

Small Island Developing States and climate securitisation in international politics: Towards a comprehensive conception

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Abstract: This article focuses on the engagement of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the climate security debate launched by the United Nations Security Council. It aims to show how SIDS' engagement in the Security Council debate can provide an innovative approach to explain and overcome some of the conceptual and policy challenges for climate securitisation at the international level. Big and small actors in the climate security debate have formed multiple perceptions about threats and solutions concerning climate security. Military-based framings of security have taken a dominant place in the Security Council debate; this has created challenges for security actors seeking to include multiple threat factors related to climate change in the security space. SIDS have illustrated the challenges in highlighting the diverse range of vulnerabilities, impacts, and solutions uniquely inherent to many security speakers and audiences involved in the climate security debate. Using a qualitative analysis of constructivist literature on securitisation, this article develops a conceptual framework to help incorporate SIDS' broader aspects of climate security into the securitising move at the international level. It asserts that SIDS make a compelling case to explain the impacts of multilevel threat factors and security provisions on climate security formation.

Keywords: climate security, small island developing states, securitisation, social constructivism

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Introduction

This article focuses on the engagement of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the climate security debate launched by the United Nations Security Council. It aims to show how SIDS' engagement in the Security Council debate can provide an innovative approach to explain and overcome some of the conceptual and policy challenges for climate securitisation at the international level. In line with the widened agenda of security studies (Buzan et al., 1998; McDonald, 2021; Wallis et al., 2022), this article

asserts that there is a need for international security speakers to adopt non-traditional approaches in order to frame threats and security provisions regarding climate change. This is particularly important for SIDS as they have promoted multidimensional and holistic approaches to explain climate threats and security (van Schaik et al., 2018; Security Council, 2007, 2018). This article also argues that conflict- and military-based meanings of security adopted by the Security Council have not helped to fully incorporate climate change into the international security sphere. Multiple meanings of 'security' have been drawn from several multidimensional impacts associated with climate change; this has required an approach to security that can incorporate multiple and alternative meanings of security threats and solutions into international security sphere.

Various experiences have resulted in divergent viewpoints among participants in the climate security debate (McDonald, 2013, 2018, 2021; Warner & Boas, 2019). The initial debate on climate security in the Security Council was launched in 2007 and 2011 by the United Kingdom and Germany, respectively. Since this securitising move, most Western states, including the United States (US), have sought to incorporate climate into the traditional conflict-resolution space under the existing mandate of the Security Council (Security Council, 2007, 2011, 2018). On the other hand, Africa, the Group of 77 (134 developing countries), the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), and SIDS have sought a more cautious approach in debating this issue under the Security Council mandate. While taking part in the Security Council debate, these actors have emphasised the multilateral process under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (Warner & Boas, 2019). These differing views are associated with multiple ideas about, "Whose security are we referring to? What constitutes a threat to security? Who are the key agents for providing security? And what are the key means of realizing it?" (McDonald, 2021, p. 19). The divergent views have made it difficult for debating actors to come to agreement about the nature of threat and security provisions (McDonald, 2018; Oels, 2012; Security Council, 2018, 2019). This lack of agreement has created challenges to fully institutionalise climate security at the international level (McDonald, 2021; Peters & Mayhew, 2016; Scott, 2012; Warner & Boas, 2019). Therefore, an important question arises as to how to explain the challenges around the securitising move at the international level. This is important in understanding how different perceptions can play out as constitutive parts of climate security formation.

Challenges for the securitising move have been illustrated by SIDS in highlighting the diversity of vulnerabilities, impacts, and solutions uniquely inherent to many security speakers and audiences involved in the climate security debate. SIDS' climate crisis has been portrayed by multisectoral and multidimensional challenges associated with climate change, and the urgent need for action through cooperation among international actors (Barnett & Campbell, 2010; Betzold et al., 2012; Söderbäck, 2020; United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change [UNFCCC], 2005). SIDS have demonstrated the 'threat multiplier' effect of climate change by portraying how climate conditions have exacerbated existing vulnerabilities and threatened their survival

(Hauger, 2014; Rasheed, 2021b). Climate-related threats to economic, political, societal, health, food, and infrastructural security have demanded action that can support and coordinate both adaptation and mitigation actions across multiple sectors (Robinson, 2020). Actions limited to military-based conflict management may not address climate-related security issues for SIDS (United Nations, 2009; Warner & Boas, 2019). SIDS can help to demonstrate the instances of alternative security narratives and development of more comprehensive and innovative approaches to security that can accommodate broader meanings of threat and security provisions.

Challenges for the securitising move are also closely aligned with concepts developed by the post-Cold War security and international relations schools, including the Copenhagen School (Buzan & Wæver, 1997; Torres Camprubí, 2016; Huysmans, 2002; International Institute for Sustainable Development, 2020; Krause & Williams, 1997; McDonald, 2021; Mead, 2021; Stritzel, 2007; United Nations, 2009; van Schaik et al., 2018). Post-Cold War studies focus on conceptualising non-military issues, including political, societal, economic, and environmental issues, as security threats. They realise that security risks may arise from human-made factors other than military-based state activities (Buzan et al., 1998; C.A.S.E. Collective, 2006; Cho, 2012; Scott, 2012). However, leading schools looking at broader aspects of security, such as the Copenhagen School, still stress the impact of conflict- or military-based security on national and international security. Military-based risks have remained at the core of security frameworks, including the use of the Security Council in dealing with fundamental questions of war and peace (C.A.S.E. Collective, 2006, p. 448; Freedman, 1998; Ramcharan, 2016; Simma et al., 2012; Walt, 1991). Therefore, this dominant military-based narrative of security has also limited the Copenhagen School's thinking from fully comprehending the impact of all types of actors and interests in the securitising moves (McDonald, 2013, 2018; Stritzel, 2007), as it may inadvertently miss the significance of all audiences who happen to carry divergent views as in the climate security debate.

