Security Studies

ISSN: 0963-6412 (Print) 1556-1852 (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/fsst20

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To cite this article: Jack Hoagland, Amy Oakes, Eric Parajon & Susan Peterson (2020): The Blind Men and the Elephant: Comparing the Study of International Security Across Journals, Security Studies

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2020.1761439

Published online: 13 May 2020.

SECURITY STUDIES
https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2020.1761439

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

The Blind Men and the Elephant: Comparing the Study of International Security Across Journals

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ABSTRACT

We use two major datasets collected by the Teaching, Research, and International Policy (TRIP) Project to map the international security subfield, examining conventional wisdom about the subfield's gender composition, theories, methods, and policy relevance. At first glance, articles in security journals appear similar to security articles, in general, political science and international relations field journals on these variables. On closer inspection, however, we find that much of the standard thinking about international security describes only two security journals, International Security (IS) and Security Studies (SS). First, women author a small percentage of articles in these two journals, with little increase over time, whereas a growing share of articles in other top journals has a female author or coauthor. Second, more articles in IS and SS employ a realist theoretical approach, and these journals have been slower to embrace nonparadigmatic scholarship. Third, in contrast with articles published in the other journal types, only a small percentage of articles in IS and SS use quantitative methods. Finally, these journals are more policy prescriptive than journals representing other parts of the discipline. IS, in particular, publishes more articles containing explicit policy recommendations than any other journal. Our understanding of the international security subfield may reveal only part of the metaphorical elephant explored by the blind men if observers do not consider variation in security-related research across different journals and types of journals.

Recent assessments of the nature of international security scholarship differ, sometimes dramatically. Michael Desch argues, for example, that "disciplinary trends in political science have fostered an increasing insularity and thus … the marginalizing of security studies, which has historically pursued both scholarly rigor and real-world relevance."[1] Tanisha M. Fazal notes, in contrast, that "trends amongst the possible producers and likely

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[1]Michael Desch, "Technique Trumps Relevance: The Professionalization of Political Science and the Marginalization of Security Studies," *Perspectives on Politics* 13, no. 2 (2015): 378.

consumers of policy-relevant research in international security suggest that the gap between them may be shrinking."[2] In 1999, Stephen M. Walt expressed fear that rational choice theory was poised to dominate international security studies, much as it had other parts of the political science discipline.[3] Writing around the same time, however, Lisa L. Martin found "there is no apparent danger of formal work becoming dominant in the field of security studies, calling the need for warnings such as Walt's into question."[4]

It is not surprising that international security scholars sometimes arrive at divergent conclusions about their area of study. International relations (IR) scholars who study security issues often resemble the fabled blind men who each encounter only part of an elephant—a leg, tusk, trunk, or tail—and engage in a heated argument about whether the animal is most like a pillar, pipe, branch, or rope. Not only do the composition of and research in the security subfield differ from those in other major IR subfields, particularly international organization (IO) and international political economy (IPE), but the study of international security itself also differs considerably depending on which journals one reads. There is, in other words, considerable variation across different types of journals in the kinds of security research published to the point that it is difficult to talk about one security subfield, rather than several.

We use two major sources of data collected by the Teaching, Research, and International Policy (TRIP) Project to examine the study of international security within IR, which we consider as a subfield of political science.[5] We draw on the results of a series of comprehensive surveys of faculty at colleges and universities in 36 countries conducted between 2004 and 2017, and a database of 8,710 IR articles published in the twelve leading IR journals from 1980 to 2017. These twelve journals include general political science journals, IR field journals, and security journals. As the most comprehensive survey of the IR field available, the TRIP Faculty Survey provides insights into how scholars think about their research and the discipline. The Journal Article Database allows us to see what work is being published in the field and compare it to what scholars say in the Faculty Survey. Combined, these data present the best opportunity to date

[2]Tanisha M. Fazal, "An Occult of Irrelevance? Multimethod Research and Engagement with the Policy World," *Security Studies* 25, no. 1 (2016): 35.

[3]Stephen M. Walt, "Rigor or Rigor Mortis: Rational Choice and Security Studies," *International Security* 23, no. 4 (1999): 5–48.

[4]Lisa L. Martin, "The Contributions of Rational Choice: A Defense of Pluralism," *International Security* 24, no. 2 (1999): 75.

[5]We consider only the international security subfield of political science, although the term "international relations" also refers to a broader, interdisciplinary discipline. See Barry Buzan and Lene Hansen, *The Evolution of International Security Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); and Stephen M. Walt, "The Renaissance of Security Studies," *International Studies Quarterly* 35, no. 2 (1991): 211–39.

to study the international security subfield as practiced by scholars at academic institutions throughout the world.

The nature of our data at least partially sets the parameters of the security subfield we study. On TRIP Faculty Surveys, respondents are asked to identify their primary and secondary subfields from a list that includes "international security/global security." In other words, respondents self-identify according to their own notions of what constitutes the security subfield. The journal article data, which TRIP began collecting in 2002, are coded according to a narrower definition of articles whose primary focus is "international or transnational conflict" and "the use, threat, or control of force."[6] This definition draws on a standard definition by Walt, which, in turn, cites a report by Joseph S. Nye Jr. and Sean M. Lynn-Jones, defining international security as "the study of the threat, use, and control of force."[7] The focus of the security subfield has since expanded beyond its traditional focus on external military threats to the state to also include both international and domestic threats to a wider range of entities.[8] For this reason, as we discuss below, we expand the definition to include intrastate conflict and terrorism. This definition includes traditional security topics such as interstate war, defense spending, arms control, military power, strategy, and alliances, and it captures issues such as epidemic disease or climate change when the research considers the relationship of these topics to conflict.[9]

Our goal in this paper is largely descriptive; we seek to present a systematic and comprehensive picture of international security within IR. Specifically, we examine four aspects of the security subfield that have received attention in previous works: gender composition, theory, methods, and policy relevance. There are many dimensions on which we could map the security subfield. We focus on these four because we seek to test conventional wisdom about the subfield. First, we consider the standard argument that realism dominates the study of international security. In the 1990s, according to Jeffrey W. Legro and Andrew Moravcsik, realism was "the primary or alternative theory in every major book addressing general theories of world politics, particularly in security affairs."[10] Lynn-Jones

[6]Daniel Maliniak, Susan Peterson, and Michael J. Tierney, *TRIP Journal Article Database Codebook, Version 2.1, Teaching, Research & International Policy Project* (Williamsburg, VA: Global Research Institute, 2018), https://trip.wm.edu/data/replication-and-other-data/TRIP_Journal%20Article%20Database_Codebook2.1.pdf.

