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Polarity in the Context of U.S.-China Competition: Reassessing Analytical Criteria

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Abstract

How can polarity be used as a pertinent conceptual asset to inform the description of the distribution of military capabilities amongst the most powerful states in the international system today, especially in consideration of U.S.-China competition? Using the military power approach to polarity, this article analyses the literature that emerged in the 2010s to critically examine this concept. In order to enhance the analytical value of polarity and propose verifiable indicators of it, this study draws on Thompson's lead-sector model as well as Posen's and Lee and Thompson's research on the military foundations of polarity. When doing so, we distinguish latent enabling capabilities (as a secondary dimension of polarity) and the actual military power that primarily characterises polarity as a concept. When following this operationalisation of polarity, we show that the international system is still unipolar because the U.S. has unmatched global power projection capabilities and first-rate economic and technological might to sustain its military forces. In other words, the current distribution of military capabilities in the system reflects

that the contemporary international system is still U.S.-led and unipolar and that China's rise is still too confined by regional dynamics to constitute a preface of a military-hegemonic rivalry at a global level.

Introduction

In International Relations,[1] debates about polarity have constantly been rearranged according to how the discipline and relevant literature perceived historical changes. Since the end of the Cold War's bipolar system, a myriad of polarity-related topics has been studied: from examinations of the consequences of the post-Cold War U.S.-led unipolar world on war and peace to writings attempting to study whether China's rise is redefining the system's structure (Krauthammer 1991; Layne 2012; Monteiro 2012; Allison 2020; Zala 2021). Questions about whether the system today is unipolar, bipolar or multipolar remain unsettled (Græger et al. 2022). Moreover, several influential works have questioned the overall usefulness of polarity to assess the multifaceted nature of the international system (Legro 2011; Wohlforth 2022). Some of those scholars even decided to reject the concept altogether, alleging that it is too narrow to grasp the most significant variables that shape international politics (De Keersmaeker 2015; Brooks and Wohlforth 2016).

The goal of this paper is to enhance the operationalisation of polarity as a central concept for understanding relative military power (backed up by latent power) at the systemic level of international politics. More specifically, we assess this recent branch of criticism about polarity and suggest an evidence-based qualitative pathway to make the concept more analytically operational for the examination of the relative distribution of military capabilities between the most powerful states in the system. Two research questions will guide this article. First, in what way can polarity operate as a pertinent conceptual asset that helps describe the distribution of military capabilities amongst the most powerful states in the international system today, especially in consideration of U.S.-China competition? Second, is polarity still a useful concept despite the recent backdrop of increasing criticism and, to some extent, neglect of an in-depth analysis about it?

The article does not aim to address the usefulness of the central concept as a causal mechanism for explaining war and stability in the international system. Therefore, questions related to whether a certain type of polar arrangement <u>tends to be more</u> peaceful or stable than others are not the key focus of this

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1 The text uses capital letters in International Relations while referring to the study area; international relations spelled with lowercase letters refers generally to international politics.

research. Instead, this article aims to assess the enduring feasibility, applicability and practicality of polarity to analyse the distribution of military capabilities in the international system today as well as the latent power that enables the construction, maintenance and strengthening of military power.

Given the focus on today's system, this article will also study whether China is changing the structure from unipolar to bipolar or if its rise is still too regionally confined to cause any significant change in the global polarity of the international system. Overall, the paper shows that, based on Posen's and Lee and Thompson's conceptual frameworks on command of the commons, the international system remains unipolar due to U.S. global military primacy. Measures of latent power inspired by Thompson's lead-sector approach also indicate a slight U.S. advantage over China, although the latter seems to be closing the gap in some specific innovation- and research-related areas.

This article is organised as follows. In the next section, we map out how different authors define polarity and choose our approach to the concept for this article. Then, we assess some of the most fundamental critiques of polarity that arose in the 2010s literature. After that, we trace possible indicators and analytical criteria to enhance our definition of polarity and apply the concept to describe the relative distribution of military power in U.S.-China competition as well as the latent power underlying it. Finally, we summarise the key results of this article in the conclusion.

Defining polarity

Scholars and policymakers have continuously expressed divergent and contradictory views about polarity, so there is hardly a consensus within the literature about what this key concept means and how to measure it. One of the few widely accepted premises is that polarity is used to determine the number of great powers in the international system. The myriad of scholars who have written about this subject can be divided into three groups contingent upon what they share in common regarding the definitions of polarity. These three groups are categorised as follows: first, the all-encompassing material approach, second, the inclusive approach and, third, the military power approach.

The *all-encompassing material approach* includes scholars such as Kenneth Waltz (1979), Christopher Layne (1993) Ikenberry, Mastanduno, Wohlforth (2011), Thompson (2018) and, to some extent, Michael Beckley (2018). They usually define polarity as a reflection of how states score compared to each other in multiple categories of power, namely, population, territory, economic wealth, military capabilities, technology and (sometimes) institutional maturity. It is noticeable that this branch of the literature considers polarity an objective metric of states' relative material capabilities.

Hal Brands (2016) and Benjamin Zala (2017) are the leading scholars of the *inclusive approach*. Unlike the all-encompassing material approach literature, they define polarity as more than a measure of states' relative material capabilities. For them, polarity also reflects a wider set of intangible variables such as ideological attractiveness and how other states perceive the role of the poles. Poles are not only militarily and economically superior to others, they also execute a social role in the system.

The military power approach has been proposed by Monteiro (2014) and, to a lesser extent, Barry Posen (2011). This approach suggests that polarity is a label for military power, not latent power, represented by the other components of power – including economic wealth – which can be converted into military capabilities (Mearsheimer 2001). As defined by this group of scholars, the only requirement is that the pole needs to have first-rate latent capabilities – a strong economy, innovation capacity, favourable geography, a relatively well-off population and so forth – to be able to sustain its military power. Still, polarity, according to this group, primarily measures the relative distribution of military capabilities.

For the purposes of this paper, the military power approach is adopted. This decision has implications of both a theoretical and technical character. From a theoretical standpoint, the use of a military-based definition of polarity implies that military power is an essential capability in inter-state relations, and that non-military variables of power are only as important inasmuch as they ultimately translate into military power. This military view of polarity does make sense especially when we follow the structural perspective on international relations.

As argued by structural realists, anarchy is the defining feature of the structure of the international system. The anarchical structure is defined by the absence of a higher authority above the states to enforce laws and norms of behaviour (Jervis 1978; Waltz 1979). In this environment, states possess offensive military capabilities which enable them to harm other states, making them potentially dangerous to each other. Given that states cannot be totally certain about the intentions of other states in an anarchic environment where they are militarily armed, especially considering that intentions may change radically, states tend to fear each other and their first and foremost concern becomes survival (Mearsheimer 1994-95). To assure survival and protect themselves from external threats, possessing military power is determinant. In other words, military capabilities are the *ultima ratio* of international politics (Mearsheimer 2001).

However, other theoretical strands would disagree with this perspective. On the contrary, they argue that capabilities in international politics are not an all-round factor, but instead, the utility of their components depends on sectorial

context. David Baldwin (2002) poses the question of fungibility of power. For Baldwin, military power does not necessarily attain successful results in all policy areas. Military power can rarely be used to gain influence in trade and is unlikely to persuade central banks to lower or raise their exchange rates (Drezner 2013). Thus, the structural realist emphasis on military power as a determinant factor of interstate relations is greatly exaggerated according to this perspective (Rosenau 2007). Although this thesis is plausible to a certain extent, it still fails to address the difference between strategic and security-related interests on the one hand, and auxiliary interests that are not directly associated with survival on the other hand (Mearsheimer 1994-95). When interests related to the survival and sovereignty of the state are at stake, military power remains one of the most – if not the most – indispensable assets for both deterrence and compellence. Thus, from a broader structural realist angle, treating the relative distribution of military capabilities as a fundamental object of analysis in International Relations enhances the study of international politics because of how important military power is for states to survive in an anarchical environment.

From a technical-conceptual standpoint, the non-military approaches to polarity present major deficiencies regarding their analytical criteria. The all-encompassing material approach's main deficiency is that it fails to specify the standard by which to measure the variety of capabilities incorporated in the model and indicate a method to merge them into an aggregate score of polarity (Schmidt 2005). To be considered a pole, should a state have superior scores in all components of power? Are some scoring factors more important than others? These questions are still largely unanswered. This problem is reinforced by an observable complexity that is revealed when the relative distribution of capabilities in each individual component presents different results. As Henry Kissinger noted, economic powers can be militarily weak, and military power does not always offset economic weaknesses (Waltz 1979).

The inclusive approach also has significant shortcomings. Brands and Zala did not outline a methodological proposition to measure the degree of ideological persuasion and social prestige of a pole, nor did they explain how the lack of such attributes would prevent a militarily strong and economically sophisticated state from being a pole. Therefore, the inclusive approach leaves the concept too vulnerable to subjective considerations rather than verifiable metrics. Although the increased role of subjective factors proposed by Brands and Zala is underscored as a distinguishing trait of their epistemologically interpretivist-oriented conception of polarity, their proposal does not quite fit our research, which is more predicated on a positivist epistemology and intends to address polarity as a measurable concept that describes an observable reality (Marsh & Furlong 2010).

On the other hand, the military approach is more history-grounded than the other two approaches. The data shows that when it comes to latent power, the U.S. was by far the most economically capable state on the eve of World War II, enjoying a higher share of global economic capacity than it does today. In 1937, the U.S. represented 35% of the absolute share of world manufacturing, while the Soviet Union had around 14%, Germany 11% and Japan 3.5%. Yet that period is considered multipolar (Posen 2011). The position that the USSR occupied in the global distribution of wealth was similar to that of Latin American countries: Soviet GNP per capita was approximately 25% of that of the wealthier Western countries in 1938 and it was at 18% in 1948. Latin American countries had comparable figures – 23% in 1938 and 16% in 1948 (Arrighi 2010). In 1945, the United States had a bigger share of the world GDP than in the 21st century; however, the post-World War II international system is largely defined as bipolar, because the Soviet Union had a powerful military capable of deterring America's ambitions worldwide, meaning that the concept of polarity reflects the distribution of military power and not latent capabilities (Monteiro 2014). Although the Soviet Union had income levels similar to Latin American countries, its military power was capable of limiting U.S. power projection worldwide.

However, GNP per capita metrics barely suffice for backing up the military-first conception of polarity. Throughout the Cold War, the Soviet Union had ups and downs. During the 1950s and 1960s, it could be argued that because of its cutting-edge achievements in space, the Soviet Union was not too far behind the United States technologically (Westad 2000). Nevertheless, despite acute Soviet economic decline and growing technological backwardness during the 1970s and (especially) the 1980s, the Cold War was only perceived to be over when Gorbachev relinquished strict military control over Eastern Europe and the Soviet military threat to Western Europe ceased to be a pressing concern (Wagner 1993). This corroborates the argument underlying Monteiro's and Posen's military-based conception of polarity: during the Cold War, the system was bipolar as long as the Soviet military threat to U.S. global interests stood firm.

Among the variety of reasons why the Soviet Union fell apart was its inability to compete with the United States economically and technologically, which left the former with few plausible options besides retrenchment (Patchen 1991; Brooks & Wohlforth 2000/2001). Fundamentally, the Soviet Union collapsed because its worn-out and resource-stressed latent power could no longer be translated into a technologically powerful military capable of competing against a wealthier and militarily advanced United States (Collins 2011; Wohlforth 2011). This historical evidence substantiates the thesis promoted by the military power approach to polarity: a pole needs top-notch economic capabilities to maintain and improve its military power, otherwise it may severely fall behind a peer competitor. But it

is possible to be militarily powerful and economically weak for a limited period, as the case of the Soviet Union displays. Latent power is a source of sustainable military strength, but it is not sufficient to be the determinant label of a pole.

Taking that into consideration, the conceptual body of polarity in our article rests on the military power approach. For the present scholarly work, latent power – meaning all non-military components of power (including technological prowess, economic capacity, geography and so forth) – are treated as enabling sources of military power. If states want to build and maintain sustainable and powerful military forces, they need top-tier latent power. However, latent power is not the primary defining label of a pole. States can be weak in latent power and strong in military power, even if for a limited period. Thus, military power is the number one defining variable of polarity. Essentially, polarity describes the relative distribution of military power among states in the system, providing a conceptual map to identify who the military great powers are.

Rising backlash: Assessing the fundamental critiques of polarity

Recently, especially in the 2010s, an increasing wave of criticism emerged to challenge the core assumptions and reasoning underpinning polarity. A handful of scholars called into question the inconsistencies and lack of operable metrics in the study of polarity, and some even suggested dropping the term altogether, alleging that its incongruences made it unfeasible and unworkable as an analytical asset.

This nuanced stream of criticism was relatively multifactorial. It focused on different, and sometimes unrelated, sustaining components of polarity. Nonetheless, this article will select and evaluate three types of criticism that can be considered a misconception or a misunderstanding of the core assumptions behind polarity to a certain degree. These are: first, *polarity as an all-explaining category*, second, *the overall utility of polarity as a conceptual asset*, and third, *objectivity, threshold and measurements*. Alongside that, we will also acknowledge the following two critiques that deserve rigorous scrutiny to reduce the susceptibility of the concept to misjudgment and subjectivity. These are: first, *treating polarity as a linear category*, and second, the debate on differentiating *regional dynamics from global dynamics*.

Polarity as an all-explaining category

A common criticism towards the polarity literature is that it has tended to reduce multicausal elements such as system stability and levels of conflict to a single variable, – that is, the number of great powers in the system – emphasising an univariate explanation that impoverishes the understanding of the complex nature of international politics (Thompson 2018). According to Legro (2011), the

significance of the distribution of material capabilities as an explanatory category should not be totally rejected, but other variables – including geography, alliances, arms race, regimes and norms – should have precedence over polarity. When the weight of those variables is considered, the influence of polarity seems to phase down in comparison (Legro 2011). Therefore, the literature has allegedly overstated the central role of polarity in shaping great power strategies, and it has used the number of great powers in the system as a single all-explaining variable that overshadows other explanations.

However, this criticism seems to overlook not only the diversity of approaches to polarity, but also some of the most influential scholarships that study the linkage between the number of great powers and other variables. Hopf (1991), for example, explained that the defence dominant balance during the Cold War deriving from the ability of the two superpowers to mutually destroy each other with nuclear weapons was more important than polarity in preventing a direct war between the United States and the Soviet Union. Despite criticising Waltz by asserting that bipolarity had little to do with the absence of direct war between the two superpowers, polarity remained an important concept in Hopf's analysis.

Moreover, Stephen Walt (2011) examined how geography, offensive capabilities, and aggressive intentions influence alliances in a unipolar world, suggesting that small and middle powers are more likely to ally with a distant unipole against their own regional rivals rather than create a broad coalition to balance against the superpower. This contradicts Waltz's (1979) and Mearsheimer's (2001) prediction of a global alliance to counter the power accumulated by the unipole. Walt relied on different variables besides polarity to explain regional powers strategy in a unipolar system. In short, the polarity literature is neither uniform nor does it share a homogenous line of research.

The overall utility of polarity as a conceptual asset

The most acute criticism of polarity questions whether the concept is helpful at all and even suggests the literature get rid of it. The outstanding and renowned work by Brooks and Wohlforth (2016) claims that polarity is blunt and ill-suited to capture change. According to them, the inconsistencies and confusions in the unipolarity literature suggests that an alternative approach would be more viable to explain America's shifting place in the world. Besides, polarity forces an all-or-nothing dichotomy that neglects the complexity of the leading variables of international politics. Instead of debating whether unipolarity is over or intact, it could be more fruitful to analyse how the rise of China, the resurgence of Russia and the challenges posed by non-state actors are making U.S. leadership more complicated. This criticism is in line with De Keersmaeker's (2015) assess-

ment. De Keersmaeker asserts that polarity does not help explain profound technological, military, economic, ideological, or geopolitical changes and challenges in the international system. It is only one factor among many, and probably not the most important one. Additionally, the previously mentioned scholar claims that polarity is self-serving: the description of today's world polar structure varies in conformity with biased national interests. It is no coincidence that most unipolarists are in America whilst multipolarists are usually dispersed across the world. Therefore, according to De Keersmaeker, polarity should be dropped as a conceptual instrument.

The aforementioned authors' criticism is somewhat misguided. In assuming that polarity is too limited to capture the multilayered dynamics of international change, the authors assign polarity a role that goes beyond what concepts can do. Polarity is a concept – that is, a cognitive representation – designed to describe and give meaning to an observed reality, which is the number of great powers in the international system (Bousso, Poles & Cruz 2013; McGregor 2018). In other words, polarity is a passive describer rather than a theory (Kelly 2017). Studying the causes of international change or shifts in the number of great powers is a different endeavour, generally suited for theory, which relies on concepts but offers broader causal propositions for the operation of a particular domain (Mearsheimer & Walt 2013). Nevertheless, there is no indication on how the effort of building a theory that measures or tests the causal importance of polarity at the systemic level would invalidate the concept altogether.

Brooks and Wohlforth do make a great point when declaring that polarity should not force an exclusive all-or-nothing dichotomy. However, their proposal for an alternative approach to polarity possesses inconsistencies and unclarities that hamper its analytical viability. They adapt Buzan's classification and depict the current system as a 1 + Y + X world, where 1 represents the superpower – the United States – that coexists with a rising superpower – China – represented by Y, and an undefined number of great powers represented by X (Brooks & Wohlforth 2016). Brooks and Wohlforth failed to make indispensable stipulations to elucidate their conceptions: what are the specific material capabilities that distinguish great powers from rising superpowers? At what point do great powers become rising superpowers and do rising superpowers reach the status of actual superpowers? Without these explanations, Brooks and Wohlforth's proposal lacks rigor and has no objective benchmark for the most essential concepts of their approach (superpower, rising superpower and great power), weakening the applicability of the model outside the scope of imaginative abstraction without much basis in material reality. In this model, it would be up to the imagination of each individual analyst to arbitrarily set the standards that characterise a superpower, a rising superpower and a great power.

One of the most valid criticisms about the polarity literature is the habit of analysing polar structures through linear angles, neglecting the presence of variation within the same structure (Thompson 2018). For example, Cold War bipolarity lasted from 1945 to 1989. However, bipolarity did not always operate the same way throughout this period. From the 1970s onwards, the United States was cementing an economic transition based upon high-tech innovation, including fiber optics, internet, commercial satellites and personalised computers rather than manufacturing. At the same time, the Soviet Union was unable to capitalise on those trends and remained increasingly left behind in economic competition (Reynolds 2010). This backwardness eventually led to the rise of Gorbachev and reformers to power, characterised by a cognitive restructuring modulated on the rejection of Stalinist-like institutions and growth-impairing policies (Kotkin 2001; Snyder 2003). This period stands in a stark contrast to past Soviet achievements based on megaprojects in aeronautics, space and nuclear weapons, including the launch of Sputnik. Hence, bipolarity did not operate linearly, and it did not always mean near-parity in latent and military power between the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

Another point that deserves serious scrutiny is the difference between regional and global polarity. In many instances, regional security complexes do acquire a substantial degree of autonomy from the global system. Most threats travel more easily over short distances than long ones, establishing security interdependence in regionally based clusters with their own dynamics (Buzan & Wæver 2003). Although regions are porous and open to interventions from global powers, sometimes this openness is not exploited too frequently, which generates a prevalence of strictly local security issues (Kelly 2007). This creates a sort of regional polarity detached from the global structure, entailing a difference between the regional and the global system.