This article does not claim that the securitisation concept has practical limitations. Alternatively, it brings forward some of the social constructivist approaches to the Copenhagen School's concepts that explore the impacts of alternative perceptions on securitising moves. This involves understanding the aspect of 'speech act' in security formation and how international actors have used the speech act concept in climate securitisation practices (Peters & Mayhew, 2016; Stritzel, 2007; Warner & Boas, 2019). Here, a social constructivist lens captures a speech act as a social and discursive practice between states as they interact with issues concerning security (Buzan et al., 1998; Cho, 2012; Hopf, 2002; Milliken, 1999; Stritzel, 2007; Wendt, 1994). It asserts that a mere utterance of security by an actor may not derive the meaning of climate threats and their security implications. Rather, what climate security means to international actors is determined by their intersubjective understanding and meaning making. Climate security formation is therefore a social construction of a speech act constituted by the discursive practice of all actors involved. Using a qualitative analysis of constructivist literature on securitisation (Cho, 2012; Hansen, 2006; Huysmans,

2002; Stritzel, 2007, 2011), this article develops a conceptual framework to help incorporate SIDS' broader aspects of climate security into the securitising move at the international level. It asserts that SIDS make a compelling case to explain the impact of multilevel threat factors and security provisions in climate security formation.

The next section of this article highlights the conceptual developments and fundamental challenges for climate securitisation in the international context. It then discusses the differing views presented by the climate securitising moves. This is followed by an assessment of SIDS' role in a discursive formation of climate impact and solutions in international politics. Next, it develops a conceptual framework that can explain how SIDS' alternative views constitute an instrumental part of the securitising move. The article concludes by highlighting how climate securitisation can be more practical by looking at it via an intersubjective lens that explains the impact of alternative views.

Conceptual framing of climate securitisation

Concepts of climate securitisation have emerged as part of post-Cold War security and policy studies on non-traditional security issues faced by individuals and communities. Post-Cold War order saw new and emerging socio-economic, political, and environmental circumstances associated with increasing poverty, migration, violations of human rights, terrorism, global warming, and sea level rise (Krause & Williams, 1997; McDonald, 2021). In the 1980s and 1990s, such non-military events were incorporated into international relations (IR) scholarship and security studies to understand their potential implications for international peace and security (C.A.S.E. Collective, 2006). Despite the incorporation of multilevel threats into new security studies, the moves to securitise broader issues, including climate change or environmental issues, have encountered resistance from traditional IR schools.

Traditional IR schools have been an instrumental part of securitising moves looking at incorporating wider meanings of security. In the traditional sense, international security "deals with the most fundamental questions of war and peace and, consequently, with the highest responsibilities of government" (Freedman, 1998, p. 48) to ensure international peace and security. Bertrand Ramcharan (2016, para. 3) quotes Simma et al. (2012) in that "international security implies the right of every State to take advantage of any relevant security system [including the Security Council], while also implying the legal obligations of every State to support such systems." Among the neorealist scholars, Stephen Walt (1991) has widely been implied as a defender of traditional and limited understanding of security (Krause & Williams, 1996; Milliken, 1999; Stern, 1995). As cited by Stern (1995, p. 220), Walt (1991, p. 213) merely rejects an expansive approach to security, claiming that such a turn could "destroy the intellectual coherence" of security studies and, for most, "make it more difficult to devise solutions." Although the new moves were crucial and increasingly acknowledged by critical, post-structuralist, and social constructivist IR schools, the traditional, state-centric, and military-based framing of security has continued to hold

ontological and epistemological grounds in post-Cold War security studies, particularly in relation to defining security threats and solutions (C.A.S.E. Collective, 2006, p. 448; Stern, 1995; Wæver, 1995).

Traditionalists claim that 'security' is protection from and by aggressive military-based states that require coping mechanisms involving military-based action (Walt, 1991). The new security debate constructs an understanding of threats caused by actors and activities beyond military-based state activities. Their coping mechanisms involve multisectoral actions, including military-based action to curb multiple "domains of social activities and corresponding threats" (Stern, 1995, p. 214). The latter's understanding does not completely dismiss the involvement of a military policy agenda. Climate or environmental security fits this latter understanding, and therefore involves interaction between military and environmental activities. For example, the environment has experienced the negative impact of warfare and military activities, including negative consequences of nuclear testing, leading to the adoption of the Partial Test Ban Treaty in the 1960s to minimise nuclear pollution. The environmental degradation and resources depletion associated with mass-migration activities could also lead to conflict and war (Benjaminsen et al., 2012; Stern, 1995). Further, while expansion of military activities may directly support development of other sectors, investment in military activities will engender positive spin-offs in environmental management involving rescue and disaster-relief activities (Stern, 1995, p. 222). Some also argue against incorporating environmental issues into the security field because it brings environmental problem-solving into the military sphere. In rejecting this linkage between environment and security, Daniel Deudney (1990, p. 461) argues that the "traditional [military-based] focus of national security has little in common with environmental problems or solutions." While acknowledging the problem-solving challenges arising from linking environment and security, new security schools, including the Copenhagen School, acknowledge that non-military solutions can be involved in addressing security problems (Buzan et al., 1998; Stritzel, 2007).

