ALAN COLLINS

Contemporary SECURITY STUDIES

FIFTH EDITION

OXFORD

7

Critical Security Studies: A Schismatic History

David Mutimer

Chapter Contents

- Introduction: 'Follow the sign of the gourd' 92
- Toronto desire: *Critical Security Studies* 93
- Copenhagen distinctions 96
- Aberystwyth exclusions 97
- Constructing security 101
- Everyone's other: poststructuralism and security 102
- Beyond divisions? CASEing the joint or returning the gift? 106
- Conclusion 108

Reader's Guide

This chapter provides a partial history of a label. It is partial both in that it is not, and cannot be, complete, and in that I am both the author of, and participant in, the history. It is therefore partial in the way all other history is partial. The label is 'Critical Security Studies'. The chapter tells a story of the origin of the label and the way it has developed and fragmented since the early 1990s. It sets out the primary claims of the major divisions that have emerged within the literatures to which the label has been applied: constructivism, critical theory, and poststructuralism. Ultimately, the chapter suggests that Critical Security Studies needs to foster an 'ethos of critique' in either the study or refusal of security, and that the chapter is an instance of that ethos directed at Critical Security Studies itself.

Introduction: 'Follow the sign of the gourd'

Very soon after being identified as the Messiah in *Monty Python's Life of Brian*, Brian is chased by a growing crowd of would-be followers. In his haste to get away, Brian drops the gourd he has just bought and loses one of his sandals. Several of the followers remove one of their shoes and hop about on one foot, convinced this is what their newly found Messiah has told them to do. One follower picks up the shoe and shouts 'Follow the sign of the shoe.' Another picks up the gourd, shouting 'Follow the sign of the gourd.' Perhaps predictably, within seconds, those hopping are fighting those who are following the shoe who are fighting those who are following the gourd. Brian's 'ministry' has splintered into sects before it has even had the chance to establish itself as a ministry. The Python gang were, of course, satirizing the tendency of religious movements to fragment, as they had at the outset of the film satirized the similar tendency of political movements: 'Are you the Judean People's Front?' 'Fuck off! We're the People's Front of Judea . . . Judean People's Front . . . SPLITTERS!'

Sadly, perhaps, this all too human tendency to fragment into ever-smaller and more exclusive and exclusionary clubs affects academic movements every bit as much as it does religious and political. Any society of ideas is, in addition, a potential source and expression of **power**. It provides the intellectual resources around which to mobilize people and resources of other kinds: whether these are tithes/alms, ballots/arms, or even tenure/articles. None of this should be in any way surprising to those who work within the area covered by this chapter. While the chapter will show the divisions into which **Critical Security Studies** rapidly fell, one of the shared commitments of the work it will discuss is to the political potency of ideas. The social world is produced in and through the ideas that make it meaningful, which are themselves necessarily social. A consequence of this observation is that study of the social world is inextricably bound up with the world it studies; it is part of the productive set of ideas that make the world.

This chapter provides a partial history of a label. It is partial both in that it is not, and cannot be, complete, and in that I am both the author of and a participant in the history. It is therefore partial in the way all other history is partial. The label is 'Critical Security Studies'.[1] It is a label that has (one of) its origins in a conference held at York University in Canada in 1994. As a label it has been fought over rather more than it has been applied. It does not denote a coherent set of views, an 'approach' to security; rather it indicates a desire. It is a desire to move beyond the strictures of security as it was studied and practised in the Cold War, and in particular a desire to make that move in terms of some form of critique. It is a desire articulated in the first line of the first book bearing the title 'Critical Security Studies': 'This book emerged out of a desire to contribute to the development of a self-consciously critical perspective within security studies' (Williams and Krause 1997: vii).

The form of security studies against which Critical Security Studies was directed has been neatly captured by one of the proponents of the traditional approach:

> Security studies may be defined as the study of the threat, use, and control of military force. It explores the conditions that make the use of force more likely, the ways that the use of force affects individuals, states, and societies, and the specific policies that states adopt in order to prepare for, prevent, or engage in war.
>
> Walt (1991: 212)

The focus on the threat, use, and control of military force imposed a series of important strictures on the study of security in this period. Military forces are generally the preserve of states, and, what is more, there is a normative assumption that they *should* be the preserve of states, even when they are not. Indeed, our common definition of the state is that institution which has a monopoly on the legitimate means of violence. Therefore, by studying the threat, use, and control of military force, security studies privileges the position of the state. Furthermore, such an approach implies that the state is the primary object that is to be secured—that is, the state is the **referent object** of security. Finally, and most obviously, thinking of security as the threat, use, and control of military force reduces security to *military* security, and renders other forms of security as something else.

The various scholars who followed the desire towards a critical security study were troubled by all three of these major assumptions underlying the conventional study of security. They wondered, first of all, whether our concern needed to be only on the state and its security. What of the security of people living within states? The standard assumption of security studies is that the people are secure if the state is secure, but those drawn towards Critical Security Studies wondered about those times when this was not the case: when states ignored the security of some of their people, when they actively oppressed some of their people, or when the state lacked the capacity to provide security for its people. They were therefore led to wonder whether we should be thinking about referent objects other than the state.

Questioning the referent object of security leads inexorably to questioning the exclusive focus on the threat, use, and control of military force. Large, powerful, stable states such as those in which 'security studies' tended to be practised—the USA, the UK, or Canada—may be seriously threatened only by war. On the other hand, other potential referent objects, particularly people and their collectives, can be threatened in all sorts of ways. Therefore, once you question the referent object of security, you must also question the *nature and scope* of security, and thus of security studies.

Not everyone who questioned the referent object and the nature and scope of security would be drawn to a desire for a critical security study, however. That desire was driven by a recognition of the power of ideas, and thus a discomfort with the way **traditional security** studies focused on the state. The concern was not that there were other objects to be secured in other ways, but rather that the *effect* of studying security as the threat, use, and control of military force tended *in and of itself* to support and legitimate the power of the state. While other scholars sought to broaden and deepen security studies to consider other referents and other threats, those whose desire ran to a 'self-consciously critical perspective' were centrally concerned with the politics of knowledge. Security studies, as it had been practised, provided intellectual and, ultimately, moral support to the most powerful institution in contemporary politics: the state. Those drawn to a critical security study sought a different security politics as well as a different security scholarship.

The remainder of the chapter traces what happened as scholars acted on this desire for a self-consciously critical security study. In doing so, it sets out the major fault lines that have emerged among those initially animated by this shared desire. The signs that have driven these fault lines are not simply Monty Python's signs of the shoe and the gourd, but rather represent disagreements about the nature of critique and thus of different forms of critical security study. Thus, while the chapter outlines the sects into which critical desire has fractured, it also sets out a range of answers to the question of what Critical Security Studies might be. My history of these splits begins in 1994.

Toronto desire: *Critical Security Studies*

In May 1994, a small conference was held at York University in Toronto entitled *Strategies in Conflict: Critical Approaches to Security Studies*. It brought together from around the world a variety of scholars, both junior and senior, with interests in security and with a concern about the direction of security studies in the early post-Cold War era. It was in the course of the discussions at and around that conference that the label 'Critical Security Studies' started to be applied to the intellectual project that drew the participants to the conference, and it was used as the title of the book, edited by Keith Krause and Michael C. Williams, that the conference produced: *Critical Security Studies: Concepts and Cases* (1997b).

The conference and book were an expression of the desire for self-consciously critical perspectives on security, but they both worked extremely hard to avoid articulating a single perspective in response to that desire: 'Our appending of the term *critical* to *security studies* is meant to imply more an orientation toward the discipline than a precise theoretical label . . . ' (Williams and Krause 1997: x–xi). The book therefore served to launch the label Critical Security Studies, but not to fill it with precise content (see Key Quotes 7.1 for some of the ways in which Critical Security Studies *has* come to be defined). Metaphorically, it threw open the doors of the church of critical security and tried to welcome the followers of the shoe *and* the gourd, and even those hopping around on one foot.

In their contribution to that volume, Krause and Williams aimed to set out the scope of a critical security study, and it has served as a touchstone in the further development of Critical Security Studies. They began their case for Critical Security Studies from the concerns with the traditional conception of security I have recounted. In particular, Krause and Williams began by questioning the referent object of security:

---

[1] When I refer to the label or to the 'field' of enquiry that is increasingly gathered under that label, I will capitalize Critical Security Studies. Otherwise, I leave the terms in the lower case.

KEY QUOTES 7.1 Definitions: Critical Security Studies

Critical Security Studies has proven reasonably resistant to clear definition. This has been largely intentional, as the provision of a definition is limiting in a way that those behind the *Critical Security Studies* text wished to avoid. Nevertheless, there are some definitions in the literature:

'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*. . . . Perhaps the most straightforward way to convey our sense of how *critical* should be understood in this volume is Robert Cox's distinction between problem-solving and critical theory: the former takes "prevailing social and power relationships and the institutions into which they are organized . . . as the given framework for action, while the latter calls them into question by concerning itself with their origins and how they might be in the process of changing". Our approach to security studies . . . thus begins from an analysis of the claims that make the discipline possible—not just its claims about the world but also its underlying epistemology and ontology, which prescribe what it means to *make* sensible claims about the world.'

Williams and Krause (1997: x–xi).

'An emerging school of "critical security studies" (CSS) wants to challenge conventional security studies by applying postpositivist perspectives, such as critical theory and poststructuralism. Much of this work . . . deals with the social construction of security, but CSS mostly has the intent (known from poststructuralism as well as from constructivism in international relations) of showing that change is possible because things are socially constituted.'

Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde (1998: 34–5).

'Critical security studies deal with the social construction of security. The rhetorical nature of "threat discourses" is examined and criticized. . . . Critical security studies consider not only threats as a construction, but the objects of security as well. . . . Critical security studies . . . have an emancipatory goal.'

Eriksson (1999: 318).

'Critical security studies is a sub-field within the academic discipline of international politics concerned with the pursuit of critical knowledge about security. Critical knowledge implies understandings that attempt to stand outside prevailing structures, processes, ideologies, and orthodoxies while recognising that all conceptualisations of security derive from particular political/theoretical/historical perspectives. Critical theorising does not make a claim to objectivity but rather seeks to provide deeper understandings of oppressive attitudes and behaviour with a view to developing promising ideas by which human society might overcome structural and contingent human wrongs. Security is conceived comprehensively, embracing theories and practices relating to multiple referents, multiple types of threat, and multiple levels of analysis.'

Booth (2007: 30).

'There is no singular definition of what it means to be critical in security studies—and any rigid definition of the term critical security studies will tell you more about the position from which that definition is attempted than anything else.'

Peoples and Vaughan-Williams (2010: 3).

who or what is to be secured. The traditional answer to this question is that the referent object is the state: security refers to protecting the state from external threats, and the people living within the territory of the state are considered secure to the degree that the state is secure. As Krause and Williams put it, such a view largely reduces security for the individual to citizenship: 'Yet, while to be a people without a state often remains one of the most insecure conditions of modern life (witness the **Kurds** or the Palestinians), this move obscures the ways in which citizenship is also at the heart of many structures of insecurity and how security in the contemporary world may be threatened by dynamics far beyond these parameters' (Krause and Williams 1997a: 43). If the focus on state as a referent object is insufficient, what if we adjust our focus to the individual human being, or perhaps to the community in which humans live? What, indeed, if we ask about the security of humanity as a whole, beyond rather than within the states in which most of us now find ourselves? These are the questions Krause and Williams pose as the foundation of Critical Security Studies. They argue that posing such questions opens a broad and complex agenda for security studies, an agenda that is largely hidden by the traditional focus on the state and the military. Suddenly we can ask about the ways states pose threats to their own people, as well as asking about the responsibility for providing security when the state does not. This question of the responsibility of an international community for the security of those inside a state cannot be seriously posed within traditional security studies, and yet only a few years after the Toronto conference, an International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty proclaimed a 'responsibility to protect' those subject to radical insecurity within their own states (see Chapter 22).

While the broadening of the security agenda was an important feature of the foundations that Krause and Williams were attempting to lay, rather more significant were the **epistemological** implications they drew from the challenges to the traditional conception of security. They argue that by looking at individuals, and particularly the communities in which they live, a critical security study has to take seriously the ideas, **norms**, and values that constitute the communities that are to be secured. Traditional security studies treats its referent object as just that: an object. The state is a 'thing' that is found, out there in the world, and subject to objective study by security analysts. By contrast, Krause and Williams argue that thinking of the varied communities in which people live requires an interpretative shift, a recognition that ideas (at least in part) constitute communities and that therefore the ideas of analysts are not entirely separable from the objects studied.

Having opened the doors of what they hoped would be a broad church, Krause and Williams set out the agenda of what would attract scholars to the service. Critical Security Studies would:

- question the referent object of security: while states were clearly important, human beings were both secured and rendered insecure in ways other than by states and military force; Critical Security Studies would engage in research that recognized this and explored its implications;
- consider security as more than just military security: once the referent object was opened up, so too were the questions of what rendered referents insecure, and how security was to be achieved, both for the state and for any other referent objects; and
- change the way security was studied, as the objectivity assumed by traditional approaches to security is untenable; indeed, once you consider the way human communities are constituted by ideas, norms, and values, it becomes clear that this applies even to the state, and so Critical Security Studies becomes a **post-positivist** form of scholarship.

With the *Critical Security Studies* text, a range of scholars responded to this agenda in a variety of different ways, laying the foundations for the variation in Critical Security Studies we continue to see.

When students and scholars discuss the breadth of the initial desire of *Critical Security Studies*, they will often make almost immediate reference to Mohammed Ayoob's contribution: 'Defining Security: A Subaltern Realist Perspective' (Ayoob 1997). Ayoob focuses on the first of Krause and Williams' challenges, and questions the assumed nature of the state in traditional security studies. He argues that the state in traditional security studies is the state of the advanced, industrial North. He seeks to expand that notion of security to account for the security concerns of the majority of the world's states, concerns that 'mirror the major security concerns evinced by most Western European state makers during the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries' (Ayoob 1997: 121–2). Thus, while Ayoob questions the nature of the referent object of traditional security studies, he does not introduce alternative possibilities, nor does he enquire very far into other means of providing security, and he certainly does not contest the epistemological nature of security study.

