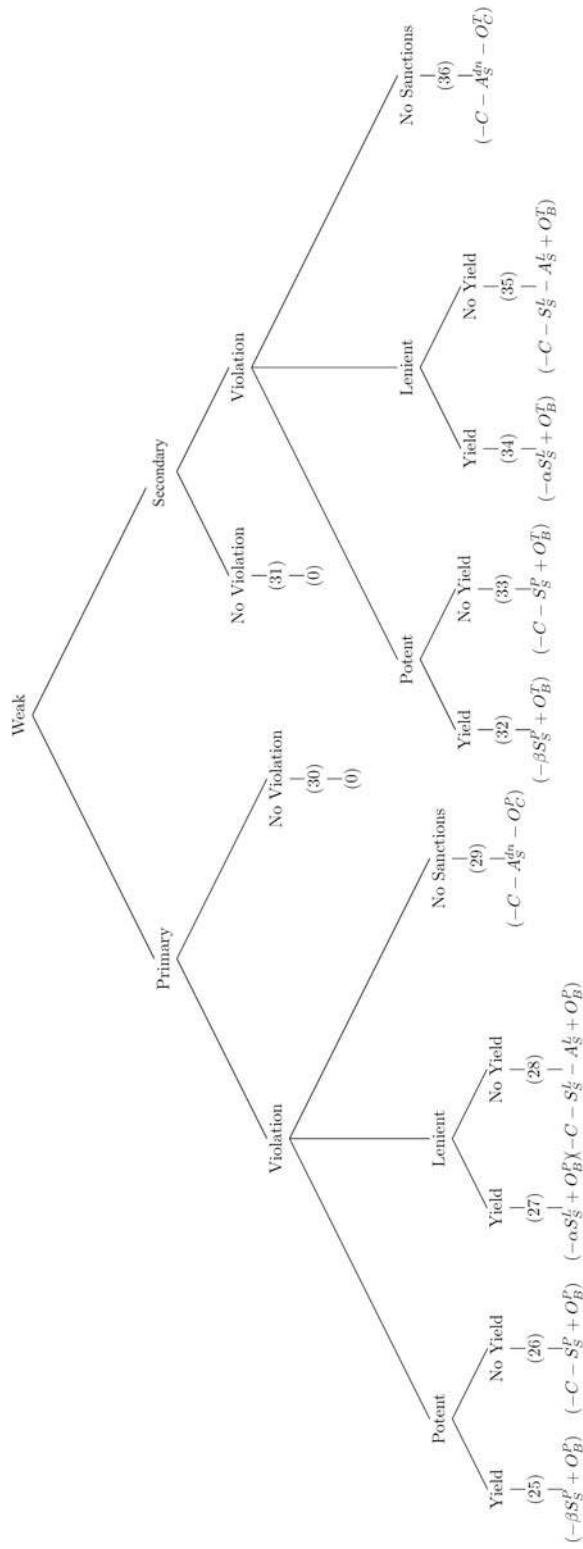


Figure 9.6 Illustration of 12-node game, weak Sender.

to the ontological security of the Sender. Likewise, the payoff for the Target is positive when the ontological benefit obtained from the norm violation outweighs the trade cost of the sanctions.

This incentive structure suggests that there are times that it is worthwhile for Targets to violate international norms even knowing that strict sanctions will be implemented, and that there are times that it is worthwhile for Senders to sanction Targets when targets are not going to yield, depending on the relationship between the norm and the state's sense of self. Our model produces a series of inequalities that can be simplified in terms of a given ontological benefit. Those inequalities demonstrate that there are a number of cases (as shown in Figures 9.1–9.3: medium sender/secondary norm and weak sender/primary norm) where the payoff may be positive even when the sanctions regimes do not change target behaviour. While the payoff of sanctioning ultimately depends on the other variables in the inequalities, the game matrix demonstrates that *states may have an incentive to implement sanctions even when their material payoff is negative*.

Returning to the sanctions regime on Iran, then, it is possible that this is not a counter-intuitive case of the USA, its allies, and the United Nations Security Council implementing sanctions with the expectation that they will change Iran's foreign policy, despite the overwhelming evidence that sanctions regimes do not change Targets' policy choices. Instead, borrowing from critical approaches to security, it is possible that it is a case of the Senders of this sanctions regime having (different, but coinciding) ontological security interests in condemning Iran, whether or not that condemnation actually leads to policy change on the part of Iran. Those interests make sanctions primarily an *expressive* policy of *reaffirmation* of the Sender's sense of self rather than primarily either a tool of coercion or a symbolic act meant to communicate with the Target.

Conclusion

This use of quantitative methods to investigate the argument that actors' sense of self is influential in their security decision-making is not, alone, sufficient to explore the specific question of the costs and benefits of the sanctions regime on Iran or general questions of what security is, how it is best understood or measured, and how to best improve prospects for people's security around the globe. In this particular example, the game-theoretic model functions as a plausibility probe for the argument that states' Sense of self influences their decisions to send economic sanctions regime, but significantly more empirical and theoretical work would have to be done to establish this story as a (or the) logic of sanctions implementation. This 'game', and other quantitative methods used to evaluate and support work in critical Security Studies, needs to successfully navigate both the quantitative/qualitative divide in the discipline and complexity of multimethod work.

At the same time that there are limitations to the prospects for quantitative methods in Critical Security, there is also unexplored potential in those methods. Concerning sanctions on Iran, for example, theoretical geometry could be used to map discourses of sanctions justification onto topological spaces that represent them relationally. Abstract algebra could be used to illuminate algorithms in sanctions bargaining and possibly account for emotional, communicative and relational elements. Bayesian statistical techniques could flesh out the relationships between constitutive factors that both make sanctions imaginable and influence the relationships between Senders and Targets. Complexity theory could be used to analyse the multilevel performances of sanctions as securitized and Iran as 'enemy'. These are just a few of the productive directions for quantitative methods in critical approaches to security.

Please see the companion website for a seminar exercise.

Questions for further debate

- 1 What potential do quantitative methods offer for reflective and constitutive research in Security Studies? What are some potential difficulties or drawbacks of the use of these methods?
- 2 How does the quantitative/qualitative divide influence the possibility of using quantitative methods for research in Security Studies?
- 3 What is the relationship between the research questions we ask about security and the methods that we use to research those questions?
- 4 What does a game-theoretic model tell us about the incentive structure for implementing economic sanctions? What does it not tell us?
- 5 How might one begin to design multimethod approaches to understanding security from a critical perspective?

Sources for further reading and research

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10 Archival research and document analysis

Marc Froese

Chapter summary

This chapter examines the use of archival research and document analysis in critical Security Studies. These research methods are usually associated with the discipline of history but they have also been an important set of tools for critical social scientists. As a case study, I will examine an event that took place approximately a century ago, the World War I internment of Ukrainians from the Austro-Hungarian Empire who made their home in Canada prior to 1914. In particular, the chapter includes discussions of how to analyse primary sources, the relationship between archive research and historical narrative, the proper development of deductive and inductive modes of reasoning, and their use in the creation of inferences about the past.

Learning outcomes

On completion, readers should be able to:

- identify and critically engage with basic approaches to historiography and apply basic logical approaches to reasoning about the past;
- locate and evaluate primary sources, understand the basics of interpreting sources and apply an analytical framework to the collection of sources;
- discuss the pitfalls to be avoided by social scientists who use an historical approach to critical Security Studies.

Introduction

As a terrain of social scientific research, critical Security Studies are intimately connected to the study of history. Early scholars in the study of International Relations such as Hans Morgenthau and E. H. Carr used historical studies to develop a deeper understanding of security and insecurity and in so doing influenced the thoughts of IR scholars since World War II. In response to what became the realist school of thought, critical scholars in North America and Britain put forward a number of corrective approaches, most of which relied heavily on the ideas of historical movement and social progress first developed by Marx and Engels (Cox 1987). It is perhaps a little unfortunate that International Relations and Security Studies in particular, once so engaged with the study of past events, now considers historiographical methods to be just one of a number of competing approaches to the study of security (Yetiv 2011). Even so, scholars of security have once again become interested in the

historical record in order to help them understand the complexity of the modern global security environment.

In light of the changing ways that social scientists have pursued Security Studies over the latter half of the twentieth century (as discussed throughout this book), we need to ask, why should social scientists bother with a systematic study of the past? Should not Security Studies scholars leave history to the historians? I would answer that having a grounded appreciation of historical analysis always benefits research in the present, and even if one is planning to keep one's focus firmly planted in here and now, it is important to understand how historically oriented scholars interpret the past. In particular, archive research and analysis is increasingly important to our understanding of the ways that security, as both a conceptual model and a policy goal, has been pursued by governments, contested by publics and studied by scholars.

History and security: studying the past

Social scientists need to remember that the past is never as straightforward as it first appears. To that end, this section will first look at three main approaches to historiography. Then we will examine a particular narrative based upon an historic event that took place during the First World War in Canada. We will discuss its significance and analyse the way that primary sources can shed light on the past.

There are three broad approaches to interpreting the past that have proven popular with social scientists. The first we may term the Past as Scientific Hypothesis. In the first decades of the twentieth century, a heady mix of classical economics, behaviourism in the discipline of psychology and even Marxist understandings of politics and sociology contributed to a view of history that attempted to apply a scientific and structuralist approach to decoding the past and predicting the future. In fact, patterns in the past that explain the present and shine a predictive spotlight on the future were the 'Holy Grail' pursued by social scientists in the field of Security Studies. While classical realists such as Hans Morgenthau and E. H. Carr were circumspect about the use of history to predict the future, Kenneth Waltz's major book *Man, the State and War* (1959) launched an empirical and scientific (some may say scientific, which means narrowly oriented towards scientific modes of knowing to the exclusion of other methods of gathering knowledge) revolution in Security Studies that placed the past under the microscope and turned history into neat packages of data to be used in statistical surveys and empirical studies. Not surprisingly, this particular mode of interrogating the past with its promise of empirical certainty has been increasingly contested as neo-realism and behaviourism have begun to give way to post-structural approaches to collecting and interpreting historical knowledge.

The second approach we may term the Past as Portent of Possible Futures. Marx and Engels' argument in the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848, that to understand the present and future you need to understand social contradictions within the mode of production, has been particularly influential. Today, in the shadow of the global financial crisis, Marxist approaches to theorizing insecurity and crisis are increasingly relevant. Indeed, the past weighs heavily upon the present, and is our primary reference point for understanding our contemporary world, a fact that historical materialist scholars understand acutely. They examine the many contradictions within historical processes, suggesting that the formation of class interests in the past tends to act as a catalyst for political and economic change in the present and carries significant implications for social change in the future. In particular, power plays a significant role in the production of narratives about

the past, as social classes struggle to appropriate history in the service of present ideology (Trouillot 1995).

The final approach to understanding history we may term the Past as Context, or as MacMillan (2008) terms it, the Past as Friend and Guide. This is not a new way of understanding history. We may trace this approach back to the Annales School of historiography developed in France before World War II and typified by the work of Marc Bloch (1964) and Fernand Braudel (1980). These scholars created linkages between many different events, dynamics and processes in the past in order to contextualize human action. Of course they did not look for the same sort of patterns sought by realist International Relations scholars. Rather they (and their descendants) understand history as a web, in which the past is connected to the present by many fine filaments.

Braudel (1980), in particular, was concerned with the differences in the ways that historians and social scientists treat the passage of time in their research. Time is both a constant that every person lives with as well as a subsequent representation by historians and other scholars who study the past. This perspective is significant because it asks social scientists to understand time as part of a continuum, not as a set of discrete occurrences. The marker that separates past from present is always moving. Yet historical case studies favoured by social scientists frequently treat the past as discrete blocks of time from which particular conclusions may be drawn. This does not mean that we should all write grand and sweeping narrative history, but it does mean that as social scientists we need to be cognizant of the fact that events do not occur in a vacuum. Time flows, events overlap and break against each other like waves on a shore. Case studies stop time, speed it up, or slow it down in order to deal with only the historical details of relevance to a particular project. There is nothing necessarily wrong with this treatment of time *per se*, but the Annales School teaches that we ought to take seriously the 'movement, the different time spans, the rifts and variations' that make the passage of time and its impact upon events more complex than any single case study allows for (Braudel 1980: 47).

These three perspectives are related in a number of ways and it is not always easy to categorize historically oriented research according to the neat boxes presented above. Even so, it is always useful to tease apart the assumptions made by historians and social scientists who study the past, namely that the past offers specific lessons, the past points towards possibilities for the future, and the past offers helpful context with which to examine the complex interrelation between past, present and future.

British novelist Julian Barnes has called history 'that certainty produced at the point where the imperfections of memory meet the inadequacies of documentation' (Barnes 2011: 17). To a great extent he is correct to suggest that the past can never be a terrain of fixed and immutable features. Like the present, it changes with the eye of the beholder, and in some cases, with the interpretations of the interpreter. Even so the study of history is not a relativistic undertaking. We may debate causation, motivation and even which facts are relevant, but the interpretation of the past is different from the social construction of the present in one important respect: the past is not still changing. We may disagree about the relevance of particular facts or the emphasis placed on certain interpretations, but we can be sure that certain events took place (even if we do not agree about their meaning) and their consequences continue to influence the present.

It is trite but true to say that history is made by the winners of social conflict, but the rise of social history and post-structural research methods have destabilized official histories and shed important light on events that governments would sometimes rather forget. In this case, a brief study of Canada's experience with civilian detention in the First World War provides

context for current discourses of security and attempts at securitization that are under way in Anglo-American countries. This narrative shows that extra-judicial detention of internal security threats is neither new nor novel in the North American context, and it also vividly illustrates that type of long-term trauma caused by the concentration camp and other policies designed to single out and punish particular ethnic groups. Almost a century later, Ukrainian Canadians are only now beginning to see tokens of remorse on the part of the Canadian Federal Government.

Canada's internment of 'enemy aliens', 1914–1920

In the beginning of the 1890s, tens of thousands of Ukrainians began to settle across Canada. Canada's national government urged migration to the Western prairies in order to settle the Northwest Territories (today Alberta and Saskatchewan), thereby cementing Canada's claim on land that would not properly join the Confederation until 1905. The Federal Government desired people from Eastern Europe specifically because they were considered to be the right type of settler: Caucasian, Christian, and used to the rigours of farming land that had at best a four month growing season, and at worst almost nine months of freezing temperatures. In return for permanent settlement the government offered grants of land, some of which are still farmed by the descendants of those original migrants.

On 4 August 1914, Britain declared war on Germany and Austria-Hungary. Canada, which was not yet a fully independent nation, also entered the conflict beside Britain. Immigrants who had arrived from the Austro-Hungarian empire were looked upon with suspicion. Later, on 22 August 1914, Canada's federal government passed the *War Measures Act*, an emergency suspension of certain civil liberties which authorized Canadian military and police forces to apprehend anyone who they suspected of undermining the war effort, or working against the war interests of Canada and Britain. This included those who were in point of fact still subjects of an enemy sovereign, as well as those who may have been naturalized British subjects but were nevertheless suspect because of their ethnic background (Farney and Kordan 2004). It is important to note that the people we know as Ukrainians today came from across Poland, the Ukraine and Russia, some migrating from as far east as Kiev. A number came from Galicia, a territory divided today between Poland and Ukraine that was in 1914 a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

People who had migrated in search of free land and industrial jobs in Canada's developing economy quickly became aliens of enemy nationality. Canada took a firm line on the enemy alien issue despite British advice to treat 'friendly aliens' differently than prisoners of war (Luciuk and Sydoruk 1997: IV). The Borden government set up two dozen internment and work camps, eventually imprisoning 7,762 people, of whom three quarters were immigrants of Austro-Hungarian background, including a small number of women and children (Farney and Kordan 2004: 74). These people were civilians who had not committed any crimes. Their only mistake was to have been born in territory controlled by Austria. In return they were imprisoned and their possessions were confiscated, to be held in trust, although not all wealth was returned (Luciuk 1988: 19). Those who were not imprisoned were required to register with authorities, carry identification documents and regularly check in at police facilities (Luciuk 2001: 6).

One of the largest of these concentration camps, the Castle Mountain Internment Camp, was located near Banff, Alberta, an area known today for the Banff National Park's abundant wildlife, glaciers and world class skiing. The men housed at the camp (this particular camp had no women or children) worked on projects designed to better showcase the park

to tourists, including building a road between Banff and Lake Louise and cutting the stone required to build the Banff Springs Hotel, which was then owned by the Canadian Pacific Railway (Kordan 2002: 12). Few tourists today who drive the scenic Bow Valley Parkway and stay in the opulent former railway hotel know that portions of the crown jewel of Canada's national park system were built with coerced labour.

Conditions at the camp were spare, with the camp itself little more than rough fences of raw timber and barbed wire surrounding canvas tents. Winters were so harsh in the mountains that the prisoners had to be moved to quarters at the Cave and Basin hot springs near the town of Banff. Manual labour was mandatory and those few who attempted escape risked being shot. While some guards treated their charges humanely, others were abusive and harsh (Kordan and Melnycky 1991: 49–50). The humiliation of the concentration camp was compounded in 1917 when, just as prisoners were being paroled to fill labour shortages in Canadian industry (at reduced wages), the government passed the *War-time Elections Act* that 'effectively disenfranchised most Ukrainians in Canada' (Luciuk and Sydoruk 1997: IV).

Ukrainians continue to struggle for recognition of Canada's overreaction in its quest for secure borders. A small amount of monetary compensation has been forthcoming in the recent years for education programmes and to memorialize the location of concentration camps (see the Political Apologies and Reparations website in the online resources accompanying this book). In recent years, the narrative of forced labour has begun to creep into official histories of the national park system, and there is now a statue, plaque and small educational display in a turnout on the Bow Valley Parkway beneath Castle Mountain near the original site of the camp. Even so, the use of concentration camps by the Canadian Federal Government is hardly central to Canada's national consciousness. It ought to be noted that while the Ukrainians were the first civilians imprisoned in concentration camps on Canadian soil, they were not the last. The plight of Japanese Canadians in World War II is far better known (Carter 1980). Following the terror attacks on New York and Washington in 2001 the Canadian government again undermined civil liberties by allowing for arrest, detention without the possibility of bail and the use of secret evidence against people considered to be threats to the state (Bell 2006). Indeed, the use of security imperatives to undermine Canadian civil rights is not new.

In the above narrative, we have pieced together some of the common knowledge about Canadian concentration camps in the First World War. In the decades since much of the evidence of this troubling period has lain forgotten, but in recent years a number of primary sources have been uncovered, including government memoranda such as correspondence between camp officials, diplomatic cables between Canada and Britain, and private documents such as photographs and diaries kept by camp guards, the letters of prisoners and of course the eye-witness accounts of inmates recorded many years later. From these sources, we know what the approximate conditions in the camps were like; we have complaints about rough treatment, and even photographs of men shot while trying to escape (Luciuk and Sydoruk 1997). We know the mental state of prisoners from their letters and recollections (Kordan and Melnycky 1991: 49). In short, when historians and social scientists began to poke about in this dark corner of the national narrative they were able to discover a great deal about the racism and violence that marked early twentieth century security policy in Canada.

However, we do not know the nationality of all the detainees. Those records were destroyed following the Second World War (Luciuk 2001: 23). Some evidence suggests that some Canadian towns rounded up indigent immigrants who, due to their inability to communicate in English, were placed into the camps (Carter 1980: 22). The interesting thing about this

period is that we have so much written information and even a fair amount of photographic evidence, but due to the precarious situation of the prisoners themselves who were often poor, and subsequent bureaucratic oversights, we do not know some very basic information.

In developing the narrative of Ukrainian detention, archives are an invaluable source of information. Traditional archives are housed by governments, universities and sometimes by private organizations. Thanks to the Internet, much material that was previously only accessible on site can now be viewed anywhere in the world. Archives Alberta hosts an online edition of the diary of a camp official and the Government of Canada hosts a web collection of internment documents, most of which are primary sources available online for the first time. Secondary sources in the form of scholarly books, popular histories, and the analysis of activist groups and other third parties are also readily available online. Ukrainian activists maintain a collection of analysis related to internment at two different web portals. Also, scholars who know that their work will be studied by activists frequently reproduce government reports, diplomatic cables and personal letters that are relevant to their studies, but may be difficult for non-specialists to access.

Of course archival evidence, despite having been produced while events were taking place by actors in those events, needs to be examined critically. Sometimes more information is obscured than revealed. For example, Luciuk and Sydoruk (1997) published a number of photographs taken by Sergeant William Buck while he was deployed at the Castle Mountain camp and later at a camp in Ontario. And despite this trove of primary evidence we do not know what sort of person Buck was. His captions on the photographs are often enigmatic, and the photographs themselves give little away. A casual reader examining the first half of the album might be forgiven for thinking that internment was summer camp with chores. Later photographs of the funeral for a man shot in the stomach while trying to escape reveal more of the brutality of camp life. We continue to wonder about the motives of a man who took these photographs, compiled them (along with others not published) in an album and sent them to his granddaughter as a Christmas gift in 1918. Likely he was trying to capture for posterity a significant moment in his own life, and if that is the case, he nevertheless offers little of his own feelings about what he witnessed during the events he records.

Interpreting sources

Now that we have examined basic approaches to historiography and introduced the basic challenge at the heart of historical research, that of finding reliable sources, we will move directly into the no-man's land between the social sciences and humanities and interrogate how social scientists use historical facts. The first step is to look at how we approach facts, the next step is to ask how we interpret the significance of narratives, and then we need to look at how we use methods of reasoning to approach history.

Jerome Bruner tells the following allegorical story to illustrate the importance of facts in the creation of historical narrative.

Socrates, let us say, has been returned to earth to re-establish his famed academy. In preparation for opening day and to become better acquainted with the culture, he is holding a dialogue with three distinguished baseball umpires. "How do you call [the pitches] from behind the plate?" he asks them. The first says, "I call them like they are." "And you?" he asks the second. "I call them like I see them." The third replies, after a pause: "They ain't nothing until I call them." The classic, the modern and the post-modern fact in a nutshell!

(Bruner 1998: 19–20)

Bruner goes on to explain that each umpire understands a basic fact about baseball (that a ball was thrown towards a batter) differently. Scholars, those from the nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries, often thought of facts as self-evident and discoverable, like fossils or minerals. Many believed their histories told the stories of the past accurately, without bias, and were rooted in self-evident fact. Scholars of the mid-century, and especially those engaged with the burgeoning scholarship of social theory, began to be a little more wary of facts, understanding in the wake of Einstein's Theory of Relativity that where you stand often dictates the colour and shape of fact. Following Hitler's Third Reich, and its torturing of fact and logic, scholars of the postwar period, and particularly scholars who took seriously the critical theory of that period, began to see fact as not only a product of perspective, but also as a product of ideology, language, culture and social class.

In the light of Bruner's allegory, interpreting the past becomes more than uncovering what really happened. We begin to see that description of the past can be coloured by the perceptions, values and commitments of those who write narratives. In short, we cloud our own past. The assumptions with which we begin, the theories, the modes of reasoning, and even our political commitments colour narrative and simultaneously clarify and obscure features of the past. At the heart of it, history is storytelling, or what Hayden White (1984) terms a narrative representation of reality. In order to make sense of history we create a narrative, but narratives are never value-free. Just as the facts discussed by Bruner above require context in order to understand them, so narrative requires a mental ordering to create meaning, and that ordering process is never value-free.

Working in tandem, scientists of cognition and scholars of literature have come to believe that narratives are a basic tool for thinking. Because history is a story we tell, critical scholars need to problematize the creation of narratives themselves. Such a reconsideration of narratives almost always calls into question settled interpretations of the past. Even so, we can still say with confidence there are facts to discover and not all aspects of the past ought to be subject to reinterpretation. Between 1914 and 1918 the Government of Canada imprisoned a significant number of Eastern European people at a series of 24 concentration camps based across Canada. These people, held against their will, were forced to labour in a number of hard, physical occupations, including road building and stone cutting. According to the official record, they had committed no crimes.

These are facts that we know, and while we may dispute certain portions of the record, the past is never entirely mutable. In fact, we call historians who revise the record of agreed upon facts revisionists. Revisionism should never be undertaken lightly, and when it is done, historians ought to make a serious case for its necessity. Because history is often written by the winners of conflicts, revisionists sometimes do society a service by uncovering flagrant untruths or significant inconsistencies at the heart of the dominant historical narrative. Other times, and sadly this is more common, historical revisionism is an attempt to distort fact to fit other commitments. The best example is holocaust denial, in which the fact of mass murder is replaced with faulty arguments that attempt to blur or erase collective memory.

Historians and social scientists have a responsibility to try, as much as they are able, to develop narratives about the past that are argued fairly and broad enough to uncover as much about events as possible. No individual can pretend to being omnipotent about the past, or even being entirely unbiased. But we can strive for fairness, balance and inclusivity when making inferences about the past. Historians call a conclusion based upon evidence and inference. There are two basic methods for creating inferences about past events rooted in inductive and deductive reasoning (see Figure 10.1).

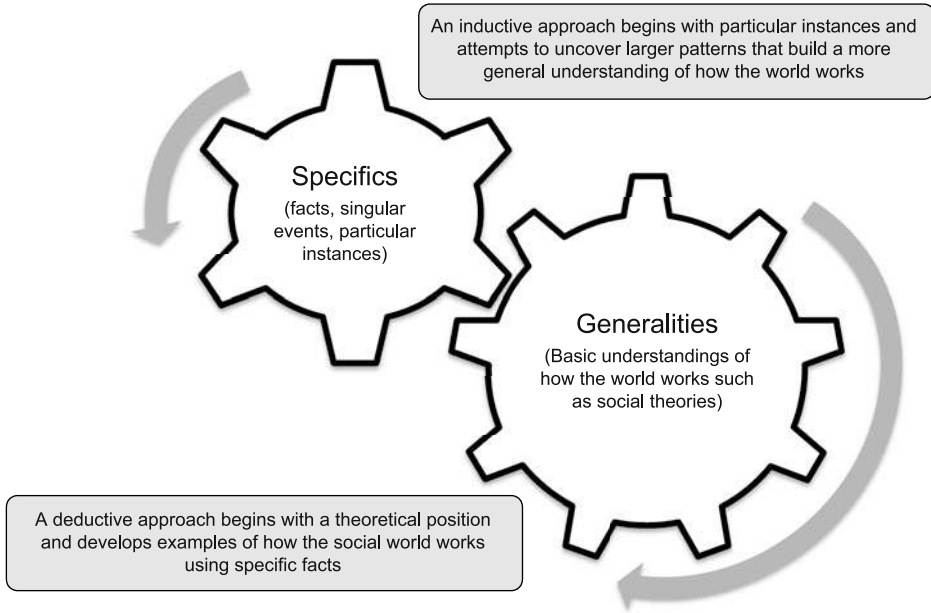


Figure 10.1 The gears of reasoning.

Working deductively, scholars may begin with a host of facts, and sort them for those that fit a larger pattern, moving from the general (the larger terrain of history, historiography and social theory) to the specific set of facts that fit the case under study. In that sense, it was no accident that I chose the internment of Ukrainians as a set of facts with which to illustrate the importance of historical studies to contemporary critical Security Studies. Alternatively, you may wish to approach the past without a particular pattern in mind, finding facts, and building theory to explain what you find. This method moves from the specific (the facts uncovered) and attempts to create an explanation that can be generalized to other facts subsequently uncovered.

To put it in slightly different terms, as an historically oriented social scientist, you may be interested in the issue of civilian internment, and as a result begin looking for examples of internment in Canadian history. You may have a theory that civilian internment is the result of the perception of internal threat or betrayal on the part of state elites. With this pattern in mind, you would find a number of examples of civilian internment in the Canadian context, including Ukrainians in the First World War and the Japanese in the Second World War. You could move on from there to draw cross-cultural comparisons, other trans-historical comparisons and so on. This is a deductive method, because it starts with a theory, and looks for examples that fit the model you suspect holds some explanatory power.

On the other hand, you might discover by accident the story of the Castle Mountain internment operations, become intrigued and unsettled by this dark chapter in Canadian history and in asking how such an injustice could have occurred, set out to find other examples of civilian internment. Along the way, you may discover the concentration camps used in the Second Boer War (1899–1902), Canadian and American internment camps used for

the Japanese during World War II, and German and Japanese concentration camp operations. You may then, using the many facts you discover, begin to formulate a theory about the use of civilian internment operations during wartime. This is an inductive method, because it starts with facts, and once a pattern is discovered, attempts to develop a theory to explain the pattern. Remember, the main difference between deductive and inductive reasoning lies in the way arguments are expressed. All inductive arguments can be expressed deductively and deductive arguments can be expressed inductively.

Limitations of an historical approach

The most obvious limitation of an historical approach in the social sciences depends on where you stand in relation to the great debate over deductive and inductive methods of reasoning. There is one particular charge that social scientists and historians have been levelling at each other for most of the past hundred years, namely that historians do not appreciate the importance of theory for framing and interpreting facts, and that social scientists do not understand the harm to history done by the relentless onslaught of theorizing about the past (Weber 1949; Durkheim 1966; Tilly 1984). This chapter has attempted to move beyond this debate by suggesting that inductive and deductive reasoning are two sides of the same coin. Other scholars have similarly attempted to move beyond this old tension by proposing a number of different ways to rearticulate the relationship between theory and history (Stryker 1996).

Perhaps rather than arguing about the limitations of an historical approach, we ought to consider the most prominent mistakes made by social scientists engaged in historical research. Students engaged in historical research in the field of critical Security Studies ought to be aware of four common pitfalls to avoid when uncovering historical facts and using them to create narratives about the past. The first pitfall is the reading of unambiguous lessons from history. Straightforward lessons from the past are usually the hallmark of sloppy historical research. The past is as complex a place as the present, and any research that attempts to draw empirically verifiable lessons about for example the nature of war, or the possibilities of perpetual peace, is likely to fail. We can draw simple lines of congruency, agreeing that people in the past are much like people today, embedded in cultures, possessed of both altruistic and self-interested motivations, driven by fears and possessed of great passions. The complex interrelation between human emotion, modes of reasoning, cultural values and ever evolving historical narratives, however, is such that any attempt to venture far into the predictive possibilities of historical case studies is usually a fool's errand.

The second pitfall involves making assumptions based entirely upon current theories or concepts. It may be appropriate to take the work of important scholars such as Michel Foucault or Karl Marx and use it as a lens through which to view the past, but we need to be careful not to use theory to determine what we discover in the past. The application of theory to social phenomenon is a basic part of social scientific methodology. However in historical studies, we need to be aware of the dangers of a template approach to writing history. Using a single lens to interpret the past will tell a lot about the historian, but little about the past. This does not mean that historical researchers need to check their moral and political convictions at the door. Perhaps the historian who best avoided the many pitfalls of a template approach was E. P. Thompson, the great Marxist historian of the working class in Britain. His book, *The Making of the English Working Class*, managed to strike a balance between fresh insights about working people in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and staying true to an historical materialist approach. It is possible to maintain theoretically informed political commitments while seeking the truth in the past.

Assuming a simple and straightforward narrative is the third pitfall to be avoided by scholars of history. It may appear that the narrative you are telling is a simple story. The narrative of Ukrainian internment above also appears straightforward. It is the story of an ethnic minority caught up in events larger than themselves, accused of crimes largely imagined and subjected to unjust and injurious treatment by the state. This is largely the case, but drawing connections between past and present is often a more complex process. If we assume, from the outset that we know the contours of the case, it is likely that we will miss significant facts, or gloss over small, but significant details. The converse of assuming a straightforward narrative is discarding facts that do not fit the narrative you wish to tell. You will find that the more you delve into the factual details of events, the more you will be able to explain outlying facts and even use them to provide richness and depth for your study.

The final pitfall is assuming a fact is just a fact, and a narrative is value-free. It is tempting, when dealing with historical facts to treat them as evidence that is not encumbered by context or values. But as Bruner (1991) and White (1990) show, facts are only recognized as significant in the context of other facts, and narratives are never value-free. Rather, 'narrativizing discourse serves the purpose of moralizing judgments'; put simply, all stories have a point and it is usually a moral lesson (White 1990: 24). We ought to be aware when reading narratives about the past (just as we are when creating our own narratives) that they contain any number of assumptions and biases and that just like social theory, narratives are created by someone, for someone.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have given you a brief overview of the space occupied by historical research in modern Security Studies. I suggested that there are three prominent approaches to historiography favoured by scholars of security: the Past as Scientific Hypothesis; the Past as Portent of Possible Futures; and the Past as Context. Of course these approaches are somewhat simplistic and it is better to consider them as an introduction to thinking about historiographical approaches rather than using them as a literal map to the terrain of historical research in Security Studies. We then discussed a particular historical narrative, the case of Ukrainian internment in Canada during the First World War. This case is particularly important from a pedagogical perspective because it highlights the Past as Context approach to history. We are able to see that studying the past through archive research and document analysis is an important strategy for shedding light on processes of securitization today, just as we are wary of drawing direct connecting lines between what happened in the past, and what is happening today.

Turning to the interpretation of sources we explored the nature of facts and their relationship to perception. We also examined the place of facts in different modes of reasoning about the past. Finally, we discussed the limits of an historical approach, in particular the troubled relationship between history and theory, and the four pitfalls to be avoided when undertaking an historical study. Hopefully this brief introduction to historical approaches and document analysis will have given you the confidence to dive into archives, unearth new facts, discover patterns in the historical record and use your research to add depth, richness, thick description and robust explanation to your research, whether it is oriented towards the past, or firmly planted in the present.

Please see the companion website for a seminar exercise.

Questions for further debate

- 1 Can we make any inferences about securitization processes and internment in the early part of the twentieth century that have analytical relevance today?
- 2 Discuss the three approaches to understanding history and make a case that one of these perspectives is superior to the others. What are the strengths and limitations of your historiographical choices?
- 3 Discuss the deductive and inductive modes of reasoning. Which mode of reasoning do you think lends itself to better explanations of events in the past? Support your argument with historical examples.
- 4 What is a fact? Is it discoverable like a fossil, or is it created, like Bruner's description of the postmodern umpire? Is there a place in between where facts are discovered and interpreted?
- 5 What is the role of narrative in our understanding of the past?

Source for further reading and research

- Bell, D. (Ed.) (2006) *Memory, Trauma and World Politics: Reflections on the Relationship Between Past and Present*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
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11 Ethnographic methods

Cai Wilkinson

Chapter summary

This chapter explores the process of generating the ‘thick description’ that is the product of interpretive ethnographic research. The chapter begins with an overview of the history of ethnographic methods and their current place within International Relations and Security Studies, before going on to outline the key characteristics of a critical interpretive ethnographic methodology. In the following section, a three-stage model of the research process is presented and illustrated with examples taken from the author’s fieldwork in Kyrgyzstan in 2005–2006 on understandings of security. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the limitations of ethnographic methods.

Learning outcomes

On completion, readers should be able to:

- outline the key characteristics of an interpretive ethnographic methodology;
- describe the stages of conducting ethnographic research and identify the different methods that can be used; and
- identify potential limitations of ethnographic methods.

Introduction

Ethnographic methods are arguably more accurately described as a style of research rather than a formal method. The term is used to describe a range of qualitative data generation techniques that are *naturalistic*, meaning that they involve studying people or phenomena in their ‘natural’ setting or context, and produce accounts of research that are *experience-near*, meaning that they are based on people’s experiences of events, actions and phenomena in the setting or context. A central characteristic, therefore, of ethnographic methods is that they involve ‘fieldwork’ of some sort in order to try and ‘uncover emic (insider) perspectives on political and social life and/or ground-level processes involved therein’ (Bayard de Volo and Schatz 2004: 267). Traditionally this involved the researcher travelling to a particular place and spending an extended period of time, often years, living there as part of the community being researched. Increasingly, however, fieldwork is better understood as the process by which the researcher immerses herself and participates in the research context or field; while this may involve travelling to a different country or city, it could equally describe working in an organisation or institution or being part of a community such as an online forum.

Within academia, ethnographic methods have been traditionally associated with anthropology, which focuses on the study of human beings' ways of life. Within anthropology, ethnography describes two related things: first, it is the process of conducting research; and second, it is the product of research, with an ethnography being 'a written account of a particular culture' (Seligmann 2005: 229). However, despite the close association of ethnography with anthropology, it is worth noting that ethnographic methods trace their origins back to the administrative practices of empire management:

that is, in empires' needs to manage far-flung and distant outposts – colonial ones, to be sure, with all the paternalism and 'Orientalism' (Said 1978) and racism (and sexism and able-bodiedism, still largely unspoken of) they entailed, which marked those methods in ways their users are still contending with.

(Yanow 2008: 188)

As such, ethnographic methods have arguably been a long-standing feature of the practice of International Relations (IR) and politics, if not the discipline of IR, which preferred to develop methods that conformed more closely to scientific modes of knowledge production.

Historically, ethnography has been defined by the researcher's prolonged immersion in a given geographical locale ('the field') and her focus on the everyday lives of the people present there. In this conceptualisation of ethnography, the field is conceived of as being geographically and socio-culturally bounded and *participant observation* is viewed as the method via which the researcher generates data for her ethnography, observing and recording what she sees, hears and experiences while partaking in the activities of the community she is studying.

Over time, however, understandings of ethnography as a research process have evolved in response to anthropologists' concerns about issues of power, representation, othering and ownership. Indeed, addressing these issues has become central to the anthropological project, which, as Vrsti notes, 'has made a conscious effort to become aware of and distance itself from the Eurocentric assumptions that informed the early days of ethnographic writing' (2010: 81) and foster a more humane approach to the people being researched, who have moved from being 'subjects' to informants and respondents, this terminological shift acknowledging their vital and active role in scholars' research.

In addition, the need for a more flexible approach that can better accommodate the contemporary 'glocalised' social world in which geography is only one factor of many has been recognised. Greater recognition of the limitations of spatialized understandings of the field as a remote and geographically distinct location has helped broaden the focus of ethnography beyond participant observation to include the use of interviews, documents and texts, images and material artefacts in order to 'explore processes not immediately or appropriately accessible through participant observation' (Amit 2000: 12). This methodological diversification has led to ethnography gaining increasing recognition 'as a flexible and opportunistic strategy for diversifying and making more complex our understanding of various places, people, and predicaments through an attentiveness to the different forms of knowledge available from different social and political locations' (Gupta and Ferguson 1997: 35). Furthermore, from a practical perspective, 'in cases where government statistics are suspect, media outlets are controlled by political interests, and poverty, lack of infrastructure, illiteracy, or political violence impede survey research, ethnographic approaches are often the most reliable and practical means of collecting data' (Bayard de Volo and Schatz 2004: 269).

The potential benefits of employing ethnographic methods have not gone unnoticed by scholars of IRs, particularly those adhering to constructivist and other post-positivist

perspectives. Within IR and Political Science, discussion to date has predominantly focused on how (or indeed whether) ethnographic methods can successfully and usefully be imported into the discipline. As Wedeen (2010: 255) notes, debate has often been fraught, largely due to the continued dominance of positivist knowledge claims in mainstream IR and Political Science.

Positivist scholars have responded to the challenge posed by these methods by seeking to decouple method (how we collect or generate data) from methodology (the reasons why we use methods in a particular way), with the end result that ethnographic methods are, variously, erroneously viewed as being just ‘fieldwork’ (Jackson 2008: 91) or solely as participant observation (Pouliot 2007); ‘trimmed down to fieldwork interviews and/or subordinated to game theoretic models’ (Wedeen 2010: 259) and stripped of anything distinctively ‘ethnographic’ by the researcher’s reluctance (deliberate or not) to engage fully with the political baggage of his research and chosen approach (cf. Montison 2010). The resulting ‘ethnographic lite’ forms have been presented as being compatible with International Relations’ mainstream preference for positivism and, ironically, are not infrequently ‘deployed in the service of the very sorts of objectivist aims that current ethnographic approaches in anthropology and interpretive political science challenge’ (Wedeen 2010: 259).

In short, despite claims that IR experienced an ‘ethnographic turn’ in the late 1980s, this has not led to the development of critical ethnographic methods, as Vrasti makes clear in her critique of IR’s ‘selective, instrumental and somewhat timid understanding of what ethnography is and does’ which has in the promise of critical ethnography in IR remained unrealized (2008: 280). Instead, ethnographic methods have most commonly been (mis)understood in IR as simply a qualitative data-gathering technique (Vrasti 2008). In light of this, a central task of this chapter is to address not only the question of what ethnographic methods are, but how they can be used in critical Security Studies – i.e. the question of methodology. For, as Rancatore explains:

Ethnographic methods, such as ‘participant observation’, are in some sense no different from any other technical mode of data collection, except that the methodology should provide philosophical support for their use. An ethnographic method permits a particular mode of access. What the methodology does with this access is to provide a philosophical basis from which explanations can be constructed for research questions from a variety of approaches.

(Rancatore 2010: 72)

By reconnecting these two aspects, it becomes evident that critical Security Studies and ethnographic methods are a complementary and potentially powerful pairing: critical Security Studies seeks to address questions concerned with the politics and power of security as a concept and practice and the consequences of how security’s meanings are constructed.

A critical interpretive methodology: concepts and principles

In this section, I outline the fundamental principles and characteristics of a critical interpretive ethnographic methodology. The qualification of ‘interpretive’ is important, given that, as Wedeen points out, there is ‘ethnographic work that is not interpretive and interpretive work that is not ethnographic’ (2009: 85), going on to explain the distinction: ‘noninterpretive

ethnography focuses on presumed values, and then looks for structure and system. An interpretive ethnography centres on meaning, and at least in many instances, on process and history' (Wedeen 2009: 92). In other words, in addition to examining what the situated meanings of an event or phenomenon are, an interpretive approach also examines how these meanings have come about by taking into account the historical, socio-cultural and political contexts in which they occur.

At the heart of ethnographic research of any variety is the idea of creating a 'thick description' of a situation or phenomenon. Anthropologist Clifford Geertz illustrates the difference between a 'thin' or purely factual description and a 'thick' one with the example of 'two boys rapidly contracting the eyelids of their right eyes'. For one boy, the action is 'an involuntary twitch'; while for the other it is 'a conspiratorial signal to a friend'. While the movement is the same in both cases, 'the difference [. . .] between a twitch and a wink is vast, as anyone unfortunate to have had the first taken for the second knows' (1973: 5–6). In essence, therefore, the creation of thick description is one of contextualising what is being studied in order to understand what its meaning is in that particular context, situation or instance. However, in contrast to non-interpretive approaches, which stop at the identification of a wink or twitch, interpretive ethnographic methodology adds two further dimensions to the thick description that are closely connected and help elucidate how she has reached the conclusion that the rapid contraction of the boy's right eye was a wink and not a twitch: reflexivity and positionality.

Crapanzano defines *reflexivity* as 'the need to be critically conscious of what one is doing as one does it' (2010: 56). By reflecting upon and articulating her thoughts, feelings, emotions, actions and reactions during her research, the researcher herself becomes a source of data that can contribute additional layers to the thick description that is being gradually developed. However, reflexivity is not simply a case of 'navel-gazing' about one's thoughts and feelings while doing research or writing the researcher into her research account via the use of first person pronouns and a statement of identity. It is a way of exposing and questioning our assumptions about how things are or how they work so that we can check these assumptions and refine our interpretations on the basis of lived experience – both other people's and our own. A vital part of this process is engaging in what Wedeen calls 'epistemological reflexivity' towards debates about 'security' and the discipline of IR more widely by 'posing questions about what bounds the discipline and normalizes its modes of inquiry, rendering other possibilities unsayable, unthinkable, irrelevant, or absurd' (2010: 264).