The new security scholarship either incorporates comprehensive threat lenses into security agenda or expands the military-based security mandate to cover non-military threats (McDonald, 2018, 2021; Nye & Lynn-Jones, 1988; Stern, 1995, p. 214). Both cases involve threat factors beyond military-based threats, including economic, social, and environmental problems. This requires expanding security thinking beyond military-based action and solutions, which involves shifting the referent objects away from state-centric, military-based security provisions (Buzan & Wæver, 1997; Stritzel, 2007). The referent objects determine the "security of what?" question, which in turn indicates the type of security provisions required. For example, in climate security, 'emancipation and autonomy' refers to global environmental threat and not that generated by state-based military action (Dyer, 2001). One can argue that climate security must involve action coordinated among multiple sectors across states to address the multidimensional socio-economic and infrastructural challenges associated with climate impacts. Consistent with Deudney (1990), climate action does not necessarily require a security agenda; development policy may as well serve the

purpose through adaptation and resilience-building projects. Here, extending a military-based security agenda to address non-military issues is not necessary for climate action. However, rather than extending a conflict-based security agenda, incorporating non-military issues into the security sphere could allow the development of security provisions that address broader issues by legitimating extraordinary measures. For example, debate on the medium-term and long-term impacts of climate change on sustainability and development, migration and conflict situations, and national and international security has already been established among policy and scholarly communities (Floyd & Matthew, 2013; Pacific Islands Forum, 2018; Scott, 2012; United Nations, 2009, 2011a). Therefore, the issue of climate change can be incorporated into the traditional security sphere to create security provisions that accommodate non-military problem-solving methods.

Climate securitisation depends on the ability of security actors to incorporate non-military aspects of security into national and international security agenda. This depends on the individual and collective actions of speakers and audiences in the securitising move.

Construction of international climate security

Security aspects of climate change were highlighted in international negotiations in the 1980s and 1990s, including at the 1988 Toronto Conference, 'The Changing Atmosphere: Implications for Global Security'. Climate security, however, later started to become prominent in an international context when climate was introduced to the Security Council debate as a security issue (Torres Camprubí, 2016; McDonald, 2013, 2021; Scott, 2012).

The way in which European states and the US have developed the climate security narrative has had broader implications for incorporating climate change into the international security sphere. For example, the UK and Germany have focused on conflict-based aspects of climate security (Security Council, 2007). As early as the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol, Sebastian Oberthür, one of the first original authors of European-based discourse, in his 1999 publication, implied environmental protection as a means of conflict prevention in climate-affected states (Torres Camprubí, 2016, p. 85). In Germany, similar narratives grew as both government and non-government research bodies discussed the security implications of climate change. In association with the German Federal Ministry of the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, scholars from non-governmental institutions, namely Hans Günter Brauch, Alexander Carius, Sebastian Oberthür, and Dennis Tänzler, produced research on climate change and conflict (Torres Camprubí, 2016). Hans Günter Brauch (2002, p. 23) found that there is "no mono-causal linkage between climate change and conflicts," but it "will contribute to environmental stress and thus become a potential cause of conflict constellations." Multiple studies and policy initiatives occurred as the German government sought to incorporate climate change into its national security strategy as well as the regional security strategy of the European Union (EU) (Torres Camprubí,

2016; Scott, 2012). At a national level, the UK established the Climate Security Desk attached to Foreign Affairs (Torres Camprubí, 2016) and, in its 2008 National Security Strategy, recognised climate change as a driver of threats and risks such as “international terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, conflicts and failed states, pandemics, and trans-national crime [...] [that] undermine wider international stability” (Cabinet Office, 2008, p. 3). National and regional discourses also influenced Netherlands and Nordic countries, including Denmark, Sweden, and Finland, to incorporate climate change into their national security strategies (Torres Camprubí, 2016).

With regional developments, the UK took the issue to the international platform in mid-2000s. The UK’s securitising move was driven by its domestic politics which, at the time, sought a political strategy to build international consensus to take urgent and extraordinary measures to support climate action under the UNFCCC (Ashton, 2011; Security Council, 2007; Warner & Boas, 2019). As analysts have argued, the securitising move by the UK coincided with its foreign policy efforts to play a leading role in climate negotiations, especially at the then-upcoming 2009 Conference of Parties (COP) meeting in Copenhagen (Warner & Boas, 2019). Domestic political discourse spoke to the importance of linking climate change to security consequences as a way to “gain more international attention” (Warner & Boas, 2019, p. 1477). This implied an attempt to use the Security Council to raise the urgency of legitimately taking extraordinary measures to enforce national commitments. Their strategy was to push national commitments further and not to undermine existing programs for climate action under the UNFCCC (Torres Camprubí, 2016; Security Council, 2007, 2018).