R. B. J. Walker's contribution to the volume is exemplary of a much more radical break with the traditions of security studies understood as the threat, use, and control of military force. Walker seeks to understand the conditions that make possible certain ways of thinking and speaking about security, and in doing so explores the intimate connections between security and the history of the modern state. Ultimately, he argues that to think seriously about security in the present is to think about the reformulation of politics broadly: 'If the subject of security is the *subject* of security, it is necessary to ask, first and foremost, how the modern subject is being reconstituted and then to ask what security could possibly mean in relation to it' (Walker 1997: 78). This is a profound challenge, but one that has been taken up by a range of scholars who assemble around the label of Critical Security Studies, as we shall see later.

In between the avowed realism of Mohammed Ayoob and the radical political philosophy of R. B. J. Walker, the *Critical Security Studies* text showcased a number of responses to Krause and Williams's challenges (see Key Ideas 7.1 for one of the more intriguing), which drew on a range of theoretical traditions and explored concrete problems of contemporary

KEY IDEAS 7.1 Security and Ken Booth

One of the most interesting and unusual contributions to *Critical Security Studies* is Ken Booth's chapter 'Security and Self: Reflections of a fallen realist' (Booth 1997). Booth came to Critical Security Studies as a well-established practitioner of traditional strategic studies—in his own words, a realist. That tradition trains you to keep yourself out of your research and writing, because its epistemology instructs the strict separation between the object of analysis and the analyst. Critical Security Studies emerged from a tradition that rejected that separation, and in 'Security and Self' Booth explores the consequences of that change through what he describes as 'an experiment in autosociology'. He examines the way in which the field has functioned as a discipline, to produce students and teachers of a particular type and to create a field of questions and limit the types of answer that can be given to those questions. The conclusion he reaches is 'that there is a critical relationship between the me/I as a theorist of security and what it means to study security. The argument has been that the meaning of studying security is not simply or necessarily created by the changes out there in the world, but by the changes—or lack of them—in here (who we think we are, and what we think we are doing)', (Booth 1997: 112).

KEY POINTS

- The Critical Security Studies label emerged from a 1994 conference in Toronto, and was then used as the title for the book that conference produced.
- The initial agenda of Critical Security Studies was set by a series of challenges to the traditional conception of security: the state was not a sufficient referent object for security; thinking more broadly about referent objects required thinking more broadly about the sources of both insecurity and security; these forms of rethinking required an epistemological move beyond the empiricist, positivist traditions of security studies.
- Critical Security Studies tried to create a broad church for the critical study of security, seeing 'critical' as an orientation rather than a unique theoretical perspective.
- The desire for a critical security study initially drew scholars from a range of theoretical perspectives, including constructivism, poststructuralism, and post-Marxism.

security. Several chapters drew on the constructivism that was making an important mark more broadly in international relations. Others were more inclined to draw theoretical inspiration from the heterogeneous products of twentieth-century continental philosophy that are often lumped together as '**poststructuralism**'. In addition, Ken Booth and Peter Vale, in considering critical security in the southern African context, began a journey that would lead ultimately to the post-Marxist Frankfurt School (see the section 'Aberystwyth exclusions').

Krause and Williams expressed the desire that led first to Toronto and then to the *Critical Security Studies* volume as seeking a 'critical perspective' on security. They worked hard to ensure that this critical perspective was not monopolized by a single theoretical approach, and so opened the conference and the volume to a range of theoretical positions. Nevertheless, the desire for a (single) perspective somehow remained as scholars responded to the challenges they laid down in creating their foundation for Critical Security Studies. Thus, despite their claims to catholicism, Krause and Williams create the conditions for schism—the schism I continue to trace. In doing so, one of the key questions I consider is: 'If Critical Security Studies is not a perspective, not a position, what is it?' The first answer to this question was given by those of the so-called Copenhagen School.

Copenhagen distinctions

The year after *Critical Security Studies* had appeared, Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde published *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (1998). This book was intended to serve as a relatively comprehensive statement of what has come to be known as 'securitization studies', or the Copenhagen School.[2] I will not discuss Copenhagen in detail, as it is treated elsewhere in this volume (see Chapters 12 and 15), but it warrants a short sideline, for it has made two important contributions to the history I am tracing.

Security: A New Framework for Analysis is built around two important conceptual developments in the study of security: Buzan's notion of a sectoral analysis of security and Wæver's concept of 'securitization' (see Chapter 12). Both of these ideas have helped to inform the broad church of Critical Security Studies, but it is the notion of 'securitization' that has been the more theoretically important. 'Securitization' is perhaps the most significant conceptual development that has emerged specifically within security studies in response to the epistemological challenge Krause and Williams note. Essentially, Wæver suggests that we treat security as a **speech act**: that is, a concrete action that is performed by virtue of its being said. 'Securitization' raises a number of very interesting questions that have informed critical security study since Wæver introduced the concept.

Despite this influence on Critical Security Studies, the Copenhagen School has sought to distance itself from Critical Security Studies. In part, this is a function of an incoherence inherent in the approach between the sectoral analysis of security and the concept of securitization. While securitization opens the possibility of the radical openness of social life, the sectoral approach, as it had developed before merging into the Copenhagen School, draws on a largely objectivist epistemology. In other words, the epistemological underpinnings of the concept of securitization do not cohere with those of the sectoral analysis of security. It is the epistemology of securitization, however, that does cohere with that called for by the desire to form a critical security study. In *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, the authors argue that Critical Security Studies is informed by poststructuralism and constructivism, and thus is open to the possibility of social change. By contrast, they suggest that the Copenhagen approach recognizes the social construction of social life, but contends that construction in the security realm is sufficiently stable over the long run that it can be *treated as* objective. In other words, they resolve the incoherence by assuming long-term stability and so enabling a largely positivist epistemology (Buzan et al. 1998: 34–5).

The explicit separation of the Copenhagen School from Critical Security Studies did more than simply announce that Copenhagen is *sui generis*. One function of the text has been to create 'Critical Security Studies' as something more concrete and less heterogeneous than the original desire. The Copenhagen authors talk of Critical Security Studies as 'an emerging school', and they shorten it to CSS. What is more, they ascribe to this emerging school two specific theoretical positions, poststructuralism and constructivism. This text, then, marks an important moment in the creation of Critical Security Studies as something other than an orientation towards the discipline, and also effects conceptual exclusions that are the subject of contestation, not least by scholars at Aberystwyth University, who have considerable institutional claim to the Critical Security Studies label.

KEY POINTS

- *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998) sets out a distinctive position on security studies, often known as 'the Copenhagen School', blending Buzan's 'security sectors' with Wæver's 'securitization'.
- There is an epistemological incoherence at the heart of the Copenhagen School between the epistemology of sectoral analysis and that of securitization.
- The Copenhagen School resolves its incoherence by arguing that the social production of security is sufficiently stable to be treated objectively.
- *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* seeks to distinguish between its approach and Critical Security Studies, and in doing so tends to produce Critical Security Studies as an emerging 'school'.

Aberystwyth exclusions

Rather ironically, the most aggressive attempt to produce a coherent approach for Critical Security Studies—to marshal all adherents to the sign of the shoe or the gourd, but not both—has been made from a position largely excluded by the Copenhagen School's characterization of Critical Security Studies as being informed by constructivism and poststructuralism. The attempt has been focused around scholars based in Aberystwyth (indeed, Steve Smith (2005) calls it the Welsh School), and has found its most complete expression to date in two volumes: Smith's *Critical Security Studies and World Politics* (2005) and *Theory of World Security* (Booth 2007).

---

[2] Bill McSweeney (1996) is generally credited with coining the label 'Copenhagen School' to refer to the work of Buzan, Wæver, and a series of collaborators.

Central to both of these books is the work of Ken Booth, who edited the first and wrote the second. Indeed, *Theory of World Security* is intended to be a fairly definitive statement of Booth's thirty-year research programme leading to a critical theory of security (Booth 2007: xvii–xviii).

In both these texts, Booth is explicit in arguing that not everyone who would consider themselves working within Critical Security Studies will accept his orientation to a critical security theory. In other words, he is making a clear case for a restrictive understanding of critical security theory—he is saying to us, follow the sign of the gourd, and means it. He argues, in fact, that the formulation of a singular 'critical security theory' is the second stage of Critical Security Studies work. Booth's intervention, therefore, is an unapologetic desire for fragmentation. As he says: 'There are times when definite lines have to be drawn' (Booth 2005a: 260). He distances himself sharply from the Krause and Williams of *Critical Security Studies*, rejecting the broad church in favour of a single tradition aimed at giving rise to a coherent critical theory of security.

In his first cut at elaborating a critical theory of security in 2005, Booth followed his Aberystwyth colleague Richard Wyn Jones, who had drawn on the Frankfurt School tradition to think about security theory in his 1999 book *Security, Strategy, and Critical Theory*. Both see the Frankfurt School tradition as centrally important to the development of a critical theory for security studies (see Think Point 7.1 for an example of the sort of security analysis this tradition can produce). In *Critical Security Studies and World Politics*, Booth throws his net slightly wider than Frankfurt in identifying the tradition, adding Gramscian, Marxist, and Critical International Relations to the Frankfurt School. In other words, Booth drew on the range of post-Marxist social theory, particularly as it has been drawn into International Relations, with pride of place to the work of the Frankfurt School in general and Jürgen Habermas in particular.

The theoretical net of Booth's critical theory of security was expanded still further with his 2007 *Theory of World Security*. Here he took an explicitly eclectic approach to theory building, engaging in what he terms *Perlenfischerie* (pearl fishing), following Hannah Arendt, picking theoretical pearls from a range of schools and perspectives. His first set of pearls is the same set he drew from the post-Marxist oyster bed in 2005, and still with the Frankfurt School the first among them. To this he adds a second, lesser, set of ideas: world order, peace studies, **feminism**, historical sociology, and social idealism. He calls the whole of the string of pearls that his fishing produced *emancipatory realism*.

THINK POINT 7.1 The persistent puzzle of national missile defence

The approach to security which starts with Frankfurt School Critical Theory has, as yet at least, not produced a great deal of scholarship which seeks to analyse contemporary issues or practices of security. One notable recent exception is Columba Peoples' *Justifying Ballistic Missile Defence* (2010), which began life as a PhD dissertation at Aberystwyth University under the supervision of Richard Wyn Jones. Peoples' book explores the (remarkably) long debates in the USA over ballistic missile defence, asking how supporters maintained their justification of successive missile defence programmes in the face of both scientific and strategic critiques. He argues that the supporters are able to draw on a cultural 'common sense' to maintain that justification. The idea of 'common sense' as hegemonic discourse he draws from Gramsci, while he uses the Frankfurt School's ideas on technology to analyse the content of the American common sense. The result is one of the only detailed discussions of a central issue of military, or indeed other form of, security from an avowedly post-Marxist Critical Security Studies perspective.

Peoples' book is worth reading in conjunction with another volume that appeared shortly before it, Natalie Bormann's *National Missile Defence and the Politics of US Identity* (2008). In this text, Bormann also takes up the (puzzling) persistence of ballistic missile defence in US political discourse, despite, as she puts it, a case that does not add up. Bormann provides, in the words of her subtitle, a 'post-structural crititque', drawing in particular on the work of Michel Foucault and her supervisor, David Campbell. The two texts make interesting companion pieces, tackling very similar problems while working out of the two leading theoretical traditions which have informed critical scholarship in security studies, and beyond: German post-Marxism and French post structuralism.

What would such a critical security theory look like? Booth argues that there are eight themes that can be drawn from the collection of post-Marxist theory useful to a critical security theory (the eight are summarized in Key Ideas 7.2). He begins with the central claim of the Frankfurt School, that all knowledge is a social process—that is, knowledge is not simply 'there', but rather is produced socially, and thus politically, and there are 'interests of knowledge'. Knowledge benefits some and disadvantages others; it is, in the noted words of Robert Cox in International Relations, 'always for someone and for some purpose'. A critical security theory, therefore, must reveal the politics behind seeming neutral knowledge. Such a conception of knowledge implies a critique of traditional theory, including traditional security theory, which, by not recognizing its political origins and content, tends to a naturalism, assuming the ability to maintain a rigid division between the analyst and the social world she is analysing. If Critical Theory, therefore, reveals the false naturalism of traditional theory and the political content of all knowledge, it provides the basis for social change—indeed, for progress. This third theme, of the possibility of progress, leads to a fourth: that the test of a social theory is its capacity for fostering **emancipation**. Change is possible, and progressive change is emancipatory.

KEY IDEAS 7.2 Themes of post-Marxist Critical Theory

- All knowledge is a social process.
- Traditional theory promotes the flaws of naturalism and reductionism.
- Critical theory offers a basis for political and social progress.
- The test of theory is emancipation.
- Human society is its own invention.
- Regressive theories have dominated politics among nations.
- The state and other institutions must be denaturalized.
- Progressive world order values should inform the means and ends of an international politics committed to enhancing world security.

Booth (2005a: 268).

The first four themes Booth derives from the broad Critical Theory tradition in social theory. To these four he adds four gathered from the specific, emergent critical tradition in International Relations. The first is that human society is its own invention. Indeed, this is a necessary condition for the operation of his earlier themes, for only if society is a social invention can knowledge serve as the basis for social change and open the possibility of emancipation. The second theme that Booth derives from critical IR is a particular claim about contemporary world politics: that regressive theories have dominated the field. If all knowledge is *for* someone and *for* some purpose, regressive theories are the ones that are *for* those presently in power with the purpose of maintaining their dominance. Critical IR theory has shown how the mainstream theories, including security studies, serve just this purpose. If this is true, then, the final two themes Booth develops are aimed at overcoming the regressive nature of world politics. The first is that the state and other international institutions must be *denaturalized*, so as to open the possibility of change, and finally that, in effecting that change to global (security) practices, politics must be governed by emancipatory values.

These themes enable Booth to argue that a critical security theory can serve as the basis for answering three sets of crucial questions in relation to security:

- First, what is real? If we reject naturalism, which assumes that the social world can be treated as objective in the same fashion as the natural world, then we cannot assume that the social world we investigate is 'real' in the same sense as the physical. Critical Theory's focus on knowledge provides a way into understanding social **ontology**, and thus the creation of social facts.
- Second, Critical Theory of this kind provides a means of thinking about knowledge, or the epistemology of social life. It directs our attention to the interests that underlie knowledge claims, and leads us to ask whom particular forms of knowledge are for, and what function they serve in supporting the interests of those people or groups.
- Finally, it suggests asking the old Leninist question, what is to be done? Critical Theory is a theory of praxis, a step in a process of political engagement designed to transform the world. As Marx put it: the point is not to understand the world; the point is to change it.