[7]Walt, "Renaissance of Security Studies"; Joseph S. Nye Jr. and Sean M. Lynn-Jones, "International Security Studies: A Report of a Conference on the State of the Field," *International Security* 12, no. 4 (1988): 5–27.

[8]For example, Buzan and Hansen, *Evolution of International Security Studies*; Roland Paris, "Human Security: Paradigm Shift or Hot Air?" *International Security* 26, no. 2 (2001): 87–102; and Jessica Tuchman Mathews, "Redefining Security," *Foreign Affairs* 68, no. 2 (Spring 1989): 162–77.

[9]See the section below in "Data" for a discussion of coding rules.

[10]Jeffrey W. Legro and Andrew Moravcsik, "Is Anybody Still a Realist?" *International Security* 24, no. 2 (1999): 5–55.

argues that realism continues to be the most heavily realist subfield of IR.[11] Second, conventional wisdom similarly considers the security subfield to be more qualitatively oriented than the rest of IR. In the ISSF Policy Forum on the Gender Gap in Political Science, for instance, Stacie Goddard argues that "some of the [security] field's leading journals publish significant amounts of qualitative research."[12] That some of the fiercest critics of what John J. Mearsheimer once called the "mathematization" of the IR discipline study security reinforces this conventional wisdom that the subfield is more qualitative than other IR subfields.[13] Paul C. Avey and Desch summarize the third element of conventional wisdom we explore: "International security has long been among the most policy-relevant subfields of academic international relations."[14] Finally, numerous works establish the existence of a gender gap in political science and IR, and conventional wisdom suggests this gap may be wider in the security subfield.[15] As Goddard notes in the ISSF Policy Forum, "there is reason to believe that women face greater obstacles in security studies than they might in the broader discipline. Security studies are often seen as a male-dominated field."[16] We seek to systematically test these four conventional assumptions.

Our findings suggest much of the standard wisdom about international security describes only two security journals, *International Security* and *Security Studies*, which together have published less than one-third of all security articles in the top twelve IR journals. At first glance, the four journals in our study that primarily publish security research—*International Security*, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *Journal of Peace Research*, and *Security Studies*—appear similar to the general political science and IR field

[11]Sean M. Lynn-Jones, "Realism and Security Studies," in *Contemporary Security and Strategy*, ed. Craig A. Snyder, 3rd ed. (New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2012), 17.

[12]Stacie Goddard, "Introduction," ISSF Policy Forum on the Gender Gap in Political Science, *H-Diplo/ISSF Forum* 17 (22 September 2017).

[13]D. W. Miller, "Storming the Palace in Political Science," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 21 September 2001, http://www.chronicle.com/article/Storming-the-Palace-in/36137/; See also Desch, "Technique Trumps Relevance"; Michael C. Desch, *Cult of the Irrelevant: The Waning Influence of Social Science on National Security* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019); Robert L. Gallucci, "How Scholars Can Improve International Relations," *Chronicle of Higher Education* 26 November 2012, https://www.chronicle.com/article/How-Scholars-Can-Improve/135898; John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, "Leaving Theory Behind: Why Simplistic Hypothesis Testing Is Bad for International Relations," *European Journal of International Relations* 19, no. 3 (2013): 427–57; Stephen M. Walt, "The Cult of Irrelevance," *Foreign Policy*, 15 April 2009.

[14]Paul C. Avey and Michael C. Desch, "The Bumpy Road to a 'Science' of Nuclear Strategy," in *Bridging the Theory–Practice Divide in International Relations*, ed. Daniel Maliniak, Susan Peterson, Ryan Powers, and Michael J. Tierney (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2020); see also Robert Jervis, "Security Studies: Ideas, Policy, and Politics," in *The Evolution of Political Knowledge: Democracy, Autonomy and Conflict in Comparative and International Politics*, ed. Edward D. Mansfield and Richard Sisson (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2004), 101.

[15]See, for example, Dawn Langan Teele and Kathleen Thelen, "Gender in the Journals: Publication Patterns in Political Science," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 50, no. 2 (2017): 433–47; Daniel Maliniak, Ryan Powers, and Barbara F. Walter, "The Gender Citation Gap in International Relations," *International Organization* 67, no. 4 (2013): 889–922; Daniel Maliniak, Amy Oakes, Susan Peterson, and Michael J. Tierney, "Women in International Relations," *Politics & Gender* 4, no. 1 (2008): 122–44.

[16]Stacie Goddard, "Introduction."

journals in terms of their trends toward greater representation of women and declining realist, paradigmatic, quantitative, and policy-relevant research. The shift toward greater representation of women and increased quantitative tools has been slower, and security journals still publish more applied research than other types of journals, but the trends are similar. However, when we distinguish what we will call the two "traditional security" journals in our sample, *International Security* and *Security Studies*, from what we will call the two "peace science" journals, *Journal of Conflict Resolution* and *Journal of Peace Research*, an interesting pattern emerges.[17] First, the pages of the two traditional security journals are filled with more articles penned by male authors than are the other journal types: women author or coauthor a relatively small percentage of articles in *Security Studies* and *International Security*, with little increase in women's representation over time, whereas a growing share of articles in the other top journals have a female author or coauthor. Second, more of the articles published in the traditional security journals employ a realist theoretical approach, compared to security articles in other journals, and these journals have been considerably slower to embrace nonparadigmatic scholarship.[18] Third, in contrast with articles published in other journals, only a small percentage of articles on security topics in the traditional security journals use quantitative methods. Finally, the two traditional security journals are more policy prescriptive than the journals representing other parts of the discipline. The gap between journal types in terms of the policy relevance of the work they publish is driven mainly by *International Security*, which publishes more articles containing explicit policy recommendations than any other journal.

