SECURITY EXPERTISE

PRACTICE, POWER, RESPONSIBILITY

Edited by Trine Villumsen Berling and Christian Bueger

NEW SECURITY STUDIES

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Security Expertise

Practice, power, responsibility

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Security Expertise

This volume brings together scholars from different fields to explore the power, consequences and everyday practices of security expertise.

Expertise mediates between different forms of knowledge: scientific and technological, legal, economic and political knowledge. This book offers the first systematic study of security expertise and opens up a productive dialogue between science and technology studies and security studies to investigate the character and consequences of this expertise. In security theory, the study of expertise is crucial to understanding whose knowledge informs security-making and to reflect on the impact and responsibility of security analysis. In science and technology studies, the study of security politics adds a challenging new case to the agenda of research on expertise and policy. The contributors investigate cases such as academic security studies, security think tanks, the collaboration between science, anthropology and the military, transnational terrorism and the ethical consequences of security expertise. Together they challenge our understanding of how expertise works and what consequences it has for security politics and international relations.

This book will be of particular interest to students of critical security studies, sociology, science and technology studies, and IR/security studies in general.

Trine Villumsen Berling is a Post-Doctoral Researcher at the Centre for Advanced Security Theory (CAST), University of Copenhagen, Denmark, and author of *The International Political Sociology of Security* (Routledge 2015).

Christian Bueger is Reader in international relations at Cardiff University, UK and co-author of *International Practice Theory: New Perspectives* (2014, with Frank Gadinger).

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Notes on contributors

Trine Villumsen Berling is a Post-Doctoral Researcher at CAST, University of Copenhagen, Denmark, and currently a visting scholar at the NATO Defense College in Rome, Italy. Her research interests include the sociology of expert knowledge and the theory/practice relationship. Publications include *The International Political Sociology of Security. Rethinking Theory and Practice* (Routledge, 2015), 'Practical reflexivity and political science: Strategies for relating scholarship and political practice' (2013, with Christian Bueger), *Political Science and Politics*, 46(1): 115–19, 'Beyond the gap: Relevance, fields of practice and the securitizing consequences of (democratic peace) research' (2007, with Christian Bueger), *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 10(4): 417–48, and 'Science and securitization: Mobilization of scientific facts, the authority of the speaker, and objectivation' (2011), *Security Dialogue*, 42: 5–6.

Christian Bueger is Reader in international relations in the Department of Politics and International Relations, Cardiff University, Wales. His research interests include contemporary piracy, international security and peacebuilding, theories of practice, and the sociology of (social) science. He is currently working on an ESRC-funded project titled 'Counter-piracy governance: a praxiographic analysis' [ES/K008358/1]. Major publications include *International Practice Theory. New Perspectives* (2014, with Frank Gadinger), Palgrave Macmillan, 'Making things known: Epistemic practice, the United Nations and the translation of piracy' (forthcoming, 2015), *International Political Sociology*, doi.10.1111/ips.12073, 'Pathways to practice: praxiography and international politics' (2014), *European Political Science Review*, 6(3), 383–406, 2014, 'Reassembling and dissecting: International relations practice from a science studies perspective' (2007, with Frank Gadinger), *International Studies Perspectives*, 8(1): 90–100, and 'Beyond the gap: Relevance, fields of practice and the securitizing consequences of (democratic peace) research' (2007, with Trine Villumsen), *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 10(4): 417–18. Further information is available at http://bueger.info.

Robert Evans is Reader in the School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University, Wales. Research interests include the nature of expertise and its use in policy decisions.

Publications include 'The imitation game as method for exploring knowledge(s) of chronic illness' (2013, with Helen Crocker) *Methodological Innovations Online*, 8(1): 34–52, *Rethinking Expertise* (2007, with Harry Collins), University of Chicago Press, 'The third wave of science studies: Studies of expertise and experience' (2002, with Harry Collins), *Social Studies of Science*, 32(2): 235–95 and 'Experiments with interactional expertise' (2006, with Harry Collins et al.), *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science*, 37(4): 656–74.