These reflections provide the basis for a specific critical theory of security (see Key Quotes 7.2 for Booth's definition of this theory). It draws on a relatively coherent body of social theory and its application to International Relations, and aims to inform scholarship and political practice in the future. While developed largely in parallel to the critical tradition in International Relations,

KEY QUOTES 7.2 Critical security theory

In his recent work, Booth (2007) has argued for the development of a distinctive critical theory of security, and proposed the following definition of such a theory, beginning from the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory:

> 'Critical security theory is both a theoretical commitment and a political orientation concerned with the construction of world security. As a theoretical commitment it is a framework of ideas deriving from a tradition of critical global theorising made up of two main strands: critical social theory and radical international relations theory . . . As a political orientation it is informed by the aim of enhancing world security through emancipatory politics and networks of communities at all levels, including the potential community of all communities—common humanity.'
>
> Booth (2007: 30–1).

Booth's critical security theory is quite clearly designed to provide a specific theory of security within critical IR. What this means is that Booth and his colleagues in the Welsh School have provided a clear answer to the question posed at the end of the discussion of *Critical Security Studies*: critical security study *should* be guided by a single, specific theory, and that theory should be informed by Critical Theory, with capital letters.

In order to make the case for exclusion as forcefully as possible, once he has set out the elements of a critical security theory, Booth (2005a: 269–71; 2007: 160–81) distinguishes it from other possible sources of critical security study. He explains, in other words, what is wrong with following the sign of the shoe or with taking off our shoes and hopping around on one foot. In particular he distinguishes critical security theory from four pretenders: feminism, the Copenhagen School, constructivism, and poststructuralism.

The exclusion of feminism is the most troubling to Booth's position in some ways, but in others the easiest to achieve. As most feminist writing will freely admit, there are various feminisms that draw in their turn from a wide variety of social theory traditions in developing analyses of **gender**. These traditions include the Critical Theory tradition from which Booth proceeds. Therefore, gender analysis can be considered already to be within Critical Theory, and thus within a critical security theory; however, other forms of feminist theorizing are as antithetical to critical security theory as their theoretical traditions are to Critical Theory more broadly. The Copenhagen School is similarly dismissed with relative ease. The near-naturalism of the Copenhagen approach to society—so stable it can be treated as objective—leaves it 'only marginally "critical"', and in Booth's eyes (2005a: 271) suffers the same forms of incoherence I have already noted in this chapter.

There remain two challengers to the critical security theory Booth champions, the same two that the Copenhagen School identified in *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. The first is constructivism, which Booth (2007: 152–3) argues is not a theory at all, but rather an orientation to world politics that serves as a basis on which to reject traditional theories. While Booth's argument may be true, it ignores the possibility, which I will explore later, that there are within that orientation various constructivist theories that do have something to say about security—just as other orientations, including Booth's, contain a number of specific theories within them. For Booth (2005a: 270), that leaves only poststructuralism, which is just too dangerous with its toxic mix of 'obscurantism, relativism, and faux radicalism'. In other words, Booth (2007: 177–8) argues, poststructuralism provides no basis for political action.

As might be imagined, and as Booth freely admits, the dismissal of constructivism and poststructuralism as elements of Critical Security Studies is not shared by all. These two theoretical positions represent, in fact, the conceptual underpinning of most of what might be drawn under the label, understood as the broad church. But even among them the sign of the shoe is defended against those hopping around on one foot.

KEY POINTS

- Ken Booth, Richard Wyn Jones, and their Welsh School colleagues argue for a specific critical security theory.
- The tradition within which they develop this theory is the post-Marxist tradition identified with Gramscian and other Marxist International Relations and, particularly, with Frankfurt School Critical Theory.
- The elaboration of the Critical Theory tradition gives rise to eight themes and a definition of critical security theory.
- Critical security theory provides the possibility of answering three key questions: what is real, what is knowledge, and what is to be done?
- Critical Security Studies should be organized around this critical security theory, and should not include feminism, the Copenhagen School, constructivism, and particularly poststructuralism.

Constructing security

If we exclude the Copenhagen School and feminist writings on security,[3] and further if we watch those committed to a critical theory of security build a hard-and-fast line between themselves and the rest of what might be considered Critical Security Studies, what are we left with? Keith Krause provided an answer in a review of the research programme of Critical Security Studies in 1998, and it is the same answer to which Booth came: constructivism and poststructuralism. Indeed, as with *Critical Security Studies*, Krause's (1998) review largely elides any difference between these two positions—the church is still broad, and so you can follow the sign of the shoe or take off your shoe and hop around on one foot if you like.

In an attempt to impose some order on the studies that compose Critical Security Studies, without resorting to the definitional strictures employed by both Booth and the Copenhagen School, Krause organizes a range of literature into a broad research programme. The effect of this move is to provide a characterization of Critical Security Studies, which, while still inclusive, clearly privileges constructivism. He organizes the scholarship of Critical Security Studies under three headings: the construction of threats and responses; the construction of the objects of security; possibilities for transforming the **security dilemma**. Krause explicitly does not intend these headings to capture the full range of critical security scholarship, nor does he suggest that scholars will tend to treat these issues separately. Nevertheless, the effect, particularly appearing at a time in which the Critical Security Studies label was being established, and coming from one of the editors of the *Critical Security Studies* volume, was to mark the character of Critical Security Studies as concerned with 'the social construction of security' (Eriksson 1999: 318).

There are two important features of Krause's review in the story of the creation of the Critical Security Studies label. The first is that it demonstrates the impressive array of research that is being conducted and published to which this label could be attached, countering, as Krause (1998: 316) notes, 'the oft-heard charge that critical scholarship is inevitably sloppy or unsystematic'. Second, he is able to derive from the review a characterization of Critical Security Studies that is far more specific than that provided by *Critical Security Studies*, and is clearly distinct from Booth's critical security theory. Krause suggests that there are six claims that tie Critical (Security) Studies together:

1. Principal actors (states and others) are social constructs.
2. These actors are constituted through political practices.
3. The structures of world politics are neither unchanging nor determining because they too are socially constructed.
4. Knowledge of the social world is not objective, as there is no divide between the social world and knowledge of that world.
5. Natural-science methodology is not appropriate for social science, which requires an interpretative method.
6. The purpose of theory is not explanation in terms of generalizable causal claims, but contextual understanding and practical knowledge.

A pair of books by Alexandra Gheciu illustrate the approach Krause sets out and demonstrate the sort of rigorous scholarship that is possible within the research programme. In *NATO in the New Europe* (2005b) Gheciu explores the socialization of former Eastern Bloc states by NATO in the years after the end of the Cold War. Socialization is an important idea in social construction, because it is the means by which actors are constructed to become members of a particular social system or community. Gheciu provides a detailed account of the way in which NATO socialized the Czech Republic and Romania to become 'Europeans' in a sense that allied with the liberal democratic notions of what it meant to be European in the 1990s. Furthermore, she shows how this socialization was an explicit security strategy, which she terms a Kantian or 'inside' approach to security—the formation of the state as a particular kind of state and thereby productive of security (Gheciu 2005b: 7–9). In *Securing Civilization* (2008), Gheciu explores the 'inside' approach to security further, by looking at the ways in which three key European security institutions—the EU, NATO, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)—respond to the post-9/11 threat of international terrorism. At the heart of these responses is the constitution of members as civilized/secure and those outside as barbaric/threatening (Gheciu 2008: 5).

---

[3] The exclusion of feminism in the production of the Critical Security Studies label is a truly fascinating issue, worthy of complete treatment on its own. As we have seen, Ken Booth effects this exclusion through arguing that feminism is a broad church in its own right and that certain feminist analyses of gender form an important element of Critical Theory. Keith Krause (1998: 324 n.4) effects a similar exclusion in his review of the scholarship of Critical Security Studies: 'I have not treated the principal themes of feminist or gender scholarship on security as a separate category. These are dealt with in detail by [others].' Lene Hansen (2000) has reflected on this same exclusion in the case of the Copenhagen School.

The focus on the social construction of agents and structures, together with a commitment to interpretative method, contextual understanding, and practical knowledge, marks Krause's account of Critical Security Studies as largely rooted within the tradition of constructivism in International Relations, a tradition Gheciu (2005b), for example, then explicitly claims. Constructivism clearly shares homologies with both post-Marxist Critical Theory and poststructuralism, but it is not the same as either. Those following the sign of the gourd are welcome, as are those hopping around on one foot, but they may feel that they are then expected to join in following the sign of the shoe.

KEY POINTS

- Social constructivism forms an important strand within Critical Security Studies.
- Constructivism takes agents and structures as constituted in and through political practices.
- Constructivism denies the division between the social world and the analyst, and thus seeks an interpretative rather than a naturalist methodology.
- While attempting to maintain the broad church, the constructive account of Critical Security Studies privileges social constructivism.

Everyone's other: poststructuralism and security

Ken Booth's antipathy to poststructural approaches to International Relations in general and security studies in particular reflects a common, and commonly virulent, reaction. In addition to obscurantist, relativist, and faux radical, approaches labelled poststructural have been called prolix and self-indulgent (Walt 1991), and accused of having no research programme (Keohane 1988). For examples of the kind of research that is actually conducted by scholars labelled post structural, see Think Point 7.2. The virulence of the rejection of poststructural work reflects, I would suggest, its radical promise. It shares with the rest of the work discussed in this chapter a pair of key commitments: a rejection of positivist epistemology and hence methodology, and commitment to social critique. However, unlike any of the other forms of critical scholarship I have thus far discussed, it does not stop short of the radical implications of these commitments. Indeed, a crucial commitment shared by poststructural scholarship but not by other forms of critical theory is a rejection of overarching grand narratives, and thus an acceptance that knowledge claims are always unstable and contingent. As a fairly sympathetic critic has put it: 'it is for this reason that most social constructivists and critical security studies writers are at such pains to establish the difference between their work and that of poststructuralists. Put simply, poststructuralists deny the form of foundations for knowledge claims that dominate the security studies debate. As can be imagined, this has led to much hostility toward poststructuralism . . . ' (S. Smith 2005: 49)

The work that is generally labelled poststructural—and, as with the other labels we are discussing, is more commonly applied by others than by a scholar to her own work—draws on a series of intellectual traditions largely having their roots in French philosophy (as opposed to the German philosophy that animates the Welsh School, for example). While the work draws on an eclectic collection of writing, the most common points of departure are the work of Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault.[4] The rejection of grand narratives—such as those of 'progress' and 'emancipation' that inform the Welsh School—together with the varied and eclectic theoretical inspirations for poststructural work, means that there are no simple summaries or sets of bullet points that can be adduced, as with the other approaches. Ultimately, to borrow an expression, the only way in is through, and many of the texts called poststructural demand close and careful reading.[5] Therefore, rather than providing such a summary, I will consider a number of important authors and texts that are routinely cited, and thus form an important part of the story of the production of the Critical Security Studies label—even though few, if any, of these authors would slap the label on their own work.

One of the first of these works is Bradley Klein's 1994 book *Strategic Studies and World Order*. In terms of the history of Critical Security Studies, the importance of the text is that it took on one of the central problems that motivate the later development of the label: what are the political consequences of traditional security studies—that is, strategic studies? Klein considered strategic studies as a discourse constitutive of the global state and military system it purports to study. His approach to that discourse is informed by Foucault's work, which Foucault discusses as a history of the present, or a genealogy. Genealogical work seeks to reveal the historical trajectory that gave meaning to particular discourses and how they then function in the present. Famously, Foucault provided such genealogies—for example, of criminal punishment and Western sexuality. Klein turns this form of investigation on strategic studies, and in the process makes a compelling case for one of the founding assumptions of Critical Security Studies: that theories about the world constitute that world, and thus that theory, including security theory, has political effects. What Klein shows is that strategic studies is productive of the very system that makes contemporary global violence possible.

Simon Dalby's first book, *Creating the Second Cold War* (1990), similarly turns the poststructural gaze on a central problem of conventional security studies: in his case, the renewed Cold War confrontation under the Reagan administration in the USA. Dalby explores the intellectual underpinnings of US security policy, or, as he puts it in his subtitle, the discourse of politics. As a geographer, Dalby (1990) is particularly concerned with the ways in which geo-politics serves as a discourse underpinning the militarism of Reagan's international policy, and it is a concern with geo-politics as discourse which has then animated much of the rest of his work. In 1998 he teamed with Gearóid Ó Tuathail to edit *Rethinking Geopolitics*, which sought 'to radicalize conventional notions of geopolitics through a series of studies of its proliferating, yet often unacknowledged and under-theorized, operation in world politics past, present and future' (Dalby and Ó Tuathail 1998: 2). More recently Dalby has turned his attention to security studies more explicitly, and explored the effects of geo-political discourse in relation to attempts to 'securitize' the environment, and the environmental effects of this discourse when it largely ignored the environment (Dalby 2002).

Perhaps the most widely cited of the scholars working within these traditions is David Campbell, and for good reason. As Steve Smith (2005: 50) notes, 'David Campbell has written some of the best empirical work in poststructuralist security studies.' The first of these works is *Writing Security* (1998a), in which Campbell explores the manner in which the USA has been produced in and through discourses of danger. He asks of US Foreign Policy some of the same questions, inspired by Foucault, that Klein used to think about Strategic Studies. In the book, he shows how Foreign Policy discourse is inseparable from what he terms foreign policy (the capitalization is the key)—that is, the production of an American self and a (dangerous) other, or a (secure) domestic and a (threatening) foreign. As with Klein's work, the contribution to Critical Security Studies thinking is clear. In the case of Campbell's work, both what Critical Security Studies will call the *referent object* and the *agent* of security (the state in both instances) is shown to be produced in its own practices.

---

[4] In his attack on poststructural IR, Booth suggests that most of those in IR who work from Foucault use his work on psychiatry, and then goes on to dismiss the IR work through criticisms of this early work of Foucault. To my knowledge, few working in poststructural security studies draw extensively on *Madness and Civilization*, an early work Foucault called 'archaeology', but rather on the later genealogical work, particularly *Discipline and Punish*, *The History of Sexuality*, and two incomplete elements of a larger programme on politics and war, *Society Must Be Defended* and 'Governmentality'. See, among others, Campbell (1998a), Gusterson (1998), Edkins (2003), Duffield (2007), Dillon and Lobo-Guerrero (2008), and Grayson (2008).