It is important to note this pattern does not simply reflect specialization across journals, with different types of journals publishing different kinds of security research. Rather, we see a major divide between the traditional security journals we studied (*Security Studies* and *International Security*), on the one hand, and the general political science, IR field, and peace

[17]These categories are intended only to recognize commonly noted differences between the two types of journals, and we make no attempt here to define peace studies or to study it distinct from the security subfield. Rather, we refer to the two journals as peace science journals to reflect common usage of that term. In their analysis of the history of peace science, for example, Nils Petter Gleditsch, Jonas Nordkvelle, and Håvard Strand identify *Journal of Conflict Resolution* and *Journal of Peace Research* as two of the main outlets for this research. They observe the study of "negative peace"—namely reducing war and/or intrastate violence—is the defining characteristic of work published in these journals. We are indifferent as to whether peace science is a separate subfield or a quantitatively oriented subset of security studies; we seek only to recognize a commonly understood difference between these two types of journals. At the same time, our analysis allows us to examine whether and to what extent there exist methodological, theoretical, and other differences across these two sets of journals. Gleditsch, Nordkvelle, and Strand, "Peace Research—Just the Study of War?" *Journal of Peace Research* 51, no. 2 (2014): 155.

[18]In this paper, we use "nonparadigmatic" to refer to "articles that do advance or test a coherent theory, but do not fit comfortably within one of the four major paradigms" coded by TRIP researchers—realism, liberalism, constructivism, and Marxism. Maliniak et al., *TRIP Codebook*, 9.

science journals, on the other. Our findings show that much of the so-called conventional wisdom about the security subfield describes only the two traditional security journals.

This paper proceeds in three parts. The first section discusses the two original datasets we use to analyze the international security subfield. In the next section, we explore: (1) the representation of female faculty and their rates of promotion, publication, and coauthorship; (2) the theoretical approaches used by security scholars in their research; (3) the use of qualitative versus quantitative methods; and (4) whether journal articles on international security contain a higher percentage of explicit policy prescriptions than those on IO, IPE, and other topics, and whether there is variation across journal types in the publication of policy-relevant research. In the final section, we discuss the implications of our findings for the study of international security.

Data

We report data from two major datasets collected by the TRIP Project at the College of William & Mary. The first includes results from comprehensive surveys of IR scholars. Most of the survey data we report come from a 2017 survey of faculty at colleges and universities in 36 countries, although we supplement and compare these findings with data from previous TRIP surveys conducted in 2004, 2006, 2008, 2011, and 2014.[19] In each survey, TRIP investigators sought to include all faculty members at four-year colleges, universities, and professional schools associated with universities who do research or teach courses on international political topics. We included all scholars who create knowledge, teach students, and/or provide expert advice to policymakers about transborder political issues, regardless of whether they consider themselves "IR" specialists.[20]

[19]On 2004, 2006, and 2008, see Daniel Maliniak, Amy Oakes, Susan Peterson, and Michael J. Tierney, "International Relations in the US Academy," *International Studies Quarterly* 55, no. 2 (2011), 437–64; on 2011, see Daniel Maliniak, Susan Peterson, and Michael J. Tierney, *TRIP 2011 Faculty Survey* (Williamsburg, VA: Institute for the Theory and Practice of International Relations, 2012); on 2014, see Daniel Maliniak, Susan Peterson, Ryan Powers, and Michael J. Tierney, *TRIP 2014 Faulty Survey* (Williamsburg, VA: Institute for the Theory and Practice of International Relations, 2014). The survey data are not strictly comparable across years, since we added additional countries each time the survey was conducted. Nevertheless, even in 2017 with thirty-six countries, respondents in the United States account for 36 percent of the sample and more than 41 percent of respondents, making rough comparisons possible. The 2004 survey included only IR faculty in the United States. The 2006 survey was expanded to include Anglophone Canadian IR faculty. The 2008 survey added faculty in Australia, China, Ireland, Israel, New Zealand, Singapore, South Africa, and the United Kingdom. The 2011 survey added faculty in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Denmark, Finland, France, Francophone Canada, Mexico, Norway, Sweden, and Turkey. The 2014 survey added faculty in Austria, Belgium, Chile, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Poland, Switzerland, and Taiwan. The most recent survey, in 2017, added faculty in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, the Philippines, and Russia.

[20]Researchers currently employed in government, private firms, or think tanks who do not also have an active university affiliation are not included in the sample. The sample does not include scholars at professional schools of international affairs who do not teach or conduct research on international politics. In short, the TRIP Project defines IR largely as a subfield of political science, rather than as the interdisciplinary field taught

To create the population for the 2017 survey, respondents were identified through a systematic series of web searches, emails, and communications with departments and individual scholars. We also consulted with country partners to ensure these lists were complete for countries outside the United States. In 2017, we identified a total of 13,482 individuals in the 36 countries who met the TRIP criteria for inclusion. Of these individuals, 3,784 responded, for a response rate of 28.1 percent.

The second major source of data is the TRIP Journal Article Dataset 3.2. TRIP systematically codes articles from the twelve leading journals in the IR field, as determined by James C. Garand and Micheal W. Giles's 2003 impact rating.[21] The journals are *American Political Science Review* (*APSR*), *American Journal of Political Science* (*AJPS*), *British Journal of Political Science* (*BJPS*), *European Journal of International Relations* (*EJIR*), *International Organization*, *International Security*, *International Studies Quarterly* (*ISQ*), *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (*JCR*), *Journal of Peace Research* (*JPR*), *Journal of Politics* (*JOP*), *Security Studies*, and *World Politics* (*WP*).[22] The sample of 8,710 articles represents all articles from issues one through four from 1980 to 2017.[23] In general, political science journals (*APSR*, *AJPS*, *BJPS*, and *JOP*), TRIP researchers coded only those articles that fall within the IR subfield. Two researchers independently coded each article for 29 variables. If coders independently agreed on the value of a variable, that value was entered in the dataset. If not, a senior researcher independently coded and reconciled the variable.