These are questions that are integral for critical Security Studies. Furthermore, this level of questioning reflects the fact that reflexivity is not just something that can be bolted on to our research as a discrete issue to consider if it is to be able to interrogate the normative assumptions inherent in debates about 'security' and the discipline of IR more widely. Rather, reflexivity has to be made an integral part of the research process from start to finish, blurring the boundary between the processes of data generation and the findings that are eventually reported (Sultana 2007: 376). In this respect, reflexivity is not about being completely transparent about what we do and feel (if indeed this is possible), but rather about explicitly acknowledging the co-constitutive nature of the research process and results, and using it as a productive site from which to interrogate the meanings of security that have become evident during the research process by focusing on the ambiguities, dissonances and differences of the multiple interpretations that emerge. In effect, therefore, as well as being a methodology, it also becomes a method of conducting fieldwork and constructing research (Robertson 2002: 786).

Box 11.1 Thinking reflexively

Reflexive thinking (also reflective thinking) is the process of self-conscious thinking about one's thoughts, behaviour, actions, feelings and emotions with the aim of being able to articulate how one has reached particular conclusions or interpretations. In the case of interpretive ethnographic methods, it is an important part of the entire research process, since it is only by reflecting on our choices, actions and interpretations thus far that we can decide how to continue with the research. Maintaining a reflexive stance also helps to avoid prejudgements and premature conclusions, since it requires us to consider questions of positionality (see Box 11.2) and continually to be open to alternative viewpoints and interpretations that may challenge or inform our own.

The process of reflection draws upon a range of information. The following questions are designed to help guide you through a cycle of reflection that is repeated multiple times over the course of your research as you reach your final interpretations.

- What happened? This could be a conversation or interview, an event that you witnessed or something that you experienced.
- How did you feel about it? Did you feel comfortable, nervous, uneasy, rushed, threatened, confused or baffled?
- What was it about the event that made you feel that way? Previous experience? Knowledge of the people involved? Not knowing what would happen? Not understanding?
- How did you react?
- Thinking about the event now, how do you feel? Has anything changed? Are there alternative points of view or interpretations to consider?
- What does the event suggest for/about your research topic?
- Does the event link to other themes and issues of which you are already aware or raise particular questions? Does this confirm or challenge your current interpretations?
- Is there anything that you'll do or think about differently in the future?
- What do you need to do next to further your research?

While answers to these questions do not necessarily need to be included in your final written account of your research, ensuring that you answer them regularly in your research journal will create a systematic record of your research process that is essential for research validity (see Table 11.1).

Being reflexive aims to provide a critical account of the researcher's actions and interpretations that extends to consideration of disciplinary, societal, cultural and personal norms and values. For many scholars, an integral part of this critical account is discussion of *positionality*, which is designed to situate the researcher in relation to her research and the field through reflection on her own norms, values, self-perception, identities, prior knowledge and experiences and how they influence her research process and interpretations. However, positionality should not be viewed as simply a statement of identity or credentials, which risks reifying or stereotyping a particular identity (Robertson 2002: 788–789). Identities are multiple, fluid, situational and intersubjectively constructed, shifting in response to circumstance and

location, meaning that our positionality is as much the product of how other people position us, as how we try and position ourselves; what is a defining identity for the researcher in her everyday life may not be seen as salient – if indeed it is recognised at all – by the people with whom she interacts (Wilkinson 2008). The reflexive consideration of positionality recognises this and uses the shifts in identity that are experienced to generate additional insights into how the meaning of security is created, negotiated and sustained and with what effects.

Box 11.2 Thinking about positionality

Positionality describes the researcher's relationships to her research, which are recognised as influencing the research process and outcomes. Thinking about our positionality and explicitly discussing it in our writing is considered important in ethnographic research as it is an acknowledgement of the subjectivity of all interpretations and helps to fully contextualise our findings for the reader.

All of us have multiple identities that draw on a myriad of interacting factors such as gender, nationality, ethnicity, class, sexuality, educational background, political beliefs, cultural background and interests, place of residence, professional status, relationship status, age and religious or philosophical beliefs. All of these factors affect how we experience and interpret the world around us. A politically conservative middle-aged white Canadian businessman will experience Kyrgyzstan quite differently from a young female Japanese human rights activist, for example, and their experiences will shape their respective understandings and interpretations.

Reflecting on our positionality allows us to consider not only how – and which of – our identities affect our interactions and interpretations, but how others' perceptions of us may affect our research. Which of our identities will be salient to our research is context-dependent. In thinking about your positionality, you may wish to reflect on the following questions, both in relation to your everyday life and in relation to your specific research context:

- What social, academic and professional roles have you experienced? Do these experiences affect how you choose to present yourself?
- When are you aware of differences in values, beliefs or behaviour? To which identities do these relate?
- How do the people with whom you interact see you? Does this affect their behaviour towards you? How?
- What does it mean to be a particular nationality, ethnicity, class, religion, sexuality or gender in a particular place? Are there stereotypes or beliefs about what people with any of these identities will be like?
- What privileges do your identities give you in terms of access, rights, freedom from socio-cultural norms and/or status? To which identities does this relate?
- Do you experience discrimination on the basis of any of your identities? Which ones?

These questions are by no means exhaustive. Articulating your identities and how they do (or don't) affect your relationship is a useful exercise in being reflexive. Not only can it help make you aware of cultural or social assumptions and power hierarchies, it is also an initial step in considering how to manage our identities during the research process.

The final aspect of a critical interpretive ethnographic methodology that needs outlining is that of how to ensure that ethnographic interpretivist research is valid. In contrast to positivist research approaches, the validity of interpretive research is governed by inquiry being able to ‘demonstrate its truth value, provide the basis for applying it, and allow for external judgements to be made about the consistency of its procedures and the neutrality of its findings or decisions’ (Erlandson *et al.* 1993: 29). Most centrally this means that any research, regardless of whether it is objectivist (usually known as positivist) or interpretivist (post-positivist), must demonstrate that it is rigorous and systematic, or, in other words, that it is *trustworthy*. While positivist criteria for establishing trustworthiness are internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity, post-positivist criteria are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (see Table 11.1).

Credibility is defined as ‘the compatibility of the constructed realities that exist in the minds of the inquiry’s respondents with those that are attributed to them’ (Erlandson *et al.* 1993: 29). It is ensured by prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and *triangulation* – every piece of data used should be confirmed by at least one other, preferably different source, with the degree of convergence between different sources providing a standard for evaluation. In addition, member checks, peer debriefing and the creation of ‘holistic views of the context’ through the use of photographs, documents and other materials to provide background are used to create a credible account of the research (Erlandson *et al.* 1993: 138–139).

Transferability, as with positivist paradigms, is assessed in terms of the extent to which the findings are applicable to other contexts or populations. However, this should not be taken to mean that interpretivist research design can be evaluated against a criterion of reliability or generalisability. Rather, the researcher attempts to describe in great details the interrelationships and intricacies of the context and phenomenon being studied. Thus, the result of the study is a situated thick description *that cannot be directly replicated*, although, as Wedeen observes, the research approach could be replicated in that:

Subsequent researchers can go to the field, and even if they do not talk to the same people, they can be made aware of the range of meanings relevant to a particular phenomenon under study, because meanings are socially, not simply individually, accessible.

(Wedeen 2010: 265)

The ‘thick description’ that has been generated, however, enables observers of other contexts to make tentative judgements about the applicability of certain observations for their contexts and to form ‘working hypotheses’ to guide empirical inquiry in those contexts. Thick description is

Table 11.1 Establishing trustworthiness: positivist and post-positivist terms

<i>Criterion</i>	<i>Positivist term</i>	<i>Interpretivist term</i>
Truth value	Internal validity	Credibility
Applicability	External validity	Transferability
Consistency	Reliability	Dependability
Neutrality	Objectivity	Confirmability

Source: Adapted from ‘Establishing Trustworthiness: A Comparison of Conventional and Naturalistic Enquiry’, Table 7.1, in David A. Erlandson *et al.* (1993: 133).

central to facilitating transferability by providing a detailed and contextual account of the research. *Purposive sampling* also facilitates transferability, being ‘governed by emerging insights about what is relevant to the study and purposively [seeking] both the typical and divergent data that these insights suggest’ (Erlandson *et al.* 1993: 30–33).

Dependability describes the criterion of consistency. In contrast to positivist claims, consistency does not necessarily imply replication, since changes in findings may be caused not only by error but also by altered circumstances or ‘reality shifts’. Therefore, Erlandson *et al.* suggest that the interpretivist researcher should be aiming for ‘trackable variance’, i.e. ‘variabilities that can be ascribed to particular sources (error, reality shifts, better insights, etc.)’ (1993: 34).

Confirmability refers not to the establishment of objectivity – which is held to be impossible due to the inherently situated nature of knowledge production – but to the idea that data can be tracked to sources and that the logic of enquiry is both explicit and implicit in the study. This criterion recognises that the researcher is a co-constructor of her findings and requires explicit reference to the role the researcher has played in his or her choice of methods, decisions and interpretations.

Taken collectively, these criteria offer a set of standards that can guide the researcher both while undertaking fieldwork and during the process of writing. However, they offer no guidance about how the researcher should conduct her research in terms of actual methods used to access or generate the data that is then interpreted.

Ethnographic methods: how, what, where, why and when?

While there is no definitive right way to undertake interpretive ethnographic research, it is possible to identify three phases through which one’s investigations progress: an initial ‘legwork’ phase of exploration and preparation, a ‘fieldwork’ phase in which experience-near data is generated, and a subsequent phase of ‘deskwork’ and ‘textwork’ (Yanow 2009: 279). Depending on the scale and design of the research being undertaken, there may only be one cycle of these three phases (as shown in Figure 11.1) or several, or the initial phase may be followed by a series of alternating fieldwork and deskwork phases. It should be stressed, however, that within these phases, progress may not be linear or stepwise, as will be illustrated in this section using the case of my own research into societal security and securitization theory, which was based on fieldwork conducted in the post-Soviet Central Asian republic of Kyrgyzstan in 2005 and 2006.

Legwork

The research process begins when the researcher starts to think about her research project, what her working questions are and how she intends to answer them. While the initial question may be posed by someone other than the researcher (as in the case of commissioned research, for example), most commonly the researcher herself is the source of the question, with her chosen topic reflecting her interests, prior experience and knowledge. At this stage, the question may be very broad or even just a hunch or sense that a particular topic would be interesting. Further investigation is then required to ascertain if the line of inquiry is worth pursuing. Conventionally this will mean undertaking a literature review, but may also include talking to people with knowledge of the topic and/or location on which the proposed research will focus, such as policy-makers, NGO workers, ‘locals’ and other researchers, or

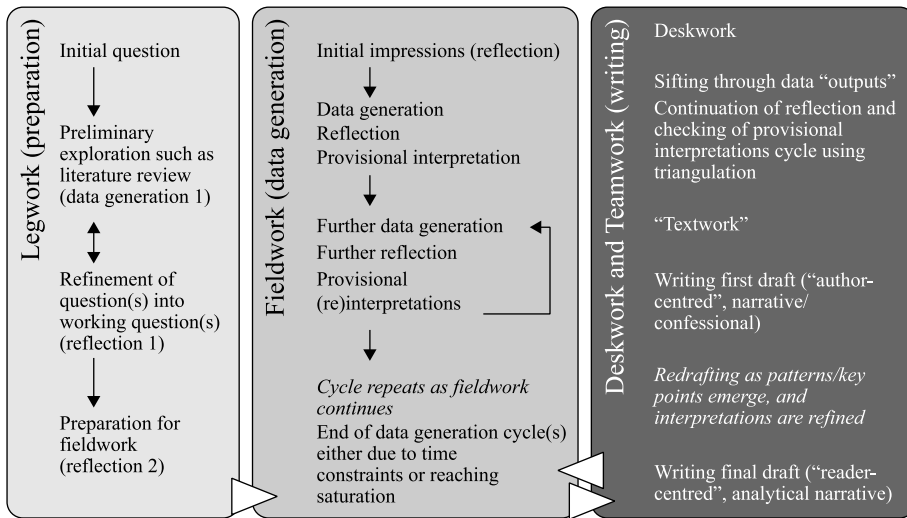


Figure 11.1 The research process.

even making a preliminary visit to possible research sites. The aim is not only to refine the initial question into a working question (or several of them) that will guide the research, but also to start thinking about how it will be possible to answer them in terms of data generation.

The initial impetus for my research came from an undergraduate course that had included securitization theory and an interest in Kyrgyzstan that had developed as a result of spending a year studying Russian philology in the capital, Bishkek, during my undergraduate studies. Securitization theory, and especially the idea of societal security, had struck me as concepts that could be useful in Central Asia, a region that has gained a reputation for instability and insecurity since the collapse of the USSR in 1991. My familiarity with Kyrgyzstan made it a logical place to test out securitization theory and examine how security functioned in a part of the world that only came to many people's attention in the wake of 9/11, when it suddenly found itself labelled as a hotbed of Islamic terrorism and extremism.

Once my initial research proposal had been accepted and I had formally started the research process in October 2004, over the following months I spent a lot of time reading academic literature on the Copenhagen school, Central Asia and Kyrgyzstan. In addition, I started following events in Central Asia and especially Kyrgyzstan closely by reading online versions of local newspapers and news agency reports in Russian and reportage from organisations such as the Institute for War and Peace Reporting, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and International Crisis Group in English. In order to keep track of events and sources, I began blogging 'news roundups',¹ which helped me begin to identify themes, trends and dynamics and refine the focus for my research.

This preliminary legwork phase was in effect the first cycle of data generation that functioned as a base layer on which to begin building up the thick description, and also began to make me aware of some of the problems of using securitization theory (Wilkinson 2007a). Furthermore, it also served as a useful reminder of the provisional nature

of our understandings and interpretations and that circumstances can very rapidly change radically. Protests about electoral irregularities began in Kyrgyzstan in January 2005 and continued in the following months before suddenly and largely unexpectedly escalating into a mass protest on 24 March that led to the ousting of the President and several days of widespread looting in Bishkek. This event, known either as the Tulip Revolution or, less evocatively, as the ‘March events’, fundamentally changed the socio-political situation in Kyrgyzstan and marked the start of an extended period of instability in the republic.² My prior knowledge of Kyrgyzstan was not made obsolete and still provided a starting point, but the importance of not assuming that particular social and political dynamics were still present was thrown into stark relief. I continued to follow events as I made arrangements to travel to Kyrgyzstan in September 2005, but was far less sure what to expect or what would be possible to do by way of data generation than I had been when I had started.

Fieldwork

Once the fieldwork phase begins, the researcher faces a very fundamental question: how to locate ‘security’ in the field? She no longer has the ‘advantage’ of merely ‘observing how others advocate [security]’ to paraphrase Eriksson (Wæver 1999: 317); she is now on the ground alongside her research subject and faces many of the same issues as her informants as she tries to make sense of events going on around her. Contrary to what theory often suggests, events do not happen in a step-wise, logical, measured fashion. Rather, they are ‘messy’ – seemingly unpredictable, random, spontaneous, and in the field have to be dealt with in unedited, complex and multiple forms. In such circumstances, as noted earlier in this chapter, ethnographic methods offer a flexible approach to research that is well-suited to accommodating the ‘mess’ and contingency that is encountered to at least some degree during fieldwork of any sort.

Kyrgyzstan’s continued instability after the March events of 2005 meant that security was an often mentioned subject, be it in terms of state viability or territorial integrity, high corruption levels or, at the human end of the scale, the continuing high levels of poverty and poor health indicators. This impression is only strengthened by the fact that both mass media and analytical coverage of post-Akaev Kyrgyzstan tended to focus on the prevalence of phenomena associated with instability: public demonstrations, assassinations, the ‘criminalisation’ of the country, the inability of the government to carry out reforms or respond to the demands of the public. But with ‘security’ being mentioned frequently and in many contexts, the challenge was how to study it in way that was meaningful to the people whom I met.

At this point theoretical models did not offer much guidance and my sense that the Copenhagen school’s analytical tools were not quite as sensitive as I had hoped grew stronger: there was no room for discussion of what constituted ‘normal’ politics and who defines it – a fraught question in Kyrgyzstan even before March 2005 – and, even more frustratingly, no space to consider the questions of how and why events developed in a particular way, why people participated in a particular protest or not, nor how it related to their lives and communities. Most worryingly, securitization theory risked obscuring the interconnections between different communities, identities, issues and points of view both within Kyrgyzstan and internationally. In this respect, it felt like it was a choice between classing everything or nothing as security. After all, given the unstable socio-political conditions, virtually all issues were being framed in existential terms on multiple levels: the future existence of the

country was being questioned, as was the future of many societal groups, including the Kyrgyz themselves, and on the personal level people did not know how they would live in the future.

Reflecting on these initial impressions, I decided to proceed with a number of data generation techniques in order to try and access a range of parts of ‘the story’. Participant observation formed the backbone of my approach. Initially this involved spending my time walking around Bishkek’s centre and observing people as they went about their daily business. I kept a record of what I saw (and when and where) and my thoughts, interpretations and questions that occurred to me. I also began talking to people about the socio-political situation. At first I did this informally, making notes after conversations with friends and acquaintances, but over time I compiled a wish list of people whom I thought it would be useful to interview and set about contacting them. I identified journalists, young people, representatives of ethnic community organisations and people involved with NGOs as four groups that were likely to offer a range of perspectives on security and what it meant in Kyrgyzstan beyond official narratives. I used a semi-structured approach to interviews with a basic set of questions that served as a starting point. Beyond these questions, however, my respondents took the conversation where they wanted, which frequently led to them sharing their own experiences. I also used a direct check question during interviews: ‘what does security mean to you?’ On its own this question would have been wholly inadequate, but within the wider context it proved to be very important in picking up nuances, contradictions and ensuring I did not leap to conclusions on the basis of limited information. In addition, from a theoretical perspective, it further highlighted the need to understand what we – and others – mean when we use certain words, since no word is value-neutral and our usage is informed by a myriad of socio-cultural factors that require explicit interrogation by the fieldworker (Wilkinson 2007b).

Based on my experience of government officials in post-Soviet countries, I decided that it was not worth interviewing government officials, since it was unlikely that, when faced with a Western researcher (even a young, female and Russophone one),³ the interviewee would deviate from the official position in his answers, and I could obtain a more complete overview of the government’s presentation of security by analysing speeches and official documents, which I duly began locating and collecting. I also began collecting newspapers, since their coverage of events and commentary provided further parts of ‘the story’, eventually sending eight kilograms of material back to the UK to sift through during the deskwork phase.

Within a week or so of arriving in Bishkek I was aware that people were holding protests outside government buildings on an almost daily basis and I started photographing protests when I saw them. I was reminded of the Copenhagen school’s comment that security is often expressed indirectly or implicitly through particular words or actions (Buzan *et al.* 1998: 27). In Kyrgyzstan, one word/action that seemed to implicitly mean security was ‘miting’, meaning ‘a protest’, and I began to pay closer attention to the dynamics of these frequent occurrences. In order to more fully document what took place during the protests and their narratives, I took photographs. As well as photographing people who were present/participating individually and, where possible, collectively to record the scale of the event, I paid particular attention to the placards and banners that were being displayed. The variety of messages suggested that different groups were using the protest to express their own concerns (societal *insecurity*) rather than directly supporting the organisers’ claims and demands (see Figures 11.2 (a)–(c)).

Box 11.3 Mixed messages*The 29 April 2006 Protest in Bishkek*

This protest was the second mass demonstration in a series held in Kyrgyzstan's capital between March and June 2006. This protest, which was billed as the 'Kyrgyz Maidan' (echoing Ukraine's 2004 revolution), was attended by between 5,000 and 17,000 people. (Official estimates put attendance at 5,000–7,000, the protest leaders claimed 15,000–17,000. My own estimate would be no more than 7,000.) Officially, the demands were the same as those made at a previous protest on 8 April 2006: that the President and his government immediately implement measures to prevent the criminalisation of the country and ensure people's security (Saralaeva and Toralieva 2006), or resign.

Prior to the protest, the organisers announced their intention to set up yurts on Bishkek's central Ala-Too Square and stay there until they got an undertaking from the President to do what they wanted. However, even before the protest started, it was evident that the protest itself was seen by some as a threat to Kyrgyzstan's security; a group of 14 associations and 12 political parties formed a forum for reconciliation and spoke out against the organisers, accusing them of wanting to stage a coup and seize power (Malevanaya 2006). Media reports indicated that the government was preparing to respond to the possibility of unrest, with the Minister for Internal Affairs promising protesters 'a surprise' on 27 April. Feeling a little wary, I set out to see what was happening:

As the photographs that follow illustrate, there were multiple 'security' issues and dynamics being expressed during the protest, from the state's choices about keeping armed male military and police personnel in the background (Figure 11.2(a)) and deploying only unarmed female police cadets on the square (Figure 11.2(b)), to the range of issues about which people chose to express concern in addition to the official message (Figure 11.2(c)). Photographs helped document this diversity and thus access a wider range of perspectives than would otherwise have been possible, and which were not reflected in most coverage of the protest by journalists or analysts.



(a)



(b)



(c)

Figure 11.2 (a)–(c) Photographs taken at 29 April 2006 Protest in Bishkek, © CW.

I continued to conduct interviews, observe and write field notes, collect newspapers and official documents throughout the fieldwork period, which lasted until late June 2006. With each new cycle of data generation I was able to add to the thick description that was developing, and which would soon have to be written up. Yet as I prepared to leave Kyrgyzstan, I was worried: I'd ended up with a lot of data – 32 transcribed interviews, thousands of words of field notes in various formats, kilos of newspapers, over 500 photographs of protests and other events, as well as several gigabytes of electronic sources including NGO reports and copies of speeches – but if anything I felt overwhelmed by the volume of information and more confused than ever about how to make sense of all the information and turn it into a readable account that had a clear line of inquiry and conclusion.

Deskwork and textwork

All the sense-making processes that one experiences in the field continue during the 'deskwork' and 'textwork' of processing data and creating one's analysis: reviewing events, perceptions, reactions, rereading interviews and printed sources, re-examining photographs, allowing the researcher to test and refine her interpretations in relation to previous and other interpretations (Yanow 2009: 278–279), rendering the divide between fieldwork and textwork 'artificial, and, in many ways, impossible' (Vrasti 2010: 84). However, the central task now is to write up and present the research and, crucially, link it to theory and/or disciplinary concerns that may have taken a backseat during the fieldwork phase (Zirakzadeh 2009: 101).

Conventionally, the process of writing has involved transformation of praxis into a formal methodology: the researcher is expected to edit out the 'messiness' of her fieldwork, tie up loose ends, systematise her account and show the stepwise progress of the research (which may not have ever actually happened that way) and adopt a 'view from nowhere' as a mark of apparent scientific objectivity (Gold 2002: 224). In contrast, writing ethnographically is 'an exercise in being truthful about the distance we travel from research questions to finished manuscript' (Vrasti 2010: 84). Writing becomes a method in itself (Yanow 2006) insofar as it is a process of 'making sense' of all information, checking interpretations through triangulation, and, most importantly, moving from an *author-centred* account to a *reader-centred* one. Early drafts are likely to be author-centred in the sense of being confessional and providing a detailed narrative account of 'what really happened' as the researcher herself experienced it. While this helps make sense of the data from the researcher's perspective, for the reader it can be excruciatingly long-winded, rambling and confusing. The aim, therefore, is to create a reader-friendly account that not only presents the thick description that has been created, but that also presents the reader with explanation and analysis of key themes and findings without erasing the researcher's presence and participation in the creation of the knowledge presented.

This means that the final account needs to present not only the researcher's interpretations and conclusions, but also the process through which these interpretations were reached (the traceability criterion) and why (the credibility criterion). Writing is not an innate skill and writing critically and/or ethnographically often involves challenging our own assumptions about how we 'should' write and what an appropriate tone is; think of how often you have been told that academic essays should use the passive voice and avoid using first person pronouns, for example. However, as Yanow rightly notes, writing in different

ways can be learned (2009: 294) and creates space for 'other voices' that are traditionally silenced in our research accounts (Doty 2004) – an endeavour at the heart of critical Security Studies.

Issues and limitations

As well as logistical and practical issues, which I address later on, a central problem is that interpretive ethnographic methods make significantly different knowledge claims from other research methods that are commonly used in IR and Security Studies and use different criteria against which to test them, as shown in Table 11.1. The unfamiliarity of many scholars with these criteria makes 'explicit statements of methodological concerns and methods procedures' necessary in order to be understood correctly (Yanow and Schwartz-Shea 2006: xiii). The inclusion of these issues to our accounts not only adds to their length – an issue that should not be underestimated given the ubiquity of strict word limits – but can be misinterpreted as a loss of authorial authority or a lack of scientific rigour by scholars unfamiliar or hostile to interpretive approaches, rather than as a reminder to readers of the research that 'the fieldwork process is imperfect but not fatally flawed' (Magolda 2000: 2010).

Similarly, from the perspective of traditional scientific enquiry, rather than being part of a flexible and responsive methodology, reflexivity can perhaps seem like a justification for opportunism or even wilful disdain or disregard for research design (Heathershaw 2009: 257). This can be particularly problematic when writing research proposals that demand a clearly defined research question and plan for how the research will be done. In contrast, ethnographic methods invite inductivism (Bayard de Volo and Schatz 2004: 268), i.e. starting with observations and using them to generate hypotheses and potentially mid-level theories, which is at odds with the deductivist approach to much IR and Political Science scholarship, where theory provides the starting point for investigation. While there is no instant solution to these issues, being clear about how ethnographic methods are being used and what sorts of insights they can generate is a positive first step.

Second, there are logistical limitations to consider. Ethnographic methods are not fast or clear-cut ways of generating data. Regardless of where the fieldwork is conducted, thick description takes time to develop and then refine into a final account. It is also open-ended insofar as it would in principle be possible to continue the cycle of data generation and interpretation indefinitely, creating thicker and thicker description. In practice, fieldwork is usually either curtailed by how long one can spend in the field, or because saturation point has been reached in those further interviews, observations, speeches or other data do not suggest alternative interpretations to those that have been reached. A further useful check can be to ask oneself how thick does the description need to be based on the question being investigated and the intended audience and proceed accordingly (Wilkinson 2010: 106).

Finally, practical issues cannot be ignored and may prove to be limitations. At the legwork stage, it is vital to consider the viability of undertaking fieldwork in a particular location, not only from the perspective of personal safety (both the researcher's and her respondents) but accessing 'the field': does the researcher have any necessary linguistic expertise or can a suitable interpreter or translator be found? Are particular sources of information or data available? How will she make contact with potential interviewees? In addition, matters of ethics must be addressed, ideally not only as a formality to gain approval, but also in terms

of what is actually possible and practicable to ensure ethical practice, since the Western concept of informed consent often does not fit neatly with the reality of ethnographic research, especially in non-Western settings.

Conclusion

In most cases, with sufficient forethought and careful monitoring and adjustment to one's actions, practical issues will not prove to be deal-breakers for undertaking interpretive ethnographic research, although they will inevitably shape it. Indeed, the necessity of engaging with the reality of people's lives, rather than ignoring them, is one of the chief benefits of utilising ethnographic methods for Critical Security Studies, since as a result the researcher herself experiences 'security'.

Extending critical engagement to ethnographic methods then invites the research to address a further set of questions relating to power and political responsibilities, as Vrasti explains: 'In doing ethnography, it is not sufficient to pay careful attention to everyday practices, one must also assume the political responsibilities that come with "the specification of discourses", with asking questions like "who speaks? who writes? when and where? with or to whom? under what institutional and historical constraints?"' (2008: 294). As these questions suggest, the use of ethnographic methods in combination with a critical methodology requires the researcher to consider her own relationships to the field of study – defined here as 'security' rather than a particular location – and its people, politics and practices and articulate her answers to these questions in the presentation of her research.

Please see the companion website for a seminar exercise.

Questions for further discussion

- 1 Is research done using ethnographic methods just 'telling stories' and/or 'navel gazing'?
- 2 What factors affect how 'thick' one's description needs to be?
- 3 What does the field of 'security' look like?
- 4 What are the advantages and disadvantages of including consideration of positionality in one's research?
- 5 Are ethnographic methods a realistic option for research in CSS and IR more widely?

Notes

- 1 <http://mental-wanderlust.blogspot.com/>. I was subsequently invited to write roundups for the *neweurasia* blog project, so switched to blogging there and continued to do so throughout my fieldwork: <http://www.neweurasia.net/author/cxw/>.
- 2 Kurmanbek Bakiev, who replaced ousted president Askar Akaev in 2005, was himself ousted in April 2010.
- 3 Issues of positionality that I encountered are discussed in detail in the work of Wilkinson (2008).

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12 Participatory action research

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Chapter summary

In this chapter we trace the development of Participatory Action Research (PAR) in the social sciences and share our research stories to illustrate the application of community guidance to developing ethical research techniques in Security Studies. We write as scholar-practitioners, but more importantly as people interested in and concerned about the experiences of other people. Our roles, which may be understood in conventional terminology as volunteers, activists, and academics, have blended in our lives and given us opportunities to gain insights through unique collaborations with people from outside more traditional academic settings. The insights afforded have been earned through trust and cooperation, then reconnection and more cooperation.

Learning outcomes

On completion, readers should be able to:

- identify the key concepts, techniques, and actors associated with Participatory Action Research (PAR);
- critically discuss the methodological strengths and limitations of PAR in the study of security;
- evaluate the ethical functions of research methodology.

Introduction

We have tried, as scholar-practitioners, to document the undocumented, to work at the borderlands of methodology. In this chapter, we discuss what we understand by Participatory Action Research (PAR) and how this research as a *process* can lend itself to critical approaches to security. First, we offer a story from our field research, about Mariposa Migrant Aid Station at Nogales, Mexico (see Box 12.1). This aid station is not an anomaly. There are four similar stations scattered along the Arizona/Mexico border. The dramatic increase of activism and humanitarian aid within this border region is an interesting and under-noticed phenomenon. Dozens of well-established, bi-national, non-profit organizations have sprung up in the last five years. The activities of these organizations, as well as non-affiliated individuals, range from political mobilization that has gained international press to the simple, but life-affirming, act of providing water to those who are thirsty.

Box 12.1 The Mariposa Migrant Aid Station

'*Gracias.*' '*Gracias.*' '*Gracias.*' '*Gracias.*' Like the metallic peals of a church bell, this word keeps the solemn rhythm of the day. In this word there is a summons. It bears witness to the cast-iron movement of the masses. Rising up from the exhausted, this word sparkles in a maelstrom of disappointed faces. Our heads remain lowered, as we take in this word in its steady grace.

' "*Gracias.*" It's the magic word here', interrupts Daniel. One of the many volunteers at the Mariposa Migrant Aid Station, Daniel seems to be the person most in charge in a place that seems to reject any sort of formalized order. He is a citizen of Mexico. Most of the volunteers today are citizens of the USA. Citizenship also seems to be an unnecessary and irrelevant form of ordering. I smile in appreciation and continue to ladle bowls of soup, head down, listening to the sounds of migration.

Daniel and I stand together on one side of a very ordinary table, offering bowls of soup to recently repatriated migrants. Tired, disappointed, and hungry these men (and today, despite the new trends in migration, they are overwhelmingly men) wait patiently in line to receive whatever food was donated by individuals and humanitarian organizations like the Borderland Food Bank. Even though this camp is officially operated by the Sonora's State Commission for the Care of International Migrants and the US-based human rights organization No More Deaths/*No Mas Muertes*, it relies upon the efforts of unaffiliated individuals and volunteers from numerous other organizations as well. Volunteers spend their days at the border cooking for and chatting with 'returned' people.

Repatriated persons enter the camp walking from Highway 19. In this area, the United States Border Patrol releases migrants after an unspecified amount of time, ranging from days to years, three miles outside of downtown Nogales, Mexico at the Mariposa Port of Entry. By the time they reach this table, they are often severely dehydrated, hungry, walking with blistered feet, and their clothing and skin are covered in cactus spines. Many of the men here wear dark clothes as they often hike through the desert at night to avoid detection and the smouldering heat. They carry their personal items in a plastic bag. None of them have shoelaces. Shoelaces, claim the United States Border Patrol agents, are a security concern and are taken during processing. Those who are newly 'returned' to Mexico, some of whom have never lived in Mexico, come directly to the table where we serve food. In a very patient and steady progression, everyone is served a bowl of soup, a sandwich, cucumber salad, coffee, and water. On this day, we serve around 300 people by mid-afternoon. The more seasoned volunteers describe today as slow. During the summer season, the aid station has attended to over 1000 migrants a day.

The mission of the Mariposa Migrant Aid Station is to acknowledge that the suffering of migrants does not end when they are pulled out of the desert. These migrants, many from Southern Mexico or with no real connection to Mexico at all, are exhausted and ill-equipped for another long journey, but with no way to get home and no place to stay, there are often few options besides attempting to enter again into the USA. Volunteers strive to reduce death and suffering by giving assistance to returned persons and by being a force of hospitality and humanitarian aid. They do this by providing water, food, basic medical care, temporary shelter, clothing, information, and companionship.

These actions, however, only represent one side of border activism. As there has been an increase of humanitarian aid and organization at this border, so too has there been a dramatic increase of ‘civilian patrols’, vigilantism, hate groups, racial profiling, anti-immigration legislation, and violence against migrants (see Doty 2009). There are protective forces at play, driven largely by fear, nationalistic rhetoric, and desire for order and stability at any cost. These forces champion the militarization of the border, criminalization of migrants, and a definitive line between ‘us’ and ‘them’.

The politics of the US/Mexico border region, and the anti-immigrant legislation that has followed, cannot exist without the othering of migrants. This creates an acute set of concerns for those who wish to research the power dynamics at play in this and very similar militarized zones: How does one conduct research on persons whose very existence is called into being by their dehumanization? How does one ‘document’ persons whose very existence depends upon their anonymity and ability to live in the shadows? How does one write on, say, the migrant without also contributing to the objectification of these bodies? That is, how do we treat ‘our research subjects’ as human beings with equal moral worth and not abstract categories that can be mined for the purpose of ‘good research’? How does one not participate in the further exploitation of vulnerable populations? How does one document the undocumented? Unlike the common concerns associated with traditional research methods, these concerns are not questions of ‘access’ but questions of ethical human contact.

These questions drive the methodological approach that we discuss in this chapter. These questions push the limits of both traditional and critical research methodology. These questions reflect concern with unjust power dynamics and the desire to move towards solidarity. In this story we hint at the constructed dichotomy between ‘us’ and ‘them’ that is central for security measures as well as academic research. It is not enough to be ‘fly-by-night’ researchers. One must take seriously and engage with care one’s role as a critical academic engaged in dialogue and desired solidarity with marginalized communities. This is no small task.

Pushing the boundaries of critical methodological approaches: rethinking power dynamics and ethical engagement

Traditional fieldwork and data collection methods are commonly conducted as a means to an end. They are necessary steps to get to the more important task of analysing data and ‘writing up’ findings. It is possible for fieldwork to be undertaken without much critical reflection on what it is that one is doing and the effects that it will have. That is not to say that ‘how to do’ research and optimize the research process is under-represented in the academy. On the contrary, much time is spent in graduate school learning how to conduct rigorous and objective research. Graduate students are well trained and focused on how to implement proper data collection techniques to optimize findings and achieve ‘good research’. There is little discussion, however, on what constitutes ‘research’ and, more problematic, the ‘research subject’.

Even within more critically oriented research there is still an inherent authority within the academic enterprise that allows and even rewards researchers for making ‘objects’ of knowledge out of other human beings. Moreover, the process of ‘writing on’ other people reinforces the subject position of the researcher as the expert and maintains the research subject as an inherently ‘other’ entity, worthy of academic investigation. The inherent privilege associated with ‘doing research’ and what this research might ‘do’ beyond its stated

objectives is enormous. On our work, we have struggled with two specific potentialities: resistance and recolonization.

Research that is largely focused on the marginalized or the subaltern can take on the form of resistance. More than just good scholarly inquiry or an academic exercise, this sort of research may help to bring about change and social justice (that is often the hope, anyway). This sort of research may bring to the fore of analysis issues that intimately affect the lives of the marginalized but frequently go unnoticed because these issues are beyond the visible spectrum of political importance. By shifting focus to the politics of the marginalized, the academic is able to 'give voice' or 'speak for' those who cannot speak or who are not allowed a public forum for serious discussion. This is, according to many scholars, the purpose of academic research (although this is also a highly contested and problematized claim as well, see Spivak 1988).

In his series of lectures on the role and representations of the intellectual, Edward Said describes the academic as an individual with a specific public role in society and not as a 'faceless professional'. The intellectual is:

an individual endowed with a faculty for representing, embodying, articulating a message, a view, an attitude, philosophy or opinion to, as well as for, a public. And this role has an edge to it, and cannot be played without a sense of being someone whose place it is publicly to raise embarrassing questions, to confront orthodoxy and dogma (rather than to produce them), to be someone who cannot easily be co-opted by governments or corporations, and whose *raison d'être* is to represent all those people and issues that are routinely forgotten or swept under the rug.

(Said 1994: 11)

In this description, the intellectual is an incorruptible public servant that brings to the fore the under-noticed, yet pressing issues of society. But also presented here is an unproblematic description of the activity of representation of which Said, especially, is intimately aware. This is a problem for critical researchers. That is, through redirecting attention to issues that go largely unnoticed (by the public or by academic disciplines) one is able to open a space for resistance to occur. This potentiality is not always actualized. For example, we can all discuss apartheid or genocide, but unless the academic goes further and exposes the injustices for what they are – flawed as our interpretations might be – then the academic does not do more than popularize issues. The discourse itself remains unchallenged. It is this second move – defamiliarizing the familiar – that is most critical.

If we believe Said when he states that it is the role of the intellectual to confront orthodoxy and dogma, then central to this mighty task is the ability to defamiliarize that which is familiar: to question what is taken for granted; to be a trouble-maker. The point is that by critically questioning representations, by interrogating that which is assumed, the academic can turn common sense on its head. S/he can expose the absurd logics of and rationalizations for colonialism, apartheid, metaphorical and literal war, economic exploitation, the inhumane treatment of migrants, refugees, the stateless, and so on. It is through language and representation that the academic is able to help in the fight against injustice, oppression, and inequality.

It is the power to represent and denaturalize representations that shows bite behind the academic bark. It is, however, also this very issue of representation and language that is most problematic for the critical academic. 'Writing on' and about others are violent acts that never truly represent the individual or the cause. Language in these circumstances is always

problematic and inept. More often than not, even the most well-intentioned academic, with a well-thought out research plan, may actually do harm to the very people s/he proposes to help. For example, the field of anthropology was, at best, complicit in maintaining colonialism through 'scientific' justifications. Sociology and the medical field were key in the oppression of the black population of the American South.¹ No number of Human Ethics Review Boards can discipline and police this for the problem is at the core of social scientific research. The desires, requirements, and rewards for pursuing so-called objective research that employs scientific methods that, in turn, are required to construct objects of study and units of analysis actually foster an environment in which researchers are required to recolonize the very individuals they seek to expose as oppressed. Even the most critically oriented scholars are subject to this conundrum.

To understand recolonization, one must accept that colonization is much more than just sending a group of settlers to a place and establishing physical control over it. As described by post-colonial scholars (see Chapter 8), the colonial and post-colonial process involves not only the appropriation of territory and political institutions. (Post)colonialism also necessarily requires the psychological, economical, representational, linguistic, and cultural imposition and restructuring of the individual. (Post)colonialism is largely based upon the ability to represent the colonized (read also marginalized, subaltern, oppressed) as less than human. It is a process of dehumanization and 'thingification'. This process of representation is essential for any sort of colonial logic – *as it is also for academic writing*.² In short, colonialism cannot be accomplished with military strength alone. With this in mind we must think of power not just as repressive, but also as productive and creative of subjects. Power is intimately linked to knowledge, but not in the purely instrumental sense that knowledge is always in the service of the powerful. Instead, we must think of power in its relationship with the production of truth and rationality. Clearly, Michel Foucault has been most helpful in articulating the power/knowledge nexus and how the social sciences do not merely describe the world as they find it but construct it and create the manner in which it is perceived and understood.

Said's *Orientalism*, inspired in large part by a Foucauldian understanding of power/knowledge, argues that there is 'no such thing as a delivered presence; there is only a re-presence, or a representation' (Said 1978: 21). Said's central contention is that Orientalism is a 'systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage – even produce – the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period' (1978: 21). In this case, power and knowledge went hand in hand, and there was no such thing as an innocent, objective academic standpoint. In other words, knowledge is not innocent. It is profoundly connected with the operations of power. Moreover, 'knowledge' about the 'other' is an ideological supplement of colonial power. The formal study of the 'other' consolidates certain ways of seeing and thinking, which in turn contribute to the functioning of oppressive power. And while, say, anthropologists have written extensively about the role of scientific research, even within their own fields, in maintaining unjust colonial practices, the rest of the academy seems to be less sensitive to the socio-political implications of research.

Despite the popularity of Said's text and the strength of these observations, it still seems that the relationship between the academic and her/his 'research subject' is given very little attention. We still speak about it with ease. Within the social sciences, researchers are still strongly encouraged to objectify, quantify, and generalize about their 'research subjects'. 'How to' research manuals still describe how the researcher needs to gain access to the subjects for purposes of observation. These manuals claim that observational fieldwork will be some of the most challenging portions of the work because some subjects will be less

‘willing’ to be observed than others. These manuals read as if the authors were commentators on a safari or a wildlife programme treating ‘research subjects’ as if they were shifty, elusive, but predictable animals that need only to be properly observed and surveyed.

Even more critically oriented and acutely aware scholars recolonize the subjects that they discuss through the sheer practice of speech. We must represent to communicate in spoken language. These representations will always be flawed and even sometimes violently wrong. This point aside, even the more critically oriented scholars regularly uphold a distinction between researchers and researched. The fact that ‘they’ are worthy of investigation inevitably constructs an us/them dichotomy that is far from politically neutral. In short, something about the research enterprise feels wrong. But how else can we think about research? Said suggests that ‘perhaps the most important task of all would be to undertake studies in contemporary alternatives to Orientalism, to ask how one can study other cultures and people from a libertarian, or a non-repressive and non-manipulative, perspective’ (1978: 24). But how does one do this without rethinking (and reproducing) the whole complex problem of power/knowledge? What would this sort of research look like? Not to suggest that we have the ‘solution’ to this concern, we attempt to acknowledge it in our research through critical and less well-known methodological approaches, such as PAR.

Participatory action research and volunteerism

As already suggested, PAR can be thought of in terms of a symbiotic relationship between community and researcher. The community is not simply subjected to questions, but can actually participate in the entire research process: from the selection of research topic to the construction of research design, through research dissemination. PAR takes seriously the power dynamic between so-called researched and researcher and offers an opportunity to develop a partnership between these parties rather than an exploitative power relationship.