[5] One of the concerns with much of the criticism directed at poststructural work in IR generally is that it is not always founded on such a reading of the texts it purports to criticize. As David Campbell (1998a: 210) notes: 'What is most interesting about the conventional critics of "postmodernism" is the unvarnished vehemence that adorns their attacks. Accused of "self-righteousness", lambasted as "evil", castigated for being "bad IR" and "meta-babble", and considered congenitally irrational, "postmodernists" are regarded as little better than unwelcome asylum seekers from a distant war zone. Of course, had the critics reached their conclusions via a considered reading of what is now a considerable literature in International Relations, one would repay the thought with a careful engagement of their own arguments. Sadly there is not much thought to repay.'

THINK POINT 7.2 Traditional subjects in a poststructural gaze

Poststructural writing can take on subjects that on the surface appear to be the same as those found in traditional security studies. What the poststructural traditions provide, however, is often a radically different way of asking questions and providing answers. Here are two examples: the first, 'about' nuclear weapons; and the second, Canadian policy towards missile defence.

Hugh Gusterson, *Nuclear Rites* (1998)

Gusterson is a social anthropologist whose discipline privileges a particular kind of fieldwork leading to ethnographic writing. Traditionally such ethnographies are written about others' cultures, often the cultures of Indigenous populations that have been (largely) untouched by European expansion. (Fortunately for the anthropologists, such cultures are often found on south Pacific islands!) Gusterson is part of a movement in anthropology turning the ethnographic gaze on his own society. In *Nuclear Rites*, he engages in an ethnographic study of the scientists at one of the US nuclear weapons laboratories. Making use of both ethnographic method and Foucault's notions of discipline, he investigates the ways in which the laboratories function to create the conditions of possibility for the building, testing, and deployment of nuclear weapons. As the title suggests, some of what he finds is that the design, building, testing, and deployment of nuclear weapons have evolved into a ritualized culture among the scientists that has little or nothing to do with the stories we tell ourselves about the needs of deterrence and defence.

Marshall Beier, 'Postcards from the Outskirts of Security' (2001)

In his study, Beier reflects on a study trip he took with a number of other Canadian scholars to visit the North American Aerospace Defense (NORAD) headquarters. NORAD is located in the middle of a mountain, usually identified as being on the outskirts of Colorado Springs. It is actually closer to the small town of 'Security' Colorado, and Beier uses this observation as the starting point for a reflection on the ways in which semiotic markers can affect group dynamics and contribute to the disciplining of dissent. He examines the ways in which opposition to missile defence was silenced within the tour, and considers the implications for the decision the Canadian government had to take on whether and how to participate in the US missile defence programme.

The principal objection Ken Booth (2005a: 270) raised to poststructuralism as part of a broad Critical Security Studies church was its supposed inability to inspire a politics, and in particular its inability to '"shape up" to the test of Fascism as a serious political challenge'. This is, of course, a serious criticism of any form of critical theory that sees itself in any sense part of a politics of change, as it is difficult to imagine a politics more in need of change than Fascism. It is also an argument repeatedly raised by critics of poststructural scholarship, regardless of how many times it is answered. In Campbell's case, his most extended answer came in his 1998 book *National Deconstruction: Violence, Identity, and Justice in Bosnia* (1998b). The Yugoslav wars of the 1990s posed exactly the sort of challenge alluded to by Booth, as it appeared to mark the return to Europe of the kind of violent Fascism to which all had said 'never again' in 1945. (For a number of responses to Bosnia, see Think Point 7.3.) In a sophisticated and compelling text, Campbell engages directly with the question Booth demands to be answered: 'What is to be done?'

Campbell's answer (1998b: 196) to the question of politics demands to be read, and read closely, but centres around fostering the ethos of democracy: 'Democracy is not a substance, a fixed set of values, a particular kind of community, or a strict institutional form . . . what makes democracy democratic, and what marks democracy as a singular political form, is a particular attitude or spirit, an ethos, that constantly has to be fostered.' This is not an answer that many find comfortable, because it provides no simple blueprint, no single strategy. Fostering the ethos of democracy does not mean that when you hold a competitive election and anoint a 'democratic' government your work is done, and so the politics that is demanded by Campbell's accounts of responsibility and democracy are profoundly more difficult and challenging than those found in most areas of security studies, even Critical Security Studies. The difficulty has led, in fact, to a concerted effort among a number of scholars working in a poststructural tradition to consider issues of ethics and responsibility in relation to 'the worst'. Much of their work draws its philosophical inspiration, in part, from the work of Emmanuel Levinas, as did Campbell in developing his arguments about a politics in response to Bosnia.

THINK POINT 7.3 Researching Bosnia

The challenge of the wars in the former Yugoslavia, particularly the war in Bosnia, attracted the attention of a number of scholars in the poststructural tradition. The ethical and political challenge of the violence is central to these works, but what also emerges is a concern with the place of Western scholarship, and the nature of the research enterprise. In order to establish his argument about the political potential of deconstruction, Campbell (1998b) first provides a deconstructive reading of the violence in Bosnia. He explores the production of identities in Bosnia that enabled the violence of the wars and their attendant 'ethnic cleansing'. Making use of Derrida's notion of 'ontopology', he explores the production of identities tied to place in such a way that the other could not be allowed even to inhabit certain spaces without undermining the self. He then turns to the responses, particularly the international responses, to the violence, and shows how various Western discourses (including security studies) created the conditions that made the genocidal violence in Bosnia possible.

While critical of some of the intellectual moves Campbell makes, Elizabeth Dauphinée takes up similar themes in her book, *The Ethics of Researching War: Looking for Bosnia* (2008). Dauphinée too is concerned with the place of Western discourses in the violence of Bosnia, but she does not limit herself to an impersonal account of scholarly influence. Rather, she turns the scholarly gaze on her own place as researcher, asking what it means that, in the words with which she opens the text, 'I am building my career on the loss of a man named Stojan Sokolovic (and on the loss of many millions of others who may or may not resemble him)' (Dauphinée 2008: 1). Her answer takes seriously the poststructural recognition that the observer is never, and can never be, detached from what she observes, and in doing so provides a telling account of the limits of our ethics, and our research.

Questions of research are also central to Lene Hansen in her *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War* (2006). The book also picks up the themes Campbell developed in both *Writing Security* (1992) and *National Deconstruction* (1998b), as Hansen develops a poststructural account of identity and foreign policy, and then uses that account to inform an analysis of Western policy in response to the Bosnian War. Where Campbell analyses Bosnia in part to answer the critics' challenge that poststructuralism provides no politics, Hansen analyses the same war in part to answer the challenge that poststructuralism does not engage in rigorous research. Hansen sets out a detailed method of analysis, drawing on, among others, Foucault and Derrida, which she then applies to Bosnia. Indeed, she concludes by comparing her analysis to Campbell's in an attempt to open an 'intra-poststructuralist debate', but holds true to her starting point by doing so not to determine who is right and wrong, but rather to explore the analytical effects of methodological choices (Hansen 2006: 217–20).

The idea of fostering an ethos is also central to the notion of critique in much of the writing labelled poststructural. Both Welsh School critical security theory and constructivist Critical Security Studies provide an answer to one of the questions I posed at the outset: what is meant by 'critical'. For the Welsh School, it involves revealing the interests behind knowledge claims, with a goal of social change. Similarly for the constructivists, it is reaching a contextual and practical understanding to know whom knowledge claims serve. Both of these are relatively static conceptions of critique: they can be done in a finite sense. Just as Campbell argues democracy is never reached, but rather is an ethos ever to be fostered, so too is critique. Poststructural writing sees its critical purposes as fostering an ethos of critique, always working to destabilize 'truths', revealing their contingency and the nature of their production. It is not a finite project, however, but rather a process in which to be constantly engaged. As with its politics, the poststructural conception of critique is difficult for many to accept, because again it is not easy. It does not allow for finite claims and finished projects, and, as students of society, we are trained to provide 'findings' and test them in a settled fashion.

Neither Bradley Klein nor David Campbell—nor indeed a number of others often also included in a poststructural security studies list, such as James Der Derian, R. B. J. Walker, Cynthia Weber, or even Michael Dillon—applies the label 'Critical Security Studies' to their work. They are surely and avowedly engaged in critical scholarship—that is the fostering of an ethos of critique—and much of their work is centrally concerned with security. Michael Dillon (1996), for example, has written an extended political philosophy of security out of the tradition of French social theory, and his more recent work explores Foucault's notions of **biopolitics** in relation to the post-9/11 security strategies of the USA and other western powers (Dillon 2006; Dillon and Lobo-Guerrero 2008; Dillon and Neal 2008). Similarly, R. B. J. Walker is one of the leaders of a large research programme on 'Liberty and Security', in relation to the contemporary practices of the war on terrorism.

While most of these scholars have not entered the broad church of Critical Security Studies, their work has inspired some within it to take off a shoe and jump around on one foot. In doing so, some have hopped right back outside again, wondering what applying the label Critical Security Studies to their work adds to the project in which they are engaged. Indeed, the ethos of critique that work of this kind aims to foster demands that we turn our critical gaze on the very scholarly practices in which we are engaged. It demands that we ask about the politics of our own labelling, including the Critical Security Studies label, one of whose stories I am telling.

KEY POINTS

- 'Poststructuralism' is a marker for a diverse set of writing inspired by a number of, generally French, philosophers including Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida.
- A number of works in this tradition within International Relations are claimed by Critical Security Studies, most notably those of Bradley Klein, David Campbell, R. B. J. Walker, and Michael Dillon.
- Despite criticism to the contrary, poststructural work does provide answers to questions of political action, just not the kind of comfortable answers many are seeking.
- Central to the political and critical nature of poststructural writing is the idea of fostering an ethos of democracy and an ethos of critique. These are never finite, never reached, but something for which we must constantly strive.

Beyond divisions? CASEing the joint or returning the gift?

As we approach a quarter of a century since the Toronto conference, what can we say of the state of the Critical Security Studies label, and the divisions into which it has been broken? It certainly seems well established within the global security studies community, with courses and even whole degrees offered, as well as finding mention in most collections on the range of approaches to security, and even having a growing number of books dedicated to its introduction (see Fierke 2007; Peoples and Vaughan-Williams 2010). There have also been moves to transcend the label, the first by healing the schisms which have riven the broad church of Krause and Williams; the second by recommending that we jettison not only Critical Security Studies, but security itself!

In 2006, a group of scholars attempted to reconstruct the broad church of Critical Security Studies that had been central to the original Toronto desire. These scholars met first in Paris, and gathered together students of security from across Europe who shared a commitment to some form of critical scholarship about security, broadly conceived. Out of this meeting was produced an article later published in *Security Dialogue* as 'Critical Approaches to Security in Europe: A Networked Manifesto', with the author given as 'The CASE Collective'. The goal of the collective was explicit in aiming to overcome precisely the sorts of divisions I have outlined in this chapter: 'the aim of working and writing as a collective, a network of scholars who do not agree on everything yet share a common perspective, is based on a desire to break with the competitive dynamic of individualist research agendas and to establish a network that not only facilitates dialogue but is also able to speak with a collective voice' (CASE Collective 2006: 444). Specifically, they sought to bridge the gaps they saw between the 'Copenhagen', 'Welsh', and 'Paris' schools (with the latter a largely poststructural position centred around Didier Bigo at Science Po in Paris).

The near impossibility of constructing a broad church is clearly demonstrated in the responses the CASE Collective generated. In a series of rejoinders published by the journal, Andreas Behnke, Mark Salter, and Christine Sylvester took the Collective to task for a series of exclusions they effected even in their attempts to forge an inclusive network (Behnke 2007; Salter 2007; Sylvester 2007). Behnke and Salter take the Collective to task for its 'European' focus, asking both what is meant by 'Europe' (Behnke 2007: 106), and what about the critical scholars who are clearly not European in any sense, but still involved in the critical security project (Salter 2007: 114). Behnke (2007: 108) also wonders about the exclusion of theoretical positions from this reformed church, as there seems no room for his interest in Carl Schmitt, for example. Sylvester makes a similar, and even more damning critique, in asking where the feminists are in this network—even a poststructural feminist security scholar such as Lene Hansen, who actually works in Copenhagen, but whose work is missing from this broad network (Sylvester 2007). Salter and Miguel de Larrinaga then went further to build on the critique of the narrow European focus of CASE in 'Cold CASE: A Manifesto for Canadian Critical Security Studies', which appeared as the lead article in a special issue of *Critical Studies on Security* exploring Canadian critical approaches to security (Salter and de Larrinaga 2014: 1–19).

Despite the criticisms, the goal of the CASE collective is clearly to draw at least some of the fractious followers of different signs together in a common critical security effort. A more recent intervention which might reach a similar end through a very different means was published in *Critical Studies on Security* in 2013. Anthony Burke notes that 'Cosmopolitanism' has a long history of thinking and practice in international politics, '[y]et it has rarely been applied to questions or practice of security' (Burke 2013: 13). From this starting point, Burke attempts to refound the ontological and ethical framework within which we can think and act security in cosmopolitan terms. Starting as it does from an ethical rather than analytical assumption, security cosmopolitanism holds out the possibility of an ecumenical joining across some, though by no means all, of the divisions I have sketched. Burke's proposed framework has proven controversial, generating significant criticism and debate. At one end, Mary Kaldor commends the attempt to move beyond 'human security' while recognizing the transnational human subject (Kaldor 2013: 42–5). Significantly less sympathetic are Neil Cooper and Mandy Turner, who see Burke's framework as a critical-sounding gloss to put on the violence of liberal interventionism (Cooper and Turner 2013: 35–41)!

The attempt to overcome divisions within critical studies of security is certainly not the project underpinning Mark Neocleous' book, despite its title: *Critique of Security* (2008). Neocleous comes to his critique not from security studies, critical or otherwise, but from the study of the state in general and the 'police' in particular. Indeed, his question is 'What if security is little more than a semantic and semiotic black hole allowing authority to inscribe itself deeply in human experience?' (Neocleous 2008: 4). The answer is suggested by the very form of the question, and in a relentless and powerful text, Neocleous shows how security functions as 'a political technology . . . through which the state shapes our lives and imaginations' (Neocleous 2008: 4–5). He begins by showing how security, not liberty, is at the heart of liberalism, and so, *contra* Booth, emancipation is not the flip side of security, but rather it is oppression. From there he traces this technology of government through the practices of the twentieth century, concluding with a sustained critique of the role played by the 'security Fuckers' (Kelman, quoted in Neocleous 2008: 1), the professionals who make their living from security, including the academics who lay claim to the Critical Security Studies label. His conclusion is that we must 'eschew the logic of security altogether', something that 'could never even begin to be imagined by the security intellectual' (Neocleous 2008: 185). He calls on us to go far further than any of the adherents of any of the signs I have discussed to this point, to 'return the gift' of security, and not to seek to put anything in its place (which would simply be the far easier, and common, task of 'rethinking' security).