While climate negotiators have agreed about the potential implications of climate for national and international security, there has also been growing debate about how to incorporate climate into the Security Council debates (Security Council, 2007, 2011, 2018). For example, China has associated climate problems with the global sustainable development agenda and expressed willingness to “strengthen international cooperation and jointly respond to climate change” (Security Council, 2007, p. 12). According to China, “the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention (COP), the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development, the United Nations Environment Programme and other forums are involved in discussions and actions related to this theme” (Security Council, 2007, p. 12). As most have agreed with the primary role of UNFCCC on this matter, Brazil, China, India, and Russia, as well as the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the Group of 77 (G77), and SIDS, have argued that if clearly not defined, the Security Council’s role in this issue could potentially undermine global mechanisms, including cooperation in other areas to support mitigation and adaptation activities (Matthew, 2013, p. 271). Representing SIDS, the Maldives in 2018 debate noted that “where there are clear threats to the security and survival of any country [...] [Security Council] has to take appropriate action” (Security Council, 2018, p. 26). However, most have also argued that moving the issue under the Security Council mandate could have institutional implications that could undermine democratic and political processes that determine sovereign claims, including common

but differentiated responsibilities of states to curb climate change (Warner & Boas, 2019). This primarily concerns the authority of the Security Council to use air, sea, or land forces under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations (Hartmann, 2010; Scott, 2012, p. 223; United Nations, 2020c; Warner & Boas, 2019).

On the other hand, the Security Council's role has been particularly explicit in the US climate security narrative. In the 2011 debate, United States ambassador Susan Rice accepted the real implications of climate change and expected the Security Council to play a more active role by "understanding that climate change [has] exacerbated the risks of conflict" (United Nations, 2011b). In 2018, the US expected the Security Council to "consider natural phenomena and disasters" (Security Council, 2018, p. 13). Parallel with the European narrative, the US has led a climate-focused security debate both in the national and international security spheres by arguing that the increasing impact of climate change, including sea level rise and extreme weather, could destroy its military facilities in small islands states (Kodack, 2020). Since the early 1990s, the US has produced several discourses, notably Peter Schwartz and Doug Randall's 2003 work, *An Abrupt Climate Change Scenario and its Consequences for United States Security*, and the Center for Naval Analyses's *National Security and the Threat of Climate Change* (CNA Corporation, 2007; Torres Camprubí, 2016, p. 94). The US has also released a series of studies concerning geopolitical impacts of climate change in China, India, Russia, North Africa, the Caribbean, South-East Asian countries, and the Pacific Islands.

Incorporating the same narrative into regional security organisations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) has portrayed an attempt to securitise climate change among US and European states (Torres Camprubí, 2016). However, moving climate security to the Security Council floor has created further challenges in terms of institutionalising climate security. Multiple actors with claims about diverse threat factors and security provisions have become part of the climate securitising move at the international level. SIDS represent a diverse set of actors; they share common factors, including unique vulnerabilities and existential impact elements, but they also present the diverse range of threats local to their economies that create questions and solutions beyond traditional security approaches (Robinson, 2020). While these diverse experiences do not fit the existing security mandate of the Security Council, incorporating alternative views will help to broaden the security lens. SIDS' engagement in climate security debates brings forward multiple threats involving infrastructure, human resources, and economic losses, and the multisectoral problem-solving efforts associated with them.

SIDS in climate security formation

Use of multilateral approaches has been emphasised by SIDS in the Security Council debates on climate security (Torres Camprubí, 2016; Security Council, 2007, 2018; Söderbäck, 2020). SIDS were both welcoming and cautious about incorporating climate into the Security Council's problem-solving platform. Speaking on behalf of Pacific SIDS

and friends at the 2007 debate, Papua New Guinea highlighted several but different threat factors facing Pacific communities. SIDS' challenges have varied from the increasing number and frequency of climate-related disasters and tropical cyclones, and climate-induced health crises such as malaria and dengue infestations, to economic challenges associated with El Niño events causing a shift of major tuna stocks and affecting their survival (Security Council, 2007, pp. 27–28). The urgency to act has also been greater, although at different scales, with some facing existential threats and others the loss of land and human displacement, depending on their economic and geographic formations (Nurse et al., 2014; Petzold & Magnan, 2019, p. 147; Thomas & Benjamin, 2018). With such conditions, moving the climate debate to the Security Council made sense to SIDS. In the 2018 debate, Trinidad and Tobago, on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), argued that:

[The] threat far outweighs the current structure of the Council ... The current structures within it will not prove sufficient for discussion of the threats posed by climate change [...] [But] the appropriateness of the discussions within the Council should not go unanswered. (Security Council, 2018, p. 27)

For SIDS, this urgency should not undermine existing commitments to UNFCCC process. Papua New Guinea's reiteration of Nauru's statement in the 2011 Security Council confirms the position that SIDS hold in the ongoing global debate. As quoted by the Security Council (2011, p. 19):

Make no mistake: the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change — the UNFCCC — is and must remain the primary forum for developing an international strategy to mitigate climate change, mobilize financial resources, and facilitate adaptation, planning and project implementation.