PAR is very similar to Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR), critical action research, and other community-based methods. PAR has emerged through continuous improvement of frequently qualitative and community-based methods in numerous fields, including anthropology, education, psychology, public health, and sociology. It has been noticeably absent in subfields relating to political science. This interdisciplinary approach and broad lineage leads to numerous, legitimate descriptions of PAR. The diversity also follows from a rather obvious insight that runs counter to the traditionally constituted academy, and that is community concerns, social issues, or challenges as individuals understand them tend not to be disciplinarily bounded. PAR is frequently a transdisciplinary process.

Although we do not wish to foreclose the potential of PAR in the social sciences by strictly defining what it must be, we can suggest some commonalities found in many descriptions of PAR, which often include:

- community voice in issue identification;
- systematic inquiry that may rely on diverse methods;
- continuous, iterative feedback and dialogue between the traditional researcher and the community members;
- explicit acceptance of the bias inherent in all forms of research, combined with intentional solidarity with marginalized or subaltern communities involved (if there must be bias, cultivate a bias that attempts to intentionally favour those communities);
- diverse methods of community-driven research dissemination, which may include dissemination through public meetings, grant applications, explicitly political materials, editorials, videos, or other forms of art and activism.

Descriptions vary in the extent to which they explicitly mention all of these components. For example:

- In *Urban Education*, McIntyre (2000) suggests there are three principles that guide most PAR projects: (a) the collective investigation of a problem; (b) the reliance on indigenous knowledge to better understand that problem; and (c) the desire to take individual and/or collective action to deal with the stated problem.
- Political Sociologist Gaventa argues that PAR ‘is simultaneously a tool for the education and development of consciousness as well as mobilization for action’ (1991: 121–122).
- In the field of public health, where CBPR is the commonly used term, this participatory method is defined as a ‘collaborative approach to research that equitably involves all partners in the research process and recognizes the unique strengths that each brings’. CBPR begins with a research topic of importance to the community, ‘has the aim of combining knowledge with action and achieving social change to improve health outcomes and eliminate health disparities’.

(Community Campus Partnerships for Health 2011)

Less important than a precise definition is the integrity of the participatory process – and most specifically the integrity with which community guidance is heeded. Drawing on essential components suggested by Community Campus Partnerships for Health, The Center for Collaborative Action Research, and the PAR Collective at the City University of New York Graduate Center, as well as articulations from scholars across a diverse set of fields, we suggest the three core commitments in a PAR process (see Figure 12.1).

So what might PAR look like ‘on the ground’? We can consider, by way of illustration, one of the most well-known cases of researcher–community collaborations that led to significant improvements in basic human security through the design of community-based health care interventions. Paul Farmer’s increasingly well-known work in Haiti provides one beautiful example of PAR (though it is perhaps a shame to call beautiful what should never have been necessary). As a young doctor in Haiti, Farmer noticed that Western Medicine was blaming tuberculosis patients for their failures to complete their tuberculosis treatment regimen. Doctors and other medical professionals explained 40 per cent treatment success rates by mentioning ignorance, voodoo, and superstition among the local population. Farmer, heavily influenced by his training in medical anthropology and the liberation theology

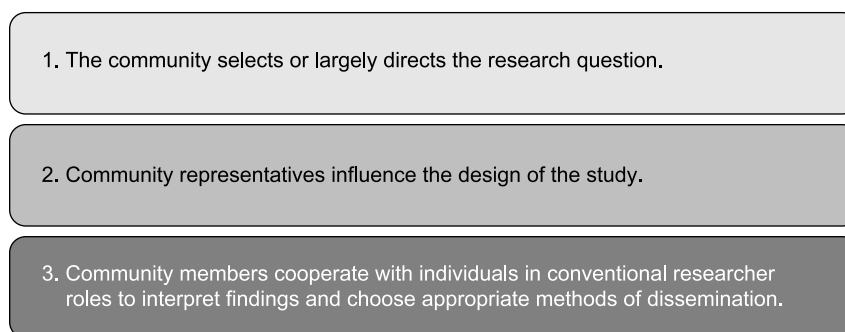


Figure 12.1 Three core commitments in PAR. Derived from Rahman (1983), Chesler (1991), Fals-Borda (1995), Farmer (2003), Gaventa (1991) and Stoecker (1999).

mandate to ‘provide a preferential option for the poor’, decided to ask Haitians why they failed to complete their treatment regimens. Their answer: as breadwinners for their families, as soon as they felt better from initial treatments they would return to work in order to earn money, provide food, and provide water (Farmer 2003).

Armed with this new information – that took time, community discussion, and thoughtful exchange to collect – Farmer worked with local medical professionals and community members to devise a new treatment plan. They provided stipends to cover patients’ food and transportation needs during their treatment cycles. The successful treatment rate jumped from approximately 40 per cent recovery to, in the first trial, 100 per cent, and it remained near that astonishingly high number. By erasing old concepts, listening, and as a result seeing in new ways, Farmer, his colleagues, and most essentially community members have now, nearly 20 years later, developed a treatment regimen that has saved literally millions of lives (Satchell 2005). Paul Farmer used community-listening techniques to help figure out why tuberculosis treatments were not working in Haiti. Although asking questions and listening to ‘research subjects’ does not seem like a radical idea, Farmer saw that academics and practitioners failed to pose simple, but life-saving questions to the local population. Through engaging with the local population on a more equal footing – by asking questions rather than assuming answers – Farmer was better able to understand challenges in accessing medicine.

More than just adopting alternative methodological techniques and tricks, employers of PAR have to unhinge the researcher/researched dichotomy. This is not an easy task with an easy solution. The liberation and pedagogical writings of Paulo Freire are helping in thinking about practical ways of dismantling this dichotomy and have long been inspiration for practitioners of PAR.

Freire offers explicit insight into *how* to rethink the colonial/colonizer and teacher/student relationships. His liberation theology is based on radically rethinking how we engage the ‘other’. For this reason many employers of PAR have found Freire also very useful in thinking about how to engage the researcher/research subject relationship. From his work, we sort out two specific strategies that can be undertaken or engaged while doing research that might help move closer to a less oppressive and less objectifying agenda: dialogue as epistemology and true solidarity. First, we must distinguish between dialogue as an epistemology and dialogue as a method or technique. Freire and Macedo (1995: 376) argued that the fundamental goal of dialogical teaching is to create a process of learning and knowing that invariably involves theorizing about the experiences shared in the dialogue process. They explain:

In order to understand the meaning of dialogical practice, we have to put aside the simplistic understanding of dialogue as a mere technique. Dialogue does not represent a somewhat false path that I attempt to elaborate on and realize in the sense of involving the ingenuity of the other. On the contrary, dialogue characterizes an epistemological relationship. Thus, in this sense, dialogue is a way of knowing and should never be viewed as a mere tactic to involve students in a particular task. We have to make this point very clear. I engage in dialogue not necessarily because I like the other person. I engage in dialogue because I recognize the social and not merely the individualistic character of the process of knowing. In this sense, dialogue presents itself as an indispensable component of the process of both learning and knowing.

While we believe this is of central importance in the classroom, this insight is also important when thinking about fieldwork, interviews, and human engagement. Do we really engage in dialogue for the mere purpose of acquiring information? Is that all that we want as

researchers? To get something useful that we can write about? To get someone to say something that will support our hypothesis? This cannot be right. Is dialogue just about sharing individual experiences? Is the purpose of fieldwork to open up a safe space for everyone to voice his or her grievances? That seems rather problematic. Fieldwork that involves interviews and speaking with people must be, from our perspective, about social interaction for the purposes of better understanding the process of knowledge. Otherwise, storytelling and dialogue would be an end in itself; one could end up with dialogue as conversation where individual experiences are given sole importance.

Fieldwork within PAR is not about being a docile listener and an avid note taker. Nor is it about preaching and getting the supportive quotes needed to illustrate and humanize arguments. Rather, there is an attempt at true interaction in which both the researcher and the so-called research subject act as co-investigators in dialogue. What does this look like in the field? It involves rethinking how we acquire information. Instead of one-off interviews, the researcher and the research subject must engage in prolonged discussions and deliberations. This process is not designed solely to ensure larger amounts of information or more reliable data, but to help us rethink the relationship between the researcher and the researched. People being studied are given control over the purpose and procedures of the research; it is intended to disrupt the traditional but implicit view that researchers are superior to those that they study. In our research this has taken several forms, but it primarily involves a back and forth exchange between the so-called 'research subjects' and the researcher that has a transformative effect on not only how we 'write up' our research, but also how we might reconfigure the research designs.

One of us, for example, developed a relationship with community organizations in rural Karagwe District of Tanzania, which has now spanned more than five years. When that relationship was in its second year, ongoing dialogue led to an opportunity to focus research tools on a question of specific and timely concern to one of the community organizations, WOMEDA: The Women's Emancipation and Development Agency. The origins of the relationship were not in attempting to 'locate research' together, but rather existed due to our common involvement in civil society and humanitarian efforts. After an initial summer of visiting with and learning about development from this and other dynamic organizations on the ground in rural Tanzania, I returned with a group of students prepared to engage in direct manual service, tutor in English courses, and learn about community development from organizations already advancing it.

The initial plans, which had been constructed over a year's worth of intercontinental dialogue via occasional email and shaky Skype connections, were not coming to fruition in the community. But a strong basis of communication and trust had been established. Freire might call this prolonged dialogue in the hope of better knowing the other. Because we were collectively flexible with and open to one another, I was able to work with my students and many community organization staff members to help address a question advanced by the Director of WOMEDA: How do we evaluate and demonstrate WOMEDA's value to women in the community, specifically in a manner that will be recognized by a large development organization? Our choice of methodology emerged through continuous dialogue – and finally a fortunate finding. Our WOMEDA counterparts assured us they had no records that could support quantitative analysis. We therefore developed a series of semi-structured interview questions designed as part of a grounded-theory approach to understanding the importance of WOMEDA for women in several communities in the area.

Our questions were developed from the broad questions WOMEDA suggested could be important: What are the primary challenges for women in the community, and where do

they turn for resources when they face challenges? Once we had a set of interview questions that explored women's perspectives relating to those two broader questions, we tested them with WOMEDA representatives, received feedback, and finalized a question set that we then used with a series of focus groups in several different communities where WOMEDA worked. We heard gripping and destabilizing stories of rampant spousal abuse and women who were forced out of their homes and away from their communities by husbands who preferred to take younger wives. We also learned about how WOMEDA had successfully represented these women before village councils and Tanzanian state courts. Together, these separate stories were painting a compelling picture of WOMEDA as an important community organization. That picture would enable us to use the language of research and bureaucracy in which we had been so steadily trained. We used that language to support WOMEDA in their efforts to communicate their efficacy to a development agency that spoke exclusively in the languages of bureaucracy and evidence-based efforts.

Additionally, during one of the interviews, we discovered that women who visited the organization had to sign-in using a book that dated back four years. We took all of the data from the book, entered it into a spreadsheet, and soon determined that the average distance a woman walked to visit WOMEDA was twenty miles. We had important and compelling stories of rights, representation and access, gathered across numerous communities, as well as a quantitative indicator suggesting the organization was important enough to women in the region that they were willing to walk twenty miles to receive representation there.

In terms of dissemination of results, WOMEDA was not interested in an academic paper appearing about their work in a journal based in the USA or Europe. They wanted our findings to appear in a format suitable for a particular grant application. They were also interested in having brochures that demonstrated the importance of their organization – and their wish list included a great website. While we were there that year, we supplied the evaluation component of the grant text, while WOMEDA wrote the remainder of the grant application. We also developed and printed a brochure at their request. The following year, we created a website (see <http://www.womeda.org/>).

Our conversations and ongoing commitments to one another made this process – fundamentally bound up with advancing human security in rural Tanzania – possible. WOMEDA was and is beautifully effective at its work. Our skills from within the academy were well-suited to help them demonstrate their effectiveness outside the academy. Yet we would have been helpless had we followed a traditional research model to determine what organizations were assisting individuals in this section of rural Tanzania, where the state is weak and measures like census data are notoriously unreliable. Only together could we see the importance and possibility of this particular use of our research tools, and could WOMEDA receive the funding that it ultimately received through that grant application.

In addition to rethinking the ethics of the acquisition of data, it is also important to critically think about the relationship with the so-called research subjects. To return to Freire, when discussing oppression, Freire describes three possible subject positions: the oppressed, the oppressor, and those who are in solidarity with the oppressed. Of course we believe oppression, and how we relate to it, is much more complex than this. Nonetheless, if we follow Said's claim that the role of the intellectual is to expose and fight oppression wherever we encounter it, then academics generally would want to be in solidarity with the oppressed. What does it mean, however, to be in solidarity with the oppressed? True solidarity, argues Freire, requires that one enter into the situation of those with whom one is in solidarity; it is a radical posture indeed. We would argue that such a position is impossible. That point aside, coming to see the world as subjects see it is known, in academic jargon, as 'going

native'. This should be avoided, describes every research manual, because under such conditions researchers will allegedly lose their objectivity about the study, which will supposedly prevent researchers from gaining scientifically useful insight into the behaviours under study. To avoid losing perspective (and going native), observers should, according to these manuals, strive to escape the group setting frequently if possible and should discuss with trusted people outside the group what it is they are observing to get those people's views of what the observer is seeing. In short, the academy formally warns against being in solidarity with our 'subjects' of research.

From Freire's perspective, however, we should strive to see the world from the perspective of the other. We will never accomplish this – seeing and feeling the world as the other does – but we should strive to do so. True solidarity with the oppressed means fighting at their side to transform the objective reality which has made them 'beings for another'. True solidarity also means avoiding 'false generosity'. Freire argues that any attempt to 'soften' the power of the oppressor in deference to the weakness of the oppressed almost always manifests itself in the form of false generosity. This is not by accident. In order to have a continued opportunity to express 'generosity', the oppressor must perpetuate injustice as well. As argued by Freire, 'an unjust social order is the permanent fount of this 'generosity', which is nourished by death, despair, and poverty' (2006: 44). 'True generosity', on the other hand, consists in fighting to destroy the causes of false charity. That is, precisely in fighting to destroy the unjust social order.

This comes, argues Freire, from the oppressed themselves and from those who are truly in solidarity with them. What does this mean for academic engagement? To begin, the academic must stop regarding the oppressed as an abstract category and start to see them as persons who have been unjustly dealt with, deprived of their voices, cheated in the sale of their labour. Academics may achieve solidarity when they stop making pious, sentimental, and individualistic gestures and risk 'an act of love'. True solidarity is found only in the plenitude of this act of love, in its existentiality, in its praxis. To affirm that men and women are persons and as persons should be free, and yet to do nothing tangible to make this affirmation a reality, is a farce (2006: 50).

Conclusion

This chapter is about PAR, but it is also about love. Love, a topic never discussed in research methodology courses, cannot be empty nor can it be quiet. Love must take the form of praxis. Praxis for Freire is the action and reflection of men and women upon their world in order to *transform* it. Praxis is the essence of dialogue itself: the word. As argued by Freire and repeated over again by those who emphasize the importance of social construction, 'human beings are not built in silence', but in word. True word is both thought and action. To say true word – which is work, praxis – is to transform the world. However, saying true word is not the privilege of some few persons with research agendas. It is the right of everyone. Consequently, no one, argues Freire, can say true word alone – nor can she say it *for* another, in a prescriptive act which robs others of their words (2006: 88). And this returns us, again, to the methodological and ethical dilemmas from which we began and that may have no easy answer or solution. In our research, we have temporarily come to terms with these concerns through the promise of PAR. Any of the interviews, observations, and analyses ('data') were collected while volunteering at the USA/Mexico border or while working in cooperation with community organizations in rural Tanzania. Although volunteerism and local direction are not the 'solution' for all academics, it is one way of working towards praxis and more ethical research.

Frequently, PAR research methods amount to a radical departure from accepted standards and common expectations. Indeed, PAR requires researchers to develop sufficient flexibility of mind to see, ask, listen, and understand in new ways. Any effort to understand the human experience through emancipatory or critical lenses is fundamentally bound up with imagining and creating new realities that move beyond our contemporary structures and concepts. In Security Studies, this frequently implies seeing beyond dated definitions or categorizations of peace and security – and rather situating the questions of peace, security, or even emancipation with individuals who define these ideals in their own ways and according to their own perspectives. Participatory methods help us see how challenges, successes, the human experience, and movements toward emancipation are understood by the individuals and communities with whom we exist. It is a starting point to a long and constantly revisited commitment to those we wish to ‘write on’.

Please see the companion website for a seminar exercise.

Questions for further debate

- 1 What type of research is better suited for PAR approaches? What type of research cannot and should not incorporate PAR strategies?
- 2 Central to PAR is the notion of solidarity. Is solidarity possible? Should researchers strive for solidarity? What are the trade-offs or concerns of pursuing normative research?
- 3 In what ways might well-intentioned PAR researchers burden community members or NGOs? How can these concerns be avoided?
- 4 We have reviewed Said’s suggestion that the intellectual is someone whose place it is ‘to confront orthodoxy and dogma’. Identify a current pressing social issue in your community. What are the assumptions necessary for this issue to be a problem? How does deconstruction or denaturalization of categories affect the issue at hand? Could the issue be addressed in part by seeing in new ways?
- 5 Is love a necessary component of conducting research? If so, how so? If not, why not?

Notes

- 1 As one well-known example, review the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment. See also Washington (2006).
- 2 Perhaps the most famous example of the importance of representation in maintaining power relationships (what Foucault would call the power/knowledge nexus) is Edward Said’s analysis of the social construction of the ‘Orient’. See Said (1978). Similar works include: Escobar (1995), Mitchell (1991), Mohanty (1988) and Mudimbe (1988).

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13 Elite interviews

Ruth Blakeley

Chapter summary

This chapter shows how elite interviewing can provide insights that cannot be gleaned from documentary analysis alone. It draws on the author's own experience of interviewing dozens of US Department of Defense officials, as well as individuals from high profile human rights organisations, about the impact that US training of Latin American military forces had on human rights during the Cold War and afterwards. The training, much of which took place at the School of the Americas (SOA), now the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC), gained notoriety in the 1990s, when training manuals were leaked that showed the USA had advocated methods tantamount to torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. The chapter introduces readers to some of the challenges of elite interviewing, it discusses some of the thorny ethical questions that need to be considered, and it provides guidance on conducting interviews.

Learning outcomes

On completion, readers should be able to:

- explain the benefits of undertaking focused interviews in the field of critical Security Studies and the various challenges involved in undertaking elite interviews, relating to research ethics, power relations and the influence of the researcher on the interview process;
- evaluate the ways in which carrying out focused interviews can be further enhanced by ethnographic methods and the relative benefits and costs of undertaking non-ethnographic and ethnographic interviews;
- reflect critically on the different methods for recording interview data.

Introduction

This chapter is informed by research undertaken to evaluate the ways that powerful Western states have sponsored state terrorism¹ in efforts to secure access to and control over resources and markets in the Global South, from European colonialism to the present day (Blakeley 2009). Historical materialist theory underpins this analysis. Historical materialism shares some of the same commitments of other critical theories (Herring 2010). It is a particular form of Marxism which contends that states and systems of interstate power relations are embedded in and produced through systems of relations which

encompass the social organisation of production (Rupert 2008). Many historical materialists understand imperialism to be the context in which states such as the USA have pursued their foreign policy objectives. They draw on the work of Robert Cox, whose analysis of the global political economy demonstrated the relationships between class, the state and world order. Imperialism, as Cox argues, ‘adds a vertical dimension of power to the horizontal dimension of rivalry among powerful states’, a dimension which is ‘the dominance and subordination of metropole over hinterland, center over periphery, in a world political economy’ (Cox 1986: 215–216). For historical materialists, detailed empirical analysis is indispensable, both as a means of analysing the specific facts of an issue, but also as a means of developing an understanding of entire phases of world history (Herring 2010).

In the case of the USA, one significant aspect of its support for state terrorism has been the political, financial and military support it gave to repressive regimes in Latin America throughout the Cold War. This included extensive military training in counter-insurgency techniques. These were intended to terrorise a wider population than their immediate victims in the hope of quashing support for progressive political movements that posed a threat to US strategic and material interests (Blakeley 2009).

In 2004, the opportunity arose to undertake a period of fieldwork in the USA. It included four weeks in Washington, DC, to interview human rights activists that campaign against SOA/WHINCEC, as well as serving and retired Pentagon officials that had been involved in US training of Latin American military forces since the end of World War II. I could thereby draw on the experience of several generations of US military personnel who had been present throughout the ‘American century’. That century saw the ascendancy of the USA to super-power status, and its eventual unrivalled dominance of world politics and the international political economy. The fieldwork also included a two-month ethnographic study at the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC), formerly the School of the Americas (SOA), in Fort Benning, Georgia. Throughout those two months, I spent four days per week at WHINSEC. I was free to observe any class of my choosing, unannounced, attend key events, including meetings of the Board of Visitors (an oversight body established to hold WHINSEC to account), and interview any member of staff or the student body as many times as I wished. This period of focused, ethnographic interviewing provided insights into US training of Latin American military personnel over an entire period of history, from the end of World War II to the present day. The remainder of this chapter introduces some of the challenges involved in elite interviewing.

Conducting elite interviews

The value of focused interviews

The emphasis in this chapter is on focused interviews, since this is considered to be the richest form of interview for the study of the social world. Social scientists tend to differentiate between three types of interview (Fielding and Thomas 2001): standardised or structured interviews; semi-standardised or semi-structured interviews; and non-standardised, unstructured, or focused interviews (see Box 13.1).

Box 13.1 Types of interview

Standardized or structured interviews involve using the exact same wording of questions in the same order with each interviewee. Readers may be familiar with this type of interview from encounters with market researchers. **Semi-standardized or semi-structured interviews** are marginally more flexible, since with this type of interview, the researcher is free to vary the sequence of the questions and pursue more information through follow-on questions. This can be useful if the interviewer needs to adapt to respondents with varying levels of comprehension or ability to articulate their responses. Finally, **non-standardized, unstructured or focused** interviews provide the interviewer with the most flexibility, since the interview is conducted not through a series of fairly standardised questions, but simply through pursuing various themes or topics that the interviewer wishes to cover. The list of topics or themes provides the interviewer with a guide, but there is much more room for allowing the interview to be led by the direction that the respondent's answers take it. This is sometimes understood as a 'guided conversation' rather than an interview.

Fielding and Thomas (2001)

Focused interviews not only provide the best possibility for gathering rich data from interviewees, but they also allow the researcher to undertake interviews that are appropriate to the background, experience, level, rank and interests of the interviewee. For example, themes had to be explored in different ways with human rights NGOs than they were with US military personnel. One of the puzzles at the heart of the research on SOA/WHINSEC was whether training at WHINSEC continued to present a risk to the human rights in the home countries of the Latin American military staff receiving training, as human rights activists claim. To explore this, my focus when interviewing human rights campaigners was on asking them to tell me more about the evidence they had uncovered of ongoing threats to human rights from WHINSEC. By contrast, a rather different approach was needed with military personnel. Department of Defense staff who have had anything to do with SOA/WHINSEC are familiar with the human rights critiques of the institution. My first interviews took place at the Pentagon, well before I had stepped through the doors of WHINSEC for the first time. To explore the nature of the training with US military personnel at that stage in the research, therefore, my questions were aimed at exploring the purposes of the training, and the forms it took. I would ask open questions about what the purposes of the training had been in the Cold War, whether there had been any changes in those purposes since the end of the Cold War, and what impact the closing of SOA and the opening of WHINSEC had had on the nature of the training. I would proceed with questions relating to how they explained the existence of the SOA training manuals which advocated human rights abuses, and whether they considered these to be typical of US military training and US military practice. These questions emphasised the strength of focused interviews as a means of developing a rich understanding, not simply of how individuals perceive an issue, but as a means of identifying the culture of an institution, its evolution, its shared history and its collective memory. These insights could not be gained from any of the documentary research I had previously completed, which involved reading the leaked training manuals, reading secondary sources about SOA as an institution, and reading the public statements that had been issued by the

Pentagon and the Office of Public Accounting, following their investigations into the manuals. Most importantly, the focused interviews helped tease out important contradictions in thinking that at first had been concealed by the party-line offered by my interviewees in their initial responses.

Repeatedly, US Department of Defense staff, when asked about the revelations that SOA had encouraged human rights violations, trotted out a well-rehearsed story that reflected the official version of events that emanated from the Pentagon in the immediate aftermath of the leaking of the manuals. This narrative asserted that the manuals had only been used among a small minority of students, that the nefarious content had ended up in the manuals through a series of oversight errors, but that these were not reflective of US military policy. My interviews at the Pentagon took place just a few months after the photographs depicting prisoner abuse at the Abu Ghraib prison had been widely published. In response to the official narrative on SOA by my interviewees, therefore, I would follow-up with questions relating to the relationship between the manuals and the more recent abuses. All were quick to condemn them. Several made the argument that the Abu Ghraib abuses were the work of 'a few bad apples' that had been poorly trained. Others candidly revealed that there was now considerable confusion about what was acceptable. They explained that confusion had arisen following mixed messages from the US Department of Justice, under the Bush administration, which had sanctioned a number of 'enhanced interrogation techniques' (CIA 2004), a euphemism for torture, for use by the CIA in the 'War on Terror' against suspected members of Al Qaida. This, they argued, had filtered through the ranks. Some even wondered aloud whether this confusion had contributed to the Abu Ghraib prisoner abuses. The responses on Abu Ghraib, particularly from older military personnel who had been involved in the Cold War training, revealed much more accurately their true personal perspectives on Cold War counter-insurgency methods than their responses to direct questions about SOA had. A number argued that Abu Ghraib was completely different from SOA, since the SOA manuals were part of a broader, legitimate US counter-insurgency strategy that was necessary for fighting a really dangerous enemy in a different era, where they argued certain things were more permissible than they are now. Wanton sexual brutality as occurred at Abu Ghraib, they argued, was totally unacceptable, but counter-insurgency methods aimed at securing intelligence from terrorised relatives were necessary in the face of a huge threat. Interestingly, very similar arguments have been made more recently by the Bush administration about the legitimacy of 'enhanced interrogation techniques' and water boarding. These methods, which bear a striking resemblance to those describe in the SOA manuals, have been used against detainees in the Guantánamo Bay detention facility, and sanctioned at the highest levels of the US administration. Meanwhile, the Bush administration condemned the perpetrators of the Abu Ghraib abuses.

Documentary research had revealed nothing of the contradictions in the attitudes of personnel that I encountered through these interviews. Documents had given me important insights into the content of the training, and the various official claims made about the training. The interviews helped uncover a much more complex picture. Individuals within the Pentagon, while recounting the party-line that torture was not acceptable, indicated that they thought the methods used in the Cold War were somehow acceptable, because they were being deployed in the face of what they perceived to be an enormous threat. Furthermore, they had distinguished in their own minds between methods used as part of what they considered to be a legitimate counter-insurgency campaign and what they saw as the unregulated, unsanctioned abuses by a few deviants.

The added value of ethnographic interviews

The interviews with Pentagon staff provoked a range of new questions that I had not previously considered before commencing the fieldwork. Exploring these was possible during the second phase of fieldwork at WHINSEC. Until then, my interviews had all been non-ethnographic. In other words, they were one-off and unconnected events where I had little opportunity to gain any insights into the daily lives of the interviewees. At WHINSEC, the ethnographic interviews provided an even richer set of data from which to draw conclusions.

The research at WHINSEC had a rather different character to the interviews undertaken at the Pentagon. They were fairly formal in the first instance. In nearly every case, I also had at least one, if not several, opportunities to follow-up on these interviews in person. This meant that I could return with questions that had arisen, either through interviews with others, or through my observations of the training observed at WHINSEC. These 'interviews' in fact amounted to ongoing conversations over a longer period of time, which allowed interviewees to expand on their comments and provide a more complete set of reflections. Such a conversation unfolded with the Judge Advocate who oversaw the human rights training at WHINSEC. Our conversations focused on the place of international

Box 13.2 Ethnographic research at WHINSEC, Fort Benning, Columbus, Georgia

WHINSEC is situated on the enormous Fort Benning military base in Columbus, Georgia, a small town situated about an hour's drive from Atlanta. Fort Benning dominates Columbus, as the largest employer in the town and for miles around. The locals are very familiar with the controversy surrounding SOA/WHINSEC, because of the yearly protests that take place at the gates of Fort Benning, led by SOA Watch, and which in years gone by have attracted over 20,000 people to the town for a long weekend each November. These protests have been a significant source of revenue for the local community. Local people are very familiar with SOA Watch's founder, Roy Bourgeois, whose house is situated just outside the gates of Fort Benning. For the two months that I spent at WHINSEC, interviewing staff and students, and sitting in on the training the US military was providing for the officer class of the armed forces from many Latin American states, my interactions with the wider Columbus community were as significant in shaping my understanding as were the more formal aspects of the fieldwork (interviews, observing training). Living in Columbus provided me with much deeper insights on the ideological divides within US politics and society. It revealed to me how revered the US armed forces are by large sectors of the US public. It helped me to better understand how the US political system works, and the place that lobbying plays within that. It also provided important insights into the legacy of racial inequalities in US society, and the ways that this had shaped people's attitudes to other nations and countries. In short, living in Columbus gave me a much richer understanding of the domestic context within which US military training of overseas forces takes place, and the ways in which the domestic shapes the international. Such insights could not be gleaned from documentary analysis alone.

human rights law and international humanitarian law in the training. He had a very different attitude to those I had encountered among Pentagon staff. He had no tolerance for arguments that violations of human rights had any place in the treatment of individuals detained by the military, and he was alarmed that such thinking was emanating from the Executive, the CIA, and certain quarters in the Pentagon. We discussed the various methods he was using to ensure that WHINSEC was not simply reminding trainees of their obligations under international law, but rather, that they were fully understood with reference to the actual scenarios they were likely to face. He had developed a series of case studies and simulations that were used to great effect in the officer training I observed. I was also able to follow-up with questions on the training as I observed it.

Through these conversations, along with my own observations of the training, I was able to develop a clearer sense of the character of the institution and its place within the US military than could be gleaned through documentary research alone. Indeed, most of the secondary source material available about WHINSEC emanated from people associated with the SOA Watch movement, and was not grounded in any serious engagement with the institution. It tended to assert that nefarious training continued. I encountered a very different institution to that described in the literature. There was considerable transparency, largely encouraged through the Board of Visitors, established after the transition from SOA to WHINSEC, to offer regular scrutiny of the institution by independent academics, human rights lawyers and various representatives from NGOs. A much more rigorous human rights training programme was in place than in any other US military institution for either its own or foreign forces.

These were important findings. When I put these points to Roy Bourgeois, founder of SOA Watch, towards the end of my time in Columbus, his response surprised me. He stated that he knew WHINSEC was not training people to torture, and that considerable changes had been made with new methods for oversight and transparency. He argued, however, that SOA/WHINSEC had become an important symbol for what he saw as wider problems with US foreign policy, and it would continue to be important for mobilising activists against US interventions overseas, as well as the use of torture, and US imperialism generally. I was then able to ask whether he and his team at SOA Watch thought it was legitimate to continue arguing that WHINSEC trains people to torture, when they know this to be untrue. He argued that this was necessary in the wider fight against US imperialism. I had previously found nothing in SOA Watch's published materials, its website, and its campaigning efforts to show that there was an appreciation among its leaders or membership of the fairly substantive changes that had been implemented when SOA was closed and WHINSEC was opened in its place. Without also undertaking ethnographic research and interviews at WHINSEC, I would have had little understanding myself of the degree of change. In particular, I would have had no perspective on the very thorough job undertaken by the Board of Visitors to hold every aspect of the training to account. Gaining these insights was a painstaking process of interviewing and re-interviewing, observing training, weighing up contradictions and anomalies between the accounts of different interviewees, and reaching judgements based on the extensive body of evidence eventually gathered from months of documentary research, and subsequently during the three months of interviewing and ethnography. Early on in the process, I made some costly mistakes. These taught me important lessons about the risks we run if we do not treat interviewees with the utmost respect. These had a significant effect on how I proceeded with the fieldwork thereafter.

The importance of trust

Social scientists that work within a post-positivist framework, as critical security scholars do, share the view that we can never free ourselves from the effects of the ideological commitments we hold, or the many experiences that shape our thinking. Some would nevertheless argue that we have a responsibility to approach research with as much objectivity as possible. This is particularly important for researchers seeking to carry out focused interviews. Interviewees need to be able to trust that the researcher is going to listen carefully to the things that they say, that they will accurately record the information provided, and the material be used in a manner that accurately reflects the perspective of the interviewee as communicated during the interview. Throughout the interview, the researcher is involved in process of demonstrating to the interviewee that they are a trustworthy vehicle for the recording and wider communication of the interviewee's experiences. To this end, I received a very sound piece of advice before I embarked on my fieldwork, which was to never argue with the interviewee. If the interviewer does argue back, they are suggesting to the interviewee that the experience they are sharing is being treated with contempt by the researcher. On two occasions, among the first few interviews I carried out, I broke this rule.

The first time I argued with an interviewee was during a telephone interview. My interviewee was making an argument in defence of torture as a tool for securing intelligence in the face of terrorist threats. I could not contain my own ideological commitment to the absolute prohibition of torture, and expressed my disgust at the interviewee's position. The interviewee ended the interview almost immediately. I had offended him, and worse, had allowed myself to be judgemental towards him, which served to undermine my objectivity, my preparedness to listen to his perspective, and in turn, his belief that I would treat his interview material with respect. I should have remained quiet, and listened to what he had to say, before proceeding to gently question him about how he squared his position with US and international law. Most of all I should have remained measured and calm. This would have elicited much more useful data than I acquired in the event. While this occurred on the telephone, its effect – to result in the hasty termination of the interview – alerted me to how risky such an approach is, and to the fact that in person, even a facial expression betraying contempt for the interviewee's position could have the same effect. This taught me early on that the interviewer has to learn to be very aware of their own body language, because this, too, can have profound effects on the trust that the interviewee is willing to place in the researcher.

The second time I broke the 'do not argue' rule less overtly, but I nevertheless overstepped the fine line between probing further and denigrating the interviewee. In one of the early interviews with a permanent staff member of SOA Watch, I asked the interviewee what evidence SOA Watch had that WHINSEC was still encouraging the abuse of human rights. When the interviewee pointed to a study that I considered to be fundamentally flawed, I failed to hide my frustration, asserting that this was a pretty poor response. The interviewee was, quite rightly, offended, and again, the interview was soon over. I was insensitive to the fact that I was speaking to a fulltime member of the SOA Watch team, and that before me was someone who had devoted their career to the work of SOA Watch, because they were deeply committed to promoting human rights. I had trampled over the choices they had made, with little thought. A much more appropriate line of questioning would have involved discussing the study, by asking the interviewee to clarify aspects of the study that I found problematic, and asking the interviewee to explain if I had misunderstood the issues

presented. In other words, what was needed was a more humble and in some respects naïve approach in my questioning, so that the interviewee felt emboldened to share their thoughts, rather than feeling that I was judging them and showing contempt for their work and their experiences. While I would not recommend that researchers test this for themselves, I only really saw the significance of the need to avoid arguing with or denigrating an interviewee when I saw the consequences of this for myself. This was by far the most important lesson I learned in my early days of fieldwork, and it speaks explicitly to the ethical principle of doing no harm in the pursuit of knowledge.

Ethical dilemmas

Researchers have a responsibility to carry out research ethically (see also Chapter 19). Generally speaking, research councils (such as the UK's Economic and Social Research Council, the Australian Research Council and the Social Science Research Council in the USA) will only fund research where a full review of the ethical implications of the work has been undertaken. Most funding bodies expect research to comply with key ethical principles. In many respects, the guiding principle that harm to research participants must be avoided in all instances encapsulates the various other ethical principles that researchers must abide by. While the principles are clear, they are nevertheless open to interpretation, and researchers will need to make judgements about how to abide by these principles. Where vulnerable groups are involved in the research, extra care needs to be taken, and research councils often offer important guidelines on the questions that need to be considered. For the purposes of this chapter, the focus will be on three specific areas that are most pertinent to elite interviewing. The first relates to the protection of interviewees from harm. The second relates to the anonymity of respondents. The third relates to the nature of the relationship between researcher and interviewee.

Protecting interviewees

Elites tend not to be considered particularly vulnerable groups. Certainly officials that I encountered in the Pentagon were very experienced interviewees, had received public relations training, and were well versed in how to conduct themselves when interviewed by academics and other outsiders. Staff members of NGOs are also members of the elite. They tend to be university educated, they are often from middle class backgrounds, and sometimes they have the capacity to exert influence at the government level. But they are also vulnerable. Those I interviewed tended to have less experience of being interviewed, and had not necessarily received training in this area. I had a responsibility to take special care with regard to their data. I recognised a vulnerability that I had a responsibility to protect that they may not have even been aware of. Even though they spoke on the record and were willing to be named personally in anything I published, I took the deliberate decision not to refer to any of the interviews I had undertaken among the human rights community in subsequent interviews I undertook with US military personnel. This was because their work often involved being highly critical of government, and even engaging in direct action against the US military, particularly at the annual protests at Fort Benning. I had a duty to ensure that I did not pass on any information about their activities or their identities, deliberately or inadvertently, to my interviewees associated with the US Department of Defense.

Establishing levels of attribution

The above example points to a second area where the researcher has to consider the specific circumstances of their interviewees. Researchers are encouraged to secure consent from research participants, preferably in writing, prior to undertaking the research (see Chapter 19, Box 19.1, for an example of a Participant Information Sheet). It is sometimes argued that researchers should also establish levels of attribution before any interview takes place. Establishing levels of attribution means determining whether the individual is happy to be named in any publications stemming from the research, whether the individual would prefer only to be identified by their membership of a particular group, whether they want to be totally anonymised, or whether the interview is entirely off the record. Others argue that in some cases, there is an argument for not establishing levels of attribution at the outset, since interviewees may want to vary the levels of attribution, and will indicate these at different stages during the interview. A further reason for establishing levels of attribution at the end is that interviewees might talk more freely if the question is not raised at the outset. Reaching a judgement on this will depend on the degree of vulnerability of the research participant. I found that US Department of Defense officials familiar with being interviewed would often volunteer the level of attribution without any prompt from me. They would indicate at the outset that everything they said was on the record. Occasionally, during the interview, they would indicate to me that a particular statement was off the record, or that they would rather not be named if I referred to a specific point in any published work. Since some of the first officials I interviewed established this pattern with me, I took the decision not to establish levels of attribution among officials at the beginning, but that if they had not indicated a preference by the end of the interview, I would then ask them to clarify. With interviewees that I perceived as being more vulnerable, I tended to establish levels of attribution at the outset. Regardless of our perceptions of the degree to which our interviewees are vulnerable, we nevertheless must ensure that all interviewees are afforded total integrity in how we handle their data. Their data must be held securely. If they indicate that they are expressing something off the record, we have a responsibility to protect their anonymity. If they indicate that a portion of the interview must not be published in any form, their wishes must be respected. Apart from anything else, if we do not respect the wishes of interviewees, they are far less likely to be willing to be interviewed in future, so we have a duty to ensure the best possible opportunities for researchers that follow us.

The nature of the interviewer–interviewee relationship

As well as giving careful thought to how we protect interviewees from harm, we also need to think about the ethical questions that arise from the decisions we make about our interactions with interviewees. In exceptional circumstances, researchers may conceal their true research motives, and they may even take on a false identity, as a means of gaining access to communities that they otherwise could not reach. In *Methods, Sex and Madness*, O'Connell Davidson and Layder (1994) describe some examples of this. In one case, a researcher posed as a receptionist in a brothel, to undertake covert ethnographic research on the habits and behaviours of men that pay for sex. Most researchers will not be faced with the many difficult ethical dilemmas such research poses. But questions about how we conduct ourselves with our interviewees are no less important. I noticed early on in interviewees among the largely male, military officials within the Pentagon, that my gender, appearance and nationality shaped the way these interviewees responded to me. Responses to me ranged from overtly

flattering spoken references to my appearance, flirtatious or charming behaviour, and spoken appreciation of my 'Queen's English' accent, to paternalistic or even patronising comments implying that interviewees did not consider me to be serious or knowledgeable, and even that I should not be troubling myself with these serious matters. I had a steep learning curve in developing strategies to respond to this range of responses. This including thinking through the ethics of the options open to me (see also Chapter 12 on *positionality*). What would be the implications of playing along with the slightly flirtatious tone, or over-emphasising my femininity? Would this help or hinder my efforts to elicit frank and candid responses from interviewees? Would playing on the perception that I was naïve and unaware elicit more or less useful material? What would be the effect of a more hard-line and serious approach? I experimented with a range of responses, and tended to find that a friendly and open approach was effective, without allowing myself to be distracted from the serious questions I wanted to ask.

Each researcher will have to make a series of judgements about what protecting their research participants means in practice, and what impact their own behaviour will have on participants. This will be based on the specifics of the communities they are engaging with. The most important thing is to be sure that researchers have complied with key ethical principles and that they are comfortable with and can defend the decisions they take.

Recording and analysing interview data

There is a significant body of literature on the various methods that can be used to record and analyse interview data. Different researchers have different preferences, and these often relate to the nature of the research being carried out. One of the first challenges is whether to make digital/tape recordings of interviews, or to take handwritten notes. There are advantages and disadvantages to both methods. Permission to record the interview must always be secured from the interviewee. A recording will provide a verbatim record of the interview. In some cases, though, the presence of the recording device may make some interviewees nervous, or more reserved in their responses. By contrast, taking handwritten notes can be less threatening to the interviewee, but the interviewer risks missing key bits of information, and will have to be a fairly rapid writer with a considerable aptitude for multitasking. If a researcher chooses to take handwritten notes, it is good practice to leave time immediately following each individual interview to go through the notes, and make any corrections and additions while the memory of the interview is fresh. If interviews are recorded, transcripts of the interview should be produced. This is time-consuming, although there are now software options available for this, or the researcher may employ a professional transcription service. The advantage of the researcher transcribing the interview her/himself is that it facilitates familiarisation with the interview material.

Methods for analysing data vary considerably, but the main principle is to develop a system for comparing material across interviews, without losing the context of each one. Many researchers develop coding systems to identify key themes in each transcript or set of notes, so that data can be easily compared. Rubin and Rubin's (1995) work is extremely helpful in outlining the different methods for doing this (see also Chapters 9, 14, 16 and 17). It is a good idea to try to devise themes and codes that speak directly to the broader research questions that the project is seeking to address. That way, the researcher can be sure that only material relevant to the project is included in the analysis.

Conclusion

Researchers identifying with critical approaches to security do not tend to see the interview data as a series of facts. Rather, the interview is understood as a social event based on the interactions between interviewer and interviewee. This is consistent with the approach adopted by those undertaking focused or ethnographic interviews, where the interviewee is given as much space as possible to freely speak, reflect and discuss an issue at some length. Therefore, when analysing interview data, the researcher will not be paying attention simply to the statements of the interviewee, but to their tone, their body language, and their general demeanour. The researcher will also reflect on their own impact on the interview. Therefore, even where interviews are recorded, it can be very helpful for the researcher to also take notes during the interview, to try and capture some of the complexity of what is a complex, relational human interaction.