One of the variables researchers coded was *issue area*, which measures the primary subfield of IR or political science to which the article contributes. In general, the articles are coded according to their dependent variable or the events or issues being explained. Even if an article's dependent

at professional schools and many undergraduate institutions. For a critique of the project based on its exclusion of economists, scientists, anthropologists, and lawyers teaching at schools of international affairs, see James Goldgeier, "Undisciplined: The Ivory Tower Survey Is Asking the Wrong Questions of the Wrong People," *Foreign Policy*, 3 January 2012.

[21]Micheal W. Giles and James C. Garand, "Ranking Political Science Journals: Reputational and Citational Approaches," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 40, no. 4 (2007): 741–51; James C. Garand and Micheal W. Giles, "Journals in the Discipline: A Report on a New Survey of American Political Scientists," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 36, no. 2 (2003), 293–308. Giles and Garand have published a more recent version of their ranking of political science journals. We use the 2003 version here, however, because TRIP researchers initially used it in 2003 to identify the twelve journals they coded. They then launched a multi-year project to code all IR articles in the top 12 peer-reviewed IR journals in Garand and Giles's 2003 ranking. Their ranking exactly mirrors IR scholars' estimation of the best peer-reviewed journals in their field, according to the results of the 2014 cross-national TRIP survey.

[22]We use abbreviations for most journals except *International Organization*, *International Security*, and *Security Studies*. We do not abbreviate these names to avoid confusing the issue area with the journal title.

[23]Two of the twelve journals published more than four issues a year between 1980 and 2017. *JPR* published six issues a year between 1998 and 2017, and *JCR* published six issues a year between 1997 and 2013 and eight issues in 2014. TRIP researchers continue to add to the journal article database. In the current dataset, although *JPR* and *JCR* are underrepresented, we report percentages of articles across these journals, and there is no reason to believe the articles are not randomly distributed in terms of the variables we consider across the six issues published each year.

variable may not fall within a particular issue area, like international security, the article may still be coded as international security if it is the primary issue area addressed. When the issues and events referred to are primarily conflicts that cross state boundaries, the article is coded as "international security." This means that "articles that primarily address civil war or other forms of intra-state conflict are coded as security [only] when they include international dimensions, the conflict crosses national boundaries, or the articles are not primarily about any other issue areas defined" in the codebook.[24] To remedy this limitation in the data and broaden our definition of international security, we also examined another variable, *substantive focus*, which measures specific topics studied. We added articles whose substantive focus is terrorism and/or intrastate conflict to include domestic conflict, even when their issue area is not coded as international security. This expanded definition captures traditional security topics like interstate war, arms control, military power, strategy, alliances, and defense spending, among others. At the same time, it also includes issues like civil war and domestic terrorism that might traditionally be considered domestic or comparative, rather than international, as well as issues like epidemic disease or climate change when that research considers the relationship of these topics to conflict. Even with this broadened definition of security, however, we recognize we may omit some articles that address international or global security issues. Despite this limitation, this paper represents an important first step based on the most extensive data available on the security subfield.

Together, the TRIP data reveal that international security is the largest subfield of IR. In 2017, more than 20 percent of survey respondents reported their primary subfield as security. IPE was a distant second, with fewer than 11 percent of respondents identifying it as their main area of research. International security also dominates IR journal publications. Between 1980 and 2017, more than 40 percent of all articles were security related, and the percentage of security articles published in the leading IR journals has remained relatively steady over time (Figure 1). Again, IPE is the nearest competitor, at just 11.4 percent of all articles.

A large (66 percent) majority of security articles are published in security journals. From 1980 to 2017, nearly one-third (29.6 percent) of all security articles were published in the two traditional security journals, *Security Studies* and *International Security*, and another third (36.4 percent) appeared in *JCR* and *JPR*, the two peace science journals in our study. General political science journals (*APSR*, *AJPS*, *BJPS*, *JOP*) published less

[24]Maliniak et al., *TRIP Codebook*, 14.

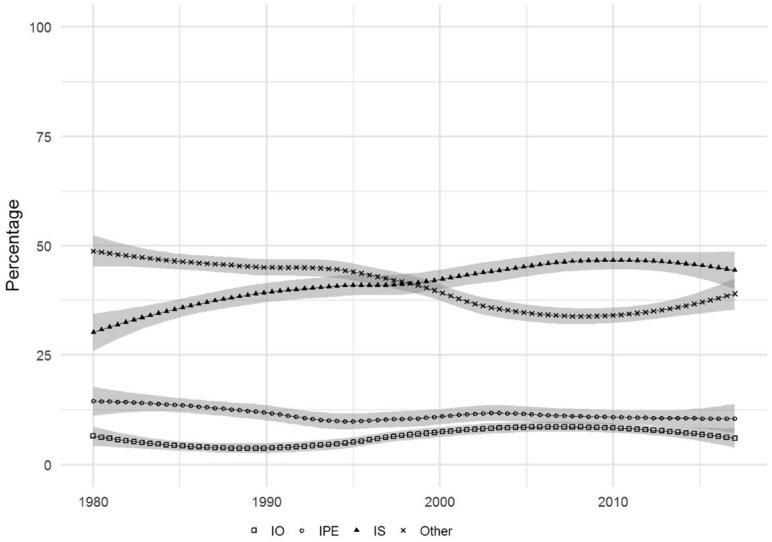

Figure 1. Journal articles issue area by year, 1980–2017. (In various graphs throughout this paper, we utilized the LOESS (local polynomial regression fitting) method in the R package ggplot2 to create graphs that display smoothed trends of the data. It computes a smooth local regression. For more information, please see http://ggplot2.tidyverse.org/reference/geom_smooth.html).

than 11 percent of all security articles in our sample, whereas IR field journals (*EJIR*, *International Organization*, *ISQ*, *WP*) published 23.5 percent.

The Study of International Security

We turn now to an examination of four aspects of the security subfield: its gender composition, theoretical approaches, methodology, and policy relevance. In each case, we explore whether and how security differs from other IR subfields and whether and how security research differs across different types of journals.

