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RESEARCH ARTICLE

What is in a word? Discourse and practice of international security in a new world

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Abstract
The world order is undergoing significant changes, marked by growing contestation of the liberal international order (LIO). This article examines how these shifts are reflected in the way international security is conceptualised. It analyses changes in security conceptualisations at the level of both discourses and practices. At the discursive level, the article examines speeches by the five permanent members (P5) of the UN Security Council. It shows increasing contestation among the P5 over three interconnected dimensions of security: whether external interventions constitute security threats; whether individuals threatened by their own governments qualify as referent objects of security; and what role the UN should play as a subject providing security compared to host states. At the level of practice, the article analyses the evolution of UN peace operation mandates. It finds a gradual shift towards more state-centric security conceptualisations, reflected in a rise of minimalist mandates and a relative decrease of human-centric tasks. The findings indicate that the decline of the LIO is accompanied by growing competition in security understandings and a partial reassertion of state-centric approaches in both discourse and practice.

Keywords: great powers; liberal international order; peace operations; security; United Nations; UN Security Council

Introduction

The world is undergoing significant transformation. A growing body of scholarship has examined the nature of these changes and how best to conceptualise them.[1] Broadly, authors have categorised the changes along two dimensions: a material one focusing on shifts in the distribution of material power between states, and an ideational one looking at the evolution of dominant norms and ideas within the international system.[2] Both these changes have important implications for the liberal international order (LIO). Established in the aftermath of World War II and triumphing at the end of the Cold War, the LIO facilitated deeper economic integration, expanded the role of multilateral institutions, and supported the global spread of liberal democratic norms and values.

[1]Adriana Erthal Abdenur, 'UN peacekeeping in a multipolar world order: Norms, role expectations, and leadership', in Cedric de Coning and Mateja Peter (eds), *United Nations Peace Operations in a Changing Global Order* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), pp. 45–64; Cedric de Coning, 'How UN peacekeeping operations can adapt to a new multipolar world order', *International Peacekeeping*, 26:5 (2019), pp. 536–9; Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni and Stephanie C. Hofmann, 'Of the contemporary global order, crisis, and change', *Journal of European Public Policy*, 27:7 (2020), pp. 1077–89.

[2]Lise Morjé Howard and Alexandra Stark, 'How Civil Wars End: The International System, Norms, and the Role of External Actors', *International Security*, 42:3 (Winter 2017/18), pp. 127–171; Roland Paris, 'The geopolitics of peace operations: A research agenda', *International Peacekeeping*, 21:4 (2014), pp. 501–8; Sara Hellmüller, 'Peacemaking in a shifting world order: A macro-level analysis of UN mediation in Syria', *Review of International Studies*, 48:3 (2022), pp. 543–59.

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In recent years, however, scholars have shown the growing contestation – if not retreat – of the LIO.[3]

In this article, we examine one key element linked to the contestation of the LIO: conceptualisations of international security. Whereas security was predominantly defined in state-centric terms during the Cold War, in its aftermath, the heyday of the LIO witnessed a broadening and deepening of the concept to encompass a wider range of actors and issues.[4] Current debates about the decline or crisis of the LIO raise the important question of how conceptualisations of international security are evolving in this changing global context. To address this question, we define security conceptualisations as 'a particular set of historical discourses and practices that rest upon institutionally shared understandings'.[5] Building on this definition, we examine security conceptualisations at the level of both *discourse* and *practice*. At the discursive level, we analyse security conceptualisations as expressed in speeches by the five permanent member states (P5) in meetings of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Our empirical focus is the United Nations (UN) as it is the principal actor charged with maintaining international peace and security. The P5 speeches provide insights into how individual member states define security.[6] At the level of practice, we examine UN peace operations, including both peacekeeping operations and political missions.[7] The mandates of these peace operations reflect the negotiated understandings among UN member states, and in particular the P5, regarding what constitutes security and how it should be promoted.[8]

We theorise security along three interrelated dimensions.[9] First, the conception of *threats*, or what is understood to constitute a danger. Second, the referent *object* of security, defined as those entities 'seen to be existentially threatened and that have a legitimate claim to survival'.[10] Third, the *subject* of security, understood as the entity entitled to provide, maintain, or restore security. Building on these dimensions, we distinguish two ideal-typical approaches. First, a realist *state-centric* definition, in which *threats* are seen as primarily military dangers and the state constitutes both the referent *object* and *subject* of security. Second, a liberal *human-centric* definition, in which *threats* include both military and non-military dangers, the referent *object* encompasses both the state and individuals, and the *subject* of security extends beyond the state to include the

[3]John G. Ikenberry, 'The end of liberal international order?', *International Affairs*, 94:1 (2018), pp. 7–23; David A. Lake, Lisa L. Martin, and Thomas Risse, 'Challenges to the liberal order: Reflections on international organization', *International Organization*, 75:2 (2021), pp. 225–57.

[4]Sadako Ogata and Johan Cels, 'Human security – protecting and empowering the people', *Global Governance*, 9:3 (2003), pp. 273–82; Endre Begby and J. Peter Burgess, 'Human security and liberal peace', *Public Reason*, 1:1 (2009), pp. 91–104; Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh, 'Human security and the legitimisation of peacebuilding', in Oliver Richmond (ed.), *Advances in Peacebuilding: Critical Developments and Approaches* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 116–36; Roland Paris, 'The past, present, and uncertain future of collective conflict management: Peacekeeping and beyond', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 17:3 (2023), pp. 235–57.

[5]Keith Krause and Michael C. Williams, 'Broadening the agenda of security studies: Politics and methods', *Mershon International Studies Review*, 40:2 (1996), pp. 229–54 (p. 243).

[6]Takuto Sakamoto, 'Threat conceptions in global security discourse: Analyzing the speech records of the United Nations Security Council, 1990–2019', *International Studies Quarterly*, 67:3 (2023), p. sqad067.

[7]Virginia P. Fortna, 'Interstate peacekeeping: Causal mechanisms and empirical effects', *World Politics*, 56:4 (2004), pp. 481–519.

[8]Håvard Hegre, Lisa Hultman, and Håvard Mokleiv Nygård, 'Evaluating the conflict-reducing effect of UN peacekeeping operations', *The Journal of Politics*, 81:1 (2018), pp. 215–32; Gabriella Lloyd, 'New data on UN mission mandates 1948–2015: Tasks Assigned to Missions in their Mandates (TAMM)', *Journal of Peace Research*, 58:5 (2021), pp. 1149–60; Jessica Di Salvatore, Magnus Lundgren, Kseniya Oksamytna, and Hannah M. Smidt, 'Introducing the peacekeeping mandates (PEMA) dataset', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 66:4–5 (2022), pp. 924–51.

[9]Krause and Williams, 'Broadening the agenda of security'.

[10]Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap De Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998), p. 36.

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international community. Against the background of an increasingly contested LIO, we derive two theoretical expectations regarding UN discourse and practice on international security: a decline of liberal human-centric conceptualisations of security, and an increase in realist state-centric conceptualisations of security.

To map the evolution of security conceptualisations, our empirical analysis proceeds in two steps. First to analyse discourses, we provide a content analysis of 384 speeches delivered by the P5 in UNSC meetings on international peace and security held between 2001 and 2020. Second, to analyse practices, we examine the evolution of UN peace operations and their mandates over the same period. Our findings confirm our expectations in that they indicate an overall shift away from human-centric conceptualisations of security and a reassertion of state-centric definitions. At the discursive level, this trend is primarily driven by China and Russia, in contrast to France, the UK, and the United States (the so-called P3). These divergences are reflected in three core areas of disagreement within the P5: whether external interventions constitute a security *threat*, whether individuals facing harm from their own governments qualify as referent *objects* of security, and what role the UN should play as a *subject* providing security. Overall, we observe not a simple return to state-centric security conceptualisations but instead an increasing competition between state- and human-centric visions over how to define international security. At the level of practice, we find that UN peace operation mandates increasingly reflect a reduced emphasis on human-centric security conceptualisations as forwarded by the P3, while increasingly reproducing the state-centric security conceptualisations held by China and Russia.