Please see the companion website for a seminar exercise.

Questions for further debate

- 1 In what ways might focused interviews enhance the data gathered through documentary research in the field of Security Studies?
- 2 Can you think of particular actors in the international security arena who might be put at risk by agreeing to be interviewed by academic researchers? Why? How might these risks be minimised?
- 3 How important is it for the interviewer to establish a relationship of trust with the interviewee? What might cause a breakdown in trust?
- 4 Can you think of any instances when it might be legitimate for the researcher to conceal their identity, or to conceal the true purposes of the research? What are the risks associated with this?
- 5 Is it legitimate for the interviewer to use certain behaviours, or to play on particular personal characteristics, during interviews?

Note

- 1 State terrorism is defined as any threat or act of violence by agents of the state that is intended to induce extreme fear in a target audience beyond the direct victim of the violence, so that they are forced to consider changing their behaviour in some way.

Source for further reading and research

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14 Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software

Oz Hassan

Chapter summary

This chapter provides an introduction to Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) and its applications in critical Security Studies. After providing an overview of CAQDAS and its benefits and problems, the chapter provides a general description of some basic CAQDAS techniques. Once these general functionalities are identified, the chapter moves on to a concrete example of how the ‘Freedom Agenda Collection’ was constructed and analysed as part of a larger qualitative research project. The chapter orientates the reader using generalities and insights into what is possible before demonstrating the utility of CAQDAS by outlining practical techniques of analysis.

Learning outcomes

On completion, readers should be able to:

- understand the obstacles and benefits of using CAQDAS in their research;
- explain the multiple approaches that can be deployed using CAQDAS to guide their research methods;
- deploy basic CAQDAS techniques against qualitative datasets.

Introduction

Computer-Assisted (or computer-aided) Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) is a generic name used to identify a wide range of software packages that help researchers conduct various forms of qualitative research methods. As a research tool CAQDAS has, thus far, been heavily neglected in Security Studies. There are relatively few examples of CAQDAS being used in sustained Security Studies projects, and few demonstrable examples of how it can be used to address security issues. Yet, this deficit in and of itself offers new researchers an opportunity for pioneering this area, adding value to current research, and advancing the state of the art. That this opportunity exists is evident in the increasing attention paid to CAQDAS by research funding bodies, and the increasing numbers of researchers training in CAQDAS in an attempt to take advantage of this deficit. The aim of this chapter is to help further this shift towards using computer technology in critical approaches to security by unpacking the obstacles and benefits of using CAQDAS in research, outlining how multiple approaches can be deployed using CAQDAS, and setting out some of the basic CAQDAS techniques that can be deployed to help generate research findings.

Using CAQDAS

The end of the Cold War created an opening for a post-positivist turn in Security Studies, as discussed in Chapter 1. A range of analytical positions have therefore emerged that share similar anti-foundationalist and interpretivist orientations. In turn, as is evident in this volume, a wide range of methodological approaches have emerged into the mainstream as Security Studies widened and deepened. Thus, accompanying the end of the Cold War was not just a transformation of analytical assumptions underpinning Security Studies at the theoretical level, but rather traditional assumptions were challenged which created the need for more complex and theoretically informed methodologies. In turn this created the need for more sophisticated methods of qualitative analysis, which sought to help with interpreting events and understanding meaning.

It is important to note at this stage that the transformation that occurred, the proliferation of critical approaches to security and the creation of methodological plurality, does not make CAQDAS a 'method' in its own right. Rather, the use of CAQDAS is a platform from which to conduct a wide range of methods; many, if not all, of the methods discussed in this book can be conducted using CAQDAS. For example, conducting archival research using CAQDAS would involve retrieving archival data and inputting this data into the software in the form of written texts, photographs or video material. This would logically be different to adopting an ethnographic approach, where the researcher's diary may be kept on CAQDAS, elite interviews where transcripts would be input, or visual analysis where imagery would be input into the software. As such, CAQDAS does not dictate the methods used, but is a powerful tool to bridge the gap between methodology and method (it is situated as a tool between the researcher's 'theory' of security and the 'practical' research they conduct).

Once understood as a tool for conducting research and bridging the gap between methodology and methods, it is clear that before the researcher considers whether to use CAQDAS, they need to outline a larger research design that identifies the methodology and methods appropriate to the research project and its research questions. It is only by doing this that the researcher can consider if CAQDAS will add to the project by being appropriate to the methodology and methods being undertaken. For example, if in the research design it is clear that a positivist methodology is being adopted that requires the use of quantitative methods, it is self-evident that CAQDAS will not be useful. If however, the research design is post-positivist and requires the analysis of qualitative sources, then the next step will be to identify if CAQDAS is appropriate. If it is, then the subsequent step would be to identify which CAQDAS package to use whilst outlining a suitable strategy for utilising the software to answer the core research questions.

This will provide a pragmatic and balanced approach, helping to overcome some of the obstacles outlined above, by ensuring that there is a suitable fit between using CAQDAS and the needs of the specific research project. In particular the researcher should consider what form of 'coding tools' they will require and a 'coding system'. The importance of coding is that it labels a collection of references about a specific theme, place, person, or other area of interest so that the researcher can gather references made throughout the dataset together and compare, contrast and analyse their usage in accordance to their methodology. Coding is a way of categorising data, and is one of the ways that researchers familiarise themselves with the data whilst building knowledge about data. How and what the researcher codes can vary significantly depending on the methodology, and knowing what to code is ultimately led by the research questions. For example, one of the uses of CAQDAS in critical Security Studies could be exploring the construction on identities. Research questions such as 'How

are actors in the text represented?', 'What motives are ascribed to the actors?' and 'How are identities being constructed?' would be asked of each text, and through a 'code whilst browsing' strategy, the researcher would meticulously analyse each text and code instances applicable to the research questions. The results of such a strategy can be highly fruitful, and large amounts of data can be reduced to models such as that produced in NVivo or tabulated (as demonstrated in Figures 14.1 and 14.2).

Of course, not all 'eye-balling' the data (reading in a preliminary analysis) will involve 'coding whilst browsing'. For example, the researcher may want to make notes on the data that are not part of the coding system. Many programmes provide this option through a variety of writing and annotation tools that allow the researcher to create memos, logs and journals stored in the project, which has the added benefit of enabling links between different parts of the data. Such functionality is also important because it provides the researcher with a method of linking ideas and concepts together, organising their interpretations of the data, and mapping out their models as the research progresses.¹ This generates an iterative yet cumulative process where the data is constantly reviewed and considered over time. This has the ultimate aim of allowing the researcher's ideas about and understanding of the texts to develop. As a symptom of this, the researcher may decide to change the way they have coded the data: by changing the coding names, merging coding categories, changing the hierarchy of coding, or even deleting some coding. In this sense what emerges is a process of learning and familiarisation over time.

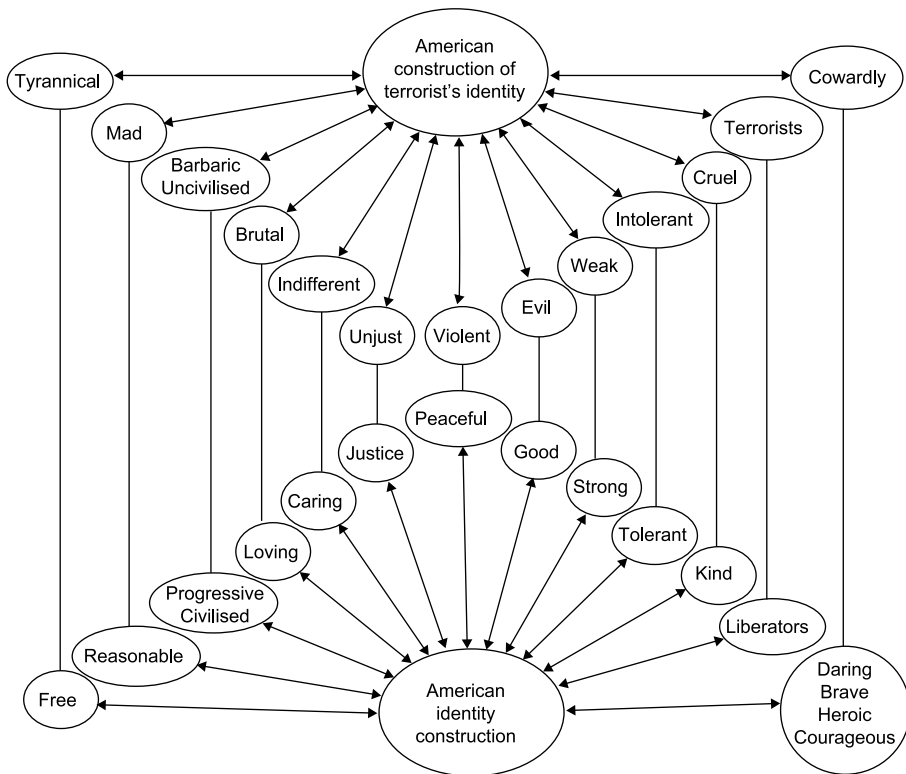


Figure 14.1 NVivo model of sample of binary identity constructions deployed by the Bush administration between 11 September 2001 and 20 January 2009.

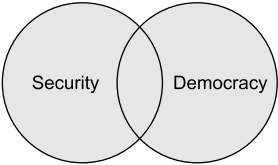
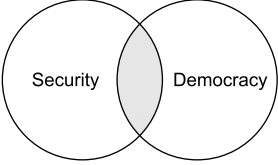
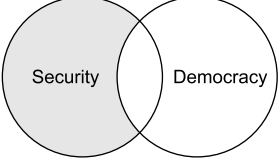
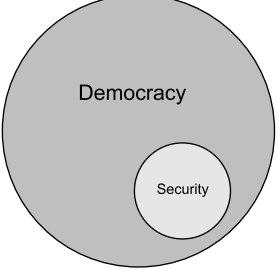
Description of 'Terrorists'	Description of 'America'
Terrorists	Liberators
Evil	Good
Tyrannical	Free
Unjust	Just
Barbaric/Uncivilised	Progressive/Civilised
Violent	Peaceful
Cowardly	Daring/Brave/Heroic/Courageous
Weak	Strong
Intolerant	Tolerant
Cruel	Kind
Brutal	Loving
Indifferent	Caring
Mad	Reasonable

Figure 14.2 Table format of sample of binary identity constructions deployed by the Bush administration between 11 September 2001 and 20 January 2009.

Another important area for the researcher to consider is the content searching tools available on the CAQDAS package. All of the packages offer this functionality and provide the ability to search, filter, focus and selectively interrogate the data. In some instances the researcher will simply want to locate items based on their name, particular characteristics or associations with other items in their project, which will simply require using the 'find' option. Yet CAQDAS also allows 'queries' to be conducted that identify content with particular text or coding characteristics. For example, packages allow the researcher to be highly specific in their search requests, targeting the whole database, select files, or single documents. Moreover, 'stemmed searches' can be conducted that enable the researcher to find words with the same 'stem' as the word entered in the search field, for example entering the term 'threat' would find words such as threat, threats, threaten, threatened and threatening. Wildcard searches can also be conducted that allow zero or more letters to be substituted; for example 'securit?' would find term security, but 'securit*' would find instances of the terms security, securitise, securities and securitisation. Further still, Boolean operators can be used, allowing for much more precise theory testing and coding throughout the entire dataset (see Table 14.1).

There are clear added advantages to having the functionalities provided by CAQDAS. Not only do programmes allow you to create databases of all your texts, but they also allow those texts to be managed and analysed more efficiently. This is particularly beneficial if the database is large. Managing and analysing a limited number of interviews or a limited number of secondary or tertiary texts can be done without CAQDAS, but some qualitative datasets can run into thousands or even millions of pages. As the quantity of texts increases, they become physically and mentally unwieldy, which can be overcome with the functionality provided by CAQDAS. This is certainly being demonstrated by the Warwick WikiLeaks Forum (WWF) that is dealing with 250,000 US Embassy Diplomatic Cables, whilst utilising the teamwork functions to coordinate a large project.² An additional advantage of using CAQDAS in this case is that it allows a team of users to work on the same

Table 14.1 Boolean operators in CAQDAS

Operator	Description	Syntax	Example
OR	Searches for items containing either (or both) of two terms.	Security OR Democracy	
AND	Searches for items containing both terms.	Security AND Democracy	
NOT (-) Prohibit	Searches for items containing the first term but not the second term.	Security NOT Democracy	
+(required)	Searches for items containing the required term and optionally the second term.	Democracy + Security	

large project over large geographical spaces and times. The NVivo programme that the WWF project is stored on allows this data to be managed and the entire system searched and coded. As such the ‘energy security subteam’ are able to code all areas that apply to them (by searching for terms such as oil, gas, solar, renewabl* and so on) whilst the ‘terrorism subteam’ are able to search for terms applicable to their area of research interest (such as rendition, arrested, interrogated, illegal combatant and so on). Notably in this case, the data is being used by different subteams, but one of the advantages of CAQDAS datasets is that they can be shared with different researchers. These can then be used for their research projects, and added to, or even used to further explore the initial research project the dataset was created for. Once a dataset is created, it can be reproduced and used multiple times by multiple people allowing projects to generate knowledge well beyond the life of the initial research project.

CAQDAS programmes clearly provide more than simply a convenient way to store texts. The availability of searching tools such as linking tools, coding tools, query tools, writing and annotation tools and mapping and networking tools allows the researcher to explore and record their ideas.³ Yet, beyond simply recording the researcher’s ideas,

many CAQDAS packages provide advanced functionality for representing the data and the researcher's ideas visually. One example is that provided in Figure 14.1, but some programmes are capable of going well beyond simple two-dimensional models. For example, Provalis Research's QDAMiner programme allows for the creation of three-dimensional multidimensional scaling to represent how strongly related different data points are, and also forms of correspondence analysis that help identify relationships within data. Yet, perhaps the most famous CAQDAS visualisations are of 'tag clouds' (also known as word clouds or weighted lists), which are becoming more frequently used on web pages and news reports detailing 'trending' in new forms of social media or summarising focus groups or speeches.

Tag clouds represent the top 100 words of a particular text or set of texts. For example, Figures 14.3 and 14.4 show tag clouds produced in NVivo that represent the top 100 words of four characters or more used in the 2002 and 2010 *US National Security Strategy* (NSS), respectively. The size of the word represents its relational frequency to the other words. For example, in Figure 14.3 it is evident that the word 'States' is the most frequently used word, whilst in Figure 14.4 'Security' is the most frequently used word (of four



Figure 14.3 Word cloud produced in NVivo of the 2002 US National Security Strategy created by the Bush administration.



Figure 14.4 Word cloud produced in NVivo of the 2010 US National Security Strategy created by the Obama administration.

characters or more). Moreover, at a cursory glance it is evident that both texts place importance on terms such as ‘Economic’, ‘Development’, ‘Trade’, ‘International’, ‘Global’, ‘Security’ and ‘States’, but that there are differences in the discursive importance of ‘Africa’ and ‘Freedom’ in the 2002 NSS compared to ‘Nuclear’ in 2010 NSS. These are useful visual representations of these documents, which tell the viewer about the weighting provided to particular concepts. As such, CAQDAS packages are not only a tool for conducting various research methods but are useful for going beyond this to create accessible outputs that can be engaged with by multiple audiences. Accordingly, what CAQDAS provides is a very powerful and diverse tool for exploring and representing qualitative data in a precise and meticulous manner, in accordance with the methodology and qualitative methods required for a particular research project. Given such a plurality of options it is perhaps best to turn to a practical example of how a research project has been conducted to provide an illustration. What is provided below is a set of steps used to conduct a process-tracing narrative discourse analysis of the Freedom Agenda Collection,

which consists of over 2,500 texts, dating from 23 September 1999 to 31 December 2011, that address US attempts to promote democracy in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

Constructing and analysing the Freedom Agenda Collection

As outlined above, before embarking on a research project and using CAQDAS it is necessary to identify a methodology and methods to address a particular set of research questions. As such, I created the Freedom Agenda Collection to address specific research questions about US foreign and security policy:

- How and why was the ‘Freedom Agenda’ developed?
- How was the ‘Freedom Agenda’ constituted and why was it done in this way?

These research questions were specifically designed to be in line with the concerns of a ‘constructivist institutionalist’ methodology, and require a ‘process-tracing narrative discourse analysis’ as a method to identify how policy is constructed within institutional settings. Given the qualitative nature of the data required to answer these questions it was deemed that CAQDAS was appropriate. NVivo was selected based on its availability, functionality and my previous training in the software programme.

Once this was decided, the next step was to identify how to select and generate texts. To analyse America’s Freedom Agenda policy, text selection was based on two key criteria: first, I evaluated the importance of the source, determined by either the level of public attention or symbolic significance; and, second, I evaluated the text’s relevance to the Freedom Agenda, which was a policy constructed in the aftermath of 11 September 2001, that attempted to promote democracy in the MENA. The Freedom Agenda included multiple strategies aligned to four distinct pillars identified by the US Department of State: political reform, economic reform, educational reform, and women’s rights. Dealing with this wide array of issues required selecting and separating multiple sources, and saving them in relevant files. The texts included speeches, interviews, press briefings, press releases, policy documents, fact sheets, reports to Congress, legislation and congressional debates.

Once texts were selected and generated they were loaded into NVivo. This created the Freedom Agenda Collection within an NVivo project. Upon entering each text into the NVivo project, it was given a title. The title started with the year, month and day in which the text was produced. This allowed the texts to be ordered temporally and chronologically analysed. Accordingly, a theoretically informed process-tracing of the Freedom Agenda was conducted, which allowed significant periods of policy change to be identified. Examples of the title format included:

- 1999_09_23 Citadel Period of Consequences (G.W. Bush)
- 2000_10_05 Vice Presidential Candidate Debate (R. Cheney and J. Liberman)
- 2006_08_07 ME Crisis between Lebanon and Israel (G.W. Bush and C. Rice).

Step One of the data analysis process was to conduct a detailed review of the texts, to maintain consistency of format throughout the database. *Step Two* required subjecting the text to analysis, in which sections of the text were manually coded. This was done by making

extensive notes using the DataBit function and coding the data at each source. Thus, a ‘code whilst browsing’ method was adopted that created a series of ‘free nodes’ (essentially coding the data by going through each text individually). Data coding was determined by the relevance to the main research questions, but a more expansive set of questions was drawn up and placed into a memo for reference (it was also printed out and placed beside the computer screen so that it could be constantly referred to whilst coding). These questions included:

- How are actors in the text represented and how are identities constructed?
- What motives are ascribed to actors?
- What argument structures are used; both ‘rational’ and ‘emotional’?
- How are events sequenced within the text?
- What representations of the past, present and future are embedded within the text?
- Is there a plot running through the text and cases of employment?
- What causal links are ascribed to, or inferred within the text?
- What ontological and epistemological claims are being made within the text?
- What assumptions, beliefs and values underlie the language of the text?
- What articulations are being made within the text?
- What are the histories and embedded meanings of the important words in the text?
- What meanings are implied by the context of the text, and how does this context alter the meaning of the words?
- What patterns can be observed in the language, and how do different parts of the text relate to each other?
- How consistent are the discursive constructions within the text?
- What regulative and constitutive ‘rules’ are (re)-constructed within the text?
- What are the power functions of the discursive constructions?
- What knowledge or practices are normalised and legitimised by the language of the text?
- How does the language create, reinforce, or challenge power relations?
- How does the current text relate to the previous text?
- To what degree does the current text represent continuity and/or change with the previous texts?

Whilst going through each individual text with reference to these questions, *Step Three* was undertaken, which reviewed the complete series of free nodes for overlaps and inconsistencies. This allowed the coding process to be made of a series of iterative yet cumulative manoeuvres, and demonstrated the manner in which constant reflection makes the research process a dynamic exercise. *Step Four* consisted of a series of computer-assisted searches, notably focusing on word frequency, cooccurrence between nodes, and to ensure completeness through auto-coding processes. *Step Five* consisted of converting ‘free nodes’ into hierarchies (in NVivo these used to be called ‘tree nodes’), which created clusters of nodes around hierarchical concepts. Once this was completed, *Step Six* was to review the project to ensure accuracy, detail and consistency. Adopting these steps allowed greater familiarity with the texts and thus encouraged a rigorous analysis. What such a strategy was able to produce was *theoretically driven* but *empirically rich* research that identified the particular discursive structures underpinning US policy towards the MENA, but also research that identified significant moments of policy change between 1999 and 2011. What CAQDAS provided was a tool to systematically bridge the gap between the established methodology and methods needed for the investigation.

Obstacles and limitations

Perhaps the greatest reason for the deficit of Security Studies researchers using CAQDAS is that it requires different knowledge and a different skill set to those taught for the most part on Security Studies courses. Not only must the researcher be comfortable with information and communications technology, which favours the majority of younger researchers, but a series of choices need to be made concerning the research design, the selection of the CAQDAS package, and the assortment of techniques to deploy. All of these decisions will involve an increased investment in time not just designing the research project in its initial phases, but actually learning the new skill of using the new software package. With looming deadlines these disadvantages serve as a serious obstacle in the first instance.

In addition to an investment in time being a serious obstacle, voyaging into the unfamiliar world of CAQDAS can be extremely intimidating for the uninitiated. There is a wide array of software packages to choose from, ranging from the very glossy and intuitively designed packages to those that are less aesthetically appealing and more difficult to navigate.⁴ Moreover, with CAQDAS being relatively new and evolving at a rapid pace that mirrors the developments in the microchip revolution and more powerful computer systems, by the time the user has familiarised themselves with one package a new version of that software with added functionality can already be on the market.⁵ Indeed, since the mid-1980s when THE ETHNOGRAPH software was first released, we have seen the release of a dazzlingly wide array of software options including ATLAS.ti 7, Digital Replay System (DRS), HyperRESEARCH, MAXQDA 10, NVivo 10, Transana 2.4, QDA Miner v4, Qualrus and others.⁶ Many of these packages no longer simply deal exclusively with written text, but are fully multimedia friendly and able to analyse audio, video and visual/graphical material in addition to pursuing a mixed methods agenda that combines qualitative and quantitative analysis. As the functionality of each package has expanded, so too have their user handbooks and online content along with the formation of a cottage industry in training workshops, events and tutorials around many of the software packages. If this was not enough, there is a *general* CAQDAS technical vocabulary that the user must familiarise themselves with, along with the *particular* vernacular of the chosen software packages.

A further obstacle to using CAQDAS is that these packages have not been designed specifically for Security Studies, but more broadly for the needs of commercial and state sectors, in addition to the needs of academic research in the social sciences. Accordingly, such packages have a wide array of functionality that goes beyond the immediate needs of many Security Studies projects. This can leave new researchers feeling that they need to learn how to use all the functions provided by the package they are using and then subjecting their data to all the techniques they have learnt. Although such effort is commendable, such a scattergun approach will likely be fruitless not only because of the vast amount of functions that can be performed on the researcher's data, but also because using CAQDAS is not simply an exercise in 'pushing a few buttons' and allowing the computer to do the research in a meaningless way. Indeed, there is often a common misperception that CAQDAS 'does the research'. CAQDAS will allow the researcher to freely experiment, but ultimately it is the researcher that will need to expend a vast amount of time and energy into using CAQDAS, familiarising themselves with the data and carrying out the functions needed for their particular research project. With these clear pitfalls in the way, researchers could be left wondering not only where to start, but if to start with CAQDAS at all? Yet, with a thoughtfully considered, pragmatic and well-designed approach to using CAQDAS, as outlined above, the value of such technology is clear.

Conclusion

A significant feature of all investigation in Security Studies is that there is no single algorithmic path that allows the researcher to seamlessly travel from initial conceptions to conclusive results. Thus, whilst there is a common misconception that the use of CAQDAS can provide such a path, this is based on a misunderstanding of what CAQDAS is and what it does. As a tool, it allows for a wide range of sophisticated procedures to be conducted, it can save the researcher time once they are proficient with the programmes, and it can allow forms of experimentation that would simply be impractical with the use of highlighter pens and paper (although such items continue to have their place). In each and every instance of concrete research, the researcher will have to ensure that they themselves understand what their guiding methodology is and what methods are appropriate. It is only then that it is possible for CAQDAS to be used to address the particular research problems in Security Studies.

Please see the companion website for a seminar exercise.

Questions for further debate

- 1 Do you see the use of CAQDAS as helpful or problematic to the conduct of Security Studies research?
- 2 As a researcher, how would you go about identifying if the use of CAQDAS was appropriate to your research?
- 3 How would you go about designing a research project using CAQDAS to investigate transformations in human security or green security discourses?
- 4 In what ways would using CAQDAS in the analysis of elite interviews, ethnography, visual analysis, or archival research require the use of different CAQDAS functionalities and data management plans?
- 5 In what ways are the CAQDAS visualisation tools useful for researchers?

Notes

- 1 Some suggestions of what to include in your journal are your research questions, along with details of what you expect to find and why, and what you have observed so far in the research.
- 2 I established the Freedom Collection, and consequently an expanded version of this analysis using NVivo 9 can be found in Oz Hassan (2012) *Constructing America's Freedom Agenda for the Middle East: Democracy or Domination* (London: Routledge). However, there are a wide range of data analysis sets available for analysis from ESDS Qulidata and the UK Data Archive at the University of Essex.
- 3 These tools are part of the definition of CAQDAS provided by the CAQDAS-QUIC project based at the University of Surrey (see further reading).
- 4 For example, later versions of NVivo have been designed to replicate the layout of Microsoft's Windows packages, which make using this programme more intuitive for those familiar with Windows software.
- 5 To illustrate this point, it is worth noting that I began CAQDAS training using NVivo 2, then conducted my doctoral research using NVivo 8, before updating this for my monograph research using NVivo 9, which before the monograph was released for publication was surpassed by NVivo 10.
- 6 Unfortunately, there is not space here to outline the comparative benefits of each CAQDAS package. As such I would recommend the reader refer to the CAQDAS Networking Project, based at the University of Surrey, and in particular the online section entitled: Choosing an Appropriate CAQDAS Package (see further reading). Reviews of individual software packages can be found online through that site as well.

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15 Social network analysis

Raluca Soreanu and Anca Simionca

Chapter summary

Social thinkers today are taking important steps from conceiving the social world in terms of substances and ‘things’ towards conceiving it in terms of processes and unfolding relations. Network approaches are at the core of this movement towards relational thinking. The chapter discusses Social Network Analysis (SNA) as more than a mere ‘method’, and argues that it belongs to a family of analytical strategies for the study of how resources, goods, events, or positions flow through a particular configuration of social ties. We show how the critical potential of network analysis grows from: (re)materialisations, interstitial thinking, and thinking across scales and strata of reality. In International Relations, the potential of network thinking rests in its creative disturbance of state-centric visions.¹

Learning outcomes

On completion, readers should be able to:

- understand the theoretical assumptions underlying network analysis;
- evaluate the appropriateness of a network analysis framework for research conducted in the field of critical Security Studies;
- formulate questions relevant for critical Security Studies while using a network analysis approach and its technical toolkit.

Introduction

Social thinkers today are taking important steps from conceiving the social world in terms of substances and ‘things’ towards conceiving it in terms of processes and unfolding relations. This chapter responds to the ongoing debate around network analysis as either ‘theory’ or ‘method’ by arguing that it cannot be reduced to a collection of techniques devised for grasping the structure of social relationships. Social Network Analysis (SNA) constitutes primarily a theoretical orientation, anchored in a relational understanding of how actors act and of what social action is. In a description that connects concerns about what the world is like (the ontological dimension) with concerns about how we can know the world (the epistemological dimension), network analysis can be said to belong to a comprehensive family of analytical strategies for the study of how resources, goods, events, or positions flow through a particular configuration of social ties. These analytical strategies are necessarily anchored in a theoretical mindset which takes *relations* – rather than individuals, attributes, categories,

or groups – as the fundamental unit of social analysis (see Marin and Wellman 2011). In a relational paradigm, things are not seen as independent ‘entities’ preceding a relation; rather they gain their whole being in and through the relations on which they are predicated (Cassirer 1953), and in and through the transactional contexts in which they are embedded.

Network-centred perspectives thus come with an important promise: that of escaping the limitations of a co-deterministic approach to social action, which explains social phenomena as the effects between agency and structure (Dépelteau 2008: 51). The view that social actors meet a world that has structural ‘properties’ – which they neither choose, nor design, nor are they fully determined by them – encapsulates an egocentric universe, populated by trimly separated individuals (or other anthropomorphised entities, such as states) who encounter social things that existed before them. This is a theoretical world where a phenomenon (the effect) is accounted for by the operations of external factors (the causes). It is an impoverished world, therefore, where the capacity to imagine our fluid and organic alliances with (or violent ruptures from) various objects (both animate and inanimate) fades away.

Relationism takes us further than co-determinism in our adventures of the mind, because it allows us to understand ‘dynamic, unfolding relations’ (Emirbayer 1997: 281). Relationism challenges our tendency to establish empirical relationships *between* social actors and structures. Structures do not carry or express particular properties, because properties do not exist outside or prior to social relations; instead, they are the result of ‘continuous transactions’ (Dépelteau 2008: 60) happening between interdependent actors. Actors, as well, take their shape, their properties, their very ‘actorness’ through transactions. We now inhabit a world where both reproduction and change are possible, but where they are not primarily treated as outcomes, but as processes. It is also a world where each transaction can generate ‘new actors, new entities, new relations among old parts’ (Abbott 1996: 863).

Among relational perspectives, network approaches have gained an important place in our theoretical imaginaries in the past two decades and have travelled well across domains of inquiry. Bruno Latour (2011: 796, 802) refers to the ‘hegemonic extension’ of the notion of network in our current theoretical context, and even to a ‘network revolution’. While Latour (2005) discusses networks first and foremost in the context of ‘Actor-Network Theory’ (ANT), his observations can ground a sociology of knowledge grasping the diffusion of the notion of network more generally. Latour (2011: 802) traces back the possibility of the ‘network revolution’ to the ‘coincidence between the conceptual notion of network (action is radically redistributed) and the rematerialisation allowed by digital techniques’. While taking distance from the specific use of the idea of networks in ANT, we follow Latour in stressing the importance of employing network approaches in ways that allow precisely a *(re)materialisation* of networks, meaning the recording of the material dimension of networks. As Latour (2011: 802) puts it:

[t]he more digital, the less *virtual* and the more *material* a given activity becomes. Nowadays, everybody knows that there is no GPS without three satellites; collective games without fast connections; drones in Pakistan without headquarters in Tampa, Florida; bank panic without Reuters screens; and so on.

Network analysis, we argue, is called to trace not only the fluidity of flows through a configuration of social ties, but also the complex (re)materialisations occurring in such configurations.

Apart from the focus on materialisations, a productive avenue for SNA (especially in the context of the discipline of International Relations, and therefore of interest to critical

scholars of security) stems from a critical reflection on the interstitial dimension of social life. What does that mean? ‘Interstitial’ literally refers to the gap or space between things (‘entities’); when we assemble a network, we also assemble its spaces and its entities. We ‘enticise’ some of the aspects of our studied phenomenon. But entities are inherently problematic in relational/transactional approaches. When we ‘enticise’ the individual or the state, we also ‘totalise’ that which is multidimensional, processual, cross-scalar, and contradictory. We exclude, as well, alternative entities which might stabilise at one point in time or another, and which might differ in substantive ways from the ones we are already considering. The work done by the network analyst, thus, begins with critical enticising and de-enticising. This means that the critical endeavours of the network analyst interested in security politics start from the encounter with or from the production of state-focused databases. Relying on such databases and generating social network analyses where the nodes are invariably states only reasserts a state-centric political imaginary. There, states are black-boxed and anthropomorphised (Kratochwil 2000), meaning that they are attributed human characteristics, in line with realist and neorealist versions of international theory, or with state-centric constructivist theories (Wendt 1999). The critical IR network analyst will thus be committed to the creative and reconstructive potential of keeping focused on the social interstice, where entities are never fixed and taken for granted, but they are themselves matters of process. The practical implications of this state of affairs are that various formal and informal organisations can and do become the entities of our networks.

Another productive avenue for critical network analysis flows from maintaining a commitment to links across ‘scales’ (Brenner 2004): from local to regional, national, or global. Such links become central to current security issues, such as the techno-scientific assemblages of the military–industrial complex. Even while thinking in terms of scales, network analysts are at risk of becoming interlocked within a single scale of the phenomenon they are studying. They are also at risk at overemphasising the idea of the hierarchisation or the vertical ordering of spaces, which is already implied in the notion of scales (Collinge 1999; Brenner 2004), while obscuring the fact that geographical scales are dynamic and fluid, and that the reconfigurations of any one scale can only be understood relationally, in terms of its multiple links with other scales, and its embeddedness in the broader ‘scalar order’ (Brenner 2004: 10).

There is yet a deeper risk that network analysts are faced with: that of becoming anchored in ‘flat ontologies’ (Vandenberghe 2006). What does this mean? It means that the social arena under investigation becomes a single network, an undifferentiated fabric that covers the world, in which we can include humans, non-humans, and un-animated objects, all bundled in a single assemblage. The idea of networks thus amounts to a ‘retiology’ (Musso 2003: 233, 326) or a ‘network ideology’ (Vandenberghe 2006), claiming that there remains nothing outside this all-encompassing ‘tissue’ based on connectivity and fluidity. In this theoretical universe, stratified ontologies – distinguishing between different domains of reality such as nature, life, psyche, and society (Bhaskar 1978; Castoriadis 1967) – become impossible.

There are many alternative histories that can be told about the development of SNA. While our account here explores the possibilities for a critical and thoroughly relational network analysis, there are impressive amounts of work being done to develop structuralist network analysis and its mathematical applications. Nadel gives a succinct expression to this structuralist direction as early as 1957. He sees social structure as ‘an overall system, network or pattern’ of relations, which the analyst can abstract from the observable actions of individuals (1957: 12). In this paradigm, networks become ‘the interlocking of relationships

whereby the interactions implicit in one determine those occurring in the others' (Nadel 1957: 16). While the recent structuralist ramifications and cooptations of network analysis are extensive across social science disciplines (including International Relations), we here give space to some crucial turning points in the life of *relational* network approaches.

One moment to mark is the development in the 1950s of the 'Manchester school', where a group of anthropologists influenced by Radcliffe-Brown pursued a distinctly critical direction in network analysis: at a time when the focus was on integration and cohesion, they emphasised conflict and change; when action was understood mainly as the result of the location in a structure of social relations, they followed Parsonian insights that treated action as an expression of internalised value orientations (Scott 2000: 26, 27).

In the USA, Harvard has functioned as a hub for scholars interested in linking networks and culture since the 1970s. Chicago has served as another hub, hosting conversations about multiple networks, contingency, and creativity (Mische 2011); while at Princeton scholars invested in linking social ties to institutions, inequality, and economic relations. During the 1990s and the 2000s, 'the New York school' in network analysis emerged, as Mische (2011) recounts, following the creativities of various thinkers who coalesced around relational ideas about the social world. Synthesising the work of these creative collectives at the time, Charles Tilly (2002: 72) proposed the idea of a 'relational realism' as a paradigm where 'transactions, interactions, social ties and conversations constitute the central stuff of social life'. In the 1990s, SNA was already a maturing interdisciplinary endeavour, even in its thoroughly relational decoupage. (See Box 15.1 for an account of the development of network approaches in the study of International Relations.)

The critical avenue for network analysis discussed so far grows from a set of theoretical moves: (a) rematerialisation, (b) interstitial thinking, and (b) thinking across scales and strata of reality. It builds on a tradition of relational perspectives that have formulated their own answers to the problem of social action. There is yet another move that can illuminate the critical and reconstructive potential of network approaches. It all begins with an act of sociological imagination and with asking: how do we construe the ties? What holds the entities (having emerged as entities via transactions) in relation to other entities? Or, in other words: what is the content of relationality? Here, it is crucial to resist the uniformities of a utilitarian paradigm, postulating that the entities making up the 'tissue' of the network will be held together by the interested behaviour of wilful actors (seeking either resource maximisation or attaining network centrality). The logic behind the generation of relational ties is often unreadable in a utilitarian key: the ties may well be gifts (Alain Caillé) or emotions (Randall

Box 15.1 Social network analysis for international relations

In the 1960s and 1970s network analysts studying IR-relevant topics investigated the emergent structures of the international system, while looking at ties resulting from trade, membership in international organisations, and diplomatic interactions (Savage and Deutsch 1960; Brams 1969; Skjelsbæk 1972; Christopherson 1976).

In the late 1970s and after, another stream of scholars using network analysis examined issues of international inequality, while anchored in dependency and world-system theory (Snyder and Kick 1979; Breiger 1981; Nemeth and Smith 1985; Faber 1987; Smith and White 1991; Van Rossem 1996; Sacks *et al.* 2001). For a review of more recent developments of network analysis in IR see Hafner-Burton *et al.* (2006).

Collins). For instance, in Security Studies, we might come to ask such questions as: how does the exchange of gifts influence diplomatic relations?

At the junction between these elements for a critical network analysis and the specific disciplinary context in IR, we can further specify some productive directions in the study of international process. First, the idea of ‘institutional ecologies’ promises to give substance to the imperatives of (a) working across scales of analysis (local, national, regional, and global) and (b) thinking in terms of stratified ontologies, so as not to ‘flatten’ the world we study. Through ‘institutional ecologies’, we can look at links across multiple social arenas or networks, while recording how distinct intersecting relational logics reassert, constrain, or transform one another. The innovative element is precisely focusing on the coupling and decoupling of the relational logics themselves (Padgett 2001; Padgett and McLean 2006). Abbott’s (2005) notion of ‘linked ecologies’, for instance, allows us to see how different institutional arenas are linked via ‘hinge’ strategies that work in both ecologies at once. In the study of global and local security politics, this is promising because we can investigate how the relational logic of one institution, promoting a certain vision of the international order, interacts with the relational logic in another institution, standing for different norms and a different political vision.

Second, a productive direction of using network analysis in IR stems from the investigation of ‘semantic networks’. This is the case because a lot of the meaningful action taking place in the international arena is indeed rhetorical action. We could thus better understand international norms formation, for instance, by looking at cooccurrences of terms in exchanges of official declarations. Here, by using structural equivalence analysis (i.e. block-modelling techniques) we can capture the ‘discursive roles’ within classification schemas and rhetorics (Mohr 1994). Furthermore, by using cluster or connectivity analysis, we can measure the ties between the ‘focal concepts’ of the semantic network (Carley and Kaufer 1993; Carley 1994). In the third section of this chapter, we discuss particular aspects of the semantic network around the topic of nuclear non-proliferation, emanating from US and North Korean sources.

Some practical aspects of Social Network Analysis (SNA)

We have so far outlined the theoretical grounding of SNA and suggested some of the productive directions in which it could take the analysis of international process. Another important part of the method is represented by its technical toolkit, which gives clarity, precision, and enhanced visualisation options for network data. This section briefly reviews the basic vocabulary needed for the formulation in technical terms of a substantive problem and the subsequent translation of the analysis results into substantive terms; it also suggests the main types of technical analyses that can be performed on such data. While the correct understanding and usage of these tools is a crucial part for any SNA study, the method should not be equated with the collection of mathematical procedures it relies on. Far from being an end in themselves, these technical tools are means for getting at a more nuanced understanding of the complexity of relational realities.

Graph theory, statistics, and matrix theory are the main mathematical pillars for the technical aspects of SNA. The object of analysis is the network, which is represented as a graph composed of *nodes* and *edges*: the entities (nodes) and the ties that exist among them (edges). In most of the analyses all the nodes are of the same kind (*one-node networks*), but there is also the important technical possibility to analyse the structure of ties between two different types of nodes (*two-node networks*).

One of the first and most important decisions regards what the nodes of the network are and how they are to be selected. While the technical operations require clear-cut entities, this condition should not make the analyst insensitive to the fact that the future nodes are not simply given prior to the analysis, but are ‘enticised’ during these first phases, as explained above. The *network sampling* is, in technical terms, one of the instances where the differences between SNA and classical inferential statistics become most visible: unlike for random samples, where their similar attributes make individuals interchangeable for the purposes of the analysis, for network sampling it is the unique relationship to the rest of the nodes that makes an individual part of the network.

The nodes are linked in a graph by edges, which are the representation of the fact that a tie exists between the two actors. Flows of resources, diplomatic relations, communication, friendship or co-membership in organisations are only some examples of possible ties. Depending on the nature of the tie, there are several types of graphs that can be used to represent it. Some of the relationships are by definition symmetrical and are therefore represented in *non-directed graphs* (for example the cooccurrence of themes in a document). The graphs where the possibility of non-reciprocal ties exists are called *directed graphs*. Furthermore, graphs can be *binary* (the tie can be only either present or absent), *signed* (the tie can be positive or negative), or *valued* (the intensity of the relationship is assigned a numeric value). Also, more than one relation between the same nodes can be analysed at the same time, leading to more than one network formed for the same set of nodes. These differentiations promise to allow for a representation of the complexity of relationships between entities. Oftentimes, however, analysts proceed to simplifications and reduce the information they have about the ties. For example, establishing a threshold of intensity, above which a tie is counted as existent and below which as non-existent, transforms a valued graph into a binary graph.

The ways in which individual nodes are embedded in the network represent the most basic level of analysis in SNA. There are several ways in which the connectedness of a node to the rest of the network is defined, resulting in different algorithms for calculating centrality measures and in different interpretations. Degree, betweenness, and closeness centralities are the most important measures and describe the position of a node in the network from different perspectives. *Degree centrality* is based on the absolute number of connections that a node has and is useful for identifying the hubs of a network. For the measurement of the other indicators of centrality, it is important to extend the notion of connectedness between two nodes beyond the existence of a direct tie between them (*adjacency*). There are several ways of calculating the ‘distance’ between nodes, based on the number of intermediary nodes needed to get from one to the other. *Betweenness centrality* identifies those nodes that link otherwise isolated parts of the network because they represent the shortest path between other nodes (brokers); *closeness centrality* identifies those nodes that have the quickest access (the shortest paths) to all the other nodes in the network.

The next important level of analysis for SNA is the *dyad*, consisting of two nodes and the tie(s) between them. Generally, any subset of nodes and their corresponding ties form a *subgroup*. Of special interest are *cohesive subgroups*, within which the ties are dense, direct, and reciprocated. *Cliques* are subsets of at least three actors among which all the possible ties are realised. For the other types of cohesive subgroups (n-cliques, n-clans, k-plex, k-cores, and n-clubs), the conditions of connectedness are gradually relaxed in order to refer to more loosely linked areas of a network. The highest level of analysis is that of the entire network, consisting of all the nodes and the ties among them. Indicators such as the *density* (the proportion of the ties that are actually realised from the total of possible ties), the *diameter* (the average distance between any two nodes of the graph), and the *centralisation* can be calculated.

