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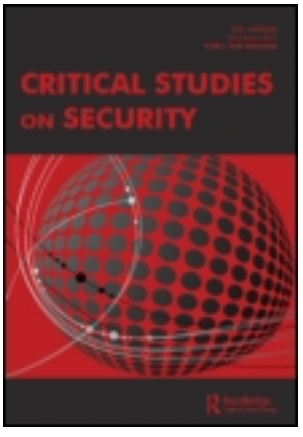


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# No emancipatory alternative, no critical security studies

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# No emancipatory alternative, no critical security studies

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We offer a provocation – that we should stop appending 'Critical' to 'Security Studies'. Critical security as an academically and politically contested terrain is no longer productive of emancipatory alternatives. In making this claim, we seek to reflect upon the underlying dynamics which drove the boom in critical security studies in the 1990s and the early 2000s and its pale afterlife in the recent years. To support the argument empirically, the attention is paid to the role of emancipatory agency at the heart of critical security understandings. As we argue, the current state of 'critical' security theorising is no longer informed by the emancipatory impulse of the 1990s and the critical claims have been much damaged by the retreat of liberal internationalism and rise of non-emancipatory and post-emancipatory approaches. The critics that remain in the field thus articulate much lower horizons with regard to policy alternatives and conceptualise no clear agency of emancipatory possibilities. Ironically, 'critical' security theorists today are more likely to argue against transformative aspirations – rather than in favour of them.

**Keywords:** critical security studies; Welsh School; Copenhagen School; Paris School; Manchester School; emancipation; evolution of security; post-liberalism

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## Introduction

Critical security studies (CSS) has grown so large and diverse as an academic field that it has generated many books and student texts to map the diversity of its analysis (see, e.g. Krause and Williams 1997; Fierke 2007; Hansen 2006; Collins 2007; Krause and Williams 1997; Peoples and Vaughan-Williams 2010; Chandler and Hynek 2010).[1] In fact, the success of CSS is one of the reasons we suggest that it makes perfect sense to drop the 'critical' appendage. As a glance at the books and textbook guides makes clear, CSS has now expanded to include the entire body of what we could call 'non-traditional' security studies, with 'traditional' security studies set-up as a straw man of unreflective, uncritical, depoliticised or timeless thinking of security. Bearing in mind that as Columba Peoples and Nicholas Vaughan-Williams note (2010, 2), this straw man never existed; that security was always an 'essentially contested concept' and that even allegedly 'timeless' concepts such as 'national interests' were always shifting, contingent and ambiguous we seek to go beyond the analytical narratives and descriptive mapping which constitute the stock acceptance of an academic world in which security theorising or focuses beyond inter-state military conflict become part of the living cannon of 'CSS' (see, e.g. CASE 2006; Williams 2003; Krause and Williams 1996, 1997; Wyn Jones 1999; Waever 2004;

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Richmond 2010a; Newman 2010; Bourne 2012; Jarvis 2009; Jackson 2012; Merlingen 2010; Pugh, Cooper, and Turner 2011).

We concur entirely with the starting point of a recent article by Christopher Browning and Matt McDonald (2012) in which they argued that CSS had 'generally fallen short of providing us with a sophisticated, convincing account of either the politics or the ethics of security'. For Browning and McDonald: 'At stake in the failure to provide such an account is the fundamental question of whether we need a "critical security studies" at all'. Where we depart from these authors is in the analysis of weaknesses of CSS and the conclusions drawn. For us, the problematic is not if the jury is still out on whether CSS can provide a coherent 'alternative' position. We do not seek to judge the usefulness of CSS, as if diverse positions can or should be homogenised in some way; rather, we seek to draw out why it makes little sense to maintain the 'critical' prefix to a study area which is so diverse and contested.

Our argument in this regard is straightforward. Charting the diversity of CSS and judging the field on the basis of whether a coherent body of thought is coming together or not fails to draw out a key problematic at the heart of current security studies approaches. The irony is that this problematic is written as clear as day – as the rubric bringing this body of thinking together – the little word 'critical'. This little word tells us something about what created the conditions of possibility for a rapidly growing body of thought and connected together and enabled the development of its disparate parts. CSS can only be understood as a study area on the basis of the 'alternative' emancipatory approach established by the 'first generation' of critical security scholars.[2]

'Critical security studies' was so-named as a field of academic study of security on the basis of the rejection of the 'problem-solving' approaches still dominant at the end of the Cold War. This approach built upon the work of Robert Cox who brought the influence of Critical Theory, particularly drawing on Max Horkheimer's distinction between 'critical' and 'problem-solving' theory, into the academic field of International Relations (IR). In his landmark article 'Social Forces, States and World Orders', published in 1981, Cox argued:

> Beginning with its problematic, theory can serve two distinct purposes. One is a simple, direct response: to be a guide to help solve the problems posed within the terms of the particular perspective which was the point of departure. The other is more reflective upon the process of theorizing itself: to become clearly aware of the perspective which gives rise to theorizing, and its relation to other perspectives (to achieve a perspective on perspectives); and to open up the possibility of choosing a different valid perspective from which the problematic becomes one of creating an alternative world. Each of these purposes gives rise to a different kind of theory. (Cox 1981, 128)

CSS set out 'to create an alternative world' and it was this normative drive which led theorists to resist accepting the world as it was and the problems of security as they were traditionally posed – at the level of securing the national interests of states. Ken Booth's 1990 plenary address to the British International Studies Association, 'Security and Emancipation', set out the first agenda for what was to become known as CSS (Booth 1991). This approach put individuals rather than states at the heart of the critical security agenda. The critical emancipatory order was to 'treat people as ends and not means' (Booth 1991, 319) and thereby 'to place emancipation at the centre of new security thinking' (Booth 1991, 321). However, there was little consideration of emancipatory agency in the 'process utopianism' of Booth (1991, 324). Emancipatory theorising was to start with the security of 'the poor, the disadvantaged, the voiceless, the unrepresented, the powerless' (Bellamy and Williams 2007, 7) but the agencies of emancipation were

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Western states, international institutions and 'global civic culture', informed by the Western academic advocates of emancipation who exchanged their allegiance to the state with one to the 'nascent world order' (Booth 1991, 324–325).

We seek to reflect upon the critical emancipatory dynamic at the heart of CSS, essential to the integration of CSS into policy-making circles in the 1990s and the early 2000s. In this period, security theorists who perceived themselves as being critical vis-à-vis the then dominant (neo)realist security frameworks were involved in writing documentation for the United Nations (UN), British, Canadian, US and other governments, the International Commission for Intervention and State Sovereignty and for the EU's working group on Human Security. The first generation of critical theorists did much to establish the 'critical' basis of study, debating and critiquing Western interventions and policy practices on the basis of whether they operated in ways which were radical, empowering and emancipatory. It was from this starting position – and debates and criticisms of it – that CSS developed.

We wish to argue that the exhaustion of the emancipatory impetus of CSS is evident in the ways in which the space for 'critical' advocacy and policy collaboration between academics and foreign policy think tanks and organisations has diminished since the early 2000s. In the 1990s, when policy-makers made radical claims of transformative policy-practices, critical security theorists were feted on all sides. In the late 1990s and throughout the 2000s, these theorists were out-manoeuvred by post-structuralist theorists who could use these radical claims couched in universal and liberal understandings of rights and freedoms in order to argue against the emancipatory project per se. Especially since 2001, the war on terror provided much less room for emancipatory alternatives and also facilitated a critique of modernist (liberal) universalist aspirations, as critical theorists argued against liberal articulations of emancipatory goals as merely the ideological gloss for unending 'global war' (see, e.g. Odysseos and Petito 2007; Neal 2010; Aradau and van Munster 2009).

Today we are left with very little of the emancipatory aspirations of CSS. In fact, it could well be argued that most of the current strands of what we call 'critical security studies' would reject emancipatory approaches altogether. Rather than imposing Western understandings of emancipation, advocates of emancipatory security approaches today recognise that there is a problem of which actors have emancipatory agency in these approaches (Richmond 2010a, 2010b; Mulligan 2011; Lemanski 2012; Roberts 2008, 2010; Shepherd 2012). It seems clear from today's vantage point (at least) that even the first generation of critical theorists lacked Cox's (1981, 130) emphasis on the alternative emancipatory actors that could enable critical approaches to be a guide to strategic action. For Cox (1981, 128), the statement that 'Theory is always *for* someone and *for* some purpose' was not a passive declaration of who the asserted beneficiaries of the theory would be but an understanding that theory reflects a certain practical 'standpoint in time and space'.

The major problem at the heart of CSS was that, from the start, CSS in Western academia posited the possibility that emancipatory theory could exist independently of an emancipatory subject. While Cox (1981, 150) understood the role of critical theory as a challenge to the concerns of power and as a guide to emancipatory – 'counter-hegemonic' – actors struggling to challenge the hierarchies of power and the system of social relations which enforced them, critical theory was imported into security studies at precisely the moment that the dominant counter-hegemonic forces of the modern era (socialist or state-based attempts to resist free market domination) had terminally collapsed.