This article makes key contributions to two bodies of literature. First, it adds to international security studies. By offering a systematic analysis of changing conceptualisations of international security, it engages with ongoing debates on the new world order. While scholars have analysed transformation in the global order and the contestation of the LIO, comparatively less attention has been paid to changes in how security itself is redefined and contested.[11] This article addresses this gap by showing transformations in how international security is (re-)conceptualised in discourse and practice. Second, the article contributes to peace and conflict studies by adding to the literature on UN peace operations. While scholars have analysed their mandates and their role in a changing world,[12] the article unpacks the underlying security conceptualisations reflected in these missions. It thereby provides insights into one specific dimension of how the new world order is reflected in UN peace and security engagements.

In the remainder of the article, we first outline our theoretical framework and our methodological approach. We then present the empirical findings on both the discourse and practice of security. This is followed by a discussion situating our results within broader scholarly debates and global trends. We conclude by reflecting on the limitations of our study and identifying avenues for future research.

[11]Sakamoto, 'Threat conceptions in global security discourse', and Tamsin Phillipa Paige, *Petulant and Contrary: Approaches by the Permanent Five Members of the UN Security Council to the Concept of 'Threat to the Peace' under Article 39 of the UN Charter* (Brill Nijhoff, 2019), are exceptions (see below).

[12]Michael W. Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis, *Making War and Building Peace* (Princeton University Press, 2006); Jaïr Van der Lijn, 'If only there were a blueprint! Factors for success and failure of UN peace-building operations', *Journal of International Peacekeeping*, 12:1–2 (2009), pp. 45–71; Lloyd, 'New data on UN mission mandates'; Di Salvatore et al., 'Introducing the peacekeeping mandates'; Sara Hellmüller, Marie Lobjoy, and Xiang-Yun Rosalind Tan, 'Beyond generations: An alternative approach to categorizing peace missions', *Global Governance*, 28:4 (2022), pp. 509–33; Sara Hellmüller, Xiang-Yun Rosalind Tan, and Corinne Bara, 'What is in a mandate? Introducing the dataset on UN peace mission mandates (UNPMM)', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 68:1 (2023), pp. 166–92; Sara Hellmüller and Fanny Badache, 'Children of their time: The impact of world politics on United Nations peace operations', *Contemporary Security Policy*, 46:2 (2025), pp. 177–96; Sara Hellmüller et al., 'Rethinking UN peace and security engagements in a changing world', *International Affairs*, 102:1 (2025), pp. 261–71.

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Conceptual framework

Definitions of security

Security is a central concept in international relations (IR).[13] Over time, international security studies have expanded from a narrow focus on state survival and military threats towards a wider focus encompassing non-military threats and moving away from state-centrism, giving rise to different subfields, including environment, economic, and health security.[14] In particular, critical security scholarship has challenged the notion that security can be defined in purely objective terms, emphasising instead that security is socially constructed and intersubjectively negotiated through discourse.[15]

Scholars have studied these discursive processes, including at the level of the UN. Some authors examine how specific issue areas become securitised, such as the environment[16] or global health.[17] Others focus more specifically on how threat conceptions vary within UNSC debates. Paige, for instance, shows that while the notion of a 'threat to the peace' under Article 39 of the UN Charter is often treated as a unified category, its interpretation varies across individual P5 members.[18] Similarly, Sakamoto provides a quantitative analysis of UNSC speeches over three decades, identifying terrorism and weapons of mass destruction as dominant threat framings among the P5.[19] Finally, Sundström et al. provide a dataset capturing how UNSC members articulate threats and norm violations in explanations of votes and in UNSC resolutions.[20] More broadly, scholars have demonstrated that major systemic shifts, such as the end of the Cold War and the 9/11 terrorist attacks, constituted critical junctures in how security is conceptualised within the UNSC.[21]

Building on this scholarship, we argue that the new world order – characterised by the contestation of the LIO – represents a further critical juncture in the evolution of security conceptualisations. We therefore examine how security is defined and contested within the UNSC against the background of a declining LIO. To do so, we distinguish between the two ideal-typical approaches introduced above: the state-centric view and the human-centric view. As mentioned, they diverge on the three dimensions of what constitutes a *threat*, what is considered the referent *object* of security, and who is considered the main *subject* of security (see Table 1).

[13]Keith Krause, 'Critical perspectives on human security', in Mary Martin and Taylor Owen (eds), *Routledge Handbook of Human Security* (Routledge, 2013), pp. 96–113; Barry Buzan and Lene Hansen, *The Evolution of International Security Studies* (Cambridge University Press, 2009); Buzan, Wæver, and De Wilde, *Security*; Ole Wæver, Barry T. Buzan, Morten Kelstrup, and Pierre Lemaitre, *Identity, Migration and the New Security Agenda in Europe* (Pinter Publishers, 1993); Myriam Dunn Cavelty and Thierry Balzacq (eds), *Routledge Handbook of Security Studies* (Routledge, 2017); Alexandra Gheciu and William C. Wohlforth (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of International Security* (Oxford University Press, 2018); Emma Rothschild, 'What is security?', *Daedalus*, 124:3 (1995), pp. 53–98.

[14]Buzan, Wæver, and De Wilde, *Security*.

[15]Buzan and Hansen, *Evolution of International Security Studies*.

[16]Lucile Maertens and Judith Nora Hardt, 'Climate change and security within the United Nations: Insights from the UN environment programme and the UN Security Council', in Eva Lövbrand and Malin Mobjörk (eds), *Anthropocene (In)Securities: Reflections on Collective Survival 50 Years after the Stockholm Conference* (Oxford University Press, 2021), pp. 34–50.

[17]Gian Luca Burci, 'Ebola, the security council and the securitization of public health', *Questions of International Law*, 10 (2014), pp. 27–39; Maike Voss, Isabell Kump, and Paul Bochtler, 'Unpacking the framing of health in the United Nations Security Council', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 76:1 (2022), pp. 4–10.

[18]Paige, *Petulant and Contrary*, pp. 34–5.

[19]Sakamoto, 'Threat conceptions in global security discourse'.

[20]Karin Sundström, Magnus Lundgren, and Mark Klamberg, 'Debating threats in the UNSC: A new dataset on explanations of votes 1989–2019', *International Studies Perspectives*, 27:1 (2025), pp. 25–44.

[21]David M. Malone (ed.), *The UN Security Council: From the Cold War to the 21st Century* (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004); Thomas G. Weiss, David P. Forsythe, Roger A. Coate, and Kelly-Kate Pease, *The United Nations and Changing World Politics*, 8th ed. (Westview Press, 2017).

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Table 1. Operationalisation of security.

	Threats	Object	Subject
State-centric (realist)	Military threats	State	State
Human-centric (liberal)	Military and non-military threats	State and individuals	State and international community (UN)

First, the *state-centric* view is rooted in realist theory that sees the international system as anarchic, with states operating in a 'self-help' environment in which no higher authority guarantees their security.[22] The resulting security dilemma incentivises states to maintain an offensive military capacity.[23] From this perspective, the main *threats* consist of military force by other states. The state itself constitutes both the principal referent *object* and the main *subject* of security, serving as 'the primary locus of security, authority, and obligation'.[24]

Second, the *human-centric* view is grounded in liberal thought, and particularly in the concept of human security. It advocates both a broadening and deepening of the traditional security paradigm.[25] Broadening entails expanding the range of recognised *threats* beyond military ones to include economic, environmental, and political risks. Deepening shifts the referent *object* of security from the state alone to include the protection and empowerment of individuals.[26] It also extends the views on the *subject* of security as going beyond the nation-state to encompass the international community, and particularly the UN, if a state is unwilling or unable to protect civilians.