<p><i>Node/Actor/Point/Agent</i>: the entities forming the network <i>Individual level measures</i>: centrality (degree, betweenness, closeness)</p>
<p><i>Tie/Link/Edge/Line/Arc</i>: represents the relationships between nodes</p>
<p><i>Distance between nodes</i>: the number of 'steps' required to get from one node to the other <i>Adjacent nodes</i>: two nodes between which the distance is 1 (the tie between them is realised)</p>
<p><i>Subgroup</i>: consists of a subset of nodes and all the ties among them <i>Main types of subgroups</i>: dyads, triads, cliques, cohesive subgroups, components, blocks</p>
<p><i>Social network</i>: consists of a finite set or sets of actors and the relation or relations defined on them; the network is represented as a graph <i>Network level measures</i>: connectedness, diameter, centralization, density</p>

Figure 15.1 Social Network Analysis: the basic vocabulary.

The example in the third section of this chapter presents the outputs resulted from a *block-modelling* analysis, one of the techniques developed for showing structural equivalences within a network. Using permutations in the incidence matrix (the matrix in which all the ties between each two nodes are reported), this type of analysis clusters together the nodes having similar patterns of relations with the rest of the network (see Figures 15.4 and 15.5).

Textbooks (such as those suggested below as further reading) provide detailed information about the logic in which these indicators are constructed and the ways in which they should be interpreted. Among existing software applications for network data analysis, we found the following ones as being distinctly useful: *Pajek* (a freeware particularly well fit for analysing large datasets); *UCINET* with *NetDraw* (an embedded application for excellent visualisation possibilities); and *Gephi*.

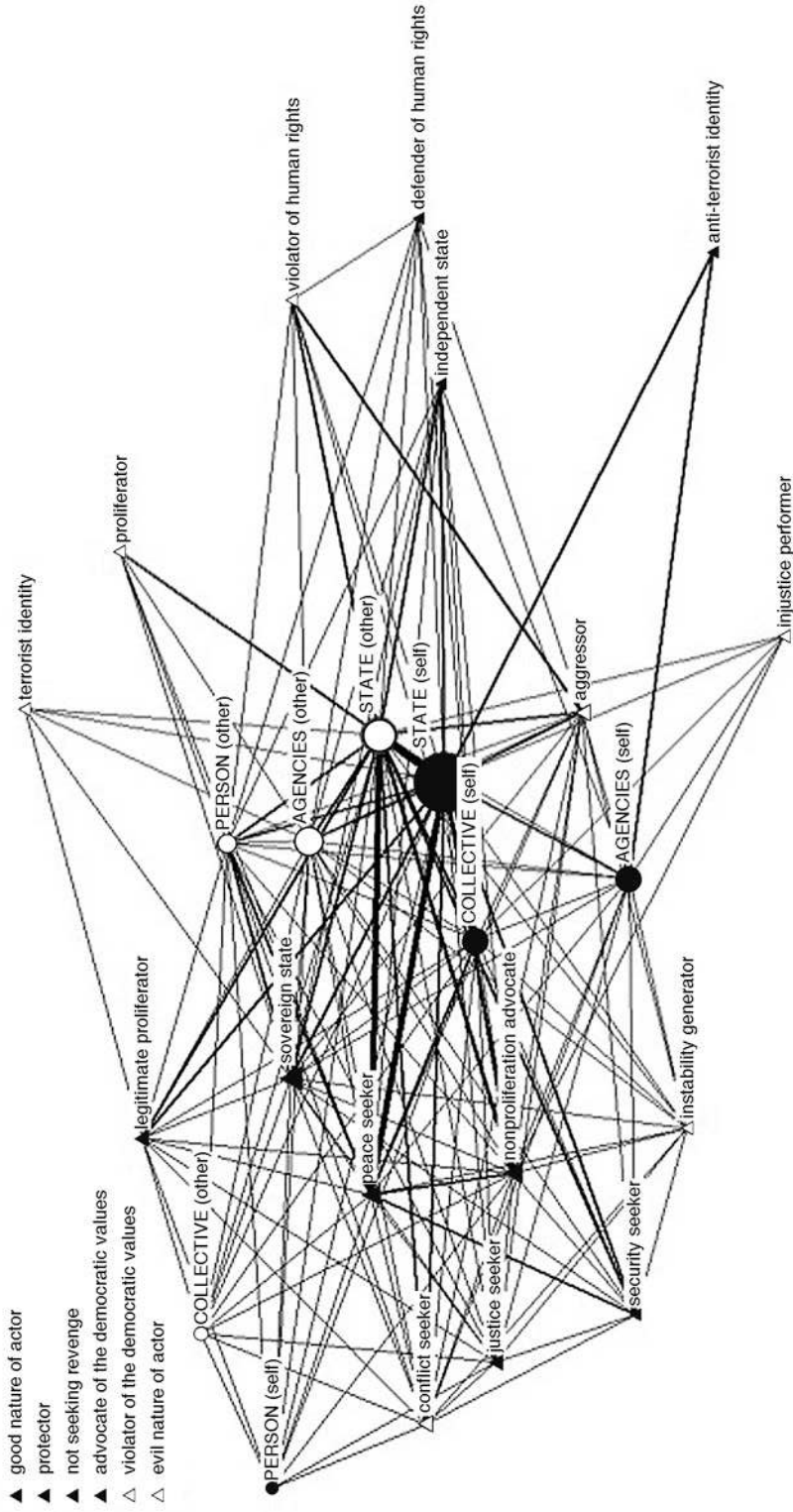
Social Network Analysis and international process: diplomatic exchanges between North Korea and the USA

Our analysis focuses on the diplomatic encounters between the USA and North Korea on the issue of nuclear non-proliferation. It investigates the articulation of a discursive regime around nuclear proliferation, while also illuminating the notions of agency that underpin the diplomatic iterations of the two sources. In other words, we embark in a playful endeavour: while being critical about what it is that we enticise (or treat as the nodes of our network), we also look at what is being enticised – and thus materialised – as ‘agent’ in the diplomatic talk itself. As we see in the graphs, we identified four main registers of enticisation. References to the ‘agent’ (or to the one performing the action) are made in terms of: (a) states; (b) governmental agencies (i.e. ministries, state departments); (c) persons (i.e. state leaders, ministers, state secretaries); (d) general collective or ‘we’ terms. This small study assembles a *semantic network* on the basis of the cooccurrences between, on the one hand, instances of

identification of the self and of the other (as peace seeker, non-proliferation advocate, security seeker, sovereign state, violator of human rights, etc.) and, on the other hand, instances of enticisation.

The case is relevant because it creates a window into the workings of the non-proliferation regime, and into the dynamics of non-compliance within this regime. As we will see, the diplomatic discursive space generated by the nuclear proliferation-related communications between the USA and North Korea is marked by radical othering practices. It is a case where all the invoked positive identity postures are also self-identities; while all the negative references are hetero-identities. To get to our semantic network, we first construed a database, by selecting 61 declarations issued by the two parties between 1994 and 2005.² We looked at statements by state leaders, ministers of defence and foreign affairs, their spokespersons, and career diplomats. These were selected according to an 'action-reaction' principle, where we traced a chain of diplomatic positions and the response to them produced by the other party. The texts were coded using semantic content analysis – which designates the procedures of classifying signs according to their meanings. We counted the number of times a party refers to itself or to the other as a particular type of actor in the international arena; we also recorded the number of references to the four types of 'entities' described above, guided by the question 'who is said to act in world politics?'. The timeline captures an important period in the history of relations between the USA and North Korea. In 1994, the USA and North Korea signed the far-reaching Agreed Framework, where North Korea committed to freeze its nuclear activities in exchange for heavy oil shipments and proliferation-resistant light-water reactors from the USA. By 2002, the diplomatic relations between the two countries had greatly deteriorated. That year, in his notorious State of the Union Address, George W. Bush branded North Korea as part of an 'axis of evil'. Our analysis ends in 2005, when the non-proliferation regime attempted through the Agreed Framework had collapsed.

A great part of the reflexive work of the critical network analyst goes into deciding on the particular technical definition of a tie, which includes both choosing and forming the elements between which the ties exist (or are absent) and the specific content of the tie. In our case, the nodes mark the occurrence in the documents of a particular semantic unit. The ties capture the cooccurrence in a document of semantic units. All the graphs below are one-mode networks with two types of nodes. The nodes are similar to the extent that both of them are semantic units, and they are different to the extent that the first type is about textual occurrences related to the question 'who is the actor who acts?', while the second type is about occurrences recorded by asking the question 'what identity posture is being invoked?'. Both types of semantic units were coded into numeric variables, which were processed via Pajek and Netdraw. The database contained information on the source of the iteration (USA or North Korea), as well as on whether the recorded unit was in reference to the self or to the other. This allows for the comparative analysis of two pools of documents, emanating from US non-proliferation diplomacy and from North Korean non-proliferation diplomacy, respectively. The isolated nodes on the graphs mark that those particular identities were missing from the documents. The intensity of the ties is also marked on the graphs, and it reads as the recurrence of cooccurrences: the more frequently two identities appear mentioned within the same document, the thicker the line is. The network itself is read as the diplomatic discursive regime of each of the two parties around the topic of non-proliferation. The last two graphs (generated via Pajek) are the result of a block-modelling analysis: here, the blocks tell us that there are series of homologies and series of oppositions which receive their meaning by their co-presence in a document. What we gain by using network analysis in this case is precisely a thoroughly relational dimension, where it is not so important how



- ▲ good nature of actor
- ▲ protector
- ▲ not seeking revenge
- ▲ advocate of the democratic values
- △ violator of the democratic values
- △ evil nature of actor

Figure 15.2 The semantic network of the North Korean nuclear non-proliferation diplomacy (1994–2005).

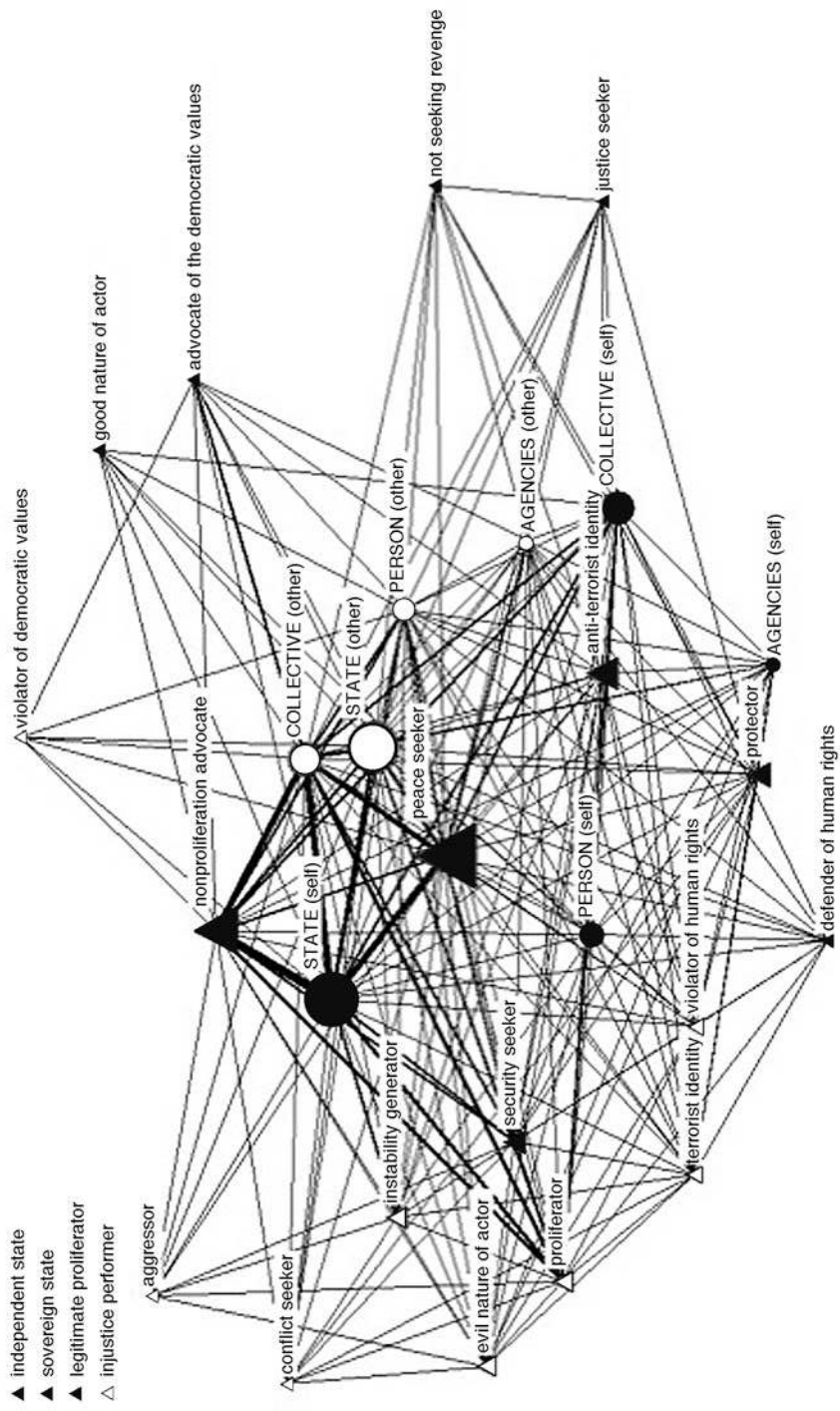


Figure 15.3 The semantic network of the US nuclear non-proliferation diplomacy (1994–2005).

many times a certain identity is invoked, but rather how the entire architecture of rhetorical mobilisation holds together.

Thus, the exchange of declarations and statements between the USA and North Korea generates a discursive field, where political identities are created, asserted, and stabilised; and where the actors of the international arena are 'enticised'. The relational maps in Figures 15.2 and 15.3 (generated via Netdraw) capture the semantic networks that are specific to North Korean non-proliferation diplomacy and to the USA, respectively. The way we defined the ties and the nodes makes it possible to observe the relations between the two types of rhetorical mobilisation (around identities and around entities). We can here see the centrality of the references to entities: to a large extent, the mobilisation of different identity postures goes through enticisation.

Going back to the critical ways of rethinking network analysis discussed in the first section, we converge on three important observations. First, because the way we defined the ties led to the construction of a semantic network, there is no direct materialisation of which the graphs tell a visual story; the materialisations that are at stake in the non-proliferation debate, however, are considerable, and their very materiality is predicated on the discursive regime captured here. The nuclear bomb itself is such a materiality. There are also its parts, which threaten to be reassembled into a deadly whole if diplomatic relations are mismanaged. But there are as well the light-water reactors which the USA promised to deliver to North Korea, in the Agreed Framework in 1994, and which count as an ever failure to materialize.

Second, how do we address the challenge of interstitial thinking? Or, in more particular terms: how does the fact that the two political visions reflected in the first two graphs are so dissimilar produce interstitial understandings? The two semantic fields point to a stark disjuncture between the US and North Korean sources as to what non-proliferation is about and what other topics it is 'networked' with. This means that disagreement itself is one of the most significant interstitial 'products' emerging from a comparative treatment of our relational maps.

Third, how are scales played out here? There are important multiscale references in the graphs, but some of them are not stemming directly from the network analysis. To an extent, our definition of nodes contains a metaperspective on scalarity, because it brings into the discussion the notions of scale (national, subnational, supranational) that speakers themselves use in the declarations, either directly (entities) or indirectly (identity postures that are state-focused or system-focused). But the more relevant questions here are: does scale itself make the semantic network hold together in a particular way? If we are faithful to any hierarchical idea of scale, it is clear that 'the national' is here assembled into the main one, holding in place most references to the identities mentioned by the diplomats. In short, state-centric language has an ordering role in diplomatic exchanges. While this might be unsurprising, what is interesting is that there are other scales doing important work of organising our network (such as the subnational agencies), which also means that even in analysing diplomatic interaction, we cannot take the liberty to enticise states as representing the unique scale in speech or action. The bias of state-centrism is thus more the trouble of the IR theorist than the trouble of the diplomat. In other words, it is more often IR scholars that take the state as the only relevant actor, while practitioners invoke other actors in their talk as well.

Finally, while looking at the second set of block-modelling graphs in Figures 15.4 and 15.5, we can observe that US sources are characterised by more coherent modes of scaling as compared to North Korean sources, in the sense that many of the things US diplomats say about nuclear proliferation hold up in relations in a recurrently similar fashion. As the US-related graph shows, all modes of enticising the self belong to the same block,

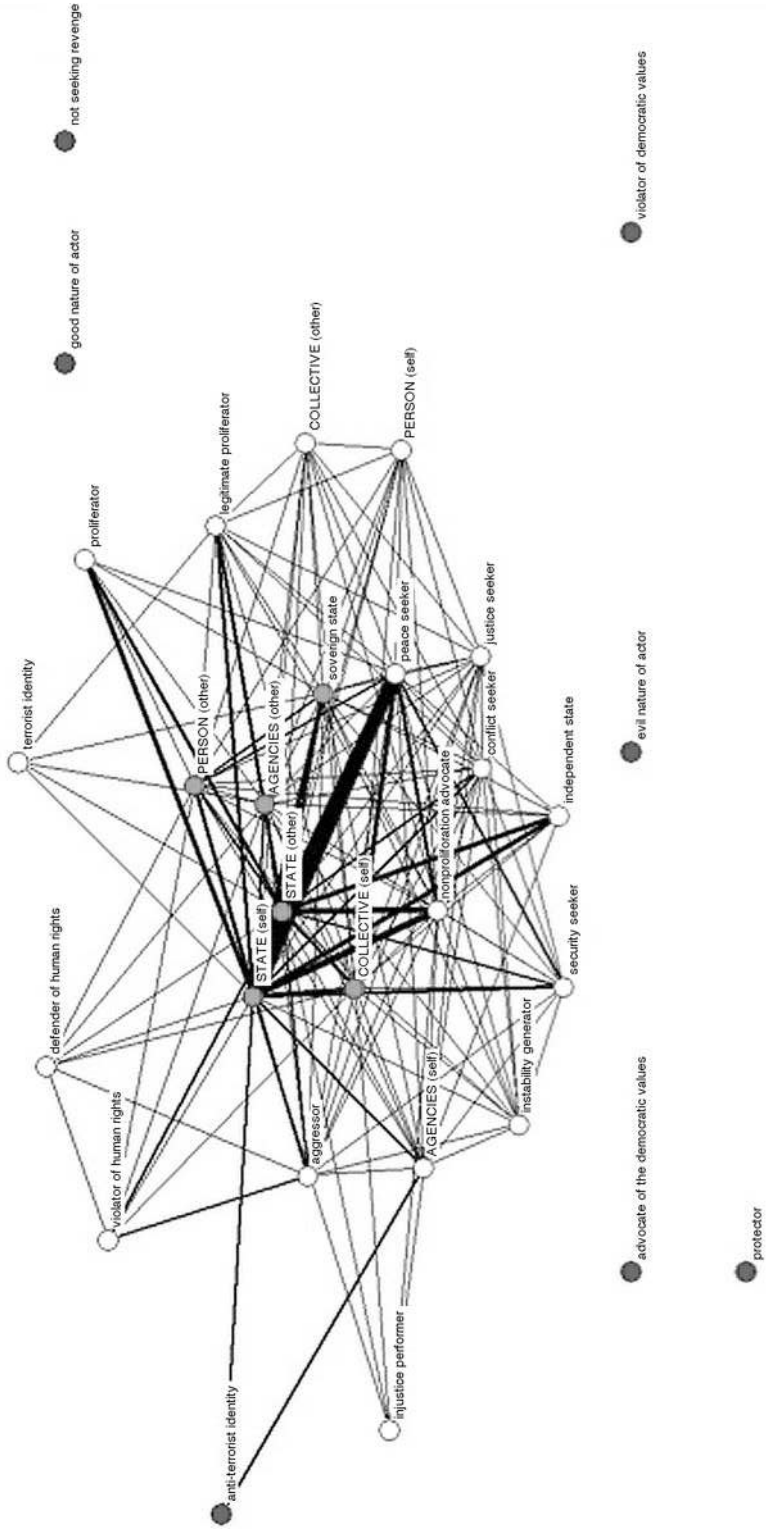


Figure 15.4 The semantic network of the North Korean nuclear non-proliferation diplomacy using block-modelling techniques.

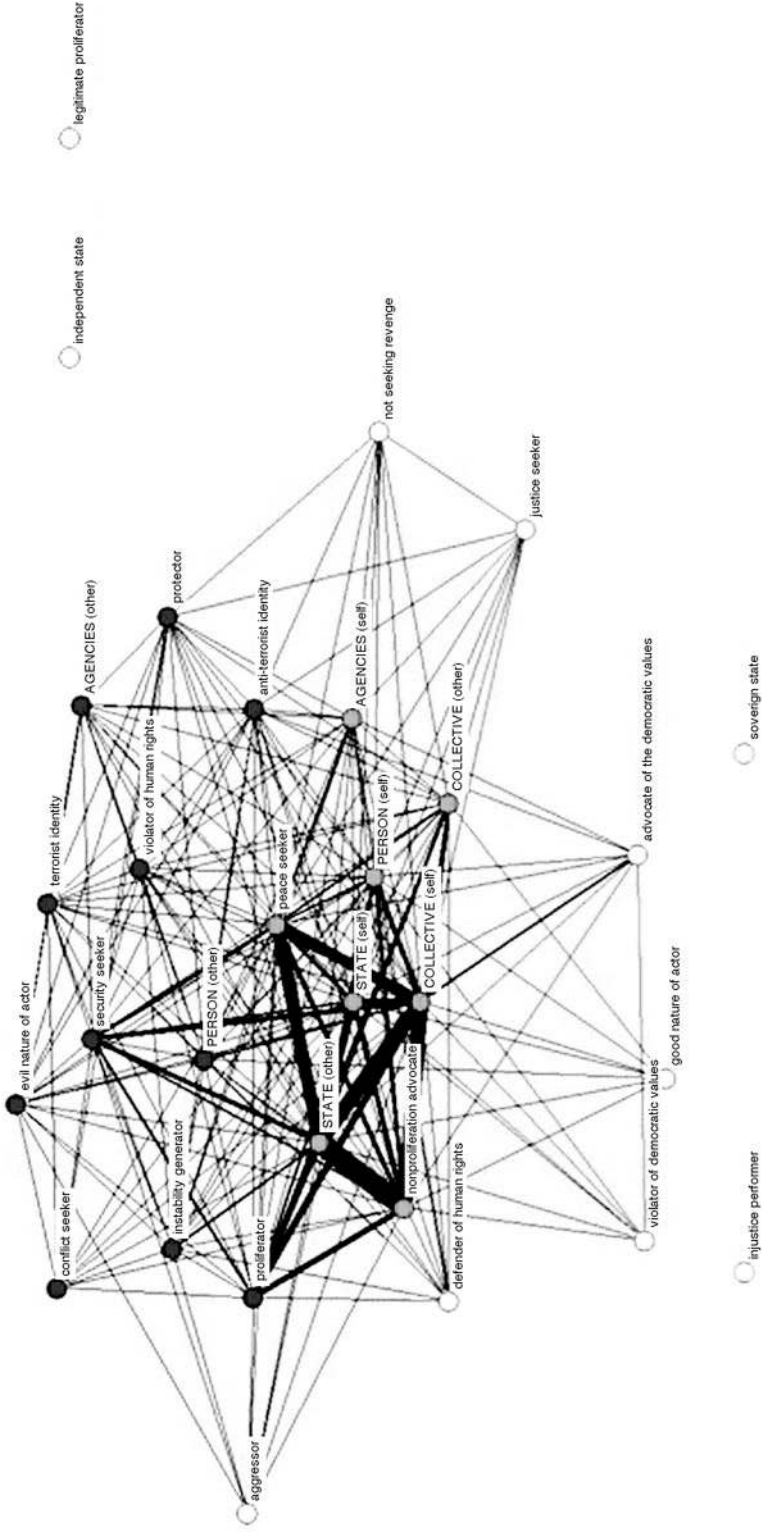


Figure 15.5 The semantic network of the US nuclear non-proliferation diplomacy using block-modelling techniques.

which marks the coherence of iterations and the fact that US discourse on non-proliferations ‘sticks’ much more than the North Korean one, where we have more unsettled emergent scalarities.

The block-modelling in the second set of graphs provides important insights into the differences between the two non-proliferation regimes. In both graphs, we observe that the central block groups nodes referring to enticisation, and very few nodes referring to some ‘special’ identities. These identities are, in a sense, ‘entity-like’, with regard to their patterns of relationality to the rest of the semantic network. They are also crucial in understanding how the entire network holds together. In the case of North Korea, this ‘special’ identity posture is that of sovereign state. Indeed, the concerns for sovereignty function as an anchor for the North Korean political imaginary in these exchanges. In the case of the USA, we see two entity-like postures: peace seeker and non-proliferation advocate. A close look at the way the blocks come together reveals two different visions of world politics: one is sovereignty-centred (North Korea), while the other one is system-focused (USA). Another important difference stems from the placement of the concern for security in the two graphs. While for US sources security appears in the same block with terrorism-related concerns, for North Korean sources security is in the same block with matters of justice and peace. This points to the existence of two regimes of securitisation. The US securitises via the invocation of terrorist threats and instability; North Korea securitises via the invocation of justice.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have shown how network analysis can be practised as a critical social science method, while being aware that network analysis is never just a method, and it always comes with important ontological (what is the world like?) and epistemological (how can we know the world?) presuppositions. Doing reflexive SNA thus starts from a theoretical consideration of the ways we can give materiality to our networks, the ways we can be curious about interstices, and the ways we can avoid flattening the world into a single undifferentiated network. Reflexivity is also called for in the practical work of ‘enticising’ that is presupposed by this technique. In International Relations, this translates into subverting the political imaginary centred on anthropomorphised states. The visual maps generated by using network analysis software are also subject to reflexive use. While reading cliques or density measures is an integral part of the analysis, statistical outputs can also receive a holistic treatment, and they can be regarded as visual metaphors, aimed at putting a locality in a state of emergence, at disturbing hierarchies, and at performing an act of reverberation, by which one domain is refigured by being described in a code that belongs to another one (Soreanu and Hudson 2008; Soreanu 2010). While this visual metaphor-centred use of network analysis might seem an unusual one, it enables us to tell stories about the international arena in a transformed and transforming vocabulary, which can allow references to flows of gifts or emotions between people and informal organisations to the same extent that it allows references to flows of military artefacts or economic aid between states.

Please see the companion website for a seminar exercise.

Questions for further debate

- 1 Can you think of other actors that could have been meaningfully included in the analysis of the diplomatic exchanges on the issue of nuclear non-proliferation? In other words,

- are there other national, regional or international actors that have an important part to play in non-proliferation diplomacy? How could the analysis be enhanced by including these new actors and the ties they bring?
- 2 Can you think of any other ‘entities’ that could have been mentioned by diplomats in the political declarations we analysed in this chapter, with regard to the issue of nuclear non-proliferation?
 - 3 How do you interpret the fact that the identity ‘sovereign state’ appears as an isolated node in the semantic network pertaining to the US non-proliferation diplomacy (Figure 15.5)?
 - 4 In the last two graphs that resulted from block-modelling techniques, compare the different relational positions of the identities related to human rights and democratic values, in the case of US sources, and North Korean sources, respectively. What is the meaning of these differences?
 - 5 How do you see the critical potential and the limitations of network analysis approaches in Security Studies? What other critical securities studies perspectives could be in a fruitful dialogue with network approaches?

Notes

- 1 The authors would like to thank Irina Culic, Markus Kornprobst, and Norbert Petrovici for their insightful comments and suggestions.
- 2 This database was generated in the context of a paper by Kornprobst and Soreanu (forthcoming).

Sources for further reading and research

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16 Predication, presupposition and subject-positioning

Linda Åhäll and Stefan Borg

Chapter summary

This chapter demonstrates how the analytical concepts of predication, presupposition and subject-positioning may be employed to analyse visual and textual representations; that is, to conduct discourse analysis in practice. As shown by Doty (1993), predication, presupposition and subject-positioning are heuristically useful categories for understanding how subjects, objects and modes of conduct are discursively constituted. In this sense, the concepts are textual mechanisms by which certain subjects are ascribed or denied agency and, thereby, enable or disable certain practices. In order to illustrate how the methodological concepts may be put to use, we analyse the discourse on ‘security versus legality’ during the ‘war on terror’ and we use the television series *24* as a set of representations of such a discourse.

Learning outcomes

On completion, readers should be able to:

- explain the key theoretical assumptions of discourse analysis;
- explain how the methodological concepts of predication, presupposition and subject-positioning can inform a discourse analysis;
- apply the methodological concepts to issues of global security.

Introduction

With the so-called ‘linguistic turn’ of twentieth-century philosophy in social and political theory, discourse analysis has emerged as a popular methodology for critical analyses of global politics by scholars with theoretical backgrounds in feminist, post-structuralist, post-modernist, post-colonial as well as more conventional social constructivist research. Valuable theoretical reflections on the concept of discourse and its relevance for global politics abound (see suggestions for further reading below) and informative examples of discourse analysis in critical Security Studies include David Campbell (1998a; 1998b), Richard Jackson (2005) and Laura Shepherd (2008a). Yet, specific contributions on methodology, explaining how to conduct discourse analysis in practice, are rare. Some authors have called for devoting more attention to the methodological aspects of discourse analysis (e.g. Milliken 1999) and, within critical Security Studies, Lene Hansen’s *Security as Practice* (2006) is exceptional. Hansen’s useful presentation of discourse analysis, however, still focuses on foreign policy analysis and

its value is therefore somewhat limited for students interested in aspects of Security Studies linked to non-state centred political issues.

Today, students are often faced with the daunting task of having to work out how to translate rather abstract arguments about the nature of reality and discourse into a methodological framework informing their empirical analysis. The aim of this chapter is, therefore, to present one specific way in which methodological concepts can inform a discourse analysis. We begin by briefly presenting some of the basic ideas of discourse and meaning construction as well as of visual and cultural representations. Then, we introduce the concepts of predication, presupposition and subject-positioning intended to inform our discourse analysis. We then apply the concepts of predication, presupposition and subject-positioning to our case study, namely the discourse on 'security versus legality' during the 'war on terror' as represented in the television series *24*. We conclude with a discussion on some of the limitations of using these particular methodological concepts for discourse analysis.

Theoretical assumptions of discourse analysis

In the academic discipline of International Relations and its subfield Security Studies, there is no common understanding about the best ways to study discourse, yet, most research employing discourse analysis is informed by the writings of philosophers such as Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida and Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (see Box 16.1).

Commonly defined, a discourse is a linguistic practice that puts into play sets of rules and procedures for the formation of objects, speakers and themes (Shapiro 1990: 329). Roxanne Doty defines discourse as a system of statements in which each individual statement makes sense. Thus, a discourse produces interpretive possibilities by making it virtually impossible

Box 16.1 The work of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe

The first edition of Argentinian political theorist Ernesto Laclau and Belgian political theorist Chantal Mouffe's *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics (HSS)* was published in 1985, and remains a classic in discourse theory. Laclau and Mouffe put forward the theoretical underpinning for a distinctly post-Marxist political agenda for the Left, and sought to open up spaces for feminist, anti-colonial, gay and ecological struggles. Unlike traditional Marxists, they argued that class was only one of many antagonisms at work in society, and not necessarily the most fundamental one. *HSS* integrated insights from philosophy, psychoanalysis and linguistics into a general theory of social order discursively understood.

Laclau and Mouffe's elaborate understanding of discourse has been highly influential for the establishment of discourse analysis as a general methodological framework for the study of politics. Their understanding of discourse would form the theoretical backbone for what later became known as 'The Essex School', due to their affiliation with the Department of Government at the University of Essex. The School's brand of discourse theory has had a significant impact in several academic disciplines, including International Relations, Critical Security Studies, European Studies, Gender Studies, Cultural Geography and Media Studies.

to think outside of it (Doty 1993: 302). Discourses do not merely describe objects, or simply transmit statements. Instead, discourses *do* something; discourses produce by fixing meaning, however temporarily, that 'enable us to make sense of the world' (Shepherd 2008b: 215). This is not to say that there is no reality outside discourse, only that the world does not exist intelligibly outside of the meaning that human beings ascribe to it. Discourse, in other words, is constitutive of 'reality'.

Notions of discourse derived from the works of Michel Foucault (see also Chapter 7) are always inextricably linked with concepts of power, as something that constitutes and energizes all discursive and social relations. The idea of discourse as social practice, moreover, offers a way of seeing how we experience the world, in part through the representational capacity of language. Discourse analysis interrogates what relations of power are enacted and sustained when meaning is fixed in some ways and not in others. In refusing to treat systems of signification as *natural*, discourse analysis professes an inherently critical vocation. Crucially, what is explored is not *why* a particular outcome happened, but rather *how* the subjects, objects and interpretative dispositions were socially constructed such that certain practices were enabled and others disabled (Doty 1993: 298).

Processes of meaning construction

As a result of the focus on meaning construction through language, traditionally, discourse analysis has not only been predominantly concerned with texts as written or verbal language but also most discourse analyses in IR and Security Studies have focused on obvious 'political' texts (such as government statements, political speeches, legal documents, etc. rather than popular sites of discursive practices). However, since communicative structures and processes of meaning-production are by no means confined to the linguistic, there is no point in limiting discourse analysis in such a way. Today, the realm of the visual is central to the cultural construction of social life in contemporary Western societies. Culture is increasingly permeated by visual images with a variety of purposes and intended effects, whether it is CCTV footage, Google Earth, Facebook or the preponderance of still or moving images in news media. Interpretations of the world often come to us through the mass media and 'television is perhaps the most crucial source of collective consciousness' (Bleiker 2001: 525).

From cultural studies, which has a longer history of analysing the visual than IR and Security Studies, we learn that the capacity of images to affect us as viewers and consumers is dependent on the larger cultural meanings they invoke and the social, political and cultural contexts in which they are viewed (Sturken and Cartwright 2001: 25). The images we interact with on a daily basis are caught up in the power relations of the societies in which we live. Hence, by analysing visual representations we are able to examine the cultures in which they are produced (Sturken and Cartwright 2001: 6). In IR and Security Studies, too, there is a growing interest in both the study of visual representations and popular cultural artefacts. Yet, again, the methodological engagement as to *how* to study visual representation is still limited.

Introducing predication, presupposition, subject-positioning

In 1993, Roxanne Doty used the concepts of predication, presupposition and subject-positioning, understood as textual mechanisms, in order to analyse US counter-insurgency policy in the Philippines. Here, we illustrate how those concepts can also be used to inform a

discourse analysis in which ‘language’ includes visual language and where popular culture is read as ‘text’. It is important to note here that these methodological concepts concern *subjects*, rather than ‘individuals’ or ‘states’, as positions within particular discourses and intelligible only with reference to a specific set of categories, concepts and practices (Doty 1993: 303). As Doty summarizes, ‘[t]aken together, these methodological concepts produce a ‘world’ by providing positions for various kinds of subjects and endowing them with particular attributes’ (Doty 1993: 307). It needs to be stressed, however, that, although for analytical purposes we discuss these concepts separately, in actuality all three work together and simultaneously.

Predication refers to how nouns are endowed with certain properties. As Jennifer Milliken puts it: ‘Predication of a noun constructs the thing(s) named as a particular sort of thing, with particular features and capacities’ (Milliken 1999: 232). It involves the linking of certain qualities to particular subjects through the use of predicates and the adverbs and adjectives that modify them (Milliken 1999: 231). A predicate affirms a quality, attribute, or property of a person or thing. Attributes attached to subjects are important for constructing identities for those subjects and for telling us what subjects can and cannot do. This is linked to whether the subject is ascribed agency or not. For example, some states might be described as ‘democratic’ or ‘free’ and as a result ascribed a certain amount of legitimate agency within ‘international society’. Others might be described as ‘failed’ or ‘rogue’ and will subsequently lack legitimate agency in the international community. Taken together these attributes produce a state as a particular kind of actor, able to do certain things and unable to do others.

Presupposition concerns background knowledge in place when reading a text, written, verbal, or visual. It is about what is taken for granted in the particular representation; what kind of world the representation is constructing; and what is considered true in that constructed world. As Doty explains:

Statements rarely speak for themselves. Even the most straightforward and ostensibly clear statements bring with them all sorts of presuppositions or background knowledge that is taken to be true. In the absence of the ‘truth’ of the background knowledge and the world it presupposes, the statement would not make sense.

(Doty 1993: 306)

Presupposition, therefore, is an important textual mechanism that by creating background knowledge constructs a particular kind of world in which certain things are recognized as true (Doty 1993: 306). In other words, it is through presupposition that the naturalization of discourse occurs.

The final methodological concept covered in this chapter is *subject-positioning*. We use the concept of subject-positioning in a grammatical sense by which we mean the way in which subjects are positioned within discursive practices and read as ‘text’, even though the ‘text’ chosen for analysis is not limited to written or spoken words. In other words, subject-positioning means to analyse the way in which texts create a ‘reality’ by linking particular subjects and objects to one another.

The two previous textual mechanisms, predication and presupposition, not only endow subjects with properties and construct a world in which they make sense, but also create relations between various kinds of subjects and objects. Hence, meaning constructed through discursive practices is *relational*, which entails that subjects and objects emerge by either being produced as *similar to*, *identical to*, *opposed to*, *complementary to*, etc. other subjects and objects

(Doty 1993: 306). Moreover, subject-positioning also involves agency as a subject is ascribed various amounts of agency whereas an object is not. In this way, subject-positioning facilitates analysis of how a subject is positioned in a ‘text’, written, verbal, or visual. Subject-positioning reveals the subject’s relation to objects, who is passive, who is active, who is looking at who, etc., which in turn suggests whether or not the subject is ascribed agency and acts as the authoritative subject of the ‘text’.

‘Security vs. legality’ in the ‘war on terror’

Following the terrorist attacks in the USA on 11 September 2001, measures that had previously been considered serious infringements on civil liberties became widely accepted. For example, the USA Patriot Act considerably expanded US federal agencies’ right to monitor phone calls, emails and access various kinds of personal records. Perhaps the most controversial change in policy by the Bush administration, however, was the introduction of so-called ‘enhanced interrogation techniques’ and justifications for why these were not torture. According to Article 2.2 of the United Nations *Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment*:

No exceptional circumstances, whatsoever, whether a state of war or a threat of war, internal political instability or any other public emergency, may be invoked as a justification of torture.
(United Nations 1984, emphasis added)

In 2002, the US Department of Justice drafted a secret memorandum with legal justifications for measures of interrogation in an attempt to circumvent the legal definition of torture. In a sense, torture was redefined. The memorandum asserts that ‘certain acts may be cruel, inhuman, or degrading, but still not produce pain and suffering of the requisite intensity’ to qualify as torture (US Department of Justice 2002: 1). The memorandum also asserts that given that there are several sleeper cells within the USA, willing to carry out severe terrorist attacks, ‘any harm that might occur during an interrogation would pale to insignificance compared to the harm avoided by preventing such an attack, which could take hundreds or thousands of life’ (US Department of Justice 2002: 41). In other words, the principle of necessity takes precedence over harms done to an individual.

Subsequently, in the spring of 2003, US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld sanctioned a series of harsh interrogation methods in order to obtain intelligence from detainees held at Guantanamo, methods that were later extended to be used on detainees in Afghanistan and Iraq (Posner 2011: 105). By November 2005, 61 per cent of the US public thought that torture as a method of extracting intelligence from terrorist suspects was justified in exceptional circumstances (Associated Press 2005). How did American and other audiences come to accept a discourse that held that, first, there was a genuine trade-off between security and legality; and, second, that in face of an overwhelming threat of large-scale terrorism, it was necessary to accept serious infringement of civil liberties in the name of national security, even torture?

Following the theoretical assumptions set out above, instead of asking *why* the extensive infringements of civil liberties took place, we seek to examine the structures of meaning that made it possible. In other words, we explore *how* interrogation methods otherwise labelled as torture were justified in the name of security. Here, we turn to popular culture and examine how those issues were disseminated to the broader public in seemingly apolitical forms, in the guises of ‘fiction’, and ‘mere entertainment’.

Analysis: 24, Season 4

In the fourth season of *24* the United States is threatened by a group of terrorists who kidnap the Secretary of Defense James Heller and his daughter Audrey, attempt to initiate a nuclear meltdown in all US nuclear power plants, shoot down Air Force One and launch a nuclear missile at Los Angeles. The protagonist of the series, Jack Bauer, is an agent working for the Counter Terrorism Unit (CTU); more information about the series is presented in Box 16.2.

Box 16.2 *24* and the blurring of fiction and fact

24 had a large and devoted following, averaging some 11.5 million viewers per season. The first episode of *24* was aired in November 2001, and the final one in May 2010, making it the longest-running spy-themed television series in history (Krug 2010). However, the show's success had serious implications for actual military practices. In May 2005, when the fourth season was showing on television in the USA, Adam Green's article 'Normalizing torture on *24*' was published in the *New York Times*. Green critiqued the frequency and normalized practices of torture and linked the torture scenes of *24* to 'real' practices of torture such as those revealed in the Abu Ghraib scandal (Green 2005). In fact, US soldiers widely shared DVDs of *24* among themselves and then eagerly tried out the new torture techniques they learned from the episodes (Monahan 2010: 35). In this sense, *24* had 'real' impact upon the way in which interrogation was performed in Iraq and Afghanistan. As a result of the impact of *24* on 'real' military practices, a military training film aimed at educating junior soldiers about the differences between fictionalized interrogation and their jobs was created (Zegart 2010: 614). Furthermore, military commanders became so concerned that soldiers could not differentiate what they were seeing on TV from how they were supposed to behave in the field that they visited the studios of *24* and unsuccessfully appealed to the show's producers to change the way in which interrogation and torture was portrayed on the show (Monahan 2010: 35).

In addition, even though ticking time bomb situations have never occurred and intelligence experts have long argued that they are unrealistic (Zegart 2010: 614), the scenario was repeatedly invoked in policy discussions. For example, Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia suggested that the Los Angeles 'ticking time bomb' scenario in *24* creates an exception to the Constitution's 8th Amendment prohibition of cruel and unusual punishment (BBC News, 12/02/2008); during the US presidential primary debates in 2007, the candidates were compelled to say whether they would sanction torture under extreme circumstances of the likes that occur on *24* (Monahan 2010: 33); and, in 2009, the then CIA Director nominee, currently US Secretary of State, Panetta was pressed about what interrogation techniques he might use if confronted with a 'ticking time bomb situation' by several members of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (Zegart 2010: 614). Last, as a result of the show, private relationships were also established between the producers and high officials within the Bush administration such as former deputy chief of staff Karl Rove and former Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff (Monahan 2010: 36). In other words, the boundaries between fiction and fact became blurred and *24* had 'real' impact upon military policy, practices and official discourses in the USA.

Here, we focus on three main ways in which the discourse on ‘security vs. legality’ is represented in the fourth season of *24*: the normalization of torture, the feminization of international law and the prioritization of pre-emption rather than response. Combined, these three types of discursive practices communicate the sense of urgency that creates an ‘either/or’ scenario and a tension between being secure and the upholding of legal norms.