It is important to realise that polarity often refers to the distribution of power at a global level rather than a regional level (Wæver 2022). If a regional struggle does not extend into the global level to cause a system-wide disturbance, it does not affect the broad structural arrangement of international politics or the polarity of the system (Tizzard 2017).

Objectivity, threshold and measurements

Thompson writes that 'we simply lack consensual understanding of what counts for power purposes or where the threshold for promotion might lie even' (Thompson 2018: 15). The lack of consensus on how to measure polarity and which capabilities should be prioritised for analytical purposes is a considerable challenge for the furthering of the usability of the concept beyond an abstract or intuitive latitude.

When seeking to fill that gap, Thompson proposed a quantitative threshold to classify different polar structures. For example, in unipolarity, one state holds more than 50% of available power. In bipolarity, two states hold no less than 50% of the available power, with each holding at least 25%. In multipolar systems, power is concentrated in three or more states possessing at least 5% of available power, but with no states holding more than 25%. To identify the leading poles, Thompson suggests a three-indicator index consisting of energy consumption, energy consumption per capita and power projection capabilities. The third indicator is composed of naval, air and missile assets, including aircraft carriers, nuclear attack submarines and strategic bombers.

The central shortfall of Thompson's metric rests on the complication of strictly quantifying the modern-day military foundations of a pole, which may result in misleading propositions. For example, some sophisticated weapons systems and components, especially those related to software, are not always clearly quantifiable. Quantification can understate the significance of such components, because they tend to be in the background of hardware and require a detailed cognisance of the complex systems within which they are incorporated. For instance, how feasible is it to quantify the stealth technology and the system of advanced radar and sensors that set the F-35 apart from other fighter jets (Osborn 2021; Congressional Research Service 2022a)? In those cases, a qualitative assessment seems more befitting than a quantitative analysis to compare and judge the military technological capabilities of poles. Although coming up with agreed-upon objective measures of a pole is a necessary undertaking, Thompson's proposal underperforms in that regard.

Therefore, one of the enduring challenges is making polarity more reliant upon objective, verifiable indicators that are permeable to change when the context demands a different approach to military power. To address these challenges, the existing literature can be a guiding light towards reformed propositions.

Measuring polarity: Reassessing analytical criteria to enhance the concept of polarity in the context of U.S.-China competition

We understand polarity as a label for depicting primarily the distribution of military power. As suggested in this paper, top-notch economic conditions are required for a state to be a strong and technologically sophisticated military power because latent power is an enabler of military power. The building blocks of latent power in the 21st century are manifested through the variables that reflect a country's capacity to discern the appropriate sociotechnical production choices to augment its power in the face of international competition and prospective challenges, as well as to develop the necessary technology, human resources and physical infrastructure to dominate the processes of innovation (Tellis et al. 2000).

Thompson's analytical model – characterised by a strong Schumpeterian tendency that emphasises the role of organisational, technological and infrastructural novelty as the fundamental impulse of capitalism – asserts that mastery of the current and emerging lead sectors of the global economy is the latent foundation of system leadership (Thompson 2020). The Fordist mode of production and innovations in the aerospace, automobile and petrochemical industries, for example, made the U.S. the chief economy from the 1930s to the 1980s. Then, the role of the U.S. in pioneering the information and communication industries enabled it to maintain its global economic primacy from the 1990s until today.

The premise behind the leading-sector approach is that states that acquire proficiency and prominence in cutting-edge technological and productive innovations that transform how critical human activities are conducted tend to be economic leaders in the international system. In this case, it is relevant to analyse U.S.-China competition in terms of relative latent power as manifested in leading sectors of the global economy, because latent power is the enabling source of military power according to the military approach to polarity.

At the beginning of the 21st century, analysts started identifying an array of emerging disruptive technologies that had the potential to revolutionise the global economy. This transformation can be defined as the fourth industrial revolution and is based on the confluence of emerging technological breakthroughs covering a wide range of fields such as artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, the internet of things (IoT), autonomous vehicles, 3D printing, nanotechnology, biotechnology, materials science, energy storage and quantum computing (Schwab 2016). Given that these technologies can be considered the emerging leading sectors of the global economy and might have a substantial impact on military capabilities – from precision striking by unmanned aerial vehicles and autonomous weapons to command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance systems – it is possible to assume that mastering them will be decisive for any state intending to be at the top of the system hierarchy in relative latent power, and possibly military power (Hammes & DiEuliis 2020).

One way to measure relative latent power in emerging lead-sectors is patents. Although quantifying the objective quality of patents is an imprecise, complicated science, the number of protections granted to an invention can offer a basic – but significant – insight into some areas of innovation.

Patents granted by the European Patent Office, Japan Patent Office and United States Patent and Trademark Office are a source of more reliable data than those coming from China. China's National Intellectual Property Administration equates patent generation with innovation, and its development strategy called for the government to bolster the number of domestically filed patents,

which resulted in patents being granted for small and incremental changes compared to entirely new innovations. This inflates Chinese patent numbers. Moreover, given the low regulatory threshold for application and granting, patent data from China might not be as reliable as data from U.S., European and Japanese offices, which are stricter in terms of quality evaluation standards and more expensive to apply for (China Power Team 2016; Liang 2012).

Figure 1. Patents granted by the European, Japanese and U.S. patent offices to U.S. and China inventions in artificial intelligence-shaped technologies from 2009 to 2019

Source: Five IP Offices Statistical Data Resources (2020)

As Figure 1 demonstrates, inventors from the U.S. have been granted more intellectual property protection in artificial intelligence-related technologies than inventors from China. From 2009 to 2019, the trend was largely more favourable to the United States.

Moreover, as illustrated by Table 1, American companies are single-handedly widespread as top providers in AI, IoT, big data, 3D printing, and biotechnology and nanotechnology. Meanwhile, Chinese companies do constitute serious competitors in the market areas they are present in, but they only unilaterally dominate solar PV.

In the semiconductor industry, manufacturing capabilities have remained concentrated among key industry players located in South Korea and Taiwan. Samsung and TSMC are the only companies manufacturing semiconductors at the most advanced process nodes – specific generation of the manufacturing process named according to its smallest feature size (Eurasia Group 2020). China remains far behind the global cutting edge of semiconductor manufacturing.

Table 1. Top Global Technology Providers in Fourth Industrial Revolution-Related Sectors

AI	IoT	Big Data
Alphabet (U.S.)	Alphabet (U.S.)	Amazon Web Services (U.S.)
Amazon (U.S.)	Amazon (U.S.)	Dell (U.S.)
Apple (U.S.)	Cisco (U.S.)	HP Enterprise (U.S.)
IBM (U.S.)	IBM (U.S.)	IBM (U.S.)
Microsoft (U.S.)	Microsoft (U.S.)	Microsoft (U.S.)
Blockchain	Oracle (U.S.)	Oracle (U.S.)
Alibaba (China)	PTC (U.S.)	Splunk (U.S.)
AWS (U.S.)	Salesforce (U.S.)	Teradata (U.S.)
IBM (U.S.)	**5G**	**3D Printing**
Microsoft (U.S.)	Huawei (chip and network) - (China)	3D Systems (U.S.)
Oracle (U.S.)	ZTE (China)	Exone Company (U.S.)
Robotics	Intel (U.S.)	HP (U.S.)
KUKA (China)	Qualcomm (U.S.)	Stratasys (U.S.)
Alphabet/Waymo (U.S.)	**Drones**	**Biotechnology and Nanotechnology**
GM (U.S.)	3D Robotics (U.S.)	Appel Sciences (U.S.)
Tesla (U.S.)	DJI Innovations (China)	Agilent (U.S.)
Solar PV	Boeing (U.S.)	Intel (U.S.)
Jinko Solar (China)	Lockheed Martin (U.S.)	
JA Solar (China)	Northrop Grumman (U.S.)	
Trina Solar (China)	Yuneec (China)	

Source: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (2021)

One of the fields in which China has shown consistent advances is quantum science, displayed by the launch of the world's first quantum satellite in 2016 (Micius). This may enable its transformation into a global technological powerhouse, especially in areas where quantum technology has relevant application: imaging, navigation, meteorology, information processing and energy (Kania & Costello 2018). Nevertheless, U.S.-based Google and IBM have been at the forefront of the first wave of quantum computers (LaPedus 2021).

Scientific publications and cultivation of qualified human capital in China seem to be heading to a prominent direction. In 2020, China had 32,925 research publications about AI, maintaining the first position, seconded by the U.S., which had 14,944 (OECD AI 2021). Additionally, since 2007, China has outproduced the United States in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) graduates. In 2019, Chinese universities awarded 49,498 Ph.D. degrees in STEM, whereas the U.S. produced 33,759 Ph.D. graduates (Zwetsloot et al. 2021). Approximately 45 percent of China's STEM graduates come from elite universities. However, according to the QS Rankings 2020, the U.S. is home to the first (MIT), second (Stanford)

and fifth (University of California, Berkley) universities with the best overall score in engineering and technology. The highest ranked Chinese university (Tsinghua University) is ranked ninth. Besides, as the Highly Cited Article Index reveals, from 2010 to 2018 U.S. publications were more cited and impactful than China's (National Science Board 2022). Other great researchers such as Brooks and Wohlforth (2015-16) have compared U.S. and China performances in royalties and license fees for innovative technology registration and in the geographic distribution of Nobel prizes winners in science. In their own conclusion, the United States maintains a competitive edge in scientific and technological proficiency over China in the aforementioned indicators, which is a source of advantage in the knowledge-based economy undergoing a fourth industrial revolution.

Although limited and far from exhaustive, Thompson's lead-sectors approach can provide an elementary picture of the relative distribution of latent power between the U.S. and China in the emerging paramount areas of the global economy. In this preliminary analysis, the U.S. does not appear to be declining, but China's performance suggests it has the required latent capabilities to match and even surpass the U.S. in critical fields, including quantum computing, expertise and research.

To measure the military foundation of polarity, Barry Posen (2003) proposed the understanding of the command of the commons – that is, getting more use out of the sea, air and space than one's adversaries, and having the ability to project military power and engage in trade at times and places of its choosing, while denying the same privilege to others. According to Posen, the command of the commons is built on four dimensions:

1. Command of the sea: based upon superior stealth submarine fleets, aircraft carriers, amphibious assets and destroyers.
2. Command of the air: depends on precision-guided weapons and stealth aircraft that can strike out of the opponent's air defence range, as well as reconnaissance and electronic warfare capabilities.
3. Command of space: formed by reconnaissance, and navigation and communication satellites to conduct operations worldwide.
4. Infrastructure: ports, bases, airlifters, large-scale ships to transport assets, and regional commands to watch over the globe.

Sameer Lalwani and Shifrinson (2011) consider that the modern commons also include cyberspace.

According to Lee and Thompson, specialisation in long-distance projection and command of the commons is a defining feature of global powers:

> These states build powerful navies, air forces, and command and control capabilities, wielding influence by gaining command of the com-

mons. The vast majority of international trade and communication flows through the oceans and skies. Controlling global sea lanes thus confers a great deal of influence on such states. In times of conflict, global powers can shut off access to trade to their enemies, forcing costly economic adjustments abroad. Sea power is also immensely useful for the construction of effective military alliances. Reach capabilities can be used to help allies join distant battles (Lee & Thompson 2017).

They proposed the following indicators to compare the relative capabilities of global powers: naval power, measured in aircraft carriers and nuclear submarines, and air power, measured in long-range strategic bombers, long-term military satellites and long-range land-based nuclear missiles. It is a similar but simpler analytical model compared to the one that Posen suggested.

Currently available data on military power displays U.S. quantitative superiority over all other major powers in the number of aircraft carriers, cruisers and destroyers possessed by each, as Figure 2 shows.

As demonstrated by Figure 3, this superiority extends to submarine fleets for nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) and nuclear-powered cruise missile submarines (SSGN).

However, the sheer quantity of surface combatants and submarines is an unreliable metric of naval power for command of the commons. Many factors other than ship and submarine numbers seem to have a greater contribution to naval capability, including types of ships, submarines and aircraft, the sophistication of sensors, weapons and C4ISR systems, networking capabilities, logistics and maintenance, doctrine and tactics, the level and quality of the education and training of personnel, and the plausibility of exercises (Congressional Research Service 2022b).

The United States' qualitative superiority is noticeable in many critical areas of command of the commons-wise naval power. Compared to their Chinese counterpart, U.S. Navy aircraft carriers are larger, nuclear-powered (giving them greater cruising endurance than a conventionally powered carrier), able to embark and operate a larger number of aircraft, and launch fixed-wing aircraft using catapults, which allows those aircraft to have a greater range/payload capability than that of aircraft launched with ski ramps. Liaoning, China's first aircraft carrier, entered service in 2012. China's second and first indigenously built aircraft carrier, Shandong (type 002), entered service in December 2019. They both launch fixed-wing aircraft using a ski ramp at the ship's bow, one of the factors which puts them behind U.S. Navy carriers (Congressional Research Service 2022b).

Figure 2. Quantity of Surface Combatants by Country

Source: China Power Team at https://chinapower.csis.org/china-naval-modernization/
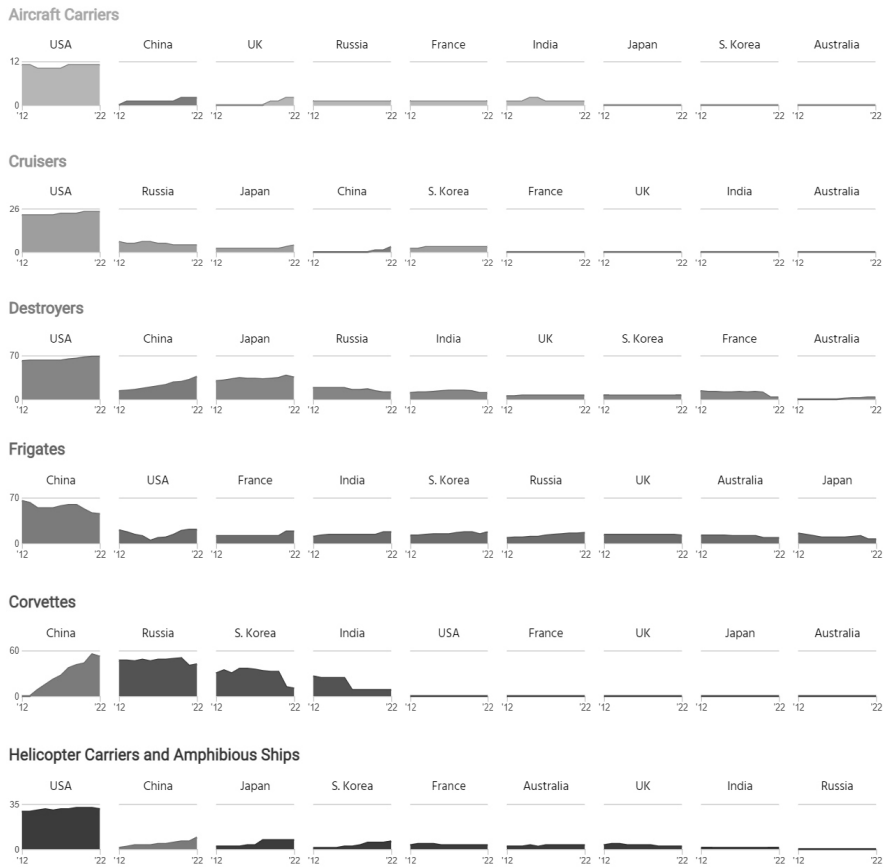
All of China's six SSBNs are Jin-class submarines (International Institute for Strategic Studies 2021). One of the main challenges for the PLAN to establish a credible sea-based conventional and nuclear deterrence is operational stealth. The stealth and effectiveness of the Jin-class has been put into question due to the amount of radiated noises it generates in operation (China Power Team 2020).

The Type 094 is reported to be two orders of magnitude louder than current U.S. and Russian boomers, and according to the U.S. Office of Naval Intelligence, the Type 094 is noisier than the Delta III SSBN first launched by the Soviet Union in 1976. The Type 094A variant is believed to feature design improvements aimed at reducing the submarine's detectability (Funaiole et al. 2021).

This would make the Chinese submarine more vulnerable in antisubmarine warfare, which prioritises detection and tracking of adversary SSBNs.

Figure 3. Quantity of Submarines by Country

Source: China Power Team at https://chinapower.csis.org/china-naval-modernization/
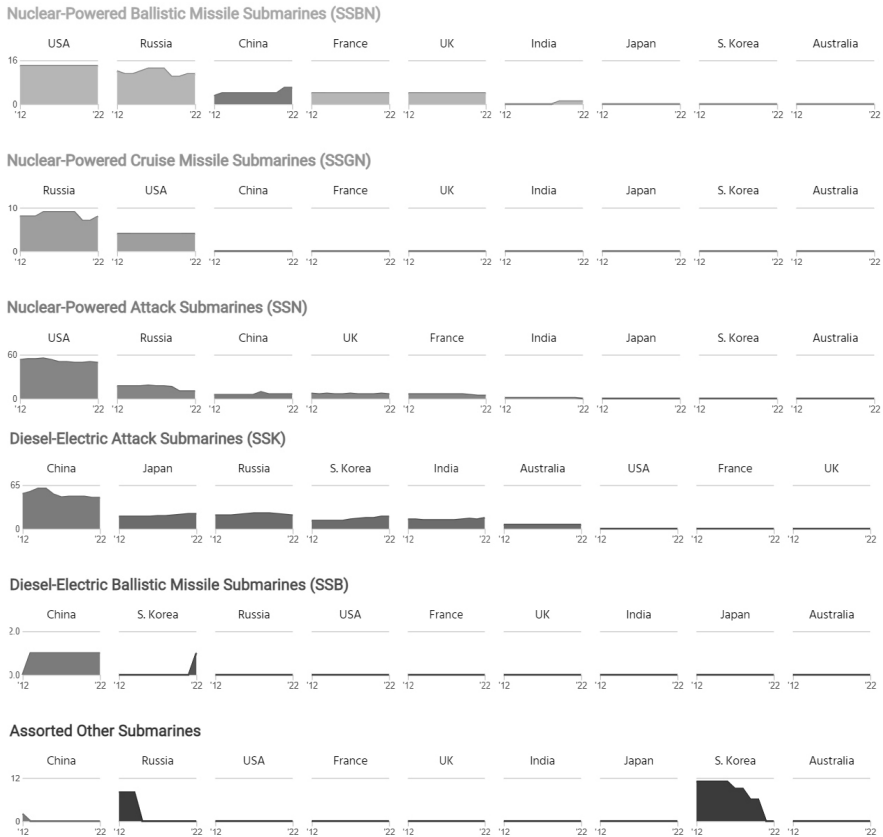
In addition, China has faced some lingering difficulties in producing certain domestically manufactured military aviation equipment. Between 2015 and 2019, China was the fifth world's largest arms importer, behind Saudi Arabia, India, Egypt and Australia. During this period, Russia supplied approximately 75 percent of China's total arms imports, including aircraft and engines (China Power Team 2021b).