Gender

Previous work has argued that women are "second-class citizens within the IR profession."[25] In this study, we find that international security is even more male-dominated than other IR subfields; women represent a smaller percentage of security scholars, are primarily untenured, and publish fewer articles in the top journals than their male colleagues. What is more striking, however, is that some journals are significantly more likely than others

[25]Maliniak, Powers, and Walter, "The Gender Citation Gap," 123; Teele and Thelen, "Gender in the Journals"; Lisa L. Martin, "Gender, Teaching Evaluations, and Professional Success in Political Science," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 49, no. 2 (2016): 313–19.

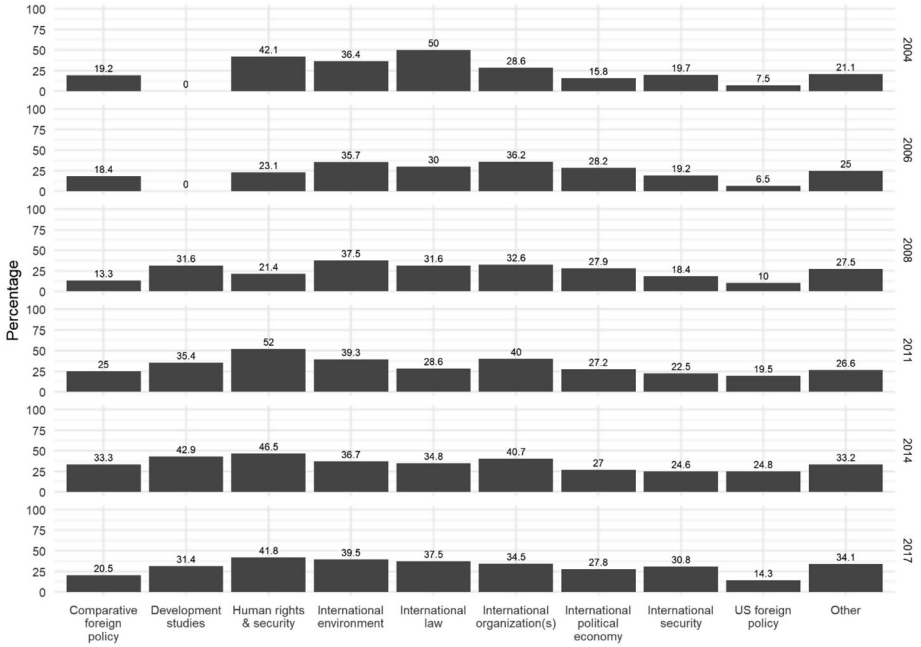

Figure 2. Percentage of female scholars by subfield. (The missing cells indicate we did not provide the response in that survey year).

to publish security-focused research by women (either solo- or coauthored articles); women are better represented in the general political science and IR field journals, and among the security-specific journals women are far better represented in the peace science journals than in the traditional security journals. Indeed, at first glance, the security journals appear to display a pattern similar to that in the general political science and IR field journals, although the security outlets have been slower to increase representation by female authors. On closer inspection, however, we see that *International Security* and *Security Studies* deviate from these trends and remain more male-dominated than all other journals.

There has been growth over time in the percentage of women within the security subfield, but, as Figure 2 illustrates, in 2017, only 30.8 percent of scholars who identify their primary subfield as international/global security were women.[26] Women comprise a larger percentage of scholars in the IR subfields of human rights and human security (41.8 percent), IO (34.5 percent), international environment (39.5 percent), and comparative foreign policy (33.4 percent).[27]

[26]Other subfields with low percentages of women scholars are IR theory (21.1 percent), IR of a particular region/country (23.9 percent), and foreign policy (12.2 percent).

[27]In the 2017 TRIP faculty survey, women comprise the majority in three subfields: the study of gender, where they comprise 78.6 percent of scholars; international/global health, where they comprise 63.2 percent; and global civil society, where they comprise 69.2 percent.

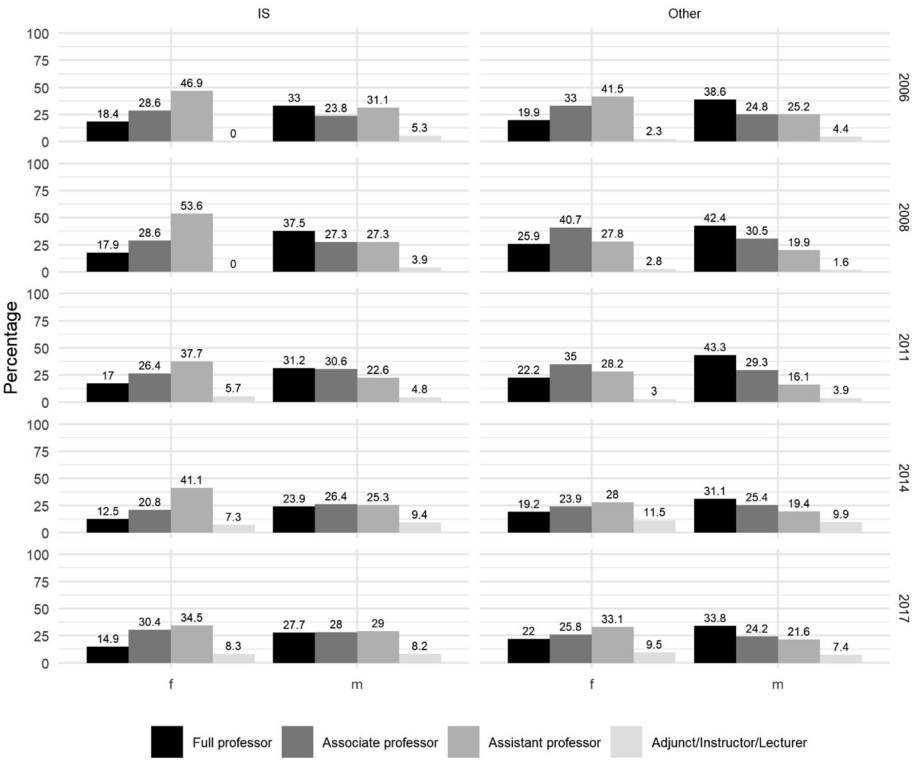

Figure 3. Respondents' gender by rank. (We did not ask about respondents' rank in our 2004 survey).