Theoretical expectations

What can we expect regarding the evolution of security conceptualisations in the new global context? To answer this question, it is helpful to look at how conceptualisations of international security have evolved historically.[27]

During the Cold War, security was predominantly understood in state-centric terms, reflecting the dominance of realist thought in the bipolar system characterised by the rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union. Security was largely defined as the absence of military *threats* posed by other states,[28] and the state constituted both the primary referent *object* whose territorial integrity and sovereignty required protection and the principal *subject* to providing security through its national security institutions.[29] Domestic affairs were considered as being within the

[22]Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (McGraw-Hill, 1979), pp. 306–12; Kenneth Waltz, 'The origins of war in neorealist theory', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 18:4 (1988), pp. 615–28; Stephen M. Walt, 'The renaissance of security studies', *International Studies Quarterly*, 35:2 (1991), pp. 211–39.

[23]John H. Herz, *Political Realism and Political Idealism: A Study in Theories and Realities* (University of Chicago Press, 1951); Walt, 'The renaissance of security studies'; John Mearsheimer, 'The false promise of international institutions', *International Security*, 19:3 (1994/1995), pp. 5–49; John Mearsheimer, 'Structural realism', in Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki, and Steve Smith (eds), *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity* (Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 77–93.

[24]Krause and Williams, 'Broadening the agenda of security', p. 232.

[25]Wæver et al., *Identity*, p. 25; Krause and Williams, 'Broadening the agenda of security', p. 230; Roland Paris, 'Human security: Paradigm shift or hot air?', *International Security*, 26:2 (2001), pp. 87–102; Paris, 'The geopolitics of peace operations'.

[26]Caroline Thomas, 'Global governance, development and human security: Exploring the links', *Third World Quarterly*, 22:2 (2001), pp. 159–75; Ogata and Cels, 'Human security'.

[27]See also Sara Hellmüller, *The Interaction between Local and International Peacebuilding Actors: Partners for Peace* (Palgrave, 2018), pp. 35–7.

[28]Edward Newman, Roland Paris, and Oliver Richmond (eds), *New Perspectives on Liberal Peacebuilding* (United Nations University Press, 2009), p. 9.

[29]Buzan, Wæver, and De Wilde, *Security*; John Baylis, 'International and global security in the post–Cold War era', in John Baylis, Steve Smith, and Patricia Owens (eds), *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations* (Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 253–75.

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exclusive authority of a state's government and firmly outside the realm of international security governance.

In the post–Cold War era, the consolidation of liberal norms within the LIO contributed to a shift towards more human-centric conceptualisations of security.[30] As Begby and Burgess note, 'the demise of the Cold War, with its threat of nuclear cataclysm, permitted a shift away from an exclusively state-centered notion of security, toward a notion of human security'.[31] The concept of human security was first mentioned in the 1994 'Human Development Report' and the Commission on Human Security was established in 2001.[32] This implied both a broadening of *threats* to encompass economic, environmental, political, and health risks and a deepening of the referent *object* to include individuals alongside states. It also expanded the *subject* of security beyond the state to include the international community, particularly the UN, as reflected in doctrines such as the responsibility to protect (R2P). In this context, the protection of individuals from atrocity crimes came to be viewed as a legitimate concern of international security governance.[33]

In the new world, the LIO is being contested. Newly powerful actors have challenged core liberal principles, such as economic openness, multilateral institutions, security cooperation, and democratic solidarity.[34] At the same time, liberalism's traditional guardians have themselves retreated from commitments to multilateralism and international cooperation, as illustrated by 'America first' policies and Brexit.[35] As a result, liberal norms underpinning human-centric approaches to security have become increasingly contested.[36] *Against this backdrop, we expect a decline in human-centric conceptualisations of security in both discourse and practice.*

As part of the contestation of the LIO, scholars also point to a resurgence of realist approaches, particularly in the reassertion of sovereignty and the prioritisation of national interests.[37] Contemporary political dynamics, including the rise of populist nationalism and the growing scepticism towards international organisations, have reinforced state-centric approaches to security.[38] Empirically, this is reflected in the positions of key UN member states, including China and Russia, that increasingly emphasise sovereignty and state authority in debates on peace and security.[39]

[30]Daniel Deudney and G. John Ikenberry, 'Liberal world – the resilient order', *Foreign Affairs*, 97:4 (July/August 2018), pp. 16–24.

[31]Begby and Burgess, 'Human security and liberal peace', p. 91.

[32]Commission on Human Security, *Final Report* (The Commission, 2003); Thomas, 'Global governance, development and human security', p. 161.

[33]Jonathan Goodhand and Oliver Walton, 'The limits of liberal peacebuilding? International engagement in the Sri Lankan peace process', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 3:3 (2009), pp. 303–23 (p. 305); Ramesh Thakur (ed.), *The United Nations, Peace and Security: From Collective Security to the Responsibility to Protect*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2016); Stamatis Laskaris and Joakim Kreutz, 'Rising powers and the responsibility to protect: Will the norm survive in the age of BRICS?', *Global Affairs*, 1:2 (2015), pp. 149–58.

[34]Ikenberry, 'The end of liberal international order?', p. 8; Paris, 'The geopolitics of peace operations'.

[35]Adam Quinn, *With Trump in Charge, the World Will Change* (Chatham House, 2016/17); T. V. Paul, 'Assessing change in world politics', *International Studies Review*, 20:2 (2018), pp. 177–85.

[36]Alexander Kentikelenis and Erik Voeten, 'Legitimacy challenges to the liberal world order: Evidence from United Nations speeches, 1970–2018', *The Review of International Organizations*, 16 (2021), pp. 721–54; Lake, Martin, and Risse, 'Challenges to the liberal order'; Rebecca Adler-Nissen and Ayşe Zarakol, 'Struggles for recognition: The liberal international order and the merger of its discontents', *International Organization*, 75:2 (2020), pp. 611–34.

[37]Roland Paris, 'The right to dominate: How old ideas about sovereignty pose new challenges for world order', *International Organization*, 73:3 (2020), pp. 453–89; Eric A. Posner, 'Liberal internationalism and the populist backlash', *Arizona State Law Journal*, 49 (2017), pp. 795–819.

[38]Mark Copelovitch and Jon C. W. Pevehouse, 'International organizations in a new era of populist nationalism', *The Review of International Organizations*, 14 (2019), pp. 169–86.

[39]Fanny Badache, Sara Hellmüller, and Bilal Salayme, 'Conflict management or conflict resolution: How do major powers conceive the role of the United Nations in peacebuilding?', *Contemporary Security Policy*, 45:4 (2022), pp. 547–71; Bilal Salaymeh, Sara Hellmüller, and Fanny Badache, 'Following a middle way: How rising powers navigate sovereignty debates in peacebuilding', *International Studies Quarterly*, 69:2 (2025), p. sqaf031.

Against this backdrop, we expect a resurgence of state-centric conceptualisations of security in both discourse and practice.

Methodological framework

To analyse conceptualisations of international security, we examine *discourses* through speeches by the P5 in the UNSC, and *practices* through the mandates of UN peace operations. We focus on the two decades since the millennium to trace changes over time.

For the analysis of the *discourses*, we established a dataset of speeches delivered by the P5 in UNSC meetings.[40] These records were retrieved from the UN Digital Library.[41] We focused on UNSC debates because they constitute the primary institutional venue in which international security is defined and negotiated.[42] As such, they provide valuable insights into how states conceptualise security.[43] Even though P5 security conceptualisations as expressed in their speeches may not fully reflect security definitions by other UN member states or those expressed outside the UN, we see our focus on the P5 as justified by their permanent membership of the UNSC, veto power, and central role in defining what constitutes a threat to international peace and security.[44] To delimit the dataset, we selected UNSC meetings with the term 'peace' in the agenda title.[45] In total, the dataset comprises 384 speeches, including 130 from 2001–10 and 254 from 2011–20.[46] We coded these speeches along our three analytical dimensions of *threats, object*, and *subject* and assessed whether they align more with state-centric or human-centric security conceptualisations.[47] Specifically, we coded threats as military or non-military; the referent object as the state alone or including individuals; and the subject of security as the state alone or including the international community and particularly the UN (see Annex 1 for the codebook). In line with our theoretical expectations, we anticipated a decline in references to non-military threats and an increase in references to military threats; a decline in references to individuals and an increase in references to the state as object of security; and a decline in references to the UN and an increase in references to the state as subject of security.