In *24*, the CTU agents as well as the terrorists are constantly faced with situations in which they feel compelled to extract vital information from an individual in order either to prevent a terrorist attack or, in the latter case, make it happen. Curiously then, both the CTU and the terrorists are following the same imperative of necessity, as put forward in the memorandum discussed above. We suggest that the sense of urgency communicated in *24* is constitutive of the discourse on ‘security vs. legality’ in the ‘war on terror’ as legal norms and thus individual liberties are in tension with policies aimed at ensuring security. As part of this sense of urgency, moreover, no one is immune from suspicion. In Season 4, this is most clearly demonstrated when a CTU member of staff is falsely accused of being a mole and subsequently tortured, and when the Secretary of Defense’s own son is suspected of withholding information and Heller orders to have him tortured.¹ After three hours of fruitless ‘enhanced interrogation techniques’, Heller justifies his decision to his son: ‘Please understand that I’m responsible for the lives of millions of people’ (*24*, 4.07).² Here, not only is torture justified for the greater good of preserving the nation’s security, but it also indicates that to ensure security, difficult decisions, including personal sacrifices, have to be made. In addition, the sense of urgency in *24* is reinforced by the classic ticking time-bomb scenario with which each episode starts. In this way, the series conjures up exceptional scenario after exceptional scenario, so that the exceptional stops being exceptional and becomes normal. The extraordinary circumstances become ordinary.

The show’s protagonist, Jack Bauer, is a heroic and patriotic individual who is able to correctly interpret the imperative of necessity akin to Machiavelli’s Prince and, as a consequence, brave enough to depart from legal norms in order to ensure national security. What is communicated, paradoxically, is that in order to uphold the law, one may sometimes have to depart from it. This echoes realist understandings of security where power, necessity and national self-interest will always trump law. As a result, Bauer mimics the hegemonic position of the USA in a unilateral world order. Furthermore, the tension between security and legality is also played out as international law is represented as soft, naïve and ultimately irresponsible in *24*. For example, when terrorists take advantage of human rights organizations, as instruments of international law, what is communicated is that the paradigm of legality risks playing into the hands of the terrorists; it is dangerous. Moreover, refraining from torture within this ‘reality’ of necessity when faced with such a severe threat of terrorism is not only represented as utterly irresponsible, but it also represents international law as ‘soft’ and incapable of mustering the internal strength needed to do what is necessary to keep the nation secure. Overall, what is communicated in these discursive practices is that international law sometimes needs to be circumvented in order to achieve security.

In order to demonstrate how we came to these conclusions, in the next section we illustrate the methodological concepts at work in these discursive practices by looking at two different sequences of events in Episodes 18 and 19 of the fourth season of *24*: the interrogation of Joe Prado and the inauguration of President Logan.

The interrogation of Joe Prado

In Episode 18, Joe Prado, a man suspected to be affiliated with the terrorists, is taken to CTU for interrogation. However, the terrorist leader Habib Marwan anonymously calls *Amnesty*

Global (read: *Amnesty International*) in an effort to delay the questioning. *Amnesty Global* subsequently sends a lawyer to CTU to defend Prado. We are concerned with Scenes 1–6 inclusive.

Scene 1: Edgar Stiles, a CTU employee, complains about the presence of the lawyer to a superior, Bill Buchanan.

Scene 2: Jack Bauer complains to Buchanan.

Scene 3: Bauer in conversation with the lawyer responsible for putting the interrogation on hold.

Scene 4: Bauer and Buchanan seek approval for ‘enhanced interrogation techniques’ from President Logan.

Scene 5: Bauer’s lover Audrey finds out that Bauer tortured Prado in order to achieve intelligence and questions his actions.

Scene 6: President Logan’s advisor Mike Novic finds out that Bauer tortured the suspect.

The inauguration of President Logan

In the prologue to Episode 18, Vice President Logan is sworn in as President of the USA since the elected President is injured as a result of a terrorist attack that caused his airplane to crash. His political advisor, Mike Novic, is concerned, worried that he might not be up for the challenge: ‘He seems unsure of himself’. We are concerned with Scenes 7 and 8.

Scene 7: President Logan’s phone call from within a protective bunker to CTU.

Scene 8: Reactions at CTU to the conversation with President Logan.

Scene 9: President Logan is comforted by Novic.

Illustrating predication, presuppositioning, subject-positioning

As mentioned above, these three methodological concepts all work simultaneously to construct subject identities constituting discursive practices and it is only for analytical purposes that we have separated them out. However, from the scenes above, we focus on the way in which Jack Bauer is written as an authoritative subject in relation to President Logan, Audrey and Edgar.

Predication

As mentioned above, predication endows a subject with qualities, attributes or properties; it affirms its identity. Thus, it is useful to think grammatically and analyse how adverbs and adjectives modify the subject of the text. In these scenes, Bauer is constituted as the heroic individual; he not only knows what needs to be done in order to ensure national security but also acts upon it despite legal and moral obstacles. As a result, in the end, Bauer saves the day by obtaining crucial intelligence needed to locate the terrorists and blow up the nuclear missile before it reaches Los Angeles. In relation to Logan, Audrey and Edgar, Jack Bauer is a masculinized subject; an active agent oriented towards practice rather than reflection. This is indicated in a conversation with Audrey in Scene 5 where she says: ‘Logan gave you a direct order not to use extreme interrogation methods without his authorization. Jack, you’re acting against the President’ and ‘You can’t act outside the law and don’t expect

consequences'. Bauer responds: 'Trust me, no one understands consequences better than me, no one'. Here, what is communicated is not only that Bauer's reactive measures have led to perhaps difficult consequences in the past, but also that such consequences will not deter him from doing what is right. In this scene, Audrey represents reflection and restraint. She acts as a moral compass and as such personifies legal norms and international law.

Furthermore, Bauer's traits as an active masculine subject are also constructed in opposition to the way in which Edgar is represented. In Scenes 1 and 2, both Edgar and Bauer are concerned about the fact that the interrogation has been put on hold; both understand the urgency of the situation: Edgar says 'That's time we don't have!' and Bauer says 'We should be pressing this guy with everything we've got'. However, crucially, Edgar's reasons are personal and emotional: 'I know I'm not supposed to interfere on policy but considering what I've been through today, my mother dying because of these terrorists, I wanna know why we're letting a slimy lawyer protect a dirt-bag like Prado.' Bauer on the other hand goes straight to his superior and asks: 'Does he [the judge who upholds the suspect's rights] know what the stakes are?' Buchanan responds that he does but that the suspect should not be treated as a terrorist as he has no record of previous wrongdoing. Frustrated, Bauer rhetorically asks: 'What about that he was meeting with a known terrorist in the middle of the night on a pier?' and 'We need to interrogate this person and I don't care if they've got a court-order and waving it at you'. Failing to sway him, Bauer later decides to take matters into his own hands and resigns from CTU in order to take the suspect on as a private citizen. In these scenes, Edgar, who is considerably over-weight, is written as the 'common man' who supports the active agent (Bauer) and the cause (whatever needs to be done to ensure security) but is unable to fight himself. The personal and emotional sentiments associated with Edgar also function to enhance the writing of Edgar as symbolic of the US general public which, in turn, enables the writing of Bauer as associated with rationality and symbolic of the US government.

Presuppositioning

As mentioned above, presuppositioning involves background knowledge or assumptions that are naturalized, understood as 'truths' and as such *presupposed* in particular discursive practices. In the scenes discussed above (as well as throughout Season 4) torture, or 'enhanced interrogation techniques' are continually used as a first rather than a last resort which means that torture is naturalized as *the* (only efficient) method of interrogation: 'We should be pressing this guy with everything we've got'. Any reflection on whether or not torture actually can achieve reliable intelligence is lacking. This can be contrasted to the fact that several professional interrogators such as FBI- and CIA-agents have repeatedly claimed that torture is inefficient (Posner 2011: 100–101). Instead, in *24*, torture is most often explained in relation to an 'either/or' situation where you either break the law and obtain the right intelligence and as a result achieve security, or you follow international law and fail to achieve security. This is illustrated in Scene 4 where Bauer tries to convince President Logan to authorize enhanced interrogation techniques: 'If we wanna procure any information from this suspect we will have to do it behind closed doors', Bauer says. When the President hesitates on the basis that such methods are considered torture, Bauer assures him that it is '*necessary* to stop those warheads being used against us'. In other words, the choice is between using torture to ensure security or being attacked by the terrorists. President Logan's hesitation about authorizing torture here is similar to Audrey's as discussed above and means that where torture is questioned it is only on a legal basis, not whether or not it works as a

method of interrogation. In other words, that torture works as a method of interrogation is *presupposed* in 24.

Another presupposition in 24 is that whatever Bauer thinks is the right thing to do *is* the right thing to do, which functions to write Bauer as *the* authoritative subject. For example, as mentioned above, Bauer refuses to wait for the President's approval of 'enhanced interrogation techniques', resigns from CTU and convinces Buchanan to release the suspect, Prado, so that he can take him on as a private citizen in order to attain vital intelligence. Bauer tortures the suspect in a van, and Prado soon gives up correct information as to where Marwan, the main suspect, is located. The writing of Bauer as *the* authoritative subject, who always knows what needs to be done, is also communicated in Scene 6 when the President's advisor finds out that Bauer achieved the intelligence: 'Bauer got the information we needed. I think it's best if I insulate you from the details', Buchanan says. Hence, Bauer's suspicion that the suspect had the intelligence in the first place turns out to be true. Although Novic expresses concern: 'The President gave specific orders, you should have restrained Bauer', the scene still communicates that ignoring legal and moral norms regarding torture was the right thing to do. Bauer is the authoritative subject who is not only right but his views are, in fact, the 'truth'. As a result, there is no point in challenging the 'truth'. (Why challenge something that is right?) Hence, that Bauer is always right is *presupposed* in 24. This, moreover, leads to the policy of pre-emptive action. In Scene 3, which portrays Bauer's conversation with the terrorist suspect's lawyer, Bauer says: 'You and I both know that your client is guilty and that he conspired to steal a US nuclear warhead' and 'These people are not gonna stop attacking us today until millions and millions of Americans are dead. Now, I don't wanna bypass the constitution but these are *extraordinary circumstances*'.

Because Bauer knows the 'truth' – that the terrorists will not stop until millions of Americans are dead – it is crucial to take pre-emptive action. What is communicated here is that pre-emptive measures are our only option; to follow legal norms in these 'extraordinary circumstances' is dangerous.

Subject-positioning

As mentioned above, subject identities are constituted through a combination of predication, presuppositioning and subject-positioning. Hence, whereas predication endows the subject with certain properties, subject-positioning reinforces them by positioning the subject in relation to other subjects and objects. In order to illustrate how to use subject-positioning as a methodological tool, we discuss how President Logan is constituted as a subject.

One of the first decisions President Logan takes after he has been sworn in as President is to lead the country from the underground bunker at the White House, despite Novic's warning that it might create a lack of confidence in the government's ability to handle the crisis. Once located in the bunker, President Logan receives a briefing over the phone from Bill Buchanan and Michelle Dessler of CTU during which Logan appears anxious (Scene 7). Breathing heavily, he asks whether or not CTU will be able to catch Marwan. Dessler responds: 'there are no guarantees' whereupon President Logan seems to lose it. He raises his voice and says: 'Of course, I understand that'. He then realizes that he needs to control himself and calms down but says: 'I can't run the government from down here indefinitely, but I'm *not going upstairs until it's safe*'. At this point, Novic, aware that the President is sending out the wrong message, intervenes and makes Logan end the phone conversation in order to save face.

The reactions to the conversation between President Logan and CTU in Scene 8 further reinforce the writing of Logan as an emotional and weak subject. Almeida questions his ability to lead the country: 'Logan is *supposed to be the man who speaks to the people* of the country and exude *confidence, not fear!*' Then, in Scene 9 President Logan acts panicky again: 'Who knows what else they are planning. I'm sure he's gonna come after me next'. His advisor Novic shakes his head and calmly says 'Mr President, there's no indication that that is his plan'. Anxiously, Logan says: 'You don't know that. I don't know that. We don't have enough information to know what his plan is'. Novic tries to calm the President down: 'The Head of Secret Service is on his way over now. He's got a revised plan and I'm certain it will ease your mind about your safety'.

In these scenes, President Logan is written as anxious, terrified, unable to control his emotions, irrational and as such a weak subject. Since such traits traditionally are associated with femininity rather than masculinity, in these scenes, Logan is feminized whereas Novic is masculinized. Moreover, when Bauer and Buchanan ask for permission to use 'enhanced interrogation techniques' in Scene 4, Logan hesitates. Later, he asks for Novic's opinion on what to do. Here, President Logan is sitting on a sofa while Novic is sitting on the armrest. Leaning towards Logan, Novic says: 'I think we have to do whatever is necessary to do'. Novic is represented from the Point of View (POV) of Logan who is sitting down. In other words, the composition of the image communicates that Logan is 'lower' than Novic; Logan is literally looking up to Novic. In addition, Novic's calm appearance and body language also function to write him rather than the President as the authoritative subject in this scene. To conclude, the way in which the subject (Logan) is positioned in relation to other subjects and objects, in this case Novic, functions to reinforce the writing of Logan as a weak President unable to act with authority in a time of national crisis. Overall, this in turn enables the writing of Bauer as the authoritative subject of *24*.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have introduced the methodological concepts of predication, presupposition and subject-positioning; and demonstrated how they can form part of a discourse analysis in which 'language' includes visual representations and where popular culture is read as 'text'. In our analysis of the discourse on 'security vs. legality' as represented in the fourth season of *24*, we located three main discursive practices: the normalization of torture, the feminization of international law and the prioritization of pre-emption rather than response. Combined, these three types of discursive practices communicate a sense of urgency that creates an 'either/or' scenario and an essential conflict between being secure and the upholding of legal norms.

We conclude this chapter by discussing some limitations to this particular approach to discourse analysis. As demonstrated above, the methodological concepts of predication, presuppositioning and subject-positioning can inform a discourse analysis by revealing how subjects and objects are discursively produced and as such expose *how* certain practices are enabled and others disabled. The concepts cannot be used, however, to tell us why 'enhanced interrogation methods' were deemed necessary in the fight against terrorism. Furthermore, these methodological concepts cannot be used to tell us the 'real' meaning of *24*. Discourse analysis cannot answer how actual audiences interpret *24*, nor can it reveal what message the producers of *24* wanted to portray. In order to answer such questions of effects and intentions, different methods need to be employed.

Finally, we do not claim that this is necessarily the best way of conducting discourse analysis; nor do we insist on the desirability of a common understanding of how discourse analysis should be undertaken. Instead, the question of which way to conduct discourse analysis should be driven by considerations of the type of research question. Nevertheless, we do believe that a number of issues in critical Security Studies may be beneficially explored by employing the methodological concepts of predication, presupposition and subject-positioning. In particular, this involves the analysis of visual and cultural representations of security.

Please see the companion website for a seminar exercise.

Questions for further debate

- 1 To what extent are national identities constructed through visual and cultural discursive practices?
- 2 How can predication, presupposition and subject-positioning be used to analyse a particular state leader's authority or lack thereof?
- 3 How is US national security represented in other examples of fiction?
- 4 Is there a genuine tension between national security and international law?
- 5 How important is the entertainment industry in shaping the public's political views?

Notes

- 1 It later turns out the son only tried to hide the fact that he is gay, which sparks questions of heteronormativity, hyper-masculinity and gender that regrettably we are unable to go into here.
- 2 This chapter follows the usual written conventions in referencing television series, with the first numeral denoting the season and the second denoting the episode, so '4.07' refers to season four, episode seven.

Source for further reading and research

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17 Deconstruction as ‘anti-method’

Penny Griffin

Chapter summary

This chapter outlines a deconstructive approach to global politics, using the Global Financial Crisis to illustrate how this approach might be used to generate new knowledge and ideas about security. An article produced for *Foreign Policy* magazine in 2009 (entitled ‘The Death of Macho’) is deconstructed to show how ideas about economic security, progress and future prosperity can be, and are being, subject to contestation.

Learning outcomes

On completion, readers should be able to:

- describe some of the key debates and approaches surrounding an anti-methodological approach to world politics;
- outline how and where deconstruction can be applied to global politics;
- apply a deconstructive approach to examples of security/insecurity in global politics.

Introduction

To understand deconstruction as an approach to analysis, we need to engage with the work of French post-structuralist Jacques Derrida, whose use of the term ‘deconstruction’ has had widespread and significant intellectual impact.

It is not, as Zehfuss (2009: 138) describes, easy to summarise Derrida’s thought, not least because he was so prolific, or used apparently complex words (*différance* and undecidability, in particular), or indeed that he quite enjoyed ‘making up’ words (which is not unusual in the scholarly community). For Zehfuss, the key to understanding the potential difficulty with Derrida’s terms is more fundamental. ‘As his arguments challenge the categories within which we think – that is, our language – his terms are not easily explained using that language’ (Zehfuss 2009: 138). We need to understand the logic of Derrida’s thought to appreciate his ideas, and we need, in particular, to understand the significance Derrida attributed to the act of *reading* in and of itself: for Derrida, ‘reading is itself an act of writing’ since ‘reading does not decipher the given meaning of a text but is part of creating that meaning’ (Zehfuss 2009: 138–139).

Derrida’s approach focused on the importance of *contextualising* our readings of texts, with the *text*, for Derrida, being more than simply words on a page (such that it might be a theory, an image, a performance, a structure, an organisation, event or artefact, and so on). Derrida

was highly sceptical of describing deconstruction as explicitly either method or tool of analysis. Thus, 'anti-method' here derives not necessarily from an absence of methodology but from a particular care to reject the claims to objectivity, certainty, accuracy and truth that characterise traditional approaches to human behaviour (or international affairs, state action, organisational process, and so on). Refusing the separation of text and exterior application of method, Derrida advocated, rather, that deconstruction be considered always internal to the text: the point, for a deconstructive approach, is that the text always carries within itself its own undoing. The task of the analyst is simply to highlight the incoherencies, inconsistencies and problematic assumptions the text has otherwise rendered indiscernible. Thus, it might be more in keeping with Derrida's own thinking to see deconstruction as a form of critical sharpness rather than a method in and of itself.

In advocating deconstruction as a kind of 'anti-method' I do not suggest that we are absent from our analyses' explicit engagement with methodology from our research designs. Far from it and I would argue that a lack of explicit engagement with the specifics of one's own research strategy is likely to lead only to unreflective and unproductive research. Where this chapter discusses 'anti-method' it is in the same sense, as Shiner describes, that 'we have come to speak of the anti-novel or anti-art' (1982: 383). That is, as anti-establishment and, in the case of research design, anti-foundationalist.

Anti-foundationalism as 'anti-method'

Derrida was writing against what he described as *logocentric Western metaphysics*. This consists of ways of thinking committed to a centre of all meanings, which acts as an ultimate 'word', or presence, essence, truth or reality that acts as the foundation of all our thought, language and experience (Eagleton 1996: 113). This might also be described as *foundationalism*, in that it uses so-called rational inquiry to search for a foundation of knowledge in order to supply particular sorts of universal claims. A good example in International Relations (IR) scholarship would be neorealism's articulation of a particular form of structural 'security dilemma', arising from the foundational assumption of a self-interested, unitary state dependent on military force. Another example, from liberal economic theory, might be the assumed inevitability of economic liberalisation, led by the supposed rationality of 'economic man' (*homo economicus*), who seeks always to maximise his own profit. Such theorising seeks to explain and accurately describe actor behaviour within the international 'system' based on assumptions of 'rational' action and the acceptance of existing structures of power and authority. It is thus logocentric in its commitment to a centre of all meanings (or 'big explanation for everything'); for example, a limited conception of 'rationality' as equivalent to the serving of self-interest (which is closer, in the case of neorealism, to self-preservation than the profit maximising agenda of liberal economic theory).

Anti-foundationalist scholarship, on the other hand, takes issue with approaches to the study of culture and society that search for foundation, truth, objectivity, certainty and system (Best and Kellner 1991: 20). Anti-foundationalist theories (such as social constructivism, a number of feminisms and post-structuralism) approach the study of IR from non-essentialist perspectives that challenge, at fundamental and unsettling levels, some of the core categories of IR's conventional forms of analysis. By asking us to confront in quite radical and imaginative ways how we know what we think we know and what, then, we exclude from our analyses, such research strategies are always strongly political. Deconstruction 'so profoundly interferes with our standard ways of conceiving the world that much of what we may have taken for granted must be reconsidered' (Zehfuss 2009: 144). To deconstruct claims to objectivity

or seemingly rational systems of thought and behaviour potentially deprives those claims and systems of their coherence and their inevitability. This has made post-structural theorising, of all IR's modes of inquiry, frequently deplored, derided and discounted.

Deconstruction, decentring and 'double reading'

It is important, in grasping Derrida's ideas, that we try to engage (at least a little) with his critique of Western philosophy, which is in part a response to Saussurean (structuralist) linguistics (hence deconstruction falls under the broader theoretical moniker 'post-structuralism'). Saussure proposes that meaning in language is a matter of *difference*, in particular, the differentiation of sounds structures. Meaning is thus the difference between two signifiers (a 'signifier' is made up of an indivisible sound and image, with the 'sign' being its graphic form, which is always exterior). 'Boat' is, for example, 'boat' because it is not 'goat' or 'moat'. For structuralist linguistics, language forms a closed and stable system of difference.

An effect of this closed system is that it creates, as post-structuralists such as Derrida argued, a potentially infinite 'tissue of differences', since every sign is what it is because it is not all other signs (Eagleton 1996: 111). Structuralism, because it relies on the *sound difference* of meaning also, Derrida notes, privileges the spoken over the written word (*phonocentrism*; literally, the centring of the act of speech), reproducing the speech act as a more accurate (or perfect) form of communication. This has the effect, Derrida suggests, of privileging presence (the act of speech) over absence (the written word), since writing is seen as 'derivative' and 'further removed' (Zehfuss 2009: 140).

Where structuralism divides the sign from the referent, for post-structuralists, meaning exists as the difference between signifier and signified (the signifier 'boat' and the signified 'boat'). The signified 'is really the product of a complex interaction of signifiers, which has no obvious end-point' (Eagleton 1996: 110). For Derrida, meaning cannot be assumed to be always present in a sign: rather, it represents something about language that is potential, still to come, or *deferred (la différance)* along a possibly infinite chain of signifiers. Post-structuralism's move away from the possibility of a closed, relatively stable and ordered system of language towards the potential for infinite meaning and difference/*différance* is crucial because it means that *meaning is a process*: the sentence may end, but the process of language does not. This means also that, since meaning's context (the various chain of signifiers that surround it) is subject to constant change, language begins to look less like 'a well-defined, clearly demarcated structure containing symmetrical units of signifiers and signifieds' than 'a sprawling, limitless web' (Eagleton 1996: 112).

For Derrida meaning is always *transformational*: capable of transforming that which it touches at a given moment and subject to constant change itself. Writing creates meaning, but only tentatively, and as constantly subject to interpretation. Although, however, the possibility for infinite meaning is always present, texts deploy various strategies to close off this possibility, which is what Derrida referred to as the 'structurality of structure' (2001: 351–352). This structurality is the mechanisms, processes and practices through which a text orients, balances and structures itself (Derrida 2001: 351–352). Western metaphysical discourses, Derrida argues, achieve their structurality by cantering themselves, deploying a 'central', 'original', or 'transcendental' signified to, as far as they can, 'fix' themselves. The consequences of this method are important, since centred meanings (transcendental signifieds, which form the 'first principles' of metaphysical thought systems) in social discourse are held up frequently as the origin of other meanings (for example, in Western liberal democracies, transcendental signifieds such as the Family, Democracy, Freedom and Authority provide the foundations for other apparently

stable social meanings, such as heterosexual partnership, political order, private property and political representation). To 'decentre', or deconstruct, them reveals that they are socially constructed and privileged, more commonly defined by what they exclude, and involving 'binary oppositions' that establish apparently rigid hierarchies between categories (usually privileging the first category, as for those patriarchal social systems based on a man/woman opposition, or the colonial systems based on a civilised/barbarian opposition). The stability of these oppositions can be undermined by a deconstructive strategy that shows: first, how the hierarchies on which the binary depends are constructed and therefore not true and/or reliable, and; second, how such oppositions can be betrayed into inverting themselves through their very need to hold themselves together.

The term *double reading* expresses more Derrida's strategy of exploring the less obvious meanings of a text.¹ The first (or traditional) reading of a text comments on the author's *vouloir-dire* (Derrida 1997: 48–49), or what the author attempts to command by their text. This reading offers the dominant interpretation of the text, showing how the text 'appears coherent and consistent with itself' (Devetak 2005: 169). 'If a deconstructive reading is to have any persuasive force, then it must possess a full complement of the tools of commentary and lay down a powerful, primary layer of reading' (Critchley 2005).

The second reading seeks to unsettle the text 'by applying pressure to those points of instability' that might expose its internal tensions and incoherencies (Devetak 2005: 169). The aim of this reading is in part to contradict the text's *vouloir-dire*, primarily by locating what Derrida sometimes referred to as the text's 'blind spots' (1997: 163–164), which Derrida often found in ambiguous concepts and apparently simple words or terms that actually possess 'a double or multiple range of meaning that simply cannot be contained by the text's intended meaning' (Critchley 2005). Importantly, for Derrida, a text has to 'undo' itself from within: 'conceptual blind spots are deployed by their authors in a way that simply cannot be controlled by their intentions. In an important sense, the text deconstructs itself rather than being deconstructed' (Critchley 2005).

What one is trying to cultivate [. . .] is a scrupulous practice of reading, being attentive to the text's language, major arguments, transitions and movements of thought, but also alive to its hesitations, paradoxes, quotation marks, ellipses, footnotes, inconsistencies and downright conceptual confusions. Thanks to Derrida, we can see that every major text in the history of philosophy possesses these self-deconstructive features.

A deconstructive (anti-)method in critical approaches to security

Deconstruction is not an easy idea to express, unsettling 'the categories on which our thinking is based and that are fundamental to language' to the extent that it becomes 'difficult to express what deconstruction is within this language' (Zehfuss 2009: 139). Such difficulties notwithstanding, there are several contributions a deconstructive method offers the student (and scholar) of IR, which I have chosen here to group according to three categories: *interpretation*, *challenge*, and *possibility*.

Interpretation

Understanding, and practising, the thinking in which deconstruction engages (Lawlor 2011) is pivotal in producing deconstructive analysis. A deconstructive method may or may not

reject the rigour of empirical analysis (this depends on the commitments of the researcher) but nevertheless has its own criteria of theoretical commitment. First, using a deconstructive method requires that we understand the world as a ‘text’, in that it can only be *interpreted* (Devetak 2005: 168). Language is not a mirror of nature and meaning is applied, never implicit. Deconstruction uses language as something more than a medium through which the world is expressed, or a secondary event to the world as it happens: rather, language *is* the world, constructing meaning and changing what we do or do not see. Second, deconstruction is less concerned with observation of ‘objects’ than with observation of ‘observations as observations’ (Andersen 2003: xii). This produces a strategy of analysis that in practice refuses the separation of subject and object of study, seeing both as constituted by discourse and implicitly implicated in the relations of power therein. Thus, the ‘scientific’ separation of subject and object is impossible within a deconstructive method, since the observer is as caught in the text as the observed, and meaning dependent thereon. Third, our truths and facts are made possible within socially constructed language systems (‘systems of signification’, or discourses). Every object (material, factual, ideational, or otherwise) is constituted as an object of discourse, since no object is (or can be) given or determined beyond its discursive condition of emergence. Discourses are powerful embodiments of constraint, repression and imperative, which transform language from an infinity of potential meanings into more closed and ‘knowable’ systems. These systems unify and make sense of our social relations, identities and behaviours.

The fact that every object is constituted as an object of discourse has *nothing to do* with whether there is a world external to thought, or with the realism/idealism opposition. An earthquake or the falling of a brick is an event that certainly exists, in the sense that it occurs here and now, independently of my will. But whether their specificity as objects is constructed in terms of ‘natural phenomena’ or ‘expressions of the wrath of God’, depends upon the structuring of a discursive field. What is denied is not that such objects exist externally to thought, but the rather different assertion that they could constitute themselves as objects outside any discursive condition of emergence.

(Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 108)

Challenge

A deconstructive methodology sets the IR scholar the task of challenging ‘the hegemony of the power relations or symbolic order in whose name security is produced, to render visible its contingent, provisional nature’ (Edkins 1999: 142). Deconstruction is essential in ‘radically unsettling what are taken to be stable concepts and conceptual oppositions’, while deconstructive practice also pays particular attention to the effects of the stabilisations (or ‘stability-effects’) of any apparent totality (Devetak 2005: 168–169).

Although structure, and therefore discourse, is always partial, uncertain and inessential, ‘within structure there is not only form, relation, and configuration. There is also interdependency and a totality which is always concrete’ (Derrida 2001: 3). Highlighting how a structure centres itself reveals also how it neutralises its instabilities, ‘fixing’ itself through certain ‘organising principles’, origins or end points that orientate the ‘coherence of the system’. As Laclau and Mouffe argue, this process of neutralisation means that discourses *are* totalising but that they can never be *sutured* totalities (2001: 96). It is only through essentialist discourses, discourses of unity, that the ‘field of differences’ constituent of the diverse ‘social orders’ are domesticated, identities ‘fixed’ and made ‘real’, and thus social relations ordered.

The 'social' may always be 'open', its processes partial, and every identity 'precarious' and 'inessential' (Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 96), *but it is not made to appear so.*

Possibility

By exposing the contingency of otherwise apparently stable 'truths', 'facts' and/or hierarchies, deconstruction is not 'destructive' but profoundly radical, proposing constantly the possibility of alternatives. Deconstruction offers 'a kind of thinking that never finds itself at the end' (Lawlor 2011) and in confronting the impossibility of singular metaphysical 'truths' ('justice', etc.) we recognise the multiple ways in which such truths are possible. In viewing discourses as 'unstable grids' rather than fixed and determined systems of meaning, we thus see their changeability, historical contingency and how they might be open to future change and reconfiguration. Although discourses are heterogeneous language systems, obeying and embodying 'complex historical dynamics', historical changes and changes in social life, they also deploy processes of centring that orient, balance and give grounding to their overall structure: analysis that focuses on the processes, practices and symbols through which different discourses create and pronounce meaning reveals the level of contingency of this meaning and meaningfulness, or, in other words, to what extent discourses turn potentially unstable meaning into concrete identity and how they might, then, be *otherwise*.

Limitations of/to a deconstructive approach

I have a [. . .] skepticism about the popular idea of deconstruction as a methodological unpicking of binary oppositions (speech/writing, male/female, inside/outside, reason/madness, etc. etc. etc.). In my view, this is a practice which led generations of humanities students into the intellectual *cul-de-sac* of locating binaries in purportedly canonical texts and cultural epiphenomena and then relentlessly deconstructing them in the name of a vaguely political position somehow deemed to be progressive. Insofar as Derrida's name [was] marshalled to such a cause, this only led to the reduction of deconstruction to some sort of entirely formalistic method based on an unproven philosophy of language. (Critchley 2005)

Deconstruction (as part of a broader post-structural approach) has variously been criticised for: a tendency to call all values into question; an emphasis on the idea of textuality (rather than, say, materiality); the production of readings and interpretations that are not subject to any form of falsification; a failure (albeit intentional) to remove from the text the paradoxes or contradictions that it highlights; not having established alternatives of its own account. Some scholars doubtless struggle with the loss of fixity implicit to a deconstructive method, asking how, if nothing is fixed in a text, one can grapple with it at all. It would be worth noting that, since deconstruction operates as part of the very system (text) it critiques, its techniques are feasibly subject to deconstruction themselves, although the plausibility of deconstructing a deconstruction seems limited.

Deconstruction's focus on 'how' rather than 'why' questions (asking, for example, what the practices are through which knowledge is produced, rather than asking why this is so) has proved problematic for a number of scholars; not only those who advocate a given and objective reality (IR's neorealists, for example), but also those (Marxist and post-Marxist scholars in particular) who claim that, although this method might outline how 'a particular discourse can gain dominance at a specific point in time', it overlooks 'why a certain discourse and not another is successful' (Bieler and Morton 2008: 105). For Bieler and Morton,

post-structural approaches ‘fetishize’ self/other differences without allocating shape and historicity to relations of exploitation, domination and force, thus ignoring the ‘underlying power structures promoting individual discourses’ (2008: 105–114).

As Palan notes, we should avoid judging a school, an approach or a theory ‘purely on the basis of material already published’, since theories ‘are changing, schools of thoughts are evolving, and traditions often develop in unpredictable ways’ (2007: 48). Deconstruction may not determine the underlying power structures and historical relations of force that shape our lives at all moments, but it certainly prompts the kinds of questions that lead us to interrogate, for example, practices of representation, security, capital and power in world politics (and their effects). This is an important contribution because it shows us how the sense we make of the world, and our ability to act within it, is heavily regulated (Griffin 2011: 48). I would argue that post-structural understandings of power, identity and representation *can* avoid ‘fetishizing’ self and other, allocating, even, shape and historicity to relations of exploitation, domination and force (Griffin 2011: 47).

Box 17.1 How to deconstruct a text

- 1 Choose the text to be deconstructed (or perhaps the text has been chosen for you).
- 2 Produce the first (traditional) reading:
 - (a) contextualise the text (read, where possible, the text in its original language, familiarise yourself with the author’s previous work and know the original context in which it was written);
 - (b) understand and describe the text’s intended, accepted and/or dominant meaning (its ‘*vouloir-dire*’);
 - (c) comment on what the author might have ‘commanded’ by their text, and/or how the text might generally be interpreted or taught;
 - (d) describe how the text achieves maximum coherence and consistency (its ‘stability effect’, e.g. what its major argument might be, what language it uses and where).
- 3 Produce the second reading:
 - (a) look for and outline the text’s key assumptions;
 - (b) describe what the text presents as normal, natural, apparent or primary;
 - (c) ask where the text establishes oppositions and/or firm distinctions between two categories and what the effects of this might be;
 - (d) find the text’s ‘pressure points’, i.e. the tensions and contradictions within the text, or ideas that do not readily match other ideas present in the text;
 - (e) describe how and where the text does not conform to its stated or accepted meaning.
- 4 Demonstrate how the text unsettles itself:
 - (a) outline where the text’s argument relies on assumptions that might undermine it;
 - (b) describe how, for example, binaries and hierarchies might be mutually reinforcing or codependent and break down under scrutiny;
 - (c) outline how the text’s idea of normal, natural or expected might be none of these things.

Applying a deconstructive (anti-)method: the global financial crisis

1 A first (traditional) reading

I have divided this text into two parts: an illustration (the largest illustration for the body of the article by taking the whole of page 67 in Salam 2009, see Figure 17.1) and a written article (see Box 17.2 and Box 17.3 for background information). To offer a *first reading* of Salam's piece, we need to detail his article's foundational assumptions and argument. Salam discusses 'the almost unbelievably disproportionate impact' the 'Great Recession' is having on men and how this 'will only get worse' (2009: 66). (Limited) other writings at the time supported, broadly, the two themes Salam elucidates here: first, that the recession was caused 'by risky macho behaviour'; second, that male jobs were more quickly threatened, which is 'hastening the decline of men as job sectors favouring women remain relatively unscathed' (*New York*

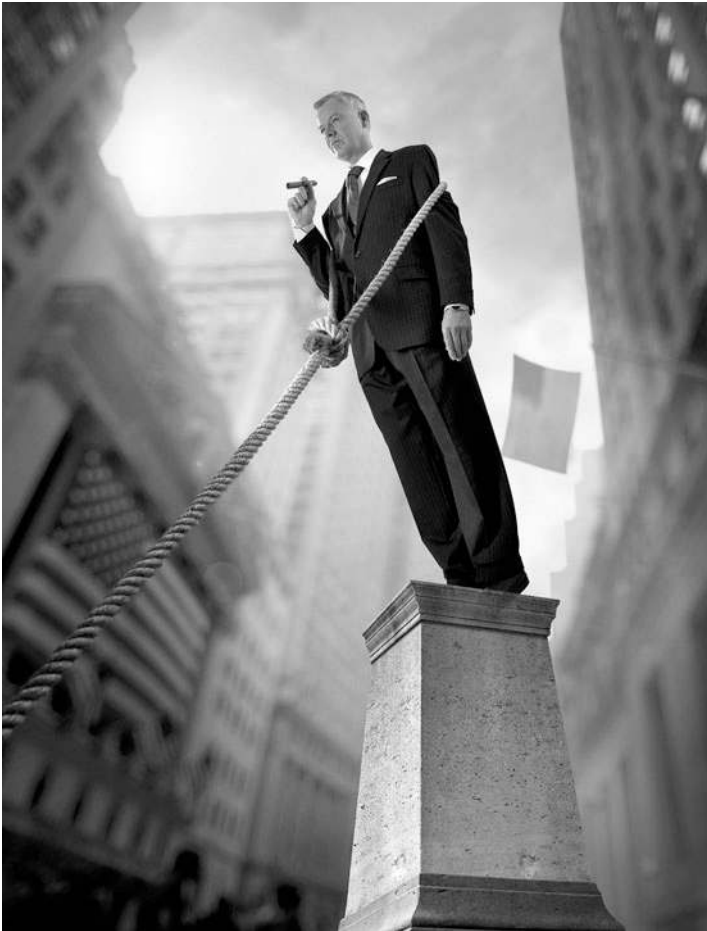


Figure 17.1 'The Death of Macho'.

Source: Reproduced with kind permission from Aaron Goodman, photographer.

Times 2009). Salam's contributory argument is to go a step further than analyses that highlight high rates of male job loss by claiming two things about the Global Financial Crisis (GFC): that it heralds the end of universal male dominance; and, as a crisis for men, it represents the moment at which men must choose 'to accept or fight [their loss of dominance as a "fact of history"]' (Salam 2009: 68).

The illustrative photograph (Figure 17.1) shows a silver-haired male executive, cigar in hand, standing precariously atop a column. He has a noose around his torso and is pulled forward by an unknown person/object/force to the left of camera, teetering forwards towards an unknown drop. A line of smart buildings recede away from the fore-fronted figure and two American flags can be made out in the background, one attached to the facade of a building to the left, another hanging mid-air to the right of the executive's body. The male figure himself appears to bear no apparent terror and his expression is haughty but inscrutable.

The text's intended meaning (its *vouloir-dire*) is perhaps best grasped by taking some of the article's key, and earliest, claims at face value: that is, that the GFC is altering the fact that '[m]anly men have been running the world forever' and that this crisis will 'alter the course of history' (2009). The text states that a 'great shift of power from males to females is likely to be dramatically accelerated by the economic crisis' since more people will realise 'that the aggressive, risk-seeking behaviour that has enabled men to entrench their power – the cult of macho – has now proven destructive and unsustainable in a globalized world' (Salam 2009: 66). There

Box 17.2 The 'GFC'

Article excerpt: 'Manly men have been running the world forever. But the Great Recession is changing all that, and it will alter the course of history. The era of male dominance is coming to an end. [. . .] The consequence will be not only a mortal blow to the macho men's club called finance capitalism that got the world into the current economic catastrophe; it will be a collective crisis for millions and millions of working men around the globe. The death throes of macho are easy to find if you know where to look. Consider, to start, the almost unbelievably disproportionate impact that the current crisis is having on men – so much so that the recession is now known to some economists and the more plugged-in corners of the blogosphere as the 'he-cession'. More than 80 per cent of job losses in the USA since November (2008) have fallen on men, according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics. And the numbers are broadly similar in Europe, adding up to about 7 million more out-of-work men than before the recession just in the USA and Europe as economic sectors traditionally dominated by men (construction and heavy manufacturing) decline further and faster than those traditionally dominated by women (public-sector employment, health care, and education). All told, by the end of 2009, the global recession is expected to put as many as 28 million men out of work worldwide. Things will only get worse for men as the recession adds to the pain globalization was already causing. [. . .] Of course, macho is a state of mind, not just a question of employment status. And as men get hit harder in the he-cession, they're even less well-equipped to deal with the profound and long-term psychic costs of job loss. [. . .] In other words, be prepared for a lot of unhappy guys out there – with all the negative consequences that implies' (Salam 2009: 66).

Box 17.3 Textual Background

Magazine background: Founded in 1970 and published (in print and online) by a division of the Washington Post, Foreign Policy claims to be 'a global magazine of politics, economics, and ideas, drawing on the world's leading journalists, thinkers, and professionals to analyse the most significant international trends and events of our times, without regard to ideology or political bias' (Foreign Policy 2011).

Author background: Reihan Salam is a US citizen and Fellow at the New America Foundation (which has its headquarters in Washington, DC) and editor of the online review, The American Scene. He has worked at The Atlantic, NBC News, The New York Times, the Council on Foreign Relations and The New Republic. He is the co-author, with Ross Douthat, of *Grand New Party: How Conservatives Can Win the Working Class and Save the American Dream* (Doubleday 2008). He also writes for National Review, Forbes.com, The Daily Beast and Slate. He has been described (and has described himself) as an 'unorthodox conservative', an advocator of 'traditional family values' and a supporter of gay marriage. His New America Foundation page describes his areas of expertise as crime, elections and political parties, immigration, regulation, telecom and technology and welfare (New America Foundation).

Issue background: The publication of Salam's article, in July 2009, occurred two years after the collapse of New Century Financial and a year after several further notable corporate casualties are 'rescued' by US government, most famously perhaps mortgage lenders Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. It is in 2009, the apparent peak of the so-called Global Financial Crisis (GFC), that a flurry of descriptions of the GFC as a 'mancession', or 'he-cession' (as per Salam's piece here), emerge, the argument being that, since men are seemingly bearing the brunt of the job losses at a significantly higher rate than women, the GFC is disproportionately hurting male workers.

are two points of note to this argument worth detailing here: first, 'globalisation' is posited as intractable (and beyond critique), and; second, we are being asked to assume that, if men lose their jobs, machismo will end. Men and macho have become here, in essence, interchangeable categories. The rather superior-seeming male executive is being pulled off-balance by an unseen force, veering forwards towards an unclear fate without any great expression of fear. A sense of economic peril is perhaps implicit in the illustration but clearly stated in the text: in the illustration the out of focus Wall Street flanking the noosed figure suggests, but does not overstate, the primacy of an economic environment, while the written article has the advantage of dramatic adjectives (monumental shifts, facts of history, mortal blows, unbelievable disproportions, massive psychic trauma, and so on) to stress its claims. The gendered nature of that peril is, however, explicit in both: this is an article asking us to centralise in our understanding of financial crisis the security (or lack of) of the working (American) male. Maximum coherence and consistency can only be achieved through the reader's faith in the foundational importance of breadwinning, heterosexual US masculinity, and any attacks on it.

2 A second (double) reading

A *second reading* seeks to 'undo' the deceptive simplicity (and persuasiveness) of the text's argument.

For example, use of the term ‘Great Recession’ is interesting, echoing the ‘Great Depression’ as a descriptor of pre-Second World War (initially US-based, then global) economic stagnation. John Maynard Keynes had once, in 1930, referred to this as ‘the Great Slump’, although this terminology seems not to have stuck. As Rampell shows in her self-confessed ‘highly unscientific’ analysis of Nexis articles containing the term ‘Great Recession’, its use reached a highpoint of use between December 2008 and March 2009 (although she does not examine beyond March 2009) (Rampell 2009). The term may have caught on so quickly, Rampell argues, as an appealingly catchy and ‘vaguely punny’ phrase: as she also points out, however, the term Great Recession has been trotted out for a number of economic downturns in the twentieth century ‘that in retrospect might seem somewhat mild’. Perhaps

its regular revivals have something to do with a near-eschatological desire to witness a downturn of epic, historical proportions. After all, as long as we’re suffering, we might as well brand the suffering so it’ll sound more impressive to our grandchildren.

