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within the school—which is the correct view. Wæver is the intellectual godfather of securitization theory. In Chapter 1, Floyd traces the “intellectual ancestors of securitization theory,” meaning Wæver’s intellectual ancestors, yet referring to the Copenhagen School (p. 41). John L. Austin is there, as is Jacques Derrida, Carl Schmitt, and Kenneth Waltz. But not a word about Buzan’s impact on Wæver’s thinking. The roots of securitization theory predate their cooperation, but the two worked together for over a decade. Neglecting Buzan is even stranger when the Copenhagen School is the subject, since he is its second central author.

The presence of Schmitt as an ancestor is likewise surprising. Michael Williams has successfully linked securitization theory to Schmitt’s work, but in the discussions on New Framework, Schmitt appeared only marginally. Others, like Hannah Arendt, surfaced more often, and Floyd admits on page 41 that Arendt should have been treated separately as one of the ancestors. (So why is she not?) If we include Williams in the Copenhagen School, Schmitt rightly belongs to the intellectual family, but if Wæver is the Copenhagen School, Schmitt is out. Therefore, defining the Copenhagen School is important. Bill McSweeney (not discussed by Floyd) coined the term in writing about the revised edition of Buzan’s People, States and Fear (1991) and the first three books of Buzan’s cooperation with Wæver in wider teams at the Copenhagen Peace Research Institute (COPRI): European Polyphony (1990); The European Security Order Recast (1990); and Identity, Migration and the New Security Agenda in Europe (1991). New Framework was next in line, and Regions and Powers (2003) thus far completed the series. The core of the Copenhagen School is this series of publications, centered on the cooperation between Buzan and Wæver, as facilitated by COPRI. The research seminars at COPRI came closest to a true school, and the publications contributed to a new phase in security studies—parallel to the development of critical security studies and works on human security. In my view, the school is defined by publications rather than persons. Both Buzan and Wæver have published a lot outside of the Copenhagen School, and many others, including Williams, have actively contributed to it.

In contrast to what she writes, Floyd does not pick up the moral dimension but adds it to securitization theory. By distinguishing between “referent object benefitting securitisation” from “agent benefitting securitisation,” she hopes to reveal intentions behind securitizing moves. But how to study motives? Al Gore is the obvious figurehead to follow in this account of American (lack of) environmental policies. His career is a typical example of “where you stand depends on where you sit.” From a reluctant U.S. government negotiator in the Kyoto deliberations to a Nobel Peace Prize winner as a nongovernmental actor, Gore illustrates the complexities of the moral dimension. In this book he mainly figures as a hero. This probably results from Floyd’s choice to let outcomes decide whether (de)securitization is morally permissible or prohibited (p. 33). If the outcome “improves human well-being,” (de)securitization is morally good.

This is a difficult benchmark and a hopeless criterion. By definition, the analyst decides what an outcome is; outcomes are constructed. Moreover, how is one to establish criteria for human well-being and for its improvement? Floyd’s solution is to study outcomes in terms of “consequentialist logic” in line with moral philosophy. It is worthwhile to follow her argument, but for a different purpose. The question “What moral judgments are made about (de)securitizations?” is a welcome addition to the existing framework for analysis. Taking a position in that judgment, however, is a political move beyond the analysis. Acknowledging that we cannot escape taking a position is different from embracing it.

In conclusion, Floyd’s revision of securitization theory conflates critical diagnosis of (de)securitizations with moral judgments about them. Although I share her concern that American governmental securitizations of the environment have hardly left the level of rhetoric, the separation of diagnosis and concern about its results needs to remain intact.


— Turan Kayaoğlu, University of Washington–Tacoma

Scholars of international relations, political theory, legal studies, the European Union, and globalization have been discussing the nature of sovereignty for several decades now. This volume brings diverse disciplinary voices together to explore the nature of sovereign authority; the goal is to develop a more sophisticated understanding of sovereignty and a common conceptual vocabulary.

This edited volume has several merits. Rather than looking for a grand theory, it explores how “sovereignty” has been claimed in diverse, and often contradictory, ways. The invocation of sovereignty is contingent: Sovereign authority claims are conditioned by the political realities of empire, state building, military intervention, and globalization. They are also informed by other “political” concepts like power, rule of law, the state, and just war. Short of a grand theory, in this context-dependent investigation, the contributors explore what the editors call the “grammar of sovereignty” and the reciprocal way in which this grammar has shaped and been shaped by political factors and ideas. The amazing ability of sovereignty to be adapted to varied legal and political contexts allows scholars to find its grammar in important legal and political debates,
to analyze its logic in operation, and to have a sophisticated understanding about its future.