To analyse security conceptualisations in *practice*, we focused on UN peace operations and drew on the UN peace mission mandates (UNPMM) dataset,[48] which codes the mandates of 147 UN peace operations between 1948 and 2024. The UNPMM offers two features that were particularly useful for our purposes. First, it classifies peace operations according to their objectives, distinguishing between minimalist and maximalist ones.[49] Minimalist missions prioritise short-term stabilisation and the prevention of renewed violence, while maximalist missions aim to address

[40] Fanny Badache, Sara Hellmüller, and Bilal Salaymeh, 'United Nations Security Council peace-related speeches (UNSCPeaS) (Version V1)', available at: {https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/0OROVZ}, accessed 30 June 2026. While the speeches may not reflect the actual security conceptualisations of the P5, but the expressed ones, we still consider it a viable source of information about how security is framed in the international arena.

[41] See UN Digital Library, available at: {https://digitallibrary.un.org/search?ln=en&cc=Speeches}, accessed 30 August 2026.

[42] Art. 24, UN Charter; Ian Hurd, 'Legitimacy, power, and the symbolic life of the UN Security Council', *Global Governance*, 8:1 (2002), pp. 35–51.

[43] Paige, *Petulant and Contrary*, pp. 34–5.

[44] Paige, *Petulant and Contrary*; Paris, 'Past, present, and uncertain future'.

[45] This decision constitutes a limitation as it excludes a significant number of meetings related to specific country situation. However, the advantage is that it disconnects the discourse of security from a specific context. This allows us to grasp 'general' discourses on security. Moreover, we only selected speeches when countries were speaking in their national capacity and not in another role, e.g., as UNSC president or chair of a commission.

[46] 2001–10: China: 24, France: 27, Russia: 26, UK: 26, US: 27; 2011–20: China: 51, France: 49, Russia: 54, UK: 50, US: 50.

[47] References to the speeches are made as follows: the first two letters indicate the country (CH: China; FR: France; RU: Russia; UK: United Kingdom; US: United States). This is followed by the S.PV number of the meeting in which the speech was made. The last four digits indicate the year in which the speech was made.

[48] Hellmüller, Tan, and Bara, 'What is in a mandate?'

[49] Charles T. Call and Elizabeth M. Cousens, 'Ending wars and building peace: International responses to war-torn societies', *International Studies Perspectives*, 9:1 (2008), pp. 1–21; Vincent Chetail, 'Introduction: Post-conflict peacebuilding –

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the root causes of conflict and achieve positive peace. We interpret this categorisation as a proxy for underlying security conceptualisations: minimalist missions reflect state-centric approaches, while maximalist missions reflect human-centric approaches. Second, the UNPMM codes forty-one different mandate tasks, enabling a fine-grained analysis of how security is conceptualised in practice. Tasks such as ceasefire monitoring and demilitarisation are indicative of state-centric conceptualisations prioritising military threats and the state as referent object and subject of security; whereas activities such as human rights promotion or electoral assistance reflect human-centric approaches prioritising non-military threats, protection of individuals, and an expanded role for the UN as a provider of security. In line with our theoretical expectations, we anticipated a decrease in maximalist peace operations and an increase in minimalist peace operations as well as a decrease in human-centric mandate tasks and an increase in state-centric mandate tasks.

Empirical analysis

In the empirical section, we first present our results on the evolution of security conceptualisations in P5 discourses at the UNSC, and then turn to our findings on the practice of international security as reflected in the evolution of UN peace operation mandates.

Changes in discourse: P5 speeches

The analysis of the P5 speeches confirms both hypotheses: a slight decline in human-centric conceptualisations and a gradual return of state-centric conceptualisations across all three dimensions of *threats, object*, and *subject* of security.

Regarding *threats*, while both military and non-military threats continue to be mentioned in P5 speeches, we observe that references to military threats have outnumbered references to non-military threats in every year after 2006 (see Figure 1).

This pattern is also reflected in the qualitative analysis.[50] Generally, all P5 acknowledge both military and non-military threats.[51] For instance, Russia and the United States refer to health security,[52] China to poverty and underdevelopment,[53] and the UK and France to drug and human trafficking.[54] However, we observe an evolution over time. A human-centric approach was initially prevalent. This is most vividly exemplified in the health sector, which became securitised with the HIV/AIDS crisis in the 1990s.[55] Many countries linked the epidemic to international peace and security. The UK, for instance, said that 'if life expectancy is falling by a generation in a decade […] how can that not be a threat to the security of the State?'[56] China mentioned that 'AIDS has […] become one of the most important non-traditional security issues'[57] and Russia stated that 'HIV/AIDS is one of the most serious non-military threats to peace and security'.[58] However, towards the second decade of this millennium, Russia and China began to refer more frequently to military threats. This shift was particularly driven by Russia's inclusion of external

ambiguity and identity', in Vincent Chetail (ed.), *Post-Conflict Peacebuilding: A Lexicon* (Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 1–33.

[50]CH_7143_2014, FR_6903_2013, FR_7275_2014, RU_7196_2014, RU_7802_2016, UK_6886_2012, UK_7802_2016.

[51]CH_4859_2003, CH_5228_2005, FR_4259_2001, FR_4272_2001, FR_4859_2003, FR_5228_2005, RU_4859_2003, RU_5228_2005, UK_4259_2001, UK_4859_2003, UK_4993_2004, UK_5228_2005, US_4259_2001, US_4859_2003, US_5041_2004, US_5228_2005, US_5379_2006, US_6153_2009.

[52]RU_4859_2003, US_4259_2001.

[53]CH_5052_2004.

[54]FR_6903_2013, UK_5997_2008.

[55]CH_4859_2003, FR_4259_2001, FR_4859_2003, RU_4859_2003, UK_4259_2001, UK_4859_2003, US_4259_2001.

[56]UK_4859_2003.

[57]CH_5228_2005.

[58]RU_5228_2005.

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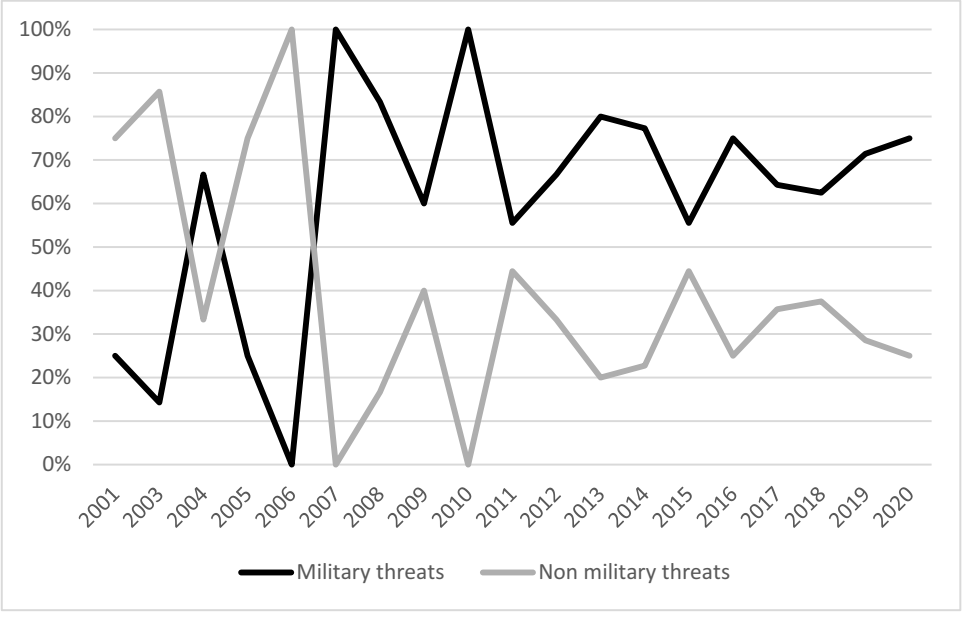

Figure 1. Share of military vs. non-military threats mentioned in P5 UNSC speeches.

military intervention as a source of insecurity,[59] which is absent from the other P5 speeches as well as from earlier speeches by Russia.[60] Russia mentions for instance that 'there is a dangerous tendency towards [the proliferation of internal armed conflicts] against the backdrop or as the result of the overthrow or destabilisation of legitimate governments through external interference'.[61] While less explicit, China similarly notes that 'no […] interference [should] be permitted in the internal affairs or struggles' of states.[62] Clearly shaped by the 2011 international intervention in Libya, which both countries heavily contested, this represents an important shift in threat perceptions, indicating a return to more state-centric conceptualisations.