(Rampell 2009)

This seems significant when thinking about the text’s use of the term, which depends on heralding a shift in masculinity (but not economic discourse) that is so dramatic, ‘seismic’ and history-altering that any base terms need to convey sufficient historical gravitas. This selective (and rather melodramatic) focus thus serves a dual purpose. First, it highlights the apparent significance of the author’s core argument (that we are witnessing a shift to a ‘post-macho world’). Second, and relatedly, the drama of the historical allusion circumvents discussion of assumptions that the article presents as given (i.e. as beyond questioning) and the inconsistencies and incoherencies in the overall argument of the piece that these unproblematised assumptions then present. These are several and constitute that which the text presents as normal and natural, but which on second reading is worth interrogating.

To start: the assumption (and core argument) that ‘we’² have witnessed a shift of power from men to women. The key consequence of the GFC will be ‘not only a mortal blow to the macho men’s club called finance capitalism’ it will also be ‘a collective crisis for millions and millions of working men around the globe’ (Salam 2009: 66). For this claim to make sense, however, we need to believe that ‘man’ is broadly equitable with, and intimately tied with ‘macho’ in a way that ‘woman’ is not. That is, we need to commit to Salam’s argument that the sexes are polarised (this the author perhaps most clearly states with the claim that the ‘axis of global conflict in this century’ will be ‘gender’, 2009: 70). That women might not represent ‘macho’ might seem reasonable if we think of the frequency with which femininity is equated with machismo (i.e. not often), but it is not *impossible* for this to be the case: women can, and do, demonstrate stereotypically male behaviours and where there are incentives to do so (for example, the incentive of continued employment in the financial industries) these are likely exacerbated. The ‘death throes of macho’ that are ‘easy to find’ when we look at how the current crisis is threatening men (Salam 2009: 66) are not so pertinent if we consider how women might embody ‘macho’, which is as Salam claims, ‘a state of mind’, not ‘just a question of employment status’ (Salam 2009: 66).

What may not be obvious on first reading this oppositional view of ‘gender’ (read: war of the sexes) is the implicit assumption of *heteronormativity* that it exemplifies. Heterosexuality as a model of human relationship assumes a privileged position throughout this article (discussion, for example, of men’s potential adaptability in family life refers only to marriage between male and female spouses, Salam 2009: 69). For this to be achieved the text has to bifurcate clearly men and women, reproducing the assumption that male and female

identities, actions and behaviours are fundamentally different and diametrically opposed. Men, the article suggests, have entrenched their power through aggression and risk-taking, ergo men are aggressive and risk-taking, while women, presumably, are not. The ways in which the article centralises masculinity while failing to consider in any meaningful sense multiple gender identities thus pays little attention to locations of power and influence in the global economy.

This relates also, importantly, to the ways in which the text creates and sustains a certain type of security/insecurity binary, designed to uphold a particular concern for male rather than female unemployment and social disenfranchisement. Herein, the American male has become emblematic of supposedly global patterns of gender insecurity (the article rarely specifies that its illustrative statistics are North American and makes direct reference to Europe, Lithuania and the Icelandic bankruptcy as analogous to US crises of manhood). We have, the article claims, 'no precedent for a world after the death of macho' (Salam 2009: 70). 'Things' are getting 'worse' for men and 'macho unemployed and undirected' represents a specific social problem but also 'massive psychic trauma' for the '[s]urly, lonely, and hard-drinking men, who feel as though they have been rendered historically obsolete, and who long for lost identities of macho' (Salam 2009: 69). The 'disciplining effects of marriage' are fading as fewer young adults think they can, or have the resources to, marry. Such assertions rely heavily on advocating male insecurity as fundamentally threatening to societies, in ways that women's disadvantage is not. We are being asked to worry more for crises of masculinity than those of femininity (I have yet to read any article that discusses the GFC as a crisis for femininity, women and/or girls), with unemployed men considered more threatening both to the fabric of society and to individual welfare than unemployed women. The article goes so far as to claim, citing the *American Journal of Public Health*, that 'the financial strain of unemployment' has significantly more consequences on the mental health of men than on that of women' (Salam 2009: 66). Men, nonetheless, have a choice to make not available to women and it is this that 'will have seismic effects for all of humanity' (Salam 2009: 68). The shift 'to the post-macho world', in fact, depends entirely 'on the choices men make' (Salam 2009: 69). By discussing the 'death of macho' while centring entirely men and masculinity as indispensable to the future trajectory of world prosperity, the article reinforces, first, a portrait of a war between the sexes in which women and all non-macho men are peripheral and deprived of agency, and, second, centralises the threat that men deprived of their economic potency might present to economic (and national) security.

The text states that, as 'the crisis unfolds', it will 'increasingly play out in the realm of power politics' (Salam 2009: 66), which suggests that 'power politics' has yet truly to take centre stage in the global economy. Where exactly we have already seen a shift of power from men to women remains unclear. As Salam elsewhere notes, female disadvantage is widespread: 'female-dominated jobs' are invariably less well remunerated than those dominated by men (Salam 2009: 68), and the male breadwinner model of the family, with its ensuing 'traditional gender roles', has been historically and actively *backed by the US state*, promising women 'economic security in exchange for the state's entrenchment of male economic power' and thus circumventing the perceived social insecurity of high levels of male unemployment in the 1930s (Salam 2009: 68). It has 'turned out' that 'not only did the macho men of the heavily male-dominated global finance sector create the conditions for global economic collapse' and that they were 'aided and abetted by their mostly male counterparts in government whose policies, whether consciously or not, acted to artificially prop up macho' (Salam 2009: 68). We are *not*, however, witnessing the end of Wall Street,

global finance, or capitalism (Salam 2009: 67). If these 'ideas and institutions will live on', and the structures that enable them will continue unchallenged, what exactly the incentives are to radically alter the 'aggressive' and 'risk-seeking' behaviours that have sustained all the component parts of a financial system that is not (and Salam makes this explicit) under threat is unclear, and rather confusing. Men will give up macho because they have built a system that has 'proven destructive and unsustainable in a globalized world' (Salam 2009: 66) and yet they will do so even though this system is not under threat and they are (allegedly) biologically programmed not to.³

According to Salam's argument, men can 'adapt' and change their models of family life, or they can react and 'decide to fight the death of macho' with anger and 'nasty extremism' (Salam 2009: 69). In both scenarios, we would, however, need to be fairly confident that the jobs lost in the GFC are not regainable by the men who have lost them. There is little evidence for this and certainly no evidence for women taking those jobs lost by men. In fact, the male executive unbalanced not by himself but by forces external to him (shown in Figure 17.1) shows no sign of failing to regain his balance once the rope is removed. There is, for example, some evidence to suggest that 'men have fared better than women in regaining jobs during the slight rebound sometimes called the recovery' (Folbre 2011), with men gaining and women losing (at a substantial pace) employment during the period June 2009 to May 2011 (Kochhar 2011). Research has also suggested that men might actually have experienced job losses at a lower rate than in earlier recessions. Men might be more sensitive to recessions because 'they are overrepresented in highly cyclical sectors' (Reuters 2009), with employment positions in these sectors (for example, manufacturing or construction) not likely to be then given to women; such jobs will simply be regained by men at a future date. Women change jobs more easily, but they invariably command less in salary earnings. As Buvinic *et al.* (2009) discuss, in those countries where women's survival was precarious before the crisis, slowed economic growth, increased prices for basic goods, the increased likelihood of girls rather than boys being withdrawn from school, reduced spending on health care and thus higher levels of infant and child mortality are not likely to do much for women's welfare overall.

These are points that Salam *almost* considers once, in a paragraph discussing 'male-dominated' US industries such as construction and transport (2009: 68), followed by a somewhat begrudging concession that women 'had a higher global unemployment rate before the current recession, and they still do' (Salam 2009: 70). Yet he fails fully to engage with or develop how these ideas might impact on his claim that women are gaining 'more of the social, economic, and political power they have long been denied' (Salam 2009: 70). The 'penis competition' made possible 'by limitless leverage, arcane financial instruments, and pure unadulterated capitalism' is not, Salam argues, possible again, and will now be 'domesticated' in lasting ways (Salam 2009: 70). Quite who, or what, has domesticated this 'penis competition' remains, however, unclear. Have men 'domesticated' themselves? Are we to assume that 'the rise of women' has domesticated those men we are being asked to think it has displaced? The article's closing claim that the 'axis of global conflict in this century' will be neither 'warring ideologies' nor 'competing geopolitics' but 'gender' suggests not.

Conclusion

This chapter has noted how particular constructions of gendered 'security' in the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) form useful examples of the potential applications of a deconstructive

method. Interpreting, challenging and engaging with the possibilities of the GFC by examining how it is represented allows us a few moments to take seriously how knowledge is produced in and about global politics and the effects of this. The GFC, in particular, offers us an opportunity to think very carefully about how we conceptualise 'security', and the methods through which we seek to 'secure' ourselves against apparent threat(s). Using a deconstructive (anti-) method forces us to face the possibility that those threats are not externally determined and objectively knowable, but are instead internally, and socially, created. As Dillon argues, the 'very instruments and the very preoccupations which tell us what to fear and how to protect ourselves from danger also threaten us' (2009: 423). A deconstruction of Salam's article shows how a text proclaiming the 'death of macho' and the beginnings of a radically 'new world order' is premised entirely on maintaining the conditions for the old order. In this instance, we create our own dangers ('gender' conflict) by actively perpetuating the conditions we claim to be averting (in this instance, by failing to alter the structures, institutions and practices that sustained the behaviours we seek to avoid in the future). A deconstructive analysis thus presents to us the possibility that our current preoccupations (e.g. with 'gender', 'conflict', 'risk' and 'insecurity') create the conditions for fear and danger. Such analysis also, however, suggests that actually challenging (by not accepting as given and beyond dispute) how and according to what categories we govern ourselves can make a radical difference in our lives.

Please see the companion website for a seminar exercise.

Questions for further debate

- 1 What does an 'anti-methodological' approach tell us about global politics today?
- 2 Why might a deconstructive approach to global politics be unsettling to some?
- 3 Describe a conventional approach to 'security'. How would you go about deconstructing this?
- 4 What can an anti-foundationalist analysis of the GFC tell us about the context, evolution and effects of that crisis?
- 5 Why is it important to deconstruct assumptions about masculinity and femininity in global politics?

Notes

- 1 Derrida's favourite method of deconstruction was to take an apparently peripheral and/or casual fragment of a text and 'work it tenaciously through to the point where it threatens to dismantle the oppositions which govern the text as a whole' (Eagleton 1996: 116). Derrida himself read extremely carefully and certainly more than twice his chosen texts; hence 'double reading' expresses more generally his strategy of deconstruction.
- 2 Salam is never specific throughout this article concerning what he means by 'we', but since he mentions 'global shifts' more often than particular US-based changes, I assume here that he means 'we' as a global 'we', with all the problems this entails.
- 3 Salam uses essentialist biology to claim that the female sex is less inclined to 'risky' behaviour in financial markets, citing as 'established fact' the claims from one article (by behavioural finance economists Barber and Odean) that 'of all the factors that might correlate with overconfident investment in financial markets, – age, marital status, and the like – the most obvious culprit [is] having a Y chromosome' (2009: 68). It is not clear from this whether we are meant to believe that the challenge to macho in the finance industries lies in the replacement of the Y chromosome (i.e. whether women are taking men's jobs), since the text nowhere engages with whether the jobs men lose are taken up by women, particularly in the finance industries. There is little evidence for this being

the case. Colgan (2009), for example, suggests that in Australia the GFC has pushed more women to work, but does not say if the GFC has created more work for women, nor specify whether any of the 50,000 jobs lost by Australian men have been taken by the 20,000 women who, apparently, have found jobs. It is not, then, clear, why and how it matters where and how Y chromosomes affect financial markets, if indeed they do, since there is nothing here to suggest we might expect an increase in the Y chromosome on Wall Street (or anywhere else).

Sources for further reading and research

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18 Visual analysis

Cerwyn Moore and Chris Farrands

Chapter summary

This chapter examines the visual politics of security. In particular the chapter offers a preliminary introduction to aesthetic readings of the visual. It does so, first by establishing the roots of interpretive analysis within International Relations (IR) theory touching on the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur, before using a range of examples to demonstrate the interface between qualitative theories and contemporary methodologies. The final part of the chapter explores the limitations of ‘aesthetically informed’ accounts of IR, while also demonstrating more generally how interpretive methods can be brought to bear on visual accounts of security.

Learning outcomes

On completion, readers should be able to:

- examine ‘visual’, ‘representational,’ and ‘pictorial’ themes within critical approaches to security;
- examine the methodological strengths and weaknesses of aesthetic accounts of visual security;
- locate ‘aesthetic’ accounts of the political, placing visual readings of security within a broader body of interpretive IR.

Introduction

In recent years the move to explore socio-cultural relations, narrative, and perhaps most recently hermeneutics and aesthetics has done much to enrich the use of qualitative methodologies in International Relations (IR), and Security Studies. Drawing on the work of influential literary and social theorists such as Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur, the move to incorporate approaches from the interpretive tradition has gained more purchase and prominence in subfields of the discipline, especially in debates around epistemology (see Farrands 2010).

The ‘aesthetic turn’, a term used by Roland Bleiker (2001), sought to draw attention to the ways in which meaning is apprehended through art. As Bleiker notes, aesthetic approaches ‘highlight how we understand and construct the world we live in today’ (Bleiker 2009: 8). The move to use aesthetics, however, also challenges ‘how we think about representing the political interest’ (Bleiker 2009: 8).

Box 18.1 Aesthetics

Aesthetics refers to a branch of philosophy which deals with the arts. A branch of the field focuses on responses to and judgements about aesthetic experience, leading to considerations of the 'sublime'. Aesthetics also deals with that which is pleasing to the eye, to perception and the nature of beauty within the creative arts. Aesthetics analysis stretches back through the work of Hegel, Kant to the philosophy of Plato, amongst others. The core questions it asks is whether, if our knowledge of what is sublime or beautiful is neither scientific nor the result of a rule of language or logic, any claims about the subject can be true or valid, or whether what we think is sublime/beautiful is merely a matter either of social convention or of purely subjective individual opinion. The aesthetic turn in social science and especially in International Relations is concerned:

- (a) to recognise the cultural dimensions of much of our experience of IR, partly because so much IR is primarily 'about' inter-cultural relations;
- (b) to ask how we can explore and bring this knowledge to bear on a broader agenda of IR;
- (c) to ask whether an aesthetic form of knowledge based, as Kant suggested, in a particular educated and refined form of judgement, might be relevant outside an experience of the arts as a form of judgement-based knowledge which is relevant both to academic analysis and potentially also to practice in diplomacy or to the understanding of conflict and violence.

The representation of the political has been extensively explored in relation to literary sources, including biography and poetry as well as novels. It has also been quite widely used in thinking about film, which is also increasingly used as a teaching tool in IR. It is less developed in looking at images in painting, photography and related fields in IR (although not in cultural studies). Exceptions such as the writing of Christine Sylvester (2001) and Oliver Richmond (2007) demonstrate the potential of visual images as a source of understanding in IR. Of course, related concerns with the digital, or more recently the visual and pictorial, have been touched on when turning to Security Studies. Similarly, others have examined the issue of imagery and security and 'visual culture'. This chapter engages in a conversation with some of these debates, but we also seek to move beyond them in order to tackle an under-developed aspect of interpretivism, namely concerns with method, the methodological character of the 'aesthetic turn', and how these can inform an understanding of visual security. Before unpacking methodological issues, it is necessary to briefly consider the ways in which security is represented.

There are many examples of visual representations of security, some direct, some more oblique. Important examples can be found on Roman coins (the term 'se-curitas' meaning 'without care/anxiety' is originally Latin) and on late mediaeval political paintings such as Lorenzetti's famous murals in Siena cathedral depicting the allegories of good and bad government. The representation of security as a goddess occurs particularly on coins of the late fourth century and onwards. For three hundred years, the city of Rome did not even have walls, but by 300 AD the city was under immediate threat from civil war and external enemies. 'Securitas' becomes a powerful image at this point when it was put into question;

Romans came to fear for their lives and families, and older religious symbols and deities lost their power while the rising force of Christianity remained incompletely established.

In the Siennese murals, dating from the early fourteenth century, good government is represented by symbols of prosperity and social order underpinned by the twin virtues of 'Securitas' and 'Justitia' (copyright precludes reproduction here but you can view the images online by typing 'Lorenzetti mural sienna' into the 'Images' function of your search engine of choice). These are not depicted as goddesses, but as symbols of socially essential sources of stability, symbols of civic authority. Bad government is represented by a governor who appears to have horns; he is not a devil, but an apocalyptic beast ruling in disorder and without affirmed principles of justice. Arbitrary rule and illegitimate government were then the greatest threats to Italian society, excepting perhaps only the plague: they made war more likely, civil war probable, and famine and disease nearly certain. This form of uncertainty and arbitrary rule is called 'tyranny' in fifteenth century Europe (with not quite the same meaning as modern usage), but it is clear that it is the opposite of security.

Three hundred years later, Thomas Hobbes suggested a remedy for arbitrary government and social upheaval in *Leviathan*, his depiction of the all-powerful modern state, combining economic resources, knowledge gained through surveillance and unparalleled military capability. The book is most commonly reproduced with an image of the strong state on the cover, the security of a society of individuals banding together and handing their rights of self-defence and much of their political autonomy to a powerful, all-knowing, ruler, with sword and the scales of justice in his hands, and a controlling gaze that encompasses the whole society. This figure (see Figure 18.1) was originally designed for a very early (mid-seventeenth century) edition of the book and reflects the interpretation of the time.

Each of the examples here gives us a sense of how security and insecurity have been constructed in images readily available to viewers, many of whom could not read written texts. Although there are some similarities (not least in the common use of Latin), they are diverse images made at different times for very different purposes. Hobbes is a radical critic of weak states and divided politics, not a supporter of a status quo. Lorenzetti celebrates civic virtue and stability, although perhaps he too shows what he wishes for, as well as how he wants to see his home city. Emperors such as Honorius used images of security on coins as propaganda which instantly failed, but which bequeaths powerful images of their aspirations, not least because the inflation in the currency destroyed financial security as fast as Vandal and Hun invasions wrecked the Empire. There is a great deal more to be said about these images, but this summary helps to raise the question of how visual representations of security and insecurity can be understood and how we might respond to conflicting versions of their interpretation.

Importantly, the roots of contemporary debate in IR can be used to situate how hermeneutic (interpretive) forms of enquiry and analysis work alongside, and enhance, different methodological approaches in the critical canon. Indeed, debates about discourse, textualism and representation are part of ongoing disciplinary and inter-disciplinary conversations which have been well developed by a range of post-structural, feminist and constructivist writers, and Critical Theorists. In a sense, Theodore Adorno and Walter Benjamin, amongst others, sought to explore the socio-historical significance of art, and this, in turn, had a bearing on the development of Critical Theory. Elsewhere, interventions including the work of Jacques Rancière have informed debate about aesthetics through the lens of post-structuralism. This work helps to locate the use of aesthetics in IR, as an intervention which straddles Critical Theory and post-structuralism. It also leads to a consideration of the ways art invokes contemplation, reflection and interpretation. Other more recent work on



Figure 18.1 Original cover illustration of Hobbes's *Leviathan*.

Source: Image in the public domain due to expired copyright, retrieved from Wikimedia Commons, http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Leviathan_gr.jpg

narrative and narratology is also related to the 'interpretive turn'. This body of work, which is concerned with meaning, is post-positivist in form and character.

Nonetheless, the interpretive turn and the hermeneutic intervention associated with global politics does have a sense of cohesiveness and coherence beyond simply being anti-positivist. Informed by continental European philosophy, and building on the phenomenological tradition established by Edmund Husserl, questions relating to meaning and linguistics became a central concern of this body of theory. In particular, a consideration of how meaning is apprehended and inscribed gained some purchase. In turn, this served to give a measure of importance to the act of 'interpretation', to the processes through which utterances, texts, works of art and historical events are ascribed with meaning. For Hans-Georg Gadamer, the

act of interpretation led to a detailed consideration of aesthetics: of the ways in which artworks, and the judgements about art by the interpreter, produce meaning. To this end, Gadamer sought to examine artworks, the experience of art by a viewer, and the ways in which the act of understanding – through ‘play’ – is apprehended and inscribed. In *Truth and Method* Gadamer (2004) argued that aesthetics generates a dynamic form of meaning for the interpreter. In short, the act of interpretation affords the interpreter an opportunity to inscribe the meaning of texts, but the very act also conjures up a consideration of meaning which is historically conditioned.

The interpreter, not the author or artist, is driving the process of interpretation, but only within their understanding of context, language and metaphor in the work they interpret. Tied to this process is a consideration of historically conditioned self-understanding, of how the reader or viewer could unpack meanings in texts against the background of historical and cultural change. The act of interpretation behoves the interpreter the opportunity to consider the importance of context, both of the text, and of when, where and how text and context were produced. In sum, interpretive approaches capture a host of qualitative research methods, informed by hermeneutics, which invite comment and questions.

Starting to explore visual images and security

How then might one start to look at visual images which capture some experience or argument about security? If we take Gadamer as a starting point, we might think that there is some core interpretation to be found, however elusive it may be. But Gadamer’s notion of interpretation is interactive, it is about dialogue, and the viewer is unavoidably part of that dialogue. Drawing on Gadamer but also the writing of Paul Ricoeur, we can begin to frame an account of interpretation. That account also recognises the scepticism expressed about the value of a writer, painter, photographer, or sculptor’s intentions as a key to the interpretation of their work, the ‘death of the author’ argument. What we then have is what Ricoeur called a ‘conflict of interpretation’ (1998, 2004). We look at a visual image and bring our own experience and our own context to it; but, if we are honest, we also try to understand the image in front of us as it is. Where did it come from? What does it seem to portray? What is its context? Why, for whom and in what commercial or ideological setting was it created? What does it seem to include and exclude? It is a material object: how has it been preserved for us to view? In looking at it, we recognise a dialogue first between ourselves and the image, second between the image and its producer or creator and third between the image and its contexts and ours.

In short, our ability to find an interpretation of an image before us begins with uncertainty, however dominant or apparently certain what is being given to us in the image appears to be. Goya’s images of violence, for example, have a universal sense of violence and tragedy which may shock us, or at least catch our attention. But we make more sense of them when we know more about the context of their time. They have a different relevance for us in the twenty-first century if we discover that they are images of a war between the French state and military and the Spanish people (not the Spanish state, which sided with France); that in that conflict the term ‘guerrilla’ was coined literally for the ‘little war’ that was being fought out against the greater narrative of the European wide Napoleonic Wars between 1802 and 1815; and that in this war civilians were involved, and the ‘laws’ of war broken, with savage intensity.

Or you might look to another kind of example. We might explore the war photography of Robert Capa, Jenny Matthews, Don McCullin, Stanley Greene, Ron Haviv, Robert King,

or other great photojournalists. The pictures we might find of their work include some of the most famous and painful images of war available. They have been widely recognised, capturing numerous professional awards, and they provide material for a wide variety of nuanced responses to the complexity, as well as the horror of violence. They do not point to one set of conclusions or arguments, but wait: Can these images provide any evidence for judgements we might want to make about violence? They might reinforce different prejudices we have. We might want to deny ever responding to an image, 'Oh, these people are Irish/Serb/African, how fortunate for us that we are not like them', but there is a danger that images, which have a powerful resonance, reinforce racist, or simplistic, or simply smug preconceptions. Because most of us have the good fortune not to have experienced war except through a TV screen, and not to have had the pain of loss or terror on a battlefield, perhaps we cannot truly contextualise images we see. Perhaps we then turn to these kinds of images as a kind of tourist. Might it be impossible for us to have an authentic interpretation of their work?

Here deliberate fakes matter. It has been said that Robert Capa, a photographer and photojournalist, staged some of his most important photographs. Deliberate forgery of images is a major concern in the current age of sophisticated technology, and such manipulation is hard to detect. It is not helpful to say that postmodern realities are playful and subversive of any truth, for while much modern art may be playful the kinds of issues that a concern with security and conflict raise are deeply troubling. If the 9/11 denial/conspiracy lobby were right (although we do not pretend that they are), then millions of images and films and documentaries either lose all value or at the least have their meaning violently transformed. This is serious and not a mere frivolity (especially for both New Yorkers and, of course, for those US forces have struck in response) but there are two reasons to be cautious. First of all, the images, especially Capa's photograph of the falling republican fighter in the Spanish civil war, have acquired a value and impact of their own. It might not be relevant any more whether the shot was staged or whether (as Capa always claimed against his enemies) that it was genuinely taken on the battlefield. It has become the 'iconic' image of that war.

Second, can we be certain of the 'authenticity' of any image? Images can hold a truth for us, which is, as Gadamer would want to assert, a real and powerful truth, without appealing to a fundamental idea of authenticity. Visual ethnography, a specific field of research relating to anthropology, provides other arguments and conceptual tools we can use in an attempt to situate the visual representation of images of security and insecurity. In the hands of specialist scholars such as Pink (2007) visual ethnography provides interpretive tools and methodologies which are valuable in recording experience and in developing an understanding of the ways in which imagery informs research.

Visual security

The ensemble of conflicts known as the 'war on terror' has been shaped by the increasing importance of visual aspects of security. The arresting photographs of hooded prisoners from Guantanamo Bay, or the striking images of debasement taken by guards from within Abu Ghraib, did much to shape the public perception of Afghanistan and Iraq. Similarly, the horrendous images of captured hostages released in terror videos, or the pictorial aftermath of ambushes replete with maimed casualties offering a portal into an otherwise alien world of foreign conflict, have become seared into public consciousness. An orange jumpsuit is explicitly linked to Guantanamo Bay, while the war in Iraq is compressed into still images from Abu Ghraib, short video clips of a captured, bearded and dishevelled Saddam Hussein, and

relentless depictions of barbarism. Take a moment to reflect on the ways that events are depicted; consider how, for example, global recession is presented pictorially (as discussed in Chapter 18), how images are reproduced and circulated, and the ways in which identity is governed and captured visually.

Although the attacks on the World Trade Centre were captured in all manner of forms, it is footage of the burning towers rather than the falling victims which is frequently broadcast. Nearly a hundred years before 9/11, film-makers working for Pathé news captured images of what today would be called a 'barricade siege', when Latvian anarchists were surrounded by local police in Sydney Street, East London. The ensuing gun-fight and bloodshed were caught on camera, and often mentioned in accounts of the wave of terrorism associated with anarchism. In this way, some events such as 9/11 are shaped or constituted by the language used to describe them, and the images associated with them. The Pathé news footage of the Sydney Street siege may, at first glance, be viewed as black and white film of police action in a Western urban metropolis. It is, in one sense, a part of film history. In another sense though, the footage also relays meaning about the politics of terrorism linked to anarchist ideology. In other words, the meaning is constituted by those who interpret the footage, but they do so from a different 'horizon'. But this turn to the visual is not new; Goya's grotesque paintings, *Disasters of War* (*Los Desastres de la Guerra*), viewed by many as a visual protest against barbarism of the Dos de Mayo uprising, and the subsequent Peninsula War of the early nineteenth century, provided one of many examples when art clashed directly with politics. Pablo Picasso painted a similarly troubling canvas, when he documented the carpet-bombing of the Spanish town of Guernica. Contemporary images of security can be found in the most direct form in the advertising (and the logos) of arms companies and the recruitment advertisements of armed forces in most countries in the world.

Goya held the post of a court painter, a role reprised by officially appointed war artists. Steve McQueen, the London-based artist commissioned by the British Government to cover the Iraq conflict, produced a set of postage stamps entitled *Queen and Country*, honouring many of the service personnel who had died in fighting in the war. The images on the stamps were chosen by the friends or family of the dead, offering both a personal and a political record of faces. For now, these pictures remain part of an art installation, their circulation as stamps too profound a problem, a taboo issue even, for political leaders. Pictures of the dead figure widely in war photography, from the 1863 Battle of Gettysburg to more recent conflicts. They are, however, nearly always subject to censorship as well as to potential manipulation. We need therefore to be wary of their source as well as of our own responses to them. There is also a danger (which good photographers and news photo-editors are mostly well aware of, but which perhaps a viewing public neglects) of a spiral of increasingly devastating images into a 'pornography of violence' in which images from wars and civil conflicts compete for our attention by appealing to our ability to be shocked. The further danger of this kind of image is that it approximates not so much to sexual pornography (although that can happen) as to computer or video games or particular genres of horror films ('slasher movies'), making dire images commonplace and reducing our own sensitivity to them. If this happens, viewers lose their own humanity and their ethical compass, as well as their ability to think in a discriminating way about what is in front of them.

Insecurity and resistance: Jenny Matthews on women in war

In photographs collected over a number of years, the photojournalist Jenny Matthews has created a series of powerful images that have toured galleries as an exhibition of 'Women in

War'. Much of the material is available online (either at her website <www.jennymphoto.com> or on the Imperial War Museum's website). Many of these images explore a diversity of women's experience of violence, including women fighters, groups of women together and individual portraits. Matthews presents us with these images to judge for ourselves. But when she explains the images she shows how much care she took to know her subject at least a bit before using them, to get their permission, and in some cases to allow them to choose how they were portrayed. Now this could be seen as a kind of specious manipulation, but it is done with honesty and it is done to put the women portrayed rather than the 'heroic' photographer at centre stage. In the process, the individual women portrayed become agents of their own destiny. To check this, go to an Image search tool online and put in 'Jenny Matthews' name alongside three names: 'Fina'; 'Lelem, Eritrea, 1988'; and 'Adamasy and Friends Freetown' (the last appears on a Save the Children website).

In each of these pictures, a strong woman who has taken control of her life looks directly at the camera. These are not victims, and, although they have been victims of violence which they have survived, they may well not admit to the cliché of being 'survivors' either: they are themselves. Fina, mutilated by a terror gang in Sierra Leone, and trying to look after her surviving children who were not killed in the attack which hurt her, chose the prosthetic arm she wears over a more 'feminine' or 'attractive' 'real' model hand because it is more useful to her when she works her fields, and she is proud of the choice she made and shows it to the viewer. The armed woman in Eritrea wants to show she is the equal of any other fighter, but she is also proud of her hair and make-up. Adamasy is obviously having as much fun with her friends as any other young woman might, but she makes us aware of the stump at the end of her arm; like Fina she was mutilated by an armed gang in Sierra Leone. They also killed the baby in her arms. None of these women is afraid either of the camera or of what we might think. We are not in control; nor is Matthews. They are, and Matthews has successfully shown us that they are. Matthews has made a point of posing the pictures, and she has asked the subjects how they want to be portrayed. This is potentially much more dangerous, more manipulative, more inauthentic, than any kind of spontaneous camera shooting taken as the action goes on.

It is, importantly, also different from almost any conventional concept of the heroic masculine war photographer or reporter that you could find: Matthews' position as a woman is therefore also important 'in the picture', even though she never actually portrays herself. The more we know about the context (the authors acknowledge gratefully conversations with the photographer as well as her public lecture at Nottingham Trent University in 2005), the more each image can be placed in that context, and the more one recognises the strength and individuality of the participants. Violence, we are asked to see, has not caused a loss of femininity or humanity; but it has not caused a loss of individuality or agency either.

These are extraordinary photographs because they appear to play to a convention of 'suffering African women', or of 'Africa as a site of war and unreconstructed sexual violence'. These conventions of representation are everywhere, but especially (for necessary reasons, one might say) in non-governmental organisation images of suffering designed to raise funds. However these three pictures, and much of Matthews' work, undermine and change our thinking about those conventions. They therefore challenge conventional ideas of insecurity and securitisation. Adamasy is secure in her friendships but does not pretend she is a whole person. Fina conveys great strength at the same time as great hardship. If you look at any one of them, you will form a set of complex ideas about this for yourself. Looking at the three together gives a different and more nuanced perspective on how we might read meanings here. But there is nothing here we can reduce to a single narrative by taking the pictures

together as a whole. This is tough to accept, partly because there is a great temptation to look at a body of work (whether we look at three individual shots or the whole of Matthews' work available to us) and draw clear conclusions from it when those are the most dangerous and the most essentialising we might fall into. Even if you feel you are inured to pictures of violence by televisions, online searches and video games, these are real people. They speak for themselves here in their own voices. They are not merely subaltern victims silenced by the business either of their tormentors or their photographer. But it is fair to add that they are also not remote either from the commercial and practical constraints of the structures of global photojournalism, as Matthews is the first to point out, or from the structures of poverty and violence which persist in their countries.

These pictures do not represent a world in a stable settlement after a crisis or crime; whatever else they represent, they also convey a sense of struggle, hardship and uncertainty of meaning. If we 'fix' their meaning too certainly in our reading of them, we do their subjects a further act of violence; but if we refuse to suggest any meaning we in effect take from them the ability to speak at all. It is powerful that we have their names (something Matthews insists on). They are not 'generalised person in generalised situation', which is often the case with much photojournalism; they can be themselves *because* we know who they are and what their situation is. Matthews' pictures also suggest the power of individuals and groups to resist both the trauma and violence that surrounds them in the picture, and the conventional tropes and genres of 'war photography' in shaping the reproduction of the image and challenging our gaze. 'Subjects' of these photographs can perhaps become agents in at least some ways: although (as Matthews acknowledges in her accounts of her work) they cannot wholly speak for themselves separately from the process of image making and reproduction, they have at least sufficient autonomy and sufficient authority to have a voice of their own.

Beyond international relations: representing global politics

The principles of IR could be expressed in a range of different ways: from the study of states and sovereignty, to questions about language, meaning and human rights. The very contours of IR, the processes, events and actors which, together, give the discipline its character are in a constant state of flux.

For Roland Bleiker (see Box 18.2), conventional approaches largely draw on mimetic representations which 'seek to represent politics as realistically and authentically as possible, aiming to capture world politics as-it-really-is' (Bleiker 2001: 509). In contrast, Bleiker argues, 'there is always a gap between a form of representation and what is represented therewith' (Bleiker 2001: 510). Instead of avoiding or attempting to collapse this gap, 'aesthetic insight recognises that the inevitable difference between the represented and its representation is the very location of politics' (Bleiker 2001: 510). To this end, aesthetic approaches to global politics strive to 'explore how representative practices themselves have come to constitute and shape political practices' (Bleiker 2001: 50). This means something quite specific and something very open. Specifically, it means (as we have noted earlier) that representation cannot be trusted as narratives of what they appear to say. There is no 'natural' interpretation of an image any more than there is of a written text. Ricoeur, like Derrida, similarly wants us to be sceptical of what both call 'closure', the setting out of a definitive meaning of a text so as to conclude what it is about. Texts (including images) always have *another* possible meaning, *another* story to tell and *another* dialogue which we can enter. And it may be that these apparently excluded others carry meanings important for us if we stop and excavate

Box 18.2 Roland Bleiker and aesthetics in IR

Roland Bleiker has produced a series of articles and books advocating that we ‘forget IR theory’, meaning that we turn from conventional forms of knowledge (orthodox epistemologies) but also that we explore different methods, draw on different normative traditions, and challenge the assumptions about what we think academic IR is capable of recognising and dealing with (ontology). Bleiker’s work has tended to focus on written texts, such as the work of the Chilean poet Pablo Neruda, but it can also be deployed in exploring and challenging orthodox ideas about security and securitisation. Bleiker suggests that we can open a wider agenda of what IR should and could be, and that we can find a more pluralist set of methodologies, if we adopt these more radical intellectual strategies. His work has helped to give coherence and depth to the argument for an aesthetic approach to IR. He also suggests distinctive ways of linking personal experience and personal anxiety to questions of human security and the conflicts involved in group identities, from which we have drawn here. His own work relates to security obliquely – since he tends to reject more mainstream concepts in IR such as security – but his importance in the evolution of the methodology developed here is great.

them. Accordingly, direct representation – ‘this portrayal equals that meaning’ – is illusory and may be dangerous. It suggests that representation is always in question and always incomplete. Some writers go so far as to say that all representation is impossible – Derrida appears to say this at some times and then to retreat from it at others. Ricoeur is more consistent, arguing that the literature and art are dominated by metaphor and conflictual interpretation, but never that representation *of some kind* is impossible.

For critics of Ricoeur’s view, representation is also a ‘re-presentation’. That is to say that someone represents as their own an experience or image which properly belongs to someone else. There are different perspectives involved here where one gaze dominates and transforms another in adopting it for itself. This is both a power play and an act of subordination of another (another person). It is a kind of imperialism or coopting. This remains a troubling criticism although there are replies to it. One reply is that it depends how an image is used. More powerfully, it might also depend on how the person represented feels about that – do they have some agency or control or are they simply being used? Did they choose to be shown in this way? Bodies on a battlefield do not have a choice, but there may be reasons to show them. Representing people as ‘victims’ may communicate something (because they *are* victims in this particular situation), but it may also disclose a dominating attitude by the photographer or portraitist because in representing them as victims it is suggested that that is *all they are*. All of these questions are taken up more specifically in the discussion of Jenny Matthews’ work above, which offers some clues as to how this argument might develop, but readers also have to think this difficult question through for themselves.

We can summarise the core argument here in six points (but beware: this is of course a simplification to aid understanding):

- 1 Interpretation is always dialogic, uncertain, incomplete (but so is conventional scientific knowledge); meanings are never fixed or closed, but they are accessible to careful analysis.

- 2 Interpretation arises from our own critical engagement with a text – there is no interpretive knowledge that is not critical knowledge.
- 3 ‘Hermeneutics’ is a generic term for any form of interpretive understanding, including translation.
- 4 Interpretive understanding is primarily about texts (interpreting ‘text’ to mean a wide range of sources and images – not just written texts), but texts embody discourses and social practices (see Ricoeur’s essay ‘What is a text?’ to explore the range of meanings here).
- 5 Through an understanding of text we come to make sense of the way in which social behaviour and social meanings are constituted and how they are used in relation to power and institutions. Work drawn from Michel Foucault’s writing aims at parallel kinds of analysis, but Foucault’s notion of discourse is more rigid and raises problems of structure and agency, but is often also compatible with this approach.
- 6 Interpretive understanding enables a scholar to grasp complexities and nuances of meaning which positivist and structuralist forms of analysis miss; but it does not claim to achieve some of the things which they might be able to illuminate; it is always in some senses a normative theory; it is never (and has never claimed to be) a source of ‘general theory’, but it enables us to explore specific cases, and to compare them, in their specific detail.

The limitations of theory and method

While the issue of the visual, pictorial, digital or virtual has long been a concern of scholars of IR, themes related to representation have only relatively recently been addressed in the theoretical literature in IR (as discussed above). This is partly due to a predominance of particular methods and methodologies in IR which also tend to prescribe which subjects are ‘proper’ for research. It can be argued forcefully both that visual images provide dangerous and slippery ground on which to reach conclusions about security, insecurity and securitisation, and that they provide essential sources for the scholar. The first is because of the difficulties of interpretation and the dangers of image manipulation; but the second is because we live in highly visual global and local societies in which brands and logos as well as image-centred cultural forms and practices dominate. Aesthetic approaches such as those summarised in this chapter enable us both to grapple with the question of interpretation and to be aware of some of the limitations of approaching this material. Perhaps the most succinct account of the limitations and dangers is an argument thought through by Stephen Chan (2010) in an essay on Susan Sontag’s photographic and philosophical work.

Three further dangers arise, which one needs to be aware of in working with visual images at any level. The danger of sentimentality is the greatest, since powerful images manipulate our sensations and emotions, and often invite us to engage with pictures which evoke responses informed by a set of values. Essentialism (i.e. the idea that some visual images have a set of pre-determined properties or characteristics) is also a danger which needs to be addressed, or at the least, considered. Finally here, there is the question of ethics – in what ways are images and the visual ‘given verbal and political meaning’ (Hansen 2006: 217). There are, if not ‘remedies’, at least ways in which one can arm oneself against these risks. These are essential tools of any kind of interpretive approach, including one which looks at visual images of security in particular. It is important then, to consider the following themes and questions when engaging in visual analysis: *reflexivity* (what methodological choices have

informed my decision to look at imagery?); *veracity* (what is the source of an image, and can this be cross-referenced?); *dialogue* (recognising the dialogic nature of knowledge and experience; for example, how is identity articulated visually?); checking for *manipulation* by commercial and political interests (how has imagery been used or why has this depiction gained credence?); and *theoretical sophistication*.

There are, of course, many other important questions about visual security and methodological considerations about the use of imagery which are, unfortunately, beyond the scope of this chapter. Although there are both theoretical and methodological limitations which need to be acknowledged when drawing on aesthetics, it is hoped that these themes and questions will help scholars who work on security to approach the subject area and subject matter with renewed vigour, curiosity and enthusiasm.

Conclusions

This chapter aims to open up aesthetic and interpretive understanding for the reader interested in visual images. We are bombarded by a range of images, including images on smart phones and on Youtube or global image files. Some of these images are very powerful challenges to our understanding of the immediate moment, but others are almost certainly constructed and planted by security officials or bloggers or simply disruptively playful individuals manipulating images for their own reasons. We cannot be sure of the ‘good faith’ of images even though we can ask questions about their sources and their meanings. Photoshop is too easy to use. Images of security and insecurity as direct as those found on Roman coins are rare today, partly no doubt, because modern citizens have a different and less literal sense of visual literacy. But there are many examples of the oblique rendering of images of state power and its ability to provide security, or of popular resistance against tyrannical state power in search of security. We all (the authors as much as the reader!) need to develop more sophisticated tools to explore this burgeoning box of threats and delights. But the most important tool is our own sceptical judgement (just as it is in looking at written texts of all kinds), which an aesthetic or interpretive approach encourages us to develop.

Please see the companion website for a seminar exercise.

Questions for further debate

- 1 How have aesthetic approaches broadened the field of study in IR?
- 2 Using examples, explore the implications of aesthetic interventions in world politics.
- 3 Are there particular problems or issues in exploring interpretive approaches to particular sources when those sources are visual images rather than written texts? What are they and how might they be overcome?
- 4 How can visual images reflect ideas about security and insecurity? How might they reflect changing values as well as changing political contexts?
- 5 Using the Images function on any search engine you use, find several images relating to a single conflict or problem in global politics; reflect on how they can be interpreted and how your own position as well as their specific context shapes the interpretation of them. How do they illuminate understanding of that conflict/problem? What are the limitations on what can be said about that conflict/problem using an interpretive approach?

Sources for further reading and research

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19 Conclusion

The process, practice and ethics of research

Lee Jarvis

Chapter summary

This chapter argues that research on security comes from somewhere, is produced by someone, and has potentially significant impacts on others. It begins by tracing the contexts of research, highlighting issues of project design, academic convention, and political interests. To illustrate the significance of these, a case study on contemporary terrorism research is provided. A second section explores different understandings of the security researcher, contrasting images of this role as a scientist, narrator, and critic. The chapter concludes by investigating significant ethical issues that emerge in the conduct and presentation of research.