Data on raw naval capabilities that make commanding the maritime commons possible points to a significant qualitative lag between U.S. military power and China's, especially in aircraft carriers and submarines, two core instruments of power projection. The U.S. superiority in infrastructure of command is even more patent. While the U.S. has military facilities and strategic commands spanning all continents of the world, China's first military base abroad, in Djibouti, was built alongside U.S., Japanese and French forces (IISS 2021). Currently,

among the key challenges confronting China's ability to be ranked as a global military counterpower to the United States, two of them appear to stand out.

The first is related to systems integration. The increasing complexity of systemic integration of components along with testing and verification of those components has extended the requirements for comprehensive expertise and know-how and for tacit knowledge-based organisational experience for designing weapons systems, shrinking the backwardness advantage that allowed Germany to emulate and match British naval capabilities pre-World War I (Gilli & Gilli 2018-19). If aviation design up to the 1930s consisted primarily of aerodynamics structure and efficient hydraulic pilot controls, from World War II and the rise of electronics during the Cold War onwards, aircraft acquired new weapons and more technologically sophisticated components in a structurally coherent system which required firms to learn and develop new skills in a variety of disciplines and processes (Johnson & Hobday 2003). Nowadays, know-how about weapons systems is embedded in the collective memory and experiences of defence organisations, which severely inhibits its diffusion (Johnson 2021). The reliance on Russian technology for some of China's advanced defence systems remains a reality, as illustrated by many J-20 stealth fighters which still employ Russian Saturn AL-31 engines. In 2019, Russian defence firm Rostec accused China of illegally reverse engineering a wide range of Russian weaponry and military hardware, including aircraft engines, Sukhoi planes and air defence systems (Simes 2019). This suggests that China is struggling to close the military-technological gap with the United States in state-of-the-art base of indigenous innovation for advanced weapons systems (Raska 2019). This hampers China's ability to contest U.S. command of the global commons in the air and shatter the U.S.-led system.

The second challenge concerns geography. Unlike the United States, which is effectively isolated from other powerful states in Eurasia by two oceans and surrounded by weak unthreatening neighbours, China's rise is shaped by a regional environment crowded with potential adversaries who are suspicious of its aggrandisement efforts (Shifrinson 2020). The potential for multifront conflicts and strategic encirclement characterises the regional geography surrounding China (Ross 1999). The so-called first island chain and its outer ring is relatively encircled by U.S. military facilities in South Korea, Japan and Australia (Kaplan 2010). Other regional states such as Singapore and Indonesia are also wary of China's quest for regional leadership, as evidenced by the first's building of a pier at its Changi Naval Base to accommodate visiting U.S. aircraft carriers, and Indonesia's destruction of allegedly encroaching Chinese fishing boats on Indonesian waters (Roy 2020). China's land-based territorial disputes with India also diverts Chinese military resources away from the Indo-Pacific theatre (Krepinevich 2017). Moreover, India's centrality in the Indian Ocean poses particular problems for China's su-

premacy in the Indo-Pacific. India's advantage in the Indian Ocean area is manifested by shorter lines of communication to its own bases and resources, whereas China, in case of a conflict, would have to deploy naval forces through dangerous chokepoints and cope with uncertain logistical support (Brewster 2016).

Threats are a function of geography, offensive capabilities and perceived aggressive intentions (Walt 1987). China's military buildup in the South China Sea and the East China Sea in the vicinity of other regional states is likely to be interpreted as a major threat. For Taiwan, the threat might be existential. Therefore, regional states turn to the U.S., located on the Western Hemisphere, to balance against China's aspirations, given that China's proximity, as well as its growing offensive capabilities, could facilitate military aggression against them. The QUAD partnership between the United States, Australia, India and Japan is a possibly interesting illustration of Walt's alliance theory.

Nevertheless, China's A2/AD capabilities could inflict damaging costs onto U.S. forces. A RAND Corporation study showed that Chinese forces would enjoy the advantage of proximity were a crisis or war against the United States to break out in the immediate periphery of the Chinese mainland. In spite of that, the longer the forces moved away from the mainland, the more Chinese advantages would shrink (Heginbotham et al. 2015). As James Lebovic (2017) puts it 'China makes for a formidable opponent in any battle fought in and around the Chinese mainland but lacks air and naval power to extend its global reach'. In summary, the data indicates that the world today is unipolar, led by the U.S., which has unmatched military power projection capabilities and first-rate economic and technological might to sustain its military forces.

Still, there may be dissenting perspectives regarding the interpretation of the data. According to Øystein Tunsjø (2018), the world today is bipolar, because the two top states – the United States and China – are much more powerful than any third state, therefore, the structure of the international system has recently changed from unipolarity to bipolarity again. China is not as powerful as the United States and is far from having similar global power projection capabilities. The Soviet Union was never as powerful as the United States during the Cold War. It only deployed its first aircraft carrier in the 1970s and had no power projection capabilities in the aftermath of the Second World War. Despite this power disparity, scholars and practitioners – including Kenneth Waltz (1964) and Reynolds (1992) – considered the Soviet Union a superpower composing a bipolar structure alongside the United States because both were much more powerful relative to all other states.

In Tunsjø's analysis, the power gap between the second and third ranked power is more important than the one between the former and the leading state when it comes to determining the polarity of the system. Thus, Tunsjø con-

cludes that the current structure of the international system is bipolar. However, Tunsjø overlooks the role of geography in each context. Although China's economy is stronger, geography and military power make its status much more precarious compared to the Soviet Union in the Cold War. The Soviet Union had mostly a weak economy, but enough military power to undermine U.S. interests in Eurasia. Not only was the Soviet Union a land-based hegemon in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, but it also had some footprint in East Asia. Geography combined with its military capabilities made the Soviet Union a global rival of the United States. The geographical spread of the Soviet Union – from Eastern Europe in the west of its territory and the Middle East in the south to China and Japan in the east – made it a primary factor of security considerations in different areas. Operating from internal lines of communication, the USSR was a power to be reckoned with in Europe, Asia and the Middle East. It was not equally powerful everywhere, nor was its power unchallenged. Still, the Soviet Union was a continental force that transcended different regional boundaries (Dibb 1986). China, on the other hand, has no similar continental or maritime hegemony in its region.

Adopting Tunsjø's definition of the current system as bipolar would ignore the significant disparity between the U.S. and China in military power, and such disparity was not as vivid during the Cold War given the Soviet Union's geography and military capabilities. By applying the military conception of polarity, we can identify that geography was largely an enabler of the military capabilities of the Soviet Union. For China, geography is more of a hindrance that constrains China's power projection capabilities to one regional sphere.

Consequently, it is also important for analytical models that deal with polarity to consider the possibility of variation. Some processes and definitions are generalisable; for example, the concept of polarity is a category for describing the distribution of military power and identifying the top states in this domain. But some variables that act to produce a certain outcome in a given circumstance might not operate the same way (or at all) in a different context (Tilly 1995). In this case, although America and China are significantly stronger than all other states in the system, there is a massive disparity between both that makes a Cold War analogy too imprecise. China does not have the partial military interregional hegemony that the Soviet Union had, nor does it have the same geographical extension in Eurasia to harm U.S. military power. Hence, we argue that the world today is still unipolar.

Conclusion

The measure proposed in this article to make polarity more operational can inform scholars and practitioners about the current state of the relative distribu-

tion of military power in the world, as well as the latent power that enables it. The U.S. is still ahead of China in military competition according to indicators of power projection capabilities proposed by Posen and Lee and Thompson. Economically and technologically, based on a leading-sector model tailored for the analysis of fourth industrial revolution areas, U.S. superiority is also present. China has accomplished some successful results in research, expertise and mastery of certain innovation areas, such as quantum science. However, the U.S. has the highest-ranked universities, the highest-cited articles, the main top global providers of emerging technologies, and has the edge over China on patents and royalties for innovative technology.

We still live in a unipolar world where the U.S. has unmatched global power projection capabilities. Unipolarity is not omnipotence. The rise of regional powers and second-tier competition is still possible under a unipolar system. Unipolarity does not imply the end of all conflicts or the absence of complex state and non-state actor-driven challenges for the unipole and for the international system. Unipolarity simply means that there is no military-hegemonic rivalry at a global level (Wohlforth 1999; Jervis 2011). Regional powers can operate beyond their region sometimes, but their reach will be very limited compared to that of the United States. As long as their military-technological capabilities for power projection and infrastructure of command reflected in military bases around the world remain far inferior to those of the U.S., and their geography does not enable much extra-regional extension to harm U.S. interests worldwide, the world is likely to remain unipolar.

Polarity is not exclusive. It cannot by itself explain political, technological, economic, ideological, geopolitical or even military-technological transformation in the system. Despite this, knowing the relative distribution of military power in the world and keeping track of the indicators that matter is elucidating. It allows us to know who the great powers are, or who the superpower is, and whether the rising power poses a military global threat or is, at the moment, circumscribed by regional challenges. This is not an all-or-nothing dichotomy. It is more of a description of each state's military power projection capability, which coexists with the enabling economic power that underpins it and the favourability or disadvantages provided by geography.

There are some questions that need further study in the literature, especially regarding the regional and global differences of a structure. When do regional frictions and wars turn into system-wide disturbances that have the potential to alter the structural arrangements of the international system? In summary, when do regional conflicts acquire the ability to change global polarity? Overall, studying polarity through categories that can be objectively defined, without overstating or understating its role as a causal mechanism, can

be a source of an interesting understanding about the military hierarchy in the international system.

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Acknowledgments

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Energy Security in Security Studies: A Systematic Review of Twenty Years of Literature

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Abstract

Energy security has clear relationships with national security – historically, semantically, and practically. This exploratory study offers a quantitative and qualitative content analysis of 43 academic articles focused on energy issues, published in five international security studies journals – International Security, Security Dialogue, Security Studies, Contemporary Security Policy and Survival – from 2001 to 2020. The study identifies the main energy themes covered in the articles and the authors' demographics. The paper concludes that the coverage of energy issues has been quite sporadic and largely underexplored in security studies. The essence of the debates over energy issues has not changed much since the energy crises of the 1970s – it remains predominately state- and Western-centric with a primary focus on oil and nuclear power. The crude oil price surge because of supply disruptions from the Middle East is still viewed as a main threat to energy security. Similarly, international armed conflicts, domestic instability and nuclear proliferation are prioritised among the most critical outcomes of energy insecurity. The primary public policy responses to threats to energy security still focus on foreign policy, diversification of suppliers and energy sources, domestic energy efficiency and strategic energy stockpiles.

Keywords: energy security, security studies, international relations, security of supply, oil, content analysis

Introduction

Energy is a crucial part of human life and one of the critical elements of any human activity. It is required for heating, mobility, lighting and communication and is, therefore, integral to modern society. At the same time, energy, like most of society's resources, is scarce, meaning that society has limited available energy. Although physical energy is usually not in short supply, the useful energy that people can use in the form of energy services is (Jansen & Van der Welle 2010). Because useful energy is a scarce resource, people had to learn how to prevent that scarcity and mitigate its consequences in their lives. Thus, the pursuit of energy security exists as long as people use energy (Valentine 2010).

Even though energy services are integral to all aspects of human life, energy security only became a public policy concern at the beginning of the 20th century when the issue of energy security attracted the attention of national defence policymakers.

The time the issue of energy security entered the public policy agenda was not coincidental. The beginning of the 20th century witnessed revolutionary transformations of energy systems and, specifically, the emergence of mechanised warfare, and high costs and benefits became associated with these transformations. For instance, the decision to convert the British Navy from coal to oil brought not only advantages in speed and flexibility but also risks related to the stability of oil supply from abroad. During World War II, the role of energy resources, especially oil, in military capabilities became evident – some strategic objectives during the war were determined by the intention to secure energy supply or prevent adversaries from doing so. For example, concerns about oil security were important for Japan's decision to occupy the East Indies and attack US troops in Pearl Harbour, and for Germany to drive toward the oil-rich Caspian region (Hayward 1995; Yergin 1991).

Even though national security has had to deal with a broad range of security threats – military, economic, social and environmental – from the moment of its birth after World War II, security studies have been focused mainly on the military dimension of security. It is not surprising because security studies grew out of debates over protecting the state against external threats after World War II. At that time, the military dimension of national security dominated other dimensions of security, such as the economy or social issues, because the threats of external aggression were viewed as more possible and severe than economic crises or social problems. Consequently, during the Cold War, security studies was composed predominantly of research focused on military statecraft (Baldwin 1997; Hampson 2013; Wolfers 1952). Even though other threats, including

domestic ones, such as the economy, environment, health, poverty and inequality, were acknowledged, they were discussed chiefly regarding their impact on military security.

Yet the energy crises of the 1970s that resulted in crude oil scarcity and panic in the Western world brought the question of energy security into the security studies discourse. As Robert J. Lieber (1976) stated, 'energy became a security issue when the supply of oil and later the ability to pay for this oil become a matter of national survival'. Moreover, the crisis particularly challenged the military focus of security studies. As Joseph Nye (1980) so aptly put it, 'the probability of Soviet tanks rolling across the north German plain is much lower than the likelihood of an interruption of oil supplies stemming from various conflicts in the Middle East. Yet the United States is less prepared for an energy emergency than for a military attack'.

Even though the impact of access to natural resources on how and to what degree states interact with other states had been acknowledged before, the 1970s oil crises highlighted the direct relationships between energy, security and foreign policy. Control over flow, prices and energy infrastructure has become a central element of power dynamics in international politics (Colgan 2014). As a result, energy security has become an inevitable part of international politics and, therefore, of foreign policy.

Historically, international security studies was primarily concerned with security in a bipolar world – the security of other countries was mainly addressed only in the sense of how it could affect the security of superpowers (Buzan & Hansen 2009). Consequently, energy security debates during the Cold War covered almost exclusively the energy security of the United States. The energy security of other countries was mainly discussed as part of the global rivalry between the superpowers. Even the US closest allies, such as Western Europe and Japan, were chiefly concerned about how pursuing their energy security might affect their relationships with the United States and its national security (Nye 1980).

Energy security as a concept has always had clear relationships with national security – semantically, historically and practically – and can legitimately be viewed as a particular instance of national security. Nonetheless, the exact place of energy security in the security studies scholarship is unclear. Energy security as an element of security studies scholarship depends on several groups of issues and several sets of public policy responses to the issues (Deese 1979). Almost a half century after the 1973 oil crisis, a particular transformation of the views on energy security might be expected to happen in security studies. Yet, no systematic analysis of these issues and policy responses has been conducted.

Considering the historical ties between energy and national security, this study aims to identify the current debates on energy security and related energy

issues in the security studies scholarship. The study aims to answer the following research question*: How does contemporary security studies include energy issues in its scholarship?*

A concept of security is a highly ambiguous concept if used without specification: security for whom, from what threats, for which values and by what means (Baldwin 1997; Wolfers 1952)? The importance of making such clarification specifically about energy security was also emphasised by Cherp and Jewel (2011). Therefore, this study also attempts to identify how security studies scholars conceptualise energy security and, more specifically, how they answer the following questions: (1) Energy security for whom? (2) Energy security from what threats? (3) Energy security for which values? and (4) Energy security by what means?

Since the discussion about energy security issues is context dependent – energy security means different things to different people at different times and in different situations (Ang, Choong & Ng 2015) – the study is also interested in the authors' demographics – in other words, in addition to the question 'what is said about energy in the security studies scholarship', the study aims to find an answer to the question 'who says?'

To answer these questions, the following exploratory study offers a quantitative and qualitative content analysis of academic articles on energy issues published in the top five international security studies journals from 2001 through 2020. Even though the sampling frame was limited to five journals and the sample to only 43 articles – the study's main limitation – the paper analyses *all* articles on energy issues published in these top five security studies journals over the last two decades. Thus, it can provide a wealth of information to answer Lasswell's (1948) classic question – who says what, to whom, why, how and with what effect – about energy in national security debates.

Last but not least, to understand the present and to influence future energy security, it is vital to understand how different security studies scholars thought about energy security. Because of the importance of the theoretical, historical background of energy security scholarship, a short unsystematic review of pre-2001 energy security articles in international relations journals was conducted. The purpose of that review was not to compare the articles published from 2001 to 2020 but to tentatively identify the major categories for content analysis. Yet certain conclusions can be made about the evolution of the scope and focus of debates on energy issues in security studies during the second part of the 20th century.

The article proceeds as follows. The next section briefly presents the historical coverage of energy issues and security in international relations and security studies literature before 2001. Section 3 describes the research design and methods used in this study. In section 4, the study turns to the results of content

analysis and their discussion. The final section concludes and offers some directions for further research.

Energy security in security studies scholarship before 2001: A short literature review

When energy security entered the security studies discourse in the 1970s, the question of conceptualisation, or specifying an exact meaning of energy security, was immediately aroused. Indeed, without a clear definition, it is not possible to communicate about energy security issues and to conduct a much-needed policy analysis (Baldwin 1997). In 1979, David A. Deese (1979), defined energy security as 'a condition in which a nation perceives a high probability that it will have adequate energy supplies (including traditional sources such as firewood, and plant and animal residues that are frequently not traded in the marketplace) at affordable prices'. Later, Daniel Yergin (1988) defined the objective of energy security as: 'to assure adequate, reliable supplies of energy at reasonable prices and in ways that do not jeopardise major national values and objectives.'

Interruption of energy supply, unaffordable prices for energy or jeopardised values in its acquisition have been viewed as the primary threats to energy security (Yergin 1988). However, the specific nature of such interruptions, price surges and values they jeopardise has been a subject of debate in security studies literature.

The asymmetry of energy trade and market power of energy producers has been viewed as the primary source of price surges. Oil cartels play a crucial role in the energy security of energy-importing countries because of the so-called 'OPEC multiplier', a situation when even a slight increase in world energy demand results in a disproportionately large increase in demand for OPEC oil and its relative power (Lieber 1992; Mossavar-Rahmani 1983; Yergin 1988). Yet it was also acknowledged that the energy market imperfection is not the sole threat to energy security. Terrorism, technological accidents, wars and extortion can threaten the uninterrupted supply of energy at reasonable prices. Even though most of the concerns are about the uninterrupted supply of oil, the supply assurances problem exists for other types of energy sources as well – countries that operate nuclear reactors are also sensitive to the interruption of nuclear fuel supply from foreign countries (Rydell 1981).

An interruption of supply and high energy prices can affect national security in different areas and through different mechanisms. Competition for scarce energy resources can cause interstate and domestic armed conflicts. As a result, the question of how to secure energy supply without generating political, economic or environmental externalities that could lead to large-scale international conflicts has become central for security studies scholarship (Choucri, Ross &

Meadows 1976; Copeland 1996; Deese 1979). Energy resources can also be used as an instrument of national policy or, in other words, as a weapon (Paarlberg 1978). There were legitimate concerns that energy-rich nations may use energy resources to acquire influence abroad – to make other countries do something that they would not otherwise do, or prevent others from doing so, a classical Dahl (1957) definition of power.