Regarding the referent *object* of security, references to individuals as in need of protection initially outnumbered references to states in most years (see Figure 2). This trend was reversed after 2006, reflecting a retreat of human-centric understandings and a return of state-centric conceptualisations.

This is also supported by the qualitative analysis. In the early years under study, states frequently underlined the importance of human rights promotion, the empowerment of individuals, and civil society promotion.[63] France for instance highlighted the importance of 'protection of civil populations',[64] China said that 'only political stability, the progress of the population as a whole, sustained economic growth and peaceful development will make it possible to ensure genuine peace and stability',[65] and Russia referred to the need of the 'establishment of a society of political pluralism

[59]RU_7317_2014, RU_7472_2015, RU_8723_2020.

[60]In the baseline period (2001–10), Russia only referred to external interventions as a security threat once, but in relation to neighbouring states: 'Quite frequently armed groups are manipulated from abroad and become an extension of the interests of neighbouring countries. This phenomenon has become regional in nature, and poses a threat to international peace and security' (RU_4766R1_2003).

[61]RU_8723_2020.

[62]CH_8723_2020.

[63]CH_5228_2005, FR_5895_2008, FR_6178_2009, RU_4993_2004, RU_5228_2005, RU_6299_2010, UK_4859_2003, UK_5052_2004, UK_5187_2005, UK_5379_2006, UK_5761_2007, US_4272_2001, US_4766_2003, US_4993_2004.

[64]FR_4993_2004.

[65]CH_5052_2004.

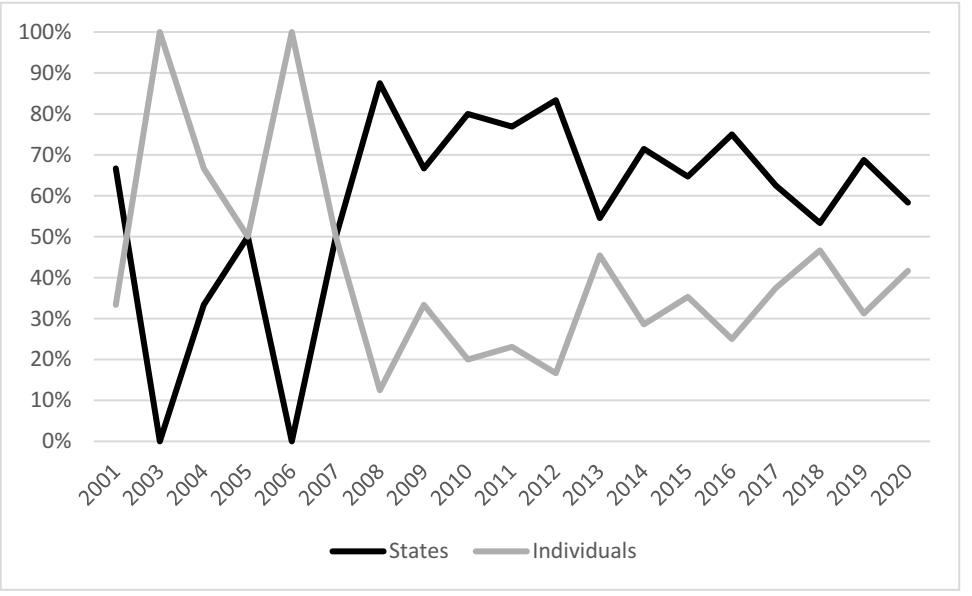

Figure 2. Share of states vs. individuals being mentioned as referent object of security in P5 UNSC speeches.

with strong State and social institutions'.[66] While in more recent years, the P5 continue to agree that not only states but also individuals need be protected and empowered,[67] there is growing contestation over whether individuals also need to be protected from threats emanating from their own state institutions.[68] The P3 frequently refer to situations in which individual insecurity stems from governments.[69] For instance, the UK notes that individual insecurity often arises from 'corrupt or venal state institutions that curtail or abuse fundamental rights and freedoms'.[70] The United States notes that 'it is no coincidence that some of the most dangerous regimes in the world are also some of the worst abusers of human rights'.[71] Finally, France argues that 'corruption is a threat to the stability and security of societies'.[72] This view is contested by China and Russia.[73] As China mentions, 'the international community has long tended to focus on human rights, the rule of law and security sector reform, perhaps without granting sufficient attention to economic and social development'.[74] Russia even argues that assigning the UN tasks in 'human rights monitoring' or 'sexual and gender issues' 'may well prove to be an unreasonable waste of resources'[75] and expresses 'serious concerns over the recently observed desire to loosely interpret the standards of international

[66]RU_4272_2001.

[67]CH_6897_2012, FR_7143_2014, RU_7802_2016, RU_8251_2018, UK_8723_2020, US_6954_2013.

[68]In the baseline period (2001–10), only the UK mentions a threat to individuals coming from host governments once, namely saying that 'regimes whose authority is questioned often cut corners on fundamental freedoms. This will generally deepen discontent and hasten conflict' (UK_5187_2005).

[69]FR_7143_2014, FR_8243_2018, UK_6472_2011, UK_7196_2014, UK_8723_2020, US_7143_2014, US_8051_2017.

[70]UK_7196_2014.

[71]US_8051_2017.

[72]FR_6472_2011.

[73]RU_6592_2011; RU_6789_2012; RU_6903_2013; RU_7275_2014; RU_7317_2014; RU_7464_2015; RU_7558_2015; RU_7564_2015; RU_7808_2016; RU_7918_2017; RU_7947_2017; RU_8086_2017; RU_8218_2018; RU_8251_2018; RU_8349_2018; RU_8393_2018; RU_8521_2019; RU_8552_2019; RU_8570_2019; RU_8612_2019; RU_8661_2019; CH_6603_2011; CH_7196_2014; CH_7275_2014; CH_7464_2015; CH_7947_2017.

[74]CH_6954_2013, also CH_6897_2012, CH_6903_2013, CH_7217_2014, CH_7472_2015, CH_8033_2017, CH_8051_2017, CH_8668_2020, CH_8723_2020.

[75]RU_8579_2019; also RU_7217_2014, RU_7564_2015, RU_8579_2019.

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humanitarian law regarding the protection of civilians'.[76] Thus, while the P3 continue to emphasise human-centric understandings of the object of security, China and Russia increasingly question such conceptualisations.

Finally, concerning the *subject* of security, while references to the UN as a provider of security outnumbered references to the state in every year prior to 2008, this pattern is subsequently reversed, with a higher share of references to the state's responsibility and a relative decline in references to the UN's role as a secondary provider of security (see Figure 3).