While Neocleous' conclusion is radical, it is hardly out of keeping with the desire that animates Critical Security Studies. That desire was spurred, at least in part, by the recognition of the ways in which security and its study supported the prevailing order. To point to a complicity so profound that 'security' itself is irredeemable is a logical potential consequence of that originating insight. What happens, though, if we turn the ethos of critique not on 'security', but on Critical Security Studies, or even critical security studies? In what ways are those of us who have responded, in whatever fashion, to the desire for self-consciously critical perspectives on security also complicit in the violence and oppression that we (nominally) seek to overturn? The answers to this question are profoundly unsettling for critical security studies. To take one very important example, much of the critical scholarship in security, at least in English, is produced by scholars working in settler colonial societies—Canada, Australia, and the USA. Settler colonial societies are those that were violently inscribed over the territory and peoples who lived there when the Europeans arrived. Those societies are only now beginning to come to terms with the implications of the ongoing colonialism of these societies; societies of which universities and their (even critically inclined) employees are a privileged part. A colleague and I recently considered the future of Critical Security Studies, and argued: 'For non-Indigenous critical security scholars living and working in North America, the violent securing of the settler-colonies . . . cannot be ignored. To work with and for a future that supports Indigenous sovereignty over land, language, and creative practice, CSS must become un-settled. An un-settled CSS works for decolonisation' (Hendershot and Mutimer 2018). In order to start to become unsettled, Critical Security Studies must acknowledge and accept its own complicity in the violent colonialism it must now seek to undo, which is an unsettling idea indeed! While critical security studies, and even Critical Security Studies, may have a future as we turn to un-settle our academic and political lives, we must always be open to the possibility that we must return the gift of security studies, along with that of security. The church can be as broad as it likes, but it may still need to be dismantled, for, as with any other institutionalized religion, it may be too deeply entwined with ongoing oppression to be allowed to go on.

Conclusion

This chapter has been unlike many in a textbook of this kind. I have not provided clear and unproblematic answers to questions such as 'What is Critical Security Studies?', 'What is meant by "critical" and "security"?', 'How do you "do" Critical Security Studies?' Rather, I have tried to turn the ethos of critique that should animate a critical study of security on the very label I was asked to discuss. I have told a story of the short history of the label and its politics, a story that attempts to reveal how Critical Security Studies came to be what it is, and what the effects are of that coming. Questions of history and politics are the questions—though by no means the only questions—that an ethos of critique leads us to ask, and the kind of story told here is one of the ways—though, again, by no means the only way—that they can be answered.

Since the conference in 1994 with which I began this story, the issue of 'security' has taken on a greatly renewed significance. During the Cold War, the Soviet–American rivalry and the ever-present possibility of nuclear war lent an urgency to questions of security that seemed to have been lost with the fall of the Berlin Wall. Such a decline in urgency was surely to be welcomed, and led, indeed, to the possibility of an idea like Critical Security Studies taking hold. Many of the concerns that animated the conference and the book had been articulated before the end of the Cold War, but that historical context made it impossible to follow them through. Critical Security Studies was a label ripe for reception at the moment it was spoken. With the events of 9/11, security regained its urgency.

In the context of a war on terrorism, wars in Iraq and Syria against a self-styled 'Islamic State', annual updates of 'anti-terror' legislation, the reorganization of government to provide 'homeland security', and the growing recognition that supposedly civilized states are resorting to torture in the name of security, security studies has never had it better (this thought alone should give us pause, as it bolsters Neocleous' case about the close connection of security studies to such extravagant violence). What is the state of the label Critical Security Studies in this present context? It seems the broad church is edging toward institutionalization, and the dangers that entails. There are now courses taught in universities on Critical Security Studies, and departments advertise for specialists under this label. As you know from reading this chapter, textbooks include Critical Security Studies in their lists of approaches. Journals have refocused their scope, and even been created, in order to house critical security work together. Perhaps because of this, the followers of the sign of the gourd are still squabbling with those following the sign of the shoe and particularly with those holding their shoes and hopping around on one foot. The stakes in this contest over the label are now higher: jobs are at stake, as are authorships of chapters.

Nevertheless, in an age in which security is so important, and some of the practices of security so troubling to those committed to liberty and justice—to the ethos of democracy—security study demands an ethos of critique. The question that remains, and the one with which I will end, is whether such an ethos demands Critical Security Studies or, rather, the refusal of security altogether.

QUESTIONS

1. If you were to become a critical security scholar, which sign would you follow and why?
2. Why did Krause and Williams aim to create a 'broad church' of Critical Security Studies? What are the advantages and disadvantages of such a conception? Who does it favour, and who does it marginalize?
3. What are the various understandings of the term 'critical' that are found in the literature on Critical Security Studies? Which one do you find the most convincing?
4. Should the Critical Security Studies label apply to the Copenhagen School?
5. The Welsh School suggests that Critical Security Studies should be guided by Critical Theory, which is the theory developed by the Frankfurt School. This suggestion makes intuitive sense; do you agree with it?
6. What is the difference between 'constructivism' and 'poststructuralism' in security studies? Does it make a difference?
7. Do an ethos of critique and an ethos of democracy provide sufficient guidance for a progressive politics of security in the contemporary world?
8. Have we reached the end of Critical Security Studies?
9. How does the rendition of a 'partial history of a label' differ from other ways of presenting approaches to security studies? What difference does it make?

FURTHER READING

Constructing security

- Krause, Keith (1998), 'Critical Theory and Security Studies: The Research Programme of "Critical Security Studies"', *Cooperation and Conflict*, 33/3: 298–333. In this article, Krause provides a useful overview of the broad church of Critical Security Studies and the literature to which the label may be applied.
- Krause, Keith and Williams, Michael C. (1997), *Critical Security Studies: Concepts and Cases*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. This edited volume launched the label 'critical security studies' and continues to be a standard reference.

There are a number of good texts that apply explicitly constructivist theory to important contemporary questions of security: Alexandra Gheciu (2005b), *NATO in the New Europe: The Politics of Socialization after the Cold War*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press (a constructivist account of NATO enlargement); Alexandra Gheciu (2008), *Securing Civilization: The EU, NATO, and the OSCE in the Post-9/11 World*, Oxford: Oxford University Press (the re-configuration of European security to confront the 'threat' of terrorism); Jennifer Milliken (2001) *The Social Construction of the Korean War: Conflict and its Possibilities*, Manchester: Manchester University Press (an account of the decision-making around the Korean conflict); Jutta Weldes (1999b), *Constructing National Interests: The United States and the Cuban Missile Crisis* (an account of the decision-making around the Cuban Missile Crisis).

The Copenhagen School

- Balzacq, Thierry (ed.) (2011), *Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve*, London: Routledge. Balzacq is one of the leading scholars of securitization scholarship that has grown from the early Copenhagen School work, and this book provides a useful overview of both current theoretical thinking and its use as an analytic approach to contemporary security problems.
- Buzan, B., Wæver, O., and de Wilde, J. (1998), *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner. This work is the most elaborate statement of the Copenhagen School approach, and clearly distinguishes it from CSS.

The Welsh School

- Booth, Ken (2005a), *Critical Security Studies and World Politics*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner; and Booth, Ken (2007), *Theory of World Security*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. These are the most explicit statements of a Welsh School of Critical Security Studies, with Booth's own contributions arguing for a specific critical security theory, rather than the broad church.
- Wyn Jones, Richard (1999), *Security, Strategy and Critical Theory*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner. Wyn Jones's book is the most philosophically elaborated statement of the Welsh School approach.

For one of the few avowedly Welsh School treatments of an issue in contemporary security, see Columba Peoples (2010) *Justifying Ballistic Missile Defence: Technology, Security and Culture*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Poststructuralism and security

- Dalby, Simon (1990), *Creating the Second Cold War*, New York: Guilford Press; and Klein, Bradley (1994), *Strategic Studies and World Order*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. These two books are among the first to draw on poststructural philosophy to think about the areas of conventional security studies, and in particular the politics of the study of security itself.
- Campbell, David (1998a), *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, rev. edn, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Campbell's first book is a touchstone for virtually all poststructural security studies literature. The epilogue to the second edition provides a very useful account of the distinction between poststructural IR and constructivism.
- Campbell, David (1998b), *National Deconstruction: Violence, Identity, and Justice in Bosnia*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. In *National Deconstruction* Campbell responds to the standard criticism of poststructuralism that it cannot stand up to Fascism.

There are a number of books that use poststructural theory to consider questions of contemporary security: Simon Dalby (2002), *Environmental Security*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (looks at the relationship between the environment and security and shows how thinking about geo-politics has shaped this discussion); Elizabeth Dauphinée (2008), *The Ethics of Researching War: Looking for Bosnia*, Manchester: University of Manchester Press (considers the place of the academic and West more generally in violent conflict); Benjamin Muller (2010) *Security, Risk and the Biometric State: Governing Borders and Bodies*, London: Routledge (examines the instantiation of security in 'virtual borders' through the institution of biometric technologies); Kyle Grayson (2017) *The Cultural Politics of Targeted Killing: On Drones, Counter-insurgency, and Violence*, London: Routledge (explores the ways in which targeted killing—what used to be known as 'assassination'—became possible in contemporary liberal democratic regimes.)

Visit the online resources that accompany this book for lots of interesting additional material: www.oup.com/uk/collins5e/

8

Poststructural Insights: Making Subjects and Objects of Security

J. Marshall Beier

Chapter Contents

- Introduction 112
- Secret agents and power bases 114
- The subject of 'smart' bombs 116
- Complicated subjects: children 118
- Indigenous peoples and a cautionary tale 121
- Conclusion 123

Reader's Guide

Taking its main cues from poststructuralists' approaches to Critical Security Studies, this chapter asks some unconventional questions about somewhat unconventional subjects for a field that has traditionally been more inclined to centre states in its investigations. In so doing, it brings to light the concealed political commitments that are a part of any attempt to theorize security and which fix arbitrary limits on whom and what gets foregrounded in the security stories we tell. Placing particular emphasis on recovering agency and political subjecthood, we are able to see the crucial part played by other actors in both the everyday practices of security and how we have come to define it. We are also led to better appreciate both the problems and promise of our own roles in producing security—and insecurity—in the ways we approach it as students and scholars.

25

Health and Security

Stefan Elbe

Chapter Contents

- Introduction 380
- Health and human security 380
- Health and national security 383
- Health and bio-security 388
- Conclusion 391

Reader's Guide

How can diseases also pose threats to security? This chapter explores three links between health and security that are now widely acknowledged by scholars and policy-makers. First, some diseases have been identified as threats to *human* security. The human security framework draws particular attention to diseases—such as HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis—that are endemic in many low-income countries. Such diseases continue to cause millions of deaths annually and pose substantial challenges to the survival and well-being of individuals and communities. Second, some recently emerging infectious diseases, such as SARS, pandemic flu, and Ebola, have also been identified as threats to national security because their rapid spread could cause high death tolls and trigger significant economic disruption. Given the contemporary speed and rate of international travel, even states with more elaborate public health infrastructures feel vulnerable to new infectious diseases that may initially emerge outside their borders. Finally, some diseases have also been identified as narrower threats to bio-security within the context of international efforts to combat terrorism. Here concerns have focused on the spectre of a terrorist attack using a disease-causing biological agent such as anthrax, smallpox, or plague. The chapter concludes by contrasting two different ways of understanding this health–security nexus: as an instance of securitization or medicalization.

Introduction

Health issues are back on the international agenda—and not just as a matter of low politics. They are 'back' in the sense that they had already become the subject of international diplomacy as early as 1851, when delegates of the first International Sanitary Conference gathered in Paris to consider joint responses to the cholera epidemics that had overrun the European continent in the first half of the nineteenth century. Yet during the twentieth century the pertinence of controlling potentially pandemic microbes was gradually overshadowed by the more pressing concerns of avoiding the spectre of renewed wars, and the ever-present potential for a nuclear confrontation. The twentieth century's deep addiction to war, coupled with its important advances in medicine, reinforced the view in the West that the world was moving in a direction in which infectious diseases would eventually be controlled—exemplified so quintessentially by the confident declaration made in 1948 by US Secretary of State George Marshall that the conquest of all infectious diseases was imminent. This confidence has been profoundly shaken.

At the outset of the twenty-first century, there is once again considerable international anxiety about a host of potentially lethal 'rogue' viruses circulating the planet—including relatively new ones such as pandemic flu (H5N1 and H1N1), the corona viruses responsible for Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), and Ebola. Other infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria remain endemic in many developing countries and have made devastating comebacks—often in drug-resistant forms. At the same time, many states remain apprehensive about the consequences of a potential terrorist attack using biological weapons. Collectively, these concerns have displaced the optimism of the twentieth century, and given way to a renewed sense of microbial unease. Nothing reflects this more poignantly than the fact that the responses to these health issues are increasingly articulated in the language of security—culminating in the rise of the notion of health security.

Health and human security

The links between health and security were initially identified within the context of the push towards strengthening human security—a framework pioneered by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in its 1994 *Human Developme¡¡nt Report*. The human security framework seeks to redress the perceived imbalance in security thinking that has predominated during past decades. By developing a 'people-centric' account of security revolving around the needs and welfare of ordinary individuals, rather than predominantly around the protection of sovereign states, human security activists wish to challenge the narrow twentieth-century equation of security with the absence of armed conflict between states. Specifically, the *Human Development Report* outlined seven areas or components of human security where policy-makers should devote greater attention and political capital: economic security (poverty, homelessness); food security (famine, hunger); health security (disease, inadequate health care); environmental security (ecological degradation, pollution, natural disasters); personal security (physical violence, crime, traffic accidents); community security (oppression, discrimination); and political security (repression, torture, disappearance, human rights violations) (UNDP 1994: 24–5). As part of this broader approach to security, the report also highlighted the considerable burden that infectious diseases continue to pose in the developing world—including **HIV/AIDS**, **tuberculosis**, and **malaria**. It is estimated that these three diseases alone cause between two and three million people to die every year.