Gil Eyal is Professor in the Department of Sociology, Columbia University, USA. Research interests include sociology of intellectuals and knowledge, in particular as it relates to broader political processes such as Israeli Orientalism and Middle Eastern studies, and their ties to the government and the military. Publications include 'For a sociology of expertise: The social origins of the autism epidemic' (2013), *American Journal of Sociology*, 118(4): 863–907, *The Disenchantment of the Orient: Expertise in Arab Affairs and the Israeli State* (2006), Stanford University Press, 'Dangerous liaisons: The relations between military intelligence and Middle Eastern studies in Israel' (2002), *Theory and Society*, 31(5): 653–93, and 'From the sociology of intellectuals to the sociology of interventions' (2010, with Larissa Buchholz), *Annual Review of Sociology*, 36(1): 117–37.

Hugh Gusterson is Professor of Anthropology and International Relations at the George Washington University, USA. His main research interests include militarism, anthropology of science, public anthropology, international security and nuclear weapons. His publications include *Nuclear Rites: A Weapons Laboratory at the End of the Cold War* (1996), University of California Press, and *People of the Bomb: Portrait's of America's Nuclear Complex* (2004), University of Minnesota Press.

Saul Halfon is Associate Professor in the Department of Science and Technology in Society, Virginia Tech, USA. Research interests include expertise and the politics of demography and population, the international politics of food and risk, and science and law. His publications include 'Encountering birth: Negotiating expertise, networks, and my STS self' (2010), *Science as Culture*, 19(1): 61–77, *The Cairo Consensus: Demographic Surveys, Women's Empowerment, and Regime Change in Population Policy* (2006), Lexington Books, 'The disunity of consensus: International policy coordination as socio-technical practice' (2006), *Social Studies of Science*, 36(5): 783–807 and 'Reconstructing Iraq: Merging discourses of security and development' (2007, with Benjamin Sovacool), *Review of International Studies*, 33(2): 223–43.

Piki Ish-Shalom is Director, the Leonard Davis for International Relations and Associate Professor in the Department of International Relations, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel. He is the author of *Democratic Peace: A Political Biography* (2013), Michigan University Press.

Richard Jackson is Professor and Deputy Director at the National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies (NCPACS), University of Otago, New Zealand. Research interests include the nature, causes and resolution of organized forms of contemporary political violence. He has published 9 books, including *Contemporary Debates on Terrorism* (2012, with Samuel Justin Sinclair), Routledge, *Terrorism: A Critical Introduction* (2011, with Lee Jarvis, Jeroen Gunning and Marie Breen Smyth), Palgrave, and *Critical Terrorism Studies: A New Research Agenda* (2009, with Marie Breen Smyth and Jeroen Gunning), Routledge. His most recent publication is a research-based novel entitled, *Confessions of a Terrorist: A Novel* (2014), Zed.

James G. McGann is Director, Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program, Lauder Institute and Senior Lecturer of International Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, USA. His research interests include the challenges facing think tanks, policy-makers, international organizations and philanthropic institutions. Publications include *Global Think Tanks: Policy Networks and Governance* (2010), Routledge, *Think Tanks and Civil Societies: Catalysts for Ideas and Action* (2006, edited with Kent Weaver), Transaction, and *Think Tanks and Policy Advice in the United States: Academics, Advisors and Advocates* (2007), Routledge.

Thomas Osborne is a Professor in the School of Sociology, Politics and International Studies, University of Bristol, UK. His research interests include historical studies of social and cultural theory and the sociology of knowledge. Publications include 'Authority, convention and political community' (2013) *Journal of Political Power*, 6(1): 127–31, *The Structure of Modern Cultural Theory* (2008), Manchester University Press, 'On mediators: Intellectuals and the ideas trade in the knowledge society' (2004), *Economy and Society*, 33(4): 430–47 and *Aspects of Enlightenment* (1998), UCL Press.

Grace Pok is an independent web designer who lives in New York City, USA.

Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen is a Professor at the University of Copenhagen. He is currently on leave working on policy development in the Danish Ministry of Defence. Rasmussen has previously headed the Centre for Military Studies and the Danish Institute for Military Studies in Copenhagen. Research interests include risk theory and the changing nature of war, as well as the defence polices of Denmark, EU and NATO. He was published widely on security and defence matters, including *The Risk Society at War* (2006), Cambridge University Press.