The qualitative analysis confirms that the P5 initially acknowledged a substantial role for the UN in providing security, even if concurring on the primary responsibility of the host state.[77] China, for instance, mentioned that while the 'country concerned bears the primary responsibility' to provide for its security, 'the international community has the important mission of assisting the countries concerned';[78] France even called for strengthening 'the international abilities of the United Nations to act during every stage of a crisis, from the threat of conflict through to reconstruction via peacekeeping and stabilization';[79] and Russia – while being the most reluctant amongst the P5 – still accepted a secondary role for the UN, referring for instance to the need 'to establish a clear balance between the responsibilities of governments and international partners'.[80] Yet, explicit calls for a secondary role of the UN declined over the years. These changes are primarily driven by Russia and China, which increasingly restrict the UN's role in their speeches. Russia argues that 'we should not forget that governments bear the main responsibility for ensuring the security of their people, including security against terrorist attacks'[81] and that they bear the 'direct responsibility for the protection of their own population'.[82] Similarly, China states that the 'national government […] has the primary responsibility to protect civilians'[83] and the UN's role should be limited to 'help[ing] countries in conflict to stabilize the security situation'.[84] The P3, in contrast, continue to underline that the UN has a secondary responsibility when host states are unwilling or unable to protect their citizens.[85] The United States, for instance, states that 'the solution cannot be only to tell the UN to hunker down and wait for someone else to take care of the problem [but] to help civilians in need'.[86] The UK notes that 'in the darkest moments of conflict, people all over the world look to the UN […] and we all have a responsibility to deliver'.[87] Thus, while China and Russia reassert state-centric understandings that restrict the UN's role as a secondary subject of security, the P3 continue to emphasise a more human-centric understanding of the subject of security.[88]

Table 2 summarises the different security conceptualisations over time. The P5 continue to agree on certain aspects, such as seeing threats in both military and non-military terms, the recognition of both states and individuals as object of security, and the state as the primary subject of security

[76] RU_7275_2014; also RU_7918_2017.
[77] CH_5895_2008, FR_5895_2008, RU_5761_2007, UK_4859_2003, UK_5187_2005, UK_5761_2007, US_5041_2004.
[78] CH_5895_2008; see also RU_6224_2009.
[79] FR_5895_2008.
[80] RU_5761_2007.
[81] RU_7918_2017; also RU_7802_2016, RU_7947_2017, RU_8251_2018.
[82] RU_7464_2015.
[83] CH_7464_2015; also CH_6603_2011, CH_7275_2014, CH_6603_2011.
[84] CH_6370_2010.
[85] FR_8051_2017, UK_7918_2017, US_7275_2014.
[86] US_7802_2016.
[87] UK_7464_2015.
[88] We checked specifically for a change in US policy during the first term of President Donald Trump (2017–21). However, we could still observe a human-centric approach to security, as indicated for instance in the following quotes: 'At the heart of that vision for reform are the civilians we are meant to serve. […] The idea of sustaining peace tracks very closely with the goal of lifting up civilians' (US_8033_2017); 'to keep the peace most effectively, this organ must have the credibility to pursue peace by advancing the cause of human rights. It is no coincidence that some of the most dangerous regimes in the world are also some of the worst abusers of human rights' (US_8051_2017); or 'only when all voices in a society are heard and human rights and human dignity are respected can effective and lasting transitions to peace occur' (US_8243_2018).

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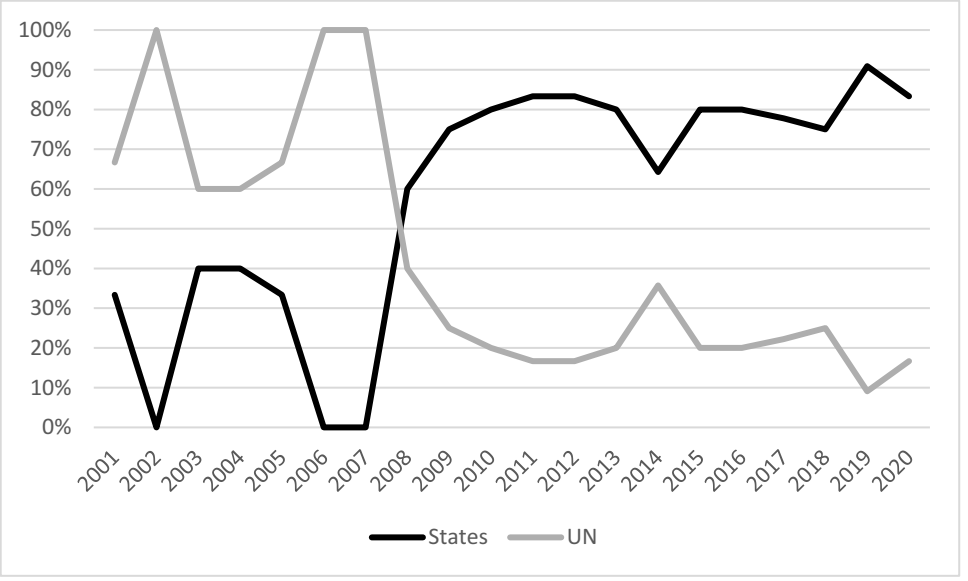

Figure 3. Share of states vs. the UN being mentioned as subject of security in P5 UNSC speeches.

Table 2. P5 security conceptualisations.

	Threats	Object	Subject
All P5	Military and non-military threats	State and individuals	State and secondary role to international community (UN)
Contested	External interventions	Individuals threatened by own governments	Role of UN

with a secondary role given to the UN. However, there is a relative decline of human-centric conceptualisations and an increase in state-centric conceptualisations driven by three trends: first, the conceptualisation of external interventions as security *threat*; second, the contestation of framing individuals threatened by their own governments as *object* of security; and third, the limitation of considering the UN as a secondary *subject* of security.

Changes in practice: UN peace operations

The analysis of UN peace operations, which captures security conceptualisations in practice, also confirms both hypotheses: a decline in human-centric conceptualisations and a gradual return of state-centric conceptualisations regarding all three dimensions of *threats, object*, and *subject* of security.

Looking first at peace operations overall, we observe a trend towards more minimalist missions since 2010. Figure 4 shows that the share of newly established maximalist missions has declined, while the share of minimalist missions has increased. This indicates that peace operations have moved away from extensive mandates, suggesting a shift towards more military-oriented threat conceptualisations, a stronger emphasis on the state as the primary object of security requiring stabilisation and protection, and a more state-centric understanding of the subject of security, reflected in the less extensive nature of mandates.

Analysing peace mission mandates more specifically, we selected tasks that reflect state-centric and human-centric conceptualisations and examined their evolution in terms of how frequently

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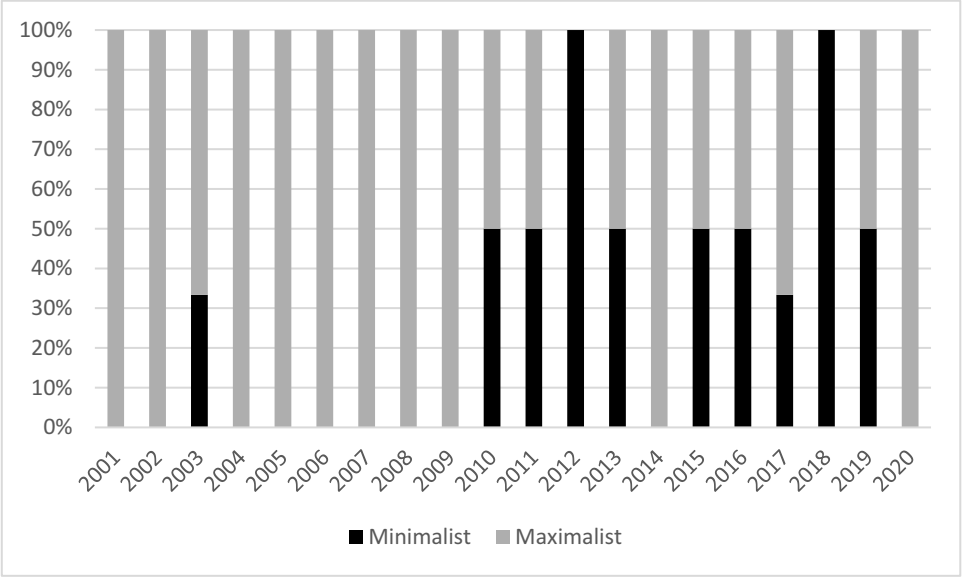

Figure 4. Share of minimalist and maximalist peace operation mandates.

they were assigned in any given year in the period under study.[89] Figure 5 shows that while human-centric tasks constitute a majority of tasks in most years, the relative share of state-centric tasks has increased over time. This change is, however, not pronounced.