The collective and individual policy narratives of SIDS have emphasised their desire to navigate the climate security debate to include holistic approaches to security threats and solutions (Alliance of Small Island States, 2012; Scott, 2012, p. 225). Pacific SIDS' narratives have further highlighted this. In 2009, the Pacific SIDS debated the issue at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), together with an effort to ensure international commitment to understanding aspects, urgency, and actions for climate security (Scott, 2012; United Nations, 2009). The UNGA was an apparent platform for island nations to build collective discourses on climate security. It provided a comprehensive venue for hearing multiple perspectives and experiences, as well as incorporating multilateral problem-solving thinking into the burgeoning climate security debate. That year, the Pacific SIDS successfully convinced the UNGA to adopt a resolution identifying multidimensional aspects of climate security (United Nations General Assembly, 2009). This resolution reaffirmed that the UNFCCC "is the key instrument for addressing climate change" and called for the UN Secretary General to

submit a report on the “possible security implications of climate change” (United Nations General Assembly, 2009). The Secretary General’s report, launched in September 2009, identified that climate change posed a potential threat to several aspects of security in states and communities, not only in SIDS. These have included (United Nations, 2009):

- Vulnerability-based aspects that focus on threat to food security and human health;
- Development-based aspects that focus on the loss of capacity to maintain stability;
- Coping and security-based aspects that focus impact on migration, resources competition, and domestic conflicts moving to international space;
- Statelessness aspects that focus on implications for rights, security, and sovereignty; and
- International conflict concerning impact on resources sharing.

The report identified a compound of challenges arising from climate change with potential security implications (United Nations, 2009). For SIDS, threats posed by climate change are existential in nature; the climate impacts weaken their natural capacities to achieve sustainable development, and sometimes even to survive (van Schaik et al., 2018; United Nations, 2009). The impacts that they face are multifaceted, move across sectors, and require multilevel problem-solving approaches. The UNFCCC negotiations have already recognised these multiple effects of climate change experienced by SIDS (Barnett & Campbell, 2010; UNFCCC, 2005).

SIDS’ claims on the life-threatening effects of climate change have preceded the 2007 and 2011 Security Council debates. The 2009 UNGA resolution was informed by their common agenda to create international awareness about the unique vulnerabilities and existential threats faced by small and low-lying islands (Rasheed, 2019, 2020, 2021a; van Schaik et al., 2018).

SIDS launched their first international campaign in the late 1980s as part of their collective effort to influence the UNFCCC process. In the mid-1980s, the Maldives had warned the members of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting and the UNGA about the existential threats faced by island communities due to sea level rise (Barnett & Campbell, 2010; Edwards, 1990; Rasheed, 2019, 2020). The 1989 Small States Conference on Sea Level Rise, held in the Maldives capital, Male', brought together 14 small island states and like-minded parties from the Mediterranean, the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean, and the Pacific Ocean to work collectively to promote the unique case of SIDS. This conference led to the formation of their ad hoc coalition, the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). Since the early 1990s, AOSIS has been very successful in navigating climate negotiations to incorporate the existential effects of climate change into SIDS’ climate agenda (Ashe et al., 1999, p. 210; Rasheed, 2019).

SIDS' vulnerability-based existential narrative has been backed by international research and policy developments over the past 30 years (Rasheed, 2020). At a lecture held in Hawai'i in 1988, the New Zealand Deputy Prime Minister (and Minister for the Environment) communicated the unique consequences of climate change in the Pacific Islands. In 1989, a report of the Commonwealth Group of Experts stated that "there was special need for concern for low-lying island countries" that called for a "major international initiative" (Barnett & Campbell, 2010, p. 86) to address causes of climate change. Multiple research projects were launched in the Pacific SIDS in the late 1980s on the impact of sea level rise, including reports from the Association of South Pacific Environmental Institutions (Barnett & Campbell, 2010). Shared understanding about the life-threatening impacts of climate change on SIDS was established among regional and international policy discourses. The 1992 Rio Conference (also known as the Earth Summit) adopted a key piece of international agenda for development and the environment, the Agenda 21, which formally recognised SIDS' special case that considered them as "extremely vulnerable to global warming and sea level rise, with certain small low-lying islands facing the increasing threat of the loss of their entire national territories" (United Nations, 1992a, para. 17.127). Such unique risk factors were further recognised in the Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA), a key piece of development policy unanimously adopted during the first Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, held in Barbados in 1994 (United Nations, 1994). Linking sustainable development and climate change, BPOA recognised priority areas for SIDS' sustainable development and to comprehensively address their multiple challenges, including "development, health and environmental goals, strengthening national institutions, and mobilizing all available resources, all of which [were] aimed at improving the quality of life" (United Nations, 1994, p. 5).

Scientific literature has also supported the vulnerability and existential element of climate impacts in SIDS (Barnett & Campbell, 2010; Bijlsma et al., 1996). The leading international scientific organisation, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), has provided scientific evidence on the multidimensional aspects of climate impacts on small island nations (Nurse et al., 2014). They include climate-related implications for water resources, the coastal environment, agriculture and food security, biodiversity, human settlements and infrastructure, human health, and economic and socio-cultural resources. A compound of risks has threatened and multiplied existing vulnerabilities associated with "narrow resource bases, dominance of economic sectors that are reliant on the natural environment, limited industrial activity, physical remoteness, and limited economies of scale" (Thomas et al., 2020, p. 2). The level and types of impacts, risks, and vulnerabilities have also varied across SIDS, creating multiple interests driving their national and international policy discourses. However, such diversities have not hindered their interests to work collectively with others who experience extreme vulnerabilities to climate change. Diverse vulnerabilities and existential conditions have been the common factors constituting their climate-related threats and security factors (Barnett, 2005; Betzold et al., 2012; Nurse et al., 2014). An account of these conditions can explain how SIDS

can create an alternative discourse that can back the differing views shared by Security Council speakers.