When we examine women's status in the profession, we find women have fared worse in the international security area compared to the other IR subfields (Figure 3). The data show a lower percentage of female security scholars are tenured (40.6 percent) compared to male security scholars (55.3 percent).[28] In other IR subfields, a higher percentage of women (6.9 percent more than in security) are tenured, and a higher percentage of women (5.9 percent more) have achieved the rank of full professor.

There is an even wider gender gap in publication rates. Security scholarship by women is underrepresented in the twelve leading peer-reviewed journals. Authors publishing on security topics are overwhelmingly male: 53.4 percent of security articles published between 1980 and 2017 are solo-authored by men, and another 24 percent are penned by all-male teams of coauthors (Figure 4). In contrast, although women comprise 21.8 percent of security scholars, they solo-authored only 9.4 percent of security articles between 1980 and 2017, and they were part of all-female teams of coauthors on just another 1.3 percent. The real growth area for women is in

[28]A plurality of women in international security are assistant professors (39.8 percent), whereas only 26.9 percent of men hold this rank.

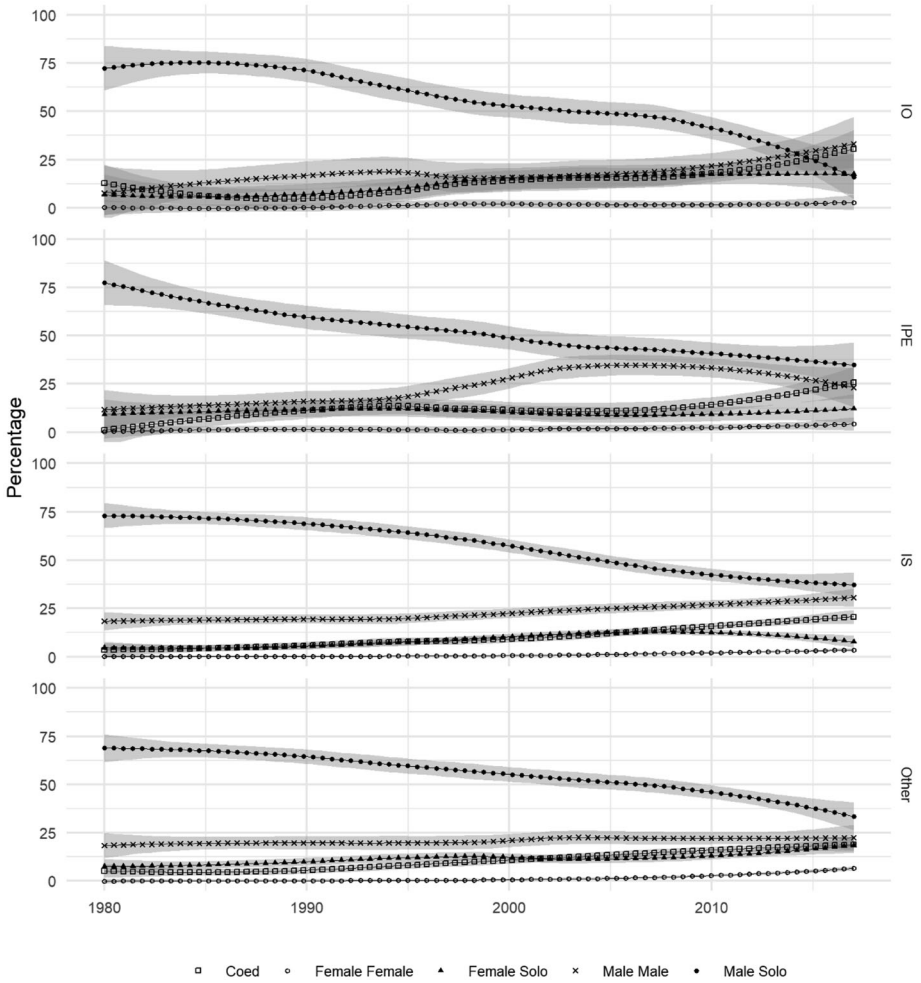

Figure 4. Gender of authorship by issue area, 1980–2017.

coauthoring articles with male colleagues: 24.1 percent of all security articles in 2017 were "coed."

Though still underrepresented relative to their proportion in their IR subfields, women publish more research on nonsecurity topics. Women are somewhat better represented, as Figure 4 shows, when they publish on IPE and IO. Between 1980 and 2017, the proportion of articles solo-authored by women on IO topics is 4.6 percentage points higher than the proportion solo-authored by women on international security. The share of articles on IO with at least one female coauthor is 8.5 points higher than those on security during the same period. The gap between IPE and security on this issue is slim: women were about equally likely to publish alone, and the proportion of IPE articles with at least one female coauthor is only 1.7 points higher than for security articles.