Not surprisingly, national governments started to view foreign policy as a tool for meeting their energy needs. As Choucri, Ross & Meadows (1976) put it, 'Increasingly, foreign policy becomes an extension of resource politics'. At the same time, it has also been acknowledged that the attempts to increase energy security could limit foreign policy options because the states would be afraid that their foreign policy decisions unrelated to energy politics could interrupt energy supply and thus undermine national energy security. For instance, the oil crises of the 1970s and the fear that they could happen again have resulted in narrower US foreign policy choices toward the Middle East (Akins 1973; Riggs 1995). Besides, threats to energy security issues may bring new difficulties to the relationships among Western countries since they depend on different energy resources to a different degree. Therefore, even if the United States reduces its reliance on oil imports, it will remain vulnerable through interdependence with allies. Finally, increasing energy prices can cause slower economic growth, higher inflation rates and unemployment in energy-importing countries (Deese 1979; Nye 1980, 1982).

Being a policy-oriented discipline, security studies has been naturally interested in preventing threats to national security and mitigating their consequences. There are several clusters of public policy responses that can reduce the potential vulnerability of energy security systems – both international and domestic.

Military intervention against energy threats has been considered an entirely legitimate solution in security studies. Yet the political and economic costs of such a solution were viewed as being extremely high. Therefore, policy responses usually consider measures other than military. Nonetheless, the modest military presence in energy-rich regions such as the Persian Gulf area, alongside political measures, was viewed as a reasonable energy security instrument (Deese 1979; Lieber 1992; Nye 1980, 1982). More promising was the role of transnational cooperation, especially in the form of intergovernmental organisations for energy security, such as the International Energy Agency (IEA) (Nye 1980, 1982; Yergin 1988).

Responses to threats to energy security are not limited to international responses. In the 1970s, there was a hope that by the end of the 20th century, crude oil would lose its predominance as fuel because of ground-breaking technologies (Akins 1973; Choucri, Ross & Meadows 1976). However, it was not expected

that such a transformation would happen soon. Therefore, certain domestic energy policy responses included energy efficiency and conservation, including the use of tax policies to encourage more efficient use of petrol products; new technologies, such as dual-fired power plants to switch easily from reliance on oil to natural gas or coal; strategic petroleum reserves; and diversification of energy sources – first of all, shifting from oil to natural gas, nuclear energy, coal and renewables (Lieber 1992; Nye 1980; Yergin 1988). Nonetheless, these policies were viewed only as supplementary. The common view was that energy-importing countries could do domestically only a little to reduce their dependency on imported energy resources, at least in a 25-year term perspective. Therefore, the appropriate goal for energy security was not zero oil imports but rather a share of oil in the import that would allow surmounting possible supply interruptions (Akins 1973; Choucri, Ross & Meadows 1976; Deese 1979; Nye 1980, 1982; Yergin 1988).

Material and methods

This study utilises a modified method used by Benjamin K. Sovacool (2014) to analyse research articles published in three major energy journals from 1999 to 2013. The modification for this study included a different sampling technique, new coding categories used in content analysis and different data analysis methods.

Sample

This study defined the population as the security studies academic literature published from 2001 through 2020. For this content analysis, articles were the unit of analysis, and the sample consisted of 43 full-length, peer-reviewed English language research articles representing the population. The articles for the investigation were selected using a purposive two-step sampling technique.

In the beginning, journals were selected based on two criteria. First, international relations journals published in English were selected based on their explicit focus on international security studies according to their title and self-declared editorial aims and scope. Although many reputable international relations journals such as *International Organization*, *Foreign Policy*, *World Politics, Review of International Studies, International Studies Quarterly* and others regularly publish articles about international security, including energy security, for the purpose of the study they were excluded from the sampling frame.

Second, five journals were identified from the list of the security studies journals based on their academic reputation, which was operationalised as the 2019 Journal Impact Factor (JIF) by Clarivate. As a result, the following five journals

were selected: *International Security* (JIF = 5.432), *Security Dialogue* (JIF = 2.419), *Security Studies* (JIF = 2.167)*, Contemporary Security Policy* (JIF=1.880) and *Survival* (JIF=1.241). Articles published in these journals from 2001 to 2020 were considered a sampling frame.

The articles were viewed in electronic format and manually analysed by a single coder without the help of automated tools. The full-length, peer-reviewed articles with a primary focus on any energy issues were selected for further analysis. Commentaries, book reviews, notes, opinions, editorials, letters, viewpoints, corrigendum and similar items were excluded, although special issues and forum exchanges were included. As a result, 43 articles were selected from the five journals for final content analysis (see Table 1).

Table 1. Sample articles by journal and year of publication

Year	Total articles	International Security	Security Dialogue	Security Studies	Contemporary Security Policy	Survival
2001	2	0	0	0	0	2
2002	2	0	0	0	0	2
2003	0	0	0	0	0	0
2004	2	0	0	0	1	1
2005	1	0	0	0	0	1
2006	2	0	0	0	0	2
2007	3	0	1	0	0	1
2008	5	0	0	0	1	4
2009	2	0	0	0	0	2
2010	3	0	1	1	0	1
2011	1	0	0	0	0	1
2012	2	0	0	0	1	1
2013	7	2	1	2	0	2
2014	2	0	1	0	0	1
2015	2	1	0	0	1	0
2016	4	0	0	3	0	1
2017	1	0	0	1	0	0
2018	1	1	0	0	0	0
2019	2	0	0	1	0	1
2020	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	43	4	4	8	4	23

Data collection

Qualitative and quantitative document content analysis was used as a primary data collection method. The content of all selected articles was viewed in electronic format and analysed by a single coder manually without the help of automated tools. The coding consisted of two major parts – author demographics and article content.

For the author demographic, the following variables were analysed for each article. The number of authors listed in an article was counted for the number of authors. For *institutional affiliation*, we recorded the institution each author provided as their affiliation. If someone listed several institutions, only the first affiliation was recorded. For the *country affiliation* variable*,* we recorded a country where the institution affiliated with each author was located. For *disciplinary affiliation*, a primary discipline for each author was identified – usually based on the author's primary department and/or position.

In terms of article content, we looked at the following variables:

1. We attempted to identify a *type of energy* the article was chiefly focused on for each article. We used five attributes of primary energy: coal, oil, natural gas, nuclear energy and renewables.

2. For *conceptualisation of energy security,* we attempted to identify what concept of energy security the authors explicitly used in their article, whether their own or borrowed from other sources.

3. Four variables were used to catch major *themes* of energy security covered in the analysed articles:

    a. *Energy security for whom?* For this variable, we attempted to identify from whose perspective energy issues were discussed in an article. Specifically, it identified the unit of analysis – a particular case or entity, such as individual, organisation, state or world system, about which data was collected and a geographical focus of the article.

    b. *Energy security from what threats?* For this variable, the major sources of threats to energy services or causes of energy crises were identified.

    c. *Energy security for which values?* We analysed the aspects of society that are specifically affected by threats to energy security were discussed.

    d. *Energy security by what means?* The actions that the authors offered to prevent threats to energy security or/and mitigate their consequences were analysed.

Results and discussion
Articles distribution and authors demographics
We found no clear trend in the number of articles on energy issues published in the selected journals throughout the two decades. On average, the number of articles remained the same – low. There were years with no articles on energy security for most of the journals (Table 1). Among the journals, only *Survival* demonstrated relatively stable coverage of energy issues. However, we did not calculate the total number of articles for each year in each journal and could not assess the population, sample ratio and the share of the articles on energy compared to other security issues.

Figure 1. Number of authors per article
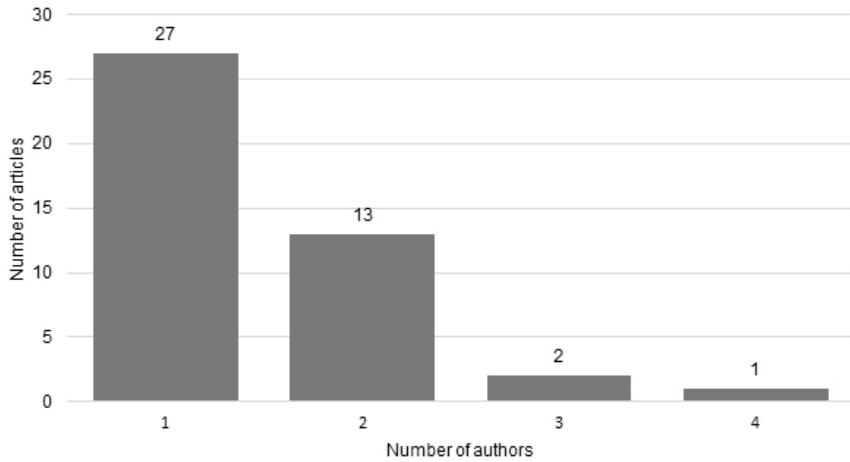
In terms of the number of authors, in 43 papers analysed, 63 authors were identified in total. Articles with one or two authors prevail, with a clear dominance of solo-authored papers (Figure 1) typical for the international relations field.

When it comes to authors' institutional affiliation, universities and think tanks were authors' primary places of employment (Figure 2).

Even though the authors' institutions are located in nine countries, two-thirds of the authors work for US-based organisations (Figure 3).

In terms of the authors' disciplinary affiliations, political science, including its subdisciplines such as international relations, comparative politics, public policy and security studies, clearly dominated.

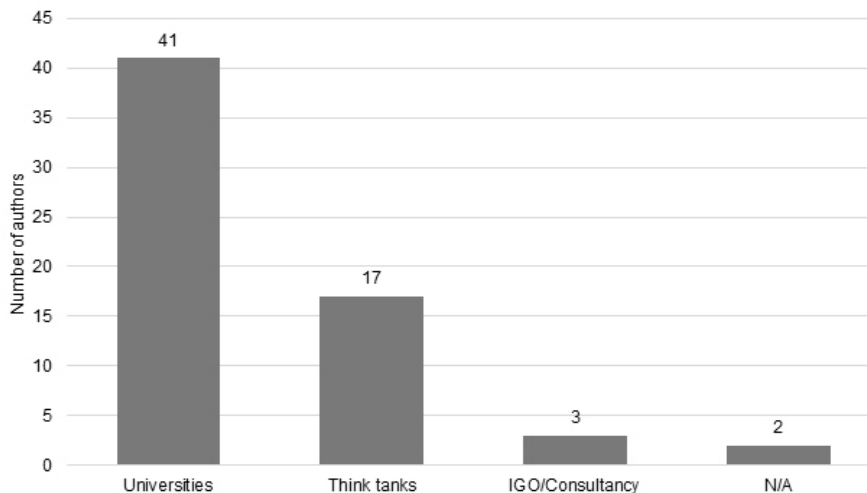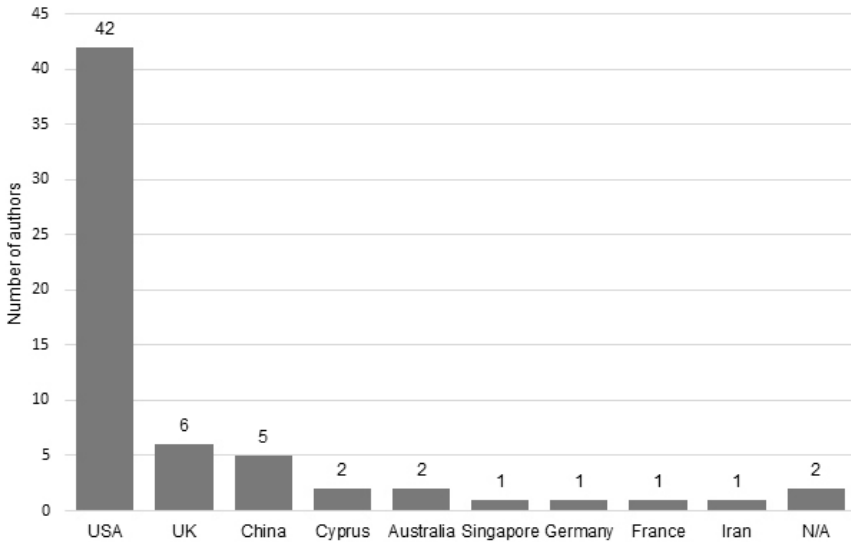Figure 2. Institutional affiliation of the authors

Figure 3. Country affiliation of the authors

Types of energy

Even though the articles mentioned almost every type of energy resource, they explicitly focused on only three of them – crude oil, natural gas and nuclear power, with an apparent prevalence of oil among them (Figure 4). Moreover, 15 articles explicitly had the word 'oil' in their titles – 'A third Oil Crisis?', 'Beijing's Oil Diplomacy', 'The Persian Gulf and the Geopolitics of Oil', 'Dismantling the Oil Wars Myth' are just a few examples. Analogously, six articles had the word 'nuclear' in their titles: 'Making the World Safe for Nuclear Energy', 'After Fukushima: China's Nuclear Safety' and others. Seven articles either covered all types of energy without giving priority or discussed general issues of energy security that could be applied to any type of energy.

Several articles were concerned with natural gas, and specifically about the stability of its supply and prices from Russia that was addressed in their titles – 'Russia, Energy and the West', 'When Interdependence Produces Conflict: EU–Russia Energy Relations as a Security Dilemma', 'Nord Stream II and Europe's Strategic Autonomy'.

Conceptualisation of energy security

Even though 32 articles out of 43 use the term 'energy security' in the main text at least once, only ten explicitly conceptualised the term, either in their own or someone else's words (Table 2). It would be correct to say that a majority of them shared the traditional, two-dimensional availability/affordability view on energy

Figure 4. Number of articles with a focus on a specific type of energy
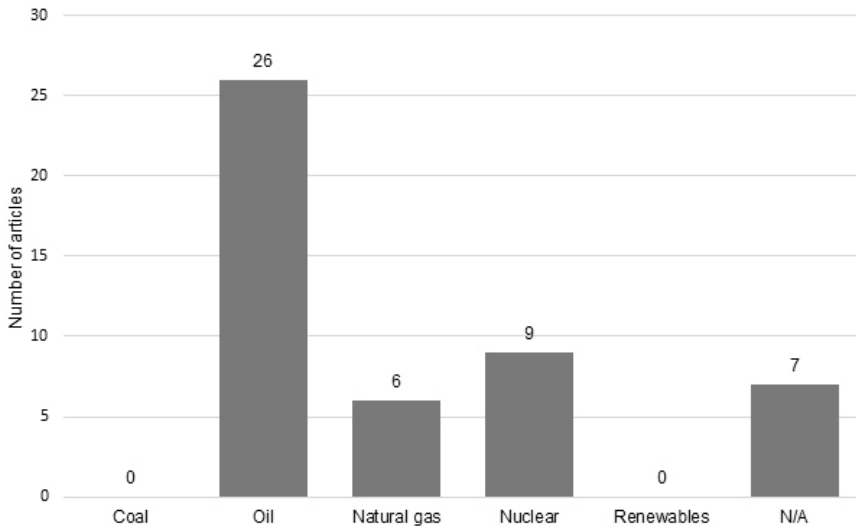
security introduced by Deese (1979) and Yergin (1988) and currently supported by the IEA (2020). Yet some authors conceptualise energy security more broadly and consider other dimensions: for instance, the environmental one (Colgan 2013; Kennedy 2010; Peoples 2014).

An article by Ciută (2010) is quite distinct from other papers for its explicit focus on energy security. It offers a comprehensive review of the conceptualisation of energy security in academic literature. It provides a well-reasoned critique of any attempt to come up with a one-size-fits-all definition of energy security. The main argument is quite persuasive – since different actors include different political, economic or environmental considerations into energy security and in different degrees, and, most importantly, use different policy instruments to respond to threats, energy security would inevitably mean different things to the actors. Thus, even though energy is crucial for all sectors of human activity for all actors – or in Ciută's own words, 'energy security means the security of everything' – energy security makes sense only within a context.

Main themes

In this section, we describe the main themes about energy issues we identified in the 43 articles. As explained in Section 2, we divided the themes into four large categories based on which questions they were answering – 'Energy security for whom?', 'Energy security from what threats?', 'Energy security for which values?' and 'Energy security by what means'?

Table 2. Energy security definitions

Energy security definition	Article	Source
The level of risk attached to any energy source, foreign or indigenous	(Buchan 2002)	Own
Supply issues, price issues, and systems issues	(Chow & Elkind 2005)	Own
Energy security means the security of everything: re-sources, production plants, transportation networks, distribution outlets and even consumption patterns; everywhere: oilfields, pipelines, power plants, gas sta-tions, homes; against everything: resource depletion, global warming, terrorism, 'them' and ourselves.	(Ciută 2010)	Own
A condition in which a nation perceives a high prob-ability that it will have adequate energy supplies at af-fordable prices	(Duffield 2012)	(Deese 1979)
The objective of energy security is to assure adequate, reliable supplies of energy at reasonable prices and in ways that do not jeopardise major national values and objectives		(Yergin 1988)
The ability of states to maintain an uninterrupted supply of energy relative to demand at affordable and relatively stable prices without sudden and significant price increases	(Christou & Adamides 2013)	Adapted from (International Energy Agency 2020; Winzer 2012)
The reliable and affordable supply of energy	(Glaser 2013)	(Deutch, Schlesinger & Vic-tor 2006)
Assured continuity of energy supply, or a situation in which energy products are readily available through the usual commercial outlets and processes	(Noël 2014)	Own
The supply of crude oil or crude products on a state	(Hughes & Long 2015)	Own
The uninterrupted availability of energy sources at an affordable price	(Lind & Press 2018)	(International Energy Agency 2020)

Energy security for whom?

The discussions on energy issues in all articles were explicitly state-centric, with countries as the only unit of analysis. Although the security of the United States still prevailed in the debates, the growth of attention to China's energy security is quite noticeable (Figure 5). However, the single largest category is 'Other / NA',

with 15 of the 43 articles - the geographical focus of the articles is either unclear or they cover global, universal issues of energy security.

Figure 5. Country/region focus of the articles
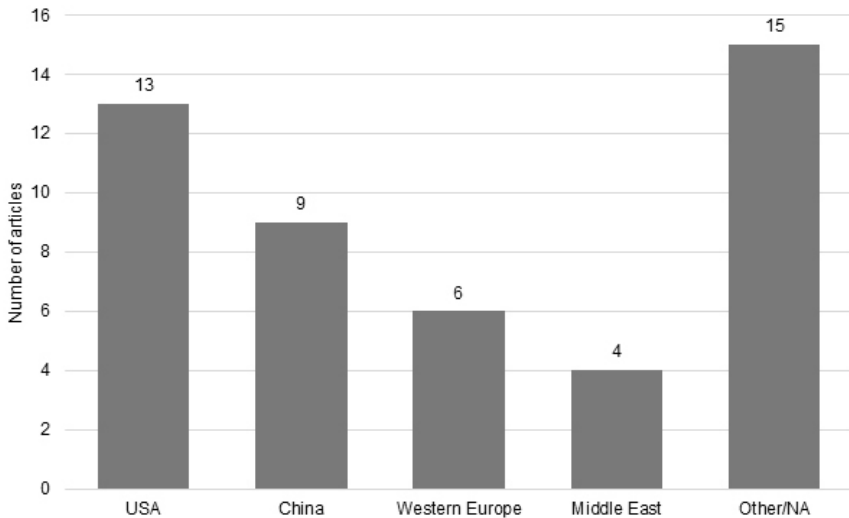
Energy security from what threats?