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With hindsight it is clear that what gave CSS its impetus was not a rise in emancipatory possibilities but their closure. The 'unipolar moment' of the end of the Cold War gave Western powers the opportunity to reposition their foreign policy orientations in the absence of any coherent challenge to their hegemony and, in fact, to roll back the gains of sovereign equality of the post-colonial era (Bulley 2009; Chandler 2006a, 2006b; Chandler and Heins 2007; Merry 2005; Hynek and Bosold 2010; Daddow and Gaskarth 2011; Thérien 2012). At a moment of reorientation of Western foreign policy-making and of the removal of the barriers to a new hegemonic, universalising discourse of international liberalism, 'critical theory' came to serve, not the counter-hegemonic forces but the hegemonic ones.

The fact that the confidence of this universalising moment lasted less than the decade of the 1990s should not become a barrier to our understanding of this moment of transition and inversion in 'critical' security theorising, in the service of the 'emancipatory' agency of Western power. Thus, we seek to undertake an accounting of and with CSS. We feel that the critical and emancipatory dynamic of the study area was based upon a hollow and inverted understanding of critical theorising and that the debates and critiques, which it gave rise to, have resulted in 'CSS' today lacking any emancipatory critical content. It would appear that the boom and expansion of CSS, starting with the 'Welsh School' has done more to critique and displace critical emancipatory theorising than to promote it.[3]

The article will be divided into three sections: firstly, we provide the backdrop to the rise of CSS as 'critical' policy advocacy, highlighting the lack of connection between these approaches and the claimed conceptual basis within Critical Theory[4]; secondly, we chart how CSS fed off this false understanding of critical theory to become a generic term for non-traditional approaches to security, lacking – if not overtly critical of – the emancipatory approach at the heart of Critical Theory. The final section analyses the much less emancipatory aspirations of those who would argue that they work in the tradition of emancipatory approaches to critical security and conclude that it is now time to remove the appendage 'critical' to security studies as a study area.

## The birth of 'critical' policy advocacy

Emancipatory critical approaches have been celebrated, by their proponents, as a novel and progressive approach to security (Booth 1991, 1994, 1995, 2005, 2008; Wyn Jones 1999; Bellamy 2004; Dunne and Wheeler 2004; Wheeler 1996). Critical security was born with a sense of urgency, to turn critical academics into policy advocates in a moment of policy transformation. The political praxis or practice of critical theorists was therefore not that of Gramscian 'organic intellectuals' (Gramsci 2009) – clarifying the experiences and ideas of counter-hegemonic forces – but rather the 'traditional' role of whispering into the ear of the Prince: the goal of policy advocacy. As Ken Booth (1997, 114) held:

> Thinking about thinking is important, but, more urgently, so is thinking about doing. For those who believe that we live in a humanly constituted world, the distinction between theory and practice dissolves: theory is a form of practice, and practice is a form of theory... it is important for critical security studies to engage with the real by suggesting policies, agents, and sites of change...

The key defining aspect of this critical area was the rejection of the state as the main referent object of security and of the national security framework as the dominant

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analytical template. Indicatively, Booth (2005, 268) has noted: 'A critical theory of security seeks to denaturalize and historicize all human-made political referents, recognizing only the primordial entity of the socially embedded individual' (see also Kaldor 1999, 2007). Although the Welsh School of CSS did not explicitly embrace the atomised individual as the referent object of security, it drove the emancipatory understanding of a common area as 'critical' through paying attention to human and community security (Grenfell and James 2008; Bastian 2004).

The rejection of states as the subjects of security study was a critical attempt to posit an alternative ontology of security. This was, from the beginning a project based on normative ideals rather than contestation based on real-world struggles and alternatives. For many authors, advocating an alternative normative vision was more important than engaging with real-world practices and understandings. The acceptance and wide appeal of such an approach can only be understood in the context of the fact that just such normative claims were being made by Western governments, appealing to normative justifications for their projection of power. Without this link to policy-making discourses, these normative views would have remained marginal to security studies.

CSS in its first iteration, informed by Critical Theory understandings of an emancipatory project, thereby faced a major problem. While it was clear that it posed an alternative goal for government policy – rather than the pursuit of stability and maintaining the interests of power, i.e. that governments should attempt to emancipate and secure the most marginal and vulnerable – it was less clear, of course, how power could be tamed and transformed in such a way. The core contradiction at the heart of CSS was that of an emancipatory project which was to be led by the major powers and institutions tasked with maintaining (and expanding) the order of liberal market hegemony.