Judith Reppy is Professor Emerita in the Department of Science and Technology Studies, Cornell University, USA. Research interests include military technology, government policies for science and technology and economics of innovation. Her publications include *Getting to Zero* (2001, edited with Catherine Kelleher), Stanford University Press, 'Classifying knowledge, creating secrets:

Government policy for dual-use technology' (2011, with Jonathan Felbinger) in Susan Maret (ed.) *Government Secrecy: Special Issue of Research in Social and Public Policy Perspectives* 19, 277–299, Emerald Publishing Group, 'Secrecy and knowledge production' (1999), *Peace Studies Program Occasional Papers* and 'Managing dual-use technology in an age of uncertainty' (2006), *The Forum: A Journal of Applied Research in Contemporary Politics*, 4(1).

Lisa Stampnitzky is Lecturer in Social Studies in the Committee on Degrees in Social Studies, Harvard University, USA. Research interests include the intersections of expertise, politics and policy, and the role of narratives in political discourse. Her publications include *Disciplining Terror: How Experts Invented 'Terrorism'* (2013), Cambridge University Press, 'Disciplining an unruly field: Terrorism studies and theories of scientific/intellectual production' (2011), *Qualitative Sociology*, 34(1): 1–19, and 'How does "culture" become "capital"? Cultural and institutional struggles over "character and personality" at Harvard' (2006), *Sociological Perspectives*, 49(4): 461–81.

Ole Wæver is Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Copenhagen, Denmark, Director of Centre for Resolution of International Conflicts, and founder and former Director of the Centre for Advanced Security Theory (CAST). His research interests include theories of international relations and security, sociology of science, religion in international relations, climate change, conflict analysis and the role of national identity in foreign policy. Books include *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (1998, Chinese 2002, Czech 2006, with Barry Buzan and Jaap de Wilde), Lynne Rienner, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security* (2003, Chinese and Persian translations 2009, with Barry Buzan), Cambridge University Press, *International Relations Scholarship Around the World* (2009, edited with Arlene B. Tickner), Routledge, *Climate change: Global Risks, Challenges and Decisions* (2011, with Katherine Richardson et al.), Cambridge University Press.

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1 Security expertise

An introduction

Trine Villumsen Berling and Christian Bueger

The study of security expertise

We live in an age of expertise. Expertise is a key resource in the formulation of policies and experts are powerful shadow players in the political process. We meet them every day in the news where they analyse and comment on recent events and trends. Experts identify what is important and what deserves attention. They are called upon to reduce uncertainty and to solve public or judicial controversies. They provide evidence for policy and frames of references to interpret trends, patterns or the behaviour of actors. Expertise mediates between different forms of knowledge: scientific and technological knowledge, legal and economic knowledge, or political knowledge.

When a crisis situation breaks out, whether it is a major accident, a catastrophic event, an environmental disaster, a terrorist attack or a military conflict, experts explain to us what has happened and what should be done next. They suggest different courses of action, and whether these are justified or not and what should be prioritized. Experts also provide means to identify what is dangerous and what is not. They develop indices and statistics, for instance, on state failure and military spending, and tell us what country or problem requires extra attention and care. Through risk assessments, experts decide whether an alert status should be moved from yellow to orange or even red, what priorities security strategies should focus on, whether you should take off your shoes at an airport security check point, or which country you should travel to and which you better avoid. These experts that define what is risky and what a threat is, what should be dealt with as a security issue and what not, are a special breed of experts – they are security experts. Some of these experts sit in universities and do security studies. Others work in think tanks or in the bureaucracies of foreign and defence ministries or international organizations, such as the EU, NATO or the UN. Understanding how security experts and processes of security expertise shape security practice is the task of our following discussions. We investigate the nature, institutionalization and practice of security expertise.

That security expertise has only recently become a major analytical focus is somehow surprising. Governments are surrounded by circles of security experts and security problems, such as civil wars, terrorism, international interventions

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