We identified 11 major topics about sources of threats to energy security, including the absence of such threats (Figure 6).

The **concentration** of energy resources in one or a few hands (monopoly or oligopoly) or in a particular region is viewed as a primary threat to energy security. The strong dependency of Western countries on imported oil from that region has enormously enhanced the power of energy cartels that can deliberately restrict energy supply by not utilising existing extraction capacity or by underinvesting in it (Jaffe, Klare & Elhefnawy 2008; Levi 2013; Lind & Press 2018; Salameh 2001). Some authors emphasise the role of market power of oligopolistic energy actors and their alliances, such as OPEC.

For instance, OPEC was operating at 99% of its total crude oil productive capacity at one point. Even though the cartel was not the only oil producer in the world, because of the absence of free capacity, even a slight increase in demand or supply decline could generate a world energy crisis. Even though the total energy supply disruption is unlikely in such a situation, the price spike can be significant (Jaffe, Klare & Elhefnawy 2008; Levi 2013; Lind & Press 2018). Also, in their responses to threats to their energy export caused by new energy sources, such as shale oil, cartel members can jeopardise the energy security of oil importers (Noël 2016). Yet some authors acknowledge that compared to the 1970s,

Figure 6. The number of articles covering specific threats to energy security (or their absence)
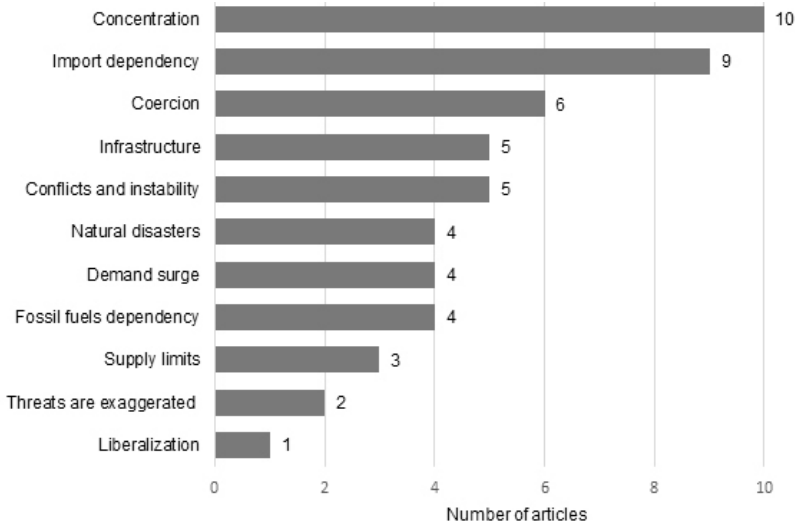
cartels' role in oil world markets has significantly declined because of new players such as Russia (Jaffe & Manning 2001). Yet new energy exporters often use 'resource nationalism' – an attempt of governments in those countries to control their energy sectors (Bremmer & Johnston 2009). Threats to energy security can be caused by geographical concentration too. The regional concentration enhances the risk from natural disasters and regional instabilities (Lind & Press 2018). Finally, a dangerous concentration can exist within energy-importing countries as well. For instance, national energy resources can also be concentrated geographically. Therefore, relying on a single type of energy, even the domestic one, can still threaten national energy security (Chow & Elkind 2005; Noël 2014).

Dependency on imported energy resources **(import dependancy)** – crude oil, and especially dependence on imports from distant regions such as the Middle East – is viewed by many authors as a potential threat to energy security. Currently, import dependence is viewed as a common issue for many countries, including the United States (Barnes & Jaffe 2006; Chow & Elkind 2005; Duffield 2012; Jaffe & Lewis 2002), Western Europe (Duffield 2012; Krickovic 2015) and China (Barnes & Jaffe 2006; Daojiong 2006; Jaffe & Lewis 2002; Kennedy 2010; Lind & Press 2018). Many papers emphasise that imported energy supplies are not a threat to national interests *per se* but because of the energy supply disruption caused by either human or natural factors, such dependency can become a severe threat to national security. This threat is especially real when most of the nation's oil imports enter the country through narrow transit routes such as straits or a small region such as oil ports in the Gulf of Mexico (Chow & Elkind 2005).

At the same time, other authors argue that countries should not care about where they get their oil because energy consumers can receive energy freely through market mechanisms. They claim that there is little historical evidence to support the claim that imported energy is less secure than domestically produced (Clayton & Levi 2012). Many crises were caused by domestic factors such as domestic infrastructure failure because of natural or human factors or strikes at domestic energy facilities. These authors argue that energy resources improve the diversification of suppliers and positively contribute to national energy security (Chow & Elkind 2005; Noël 2014).

The fear that energy can be used for **coercion** as an instrument of foreign policy is viewed as a real issue in security studies. Countries dependent on energy imports fear that someday an energy exporter will make them an offer they cannot refuse because the consequences of energy disruption will be destructive to their economy and military capabilities. Energy producers can use energy coercion through embargos and production cuts, but also by transit and third countries that can interrupt the energy supply by military means. The potential for coercion varies significantly across different stages of the energy supply chain (Burrows & Treverton 2007; Christou & Adamides 2013; Hughes & Long 2015; Kelanic 2016; Lind & Press 2018; Noël 2019).

Unreliable or poorly designed **infrastructure**, both the physical energy systems and the institutional framework that enables these systems to work, is another threat to energy security. The 2000–2001 California electricity crisis demonstrated that the national energy systems can still be vulnerable even without disrupting the foreign energy supply. Similarly, in 2005, Hurricane Katrina exposed critical issues in US energy infrastructure (Chow & Elkind 2005; Noël 2014). The issue of energy infrastructure is not unique to the United States, though. For instance, China experiences difficulty in proper management of energy systems (Daojiong 2006), and France is concerned about its aging nuclear infrastructure (Duffield 2012).

International and domestic **instability**, such as interstate **conflicts**, civil wars, insurgency, terrorism, and riots in energy-rich or transit areas, threatens energy security. For example, the permanent instability in the Middle East is viewed as the main risk to the stability of supply from that region (Barnes & Jaffe 2006).

Natural disasters such as hurricanes or earthquakes can also provoke energy crises. The major problem is a flawed infrastructure that makes a national energy system vulnerable during disasters (Chong 2013; Chow & Elkind 2005; Noël 2014; Tertrais 2011). For instance, about 60% of US national oil imports enter the country through the relatively small coastal region, and more than 50% of oil refineries are located along the Gulf of Mexico.

Even though studies of import dependency are generally focused on the **dependence on fossil fuels**, primarily crude oil and natural gas, some authors emphasise that fossil fuels threaten energy security, whether domestic or not. Dependence on fossil fuels is viewed as risky because of their finite amount on earth and the environmental effects of their combustion (Chow & Elkind 2005; Jaffe, Klare & Elhefnawy 2008; Kraemer 2008; Peoples 2014).

Another factor that threatens energy security is **energy supply limits** to markets. Whether the world will experience a shortage of fossil fuels in the short term has been central to the debate on energy security, especially in the early 2000s. Some articles predict a global deficit of fossil fuels because the cost of developing new energy reserves is rising quite slowly (Elhefnawy 2008). Other authors, however, criticise the view, arguing that the peak oil theory has been misleading and negatively affected national security policies (Jaffe, Klare & Elhefnawy 2008; Stern 2016). At the same time, other authors emphasise that the real problem is not physical oil reserves underground but rather the capacities of the oil industry to extract and deliver (Maloney 2008).

One of the threats to energy security that is often mentioned is the global misbalance between the supply and demand of energy resources (**demand surge**), particularly in the case of crude oil. Simultaneously, the world energy demand is increasing. Many authors connect it with rapid economic growth, especially in the Asia-Pacific region, and predict that such a misbalance could threaten energy security (Daojiong 2006; Maloney 2008; Noël 2014; Salameh 2001).

Even though control of energy resources by a few actors, especially by external or foreign actors, is viewed as a clear threat to energy security, the deregulation and **liberalisation** of energy systems and markets can also be a threat. For example, the liberalisation of energy systems can jeopardise the prospects for long-distance importing of natural gas because this type of energy requires long-term contracts requiring governmental guarantees. Second, renewables and other alternative energy sources become less competitive against traditional energy sources (Buchan 2002).

In addition to the 10 threats to energy security identified in the reviewed articles, some authors believe the **threats to energy security are imaginary, exaggerated**, or do not exist. For instance, the liberal school of economics argues that energy consumers can receive energy freely through market mechanisms, and, therefore, essentially, the threat to energy security is mostly imaginary (Stern 2016; Stulberg 2004).

Energy security for which values?
The study identifies eight main themes about the possible impact of energy security threats (Figure 7), which are elaborated below.

One of the most popular topics in security studies is the relationship between energy and armed conflicts (the issue of **international peace**). Because of the threats to energy security, states can choose to use military force to supersede market mechanisms by physically preventing oil imports from reaching the target, either by controlling energy resources or their transit routes (Kelanic 2016), which can potentially result in full-scale military conflict. Even though the threat of energy resource wars is often exaggerated (Jaffe, Klare & Elhefnawy 2008; Noël 2014), the political effects generated by the energy industry are viewed by many researchers as a cause of conflicts in the 21st century, either directly or indirectly (Ciută 2010; Colgan 2013; Salameh 2001).

There are several pathways through which concerns about energy security can result in conflicts. First, vulnerable energy supplies make states' militaries vulnerable; when states already have incentives for conflict, oil vulnerability can influence the assessment of adversaries' military capabilities and, therefore, provoke an interstate conflict. Second, energy reserves, or perceived energy reserves, increase the value of territory and encourage countries to engage in territorial conquests since the payoffs of such resource wars are perceived as being higher than the risks associated with them (Glaser 2013).

Both energy exporters and importers are also concerned about transit routes and aim to control them, resulting in increased tension (Jaffe & Manning 2001). Most importantly, each party can misinterpret the intentions of the other parties producing a so-called 'security dilemma'. As a result, when energy importers are concerned about outcomes of territorial conquests, control over transit routes and access to energy and its costs, they can decide to intervene (Burrows & Treverton 2007; Colgan 2013; Elhefnawy 2008; Glaser 2013; Kennedy 2010;

Figure 7. The number of articles covering specific targets the threats can affect
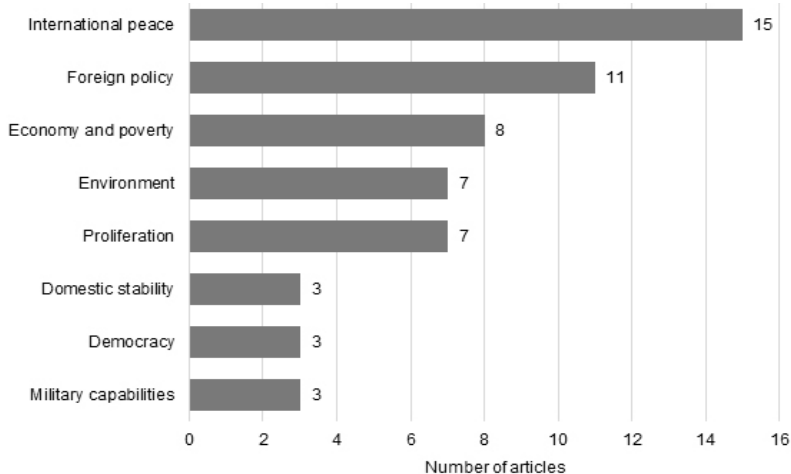
Noël 2019). At the same time, direct and indirect costs associated with such interventions inevitably reduce the payoffs of seizing energy resources and would make such options extremely risky (Meierding 2016). Thus, countries facing similar threats to energy security could decide to cooperate rather than engage in wars for the energy prize (Stulberg 2004). The misbalance between supply and demand would likely result only in a change in price but not in any armed conflicts. Thus, according to some scholars, the chances of oil wars are exaggerated (Meierding 2016; Noël 2014).

Energy can affect international peace in other ways as well. For instance, energy exporters can decide to use oil money for rearming and challenging other countries (Jaffe & Manning 2001). On the other hand, because of the collapse of energy prices, reducing incomes from energy sources can result in the desire of leaders of energy countries to start wars (Bremmer & Johnston 2009). At the same time, energy importers can provide weapons and military services to energy exporters in exchange for the stability of the energy supply.

There are undoubtedly connections between the oil trade and international politics, whether by geography, perceptions or producers' strategies. Concerns over energy security inevitably shape states' **foreign policy**, encouraging politicians to step in to prevent or mitigate threats to energy security. That applies both to energy-importing and energy-exporting states (Clayton & Levi 2012). For instance, dependence on foreign oil has shaped US policy toward the Middle East for decades (Barnes & Jaffe 2006). It determines the relationships of Russia with neighbouring countries and NATO because of the centrality of goals to maximise energy revenues (Burrows & Treverton 2007; Jaffe & Manning 2001; Stulberg 2004) and China's interest in the Middle East (Jaffe & Lewis 2002). The problem is that energy dependence can invite demands for political accommodations in exchange for stable energy supplies, demand or transit (Colgan 2013; Elhefnawy 2008; Jaffe & Lewis 2002; Kim 2019). Even though energy security issues are unlikely to cause military conflict, the risk of such conflict prevents strategic cooperation. For example, oil dependence reduces states' willingness to cooperate on shared security concerns (Colgan 2013; Noël 2014). Yet the link between the oil trade and political relationships has changed substantially compared to the 1970s and 1980s (Clayton & Levi 2012).

Even though security studies traditionally view the economy through the military prism, many authors emphasise how energy affects economies for energy-exporting (Jaffe & Manning 2001; Maloney 2008; Moshirzadeh 2007; Noël 2016) and energy-importing (Elhefnawy 2008; Meierding 2016) countries. This points to the issues related to **economy and poverty**. The effects of energy price surges are especially crucial for developing countries whose economies can collapse while developed countries experience just a moderate slowdown (Burrows

& Treverton 2007). Undoubtedly, economic difficulties can increase the probability of international conflicts – energy-related threats easily extend from the economic sector into the military and political ones that can result in decreased military capabilities or the political instability discussed above (Burrows & Treverton 2007; Christou & Adamides 2013).

The problem of acquiring weapons of mass destruction by governments, organised groups and individuals – often referred to as horizontal **nuclear proliferation** – is one of the central topics in security studies. It is often argued that the threats to energy security can increase the risks of nuclear proliferation (Acton 2009; Chong 2013; Deutch et al. 2004; Elhefnawy 2008; Pandza 2013; Tertrais 2011). Because of the concerns over uninterrupted energy supply, countries can decide to pursue nuclear energy. One problem is that the 'commercial' plutonium fuel can be used for a nuclear weapon. The related problem is that energy-importing countries can provide nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction or technologies to other countries to secure their energy supply (Salameh 2001).

Finally, one of the negative externalities of energy use is its **environmental** effects. For fossil fuels, it is primarily air pollution and global climate change (Burrows & Treverton 2007; Jaffe, Klare & Elhefnawy 2008; Kennedy 2010; Kraemer 2008; Peoples 2014), and for nuclear power, there are concerns about power plants' safety and radioactive waste storage (Chong 2013; Tertrais 2011).

Similarly, energy, especially oil, can create conditions for domestic conflicts that lead to state failure and/or foreign intervention (the **domestic stability** issue). Energy resources can create economic inequality, inadequate institutions, political instability and environmental issues (Colgan 2013; Elhefnawy 2008; Tang, Xiong & Li 2017).

Some authors emphasise the linkage between resource wealth and **democracy**. For instance, in petrostates, extensive income from energy exports can reduce the domestic accountability of leaders (Burrows and Treverton 2007; Colgan 2013; Maloney 2008). Thus, energy, specifically energy rent, can affect liberal reform and democratisation.

Even though the importance of petrol products for the **military** is acknowledged, the scenario in which militaries of contemporary states lack petrol products to the degree that it affects their capabilities – the shortage of fuel for aircrafts, tanks, vehicles and vessels – is not viewed as a very real threat for most of the countries. Energy is crucial for the military – most land and air vehicles depend on petroleum products. Even though some military marine vessels use nuclear propulsion, many also need petroleum products. As a result, there are no viable substitutes for petrol products for military purposes. Thus, militaries that lack access to oil resources cannot function effectively. Therefore, vulnerable

energy supplies make states' militaries vulnerable – denying oil to an adversary in wartime could paralyse its forces and threaten it with defeat (Glaser 2013; Kelanic 2016; Meierding 2016).

Energy security by what means?

The study identifies eight major themes about possible actions to prevent or mitigate energy security threats, including an absence of any actions (Figure 8).

Figure 8. The number of articles covering specific means aiming to mitigate threats to energy security
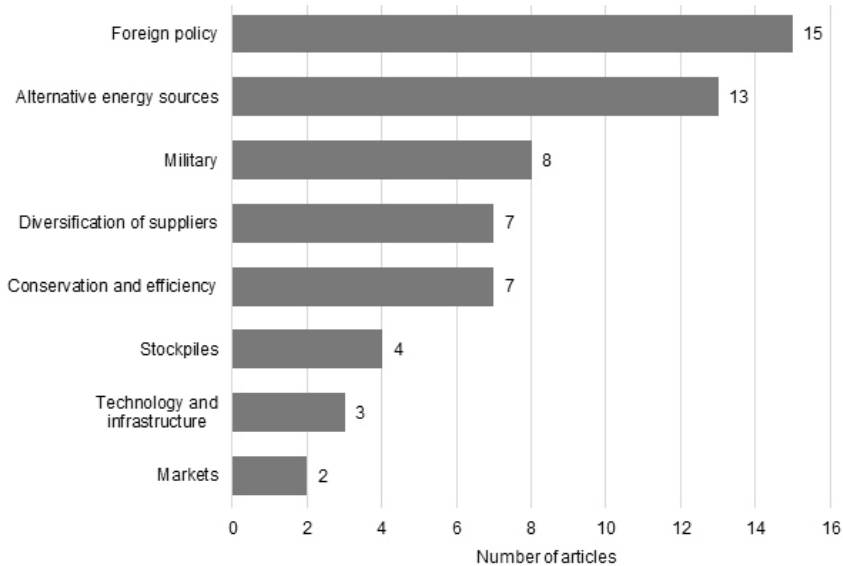
International cooperation is viewed as a more promising solution to threats to energy security than the military. Many authors emphasise the role of active diplomacy in increasing national energy security (**foreign policy** means). The reliance on imported energy encourages countries to spread their diplomatic activities to wherever they would help. Forms and strategies of foreign policy vary, but they can include cooperation in energy trade and energy technology with the ultimate goal of creating a transparent global energy system (Chow & Elkind 2005). Energy cooperation can include bilateral and multilateral agreements regarding energy security among energy importers, not only among Western countries regarding whether they should release emergency oil inventories, but also strategic energy cooperation between such countries as the United States and China (Barnes & Jaffe 2006; Burrows & Treverton 2007; Chong 2013; Clayton & Levi 2012; Glaser 2013; Jaffe & Lewis 2002; Kelanic 2016; Kraemer 2008). Quite similarly, cooperation with energy exporters would positively contribute

to the energy security of energy importers (Clayton & Levi 2012; Jaffe & Lewis 2002; Jaffe & Manning 2001; Kennedy 2010; Kim 2019; Lind & Press 2018; Maloney 2008; Noël 2016). However, the views on formal intergovernmental organisations such as IEA in achieving energy security are more sceptical. Although all countries have a common interest in energy security, their specific needs and options may differ significantly. Even in the 1970s, when many countries had shared concerns about the stability of oil supply from the Middle East, they cooperated to a minimal extent (Duffield 2012).