The Welsh School of CSS facilitated an emancipatory articulation of security focused on individuals and communities (Christie 2010; Richmond 2007; Gasper and Truong 2005). Such a reconceptualisation was seen as a potentially radical departure from the previously dominant understanding of security through the notion of national security (Paris 2001; for dissenting views, see Nuruzzaman 2006 and Suhrke 1999). The shift from the state as the referent object of security to the insertion of the individual or a group of individuals to the same position has been praised as proof of the latter's political empowerment (Thomas 2000; MacLean, Black, and Shaw 2006; Kaldor 2007). In a much more emancipated and liberalised world, the replacement – or at least sidelining – of *Realpolitik* by the liberal conception of security on which critical security approaches rested was said to demonstrate the new possibilities of the international political order (Glasius and Kaldor 2006; Axworthy 2004; Mack 2004; Ogata and Cels 2003; McRae and Hubert 2001; Newman and Richmond 2001).

The UN, intergovernmental organisations and even some (putatively more enlightened) nation-states seized upon the opportunity and began to speak about and to advocate critical approaches, particularly in relation to the concept of human security. Many of these activities were then linked to the phenomenon of 'global civil society', in part inspired by the work of Jürgen Habermas (Kaldor 2003; Matthew, McDonald, and Rutherford 2006; McRae 2001). The rise of what was seen as critical or emancipatory policy-making in the sphere of human security was said to confirm the immanent transition to a cosmopolitan world order based on universal rights and freedoms (Florini 2003, 2007; Tuchman 1989).

The fact that human security as a concept, discourse and practice was followed by a series of humanitarian developments in global norm-making was used to vindicate the political and paradigmatic importance of CSS (Hubert 2004; Krause 2004; Garcia 2006;

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MacFarlane and Foong Khong 2006; Axworthy and Taylor 1998; Weiss 1999; Fox 2002; Macrae 2002). Campaigns to ban anti-personnel landmines, cluster munitions, the use of child soldiers, as well as the campaign to establish the International Criminal Court and translate the principle of humanitarian intervention into the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine were frequently used to prove the practical effects of the critical security paradigm.

Additionally, it was maintained that critical security approaches have led to emancipatory policy practices, diverting more attention and resources to issues of human development and public health (Elbe 2010; Roberts 2008; Iqbal 2006; Chen, Leaning, and Narasimhan 2003; Poku 2001; Sen 2000). Critical security approaches also became key to the field of post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding (Richmond 2003, 2010a, 2010b; Bryden and Hänggi 2005; Shaw 1996; de Soto and del Castillo 1994). In a world in which leading Western powers and international institutions proclaimed the goal of emancipation, critical security approaches were understood to be the precondition for entering into a postmodern (Cooper 2000, 2004) or Kantian (Glasius and Kaldor 2006) model of regional and global governance in which sovereignty was to be replaced, or at least compromised, by the domestic liberal responsibility of states, helped in this task by new international and regional political platforms and transnationally stretched non-governmental organisations.

For much of the 1990s, CSS appeared to be the dominant framing for security theorising. The reason for this was that emancipatory thinking had been concerned more with challenging realities than with analysing them: more concerned with advocacy than critique. Consequently, in the absence of any analyses of emancipatory agency, the practical contribution of the critical discourse to progress on the ground had all too often been missing (for an exception, see Muggah and Krause 2006). Thus, what was presented as critical and emancipatory security theory and practice bore little resemblance to traditional understandings of Critical Theory based around alternative emancipatory possibilities.

For many leading critical security scholars, work with leading Western powers and international institutions was the emancipatory way forward (for an interesting elaboration of this point, see Kittikhoun and Weiss 2011). 'Welsh School' stalwart Nicholas Wheeler (1997, 2001) began with research on theories of human solidarity and continued by conceptualisation and policy-making promotion (in the context of the British Labour Party's 'Ethical Foreign Policy') of humanitarian intervention and in the academic context of policy-making support for the R2P doctrine (Dunne and Wheeler 2004; Wheeler 2001). Robert Cooper was instrumental in the promotion of humanitarian intervention first within the British Government and later in the European Union (EU), in his capacity as senior political advisor to Tony Blair and Javier Solana respectively (see Young 2002). In fact, there were very few successful critical security academics who did not participate in policy advocacy, especially in the Canadian, Japanese and UN contexts (see Hynek 2012).