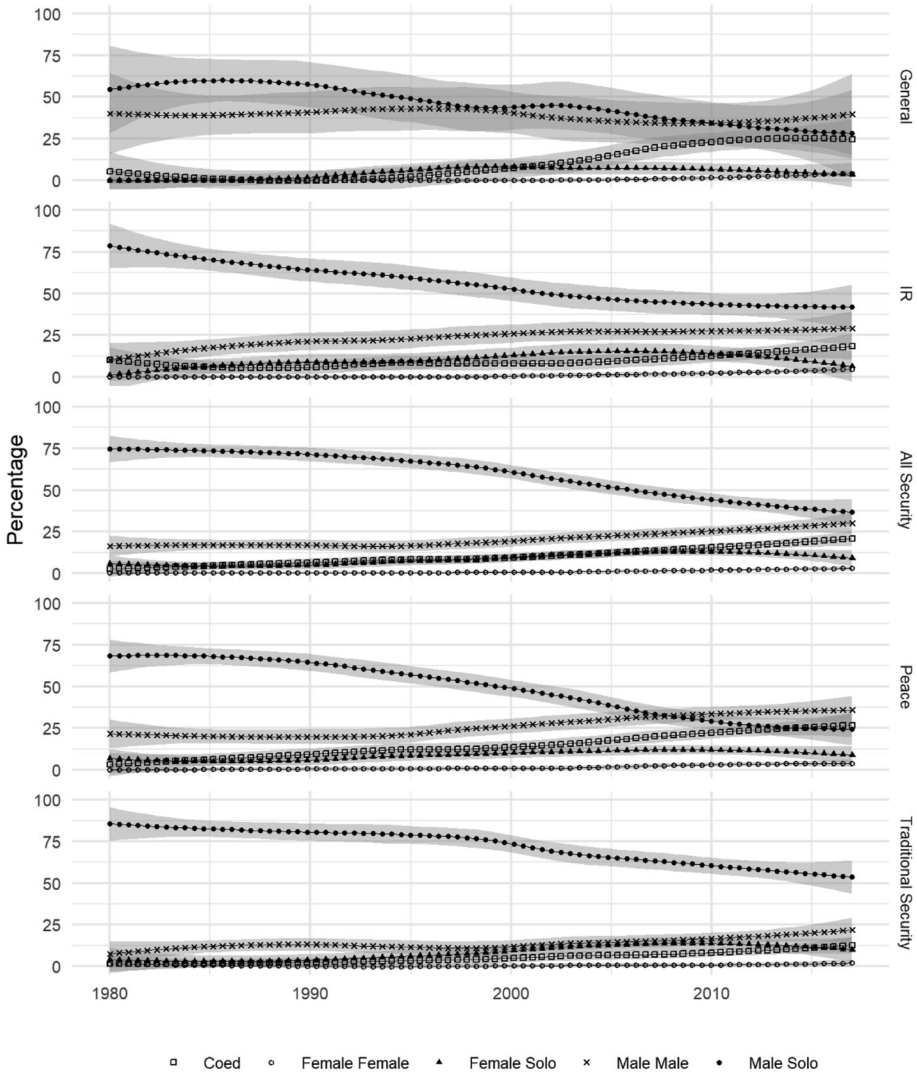

Figure 5. Gender of authorship by journal type, 1980–2017.

Comparing the representation of female authors across journal types, Figure 5 reveals the most striking gender disparity in publication rates. We observe three general and perhaps unsurprising trends. First, for most of the period covered by the TRIP Journal Article Database, male-authored articles represent the largest share of published security work. Second, however, the percentage of male authors has declined over time. Articles solo-authored by men in the general political science journals declined from a majority of published work (about 60 percent between 1980 and 1990) to 36.4 percent in 2017. In the IR field journals, the percentage of articles solo-authored by men declined from 75 percent in 1980 to 31.7 percent in

2017. This decline was steeper in the four security journals, where articles solo-authored by men dropped from 79 percent in 1980 to 28 percent in 2017. Finally, we have seen an increase in coauthorship—including articles coauthored by teams of male and female scholars. In the general political science journals, since 2010, the percentage of articles coauthored by coed teams of male and female scholars has generally increased. The percentage of security articles published in the general political science journals that are solo- or coauthored by all women, however, remains considerably lower. No security articles by women were published in the general political science journals before 1993, although their share has since held steady at around 10 percent. By 2017, 58.6 percent of security articles in IR field journals were coauthored, up from 46.7 percent between 1980 and 2000. Of the coauthored articles published in IR field journals in 2017, 37.5 percent (i.e., 22 percent of all security articles published in IR field journals in 2017) were coauthored by male and female scholars. The share of security articles solo-authored by women published in IR field journals rose slightly from 6.2 percent between 1980 and 1990 to 9.8 percent in 2017.

We see a similar, if slower, trend in the four security journals. In 2017, 64.7 percent of security articles in these journals were coauthored, a steep increase from 15.8 percent in 1980. The share of articles coauthored by men increased from 10.5 percent in 1980 to 34.1 percent in 2017, and the percentage of articles with male and female coauthors increased from 5.3 percent to 26.8 percent. The percentage of articles solo-authored by women in security journals also rose slightly, from 5.3 percent in 1980 to 7.3 percent in 2017.

When we look more closely at the security journals, however, we see a noteworthy pattern. The two traditional security journals in our study, *International Security* and *Security Studies*, deviate from these overall trends and from the two peace science journals in the sample, *JCR* and *JPR*. The two subtypes of security journals have similar rates of male authorship. In 2017, 62.5 percent of articles in traditional security journals and 62 percent in peace science journals were solo- or coauthored by men. The similarities end there, however. There has been a relatively smaller decline over time in male solo-authorship in traditional security journals (from an average of 67.7 percent between 1980 and 1987 to 59.7 percent between 2010 and 2017) than in any other type of journal, including the peace science journals. In *JCR* and *JPR*, male solo-authorship declined more steeply and to lower levels (from 69.6 percent in 1980 to 22 percent in 2017). Finally, while coauthorship in traditional security journals has increased from 6.7 percent in 1980 to 50 percent in 2017, this reflects a large increase in articles written by two or more men (from 6.7 percent in 1980 to 25

percent in 2017).[29] The peace science journals have experienced a more significant increase (from 21.7 percent in 1980 to 74 percent in 2017), but that reflects a much smaller rise in coauthorship by all-male teams (from 13 percent to 40 percent). Over the period covered by the TRIP Journal Article Database, less than 10 percent of articles were solo-authored by women in the four security journals (including traditional and peace science journals). Thereafter, the two types of security journals diverge. More than 83 percent of the articles published between 1980 and 2017 in *Security Studies* and *International Security* lack a female author or coauthor, compared to 72 percent of articles in the peace science journals. Indeed, the size of the overall gender gap in publication rates discussed above—namely that more than 53 percent of all security-focused articles are solo-authored by men between 1980 and 2017—is driven in part by two journals, *Security Studies* and *International Security*.[30]

We find, in short, that there are two different security subfields for female scholars: one clustered around the general political science, IR field, and peace science journals, in which a growing share of articles are written by women, and another represented by the traditional security journals, *Security Studies* and *International Security*, in which research by women remains significantly underrepresented. The gender gap in publication rates across all the top journals, but especially in *Security Studies* and *International Security*, confirms the conventional wisdom about the underrepresentation of women and points to the need for greater efforts to include security scholarship by women.