Traditionally for security studies, **military** response to threats to energy security or to prevent such threats is viewed as a legitimate mechanism. Yet the certainty of use of the military for energy security varies significantly among articles. Most articles view military action against energy security threats as ineffective, costly and, therefore, unlikely. Others concede the possibility of using the military as a last resort. They argue that a hypothetical closure of the Strait of Hormuz would result in an immediate US military response to make it open. Other countries, such as China, also boost military capabilities to protect energy transportation routes because their oil imports are vulnerable to military disruption. Because of increasing tensions between the United States and China around energy issues, claims could increase the role of the military in this matter (Glaser 2013; Hughes & Long 2015; Jaffe, Klare & Elhefnawy 2008; Kelanic 2016; Kennedy 2010; Lind & Press 2018). Yet it is more likely that the military responses of major powers would be limited by non-combat actions such as peacekeeping. Moreover, the military implication of energy security does not necessarily mean sending the troops overseas but may include increasing military ties with energy-rich countries and supplying arms and military services to them in exchange for friendly energy policies (Elhefnawy 2008; Kim 2019).

Other authors argue that the oil market does not depend on the United States' military presence in oil-rich regions (Gholz & Press 2013). The pursuit of energy security through military actions costs a higher price than other means. As Nader Elhefnawy has put it in a rhetorical question, 'What might the United States have accomplished if it put even a small fraction of the money spent on securing the Persian Gulf since 1973 into developing alternative energy sources?' (Jaffe, Klare & Elhefnawy 2008: 79).

The foreign policy responses often overlap with another strategy to minimise risks to energy security – a **diversification of energy suppliers**. Indeed, as discussed above, energy producers' market power is a major threat to national security. For instance, China is looking for new energy suppliers in the Middle East and Central Asia (Jaffe & Lewis 2002; Kennedy 2010). In addition, diversification of energy supply routes is not limited by suppliers only. For China, for instance, a so-called 'Malacca Dilemma' exists – the threat that the United States would

block energy passing through the Malacca Strait to China. China attempts to minimise that threat by building pipelines from Central Asia and Russia (Lind & Press 2018; Noël 2014). Analogously, European countries are attempting to diversify their energy markets and transit routes to break Russian control over its natural gas supply (Krickovic 2015), and the United States traditionally attempts to solve the problem of diversification of suppliers through the increase of local energy production (Chow & Elkind 2005; Elhefnawy 2008).

Diversification of suppliers comes hand in hand with the diversification of energy sources. Since the primary concern is the dependency on oil, **alternative energy sources** such as shale oil, coal, natural gas, nuclear power and renewables are viewed as another solution for energy security issues (Chow & Elkind 2005; Duffield 2012; Fair & Shellman 2008; Jaffe & Lewis 2002; Kelanic 2016; Kennedy 2010; Kraemer 2008; Moshirzadeh 2007; Peoples 2014; Tertrais 2011). At the same time, there are some sceptical views on alternative energy sources regarding unconventional oil (Elhefnawy 2008; Noël 2016; Salameh 2001).

Domestic energy **conservation and improving energy efficiency**, especially concerning oil, are important public policies for improving energy security. A country with lower energy intensity will be less vulnerable to energy shocks (Chow & Elkind 2005; Duffield 2012; Glaser 2013; Kelanic 2016). Yet it is crucial to promote energy efficiency domestically and abroad, especially in developing countries (Jaffe, Klare & Elhefnawy 2008). Even though the energy efficiency of economies in Western Europe and Japan has drastically improved, in other countries such as China, the critical threat is the growing consumption of energy resources without significant progress in energy efficiency (Daojiong 2006).

Like conservation and efficiency, a more reliable and efficient **technology and energy infrastructure** is essential for improving energy security (Chow & Elkind 2005; Kennedy 2010). It includes technological improvements and more effective institutions (Daojiong 2006).

Some authors emphasise the limitations of diversification and technological advances for replacing imported oil in the national energy mix. Therefore, strategic **stockpiles** remain essential for achieving energy security (Gholz & Press 2013; Glaser 2013; Kelanic 2016; Lind & Press 2018).

Finally, there are some views that energy security problems can be solved without policy responses – through market adaptation (the importance of **markets**). Nonetheless, it is acknowledged that even though markets can adjust to small threats, serious accidents can exceed the market's ability to adapt and, therefore, will result in a significant price surge. These accidents include consolidation of Middle Eastern oil reserves, on the one hand, domestic instability in Saudi Arabia or other oil-exporting countries, or disruption of transit through

crucial export straits such as the Strait of Hormuz or the Strait of Malacca (Gholz & Press 2010; Levi 2013).

Conclusions

The five leading security studies journals analysed in this study cover energy issues in security studies over the past twenty years. Although many reputable journals with a broad international relations focus, such as *International Organization, International Studies Quarterly* and *European Journal of International Relations,* were not included in the sample, we believe that the study still offers a significant amount of information on energy issues in security studies over the past twenty years.

Security studies do include various energy issues in their scholarship. Yet it must be admitted that the coverage of energy issues in security studies journals has been relatively low and sporadic. Most authors used approaches and methodological tools typical for security studies – typically neorealist qualitative, secondary-sources studies.

Energy issues are discussed in security studies specifically from a state-centric perspective only. Even though there has been an increased interest in human security in the last two decades, the analysed articles do not address energy security from a human security perspective.

Furthermore, the debates remain predominantly Western- and, first of all, US-centric. Even though the number of articles on energy security in other countries, including China, is noticeable, the accusation of security studies as 'being written largely by Westerners and for Western governments' (Hampson 2013) can be applied to energy security in security studies well.

Energy debated in security studies remains oil- and nuclear-centric. Even though some articles address the diverse nature of energy threats to energy security for different countries, the US-centric focus of the debates about energy security still keeps the half-a-century-old concerns over high oil prices or/and a heightened risk of oil supply disruptions from the Middle East and risk associated with nuclear proliferation. It is hard to deny that oil remains the lifeblood of modern transportation and warfare. One might argue maybe there is a good reason why the research on energy security has focused consistently on the same topics – because the real world reflects that consistency. Yet it should be admitted that natural gas, specifically the ongoing EU-Russia gas crisis since the mid-2000s, despite its rich empirical ground for scholarly debate, has been reflected superficially in analysed mainstream security studies journals.

Even though energy security is not viewed only through the prism of military security, the military discourse, especially about the role of energy in provoking interstate and domestic armed conflicts, prevails as it did 40–50 years ago.

The environmental dimension of energy security, such as pollution and global climate change, with a few exceptions remain neglected in academic security studies literature.

Quite similarly, the potential governmental responses to energy security threats have not changed much. They include diversification of suppliers and energy sources, domestic energy efficiency and stockpiles, and an active foreign policy, focusing on bilateral agreements rather than intergovernmental organisations.

There is a clear explanation for that – despite its historical importance, energy security has not been considered to the full extent to be part of security studies. Even though security studies is a dynamic field that has expanded its scope significantly in the past twenty years, energy issues remain a largely underexplored area within at least major mainstream security studies journals.

Yet it should also be admitted that the conclusion about the Western- and especially centric debates about energy in security studies is quite possibly an artifact of selection bias (i.e., the choice of which journals to study) rather than the whole field. For instance, several journals such as *Journal of Peace Research*, tend to focus on (1) quantitative data, (2) nonstate actors and (3) non-US perspectives. Therefore, the increasing number of international relations and security studies journals, both mainstream and those that consciously try to adopt less mainstream approaches to studying security, such as human security or geopolitics for content analysis, looks like a logical and promising direction for further research.

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The Role of the UN Security Council in the Fight Against Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea

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Abstract

The UN Security Council continues to play a critical role in ensuring the maintenance of international peace and security. Towards this end, the Council has over the years delineated maritime piracy in the Gulf of Guinea as a threat to international peace and security. Through Resolutions 2018 and 2039, the Council has since 2011 adopted what is largely a militarised approach to dealing with the menace of piracy in the region, similar to its approach in the Gulf of Aden. Even though threat levels are beginning to decline, the Gulf of Guinea is still considered a maritime hotspot. It is within this context that the Council has been moved to reconsider its militarised approaches to include non-kinetic measures. Recognising the critical interface between militarised and non-kinetic measures, the Council has adopted Resolution 2634 in what is considered to be a significant departure from its previous approach. This paper interrogates the rationale for this departure and assesses the extent to which this new approach would support the fight against piracy in the region.

Keywords: maritime piracy, Gulf of Guinea, UN Security Council, military approaches, non-kinetic measures

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Introduction

The Gulf of Guinea is noted for its significant role in connecting the states of the region to the African continent, as well as the rest of the world in terms of international trade, and for facilitating the import and exportation of goods and services to and from major global markets by sea. The Gulf of Guinea is recognised for possessing large deposits of marine and rain forest resources, especially fish and timber. Given its rather weak national and regulatory frameworks on extraction and exports, resources in the Gulf of Guinea are susceptible to all manner of exploitative agenda.

The region is also noted for the high incidence of maritime insecurity fuelled by incessant attacks by pirates using unconventional means to attack, hijack and kidnap seafarers. The rippling effects of the maritime crimes in the GoG particularly on international shipping, food security and, ultimately, regional and international security has propelled the call for a concerted approach to tackling the maritime insecurity in the region (Morcos 2021). There are presently numerous institutional and legal structures present in the area that have been implemented to combat maritime insecurity in the GoG. The spate of maritime insecurity has garnered global media traction, creating an enabling environment for global action. The priority placed on improving the situation in the region by the international community is demonstrated by UN Security Council Resolutions 2018 and 2039. The UNSC Resolutions 2018 and 2039 have successfully fast-tracked the implementation of both regional and continent-wide security frameworks. These notwithstanding, the threats in the region continue to rise with damning consequences for states in the region and the international community at large. The UNSC has adopted yet another resolution (2634 in 2022) to supress piratical activities of in the region. The central question of this paper is: What accounts for the departure of the Security Council from its militarised approach in the adoption of Resolution 2634? How relevant is Resolution 2634 to maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea? The paper therefore engages in a discursive analysis of the approach as adopted in Resolutions 2018 and 2039, highlighting the strengths and inherent deficiencies of the resolutions. Against the background of a reported decline in the rate of incidents in the region, the paper notes that Resolution 2634 is designed to consolidate gains generally made in the fight against maritime insecurity in the region. The adoption of a new UNSC resolution which characteristically departs from the conventional approach of using kinetic measures in addressing maritime threats to one that recognises the use of non-kinetic and unorthodox measures, is indicative of the UNSC's broader understanding of the root cause of piracy and other transnational organised crimes in the region. The paper also argues that Resolution 2634 is an implied recognition by the Security Council of the inherent deficiencies that exist in the

militaristic approach advanced under earlier Resolutions 2018 and 2039. Further, the paper highlights how the adoption of UNSC 2634 introduces a new orientation in the approach and understanding of maritime related crimes globally.

Literature review

The corpus of literature on maritime security has been compiled from a more classic realist or liberalist theoretical perspective. Bueger and Edmunds (2017) observe that more modern theoretical paradigms, such as constructivism or critical security studies, have had little impact on discussion. The emphasis of the realist understanding of maritime security is on sea power, hard naval strength and military prowess (Grove 1990, 2021; Till 2004; Blunden 2009; Le Miere 2011; Booth 2014; Speller 2018), putting a focus on hierarchical or structural impacts on global change, shifting threat perceptions, naval modernisation and capability changes, and implementation of the Law of the Sea (Bekkevold & Till 2016). However, this strategy disregards the 'bottom-up' effects of maritime disorder on global maritime order, as well as the myriad interactions, cooperative efforts and conflicts that result from such disorder (Bueger & Edmunds 2017). On the other hand, liberalists perceive security at sea as a concept subject to the rigors of collective public order and legal regulation (Geiss & Petrig 2011). For instance, Kraska and Pedrozzo argue that 'international law has changed from a set of principles intended to prevent naval warfare by keeping maritime powers apart to a modern global framework intended to promote maritime security cooperation by uniting nations to achieve common objectives' (Kraska & Pedrozzo 2014: 10). Although this approach by liberal scholars considers the importance of maritime security cooperation as a measure to enhance security at sea, the focus is largely on technical and formal regulation with little to no recourse to maritime security governance.

Indeed, as Buerger and Edmunds admit, maritime security is a relatively recent creation which broadly incorporates a significantly broader range of security concerns, other than the usual emphasis on states, armed forces and conflict (Buerger & Edmunds 2017). Maritime security is focused on new themes such as terrorism, transnational organised crime or environmental degradation, which affect a divergent range of actors including but not limited to states. Over the years, literature on security at sea has grown to a broader and more expansive understanding of maritime security. In accordance with the EU Maritime Security Strategy, maritime security is defined as a 'state of affairs of the global maritime domain, in which international law and national law are enforced, freedom of navigation is guaranteed, and citizens, infrastructure, transport, the environment, and marine resources are protected' (EU 2014). Piracy has emerged as one of the thorny maritime security threats in the world affecting international ship-

ping and navigation (Hasan & Hasan 2017). In the past, combating piracy has primarily been a maritime law enforcement using kinetic measures (Guilfoyle 2008) and the principal defense mechanism against piracy has been through military intervention (Hasan & Hasan 2017). While the act of piracy makes the perpetrators 'common enemies of mankind' (Anyanou 2022), international law limits member states' right of arrest of pirates to the high seas. This has resulted in several contestations on the extent to which states and non-states actors can intervene. Cockyane (2014) reports this as the 'sovereignty obstacle'. Studies have also shown that the UNSC response to this dilemma has been an authorisation of the use of force by member states (Treves 2010; Cockayne 2014). The UNSC has become a focal point for all states who seek international support and authority to counter maritime security threats. To execute this responsibility, the UNSC adopts resolutions which are issue-specific and at times broader in scope to confront a particular problem (Wilson 2018). Bosco (2009) explains that the complexity and the difficulty that underpins the negotiation of a treaty has uniquely positioned the UNSC to intervene timeously to deal with common global security threats under the canons of resolutions. While the frequency of UNSC resolutions has generated considerable attention, there is sparse literature on the impact of resolutions with focus on maritime security.

Further, Wilson (2018) reviews about ninety (90) UNSC resolutions that give effect to the use of naval power to tackle security threats that are transnational in nature. Wilson's investigation concentrated on a growing application of the UNSC resolution to address changing maritime domain risks and how to strike a balance between existing risks and the evolving security issues. However, the examination of the counter measures adopted has received less attention. Again, existing literature seems to be quiet on the extent to which resolutions affect the maritime security architecture of a particular maritime domain. Some critical questions like – To what extent does the military approach adopted in UNSC resolutions effectively address maritime insecurity in a region? How well do these approaches confront the push factors that degenerate into maritime insecurity? – have received less prominence. For a while the success story of the fight against piracy within Somalia and the broader Gulf of Aden cannot be overlooked, the military approach spearheaded and fashionably laid in the UNSC resolution is not comprehensive enough. Valencia and Khalid (2009) posit that the 'vigilante approach' underpinning the multilateral initiatives to deal with piracy in the Gulf of Aden has rather provided an opportunity for naval powers to demonstrate their prowess. Further, they likened the approach to 'swatting a wasp while ignoring the hive'. This paper, however, focuses on the UNSC resolutions adopted to address maritime insecurity in the GoG. This paper argues that the quite impressive arsenal of international measures put in motion through the adoption of UNSC

Resolutions 2018 and 2039 that characteristically employs a vigilante approach to the fight against maritime insecurity in the region is not sustainable and do not comprehensively address the menace to its roots. This paper posits that the measures including international naval operations, self-defensive measures, security sector reform and infrastructure projects, the Yaoundé Code of Conduct (YCoC) process, among others, may have contributed to the recent decline in incidence rate in 2022 but do not provide sustainable solutions. UNSC Resolution 2634 highlights a paradigm shift in approach and, more importantly, introduces a new regime to govern the operations of states and regional bodies in the fight against maritime insecurity in the GoG. The thrust of discussions herein is to highlight the differences in approach and to underscore the importance of adopting both kinetic and non-kinetic approaches in addressing threats to maritime security in the GoG, particularly piracy.

Piracy under contemporary international law

Even though piracy until recently was thought to have been curtailed as an issue of international concern, it has reemerged into the forefront of international security discourse (Nyman 2011). Given its pervasiveness and impact, it presents a problem not just for the state but the international community as it poses a threat to international peace and security. The impact of piracy on international economic relations has long been recognised (Wallner & Kooszkiewicz 2019). In terms of its origins, Gottschalk et al. (2000) assert that piracy as a crime was born as soon as the sea was used to transport items of value. It is noted that piracy is a consequence of privateering, which involved the use of ships to take out other ships in the name of a state during inter-state wars. However, after the war, the privateers used the same approach to sack commercial ships but as pirates, not privateers (Wallner & Kokoszkiewicz 2019). Thus, while privateering was employed by states during inter-state wars, it similarly served as a launching-pad for piratic activities and hence became a crucible to fight against in a time of peace (Nyman 2011). This notwithstanding, the international regime on piracy only existed under customary law, where a coastal state was given the opportunity to judge a pirate – only if it could catch the pirate and the said crime occurred on the high seas (Trzcinski 1998; Wisniewski 1977). In such circumstances, it is deemed that the state that impounds the pirates have universal jurisdiction to do so. The justification is that, in the context of international law, the coastal state's right to exercise jurisdiction is limited to its territorial waters and does not extend to the high seas. Within the high seas, however, the arresting state is given jurisdictional rights. (Kelly 2013).

The status of piracy under international law moved from being recognised as a customary practice to the need for piracy crimes to be codified under in-

ternational law. Although this goal was finally achieved in 1958, the attempt or call for codification pre-dated the Second World War (Wallner & Kokoszkiewicz 2019). In 1926, for instance, the League of Nations constituted a committee of experts charged with the responsibility to ensure the eventual codification of international law (ibid.). The 1932 Harvard Draft Convention on Piracy was also an attempt at codification, the content of which became a point of reference for the International Law Commission (ILC) during its work on the 'Articles concerning the law of the Sea with commentaries' (Jesus 2003).

Notably, the modern laws on piracy in the UNCLOS, specifically article 100 to 107, was directly transplanted verbatim from the Geneva Convention of the High Seas (GHSC). This was made clear at the 288th meeting of the ILC convened on 10 May 1995. Upon the adoption of the UNCLOS (1982), international law in the field of vessel security was considerably expanded by the 1988 Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts of Violence against the Safety of Maritime Navigation (SUA Convention) (Wallner & Kokoszkiewicz 2019). The SUA Convention included politically motivated acts of violence or depredation against ships and persons abroad as forming a part of acts of piracy (Jesus 2003). However, it is pertinent to rehash that the locus of piracy crimes regulated by the SUA Convention do not overlap with the crime of piracy as defined under the UNCLOS (Middleton 2009). The SUA Convention is designed to also fill the apparent gap in the scope of the definition of piracy under UNCLOS.