Perhaps the most influential of these theorists was Mary Kaldor at the London School of Economics (LSE). She made her name advocating for bold international action in the light of complex humanitarian emergencies, or the 'new wars' (most notably in the Kosovo case), then elaborated the notion of global civil society (Kaldor 2003) inspired by Habermas and Critical Theory, and continued with the establishment of an EU/LSE advocacy group responsible for the formulation of the Barcelona and Madrid Reports on human security (Human Security Study Group 2004, 2007), of which the former received the official stamp of EU approval as *A Human Security Doctrine for Europe*. These documents exude a mixture of voluntaristic idealism and Western militarism in the cause

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of humanitarian intervention and the creation of voluntary corps which would collaborate with soldiers in contributing to the empowerment of local populations (Vankovska 2007). Indeed, the contact with Javier Solana allowed Kaldor and a few of her colleagues to help shape the EU's approach to human security (see Kaldor and Solana 2010). It is not a coincidence that the last policy-making redoubt where critical emancipatory claims are made for policy interventions has been the European External Action Service (Martin and Owen 2010).

## 'Critical' equals non-traditional

The tragedy of CSS is not merely in the inversion of critical approaches of the 'first generation' of policy advocates but the fact that this inversion of critical understandings was taken up on its own terms by the majority of its critics. Rather than reasserting the need for emancipatory approaches or the difficulty of positing such approaches in the absence of a counter-hegemonic struggle, CSS retreated into theory overtly critical of emancipatory possibilities per se. The boom in critical security theory was then extended by the attempt to add other approaches, which (while being outside the mainstream of traditional approaches) were not emancipatory in the Critical Theory sense. Where critical security theorists paved the way, being parasitical on their relationship to policy-making, other non-traditional theorists gravitated to the security area in an attempt to expand the remit and approach of CSS through the critique of their assumptions. In this regard, Waever (2004; see also Krause and Williams 1996) points out the expansion of CSS to include non-emancipatory approaches, which sought to contest the claims of CSS and deconstruct them:

> … part of CSS ... thinks of the meaning of 'Critical' in terms of 'capital C-capital T', Critical Theory, i.e. Frankfurt School, early Habermas inspired thinking with a drop of Gramsci and maybe Kant. Others think of 'critical' in a more inclusive sense where CT is only one possible format, and CSS as a broad movement therefore includes also other forms of theory that is critical, even if it is not Critical Theory, i.e. feminism, normative theory and post-structuralism. In practice, the majority of these 'non CT ct' writers are found somewhere on the IR continuum from constructivism to post-structuralism, e.g. much work on the social construction of threats and self-other relations. (Waever 2004, 6)

Thus, the policy-making 'successes' of CSS opened the door to a boom in security studies, based on the view that the critical understanding of the world of Western aspirations of emancipating the 'Other' could and should be challenged and deconstructed or form the basis for taking the argument further. These critics joined the fray, building CSS as a vibrant study area, and one in which a variety of feminist contributions played a central role (Enloe 1989; Elshtain and Tobias 1990; Tickner 1992, 2004; Blanchard 2003; Sjoberg 2009; Sylvester 2010; Wibben 2010; True 2012).

This situation represented a watershed, after which the Copenhagen School of Security – otherwise existing since the late 1980s/early 1990s – became the Copenhagen School of *Critical Security Studies* (the 'second generation' of CSS). Given the theoretical problems of emancipatory CSS identified and discussed above, the complete rejection of any emancipatory ambition by the Copenhagen School was considered to be its main advantage. Its broadened scope and emphasis on studying processes of securitisation, which was framed as 'non-traditional' security, quickly became the byword for CSS (see Balzacq 2005; Stritzel 2007; Salter 2008). The consequence of the breadth of the Copenhagen CSS was the development of academic critique of their overly objectivist approach to collective identity formation and societal

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security (McSweeney 1996; for a reply Buzan and Waever 1997, and for a rejoinder Theiler 2003) as well as critical attention to issues of practice, agency and wider alternative futures (Bilgin 1999, 38). Thus, the scholars associated with the second generation of CSS neutralised the previous emancipatory potential of CSS and removed the, already weak, discursive connection between CSS and Critical Theory. This is clear from Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde's (1997, 34) reflection upon the relationship between CSS and the Copenhagen School:

> 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 its work… deals with the social construction of security, but CSS mostly has the intent… of showing that change is possible because things are socially constituted… [As the Copenhagen School shows] even the socially constituted is often sedimented as structure and becomes so relatively stable as practice that one must do analysis also on the basis that it continues… in our purposes we are closer to traditional security studies.