Whilst the initial *Human Development Report* did not define the notion of 'health security' in greater detail, the subsequent 2003 report of the Commission on Human Security—*Human Security Now*—filled this gap by devoting an entire chapter to 'health security'. 'Good health', the report (Commission on Human Security 2003: 96) argued, 'is both essential and instrumental to achieving human security'. It is essential in the sense that human security is ultimately about protecting lives, and this is not possible to achieve without also reducing the scale of a range of lethal diseases. The report further argued that health is also 'instrumental' for human security because it allows sick adults to resume work, helps secure the material well-being of families, allows children to stay in school, and so on. Endemic diseases are thus simultaneously *direct* threats to human security because they can cause death, and also broader, *indirect* threats to human security because, where the burden of disease is significant, this has knock-on ramifications for several other dimensions of human security.

Perhaps no disease illustrates those links between health and human security more poignantly than the global AIDS **pandemic**. As rates of HIV/AIDS increased dramatically during the 1990s, the disease began to pose immense human security challenges for many developing countries—so much so that the former director of the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) argued: 'As a global issue . . . we must pay attention to AIDS as a threat to human security, and redouble our efforts against the **epidemic** and its impact' (Piot 2001). UNAIDS is the specialized United Nations agency tasked with addressing the international spread of HIV/AIDS. Established in 1995, UNAIDS is located at the centre of a complex network of various United Nations programmes and affiliated organizations, including the World Health Organization and the World Bank. Its political objectives are to mobilize leadership for effective action against the spread of HIV/AIDS, to monitor and evaluate its spread, and to support an effective response. As such, UNAIDS also collates international statistics about the extent of the AIDS pandemic. It is actually very difficult to determine exactly how many people are living with HIV/AIDS in the world and how many are dying from **AIDS-related illnesses**. Generating such data would not only be impossible in the light of immense financial and logistical constraints, but would also necessitate testing virtually every member of the human population for HIV—raising difficult ethical questions around compulsory testing.

Table 25.1 Regional HIV statistics, 2015

Region	People living with HIV (all ages)	New HIV infections (all ages)
Eastern and southern Africa	19.0 million	960,00
Middle East and North Africa	230,000	21,000
Asia and Pacific	5.1 million	300,000
Latin America and the Caribbean	2.0 milllion	100,000
Eastern Europe and central Asia	1.5 million	190,000
Western and central Europe and North America	2.4 million	91,000
Eastern Europe and Central Asia	1.5 million	190,000
Western and central Africa	6.5 million	410,000
Global	36.7 million	2.1 million

Source: UNAIDS (2016: 2)

Nevertheless it is estimated by UNAIDS (2016) that around 1.1 million[1] people die annually of AIDS-related illnesses, while a further 2.1 million people[2] continue to become newly infected with the virus every year (see Table 25.1). Contrary to widespread belief, HIV/AIDS is not at all confined to sub-Saharan Africa. Every region of the world currently has a significant number of people living with HIV/AIDS. The large burden posed by HIV/AIDS on individuals and societies was therefore central to the rise of the human security agenda, and represented precisely the kind of issue that this human security agenda wished to draw more attention to. Access to life-prolonging medicines has since become more widespread in many low-income countries. However, the early experiences of millions of people living with HIV/AIDS prior to the international roll-out of such medicines remain one of the starkest illustrations yet of how, beyond their direct mortality, infectious diseases can also have further ramifications for a range of other dimensions of human security.

[1] 1.1 million in 2015, stated in UNAIDs 2016 Global AIDS Update—http://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/global-AIDS-update-2016_en.pdf

[2] 2.1 million in 2015, stated in UNAIDs 2016 Global AIDS Update—http://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/global-AIDS-update-2016_en.pdf

Health security

Amidst rapidly rising rates of HIV/AIDS at the outset of the twenty-first century, analysts observed that the disease was also beginning to affect health security more generally by placing additional stresses on health-care facilities, which are frequently already stretched in the first place. An early study of the impact of HIV/AIDS on the health sector in South Africa found that the AIDS epidemic was having several negative impacts, such as causing the loss of health care workers and generating increased levels of absenteeism, with just under 16 per cent of the health care workforce in the Free State, Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal, and North West provinces being HIV-positive. It also found that the rise in the number of HIV/AIDS patients seeking clinical care had led to an increased workload for health care staff, as well as lowering staff morale. With some 46.2 per cent of patients in public hospitals being HIV-positive at the time, the study concluded that at times non-AIDS patients had even been 'crowded out' of the system in order to accommodate patients living with HIV/AIDS (Shisana et al. 2003). A study from Kenya conducted around the same time, and based on a sample of hospitals, detected similar trends—with an increase in AIDS-related admissions and 50 per cent of patients on medical wards living with HIV/AIDS. Focus-group discussions conducted in the context of that study also revealed that one of the reasons why the Kenyan health care systems had such high levels of attrition, with scores of personnel leaving the sector, was a fear of becoming infected with HIV (in addition to high workloads, poor remuneration, and poor working conditions) (Cheluget et al. 2003). Another study of the impact in Swaziland in turn subsequently estimated that up to 80 per cent of bed occupancy in the medical and paediatric wards was related to HIV/AIDS (Kober and van Damme 2006). Those studies showed that, especially without access to life-prolonging medicines, the human security ramifications of infectious diseases like HIV/AIDS are not confined to the direct mortality caused by the illness, but also result from the ripple effects of the disease through much wider social structures—including health care systems. That phenomenon was again seen again during the 2014–15 Ebola outbreak, as stretched health care systems struggled to cope with the rise in demand for health care, meaning that other health services—such as those treating malaria or offering maternal services—suffered as a result.

Economic security

Defined as 'an assured basic income—usually from productive and remunerative work, or in the last resort from some publicly financed safety net' (UNDP 1994: 25)—economic security is another important component of human security affected by widespread infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS. Over the past decade, household studies have suggested that impact to be twofold. Households affected by HIV/AIDS were likely to experience a reduced earning capacity, as persons are unable to work, or are tied down to caring for the affected family member. For example, an early comparative study of rural and urban households in South Africa conducted by Booysen and Bachman (2002) showed that those households affected by HIV/AIDS had on average only 50–60 per cent of per-capita income of non-affected households. HIV/AIDS additionally generated new costs for treatment and, in the case of death, additional funeral expenditures, legal costs, medical bills, and so forth (Drimie 2003). Other studies carried out by the World Bank amidst escalating rates of HIV infection at the time similarly suggested increased expenditure by these households on medical care and funerals, as well as a reduction in spending on non-food items (see Barnett and Whiteside 2006: 203–5). These early and difficult experiences of HIV/AIDS over the past decade thus show how infectious diseases can have an additional impact on human security in that it can undermine the ability of individuals and households to ensure their economic security—especially when medicines are not widely available.

Food security

The experience with HIV/AIDS even showed that the spread of new infectious diseases could affect food security, defined as requiring 'that all people at all times have both physical and economic access to basic food. This requires not just enough food to go round. It requires that people have ready access to food' (UNDP 1994: 27). The crucial point here is that the physical availability of food is only part of the equation when it comes to food insecurity. Even when such food is physically available, people may still hunger and starve if they do not have access or entitlement to this food. During many famines, the problem is the lack of purchasing power and the poor distribution of food, rather than the absence of food itself. This distinction is crucial, because HIV/AIDS can generate food insecurities by skewing the access of certain individuals and groups to food. At the height of the AIDS epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa, the negative impact of HIV/AIDS on food security prompted the famine researcher Alex de Waal to advance a 'new-variant famine' thesis, which argues that 'AIDS attacks exactly those capacities that enable people to resist famine. AIDS kills young adults, especially women—the people whose labor is most needed' (de Waal 2002). A study carried out by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of 1,889 rural households in northern Namibia, southern Zambia, and around Lake Victoria in Uganda later found that households affected by HIV/AIDS, particularly if they are headed by women, were finding it increasingly difficult to ensure their food security (FAO 2003). Another study of fifteen villages in three districts of Malawi carried out by Shah et al. (2002) found that many households affected by HIV/AIDS experienced loss of labour (70 per cent), reported delays of agricultural work (45 per cent), leaving fields unattended (23 per cent), changing crop composition (26 per cent), but much of the impact depends on when the disease arrived (that is, pre- or post-harvest), the existence of other stress factors, and the relative economic status of households. Although HIV/AIDS is, therefore, unlikely to create a 'supply-shock' in terms of food production in and of itself, an infectious disease like HIV/AIDS can nevertheless have negative implications for households by interacting in complex ways with their ability to secure access to food (de Waal 2006: 89–92; Gillespie 2006).

In all these ways the challenging experiences with the AIDS pandemic over the past decade serve as a stark reminder of how a widespread, lethal infectious disease can not only represent a direct threat to human security, but can also shape additional dimensions of human security—including health security, economic security, and food security. Taken in conjunction with the large number of lives the disease claims annually, many in fact still consider HIV/AIDS to represent one of the world's most pressing contemporary human security threats even today. It is precisely one of those crucial contemporary issues that the human security framework wishes to highlight and where its advocates would like to see increased international coordination in terms of scaling up the prevention, treatment, and care for people living with HIV/AIDS, as well as for people affected by other endemic diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis. This emphasis on health issues within the framework of human security renders the latter one of the principal sites in contemporary world politics where health issues are increasingly being discussed, deliberated, and responded to in the language of security—albeit in a context in which the meaning of security is itself significantly expanded and redefined. Considering health issues as threats to human security is, in the end, just as much a matter of definitional fiat, and of redefining security, as it is of making substantially novel empirical claims about the impact of these diseases in low-income countries.

KEY POINTS

- A number of health issues have been given renewed prominence within the framework of human security.
- The AIDS pandemic is widely perceived as one of the most serious and on-going human security threats, with more than thirty million people currently estimated to be living with HIV/AIDS. Malaria and tuberculosis also remain endemic in several developing countries and continue to claim many lives every year.
- In addition to posing a direct security threat to peoples' lives, diseases also represent indirect threats to their security.

Health and national security

Further links have been identified between health and national security. Here, too, the AIDS pandemic has been instructive in showing how infectious diseases can simultaneously bear upon both human security *and* national security concerns. Within the state-centric perspective of national security, HIV/AIDS has received further attention from policy-makers over the past decade, because it was feared that the disease could have a detrimental impact on the armed forces of the worst-affected countries. Evidence about the impact of HIV/AIDS in the armed forces is very patchy, subject to considerable controversy and continuously evolving. Yet there is some evidence that the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS initially posed considerable challenges to the operational efficiency of several armed forces in sub-Saharan Africa (see Case Study 25.1). The impact of new infectious disease outbreaks on the armed forces raises concerns not just for human security but also for national security.

Although HIV/AIDS was the first infectious disease to be identified as a threat to national security in the twenty-first century, it is not the only one.

CASE STUDY 25.1 The South African National Defence Force (SANDF)

The impact of new infectious disease outbreaks on the armed forces also gives health an important national security dimension. Again, the intitial spread of HIV/AIDS—especially in sub-Saharan Africa—is illustrative of this link. Information about the impact of HIV/AIDS on Africa's armed forces is extremely difficult to obtain because of its sensitive nature. Even in those militaries that test soldiers for HIV/AIDS, officials have been extremely reluctant to make such information public, as it may well point to potential weaknesses in the armed forces. Over the past years, some information has nevertheless begun to emerge about the ways in which HIV/AIDS was initially perceived as a serious threat to the operational efficiency of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF).

South Africa is already home to one of the largest number of persons living with HIV/AIDS in Africa. As HIV **prevalence rates** rose dramatically in the country, the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) claimed at the time that HIV prevalence in the armed forces was around 23 per cent, which was slightly higher than the civilian population and amounted to roughly 16,000 soldiers. Many analysts suspected at the time that in reality this figure could be much higher, perhaps as high as 40 per cent, which would put the number closer to 28,000 (Heinecken 2001; Meyer 2004). Even the official figure was high enough, however, to prompt the USA and SANDF to set up a programme aimed at establishing the rate of HIV infection in the armed forces more conclusively and evaluating the effects of anti-retroviral treatments on SANDF. Because of human rights considerations, SANDF could not force its soldiers to be tested, but SANDF did set up a programme where soldiers could come forward voluntarily to be tested. Initially 1,089 soldiers came forward to be tested, of whom 947 (89 per cent) tested positive. The average age of those who tested positive was 34 years, and 60 per cent of them were married. Although this figure was not representative of SANDF as a whole (most of those who came forward to be tested probably suspected that they were HIV-positive already), it left no doubt that the issue of HIV/AIDS has been a very serious one for many armed forces in Africa over the past two decades.

In the light of these figures, senior officials in SANDF expressed serious concerns about the impact of HIV/AIDS on the military's combat readiness because of the high levels of absenteeism the illness induces. They estimated that a soldier in the early stages of illness would be absent on average 20 days a year, rising to 45 days for soldiers displaying symptoms. Soldiers who had developed full-blown AIDS were estimated to be absent on average for a minimum of 120 days per year. SANDF therefore believed that it would lose between 338,000 and 560,000 working days annually because of the illness. SANDF was further concerned with the fact that many of those most affected by HIV/AIDS in SANDF are in the age group of 23–32, which is the age group from which most of the operationally deployable soldiers, officers, non-commissioned officers, and highly skilled members of the armed forces are drawn. The perceived danger here was that over the course of several years, HIV/AIDS could hollow out this middle rank, creating gaps and shortfalls within the armed forces. This impact on SANDF was all the more significant because of South Africa's leadership role on the African continent and because the country wishes to play an expanding role in African peacekeeping operations, which it can only do with a healthy military. Although many AIDS-related medicines are now more readily available, the initial experiences of the SANDF with HIV/AIDS illustrate very well that newly emerging infectious diseases can also have important ramifications within the realist conception of security by creating new challenges for the armed forces in particular. To this day, the question of how to protect the armed forces from infectious disease outbreaks thus remains an ongoing concern for military medicine, and many militaries also continue to carry out research and surveillance on infectious disease outbreaks—giving infectious diseases in particular another signficant security dimension.