The attempt to provide an international agreement on the subject of piracy predates the provisions as set out in the UNCLOS. Nonetheless, the existing international law regime on piracy is governed by Article 100 through Article 107 of UNCLOS. To carefully determine when an activity may be defined as an act of piracy under international law, the stratification of the waters of the earth into different juridical categories is key (Azubike 2009). They include the territorial waters,[1] contiguous zone,[2] exclusive economic zone[3] and the high seas.[4] For the purpose of this article, the significance of the classification lies in the fact that international piracy under UNCLOS is construed as an activity that must occur in the high seas. The definition of piracy, as will be examined shortly, will highlight this fact.

The UNCLOS enjoins all states to cooperate to the fullest extent possible in the repression of piracy in the high seas or in any other place outside the ju-

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1   Articles 2–32 of UNCLOS; the territorial sea does not exceed 12 nautical miles from baselines.
2   Article 33 of UNCLOS; the contiguous zone does not extend beyond 24 nautical miles from the baselines.
3   Articles 55–75 of UNCLOS; the exclusive economic zone do not extend beyond 200 nautical miles from the baselines.
4   Articles 86–120 of UNCLOS.

risdiction of any state.[5] The heinous act of piracy conferred universal jurisdiction on all states but what constitutes the act itself has fluctuated throughout the centuries (Kelly 2013). This is because maritime piracy has ceased to be as simplistic an activity, which may involve pirates ship approaching victim ship, boarding and robbing it and ultimately sailing away unscathed. The events off the Somali coast changed contemporary conceptualisation of the crime as they closely resemble an organised crime syndicate (Bellish 2013). Nonetheless, the most important definition of piracy is that set out in Article 101 of UNCLOS, which states that piracy 'consists of any illegal acts of violence or detention, or any act of depredation, committed for private ends by the crew or the passengers of a private ship or a private aircraft, and directed on the high seas, against another ship or aircraft, or against persons or property on board such ship or aircraft; against a ship, aircraft, persons or property in a place outside the jurisdiction of any state . . .' (UNCLOS 1982: 41-42). Article 101 also defined piracy to constitute 'any act of voluntary participation in the operation of a ship or of an aircraft with knowledge of facts making it a pirate ship or aircraft'. The illegality of the act is not in question. However, whether a modern-day act of piracy is undertaken for 'private ends', it 'must occur in a place outside the jurisdiction of any state' and the suggested 'two-vessel requirement' in the definition has invited contestation on the aptness of the definition of piracy in Article 101 of UNCLOS (Wallner & Kokoszkiewicz 2019; Azubike 2009). Even though this article reechoes the inadequacy of the definition of piracy to cover modern trends of the act, for purposes of examining the status of piracy under international law, any acts of violence, detention or depredation committed in maritime zones within the territorial sovereignty of a coastal state will not be considered as piracy in the eyes of international law. Therefore, for a crime to qualify as piracy, the UNCLOS provides that the illegal act must be carried out outside the national jurisdiction of the coastal state, specifically on the high sea.

Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea: A threat to international peace and security

The threat of piracy in the GoG is not a new phenomenon dating as far back between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, the naval powers of the Royal Navy of the British Empire and other European states forced a decline in the activities of pirates along the coast of the GoG (Boot 2009; Schubert & Lades 2014). In the wake of decolonisation in the region, piratical activities re-emerged as most coastal states along the GoG inherited weak naval forces, struggling economies and unstable political climates. There is sufficient literature that ties the resurgence of piracy in the GoG to the astronomical increase

5   Article 100 of UNCLOS.

in the level of poverty and inequality, deep-seated corruption and nepotism coupled with the inability of post-colonial states to deliver good governance and tangible economic development to their respective constituents (Ukeje & Ela 2013; Ukiwo 2007). It is well-documented that an estimated 63% of all reported incidents of piracy between 1983 and 1984 were recorded in the GoG; nonetheless, the increased incidence of piracy off the coast of East Africa and South Asia overshadowed that of the GoG (IMO 1984). At the time, the maritime domain between the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden served as an important pivot connecting critical destinations such as the Red Sea, Suez Canal, Europe and Asia. That notwithstanding, it is also estimated that 7 to 12 percent of the world's annual oil supply passes this stretch of water that spans more than 2 million square miles (Onuoha 2010).

The sudden scale up in piracy attacks in the GoG gained global traction. Between 2005 and 2006 the reported incidents of piracy increased from 25 to 32. A similar trend is reported in 2007 and 2008 with recorded incidents from 53 to 59 (IMB 2010). The number of incidents declined to 48 in 2009 and 41 in 2010, and steadily rose again to 52 in 2011 and 62 in 2012 and subsequently, a decline again from 2013 when it was 52, 42 and 31 cases in 2014 and 2015 respectively (IMB 2013, 2016). Additionally, the nature of pirate attacks in the region are unconventional and more sophisticated in nature. Pirates in the region use weapons such as AK-47 rifles, varieties of machine guns and other sophisticated weaponry (Oyewale 2015). Notably, the incidence of violence against seafarers has considerably increased with reported cases of 140 kidnapped between 2000 and 2014 (Prins & Daxecker 2017). By the close of 2021, 43% of all injured victims of piratical attacks in the world were from the GoG. The IMB's (2021) global piracy report also indicates that the GoG accounted for all 40 kidnapped crew incidents, as well as the sole crew fatality. The high level of violence in the GoG is tied to the nature of piracy attacks in the region. While Somali pirates are more focused on kidnapping for ransom, capturing vessels and holding its cargo and crew to extract money from ship-owners, pirates in the GoG attack vessels with the aim of stealing all items of value from the vessel and its crew. Anyimadu (2013) observes that kidnapping of crew-members seldom happens, and so levels of violence are comparatively high, as pirates in the region are rather indifferent about ensuring the welfare of hostages.

Although the rate of piracy has seen a sharp decline in 2021, the GoG maintains the global spotlight for being the hotspot of piracy accounting for one occurrence of piratical attack for every 4.5 days since 2016 (Stable Seas 2021). Consequently, the nature of piracy in the GoG has far-reaching consequences which play a significant role given the pervasiveness of poverty in the region. Around 242 million people live in the GoG region below the United Nations'

'extreme poverty' criterion of $1.90 in income per person per day (World Poverty Clock 2021). Although most nations have taken initiatives to eliminate extreme poverty, the number of people living in severe poverty in the GoG is still rising. Bell et al. (2021) assert that there is a mutually reinforcing relationship between piracy and poverty. Indeed, endemic poverty is an important catalyst to drive young people towards maritime crimes. The corollary effect is that these maritime crimes, like piracy, undermine coastal economies and further drain the already overburdened coffers of states. A snapshot of this phenomenon is piracy in the GoG – a development known to drive regional poverty among West and Central African states. Through direct, indirect and opportunity costs, states within the GoG region suffer grave losses traced to maritime crimes (Bell et al. 2021). A report by the UN Office of Drugs and Crime titled 'Pirates of the Niger Delta: Between Brown and Blue Waters' indicates that pirate gangs get roughly $4 million in ransom payments each year for those who have been abducted at sea (Jacobsen 2021).

Piracy in the GoG also contributes to the value lost to the state in terms of the stolen oil and goods. As noted above, the modus operandi of pirates in the GoG are quite unique with more than 80 percent of the incidents targeting the goods and items of value, rather than kidnapping for ransom (Oceans Beyond Piracy 2016). Research conducted by Chatham House highlights that the scale of oil theft in the Niger Delta ranges from $3 billion to $8 billion a year, with this crime mainly occurring 'onshore or in the Niger Delta's swampy and shallow waters' (Katsouris & Sayne 2013). The volatile waters of the GoG require that counter measures are rolled out to address all challenges. It is estimated that the total direct cost for counter-piracy measures is approximately $524 million per year, with most nations increasing naval spending. Since 2011, the twelve nations between Cote d'Ivoire and Angola have spent collectively an estimated $82 billion on national defence, and this sum has been consistently increasing throughout most of the region (Bell et al. 2021).

Furthermore, the tangible losses occasioned by these piratical acts in the GoG cannot be overemphasised. Insurers are compelled to charge higher rates to operate in 'dangerous waters', while a number of companies rather provide 'hazard pay' to seafarers who transit the area (Bell et al. 2021). The increased costs to the maritime transportation sector impose far-reaching indirect costs on African states, especially states within the GoG region and most importantly, these costs have a grave impact on government revenue earned through transoceanic trade (ibid.). Although this trend gravely affects coastal economies, the rippling effect of maritime piracy in the GoG is globally felt. The increased costs of security, shipping insurance and operations are paid largely by international shipping companies.

The frequency and violent nature of these attacks have been a pain point for the respective navies of states in the region, and continue to ward off foreign investment in the region as well as weakening state presence in the territorial domain. Although in 2022 the GoG witnessed marked improvement in the maritime security situation in the region, this development does not mean the GoG is out of the woods yet. Rather, it calls for a re-examination of the approach and strategies to consolidate the gains made in 2022 and most importantly, to comprehensively tackle maritime insecurity in the region. This paper maintains that UNSC Resolution 2634 will serve as a guidepost to a more enhanced and effective maritime security framework in the region.

Fighting piracy in the Gulf of Guinea: An appraisal of existing militarised approach

The definition of piracy under UNCLOS does not wholly tackle the issue of piracy. When a state's territorial waters are involved, the same act that is considered piracy on the high seas is not christened as piracy under Article 101 of UNCLOS. This seeming inadequacy, coupled with the lack of a clear line of action, propelled the call on the UN to support national efforts. In response, the UN Security Council (UNSC) adopted Resolution 2018 in October 2011, which inter alia condemns all acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea committed off the coast of the GoG, as well as calling on regional organisations and the countries concerned to work toward a comprehensive strategy to facilitate the prosecution of alleged perpetrators of the acts (UNSC 2011).

After the adoption of Resolution 2018, the UNSC complemented its initiative with the dispatch of a multi-disciplinary mission to the GoG in November 2011. The objective of the assessment mission were twofold: 'to assist the Government of Benin in the formulation of a national integrated programme to address drug trafficking, organised crime and piracy' and 'to assess the scope of the threat of piracy in the GoG region and explore options for an effective UN response'.[6] Notably, the report necessitated the adoption of another resolution, 2039 (2012), which further urged states in the GoG region, operating with support of the international community, to develop and implement national maritime security strategies with particular prominence on the prosecution and repression of piracy and armed robbery at sea, as well as the prosecution and punishment of those convicted of such crimes (UNSC 2012).

The global initiative spearheaded by the UN Security Council invariably laid the foundation for member states of the Economic blocks – the ECCAS, ECOWAS and, more broadly, the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC) – to come up with a broad range of 'regional strategies and frameworks to counter pi-

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6   Report of the UNSC Assessment Mission on Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea.

racy, armed robbery against ships and other illicit maritime activities, through regional information sharing and strategic coordination mechanisms, and to build on existing initiatives, such as those under the IMO'. In this light, two interrelated agreements have been adopted by the countries within the West and Central African enclave. They are the Code of Conduct concerning the repression of piracy, armed robbery against ships and illicit maritime activity in West and Central Africa (YCoC), adopted in June 2013, and the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the Establishment of a sub-regional Integrated Coast Guard Network in West and Central Africa. The importance of the afore-listed initiatives is to push for a phased approach to national-level capacity building and to foster cooperation within and amongst states in the GoG region. Currently, the 2013 Yaounde Code of Conduct (YCoC), which was developed by governments in the area, commits its 25 signatories (MOWCA members) to combat piracy, armed robbery against ships and illegal maritime activity in West and Central Africa. On a practical note, the aforementioned frameworks ushered the development of two regional information-sharing centres, one for Central Africa states, situated in the Republic of Congo and one in Ivory Coast, assisting Western Africa states (Stable Seas 2020). However, for the purposes of our analysis in this article, prominence will be placed on an appraisal of UNSC Resolutions 2018 (2011) and 2039 (2012). This appraisal is crucial to appreciate the distinction between the aforementioned resolutions and the recently adopted Resolution 2634 (2022).

A critical assessment of UNSC Resolutions 2018 and 2039 and key regional frameworks is indicative that the focus of the UN and West and Central African states towards the fight against maritime security challenges, particularly piracy, was to strengthen the institutional capacity of member states and to foster regional cooperation. The underlying approach advanced to curb maritime piracy in the region is 'militaristic' in nature. Resolution 2018 (2011) expresses the above assertions in the following ways: paragraph 2 of the resolution specifically dealt with the need for regional bodies, the ECCAS, ECOWAS and GGC, to develop a comprehensive strategy with prime focus on developing 'regional framework to counter piracy and armed robbery at sea, including information-sharing and operational coordination mechanisms in the region' (UNSC 2011: para 2(b)). Furthermore, the 'militaristic' approach is well articulated in paragraph 3 of Resolution 2018. In accordance with applicable international law, UNSC Resolution 2018 (2011) clearly authorises counteractions through the conduct of bilateral or regional marine patrols. Again, paragraph 4 of the resolution intimates the use of defensive tactics to either repel attacks on ships or to resist ongoing attack by pirates on ship. Beyond the textual commitments on paper, the militaristic approach is widely seen in the operations of member states as well as regional in-

stitutions designed to fight maritime piracy. This approach has been assimilated into the operations of both national and regional bodies.

The initial response to maritime insecurity in the region was largely anchored on bilateral military alliances. In September 2011, for instance, Benin and Nigeria entered into a six-month joint naval patrol agreement christened 'operation prosperity' (Oyewale 2016a). Six Nigerian ships and aircraft, along with two vessels from Benin, launched the joint patrol (Oyewale 2015). This arrangement between Benin and Nigeria was extended beyond the six months. Since 2013, however, the Yaoundé architecture has ushered in a region-wide framework for dealing with information sharing and collaboration with the Gulf of Guinea (Larsen & Nissen 2018). At the national level, there seems to be an attempt by several states to consolidate and increase the numerical strength and the logistical capacity of security agencies. Following the acquisition of new platforms, regional entities in the region improved their fleets and coast guards (ibid.). From 2000 to 2016, no fewer than 53 platforms were purchased by GoG states (Wezeman & Wezeman 2015). Nigeria acquired 13 platforms including four Shaldags, two Hamiltons, two P18Ns, two FPB-98s and two FPB-38s in 2009, bringing the total number of platforms to 48 (ibid.). However, there is a marked decline in the volume of imports of arms in the period between 2017 and 2021 (Wezeman et al. 2022). This notwithstanding, countries like Nigeria continue to receive major arms from 13 suppliers, including 272 armored vehicles from China, seven combat helicopters from Russia, three combat aircrafts from Pakistan, twelve light combat aircraft from Brazil and nine patrol craft from France. According to Wezeman et al (2022) these imported arms played an important role in the management of crises in-land and offshore.

Surveillance operations of member states have also been reinforced with the acquisition of air power and remote sensors which have improved awareness in the region. Mauritania is noted to have acquired a C-212 aircraft for maritime patrol (MP). Again, Nigeria leads in the consolidation of its security apparatus through the acquisition of unmanned aerial vehicles to patrol internal waters and the maritime domain (Wezeman & Wezeman 2015). Additionally, since 2013, the Nigerian Navy and the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) have implemented satellite surveillance centres (SCC) to monitor its maritime interests (Osinowo 2015).

Evidently, Resolutions 2018 and 2039 primarily advanced a military approach to safeguard the maritime domain in the GoG. It is significant to note that, out of the resolution's eight (8) paragraphs, only paragraph five (5) addressed the necessity of prosecuting alleged offenders, including the locations and financiers of acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea. Furthermore, a cursory look at Resolutions 2018 and 2039 evinces the prominence attached to the creations of institu-

tions or, better still, enhancing the capacities of institutions to position them to adequately fight maritime piracy. The report of the UN Assessment Mission deployed to the GoG supports this assertion. Paragraph 59 of the report recommends the development of institutions and the integration of structures to strengthen surveillance, information gathering and protection activities. In fact, the importance of cooperation runs through most of the recommendation outlined in the report to regional stakeholders. Similarly, the recommendations also evince snippets of the military approach advanced in the resolutions. With respect to regional initiatives within the GoG enclave, it is pertinent to emphasise the key frameworks (YCoC) went beyond piracy, hijacking boats and kidnapping crew members to include illegal and unregulated fishing. However, the crux of the framework focused more on a military approach. The outlined measures and guiding principles in YCoC employed the use of militia to tackle maritime piracy in the GoG.[7]

Despite the modest attempt through the canons of Resolutions 2018 and 2039 and under the auspices of key regional initiatives, ten years down the lane, the UNSC has passed another resolution, 2634 (2022), which is fundamentally different in its nature and scope from predecessor resolutions (2018 & 2039) although all three resolutions are aimed at tackling the scourge in maritime piracy in the GoG. This article will engage in a discursive analysis and assessment of UNSC Resolution 2634 (2022).

UNSC Resolution 2634 (2022) – a non-militarised approach to the fight against piracy
Distinction between UNSC Resolution 2634 (2022) and UNSC Resolutions 2018 & 2039
In general, UNSC Resolution 2018 (2011) condemned all acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea committed off the coast of the states of the GoG. It also welcomed plans to hold a summit for the heads of state in the GoG region to discuss a comprehensive response in the region and to encourage states and regional bodies to develop a comprehensive strategy to address maritime insecurity in the region. With the firm belief that cooperation between regional bodies will help provide advice and direction to ships transiting the Gulf, Resolution 2018 also focused on addressing the issue of cooperation between states and regional organisations, the shipping and insurance industries. On the other hand, Resolution 2039 was a response to the report of the secretary-general's assessment mission on piracy in the GoG. Among others, the resolution places primary responsibility on the states of the GoG to counter piracy and armed robbery at sea and 'requests the Secretary-General through the United Nations Office of West

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7   Articles 3 to 10 of the Yaoundé Code of Conduct contained several clauses suggestive
    of a more combatant approach.

Africa (UNOWA) and the United Nations Office of Central Africa (UNOCA) to support states and subregional organizations in convening the joint Summit', as referenced in Resolution 2018 (2011). To bring developments in the region to the attention and consideration of the Security Council, the resolution charged the UNOWA and UNOCA with the responsibility of regularly informing the Security Council about the situation of piracy and armed robbery at sea in the GoG.

An understanding of the activities or developments prior to the UNSC's adoption of Resolution 2634 (2022) is key to fully grasping the policy rationale behind the adoption of Resolution 2634 and the possible reasons why it is substantially different. In the previous section, this article demonstrates that in the erstwhile resolutions, 2018 & 2039, the UNSC gave prominence to mechanisms aimed at enhancing the institutional capacity of national and regional institutions. Most importantly, the grand strategy to combat maritime piracy along the coast of the GoG advanced a more 'militaristic' approach. Against this background, and the consequent strategies that followed the adoption of the two resolutions, much ink has been poured on the inherent deficiencies in the maritime security architecture of the GoG (Egede 2016, 2018; Hassan & Hassan 2017; Oyewale 2016a). In particular, Anyimadu (2013) bemoans the wholesale implementation of the Somali counter-piracy model in the GoG. Anyimadu notes that while piracy in the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean is dominated by piracy, threats in the GoG manifest in a variety of ways. Therefore, the formulation of the Yaoundé Code of Conduct along the lines of the Djibouti Code of Conduct is a fundamental deficiency. The maritime security architecture is burdened with sensitive national security issues that seriously impede regional cooperation and result in significantly unequal implementation capacities among member states, among other things when it comes to combating piracy (Hassan & Hassan 2017).