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The Copenhagen School's proponents warned against emancipatory claims of power and about being too enthusiastic about human security (Buzan 2004). A great deal of criticism has been directed towards the concept – its delimitation, underpinning ontology, nature and political feasibility. Theoretically, emancipatory CSS was challenged for the alleged naivety of claims regarding the possibility of an ontological shift in the referent object of security. Although critical security approaches could mean a limited change in world politics, these scholars have argued the very fact that nation-states have been principal providers of people-centred security showed the limits of its transformative effects (Buzan 2004; Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde 1997).

The broadened, non-traditional approach of the Copenhagen School refused the emancipatory framework of CSS on a number of grounds: its empirically descriptive approach attempted to stay impartial rather than to advocate policy responses; methodologically, the prioritising of the individual as a referent object contradicted the School's ontological pluralism with regard to the construction of both referents and threats; most importantly, emancipatory security discourses could only be understood as the result of a successful securitisation act through which emancipation was securitised as a policy goal – indeed, this did not go well with the School's preference for desecuritisation wherever possible (Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde 1997, 29, 35, 47; Buzan 2004; Waever 1999).

The rejection of emancipatory approaches by the founders of the Copenhagen School was challenged by scholars who advocated for a synthesis, or at least 'bridge-building', with the Welsh School of CSS. In this context, Rita Floyd (2007a, 327; see also 2007b, 38) argued in favour of such bridge-building, not on the basis of possible ontological or epistemological links but on the pragmatic grounds that a united critical front was needed against 'conventional' security perspectives: first, 'the more unified these critical theories are, the stronger a challenge they can offer to the mainstream of security studies'; second, 'the more united the academy the more adoptable are its theories for policy-makers (EU or otherwise)'; and third, that such a strategy would pave 'the way for a more evaluative engagement with security on the part of the analyst, allowing for normative... conceptualisations of security'.

In parallel efforts to engage Copenhagen and Welsh CSS, Edward Newman (2010) made the case in favour of synergising these as 'critical human security studies' and suggested a number of practical directions for future research (see also Christie 2010, 177). In these pragmatic approaches, critical approaches are seen to need to build a policy

advocacy consensus rather than to stake out claims for emancipatory alternatives. Floyd and Newman's ambitious visions to remedy the first generation of CSS by their integration with the Copenhagen School did not materialise and as we show below, the main reason was the incursion of post-structuralism into CSS (the 'third generation' of CSS), which signalled the end of the emancipatory project itself.

## The demise of the emancipatory project

As we show in this section, the CSS project exhausted itself of emancipatory potential. After its original critical emancipatory drive based on the emancipatory ethics of practical policy engagement, through which Western powers and international institutions were urged to become more radical and 'human-centred', the Copenhagen School shifted CSS back from policy advocacy. This, in turn, opened the door for critical approaches which were even more distanced from emancipatory alternatives: the post-structuralist critics. It was the success of these deconstructionist critiques which we argue has made the emancipatory 'critical' appendage redundant.[5]

These critical post-structuralists, often labelled as proponents of the 'third generation of CSS' or the 'Paris School', came from broader critical social and political theory and IR. A number of Foucauldians and post-Foucauldians (inspired more by the work of Giorgio Agamben, see Alt 2010) emerged to use Foucault's epistemological framework to dominate the post-structuralist engagement with CSS. These post-structuralists were wary of the emancipatory attempts of the first generation of CSS, highlighting general incredulity to normatively based alternative futures as well as the problematic policy experiences of 'humanitarian' interventionism, 'peace' through militarism or emancipation through liberal governmentalism.

The most influential Foucauldian critique of emancipatory security studies has possibly been that of Mark Duffield's (2001, 2007, 2010). His focus has been on the unending liberal way of war which has had bare life, at the level of population in the Global South, as its field of intervention. Duffield's criticism of the discourse and practice of the critically inspired security-development nexus highlighted how 'emancipatory' approaches to security have been complicit in the promotion of a Western neoliberal political agenda (Duffield 2010, 12–14, 69, 227–234). Duffield argued that emancipatory discourses had been appropriated by strategic complexes driven by Western liberal states and rendered as their primary biopolitical technology of governance. As he maintained in this context, 'human security signals the return of the state to development discourse' (Duffield 2007, 126). However, this point relates not only to Western states but also to underdeveloped states (Duffield 2010, 65). Duffield offered an interpretation which did not approach critical frameworks from a humanistic viewpoint, but rather saw them as a new tool through which former colonial powers (today's liberal states), international protectors (IOs) and 'petty sovereign power' (i.e. NGOs, see Duffield 2007, 25, 52) could contain and regulate the lives of Southern populations. Consequently, codification of humanitarian intervention in the form of the R2P doctrine was seen as a particular liberal strategy to percolate state sovereignty in the Global South (Duffield 2007, 120).