Vulnerabilities and existential discourse

The impacts of sea level rise, for example, cannot be separated from SIDS' climate discourse, particularly in the context of low-lying island archipelagos such as the Maldives, Micronesia, Solomon Islands, and Tuvalu (Thomas et al., 2020; World Bank, 2021). The Pacific Islands have experienced severe soil erosion causing loss of land, infrastructure, and assets located in the coastal areas, where the majority of communities live. Loss of land has displaced a great number of people in Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia (United Nations, 2015, p. 33). Additionally, most SIDS have economic activities associated with coastal land and marine resources. Sea level rise affects the sustainability of such resources to support economic development. Studies show that the economic impacts of climate change in SIDS are higher than the global average (Barnett, 2005; United Nations, 2015). Both local and external markets are significant aspects of development. Climate change can adversely affect SIDS' economic capacity by impacting human and asset capacities associated with markets; inundation of land and displacement of people can affect the infrastructure and workforce supporting economic activity (Barnett, 2005; Barnett & Campbell, 2010; Thomas et al., 2020; UNFCCC, 2005). UNFCCC (2005, p. 23) identifies "loss of beaches, coastal inundation, degradation of coastal ecosystems, saline intrusion, damage to critical infrastructure, and bleaching of coral reefs" as potential threats to tourism — here, climate impacts are caused by both internal damage and external markets. Of total exports, 30% in most SIDS are linked to tourism; in the Maldives, Seychelles, and Bahamas, tourism accounts for over 50% of total exports. With 45% of tourist resorts in the Maldives affected by coastal erosion, coral bleaching, and sea level rise, potential losses to its international tourist market are high (World Bank, 2021).

The impact of sea level rise on population, assets, and freshwater bases further increases the long-term risks associated with the security of agriculture, food, and human health. Where coastal aquifers remain the only source of fresh water, increasing sea level rise and coastal flooding have affected the main water sources in the Pacific Islands over the years (Oberle et al., 2017). Records from 2007 found that 90 inhabited islands in the Maldives experienced flooding caused by swell and tidal waves, "causing extensive damage to critical infrastructure, properties, household goods, saltwater intrusion to groundwater aquifer, coastal erosion and livelihood" (World Bank, 2021, p. 15). Water quality also affects agricultural productivity. Population and livelihood, including food security, of many SIDS depends on local agriculture; the multiple impacts of climate change — sea level rise, tropical cyclones, floods, and droughts — over the years have significantly damaged agricultural production (United Nations, 2015). Cyclone Ami in 2003 cost over US\$ 35 million in lost crops in Fiji. Cyclones like Winston in 2016 caused losses amounting to US\$ 460 million. While extreme flooding

has threatened river catchments, climate-induced drought has further increased risk factors to food security. The 1997–98 El Niño caused widespread agricultural losses in Fiji amounting to US\$ 65 million (Barnett, 2005). Depletion of food supply has produced life-threatening conditions for 260,000 people in Papua New Guinea. Impact on agricultural production and supply caused by “diminished food production; lost work capacity and reduced labour productivity” (United Nations, 2015, p. 31) increases health risks associated with water-borne and vector-borne diseases.

Physical and mental stress caused by hurricane and cyclone season in the Caribbean and Pacific Island communities has been further exacerbated by global lockdowns linked to COVID-19 (Mead, 2021). Rapid lockdowns in the Pacific Islands were successful in keeping COVID-19 from most of their communities. However, battling with this health crisis also stressed national and regional resilience and climate-coping mechanisms. For example, tropical Cyclone Harold, which hit Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and Fiji in April 2020, put those communities at multiple risks, including food security, health, shelter, and economic risks (Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2020). While COVID-19 brought crippling effects to domestic coping mechanisms, the ongoing manifestations of climate change further multiplied the threats faced by island nations across the globe. This has weakened their existing fragile economies and national capacities, particularly in building short- and long-term resilience mechanisms for the survival and sustainability of their national territories and sovereignty rights (United Nations, 2020b).

The capacity to address multiple risk factors has affected — and been affected by — adaptation and mitigation activities (Robinson, 2020; Thomas & Benjamin, 2018; Thomas et al., 2020, p. 4). Diminishing capacities have, therefore, been associated with SIDS’ continual engagement in seeking external cooperation to support sustainability and resilience against climate impacts (UNFCCC, 2005; Leal Filho et al., 2021).

SIDS’s engagement in the UNFCCC process has been notable. UNFCCC has fundamentally supported a capacity-building project in SIDS over the years. At its inception in 1992, UNFCCC Article 11 launched a financial mechanism “for the provision of financial resources on a grant or concessional basis, including for the transfer of technology” (United Nations, 1992b). Since the financial mechanism was entrusted to the Green Climate Fund in 2011, US\$ 818 million worth of projects have been implemented, including in SIDS (United Nations, 2020a). According to United Nations (2015, p. 10), “the cost of inaction in the Caribbean alone is projected to amount to over US\$22 billion annually by 2050 — equalling 10 percent of the current size of the Caribbean economy.” SIDS have received considerably more financial support from the Green Climate Fund than non-SIDS, with more than half of their support for adaptation projects (Chase et al., 2020). Both adaptation and mitigation in SIDS have benefited from global climate finance (Watson et al., 2019). Multiple multilateral mechanisms have supported adaptation planning and implementation to help build domestic capacities (Thomas et al., 2020; Leal Filho et al., 2021). Moreover, recognition of domestic capabilities is important in developing a complementary support mechanism through international cooperation (Baldacchino, 2018).