High-income countries have also expressed considerable unease about how new infectious diseases threaten their populations and economies within the context of increased globalization and rapid international travel. An influential report issued in 1992 by the Institute of Medicine in the USA entitled *Emerging Infections: Microbial Threats to Health in the United States* warned that the emergence of the AIDS pandemic illustrated how ‘some infectious diseases that now affect people in other parts of the world represent potential threats to the USA because of global interdependence, modern transportation, trade, and changing social and cultural patterns’ (Lederberg et al. 1992: v). By the end of the decade, these anxieties had reached a sufficient level for parts of the US government to officially designate such infectious diseases as threats to national security. The United States National Intelligence Council, for example, produced an influential and widely cited National Intelligence Estimate entitled *The Global Infectious Disease Threat and its Implications for the United States*. The findings of the report, declassified in January 2000, confirmed many of these fears by pointing out that, since 1973, at least thirty previously unknown disease agents have been identified (including some for which there is no cure such as HIV, Ebola, Hepatitis C, and the Nipah virus). It also found that in this same period at least twenty older infectious diseases have re-emerged, frequently in drug-resistant form—most notably amongst them tuberculosis, malaria, and cholera. The report concluded: ‘New and re-emerging infectious diseases will pose a rising global health threat and will complicate US and global security over the next 20 years. These diseases will endanger US citizens at home and abroad, threaten US armed forces deployed overseas, and exacerbate social and political instability in key countries and regions in which the United States has significant interests’ (National Intelligence Council 2000).

By their very nature, infectious diseases lend themselves particularly well to such securitizations. They are usually caused by microbes that are imperceptible to the human eye. Consisting, in the case of viruses, merely of a piece of nucleic acid (DNA or RNA) wrapped in a thin coat of protein, they exist at the very margins of our conceptions of life. Human beings could be exposed to them at any time without knowing it, and yet suffer a quick and violent death not long thereafter. They are, in this respect, ‘silent’ and ‘invisible’ killers. Perhaps nothing is more frightful to many people than a lethal danger they have no way of detecting. Even the famous microbiologist Louis Pasteur, who explored the germ theory of disease, eventually developed an obsessive fear of microbes, refusing to shake hands with people, carefully wiping his plates before eating, and on more than one occasion even examining food served at dinner parties with his portable microscope. As in other areas of life, uncertainty tends to breed anxiety. It is this innate and all too human fear of microbes that makes them particularly amenable to being portrayed not just as important health issues, but as national security threats as well. Over the past decade, three infectious diseases in particular have been portrayed as such national security threats, each discussed in the following sub-sections.

SARS

Widely regarded as the first infectious disease epidemic of the twenty-first century, SARS is thought to have emerged in the Guangdong Province of China in November 2002—a region known for its lively markets where humans and livestock mingle in close proximity. Symptoms of the new disease included a high fever, a dry cough, and shortness of breath or breathing difficulties. However, it was not until 11 February 2003 that the Chinese Ministry of Health forwarded reports of 305 cases of acute respiratory syndrome to the World Health Organization, by which time at least five deaths had been reported in Guangdong Province. The new disease appeared to confirm all the earlier fears about how a newly emerging infectious disease could rapidly spread across the globe through modern transport infrastructure. Perhaps nothing exemplified this more clearly than the fate of Dr Liu Jianlun, a local Chinese doctor who initially treated patients infected with the new disease. He subsequently travelled from Guangdong Province to Hong Kong in order to attend a wedding. He stayed on the ninth floor of the four-star Metropole hotel (in Room 911), where the disease quickly began to spread to other guests staying on that floor of the hotel. In epidemiological terms he is now referred to a ‘super-spreader’; the World Health Organization ultimately attributes more than 4,000 worldwide cases of SARS to this doctor alone (National Intelligence Council 2003: 10). Those who became infected by him subsequently travelled as far as Singapore, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Ireland, Canada, and theUSA, where they, in turn, infected more than 350 people directly or indirectly. Another doctor who had treated the first cases of SARS in Singapore also reported symptoms before boarding a flight from New York back to Singapore on 14 March, and had to disembark prematurely in Frankfurt, Germany, for immediate hospitalization and isolation.

Wide-ranging international cooperation amongst scientists and laboratories revealed that SARS is caused by a new coronavirus, which is believed to have crossed over from the animal to the human population. This is because evidence of infection with the coronavirus could also be found in several animal groups, including Himalayan masked palm civets, Chinese ferret badgers, raccoon dogs, and domestic cats.

By the time the last human chain of transmission was broken in July 2003, there had been 8,098 reported SARS cases, causing 774 deaths in 26 different countries. SARS killed about 10 per cent of those infected, although the chances of survival in the event of an infection were heavily dependent upon the age of the victim. Less than 1 per cent of persons aged 24 years or younger died from the disease, up to 6 per cent of those aged 25–44 years old died, and up to 15 per cent of persons aged 44–64 years old died. The greatest risk was for persons aged 65 or older, of which 55 per cent succumbed (National Intelligence Council 2003: 16). Geographically, SARS left its deepest mark in Asia, with China, Taiwan, and Singapore accounting for more than 90 per cent of cases, although notable outbreaks also occurred in Toronto. Moreover, the effects of the SARS outbreak were not confined to these deaths alone.

The disease also caused widespread fear amongst populations around the world, especially as there was no cure readily available, and its transmission patterns remained unclear for a considerable period of time. People thus began to wear masks covering their noses and mouths, began to avoid public places such as restaurants and cinemas, and ceased to travel. In conjunction with the decision of many investors to put investment plans in the region on hold, the SARS outbreak also had considerable economic consequences for the region. The travel and tourism sectors were particularly badly hit, with room bookings and airline seat bookings in several cases being down by more than 50 per cent on previous years. In countries such as China, Singapore, and Canada, public health agencies also implemented quarantine and isolation procedures, restricting the movements of those perceived to be at risk of being infected with the virus. Some countries even introduced thermal scanners at airports in order to detect people with symptoms of fever. Although it ultimately proved possible to contain SARS through quarantine and other public health measures, many policy-makers felt that the writing was now clearly on the wall and that things could have been much worse, especially if the coronavirus had achieved more efficient human-to-human transmission. For many, the SARS episode thus represented a warning of what could happen if a renewed flu pandemic ravaged the human population in the twenty-first century.

Pandemic influenza

There were three such human flu pandemics in the twentieth century alone—in 1918, 1957, and 1968. The first of these was particularly severe, breaking out within the harsh conditions of the First World War and leading to the deaths of tens of millions of people around the world. Policy-makers at the World Health Organization and in several national governments remain concerned today that the H5N1 strand of avian flu has the potential to evolve eventually into such a renewed pandemic, and are framing avian flu as a threat to national security. Writing in the *New York Times* in 2005, Senators Barack Obama and Richard Lugar argued:

> When we think of the major threats to our national security, the first to come to mind are nuclear proliferation, rogue states and global terrorism. But another kind of threat lurks beyond our shores, one from nature, not humans—an avian flu pandemic. An outbreak could cause millions of deaths, destabilize Southeast Asia (its likely place of origin), and threaten the security of governments around the world.
>
> Obama and Lugar (2005)

The US *National Security Strategy* (2006) further pointed to the dangers posed by 'public health challenges like pandemics (HIV/AIDS, avian influenza) that recognize no borders', arguing that 'the risks to social order are so great that traditional public health approaches may be inadequate, necessitating new strategies and responses' (White House 2006: 47). *The National Security Strategy of the United Kingdom* (Cabinet Office 2008) similarly cited pandemics alongside terrorism and weapons of mass destruction as part of a 'diverse but interconnected set of threats and risks, which affect the United Kingdom directly and also have the potential to undermine wider international stability' (Cabinet Office 2008: 3). Pandemic threats also continue to reside at the top of the UK national risk register and are identified as a (top) Tier 1 threat in the latest National Security Strategy (Cabinet Office 2010: 27). Most recently, pandemic threats were still flagged up in France's 2013 White Paper setting out French national security policy for the period 2014–19 (Kittelsen 2013: 7; Livre Blanc 2013), and in the 2016 annual threat assessment of the US Director of National Intelligence (Coats 2017: 14)

The scenario that policy-makers are particularly concerned about is that of a zoonic (animal-to-human) transmission of an influenza virus that subsequently recombines or mutates to achieve efficient human-to-human transmission. If such a virus emerges, it will in all likelihood be spread through coughing and sneezing, and people will probably be infectious before they actually become aware of any symptoms. This latter fact is crucial and would make a future flu pandemic much more difficult to contain than SARS, where people mostly became infectious only after developing symptoms. The first step in this chain—the zoonic 'leap' from the animal to human populations—was already documented in 1997 in Hong Kong. Officials sought to deal with this danger quickly and at great cost to the animal population by ordering virtually the entire poultry population of Hong Kong (some 1.5 million birds) to be destroyed. Although these measures appeared successful, there was a further outbreak in February of 2003, again in Hong Kong. By June 2008, there had been 385 confirmed cases of bird flu (H5N1) according to the World Health Organization, of which 243 died. The fatality rate for human cases of avian influenza is thus much higher than in the case of SARS, with more than 60 per cent of infected persons dying. Again the region most seriously affected is Asia, with China, Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam (but also Egypt) accounting for the majority of cases. On rare occasions, it has also been possible for H5N1 to become transmitted between people, but usually only in situations of very close contact with this person during the acute phase of the illness, and even when this spread has occurred, it has not gone beyond one generation of close contacts.

Despite the anxieties that these developments generate, it is worth bearing in mind that, given the wide geographic spread of the virus in birds, as well as the high number of cases of infection in poultry, the numbers of human infections are at the moment comparatively 'low', which indicates that the virus does not 'jump' the species barrier that easily. If it does, the estimates used by the World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the USA indicate that there could be between 2 million and 7.4 million deaths worldwide, with many more becoming ill and requiring hospitalization. Vaccines need to be virus-specific, and therefore it is very difficult to create effective vaccines in advance of a pandemic; we simply do not yet know exactly what such a virus might look like. Policy-makers have therefore focused their efforts on stockpiling antiviral medicines, and drawing up lists of who should receive priority access to such medicines in the case of a renewed pandemic. Many questions still remain, however, about the efficacy of these drugs, and governments are therefore also trying to increase the worldwide capacity for producing vaccines so that, once the latter are developed, more doses can be manufactured and distributed more quickly.

Ebola virus disease

During 2014, renewed international alarm was triggered by a novel outbreak of Ebola virus disease in West Africa. The World Health Organizations (WHO 2015) reports that during the Ebola outbreak of 2014–15 there were at total 28,616 confirmed cases of Ebola infections in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone—the three West African countries most heavily affected by the outbreak. WHO further reported 11,310 deaths from the disease, making it both the largest and deadliest Ebola outbreak in history.

The scale of the 2014–15 Ebola outbreak in West Africa caught many experts by surprise. Earlier outbreaks of Ebola had mostly been detected in other parts of Africa, had been very sporadic, had mostly occurred in rural settings, and had led to comparatively low numbers of deaths. Therefore national and international institutions did not immediately recognize the significance of the new outbreak in West Africa. Non-governmental organizations like Médicins Sans Frontières (MSF) initially provided the majority of international assistance on the ground, but such organizations alone could not prevent the spread of Ebola into major urban areas, and thus a much larger proportion of the population also becoming effected.

As the scale of the outbreak continued to grow in the second half of 2014, and the magnitude of the challenge became more widely appreciated, several leaders of influential institutions began to describe the outbreak in terms of a crisis and security threat. The director of the US CDC referred to the situation in West Africa as 'spiraling out of control'. The Senior UN System Coordinator for Ebola Disease echoed that 'the outbreak is moving beyond our grasp'. Organizations on the ground concurred, with the International President of Doctors Without Borders arguing that 'the world is losing the battle to contain it [Ebola]. Leaders are failing to come to grips with the transnational threat' and the Director General of the World Health Organization simply but plainly describing Ebola as 'a global threat' (Morrison 2014). By October 2014, the international concern about Ebola had reached such heights that the influential *Economist* magazine could lead with the daunting headline of 'The War on Ebola'.

Recasting the Ebola crisis as a transnational and global security threat also enabled the issue to be discussed by the United Nations Security Council. When the Security Council convened on 9 September 2014 to discuss the crisis, Ebola became only the second disease in its history to be discussed by the Council—with HIV/AIDS having set the precedent in 2000. The Liberian Defence Minister briefed the Security

Council that his country lacked 'infrastructure, logistical capacity, professional expertise and financial resources to effectively address this disease'. He also said that 'the deadly Ebola virus has caused a disruption in the normal functioning of our state' (BBC News 2014). This echoed earlier warnings issued by leaders of other heavily affected countries like Sierra Leone, whose president had similarly claimed that 'The very essence of our nation is at stake' (Gostin et al. 2014). On 18 September 2014, the UNSC formally declared the Ebola outbreak in Africa as a 'threat to international peace and security' as part of Resolution 2177.

Framing the Ebola outbreak as a security threat also paved the way for a much stronger military involvement in the international response. Humanitarian organizations working on the ground, which were historically quite reluctant to call for outside military intervention, began to see no other way of getting on top of the outbreak than to involve the armed forces. MSF and Oxfam thus began to call for troops to be sent to West Africa. Peter Piot, who had earlier been involved in drawing links between HIV/AIDS and security whilst Executive Director of UNAIDS, and who had helped identify the Ebola virus in 1976, similarly called for a 'quasi-military' intervention.

The rationale behind these calls was that humanitarian aid alone would not suffice to control the spread of the disease, and that humanitarian organizations were simply overwhelmed with what was unfolding on the ground. In the absence of an available medical treatment for Ebola, the response had to rely predominantly on traditional public health measures like isolation, quarantine, and so forth. Here it was hoped that military capabilities in terms of logistics, biohazard response, and so forth could help to meet the challenge. Their call was eventually heeded when the governments of the USA, the UK, France, and China announced that they would soon be making military deployments to the region to assist with the response.

Although the links between health and security helped to mobilize these resources, the drawbacks of this approach also became visible. Framing Ebola as a security threat risked facilitating the disproportionate use of force and privileging short-termism. Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone all declared states of emergency, including curfews and executive orders that allowed for arrests without court orders. The UK, the USA, and other countries issued airport screening and quarantines, whilst vital international flights to the region were suspended and dramatic media coverage fuelled popular fears far beyond West Africa. Moreover, the militarized response has raised difficult challenges for already stretched armed forces, whilst at the same time jarring with much longer and often painful legacies of outside military intervention in the region. All the while, and as with previous infectious disease outbreaks, the sustainability of this emergency response remains uncertain. Although linking Ebola to security concerns was powerful in mobilizing resources in the short term, experience has shown that they are difficult to maintain in the long run (Elbe 2006).