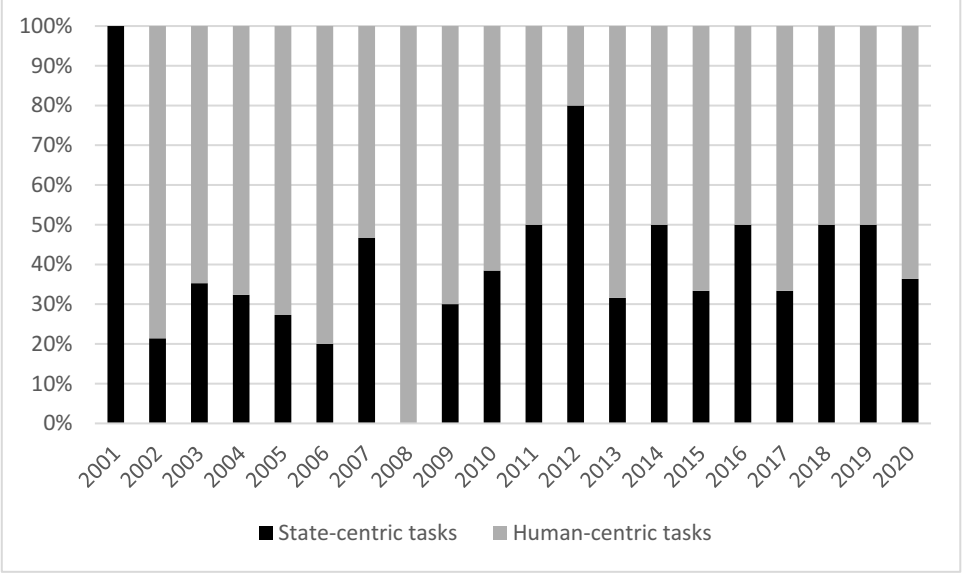

Figure 5. Share of state-centric vs. human-centric tasks in UN peace operation mandates.

[89]For state-centric tasks, we selected demilitarisation; demining; observation, monitoring, and reporting on military and police (OMR); small arms and light weapons (SALW); and demobilisation, disarmament, and reintegration (DDR). For human-centric tasks, we selected electoral assistance and security; support to permanent state institutions; promotion and monitoring of human rights; economic reforms; and good governance.

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The shift becomes more visible when examining specific mandate tasks individually. For instance, Figure 6 shows demilitarisation as an example of state-centric security conceptualisations and human rights promotion as an illustration of human-centric security conceptualisations. We observe that while demilitarisation tasks have increased in peace operation mandates, human rights promotion tasks have decreased over time.

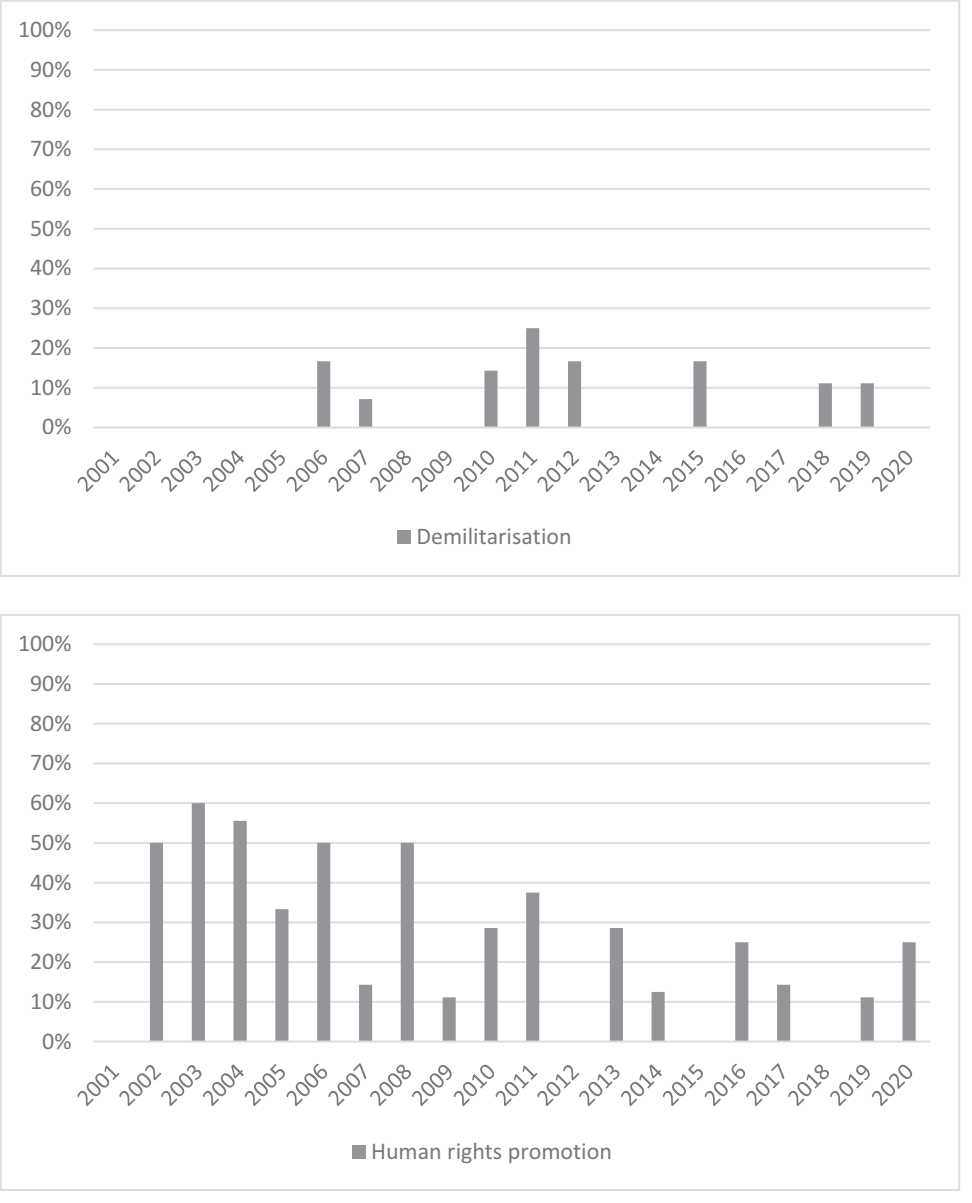

Figure 6. Share of demilitarisation and human rights promotion tasks in UN peace operation mandates.

Discussion

Our results show that, against the background of a declining LIO, we witness an increasing contestation of what constitutes international security, outlined by a relative decline of human-centric

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security conceptualisations and a relative increase in state-centric security conceptualisations. This pattern can be observed in both discourse and practice, although it is more pronounced in the former.

At the level of discourse, the P5 initially broadly converged on (or at least did not contest) human-centric conceptualisations of security. This understanding emphasised that threats stem from both military and non-military sources, that both states and individuals require protection, and that while the state is the primary subject of security, the international community assumes an important secondary role. More recently, differences have become more pronounced. While the P3 continue to promote human-centric views, Russia and China have explicitly re-emphasised state-centric elements of security, framing external interventions by other states as a key security threat, questioning the protection needs of individuals from their own governments, and limiting the role of the UN as a secondary subject of security. As a result, state-based security conceptualisations have regained prominence at the expense of human-centric ones. This does not imply a full-fledged return to state-centric security conceptualisations but rather underscores an increasing polarisation between state- and human-centric visions held by the P5.

At the level of practice, our analysis shows that security conceptualisations underlying UN peace operations are also shifting. We find that UN peace operation mandates reflect the relative rise of state-centric approaches to security. This is evident in a shift towards more minimalist missions and a relative increase in state-centric mandate tasks. At the same time, human-centric tasks continue to constitute the majority. This finding is not surprising given that continuation in UN peace operation mandates is more likely than change. Previous research suggests that international organisations are path-dependent,[90] that macro-level changes may not immediately translate into shifts in peacekeeping practices as missions tend to be 'resilient',[91] and that the P5 may reproduce existing mandates due to group-preserving tactics.[92] In this context, even modest shifts in mandate composition are analytically significant, as continuity is more likely than change.