Building domestic capacities alone does not curb the multilevel threats posed by climate change; international commitment is necessary. SIDS have made significant efforts in this space through continual engagement with the UNFCCC process, including recent Paris negotiations to push national commitments to reduce global greenhouse gas emission levels (Ashe et al., 1999; Barnett, 2005; Barnett & Campbell, 2010). SIDS' participation in subsequent negotiations has promoted general awareness that the increasing severity of climate threats and impacts is a result of global warming caused by human activities (Nurse et al., 2014). For example, the 2015 Paris Agreement included a commitment to limit the global temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels as an aspirational goal. SIDS have long established this view in international campaigns since the launch of AOSIS's '1.5°C to stay alive' campaign in 2008, to set a global goal of 1.5°C because of scientific evidence that SIDS face unique vulnerabilities and existential impacts (Benjamin & Thomas, 2016). SIDS' engagement in these negotiations has built international discourse on multidimensional and existential elements of climate change.

For SIDS, addressing climate change aligns with the subject of development, survival, and security (Robinson, 2020; Thomas & Benjamin, 2018; Thomas et al., 2020). More importantly, they present a diverse group and bring forward a multitude of threats and problem-solving options. Possible implications for security have included climate-related stresses, including human, food, and broader environmental risks. Such multiple threats illustrated by SIDS have not been seriously considered in the Security Council's approach to climate security (Söderbäck, 2020). However, threats and response mechanisms to address them must be accepted by security actors in order for them to be institutionalised as international security issues. There is general agreement about long-term and indirect links between climate threats and security. However, navigating the issue through the Security Council's traditional security platform has not helped security actors to institutionalise it at the international level. Moving beyond this traditional framing of security is required. This can be explained in terms of the constitutive part SIDS can play in climate security formation.

Towards comprehensive climate security formation

The Copenhagen School has incorporated multiple threat factors and problem-solving options into the international security discourse (Buzan et al., 1998). This involves articulation of serious issues as a security problem. Consistent with Ole Wæver (1995), Stritzel (2007, p. 360) explains:

The articulation of 'security' entails the claim that something is held to pose a threat to a valued referent object that is so existential that it is legitimate to move the issue beyond the established games of 'normal' politics to deal with it by exceptional, i.e., security, methods.

However, the openness to include any issues, including economic, health, and environmental challenges, in the security space has not allowed the full securitisation of climate change in the international context (Warner & Boas, 2019). Using constructivist approaches to securitisation, this section identifies two reasons for the problem with climate securitisation. It further develops conceptual building blocks to explain how SIDS' existential experience can help to conceptualise and include a comprehensive approach to climate security in the Security Council debate.

The first reason lies with the one-directional application of 'speech act' in international securitisation moves, and the second relates to the underutilisation of discursive formation of security as an ontological base to reinforce the methodological and practical powers of the securitisation school (Stritzel, 2007). In the first case, non-military-based issues can be treated as an "existential threat to a valued referent object," and considered as urgent matters that deserve "exceptional measures to deal with the threat" by speaking security — i.e., "utterance of security" (Buzan & Wæver, 2003, p. 491). However, this speech act is often implied as one-directional when it puts the actor or speaker in a "very strong position to deal with the issue as he/she thinks is appropriate" (Stritzel, 2007, p. 360). As in the case of climate securitisation moves by European powers and the US, instigating the debate through their authority under the Security Council has put their speech act as rather one-directional. This has limited importance in considering other options and alternative understandings shared by debating states, particularly regarding the multidimensional nature of climate change. This type of realist notion that international security is understood and formed within the Security Council mandate has created an authoritative framing of the speech act, limiting the intersubjective aspect of this securitisation move. While authors of the theory, including Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver (1997, 2003; Buzan et al., 1998), have stressed the role of positional power between security speakers and audiences, a further problem with securitisation arises when multiple stakeholder-actors are in a position to define 'security' (Stritzel, 2007, p. 365).

Climate impacts and solutions have been derived at both national and international levels primarily under the UNFCCC. When the Security Council debate was launched, debating states expressed divergent interests mostly in terms of the need for securitising climate change and the appropriateness of the Security Council mandate to determine security provisions (McDonald, 2013; Scott, 2012; Scott & Andrade, 2012). China, for example, has recognised the importance of considering the security implications of climate change — and all debating states have shared this view. However, China has been particularly cautious of using the Security Council platform to debate on its solutions because of the political and economic issues associated with climate change that lie beyond the Council's mandate (Security Council, 2007, 2018). As with most developing states, China has expressed climate issues as a developmental concern that needs to be debated under broader mandates of the UN. The Security Council has created a power factor for its members to derive security in traditional terms. As such, China's focus on military-based aspects of security can limit its acceptance of alternative perceptions of climate security in the Security Council debate.

This has resulted in the failure of the security speakers, under the Security Council, to fully observe the intersubjective function of the climate security formation as constituted by its speech act. This has made climate security discourse strategically selective and an incomplete speech act. Focusing exclusively on the “semantic side of speech act articulation” (Stritzel, 2007, p. 358) or mere utterance of security actors to generate the urgency and exceptionality of an issue has limited the applicability of the securitisation theory in multiple or comparative empirical cases. However, the intersubjective function of a speech act can bring forward the practical and constitutive powers of speakers and audiences (Côté, 2016).

