

Reviews

The Evolution of International Security Studies, Barry Buzan and Lene Hansen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 400 pp., \$99 cloth, \$30.99 paper.

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The Evolution of International Security Studies is an attempt at an intellectual history of something the authors call “International Security Studies” (ISS). It is done from a recognizable mix of Copenhagen and English School viewpoints, which means that there is altogether too little about war, and altogether too much about the niceties within constructivist and post-structuralist discourses.

The label “ISS” is not a popular one for the titles of books, journals, or university programs. It is hardly surprising, then, that Buzan and Hansen use the first three chapters (out of eight substantive ones) somewhat defensively defining their view of this “subfield’s” boundaries, key questions, and driving forces. On the boundary issue, the authors accept that delineation “is complicated by the fact that as time goes by we get a different perspective on what falls in [ISS] and what does not” (p. 8). Their defensive approach is also apparent in the concluding chapter of the book, where the authors note that while it is “possible to see ISS as moving towards becoming one conversation,” others see only “fragmented self-centred camps” (p. 257). My money is on the latter. Be that as it may, I would have preferred the

balance of discussion to have favored the intellectual content of International Security Studies rather than subfield navel-gazing.

In particular, the book would have benefited from saying much more on the Strategic Studies dimension of international security. Nobody involved in the evolution of its debates can be satisfied by the book’s treatment of what for so long was the dominant subfield of International Relations. Strategic Studies is allotted only one chapter, “Strategic Studies, Deterrence and the Cold War.” The same goes for the short decade since 9/11, even though the book was completed in 2008. Strategic Studies, therefore, is an undercooked part of the book. An intellectual history should have more to say about its most historic intellectuals.

Further, while the historical approach adopted in the book is effective, it suffers somewhat from presentism. Thus, one finds references to numerous recent writers who have not produced substantial works, developed any original approaches, or inspired groups of followers, while key figures in the evolution of thinking about international security who achieved all those things are ignored. It is certainly

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possible to find references to some of the intellectual beacons of Strategic Studies, but one gets no sense of the intellectual stature of such scholars as Bernard Brodie, Herman Kahn, Henry Kissinger, and Thomas Schelling, to name but a few. Likewise, in terms of scholarly influence, one looks in vain for mentions of James E. King (who nurtured so many significant contributors to thinking about strategy in the United States), John Garnett (the first person to be appointed to teach Strategic Studies in the UK—and before the Cuban Missile Crisis), and Philip Windsor (a true strategic thinker in a world of strategic talkers). The influence of each of these figures was in inverse proportion to their published writings, but an intellectual history should let readers know such things. From another corner of the subfield, the considerable influence of the highly productive Richard Falk is also not recognized appropriately.

While incomplete, the chapter on deterrence and the cold war is generally authoritative. This is not the case with the key chapter on newer approaches to thinking about security. Entitled “Widening and Deepening Security,” this chapter loses purchase as a result of its strange conceptualization of “deepening.” This is evident, for example, in remarks that imply that the move involves the “deepening of the referent object beyond the state” (p. 189). This is not how any “deepeners” I know conceive the move. As we “deepeners” have explained for a long time, the move involves seeing security as a *derivative* concept; this means exploring security thinking and practices, as R. B. J. Walker has put it, in relation to “the most basic questions of political theory.” Deepening, in other words, is about drilling down to the political core of all security thinking and practice.

The deepening move is also misunderstood in relation to the discussion of the individual as a referent for security. The authors seemingly endorse the critics of this view, who assert that “an exclusively individual referent object is . . . impossible” (p. 207). Who could disagree? Those (like me) who talk about individual humans as the ultimate referent in theorizing security do not imagine people removed from a collective context: “community,” for example, is an absolutely crucial theme for “critical” approaches to security. Our argument is simple and logical, and indeed was expressed with perfect clarity in a key work of the English School canon. In *The Anarchical Society*, Hedley Bull wrote: “World order is more fundamental and primordial than international order because the ultimate units of the great society of all mankind are not states (or nations, tribes, empires, classes or parties) but individual human beings, which are permanent and indestructible in a sense in which groups of them of this or that sort are not” (p. 22). The argument is logical, not (antistatist) ideological, but critics appear unable to grasp it.

The Evolution of International Security Studies is always challenging, for it asks its readers to think about where they stand, and why, while questioning the viewpoints advanced by the authors. “ISS,” they conclude, “will continue to evolve not just in keeping pace with new security concerns, but also in developing new ways to think about them” (p. 272). But wait! If security is a “speech act,” making threats “objective” (pp. 33–34), as the Copenhagen School claims, should this final sentence in the book be changed to read: “security concerns will develop by keeping pace with ways in which security is spoken”? But this is not ambitious

enough, either. We surely want to know what is doing the work all the way down. What constructs the speech acts—and even more important, the acts of silence—that create the insecurities that determine peoples’ lives (which in turn make the search for security so critical)? Without the deepening move, security theorizing will remain a modest business. I therefore hope that readers of *Ethics & International Affairs* will prioritize drilling

down into those “basic questions of political theory” which alone help us to understand why the ideas making up world order do not work for so many fellow human beings and so much of the natural world on which we all depend.

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International Criminal Law and Philosophy, Larry May and Zachary Hoskins, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 268 pp., \$88 cloth.

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Since the UN Security Council created international tribunals to investigate crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda (in 1993 and 1994, respectively), and especially with the creation of the International Criminal Court in 2002, international criminal law has grown into a well-established area of international law. This development, which is arguably unprecedented in international society, raises several kinds of important and difficult questions. In a positive vein, political scientists are investigating how international trials actually work and their prospects for becoming a stable international institution. Lawyers and political theorists are examining the substance of international criminal law and the procedures it should follow, in particular asking which reforms to current practice would be valuable or required by justice. Philosophers are asking, more abstractly, what values may justify the practice of international criminal justice overall, and have also begun to scrutinize concepts

that belong properly to international criminal discourse, such as those of joint criminal enterprise and genocidal intent.

Larry May, one of the foremost philosophers currently working in the philosophy of international law, and Zachary Hoskins, a doctoral candidate at Washington University in St. Louis, have assembled a series of articles by lawyers and political philosophers that examine normative and philosophical questions of international criminal law. Most contributions to this volume point to specific areas of international practice that require reform, but some deal with more general questions of justification; most defend some sort of expansion of international criminal law, and hence a reduction of state sovereignty, but some take a more conservative state-favoring position. Much to its credit, the volume attempts no easy defense of international criminal legal practice, and features many contributions that explicitly acknowledge and address