KEY POINTS

- Since the turn of the century many policy-makers have also come to view newly emerging infectious diseases as threats to their national security.
- The SARS outbreak of 2002–3 confirmed many of these fears, showing how a new infectious disease can rapidly spread across the globe, causing widespread fear amongst populations and generating serious economic consequences.
- Although the SARS outbreak was contained, strong concerns remain about the spectre of a more lethal and infectious flu pandemic emerging in the future.
- The slow international response to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa shows that significant gaps in global health security remain.

Health and bio-security

Some diseases have also acquired a greater security salience because terrorists or other political groups might attempt a mass casualty attack by deliberately releasing a disease-inducing biological agent. Such agents could enter the bodies of civilians through inhalation if the agent is successfully transformed into an aerosol form. Alternatively, they could enter the human body by means of ingestion if, for example, food or water supplies are contaminated with such an agent. Two events have raised the concern of governments about such a scenario. The attacks of 9/11 showed that terrorists—if capable—might not shy away from using such weapons. Indeed, from the perspective of a terrorist group, many characteristics of a biological agent may be deemed advantageous. First, several of these agents are naturally occurring and can thus be more readily acquired. Second, they would require only small quantities to have substantial effects. Third, these agents are not perceptible to the human eye; once released, they would initially evade the human senses of smell, taste, and so on, and would therefore allow a potential terrorist time to escape undetected. Finally, the very same quality that has long made biological weapons of dubious military use—namely, their inability to differentiate between civilians and combatants—are unlikely to deter would-be terrorists. However, these advantages also need to be balanced with some disadvantages associated with the use of biological agents, including the risk that the terrorist might become infected as well, the technical difficulty involved in successfully stabilizing and weaponizing these agents, and the fact that attacks with biological agents are heavily susceptible to weather conditions such as wind, levels of cloud cover, and so on (Ryan and Glarum 2008: 35). Expert opinion thus remains divided as to how probable such an attack actually is.

Another event that substantially increased anxieties about the possibility of such a scenario materializing was the discovery that anthrax letters were being sent in the USA in 2001—a time when the country was still reeling from the attacks of 9/11. There were probably two separate batches of anthrax letters sent from mail boxes in Princeton, New Jersey. The first batch, thought to consist of approximately five letters, was sent around 18 September 2001 to media offices, including American Media Incorporated, broadcasters and editors in New York City, and to a tabloid publisher in Boca Raton, Florida. These letters were initially dismissed as hate mail and/or left unopened. A second batch of letters was then mailed on 8 October 2001, two of which went to Democratic senators in Washington, DC. The first of these was opened on the morning of 15 October in the Hart office building of the Senate majority leader Tom Daschle. It would take a week before it was established that these second round of infections had come from letters, by which time many more had become exposed. It was later also discovered that the anthrax used was of the Ames strain, which had been used for several years in the US biological weapons programme (Guillemin 2005: 173–6). Although the attacks of 9/11 and the letters laced with anthrax were a crucial catalyst in terms of placing the combat of terrorism at the heart of the international security agenda, anxieties about such a biological attack actually pre-date 2001. In 1995, the Aum Shinrikyo cult in Japan had already released Sarin nerve gas in the Tokyo subway (see Case Study 25.2).

All these events contributed to a climate in which it was felt that more concerted efforts needed to be undertaken to protect populations in the event of such an attack. In the USA, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) were charged with drawing up a list of the biological agents that might be used in such an attack. Its list consists of Category A agents, which are highly infectious, have high mortality rates, can be easily disseminated, and are difficult to treat medically. They would thus have a highly disruptive effect if used in a biological attack. Examples of such agents are anthrax, botulism, plague, smallpox, tularemia, and viral hemorrhagic fevers (for example, Ebola, Marburg, Lassa, Machupo). Category B agents, in turn, comprise those agents that cause lower mortality rates, have moderate **morbidity** rates, and can be treated more readily. They include brucellosis, epsilon toxin of Clostridium perfringens, food-safety threats (for example, salmonella species, Escherichia coli O157:H7, Shigella), glanders, melioidosis, psittacosis, Q fever, Ricin toxin, Staphylococcal enterotoxin B, typhus fever, and viral encephalitis (for example, Venezuelan equine encephalitis, eastern equine encephalitis, western equine encephalitis), and water-safety threats (for example, Vibrio cholerae, Cryptosporidium parvum). Finally, Category C agents refer to emerging pathogens with potential for future weaponization, such as Nipah virus and hantavirus.

In the USA, two new initiatives were also launched to respond to potential attacks with these agents: projects BioWatch and BioShield. BioWatch consists of a network of sensors (or stations) in thirty-one cities that analyse particles in the air through a filter system. These filters are collected daily and analysed at the CDC for traces of six agents: anthrax, brucellosis, glanders, meliodosis, plague, smallpox, and tularemia. This process has a turnaround time of at least thirty-six hours (Ryan and Glarum 2008: 262). Project BioShield, in turn, was designed to increase the 'medical defences' of the USA against a range of possible pathogens. At a cost of around US$5.6 billion over a ten-year period, Project BioShield included the purchasing and storing of significant stockpiles of medicines as well as vaccines. It also seeks to fund research into developing new medicines and vaccines to protect populations against such agents. Both programmes have ultimately proved controversial and have encountered significant difficulties in meeting their objectives.

CASE STUDY 25.2 Aum Shinrikyo attacks in Tokyo

In 1995, the Aum Shinrikyo cult in Japan received widespread media attention when it released Sarin nerve gas into the Tokyo subway system. The attack was carried out with a chemical rather than a biological substance. It was also not a very sophisticated operation, effectively relying on the use of an umbrella to poke holes into plastic bags. Nevertheless, the release killed twelve people, and hospitalized around 1,000, with thousands more needing to seek medical care. The 1995 operation was also not the first time the cult had struck. A similar attack had occurred in the town of Matsumoto eight months earlier, killing seven people (Guillemin 2005: 158).

The Aum Shinrikyo cult was first established in 1984 by Shoko Asahara as a countermovement to the perceived decadence of modern societies. The cult ultimately hoped to create a new type of society and eventually grew in size to between 10,000 and 60,000 members (Rosenau 2001: 291). The cult was operating internationally, with various contacts in post-Soviet Russia, Australia, Germany, Taiwan, and the former Yugoslavia. It even had an office in New York City. It was also well financed, with funding in the range of an estimated US$20 million (Guillemin 2005: 159).

The cult had intended to use biological weapons such as anthrax, Q fever, Ebola, and botulinum toxin on ten separate occasions (Ryan and Glarum 2008: 16). After being arrested, the head of their germ development, Seiichi Endo, later revealed that from 1990 to 1993, the cult had released aerosolized anthrax and botulinum toxin on several occasions at Japan's legislature (the Diet), the Imperial Palace, as well as several other places in Tokyo and even at the US military base of Yokusaka (Zubay et al. 2005: 134–5). Fortunately for those involved nobody became infected, most probably because the strain used was similar to that used in animal vaccination, which is of little danger to humans and has low virulence (Zubay et al. 2005: 135). The precedents set by Aum Shinrikyo prompted a growing climate of fear in which it was felt that more concerted efforts needed to be undertaken to protect populations in the event of such an attack. Long before the tumultuous events of the autumn of 2001, those incidents showed that a bioterrorist attack is more than just a hypothetical possibility—even if the attempt to place a more precise probability on such an attack occurring is fraught with difficulties.

Others, however, have also taken heart from the fact that the Aum Shinrikyo group ultimately failed to procure biological weapons—despite its clear intentions of doing so. In many ways, the group fulfilled most of the ideal conditions that ought to have led to success in terms of producing such weapons, including a network of front companies, possessing key staff, funding, sufficient time, and so forth. Although it is difficult to come to firm conclusions given the classified nature of much of the information surrounding the cult's activities, the group encountered at least three significant difficulties: (1) acquiring sufficiently lethal strands of key biological agents such as anthrax bacilli; (2) challenges in terms of finding efficient ways of delivering and dispersing the agent; and (3) internal organizational difficulties (Rosenau 2001: 293). Even a well-funded, non-state group like Aum Shinrikyo thus encountered considerable obstacles in developing viable biological weapons, showing that—in practice—procuring and developing biological weapons remain a complicated process, which requires selection of the desired biological agent, obtaining this agent, then working upon this agent in such a manner that it can become weaponized, before also creating a method for disseminating it.

KEY POINTS

- Since the late 1990s, many policy-makers have focused on disease-causing biological agents within the context of their efforts to combat domestic and international terrorism.
- The activities of Aum Shinrikyo in Japan, as well as the person(s) responsible for sending letters laced with anthrax in the USA, highlighted a perceived lack of preparedness amongst many countries to deal with the effects of a terrorist attack using such an agent.
- Some governments have launched substantial programmes to increase the speed with which such an outbreak could be detected, and ways to respond to such an attack.

Conclusion

This chapter outlined the ways in which health issues have acquired a greater security salience in the context of three competing security frameworks: human security, national security, and bio-security. How, then, is this merging of health and security to be understood? Many analysts have followed the broad tenets of securitization theory (see Buzan et al. 1998) and have identified this emerging health–security nexus as the 'securitization' of health. In this view, health issues have now become the latest in a long line of wider social issues—such as drugs, migration, the environment, and so on—to become securitized—that is, framed as existential threats requiring the adoption of emergency measures. This framing generates debates about whether such a security framing is appropriate to a field like global health that also reflects many humanitarian considerations, whether the security framing might begin to distort health priorities on the ground, but also whether this could be a useful way of garnering more attention and resources for global health issues in future. That, however, is not the only way in which the emerging health–security nexus can be conceptualized. It can also be understood from the opposite perspective.

For years scholars outside the discipline of Security Studies, most notably in sociology, have also been tracing the progressive 'medicalization' of societies, whereby more and more social problems are considered and responded to as health problems, and where the medical professions (along with pharmaceutical companies) have seen substantial material benefits as well as enjoying an enhanced social position (Conrad 2007). Viewed from this perspective, the recent merging of health and security could be understood not just as the securitization of health, but also as a wider manifestation of the medicalization of security. Put differently, these three debates on health and security are also sites in contemporary world politics where security itself becomes partially redefined in medical terms, requiring the greater involvement of the medical professions. This generates further debate about the political and social effects of such an extension of medical knowledge, strategies, and approaches into the field of security. The deeper question that the emerging health–security interface gives rise to, therefore, is whether it is best understood as the securitization of health, or as the medicalization of security.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the relationship between health and human security?
2. What are the implications of HIV/AIDS for human security?
3. To what extent are infectious diseases also a threat to national security?
4. What can be done to reduce the spread of infectious diseases in the context of rapid international travel?
5. What, if anything, is gained by referring to diseases as security issues, rather than as health or medical issues?
6. What lessons can be learned from the securitization of health theory?
7. What lessons can be learned from the SARS outbreak of 2002–3?
8. Are the threats of bioterrorism and an influenza pandemic exaggerated?
9. Do non-infectious diseases have security implications as well?
10. Is the health–security nexus a manifestation of the securitization of health, or of the medicalization of security?

FURTHER READING

- Chen, Lincoln, Leaning, Jennifer, and Narasimhan, Vasant (eds) (2003), *Global Health Challenges for Human Security*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. This volume contains a range of chapters covering the concept of human security and how it relates to several contemporary global health issues.

- Davies, Sara, Kamradt-Scott, Adam and Rushton, Simon (2015), *Disease Diplomacy: International Norms and Global Health Security*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press. A book looking at the role of norms in relation to global health security with a particular focus on the International Health Regulations.
- de Waal, Alex (2006), *AIDS and Power: Why There is No Political Crisis—Yet*, London: Zed Books. This book presents a useful overview of what is known about the links between AIDS and security, and also questions many widespread assumptions about the security implications of HIV/AIDS.
- Elbe, Stefan (2010), *Security and Global Health: Towards the Medicalization of Insecurity*, Cambridge: Polity Press. This book provides a comprehensive overview of the links between health and security and advances a new way of conceptualizing the health security interface as the 'medicalization' of security.
- Fidler, David (2004), *SARS: Governance and the Globalization of Disease*, New York: Palgrave. This book analyses the implications of the SARS crisis for the global governance of health and contemporary world politics. Many of the insights are also relevant to the governance of infectious diseases more generally.
- Fidler, David and Gostin, Lawrence (2008), *Biosecurity in the Global Age: Biological Weapons, Public Health and the Rule of Law*, Stanford. CA: Stanford University Press. A book analysing the security threat posed jointly by the spread of infectious diseases and biological weapons.
- Guillemin, Jeanne (2005), *Biological Weapons: From the Invention of State-Sponsored Programs to Contemporary Bioterrorism*, New York: Columbia University Press. This book offers a comprehensive account of the historical evolution of biological weapons, including the challenges involved in responding to the threat of bioterrorism.
- Kamradt-Scott, Adam (2015), *Managing Global Health Security: The World Health Organization and Disease Outbreak Control*. London: Palgrave, A book looking specifically at the role of the World Health Organization in global health security.
- Price-Smith, Andrew (2001), *The Health of Nations: Infectious Disease, Environmental Change, and their Effects on National Security and Development*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. One of the first books systematically to set out the relationships between health issues and national security.
- Rushton, Simon and Youde, Jeremy (eds) (2014), *Routledge Handbook of Global Health Security*, Oxford: Routledge. This is an edited collection containing a wide range of detailed articles and perspective on the links between health and security.

IMPORTANT WEBSITES

- http://www.sussex.ac.uk/globalhealthpolicy/ The website of the Centre for Global Health Policy at the University of Sussex.
- http://www.chathamhouse.org/research/global-health The website of the Centre on Global Health Security at Chatham House.
- http://www.who.int The website of the World Health Organization, which has information on most of the diseases discussed in this chapter.
- http://ec.europa.eu/health/preparedness_response/hsc/index_en.htm The website of the Health Security Committee of the European Commission.
- http://www.ghd-net.org/ The website of the network on Global Health Diplomacy.

Visit the online resources that accompany this book for lots of interesting additional material: www.oup.com/uk/collins5e/