While sovereignty is mainly “an argumentative source,” it is irreducible to a strategic, instrumentalist logic. Its meaning, function, and evolution cannot be isolated from the meaning, function, and evolution of other fundamental concepts of politics. This is an important point that the contributing authors make, and case studies throughout the volume illustrate well the coconstitution and coevolution of sovereignty and other political concepts like legitimacy, authority, and power. Likewise, as the authors demonstrate, the use of grammar is a good metaphor for helping one to understand aspects of sovereignty.

The volume, however, lacks a theoretical discussion and clarification of the function and structure of sovereignty. Metaphors cannot substitute for theoretical discussion; the language of “sovereignty speech,” and “sovereignty grammar” remain undeveloped and undertheorized compared with the “logic of consequences” or “logic of appropriateness.” The volume would have benefited from a systematic engagement with the “logic of argument” literature developed by constructivist international relations scholars.

The editors rightly avoid a meta-narrative and a grand theory for sovereignty, that is, conventional Westphalian sovereignty. That said, their exclusive focus on European history, thought, and practice—essentially Western and Northern Europe and the EU—unavoidably constructs a European narrative that reflects a mostly liberal understanding of politics. The volume embeds sovereignty’s past, present, and future in Europe’s past, present, and future. For example, Quentin Skinner examines British constitutional debates in which sovereignty claims shifted from the ruler to the people, and then to the state. Denis Branger discusses sovereignty claims within the debates about legal codification and centralization in seventeenth-century France. Several other chapters explore sovereignty grammar within the historical context of concepts like rule of law, just war, coercion, and legitimacy. All are discussed exclusively within European thought and practice. While some of these discussions develop new arguments and concepts (like Jens Bartelson’s argument for a “double bind” between sovereignty and self-defense), the discussion of sovereignty’s past continues to revolve around the usual themes and personalities. Bodin, Hobbes, Grotius, and Austin appear extensively. Hobbes alone is discussed at length in several chapters. These European debates are, of course, important for understanding sovereignty, but limiting the analysis to them provides only a partial picture.

Such limited focus on Europe is unfortunate for a volume seeking to expand the frontiers of scholarship on sovereignty. It is also unfortunate because it ignores the critical and postcolonial work that explores non-European actors and ideas, European and non-European interactions in the evolution of dominant ideas about sovereignty, and the ways in which European debates about sovereignty were informed by European colonialism.

The future of sovereignty also takes on a distinctly European cast. In several chapters devoted to the EU, the authors consider whether the EU experience is transforming sovereignty. These chapters are illuminating, but in several places the discussions oscillate between juridical and normative language and sometimes confound the two. Juridical debates involve subtle technical issues about constitutional and treaty-making powers and bureaucratic decision making in Brussels. The normative tone appears to suggest the EU as a paragon for the future, with its innovative structure, rule of law, and state accountability—arguably an example of “optimal sovereignty” or indeed optimal allocation of power (p. 9). For many contributors, these are the most important sovereignty debates and arguably hold the key to understanding its future.

It may be true that any debate about sovereignty is incomplete without a consideration of the EU. Yet as Stephen Krasner suggests in his chapter, I am not sure if European sovereignty debates can tell us anything about the present and future condition of sovereignty in other places. The EU debates seem removed from many issues central to sovereignty, like military intervention and the use of force. Several American foreign policy actions of the last decade—intervention in Kosovo, “giving” sovereignty back to Iraq, American involvement in Iraqi and Afghani constitution making, the rise of private American military companies, American drone attacks into sovereign states, the debates about Pakistan’s sovereignty in Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), and Guantanamo’s jurisdictional status in American and international laws—as well as the various debates associated with these issues, seem to be more consequential than the European debates in understanding sovereignty and assessing its future. Similarly, it is not clear what the EU debates tell us about issues like the International Criminal Court’s indictment of Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, the sovereignty of Taiwan and Hong Kong, and the status of the Palestinian Authority. The volume’s exclusive focus on the EU has, in a sense, marginalized these issues.