Our findings support existing research indicating that peace operations have become more pragmatic and reflect the lowest common denominator among member states.[93] They are also consistent with scholarship on Russian and Chinese approaches to UN peace operations, which shows that both states tend to oppose liberal elements of peacekeeping, particularly the inclusion of human rights language in mandates.[94] More broadly, our analysis points to an important implication for the UN and the future of international peace and security: the key challenge may lie not in the overall shift towards state-centric security conceptualisations but rather in the increasing disagreement between major powers over core security principles.

[90]Michael Barnett and Martha Finnemore, 'International organizations as bureaucracies', in Michael Barnett and Martha Finnemore (eds), *Rules for the World* (Cornell University Press, 2004), pp. 16–44.

[91]Aarie Glas and Marion Laurence, 'Changing norms in practice: Noninterference in the UN and ASEAN', *Journal of Global Security Studies*, 7:2 (2022), p. ogac003; Cedric de Coning, 'The future of UN peace operations: Principled adaptation through phases of contraction, moderation, and renewal', *Contemporary Security Policy*, 42:2 (2021), pp. 211–24.

[92]Lise Morjé Howard and Anjali Kaushlesh Dayal, 'The use of force in UN peacekeeping', *International Organization*, 72:1 (2018), pp. 71–103.

[93]Caroline Dunton, Marion Laurence, and Gino Vlavonou, 'Pragmatic peacekeeping in a multipolar era: Liberal norms, practices, and the future of UN peace operations', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 17:3 (2023), pp. 215–34; Abdenur, 'UN peacekeeping in a multipolar world order'; Allard Duursma et al., 'UN peacekeeping at 75: Achievements, challenges, and prospects', *International Peacekeeping*, 30:4 (2023), pp. 415–76.

[94]John Karlsrud, '"Pragmatic peacekeeping" in practice: Exit liberal peacekeeping, enter UN support missions?', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 17:3 (2023), pp. 258–72; Katharina P. Coleman and Brian L. Job, 'How Africa and China may shape UN peacekeeping beyond the liberal international order', *International Affairs*, 97:5 (2021), pp. 1451–68; Lise M. Howard, 'The future of UN peacekeeping and the rise of China', in Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall (eds), *Diplomacy and the Future of World Order* (Georgetown University Press, 2021), pp. 211–23; Rick Gladstone, 'China and Russia move to cut human rights jobs in U.N. peacekeeping', *New York Times* (27 June 2018), available at: {https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/27/world/africa/china-russia-un-human-rights-cuts.html}, accessed 30 June 2026; Zheng Chen and Hang Yin, 'China and Russia in R2P debates at the UN Security Council', *International Affairs*, 96:3 (2020), pp. 787–805.

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Conclusion

This article examined how conceptualisations of international security have changed in the context of the decline of the LIO. By analysing both the discourses of major powers and the practice of international security through the UN, we identified an increasing contestation over international security, with the gradual return of state-centric definitions of security alongside a relative decline of human-centric approaches. In particular, we show that security conceptualisations among the P5 have become increasingly polarised.

The re-conceptualisation of what constitutes international security and how it is practiced carries wide-ranging implications for the global order, international security architectures, and collective security instruments. Unpacking evolving conceptualisation of international security is particularly important in periods of systemic transitions, such as the one currently underway. This article thus contributes to both academic debates and policy discussions. Academically, it makes two contributions. First, it advances international security studies, providing insights on the re-conceptualisation of international security. Second, it adds to peace and conflict studies by contributing to the discussion on the future of UN peace operations, particularly regarding potential shifts in their mandates. For policy audiences, the findings suggest that UN peace operations are likely to become more minimalist and narrowly defined in their mandates.

At the same time, the article has four main limitations that present opportunities for further research. First, our analysis is limited to the P5, which raises the question to what extent their security conceptualisations are representative of security definitions by other UN member states or those expressed outside the UN. It would therefore be interesting to look at conceptualisations by other states, especially regional powers. Future research could investigate security conceptualisations of elected members of the UNSC and how they relate to the P5 views, for instance by using broader datasets of UNSC speeches.[95] Second, the UNSC constitutes an arena where states are socialised to express themselves in a certain way. States may voice different security conceptualisations in domestic contexts or other multilateral forums. Further research could uncover how different social contexts shape security discourses.[96] Third, our analysis shows changes in UN peace operation mandates but did not systematically trace the extent to which they are linked to states' security discourses. In-depth case-based research, for instance, could help disentangle the various mechanisms that link discourse and practice. Fourth, our analysis focuses on three decades until 2020. Further research can extend the timeframe to test and better understand the trends highlighted by our analysis.

Recent global developments suggest that the identified trends are likely to persist. The Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine and the US–Israel war against Iran have brought inter-state wars back to the forefront of international politics. These developments have been accompanied by a broader shift, with many states – extending beyond Russia and China – adopting more state-centric security conceptualisations. Indeed, several countries are increasing their defence spending, and there is renewed emphasis on military threats, with the state as primary referent object and subject of security.[97] This trend reshapes international practices beyond UN peace operations. Development and peacebuilding programmes are likely to further prioritise state-led institutions and mechanisms, while bottom-up approaches and civil society-led initiatives face more restrictions and declining funding and interests. Taken together, these developments suggest that the trend towards more

[95] Mirco Schoenfeld et al., *The UN Security Council Debates* (Harvard Dataverse, 2021).

[96] We thank a reviewer for raising this point.

[97] See for instance: SIPRI, 'World military expenditure reaches new record high as European spending surges' (24 April 2023), available at: {https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2023/world-military-expenditure-reaches-new-record-high-european-spending-surges}, accessed 30 August 2026; Mercy Corps, 'Time to turn around: The decline of UK peacebuilding', available at: {https://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/2023-03/UK-Peacebuilding-Spending-Advocacy-2Pager-v9.pdf}, accessed 30 August 2026; Berghof Foundation, 'Urgent time to invest in peace, not war' (27 April 2021), available at:{https://berghof-foundation.org/news/urgent-time-to-invest-in-peace-not-war}, accessed 30 August 2026.

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state-centric security conceptualisations in both discourse and practice is unlikely to be reversed in the near future.

Annex 1. Coding structure

Threats		
Military threats	Rebel groups	Mentioning rebel, insurgency, armed groups as security threats
	Terrorism	Mentioning terrorism, terrorist groups and individuals, terrorist activities, terrorism financing, and terrorist propaganda as security threats
	Stabilisation	Mentioning state instability and activities aimed at preventing stabilisation as security threats
	Nuclear proliferation	Mentioning the presence and proliferation of nuclear weapons as security threats
Non-military threats	Health risks	Mentioning health-related risks, like HIV/AIDS and other pandemics, as security threats
	Climate change	Mentioning climate change and ecological risks as security threats
	Corruption	Mentioning corruption and corrupt political elites as security threats
	Organised crime	Mentioning organised crime and drug trafficking as security threats
Referent object		
State as object	Stabilisation	Emphasising the state as object of security by highlighting stabilisation as condition to ensure and enhance security
	State sovereignty	Emphasising the state as object of security by underlining the principle of state sovereignty
	Collective security	Emphasising the state as object of security by referencing the importance of upholding and advancing collective security
Individuals as object	Human rights promotion	Emphasising individuals as object of security through the monitoring and promotion of human rights
	Empowerment of individuals	Emphasising individuals as object of security in need of empowerment
	Civil society promotion	Emphasising individuals as object of security through the promotion of civil society
Subject		
State as subject	Principle of non-interference	Emphasising the state as subject of security by underlining the principle of non-interference in a country's territory and internal affairs
	National responsibility	Emphasising the state as subject of security by underlining the primacy of national responsibility of the concerned country
International community (UN) as subject	UN has secondary responsibility	Emphasising the secondary responsibility of the international community (UN) in case a state is unwilling or unable to protect the citizens in its territory
	Responsibility to protect (R2P)	Emphasising the responsibility to protect of the international community (UN) in case a state is unwilling or unable to protect the citizens in its territory

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