Learning outcomes

On completion, readers should be able to:

- design and construct research projects on security;
- consider the contexts and constraints that impact on research;
- reflect on the ethical issues accompanying the research process.

Introduction

By this point you have encountered a range of critical theories and methods within contemporary Security Studies. In this chapter we turn now to the employment of these ideas and techniques in concrete research projects, drawing on a range of examples including recent work on political violence. The discussion is organized around the premise that research never takes place in a vacuum. Knowledge of security and insecurity – as with all knowledge – always comes *from somewhere*, is produced *by someone*, and has potentially significant *impacts* (see Cox 1981; Breen Smyth 2009: 195). Academic and political contexts, a researcher's subjective decisions, and ethical considerations are all central to the feasibility and value of any study. These cannot be wished away by ambitions for neutrality or pure objectivity in the scholarship we produce, however laudable these may be.

The chapter begins by exploring the locations of research, charting issues of project design, academic conventions, and broader socio-political contexts. A second section then juxtaposes three different images of the researcher within Security Studies: the scientist, the narrator, and the critic. Where we locate ourselves within these images, it argues, impacts greatly on our understanding of our 'objects' of research and the 'findings' we generate. The

final section traces ethical issues that emerge in the course of research. These arrive, first, from the methods we employ to conduct research, and, second, from the potential consequences of our scholarship which may not always be known in advance.

From somewhere

This section begins with a brief overview of the process of research design, before exploring a series of pertinent socio-political backdrops to work on security. The section ends with a case study exploring changing patterns of research on terrorism after 11 September 2001.

Research design

At a very basic level, research is concerned with the generation of knowledge. Those beginning a new project do so in order to produce new information on, or new understandings of, a particular phenomenon. This knowledge might be empirical, for example through the examination of unexplored data. Or it might be conceptual, for example through the refinement of existing theoretical assumptions. For a project to be successful in generating knowledge, however, careful thought must be given in advance to its design, with the following issues amongst the most significant.

First, it is important to aim for clarity and precision in the questions one asks in a project. Research questions may derive from a range of sources, including personal curiosity, limitations within existing literatures, and social or political issues deemed interesting or significant. In the realm of Security Studies, normative concerns have also frequently guided new research agendas. Discussions of ‘human security’, for example, arose, in part, from a desire to highlight the importance of non-military sources of insecurity – such as poverty – that confront millions of people across the world (see Chapter 3). Strands of feminist literature, similarly, emerged to both expose and address specifically gendered insecurities (see Chapter 2); with others seeking to foreground the (often-hidden) experiences of women in specific sites and spaces of (in)security such as military bases. There are no ‘correct’ reasons for embarking on a study, and many scholars will do so for a combination of motives. What is important is to select research questions that, first, may be answered, and, second, will sustain your interest for a period of time irrespective of the obstacles you encounter along the way.

When deciding upon our research questions, scholars need also to confront issues of *how* they will go about answering these. A range of considerations present themselves here. First, we need to think about the conceptual framework we will employ in a project. Do we situate ourselves within a realist, feminist, or post-structural worldview, for example? Second, we need to reflect on the analytical strategies we will employ. Here it is useful to distinguish between inductive approaches which seek the ‘bottom-up’ generation of knowledge from interpretations of new empirical data, on the one hand and, on the other, deductive approaches which begin with theoretical assumptions, analysing these through empirical evidence subsequently generated (Hay 2002: 30–31). Third, we need to select appropriate methodological techniques such as those detailed throughout this book (Chapters 9–18) and to think through their congruity or ‘fit’ with our conceptual framework. Important within this is the required information’s accessibility: are potential interviewees available for interview (see Chapter 13), are sufficient documents on the topic within the public domain (see Chapters 10 and 14), and so forth. Fourth, pragmatic concerns may also be significant. For example, are sufficient time and finances available to pursue a particular

line of enquiry? Can a particular topic be studied without causing harm to its researchers, participants, or others? Many scholars undertaking fieldwork on terrorist organizations, for instance, have encountered physical danger or intimidation in the course of their work, either by paramilitaries or by security agencies (Horgan 2004; Sluka 2007).

A final consideration is the manageability of research projects. Many aspiring researchers set out to try to achieve too much in a particular study, later scaling back their ambitions or focus by necessity. In today's digital era the problem here can often be a surfeit rather than lack of available 'data', particularly for those engaging in discursive projects. Speeches, news articles, government documents, and other research materials are now so widely available in Internet and physical archives that scholars often have to decide when to cease adding new research material for their analysis. One strategy is to continue accumulating material until the point at which no new conclusions or conceptual categories present themselves, so that: 'An analysis can be said to be complete (validated) when upon adding new texts and comparing their object spaces, the researcher finds consistently that the theoretical categories she has generated work for those texts' (Milliken 1999: 234). An alternative is instead to organize the parameters of a project around the empirical detail of the topic under study; for example, 'one might couple the selection of texts to a timeline that identifies periods of higher levels of political and media activity' (Hansen 2006: 86–87). As this suggests, there are no concrete, quantifiable criteria for delimiting research projects. Where to begin and end a particular study will be an outcome of a combination of factors, including the research questions set, the availability of material, and the coherence of the analysis that is being produced.

Academic contexts

The above discussion emphasizes the individual decisions that structure the emergence of a new research project. As we know, however, scholarship also takes place within established fields of study such as Security Studies or International Relations (IR). These fields are often structured around accepted ways of producing knowledge, sometimes known as 'paradigms' (George and Campbell 1990: 275), which often have considerable impact on the types of research produced. Scholarly paradigms, when established, comprise broadly shared ideas about what constitutes an appropriate topic for study within a particular subject area. They also incorporate accepted conceptual approaches and techniques for collecting or producing new knowledge. Many of the critical approaches explored in this book, indeed, have found themselves on the margins of mainstream Security Studies precisely *because of* their efforts to challenge the 'iron cage' of political realism that has dominated this discipline (Booth 2005b: 4). They have done so by asking different types of question to those favoured within this paradigm, and by thrusting new interpretations of global politics forward to contest this field's privileged state/military nexus. Doing so, however, is not an easy task, as Ken Booth (2007: 89) notes: '... those who study international politics have often been taught only narrow understandings of the world from within the accounts of the family of realism, and these continue to give pre-arranged answers to pre-defined questions'. A useful illustration of the power of such paradigms is the resistance frequently encountered by critical challenges. Efforts to widen the study of security beyond military issues in the 1990s, for example, were critiqued as 'irresponsible', as well as for their perceived conceptual or methodological flaws (Huysmans 2006: 21). Similar criticisms have also

long been levied at post-structural approaches to security and political analysis more broadly (see Chapter 7).

Related to this is the importance of relevant scholarship to which all projects speak. All solid research builds on, develops, and/or critiques other academic literatures whether through empirical, conceptual, or methodological advances. What constitutes relevant academic work varies, however, according to our understanding of the topic at hand, and the research questions set. Many advances within Security Studies, for instance, have come about through bridge-building with other disciplines. The turn to 'culture', for example, in post-Cold War studies of security was facilitated partly by engagements with anthropological writings (Weldes *et al.* 1999). More recently, some scholars have begun drawing on literatures addressing social and cultural memory to understand how (and which) past violences are remembered in the present, and the consequences of this.

Social and political contexts

Research on security and insecurity is situated, too, in the social and political contexts of its production. In the first instance, events and dynamics within contemporary life frequently offer the empirical substance for scholarship in this area. These can have a dramatic influence on core ideas within Security Studies, as happened with scholarship on war in the 1990s, for example. Conflicts in Eastern Europe and Africa that decade led some scholars to argue that warfare had transformed dramatically in the post-Cold War period. Although not without criticism, these scholars pointed to the prevalence of identity politics within these 'new wars' (Kaldor 2007), the increasing use of guerrilla tactics and concomitant targeting of civilians, and the prominence of decentralized war economies. These developments, it was argued, rendered traditional realist understandings of warfare decreasingly relevant with their emphasis on organized inter-state violences. More recently, the growing presence of Primate Military Companies (PMCs) in Afghanistan, Iraq, and beyond has led many researchers to begin rethinking the actors involved in contemporary security provision. Importantly, however, there is not a straightforward linear relationship between 'real-world' events and scholarship. Issues are interpreted – or constructed – as significant by their observers. As Michel Foucault (1984: 127) famously argued, 'We must not imagine that the world turns towards us a legible face which we would have only to decipher; the world is not the accomplice of our knowledge'.

Dramatic events also have the potential to impact security research because of more narrowly instrumental concerns. Issues viewed as socially pressing (think migration, extremism, and cyber-security today) frequently attract considerable funding for researchers. If viewed as important by the academic community there might also be increased opportunities for publishing on such topics in books, journal articles, and so forth; all of which are important for establishing an academic career. A range of institutions come into play once we recognize this, notably the state which is frequently central to the organization and funding of higher education. Critical theorists, in particular, have therefore highlighted the dangers of scholars becoming too closely attached to established institutions and interests, particularly when studying issues of (in)security. These include the potential cooption of research such that scholars might be encouraged to pursue topics simply because they are prioritized by political agendas. Robert Cox (1981: 128–129) famously described political realism in this way. At the same time, scholars integrated within, or dependent upon, institutions such as the state may find themselves unwilling or unable to critique those institutions. States, for example, are frequently a source of insecurity for their citizens and others, either

through direct murder, human rights abuses, or their socio-economic policies. Taking such institutions for granted as the solution to insecurity may, therefore, camouflage their participation in the perpetuation or legitimization of such violences.

Changing patterns of research on terrorism: an example

A useful illustration of the importance of contextual dynamics is found in changing patterns of terrorism research. Surprisingly, from today's perspective, this topic is a comparatively recent interest for academics. Indeed, approximately 99 per cent of all books and articles on terrorism have been published since 1968 (Silke 2004: 189). A significant part of this literature can be traced to the late 1960s and 1970s when a dramatic growth in terrorism studies occurred, in part because of geopolitical dynamics during this period. At the time, Western states had become increasingly embroiled in conflicts with anti-colonial, left-wing and revolutionary movements in Indochina, Africa, Latin America, and beyond. As a consequence, analysts became increasingly keen to study these movements, often out of a desire to assist in designing more effective counter-insurgency policies (Jackson *et al.* 2011: 10). As this literature developed, a relatively coherent research field emerged which became dominated, first, by a set of core research questions especially surrounding the definition and causes of terrorism, and, second, by a focus on particular, high-profile groups active in the second-half of the twentieth century, such as the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA). This quest for policy relevant research has led some scholars to argue that those engaging in terrorism research have largely viewed themselves as an 'adjunct to the various Western counterterrorism agencies' (Brannan *et al.* cited in Breen Smyth 2009: 196).

The events of 11 September 2001 in the USA were followed by a second dramatic shift in this subfield of Security Studies. After those attacks, a great number of new scholars began studying terrorist violence, encouraged, frequently, by new funding opportunities, conferences, and related academic activities (Silke 2009: 34–35). Qualitatively, a dramatic shift took place toward al Qaeda and other Islamist groups, with a similar burgeoning interest in tactics such as suicide terrorism (Ranstorp 2009: 22–23; Silke 2009: 41–44). Importantly, however, this period also saw the emergence of a series of explicitly critical interventions within the study of terrorism; efforts that were stimulated both by the perceived limitations of traditional approaches to this topic, and by normative or political concerns with political responses to 9/11. Building on a very small number of earlier critical voices, the ambitions of these works included: exposing silences in mainstream literatures on terrorism, challenging conceptual assumptions about what terrorism is, and increasing reflectivity over the processes and interests involved in the production of terrorism knowledge.

The example of terrorism research is a useful one for thinking about scholarship's locations. First, it emphasizes the importance of the (geo)political circumstances against which research emerges. Al Qaeda was relatively unstudied before 9/11, for example, partly because of this field's overriding concerns with other organizations (Silke 2009: 41–43). Second, it highlights the tendency of academic fields to become dominated by particular paradigms with accepted questions and foci that may often connect to external interests. And, third, it also indicates that these contexts – academic and political – are never entirely settled: fresh voices or perspectives can succeed in confronting relatively dominant paradigms. Thus, while it is not possible ever to escape the circumstances in which we study, it is possible, first, to think these contexts differently, and, second, to be as honest as possible about the impact these might have on the research we produce.

By someone

Research, as we have seen, emerges from somewhere. The circumstances in which projects arise impact on their likely significance and success as much as do questions of research design. What, then, are we to make of the second part of this chapter's opening claim – that research is always produced by someone? What does it mean to be a researcher? What types of image do Security Studies scholars hold of themselves (and of others)? In this section three of the most prominent of these are charted: the researcher as scientist, narrator, and critic, respectively. These images, I argue, involve very different understandings of the discipline and its purposes, and facilitate very different types of knowledge claim about international (in)security.

The (social) scientist

One of the most long-standing and powerful self-images within Security Studies (and the social sciences more broadly) is that of the researcher as a dispassionate, objective observer (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 1). The two dominant approaches to the study of global insecurities – neo-realism and neo-liberalism – arguably share this view of themselves (Wæver 1996: 161–170), coalescing around a positivist approach to their research involving 'the adoption of methodologies of the natural sciences to explain the social world' (Smith 1996: 11). Advocates of positivism within the study of security tend to view their role as neutral *explainers* of global political dynamics (see Hollis and Smith 1990); their task, put crudely, to test theories, identify causal relationships, and perhaps even predict future occurrences. To illustrate, consider the following account of theory testing from *Theory of International Politics* by Kenneth Waltz (1979: 13):

In order to test a theory, one must do the following:

- 1 State the theory being tested.
- 2 Infer hypotheses from it.
- 3 Subject the hypotheses to experimental or observational tests.
- 4 In taking steps 2 and 3, use the definition of terms found in the theory being tested.
- 5 Eliminate or control perturbing variables not included in the theory under test.
- 6 Devise a series of distinct and demanding tests.
- 7 If the theory is not passed, ask whether the theory flunks completely, needs repair and restatement, or requires a narrowing of the scope of its explanatory claims.

Very few advocates of the approaches explored in this book mobilize such an explicitly scientific approach to the collection and interpretation of knowledge. In part, this is an outcome of a series of important critiques of positivism that surfaced throughout the twentieth century, as discussed in Chapter 1. One such critique concerns the inability of any researcher to be purely objective in their work. Subjective perceptions, values, beliefs, and ideas always impinge upon knowledge creation, such that '[t]here can be no 'objective' observation, nor any 'brute experience'. Observation and perception are always affected by prior theoretical and conceptual commitments' (Smith 1996: 20). A second critique concerns the contexts of research considered above. Here, the implicit individualism within this model of the researcher as a scientist is insufficiently attuned to the webs of meaning and practice that help structure a researcher's commitments and perceptions. Finally, many contemporary security theorists including feminists, Marxists, post-structuralists, and post-colonialists also argue

that we need to pay attention to the significance of power relations within the creation of knowledge. Here, the assumption of neutrality within positivist approaches may be critiqued for its lack of attention to the interests running throughout academic fields. In response to these limitations, two alternative images of the researcher have become increasingly popular within the study of security: the narrator and the critic.

The narrator

An alternative image of the security researcher draws on a very different tradition within the social sciences: interpretivism. Although this image covers a spectrum of positions – from thin and thick constructivists to post-structuralists – its advocates tend to emphasize the historically and socially situated character of all knowledge, including that generated by scholars (Rabinow and Sullivan 1987: 6). To study (in)security, in this view, involves giving meaning *to* events or processes that we encounter; to seek to understand, rather than explain, local or global dynamics. And, within this, it involves seeking to understand how these dynamics are themselves understood by affected social agents (Doty 1996: 4). As this suggests, interpretivist approaches frequently reject the scientist's quest for testable theories, objective truths, and causal relationships. Instead, researchers working in this tradition seek to describe – or narrate – often in considerable detail that which they are studying (see Geertz 2003). Doing so, of course, necessitates asking very different questions to those favoured by positivist approaches, for example enquiring into *how* particular events or decisions became possible at specific historical moments, rather than *why* these took place (Doty 1993). It also opens up new material for study, allowing an engagement with social and cultural phenomena such as language, symbols, and images and the constitutive roles these play in the (re)creation of our worlds (see Fierke 2003: 81).

This broad approach to research has been applied to a very wide range of topics within contemporary Security Studies. Writing on debates over nuclear proliferation, for example, David Mutimer (1997) highlighted the legitimizing role of particular metaphorical constructs such as 'balance' and 'stability' within security policies; a theme taken up in studies of more recent debates over counter-terrorism policy (Waldron 2003). Other scholars have investigated how international events from the Cuban missile crisis to 9/11 are produced *as crises* by political and cultural elites. Feminist analyses, moreover, have traced the importance of gendered claims, assumptions and narratives within foreign policy discourses, conflicts, and international legislation. Running through all of these studies is an emphasis on the particularities of that being studied: while commonalities may emerge across case studies, these cannot be assumed a priori. Instead, the narrator attempts to stay faithful to the specifics of the particular case in question, documenting these as closely as possible. While this does raise important questions about the reliability and validity of interpretivist work, those working in this tradition tend to be sceptical about the existence of objective, immutable standards for answering these questions. Instead, they view their research – their narratives – as part of the process through which meaning is given to the worlds they are studying, rather than somehow separate from those worlds.

The critic

Our third image of the researcher often combines with that of the narrator. Here, many contemporary security scholars have argued that the primary function of research in this area is not (only) to know the world better or differently, but also to challenge and critique

existing sources, agents, and consequences of insecurity. Arguments of this sort have engendered high profile, yet competing, efforts to fashion a critical Security Studies research agenda (C.A.S.E Collective 2006), with a key concern of their proponents being to escape the limited ethical commitments associated with the national security emphasis of traditional research. For some contributors to these discussions, the term critical is therefore employed inclusively as an encompassing and broad designation to connect all critics of the dominant (neo)realist paradigm:

Our appending of the term *critical* to *Security Studies* is meant to imply more an orientation toward the discipline than a precise theoretical label, and we adopt a small-*c* definition of *critical* for both practical and intellectual reasons. Practically a broad definition allows many perspectives that have been considered outside of the mainstream of the discipline to be brought into the same forum, with attendant benefits for intellectual dialogue and debate.

(Krause and Williams 1997: x–xi)

Others scholars, drawing more explicitly on Marxian ideas, advocate a more specific approach to critique, arguing that the study of insecurity should be grounded in an explicitly *political* commitment to emancipatory politics associated with the ‘. . . freeing of people (as individuals and groups) from those physical and human constraints which stop them carrying out what they would freely choose to do’ (Booth 1991: 319; see also Chapter 6). As the foremost advocate of this approach has argued:

Critical security theory is both a theoretical commitment and a political orientation. . . . As a political orientation it is informed by the aim of enhancing security through emancipatory politics and networks of community at all levels, including the potential community of communities – common humanity.

(Booth 2005a: 268)

The key distinguishing feature of this conception of the researcher as critic is the emphasis it places on the *politics* of security practices and knowledge (see C.A.S.E. Collective 2006; Huysmans 2006). Approached in this way, Security Studies is far removed from a dispassionate enterprise. Instead, we seek to understand the world better in order to intervene in it, and change it (see Foucault 1988). How this is put into practice, however, depends upon the other theoretical and political commitments we hold. Post-structuralist approaches (see Chapter 7), for example, frequently orientate their focus toward the deconstruction of established political discourses and projects (see Chapter 17). This is done to reveal moments of internal ambiguity and silence, and, in the process, to open space for alternative practices or understandings of the world to be heard (Campbell 1998a). Studies of securitisation (see Chapter 5), on the other hand, target political efforts to securitise policy issues, charting their often undemocratic and pernicious consequences.

Self-images and knowledge claims

The three images presented above present a necessarily stylized view of research strategies that cannot do justice to the complexity of contemporary scholarship on security. Very few scholars would self-identify as fulfilling any of these roles as sketched so crudely, and the different styles of work they facilitate may, at times, be combined (see Glynos and Howarth

2007: 1). The heuristic is offered, however, to highlight the importance of epistemological and methodological issues within the construction of research projects. This is because being clear on what we are trying to *do* when we study security is crucial for three reasons. First, because our view of the researcher shapes the types of knowledge claim we can make: are these truths or interpretations, for example. Second, because this also focuses our attention upon the potential outcomes of our work: are we seeking to solve problems or imagine alternative worlds, for instance. And, third, because this also encourages further reflection on our own interests and ambitions as scholars: what are these and do they impact on our analyses? These issues have been, and should be, central to contemporary debates on the purposes of Security Studies, as they were in IR's earlier 'third debate' that began in the late 1980s.

To what ends?

A final, and equally important, issue involved in the study of security concerns research ethics. This section traces two broad sets of consideration here relating, first, to the methods used in acquiring knowledge, and second, the potential impacts upon others of disseminated research. Although some general guidelines are offered, the particularities of any research project will present specific issues and challenges that must be assessed and negotiated. That said, a general commitment to 'do no harm' (Jackson *et al.* 2011: 39) in research offers a sound standpoint from which to proceed (see also the discussion of research ethics in Chapter 13).

The conduct of research

As this book demonstrates, scholars of security engage with a very broad range of research material to generate their findings. Ethical issues become the most acute, however, in projects involving the collection of primary data deriving from the observation of, or conversation with, research participants. This includes studies grounded in interviews (Chapter 13), focus groups, ethnographic research (Chapter 11), or participant observation (Chapter 12). Those engaging in these forms of research should abide by several minimum requirements in their work. These include, first, aiming for transparency about our intentions. When approaching potential contributors to a project it is important, for example, to be both explicit and clear on the project's focus and motives, research questions, and the potential uses of the findings (see Box 19.1). Providing this information helps individuals make an informed decision about whether they want to participate in a project or otherwise.

A second guideline is to avoid endangering research participants. In the study of security, this becomes particularly acute when researching potentially vulnerable groups, or when a participant's connection with a researcher poses risks to the former. Scholars working with armed groups, for example, have often gone to considerable lengths to protect their sources from the possible interest of security agencies, including hiding their data and limiting the knowledge others have of a project (Sluka 2007; Breen Smyth 2009). The seriousness with which researchers take this commitment is such that some have even been imprisoned for refusing to share their findings with authorities (Lee-Treweek and Linkogle 2000: 18–19).

Third, it is also important to avoid exploitation in research. Research should not be approached as a process of extraction, in which information is simply taken from individuals or texts. Instead, researchers should remain aware to the potential impacts of a project upon those involved: scholars and participants alike.¹ One way to mitigate these concerns is to

Box 19.1 Sample Participant Information Sheet

The following is an abridged version of an information sheet a colleague and I distributed to potential participants in a recent focus group study on British anti-terrorism policy. In it, we tried to be as explicit as possible about our intentions, research questions, and what participating would involve. We complemented this by discussing the sheet and any questions arising from it at the beginning of each focus group. Further information on the project is available online at: <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/my-esrc/grants/RES-000-22-3765/read>

Dear Participant,

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

We are undertaking a research project, entitled 'Anti-Terrorism, Citizenship & Security in the UK'.

The research aims at assessing what impact anti-terrorism measures have upon people's sense of safety and security. This will be done by conducting around 16 focus groups with different communities across the UK. In doing so, we aim to shed light on three important questions. First, to what extent do there exist significant differences in attitudes to anti-terrorism measures based on an individual's geography or ethnicity? Second, if there are differences in attitudes between different groups of people, what does this mean for citizenship within the UK? And finally, how specifically do 'ordinary' people understand the term 'security' in this particular context, and, indeed, also beyond?

If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form before the start of the focus group. If you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

If you choose to participate, you will be invited to attend a focus group. This will last approximately one hour and a half in total. During this time, you will be asked your opinion about a number of different issues around your sense of safety and security and anti-terrorism policies.

After the focus group, which will be audio recorded, the proceedings will be transcribed.

You do not have to give us your real name (and as all data will be anonymised when written up, any names you give us will not be included in any reports, written or otherwise, that come from this research).

maintain relationships that were constructed with different people throughout a project, including sharing and discussing the findings at the analysis stage. Another consideration is to bear in mind the impact of potential power relationships, where the researcher may be viewed as an expert on the topic in question, for example. Doing this successfully requires reflecting on one's own role in the construction of research findings (Miller and Bell 2002: 54), and treating potential and actual contributors with respect throughout the life-cycle of any study.

The presentation of research

Issues of research ethics are not exhausted with the collection of data. Most researchers undertake a project hoping to disseminate their findings to academics, policy-makers, students, and so forth, and doing this raises still further ethical considerations.

First, protection of sources may again be crucial when deciding how to present research findings. Where people have offered primary data to a project that may leave them vulnerable to harm, steps such as anonymising their contributions offer important techniques for avoiding their identification by others. It may also be necessary to remove other supplementary detail that might contribute to their recognition, such as physical descriptions. Obviously, we may engage in projects where contributors either wish or expect their participation to be credited: for example when drawing on secondary literatures, some Internet blogs and so forth.² It is, therefore, important to reflect on the information used, and to treat it appropriately.

Second, it is crucial that we maintain academic integrity in presenting our findings. In any use of research material, the sources of data should be acknowledged. We should also seek to remain faithful to those sources, for example by avoiding falsifying or manipulating research findings to pursue particular arguments. What it means to stay faithful to a source, however, varies according to one's vision of social research: the positivist and interpretivist approaches sketched above, for example, have very different views of what a faithful reading of a text actually entails (see Ashley and Walker 1990). That said, it is always important to be honest about the limitations of our research: for example, are potentially relevant sources missing from an analysis and if so why?

Finally, it is also imperative that we consider the possible impacts of a piece of research on society more broadly. Scholarship on security, in particular, raises issues of genuine significance to individuals and communities. What is studied, and how this is presented, can therefore have considerable effects upon broader social dynamics. Publishing racist or 'extremist' opinions, for example, may contribute to legitimizing those views, and/or to endangering potential targets of these (Jipson and Litton 2000). This is not, of course, an argument against engaging with individuals on the limits of society: offering a space for particular marginalized voices can, indeed, derive from an ethical commitment to challenge established forms of knowledge. Instead, it is a call, first, for consideration on how we choose to share these engagements, and, second, for reflection on the possible ripple-effects of our research.

Ethics and the research process

Different research projects bring with them their own ethical considerations. Because of this, the above guidelines are necessarily cast in general terms. The important issue to keep in mind, however, is that social research takes place within, and therefore impacts upon, society: often in ways of which we cannot be aware in advance. Thinking carefully about potential harms and risks at all stages of the research process, from proposal to the publication of findings, is therefore crucial for all scholars and students working within Security Studies.

Conclusion

As this book demonstrates, the field of contemporary Security Studies is a diverse and vibrant one. So diverse is it, indeed, that scholars working within it profoundly disagree over such fundamental questions as what, and how valuable, security even is. This, for many critical

scholars, is a good thing. Security is an inherently *political* value: what it means and how it might be achieved *should be* a matter for disagreement and debate.

In this chapter we have explored some of the issues that arise from putting different approaches to security into practice. In it, I have argued that successful research in this area requires careful consideration of three key themes. First, the contexts against which a project emerges, including its design and ambitions, academic backdrop, and various socio-political dynamics. Second, the view that we hold of ourselves as a researcher, and the types of knowledge we are hoping to generate. And, third, a range of significant ethical concerns that arise from the conduct and presentation of our research. Studying security effectively, as this suggests, is therefore a complex and demanding task, as well as one of enduring fascination to those engaged in it. It is a task that requires, moreover, continuous reflection on the process of research itself. Although at once difficult and time-consuming, this is not, however, a bad thing at all for a subject dealing with issues of such significance as those explored throughout this book.

Please see the companion website for a seminar exercise.

Questions for further debate

- 1 What does it mean to suggest that research is always from somewhere, by someone, and for some purpose?
- 2 Why might academic, social, or political contexts be important for research and researchers?
- 3 What do you think is the role of a researcher?
- 4 What ethical issues arise in the conduct of research, and how might these be mitigated?
- 5 What ethical issues arise in the presentation of research, and how might these be mitigated?

Notes

- 1 The very process of participating in research may, for example, impact on contributors' views of themselves or others. Stanley Milgram's famous study of obedience to authority involving simulated electrical shocks, for example, has been criticized by some for the psychological harm that it caused to the individuals taking part, see Haggerty (2004: 399).
- 2 For a useful discussion of this in the context of Internet-based ethnography, see Kozinets (2010: 136–156).

Source for further reading and research

- Breen Smyth, M. (2009) 'Subjectivities, "Suspect Communities", Governments, and the Ethics of Research on "Terrorism"', in R. Jackson, M. Breen Smyth and J. Gunning (Eds.), *Critical Terrorism Studies: A New Research Agenda*, London: Routledge, pp. 194–215.
- C.A.S.E. Collective (2006) 'Critical Approaches to Security in Europe: A Networked Manifesto', *Security Dialogue*, 37(4): 443–487
- Jarvis, L. (2009) 'The Spaces and Faces of Critical Terrorism Studies', *Security Dialogue*, 40(1): 5–27.
- Sluka, J. (2007) 'Reflections on Managing Danger in Fieldwork: Dangerous Anthropology in Belfast', in A. Robben and J. Sluka (Eds.), *Ethnographic Fieldwork: An Anthropological Reader*, Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 259–269.

Glossary

- Aesthetics** – The study of what is pleasing, often visually and aurally, through the senses and to the imagination (the nature of beauty, taste).
- Agency** – The capacity to act.
- Anarchy** – The absence of political authority. In International Relations, the international system is assumed to be anarchic, because there is no legitimate authority higher than the sovereign state.
- Anti-foundationalism** – The belief that there is no basic or foundational belief (e.g. in God, rationality, senses) from which to create a system of values or meanings.
- Autonomy** – The capacity to act independent of external constraints.
- Balance of power** – The mechanism by which the international system is assumed to seek equilibrium, with (groups of) states forming and dissolving alliances in order to ‘balance’ the waxing and waning powers of other (groups of) states.
- Capitalism** – An economic system in which one section of society owns the means of production and exploits the labour of the remainder to generate profit.
- Cartography** – The study of maps.
- Citizenship** – The claim to rights and acceptance of responsibilities as a citizen of a particular nation-state.
- Civil society** – Any actors or groups of actors that are assumed to be separate from the state.
- Civilian** – An individual who is not involved in military or paramilitary activity. Also used informally to describe non-members of a particular organisation or institution.
- Collective security** – A formal agreement between states that any attack on one member of the group will be perceived, and responded to, as an attack against all.
- Colonialism** – The practice of extending authority over, controlling or coercing external territories.
- Communism** – An economic system in which property and the means of production are owned collectively and society is organised for the common advantage of all.
- Comparative advantage** – The idea that every actor (region, state, and bloc) can produce some type of goods or service at a lower cost than any other actor.
- Complex interdependence** – The neoliberal idea that states working through various institutions and organisations will become embedded in a variety of relationships that will in turn increase the extent to which the states are connected.
- Constructivism** – The theoretical position that sees reality as intersubjectively constituted rather than existing objectively.
- Cosmopolitanism** – Belief system that envisions humanity as a single community, with shared interests, in contrast to communitarianism.
- Cultural relativism** – The idea that values and beliefs are dependent on the social context rather than universally determined.
- Decolonisation** – The process by which former colonies achieve self-determination (self-governance).
- Deconstruction** – Proceeding from the assumption that reality is socially constructed, a range of techniques that allow an analyst to unpack or ‘deconstruct’ the way meaning – and therefore reality – is constructed.
- Demography** – The study of population and their characteristics.
- Deregulation** – Reducing or removing regulations governing practice or behaviour, usually used to describe policies that lessen governmental control of industries and corporations.

- Digital divide** – The increasing gap between those that have access to information and computer technologies and those that do not.
- Dimorphism** – The guiding assumption that beings or things can be divided into two forms or shapes.
- Discipline** – A subject-specific area of study in academia, e.g. International Relations. Can also be used as a verb in a Foucauldian analysis, to describe the ways in which boundaries between beings and things are created and maintained.
- Discourse** – A system of linguistic and non-linguistic signifiers that produce meaning.
- Discursive** – Pertaining to discourse.
- Emancipation** – Freedom from tyranny or oppression, the production of autonomy.
- Empire** – A political unit governed by a single political authority spread over several territories.
- Empiricism** – The belief that reality can be objectively identified through experiential data.
- Empowerment** – Increased capacity for action.
- Environmental sustainability** – The ability of a process or practice to continue without having a negative long-term effect on the environment.
- Epistemic** – Relating to epistemology. An ‘epistemic community’ is a group of people who accept or espouse one particular epistemology; it is also more generally used to describe a group of people who share a particular theory or set of ideas.
- Epistemology** – Theory of knowledge, beliefs about how we know what we know.
- Essentialism** – The belief that beings or things have innate characteristics that are largely unchanging.
- Ethnic cleansing** – The mass killing of a particular ethnic group, and/or the forced movement of people out of a territory or homeland.
- Ethnography** – The study of people and society.
- Femininity** – Characteristics and modes of behaviour associated with being female.
- Feminisation** – Either the attribution of feminine characteristics to that which is not usually considered feminine in an effort to delegitimise it (e.g. the feminisation of an enemy), or the disproportionate effect on women of a particular political process (e.g. the feminisation of poverty).
- Flexibilisation** – The process of making trade and industry less regulated and more dynamic.
- Foundationalism** – The belief that there are basic or foundational beliefs (e.g. in God, rationality, senses) from which to create a system of values or meanings.
- Fundamentalism** – Belief in and adherence to a strict set of principles, often derived from a single authoritative text that is religious in nature.
- Gender gap** – The idea that men and women vote differently on different issues.
- Gender mainstreaming** – Ensuring that all institutional policies and practices are formulated with attention paid to the impact they will have on individuals as a result of their gender.
- Geopolitical** – A combination of geographical and political factors.
- Global governance** – The institutions and organisations that manage or regulate international behaviour (despite there being no legitimate political authority higher than the sovereign state according to many theories of IR).
- Global politics** – The totality of political interactions, relationships and transactions (broadly conceived) occurring in the world.
- Globalisation** – A short-hand way of explaining the increasing interconnectedness of states and other actors in areas of trade, culture and governance.
- Governance** – The process of exercising political authority.
- Great Power** – A state that has the capacity to exert influence in global politics.
- Hegemon** – A state that exerts influence in global politics through coercion, persuasion or compulsion.
- Hermeneutics** – A word that can relate to either a methodology for interpreting meaning in texts, or more generally, the philosophy of interpretation.
- Heterogenous** – Comprised of many different elements.
- Heteronormative** – Practices that privilege heterosexual behaviours or beings.
- Homogenous** – Comprised of many identical elements.
- Human rights** – The rights that human beings are assumed to hold by virtue of their humanity.
- Human security** – The idea that security should be sought on behalf of human beings rather than on behalf of states.

- Humanitarian intervention** – Military, economic or political interference in the domestic affairs of a sovereign state aimed at alleviating human insecurities or suffering. Many scholars use a narrower definition confining HI to the use of military force for human protection purposes.
- Hypermasculinity** – The exaggeration of characteristics or modes of behaviours that are associated with being male.
- Iconography** – The study of representations (beings or things) that carry symbolic meaning, or the representations themselves.
- Ideology** – A belief system or set of ideas through which proponents make sense of the world. According to Marxist theory, a belief system aimed at perpetuating the status quo to benefit the few at the expense of the many.
- Imperialism** – Attitudes or policies in international relations that seek to extend one state's economic or political control or influence over other states.
- Intelligibility** – The ability to be known and understood.
- Interdisciplinary** – An approach that bridges disciplinary divides or draws on different subject-specific knowledge.
- Internally displaced person(s)/IDP(s)** – Individual or community that has been forcibly or voluntarily relocated (usually as a result of conflict) but remains within the boundaries of their home state.
- International organisation** – An institution made up of state members, e.g. United Nations, World Bank, World Trade Organisation.
- International Relations** – The academic discipline devoted to studying global politics. Written in lower case ('international relations'), the policies and practices of global political actors.
- International system** – The location of international relations, assumed to be comprised of but greater than the sum total of state actions.
- International/domestic divide** – The assumption in International Relations that politics at the international and domestic level are analytically and practically separate.
- Interpretivism** – Theory that is based on an analyst's interpretation of a given phenomenon, event or dataset, in contrast to 'empiricism'.
- Intersectionality** – The notion that different markers of identity (e.g. race, class, gender, sexuality) interconnect to produce different forms of exclusion and inequality.
- Intersubjectivity** – Collective or social meaning or opinion; where meaning and opinion is formed in negotiation or coincidence between autonomous subjects.
- Intertextuality** – The idea that all texts necessarily refer to and draw meaning from other texts.
- Levels of analysis** – Also known as 'images of analysis'. The neorealists division of international relations into three discrete areas of study: the individual (state leaders), the state and the international system.
- Liberalism** – A political theory that emphasises human capacity for positive behaviour and the autonomy of the individual human subject. Also, an economic theory that prioritises trade freed from state preferences (free trade) and market activity freed from government regulation.
- Marginalise** – To metaphorically push to one side or ignore.
- Marketisation** – The application of market rules and economic logics to a previously non-market enterprise such as a national industry.
- Masculinisation** – Either the attribution of masculine characteristics to that which is not usually considered masculine in an effort to legitimise it (e.g. the masculinisation of a leader), or the disproportionate representation of men in a particular political process (e.g. the masculinisation of governance).
- Masculinity** – Characteristics and modes of behaviour associated with being male.
- Materiality** – Substance or physical form.
- Media** – Modes or channels of communication, e.g. television, radio, newspapers, advertising, etc.
- Mediate** – Either to negotiate between two or more parties to reach a peaceful resolution to a conflict or dispute, or to act as a link or conduit between two or more different symbols or concepts.
- Metaphor** – A figure of speech in which a term or phrase is linked to something to which it is not usually or otherwise linked in order to suggest a resemblance, e.g. 'Her office was a pigsty' (her office is not literally a pigsty, but the metaphor suggests that it shares the characteristics of a pigsty, i.e. her office is dirty, smelly and/or untidy). NB If the figure of speech makes a comparison using 'like' or 'as', it is a simile, not a metaphor, e.g. 'Her office was like a pigsty'.

- Methodology** – The study of methods, usually research methods, and/or a description of the actual methods used to conduct research.
- Militarisation** – The process by which beings or things become associated with the military or take on military characteristics.
- Militarism** – The belief that the most appropriate solution to a problem or response to an event is the military one.
- Militia** – An armed force not under the control of the official state military.
- Modernity** – Era associated with the privileging of rationality, progress and scientific method, and the belief in the legitimate authority of those.
- Multinational corporation (MNC)** – Industry or business that conducts activities and has assets in more than one state.
- Multiplicity** – The recognition of many beings or things.
- Narrative** – The communication (recounting, telling) of a sequence of events, or things that have happened so as to establish a meaningful connection between them (story, sequence).
- Nation** – A grouping of people who are assumed to share language, custom, territory and history.
- Nationalism** – A belief system that prioritises the interests of the nation.
- Neoliberalism** – A political and economic theory that adds to classical Liberalism a central concern for economic growth.
- Neologism** – New word.
- Neorealism** – A theory of International Relations that attempts to rework classical Realism and produce a rigorous and testable account of why states behave as they do in the international system. Also known as structural Realism, not to be confused with ‘structuralism’.
- Non-governmental organisation** – An institution or group that is not part of any government and is therefore assumed to have political autonomy.
- Nonstate actors** – Any actors in International Relations other than sovereign states.
- Normative** – Pertaining to what should be (rather than what is).
- Objectivity** – Where meaning and existence are assumed to exist independently from individual bias or belief.
- Ontology** – The study of the nature of being and what exists to be known.
- Paradigm** – Set of guiding beliefs and assumptions about a given matter.
- Patriarchy** – Literally means ‘rule of the father’, now generally extended to mean the power and authority of masculinity.
- Performativity** – The theoretical idea that discourse constitutes the objects and subjects of which it speaks.
- Positivism** – A set of beliefs about knowledge that values empiricism (the belief that reality can be objectively identified through experiential data), progressivism (the belief that social and political science should further progress the aims and knowledge of humanity), secularism (the belief that science and politics should be separate from religious beliefs) and unity of scientific method (where both social and natural sciences should use the same methodology).
- Postcolonialism** – A theoretical approach that is rooted in the difficult experiences of constructing cultural and individual identity during and after colonial rule.
- Postpositivism** – A theory of knowledge that critiques the foundational assumptions of positivism, without disregarding the need for coherent and valid theories of meaning and reality.
- Poststructuralism** – A theory that builds on a critique of structuralist linguistics, materialism and positivist approaches; in opposition to singularity and fixity of meaning, post-structuralism emphasises multiplicity and fluidity.
- Praxis** – Action, practice or mode of behaviour (plural ‘praxes’).
- Privatisation** – Abdicating state authority over enterprises or industries that were previously managed by the state.
- Public/private divide** – The assumption that social life can be separated into two discrete realms, characterised by formal political phenomena and informal social phenomena.
- Radical** – Concerned with the root cause of a phenomenon, also used to mean extreme or drastic.
- Rationalism** – The belief that reason is the foundation of knowledge (rather than experience or intuition).
- Rationality** – That which is reasonable, in contrast to that which is emotional or uncontrolled.
- Realism** – In International Relations, a theory that explains state behaviour by assuming that the

international system is anarchic and that states will pursue self-interested policies aimed to ensure their own survival.

Reflectivism – The belief that rationalism is a flawed and partial way to understand meaning and reality and that instead attention should be paid to the interpretative, experiential and intuitive.

Reification – The process of misunderstanding an abstraction as a physical being or thing, e.g. writing about the state as an actor is a reification.

Relations of constitution (constitutive relations) – The signifiers and chains of connotation that produce meaning and make a being or thing what it is.

Representation – Three meanings: 1. The act of standing in for an individual or collective to advance their interests (e.g. the UK is represented at the United Nations); 2. The act of symbolising or signifying a being or thing (e.g. the Union Jack is a representation of the UK); 3. The symbol or signifier itself (e.g. the Union Jack).

Semiotics – The study of signs and symbols.

Signifier – Something that carries or conveys meaning, a symbol.

Sovereignty – Independence from external interference, political autonomy.

Spatiality – Of or relating to space.

Stakeholder – An individual or collective who has an interest in or will be affected by a particular policy or practice.

State – A notionally autonomous political entity that has a population and a territory.

State-centric – An approach to International Relations that assumes the analytical primacy of the state.

Structural violence – Harm or suffering caused by systemic problems and inequalities in society.

Structuralism – A theory of International Relations that draws on Marxist and neo-Marxist works and argues that the (capitalist) structure of the international system is unequal and unjust.

Subjectivity – Where meaning and existence are assumed to be dependent on individual bias or belief.

Supranational – Above the state.

Sustainable development – Modernisation or industrialisation that occurs with minimal long-term damage done to the natural environment.

Technocratic – A belief in the primacy of technical or technological solutions.

Text – Any collection of signifiers and representations, most frequently used to describe a written document but also includes films, adverts, flags, buildings, cartoons, songs, etc.

Transnational corporation (TNC) – See ‘multinational corporation’.

Universalism – The belief that some codes or rules should apply to all people, irrespective of their cultural context.

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