It appears these challenges have gained global traction, more so as there is a scourge in the activities of pirates along the coast of the GoG. In this light, the president of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) responded to the continuous threat of piracy and armed robbery at sea in the GoG and the seeming deficiencies in the institutional set-up designed to counter maritime piracy in the region. The number of incidents and the severity of piracy and armed robberies reported in the GoG region, as well as the harm being done to efforts at economic development and the destruction of crucial infrastructure, were all addressed in the presidential statement (S/PRST/2016/4) (UNSC 2016: 1-2). Presidential Statement 2016 also highlighted some challenges that have bedeviled the effective realisation of the objectives fashioned out in the maritime security architecture of the GoG. Although the UNSC welcomes the creation of the Inter-regional Coordination Centre (ICC), the CRESMAC and the CRESMAO, it is stated that it appears that their stated functions are not clearly articulated

and defined. As a result, the UNSC encourages states in the region to clarify the mandate of and relationships among these bodies in order to strengthen coordination and cooperation (UNSC 2016: 3).

The presidential statement also noted that the lack of logistical and financial resources to implement projects and programmes of the ICC and other regional institutions seriously jeopardises the effective operationalisation of the maritime security architecture as birthed and supported by Resolutions 2018 and 2039 and the Yaoundé Code of Conduct, respectively. As a result, the UNSC welcomes the idea of raising resources with the assistance of the international community to support the ICC's and other regional institutions' projects and programmes (UNSC 2016). These propositions made in Presidential Statement 2016 shaped the decision to adopt Resolution 2634 (2022) as will be demonstrated by this article. Another important thread that runs through Presidential Statement 2016 is the emphasis placed on the prosecution of suspected pirates. The Security Council emphasises that the respect for human rights, and the respect for the rule of law, are all necessary to create the conditions for a durable eradication of piracy and armed robbery at sea in the GoG (UNSC 2016: 2). According to the presidential statement, the relationship between piracy, armed robbery at sea and transnational organised crime in the GoG region justifies the growing emphasis on the need for member states in the region to prosecute pirates and uphold and respect human rights and the rule of law (UNSC 2016: 1).

UNSC Resolution 2634 (2022) is also shaped by the presidential statement made in 2021 (S/PRST/2021/15). Therein, the Security Council reiterated the importance of member states to take steps in applying international laws on the Law of the Sea, Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substance, the Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants on Land, Sea and Air. According to the UNSC, the application of these compendium of international laws and conventions will consolidate efforts to combat illicit activities at sea and clamp down on activities of pirates that may metamorphose into acts of terrorism (UNSC 2021: 1). Presidential Statement 2021 called upon member states yet to ratify or accede to the compendium of international laws aforementioned to do so swiftly (UNSC 2021: 2).

A critical scrutiny of the presidential statements highlights that the focus of the UNSC in the fight against piracy and other related maritime crimes in the GoG has seen a paradigm shift in approach to embrace the use of legal frameworks to criminalise acts of piracy and to prosecute all persons involved. The call for the ratification, accession and the application of key international laws, conventions and treaties is to ensure that all manner of violent activities undertaken to hijack, kidnap, hold hostage or to rob seafarers are wholistically captured and the right sanctions provided for in any of the plethora of internation-

al laws recognised. Thus, the adoption of Resolution 2634 comes as no surprise. Although resolution 2634 (2022) does not operate to set aside Resolutions 2018 and 2039, the language and tenor of Resolution 2634 ushers in a new paradigm in the fight against maritime insecurity in the GoG region. Unlike its predecessor resolutions (2018 & 2039) which focused predominantly on militaristic strategies, Resolution 2634 tends to lean more towards a non-military drive to combat maritime piracy in the GoG. Indeed, Resolution 2634 expresses deep concern about the grave and persistent threat that piracy, armed robbery and other forms of transnational organised crime pose to international shipping, regional security and the sustainable development of states in the region, including the impact on littoral countries, their hinterland areas and landlocked nations (UNSC 2022: preamble).

It is noted that more than 1,000 ships crisscross the GoG on a daily basis. However, acts of piracy strip away the possible benefits states may derive from commercial activities along the coast of the GoG but rather costs coastal states some $2 billion a year.[8] One key attribute of Resolution 2634 is the attempt to criminalise piracy in the GoG region (UNSC 2022: 3). On this tangent, a clear distinction can be made between Resolutions 2018 and 2039 and that of Resolution 2634. Under Resolution 2018 (2011), it only encompasses one paragraph (5) which speaks to the issue of prosecution including facilitators and financiers. The language of paragraph 5 of Resolution 2018 is materially different from that of Resolution 2634. For where the former only speaks of prosecution, the latter (2634) adds another layer which is the criminalisation of the act of piracy in the region under the domestic laws of member states. Again, Resolution 2634 allows member states to investigate and prosecute or extradite perpetrators. The key words used in Resolution 2018 and in 2039 were financiers and or facilitators. The brackets of persons who may be liable is extended in Resolution 2634. The UNSC recognises the possibility of the act of piracy being incited, financed and facilitated by persons other than the pirates themselves. The new resolution also contemplates the possibility of piracy being planned, organised, facilitated, financed or profited by a criminal network distinct from the pirates. The implication is that the language and tenor of Resolution 2634 is expansive and covers, to a large extent, all persons directly or indirectly involved in the act of piracy.

Further, Resolution 2634 maintains strict adherence to applicable international law. Under paragraph 4 of Resolution 2634, the UNSC encourages cooperation between and among member states in the prosecution of perpetrators. However, the Security Council requires states to undertake such prosecution while respecting fair trail guarantees. This is an extension of the recognition that in combatting piracy in the GoG region, the respect for human rights and

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8   Marinelink.com

the respect for rule of law are all necessary (UNSC 2016: 1). The argument that UNSC Resolution 2634 focuses on a non-military approach to combat the maritime piracy in the GoG is not far-fetched. This article makes the case that UNSC Resolution 2634 is not only 'non-militaristic' in nature but predominantly rests on the use of a comprehensive legal regime to complement predecessor resolutions (2018 and 2039) in the fight against maritime piracy and armed robbery at sea along the coast of the GoG. This objective is amplified under paragraph 5 of UNSC Resolution 2634. The UNSC calls on its members to adopt and implement national maritime security plans in line with international law, including those for the creation of unified legislative frameworks for the prevention and suppression of piracy and armed robbery at sea (UNSC 2022: 3).

Additionally, the UNSC used Resolution 2634 to address some of the inherent deficiencies that undermined the full operationalisation of the maritime security architecture birthed and sourced from Resolutions 2018 and 2039 and more particularly, the Yaoundé Code of Conduct. Resolution 2634 seeks to enhance the capacity of member states through bilateral and multilateral partnership, which allows free transfer of adequate legal and operational support upon request. Paragraph 6 of Resolution 2634 highlights the fact that a state's needs will be duly considered to determine the quantum of funds, personnel, technology and training that ought to be transferred. This courtesy is extended to UN entities like UNODC to provide advice and deliver integrated and technical assistance that will improve the capacity of member states, upon request and availability of extra budgetary resources. These constitute a marked improvement in approach as it fundamentally departs from the erstwhile arrangement where member states were afforded same training without recourse to their different implementation capacities.

The argument that there is a link between piratical activities in the GoG and transnational organised crimes metamorphosing into acts of terrorism which in turn further exacerbates the plights of member states is seen in Resolution 2634 (UNSC 2022: 3). This disposition supports the argument of this article that the two presidential statements in 2016 and 2021 significantly shaped and influenced the consequent adoption of Resolution 2634 to reflect current developments in the region. Accordingly, paragraphs 9 and 16 speak to the issue of the proliferation of terrorism if member states fail to crackdown on acts of piracy, the causes of piracy and the source of their finances.

UNSC Resolution 2634 – A holistic approach in tackling maritime piracy in the GOG?

Having demonstrated the underlying distinction between UNSC Resolution 2634 and its predecessor Resolutions 2018 and 2039, this section focuses on an assessment of UNSC 2634.

For more than a decade, the countries in the GoG basin have struggled with piracy attacks, both in their own national territorial seas and further out at sea (Bassist 2022). Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the attendant reduction in global transportation, piracy attacks along the coast of the GoG has seen a decline in the number of attacks. However, the region continues to be particularly dangerous (ICC 2022). It is important to re-emphasise that it's been over a decade that several security frameworks were rolled out yet issues of maritime insecurity remain extant in the region. One of the key reasons why the numerous interventions have yielded slow results is that the policy framework or mechanisms rolled out do not tackle the menace from its root cause. This article argues that it's this gaping hole in approach that UNSC Resolution 2634 seeks to address.

The military strategy used to combat maritime piracy in the Red Sea's Gulf of Aden, off the coast of Somalia, was quite successful in cutting down on attacks and even stopping them altogether (Bassist 2022). Mention can be made of the strong counterattacks by Russia, China and the European Union (EU), the French-led Atlanta Operation, among others,[9] inured positively in the fight to clamp down on the attacks. As noted above, the plethora of mechanisms implemented to tackle maritime insecurity in the GoG region took the form and nature of the approach used in the Gulf of Aden region. For instance, the Yaoundé Code of Conduct is specifically designed along the same lines as the Djibouti Code of Conduct. The main cause of the maritime instability in the GoG region received little to no attention although causative factors differ. Attacks in the GoG are well-planned and carried out by assailants who are knowledgeable about the targets (Bassist 2022). Furthermore, attacks are no longer limited to local seas; the farthest attack in 2021 saw 15 crew members abducted on a Maltese chemical tanker more than 390 kilometres south of Cotonou (Teixiera & Pinto 2022).

Most importantly, the GoG presents 'natural characteristics' that spur the development of piracy. It connects three continents and remains a crucial marine route for international trade (Bassist 2022). Notwithstanding the aplenty resources that sit in the GoG basin, this wealth of resources is not evenly distributed. Bassists point out that the socio-economic disparities in the area are a result of widespread corruption. Additionally, the growth of industrial fishing has eliminated jobs for traditional fishermen, driving them to pursue other options like piracy (Bassist 2022).

The above highlighted complexities on the push factors accounting for maritime insecurity in the GoG region call for a more comprehensive and multilayered approach. Unfortunately, the existing architecture in its 'militaristic form'

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9   For more information on Operation ATALANTA see: Home | EUNAVFOR.

do not suffice (Teixiera & Pinto 2022). The Yaounde Architecture, despite its importance, lacks a proper legal and judicial framework, which makes the application of the rule of law difficult to achieve (ibid.). UNSC Resolution 2634 is ordained to chart a new path in the approach and fight towards maritime insecurity in the region. Resolution 2634 makes a passionate call on all stakeholders to ascertain the underlying causes of the maritime insecurity in the region, based on which a framework would be designed accordingly. Paragraph 16 of UNSC Resolution 2634 reflects this paradigm shift. The UNSC further requests a report on the situation of piracy and armed robbery at sea in the GoG, and their underlying causes within five (5) months following the enactment of Resolution 2634. A critical scrutiny of the language and objectives of UNSC Resolution 2634 is indicative of the UNSC's intention of devising a more comprehensive and holistic approach in curbing maritime insecurity in the region. This certainly ushers in a new regime in fighting piracy in the region, which with all intents and purposes is materially different from Resolutions 2018 and 2039.

Although different, the successes and efficacy of Resolution 2634 remains to be seen. Future assessments would have to be done to ascertain whether this paradigm shift aimed at comprehensively tackling or eradicating the root cause(s) of maritime insecurity in the region would yield the desired outcomes.

Conclusion

The importance of UNSC Resolutions 2018 and 2039 cannot be downplayed in tackling maritime piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. However, the maritime security architecture in its current state does not holistically address the maritime concerns in the region. The grave and persistent threat posed by piracy, armed robbery and transnational organised crimes played a significant role in the adoption of Resolution 2634. Although the rate of piracy attacks has declined in recent years, this paper notes that maritime crimes in the GoG are interrelated and that while there may be a reduction in piracy attacks, other crimes are in surge. Therefore, if gains are not consolidated, it will invariably lead to another spike in piracy or other maritime crimes. The holistic approach advanced in Resolution 2634, other than the militaristic approach in Resolutions 2018 and 2039, will breathe a new impetus in the fight against maritime piracy. It is expected that in the coming months GoG states will take up the challenge to operationalise Resolution 2634. The cooperation of states and regional organisations in putting into practice the appropriate solutions envisioned in Resolution 2634 will be crucial to the success of this resolution in the fight against maritime insecurity in the region. Resolution 2634 also presents an opportune moment for states, regional and international bodies to revisit the approach employed in addressing the concerns and threats to the Gulf of Guinea maritime domain.

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Identifying Security Logics in the EU Policy Discourse: The "Migration Crisis" and the EU

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As the contemporary concepts of migration and security become interrelated, studies aiming to analyse why this is the case were published by reputed experts. One such example is Maciej Stepka's *Identifying Security Logics in the EU Policy Discourse*, which provides a background and an academic analysis of the EU's borders and the crossing of migrants from adjacent states. With the construct of 'migrants as a security threat' from public narratives, the book mentions that scholars have focused on the securitisation of migration and thus emphasise variables such as technology, security policies and its enactment on migrants, as well as issues of human trafficking. Due to the lack of focus and the variety of topics discussed within the book, an analysis of the security logics proves to be complicated. It is in this puzzle that the publication contains the complex nature and respective definitions of concepts such as migration, migration crisis and security within the context of the EU, while aiming to explain different perspectives on them. The complexity provided a foundation for the book's objective: to exhibit this complexity through the EU's presentation of the crisis. The explanations, which were derived from qualitative methods of analyses, argue for the entailment of the EU's securitisation acts not being speech-framing but policy-framing from different actors involved.

The book begins by explaining the constructive nature of the Copenhagen School's concept of securitisation. This school of thought focuses on powerful actors defining a security issue for the acceptance of other actors. Discussed within the book are the concept's weaknesses such as the grounds and nature of exceptions in securitisation, non-elaboration of desecuritisation and the lack of clarity about the concept of *audience* as the recipient of the securitisation narrative. These criticisms lead to a more post-structural examination and nature of securitisation through other formed schools of thought.

From there, the author created an alternative reading of the concept focused on policy framing, which required the analysis to focus on how actors involved in policymaking properly contextualised a situation that requires securitisation. This approach created a more interactive and inclusive consideration in the process, alleviating the criticisms and weaknesses of the Copenhagen School but with a delimiting condition to prevent a slippery slope. The stated condition is that it shall involve several relevant institutions in the analysis to balance the openness and cohesion of security logics. The posturing of the static and structured nature of traditional security is challenged by securitisation being a continuous process of conceptualisation as well as enactment from different but relevant actors with their own contexts and languages.

Once the method of analysis was settled, the contextualisation of security and migration within EU was introduced by stating the deep embedment of the two concepts within its institutions. For instance, the EU is restrictive and doubtful of accepting migrants outside its borders, which is then further complicated by the evolving institutions with no fixed audience. This started in the creation of the Schengen Area in 1985 supported by treaties that ushered in the EU and its securitisation policy as we know it today. Furthermore, this presented the borders of the EU as the space of security contentions. Currently, the institution that is in the forefront of securitising its territory and border is the Frontex which embodies an exceptionalist security logic in its operations. Frontex is responsible for irregular migrants' detention and deportation which are framed as a matter of securitising its territories from possible threats and insecurities. The institution is informed of perceived illegal and external activities by migrants, thus rationalising their actions and utilisation of risk management, surveillance and control technologies.

It is important to note, however, that the EU utilises words of policies and operational actions to provide a humanitarian angle in the treatment and actions on migrants crossing the border. This practice made the concept of refugees and migrants become vague and unclear. By the ascendence of concepts such as *refugee crisis* and *tragedies*, the EU maintains to align the logic in terms of human security. This is evident in terms of describing factors for the 'crisis' such as the

presence of instability, poverty, as well as organised crime and terrorism outside the continent as a way for the EU to be concerned with protecting the vulnerable groups. On the contrary, the EU does not aim to proactively solve such problems and would rather keep it away from their territory. Upon perceived insecurities such as terrorism and radicalisation, the EU plans to 'fortify' itself from risks.

Due to the aforementioned 'crisis', Frontex's default move has been to focus on its hotspots, return operations, relocation and resettlement, along with intelligence cooperation, surveillance and control. This form of management also involved external actors in controlling the flow of migrants. Aside from risk management, the assurance of resilience is also upheld by policy actors in the EU, who aim to provide long-term and comprehensive approaches in the securitisation of migration. Examples of these include the aligned reform of the Common European Asylum System with its securitisation priorities, development aid to external countries via European Union Trust Funds, as well as capacity building responses by the Council of European Union. Nevertheless, exceptional security logic persists in the presence of various operations such as EUNAVFOR MED and other joint border operations despite framing them with words pertaining to a humanitarian disposition.

Overall this book serves to synthesise the various perspectives and logics rendered by different studies regarding the EU's securitisation of migration. As such, this work is suitable for both beginning scholars who are familiar with the jargon of the discipline and seasoned academicians in the field of international migration and refugee studies. The method of constructivism aided in extensively explaining the ideas and framings of the policy actors, capturing the complex picture of the interrelation between migration and securitisation in the EU. This work is a cautious testament that in international relations, ideas and their outcomes matter. The word 'cautious' should not be accepted lightly as some ideas and framings never translate into real outcomes or are never as extensively converted into actions, unlike others. It may be that the focus on exceptionalist security logic, a byproduct of the traditional schools of thought in the field, can no longer stand with the variety of institutions involved and make a significant impact on migration. However, human security framings about migration and security remains infringed as a thought, not extensively converted into action unlike the exceptionalist logic. Ironically, it seems that the book, which aimed to show different constructs, still exhibited realism and emerges as triumphant in the EU's international migration issue.

Contestations, however, are still in place. A debatable point of improvement needed by the book is whether or not it should provide a normative framework or thought on the current phenomenon. Even so, upon analysis, every reader is imparted with the responsibility to think of the rationality or propriety of secu-

ritisation in migration. Specifically, policy actors are invited to be analytical and to reflect on such frameworks and their effect on the influx of both migrants and refugees into the EU. Regardless of the reader's inclinations on the political spectrum, an interpretation to an objective fact in existence has its own pros and cons. When faced with an EU-constructed fortress, how should we approach the delicate balancing of being humanitarian to the distressed and pragmatic in securing our borders at the same time? What words or framing do we ought to use and what are our reasons for utilising them? Are these framings to be converted on varying degrees of action or not? Fortunately, such open questions are what make this book intellectually engaging. The EU's fortress remains under construction, and this book is a call to render a security logic of our own whoever and wherever we are.

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