Some authors of the securitisation school have already recognised the implications of such semantic effects of the move (Buzan et al., 1998; Stritzel, 2007). As Stritzel (2007, p. 362, citing Buzan et al., 1998, p. 46) reiterates, “[A] speech act is interesting because it holds the insurrecting potential to break the ordinary, to establish meaning that is not already in the context. It reworks or produces a context by the performative success of the act.” This performative success or process of a speech act plays a crucial part in determining the effectiveness of the securitisation move in empirical contexts. Considering an issue as urgent and exceptional in the international context happens through a process of interactions between states — i.e., by Security Council debates. The process of state interplay is explained by the “social and linguistic relatedness and sequentiality” (Stritzel, 2007, p. 358) aspects of the speech act. This explains the discursive construction of identity, interests, and security at the international level (Cho, 2012; Hansen, 2006; Hopf, 1998; Krause & Williams, 1997). This non-static idea of securitisation brings the discussion to the second reason for limitations — that is, the intersubjective aspect of a speech act.

This second problem stresses that the underutilisation of discursive formation of security as ontological evidence can limit the role of the intersubjectivity of a speech act to fully socialise security. While identifying this as a potential problem with application of the theory, this article also argues that the theoretical grounds of the securitisation school also provide an adequate framework for the role of intersubjectivity (Buzan et al., 1998; C.A.S.E. Collective, 2006; Cho, 2012; Stritzel, 2007, 2011).

The static element of a speech act discriminates between the speakers and audiences (Côté, 2016), giving institutional priority and authority to the Security Council. This lack of social function in the securitising moves has limited the intersubjective powers to incorporate alternative security implications into the international security sphere. Stritzel (2007) stresses the importance of recognising the social connection between actors and their speech act in making securitisation moves significant. For example, the Security Council has offered a space for multiple actors (security speakers and audiences) to interact and decide through a social process (international debate) and influence collective meaning making, and intersubjectively construct the climate threats and security provisions. This lens of climate securitisation allows intersubjective agreement between all speakers and audiences, which can constitute successful moves (Warner & Boas, 2019). This

intersubjective agreement is temporal and process oriented. Rather than either one dictating the narratives for threats and solutions, this social constructivist lens places all debating parties in a constitutive position where the outcome of the debate is constructed by their temporal and spatial interplay through negotiations and discursive practice. Formation of discourse then is placed at the centre of security formation at the international level (Hopf, 2002; Huysmans, 2002; Stritzel, 2007; Wendt, 1992).

SIDS' interactions with climate negotiators have enabled them to construct shared understanding about the multidimensional nature of climate change, not only in the context of SIDS but of others as well (Ashe et al., 1999; Barnett & Campbell, 2010; Betzold et al., 2012; Rasheed, 2021a). In the security debates, SIDS have also continued to engage in order to create the same shared understanding among negotiators about the importance of taking extraordinary measures to support multilateral approaches under the UNFCCC (United Nations General Assembly, 2009; Rasheed, 2021c). Although SIDS' security discourse has been influenced by European discourse, the Pacific SIDS led their UNGA debate to create a more comprehensive discourse for climate security (Torres Camprubí, 2016; Scott, 2012; United Nations, 2009). Rather than focusing on the mere utterance of security by a speech act, the process of making this act or securitising move further explains the multiple aspects of security discussed by all involved actors in those moves. The impact of the Security Council debate is fully met by understanding their intersubjective aspects involving multiple interests.

SIDS' climate narratives can incorporate alternative security conceptions into the Security Council's climate security discourse. This means that the embedded discourse can drive international politics, which can consider multiple threat projections and ways to coordinate respective solutions through a broader international framework. Here, securitisation moves are not determined by a particular institutional space; rather, they are determined by the social process of climate securitising move constituted by discursive security formation. SIDS' role in driving the climate security debate in the 2009 UNGA platform has informed this discursive formation. Following the 2009 resolution, the Secretary General report incorporated the multidimensional nature of climate impacts that require multiple platforms for action. Although the Security Council holds an institutionally biased authority in defining international security, the social aspect of a speech act can help socialise that authority in determining security provision(s). Allowing multiple interpretations, the intersubjective aspect of climate securitising can help explain the multidimensional aspect as illustrated by SIDS.

Conclusion

The Security Council has the responsibility to identify state-sponsored, conflict-, and military-based threats that can directly and potentially threaten international peace and security, and adopt, if necessary, forceful means to maintain security. This tradition has influenced the formation of climate security in its platform. Lead security speakers,

including European countries, the United States, and countries like China and Russia, have maintained this thinking. Countries like SIDS and the Group of 77, on the other hand, have stressed the function of UNFCCC, and have actively engaged in the Security Council's debate, however not in a way to use traditional approaches to climate security. These differing views have prevented climate security from being fully institutionalised. These diverse views and interests are also the means to explain challenges and innovative approaches for the climate securitising move at the international level.

The engagement of SIDS in the Security Council's climate security debate has demonstrated how multiple meanings of security have challenged the moves to securitise climate at the international level. By analysing SIDS' articulation of climate impacts and solutions, this article has developed a conceptual framework to understand how multiple aspects of climate threats and solutions, generated by multiple actors, can help constitute climate security in the Security Council platform. The social constructivist hypothesis stresses the importance of realising this intersubjectivity for policy practices, including the speech act that utters security, that have happened in the security debates. Multiple actors constitute security by engaging in debate. SIDS have brought multiple aspects of climate threats and promoted solutions supported by multiple sectors, and the intersubjective formula can help incorporate multidimensional aspects into the Security Council's interpretation of security.

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