By expanding on and geographically scaling up Foucault's (1988, 71) remark that 'the modern state is a monstrous unison of the executioner and the physician', Foucault-inspired critiques of emancipatory approaches to security argued that the call for emancipation to be put at the centre of security thinking (the central claim which established the specificity of CSS) was the target of their critique (Shani, Satō, and Pasha 2007; Bell 2006; De Larrinaga and Doucet 2008; Duffield and Waddell 2006). By refusing the

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emancipatory logic of CSS, the concept and discourse of emancipation has thus been understood to be bound up with global sovereign and biopolitical rule which further extend forms of domination by defining the conditions of exceptionality (De Larrinaga and Doucet 2010).

Not all Foucauldian scholars have emphasised the critique of emancipatory discourses of security. Some have turned attention to the analysis of complex relationships between scientific epistemologies, representations of danger and discourses and practices of liberal security. Kyle Grayson (2008, 2010), for example, has explored the ways in which theory and practice of human security is linked to more general disciplinary and biopolitical relations of power. Michael Dillon and Julian Reid (2009) have been interested in an epistemic interpretation of liberal security. They have striven to chart biopolitical developments of liberal security, thereby utilising (post-)Foucauldian biopolitics to critique the liberal way of war; demonstrating how molecular-biological and information-digital templates have driven both liberal ways of war and ways of rule. In a complete refusal of emancipatory approaches to security, species life is cast as the referent object and the individual is replaced by the 'biohuman' composed of information and code (2009, 31, 84). While it is possible to imagine many ways in which Foucault's rich and diverse writings could inform a search for emancipatory alternatives, in CSS these possibilities appear, for now, to have been closed off.

It seems that the main alternative to the Foucauldian or post-Foucauldian rejection of emancipatory approaches in CSS has been that posed by post-emancipatory scholars such as Oliver Richmond and Roger Mac Ginty (the 'Manchester School', formerly based at St Andrews). In the light of emancipatory CSS being undermined by the retreat from liberal internationalism within policy-making circles as well as from the post-structuralist critique – they have argued that Western states and international actors need to intervene in the cause of emancipation but through more 'hybrid' or 'post-liberal' understandings based upon post-Marxist and post-colonial critical frameworks which reject liberal emancipatory discourses of security (Mac Ginty and Richmond 2009, Mac Ginty 2011; Richmond 2009).

Oliver Richmond (2010b) and Roger Mac Ginty (2010) have held that while liberal peacebuilding and human security have become co-opted as emancipatory policy possibilities, previous experience offers at least some hope for the concepts' revitalisation, making it possible for Western actors to still save others and promote the betterment of human lives and local communities (see also Futamura, Newman, and Tadjbakhsh 2010; Newman 2011). Mac Ginty (2012a, 2012b) suggests that this conceptual reframing is not going to be easy as the 'technocratic turn' associated with Western power makes any form of resistance more difficult and its immediate readiness to put the locals into pigeonholes of resistance and compliance further complicates such hybrid encounters. Mac Ginty and Richmond argue that Western engagement cannot operate as if local actors were helpless and lacked agency but instead should help determine a 'post-liberal' approach to security which enables local autonomous agencies 'to resist, ignore or adapt liberal peace interventions' (Mac Ginty 2010, 391), thus coming up with their own alternative forms of peace. Thus, for Richmond and Mac Ginty, the future lies in the recognition of cultural diversity and exploration of affinities with post-colonial theory.

A similar position is offered by Giorgio Shani (2008, 2010) who has argued that emancipatory approaches (through engagements with post-Western 'Critical International Theory') need to adjust to increasing cultural and religious diversity. Also of note is the work of Mandy Turner, Neil Cooper and Mike Pugh (Pugh, Cooper, and Turner 2011; Turner, Cooper, and Pugh 2010) who share some of Richmond's belief in the residual

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emancipatory potential of critical security on the basis of a paradigmatic transformation. For them, that means – beside continuous and equitable engagement with diverse local, cultural and welfare dynamics – mainly restructuring financial hegemony through embracing heterodox political economy to reduce existing economic inequality at a global level. The proposed culturally sensitive, value-based and desecuritised paradigm the authors propose is called 'life welfare'.