A few contributors do offer an insightful counterpoint to the volume’s liberal-Eurocentric orientation. Krasner, for example, questions the relevance of the EU experiment in understanding the future of sovereignty. He also brings issues of power into the debates. In a rather simplistic way, he categorizes 72 states with premodern sovereignty because they are “failed” or “badly governed,” thereby becoming a source of potential security risks for states with traditional sovereignty or, in the case of the EU, postmodern sovereignty. If the risks posed by these premodern sovereign states become realities, Krasner anticipates frequent military interventions and possibly a change in the rules of sovereignty. Concluding the volume, Martti
Koskeniemi provides an excellent review of the common themes and raises insightful questions about sovereignty. The volume establishes that sovereignty has been and will continue to be an integral part of the evolution of legal and political systems. Rather than having a grand theory, it advocates that we need to understand how sovereignty functions in a variety of contexts and how it interacts with other concepts central to politics and the political imagination. Sovereignty is a highly adaptive concept, varying by time periods, locales, and debates, all important points. The volume’s attempt at a cross- and multidisciplinary fertilization has the potential to expand the frontiers of scholarship on sovereignty. However, the book would have benefited from the inclusion of non-European issues, concerns, and ideas in order to expand this frontier even further.


— Gabriel (Gabi) Sheffer, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Migration and diasporic phenomena have become major factors in today’s international and domestic systems. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, these two phenomena deserve and are receiving more attention by publics, politicians, media persons, and academics than ever before. In this context, the people of India serve as a useful example of a population whose many migrations have created a worldwide diaspora. The Indian diaspora is one of the largest in history, and has been quite active in exerting its influence both in India and in its host lands abroad. From the ethnic, cultural, religious, economic, and political perspectives, it is a highly heterogeneous entity, like most other established diasporas. Despite various basic similarities to other diasporas, it has its own uniqueness. Its size, scope, and complexity make the Indian diaspora a noteworthy subject for academic research.

The present volume by Devesh Kapur is an impressive attempt to provide a fuller description, a deeper examination, and a more precise analysis of the Indian diaspora. A main focus is on the diaspora’s involvement both in its country of origin—where its influence is strongest—and its host lands, especially the United States. The author seeks to use the Indian case to draw some general analytical and theoretical conclusions about migratory and diasporic phenomena.

One of the significant points that Kapur emphasizes initially is that while academic studies of migration and diasporas have focused on the host lands, there are relatively few profound examinations of the implications of migration and diasporism for the countries of origin. More specifically, he asserts that the discussion of the political and economic consequences of migration and diasporism for the countries of origin is extremely deficient. He suggests that the main reason for this lack of knowledge is a shortage of available data on migrants and diasporas, a shortage that exists in the Indian case among others.

One of the main purposes of this book is to combine quantitative and qualitative analyses of diasporic communities in an attempt to better elucidate their political and economic relevance. To overcome what he regards as a shortage of understanding of these two phenomena, Kapur has collected, presented, and analyzed a substantial amount of data on the Indian case and others, and on their backgrounds and activities. Thus, in this book that focuses on Indian migrants and diasporans, he uses five special data sets from which he draws his conclusions: a survey of emigrants from India; a large survey of the Indian diaspora in the United States; a phone survey of 2,200 Indian households in the United States; data about the Indian political, administrative, business, and scientific elites; and a survey of Indian diaspora nongovernmental organizations in America.

The main chapters deal with the following: first, an analysis of what Kapur calls “The Missing Leg of the Globalization Triad,” that is, why it is so important to understand the significance of migration and diasporism for the homeland; second, the impacts of the various characteristics of diasporans on both their country of origin and host lands; third, the meanings and influences of three economic mechanisms—financial flows to India, global economic networks, and intermediary activities; fourth, the impacts of the flows of social and political ideas from the diaspora on the reshaping of the understanding, expectations, and norms of the political elites in the homeland; fifth, the impacts of the migration and diaspora on Indian politics and democracy; sixth, the impacts on India’s foreign policy and relations with host lands, especially the United States; and seventh, the differences in the intensity of nationalism among Indian migrants and diaspora members.

Inasmuch as the book offers too many findings and conclusions to be discussed here, I will mention only a few. Kapur is right in emphasizing the fact that the Indian diaspora is not a new phenomenon resulting from recent migration, but one with deep historical roots, similar to those of other diasporas, such as the Chinese, Jewish, and Armenian. His implicit argument is that the historical developments of a diaspora should be studied at length in order to construct a prudent explanation and categorical conclusions. He admits, however, that his findings are not so straightforward about the impact of history on the present situation of the diaspora.

Through his analytical framework, his empirical analysis, and the assessment of the comparison between the empirical findings and the existing theories, the author reaches some significant insights about diasporas’ influence on their homelands. For example, Kapur argues that