These 'post-emancipatory' scholars still frame Western and international intervention in potentially emancipatory terms, but the horizons and aspirations have been substantially lowered from the universalist call to radical academic policy advocacy, of the founders of emancipatory approaches within security studies. While the initial confident calls for emancipatory alternatives at least had an understanding of the need for emancipatory agency, unfortunately found only in Western powers and international institutions, the later approaches lack this clarity and confidence, merely suggesting that more 'open', 'unscripted', 'locally sensitive', 'desecuritised' and less 'universalist' and 'liberal' approaches can avoid the 'resistances' held to come from the local level. If these approaches are 'emancipatory' they lack any clear project or programme as to what these claims might mean or how they might be carried out in reality and are little different to mainstream think tank proposals calling for more 'local ownership', 'local capacity-building', 'empowerment', 'sustainability' and 'resilience' (see Chandler 2012, Forthcoming).

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## Conclusion

This article has argued that the appendage 'critical' should be removed to allow Security Studies to free itself of the baggage of its founding. It is clear that what little emancipatory content critical security theorising had initially has been more than exhausted and, in fact, thoroughly critiqued. The boom in CSS in the 1990s and early 2000s was essentially parasitical on the shift in Western policy discourses, which emphasised the radical and emancipatory possibilities of power, rather than on the basis of giving theoretical clarity to counter-hegemonic forces.

We would argue that the removal of the prefix 'critical' would also be useful to distinguish security study based on critique of the world as it exists from normative theorising based on the world as we would like it to be. As long as we keep the 'critical' nomenclature, we are affirming that government and international policy-making can be understood and critiqued against the goal of emancipating the non-Western Other. Judging policy-making and policy outcomes, on the basis of this imputed goal, may provide 'critical' theorists with endless possibilities to demonstrate their normative standpoints but it does little to develop academic and political understandings of the world we live in.

In fact, no greater straw man could have been imagined, than the ability to become 'critical' on the basis of debates around the claim that the West was now capable of undertaking emancipatory policy missions. Today, as we witness a narrowing of transformative aspirations on behalf of Western policy elites, in a reaction against the 'hubris' of the claims of the 1990s (Mayall and Soares de Oliveira 2012) and a slimmed down approach to sustainable, 'hybrid' peacebuilding, CSS has again renewed its relationship with the policy sphere. Some academics and policy-makers now have a united front that rather than placing emancipation at the heart of policy-making it should be 'local knowledge' and 'local demands'.

The double irony of the birth and death of CSS is not only that CSS has come full circle – from its liberal teleological universalist and emancipatory claims, in the 1990s, to

its discourses of limits and flatter ontologies, highlighting differences and pluralities in the 2010s – but that this 'critical' approach to security has also mirrored and mimicked the policy discourses of leading Western powers. As policy-makers now look for excuses to explain the failures of the promise of liberal interventionism, critical security theorists are on hand to salve Western consciences with analyses of non-linearity, complexity and human and non-human assemblages. It appears that the world cannot be transformed after all. We cannot end conflict or insecurity, merely attempt to manage them. Once critique becomes anti-critique (Noys 2011) and emancipatory alternatives are seen to be merely expressions of liberal hubris, the appendage of 'critical' for arguments that discount the possibility of transforming the world and stake no claims which are unamenable to power or distinct from dominant philosophical understandings is highly problematic. Let us study security, its discourses and its practices, by all means but please let us not pretend that study is somehow the same as critique.

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## Notes

1. It is clear that CSS is still growing in interest and impact, illustrated by the launch of the Taylor and Francis journal *Critical Studies on Security* at the start of 2013.
2. We use 'generation' here to heuristically indicate a series of overlapping temporal shifts from 'critical' emancipatory theorists, dominant in the 1990s and the early 2000s, heavily engaged in policy advocacy, to a second, transitional generation of 'non-traditional' CSS as epitomised by the Copenhagen School, to the 'third generation' focused upon the deconstruction of emancipatory claims, and the remaining 'fourth generation' of much more limited 'post-emancipatory' understandings.
3. While we use Waever's tripartite description of CSS schools, we understand them in geographically and intellectually more dispersed and networked ways (see CASE 2006, 444).
4. We use 'Critical Theory' with capital letters to denote the Frankfurt School and 'critical theory' with small cases when speaking about wider critical social and political theory.
5. Deconstruction is not critique, as Derrida famously argued (Derrida 1985, 3; see also Critchley and Mooney 1994, 365). There is explicitly no emancipatory alternative for either Foucauldian theorists or their successors, following Deleuze or Latour.

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