Theory

A second piece of conventional wisdom suggests the IR discipline, and especially the study of international security, is overwhelmingly realist.[31] More recently, at a time when the IR discipline has moved away from paradigmatic research, security generally is still considered to be the most heavily realist of the IR subfields.[32] Our analysis supports and extends this

[29]There was a dip in the percentage of articles coauthored by male scholars between 1990 and 1995.

[30]Our findings are consistent with those of the editors of *International Security* and *Security Studies*. Desch and William C. Wohlforth note, "From a very low starting point, articles [in *Security Studies*] authored by women increased to an average of 20% in the post-2000 period." Michael C. Desch and William C. Wohlforth, "Essay in ISSF Policy Forum on the Gender Gap in Political Science," *H-Diplo/ISSF Forum* 17, 22 September 2017. Our data show that, from 2001 to 2017, 21.4 percent of all articles in *Security Studies* had at least one female author. Lynn-Jones similarly notes, "Since 2006, 23% of all authors published in *International Security* have been women." Sean M. Lynn-Jones, "Essay in ISSF Policy Forum on the Gender Gap in Political Science," *H-Diplo/ISSF Forum* 17, 22 September 2017. TRIP data show that, from 2007 to 2017, 22.1 percent of articles in *International Security* included at least one female author.

[31]Legro and Moavcsik, "Is Anybody a Realist?" 5; Michael W. Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace: Realism, Liberalism, and Socialism* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997), 41.

[32]For the shift from paradigmatic research, see Stephen M. Saideman, "The Apparent Decline of the IR Paradigms: Examining Patterns of Publications, Perceptions, and Citations," *International Studies Review* 20, no.

conventional wisdom: realism is better represented in security than elsewhere, but it is far from uniformly dominant across the subfield. The leading traditional security journals have maintained a higher proportion of realist work compared to the leading general political science, IR field, and peace science journals. That said, the security subfield generally has included a more diverse set of theories since 1990 and in recent years has moved, along with the broader IR discipline, toward embracing nonparadigmatic research.

Previous research has shown that part of the conventional wisdom about IR is wrong; realism does not dominate the IR field and did not even before the recent decline in paradigmatic research. Daniel Maliniak et al. found that, among published articles in the twelve leading IR journals, realism "peaked at 15 percent in the mid-1990s, still a full nine points behind liberalism."[33] Work that cited the four major "isms" (Marxism, realism, constructivism, and liberalism) never represented more than 50 percent of published works in the field.[34] That realism does not dominate the IR field as a whole, however, does not rule out its prominence in the security subfield.

In fact, realism is the most common theoretical approach to the study of international security. The 2017 TRIP Faculty Survey showed that among security scholars, 27.1 percent consider realism to be their "primary approach to the study of IR," while only 18.2 percent of all IR scholars are self-described realists. Around 21 percent of security scholars primarily use constructivist approaches, and 12.1 percent employ liberalism. Additionally, nearly one-third (30.7 percent) of scholars who describe their work as realist say their primary issue area is international/global security, making it by far the largest issue area studied by realists. The next largest is US foreign policy, which is the focus of only 7.6 percent of self-described realist scholars. By comparison, only 19.8 percent of liberal scholars and 18 percent of constructivists primarily study security. Measured in terms of the percentage of scholars who describe their work as realist, the conventional wisdom is correct: realism is overrepresented in security compared to other IR subfields.

4 (2018): 685–703; for more on security as a heavily realist field, see Lynn-Jones, "Realism and Security Studies."

[33]Maliniak et al., "International Relations in the US Academy," 448. According to the TRIP codebook, which governed data collection for Maliniak et al., "International Relations in the US Academy," and this paper, "Realist articles frequently employ the following assumptions: (1) states are the dominant actors in international politics; (2) states are unitary, rational actors; (3) states pursue their interests, which are defined in terms of power; and (4) the international system is anarchic. To be considered a realist article it is necessary that the role of power or anarchy is the key explanatory variable. Explanatory variables frequently employed in realist analyses include hegemony, polarity, offense-defense balance, or relative and absolute power." Maliniak et al., *TRIP Codebook*, 7.

[34]Maliniak et al., "International Relations in the US Academy," 446.

Published research also partly confirms this conventional wisdom. In all but four years between 1980 and 2017, security articles were more likely than IO, IPE, or other IR subfield articles to be grounded in realism: 12.8 percent of all security articles employ the realist paradigm, compared to 2.3 percent of IO articles, 2.7 percent of IPE articles, and 5.3 percent of other articles. Realism is espoused in only a minority of published security articles, but a full 67.6 percent of all realist articles published from 1980 to 2017 focus on security. In contrast, IO and IPE together comprise only 5.8 percent of realist articles. In short, while realism does not dominate security, security dominates realism.

At the same time, the security subfield draws on a more diverse set of paradigms (and nonparadigmatic theories) than the next two largest IR subfields. Liberal work dominated the IPE subfield into the early 2000s, and no other paradigm rose above 10 percent of published IPE articles after 1997. In IO, liberalism has consistently made up between 40 and 50 percent of published articles since 1995, with constructivist work representing about 20 percent of articles. Security-focused articles, however, use a more diverse set of theories. After 1990, as Figure 6 shows, about half of all security articles were nonparadigmatic—that is, they did not employ one of the major theoretical paradigms in IR.[35] The remainder was fairly evenly split among realism, liberalism, and "other" paradigmatic work such as feminism, the English School, and Marxism. Nonparadigmatic research within international security continues to grow and represents 57.8 percent of all published security articles between 2004 and 2017.

In all three major types of journals—general political science, IR field, and security journals—nonparadigmatic work has always comprised the largest percentage of published security articles, and the study of security is becoming increasingly nonparadigmatic over time (Figure 7). In fact, sizable majorities of security articles in the general political science, IR field, and security journals are and always have been nonparadigmatic.

Again, however, important distinctions emerge among the security journals. Peace science journals are the least paradigmatic of any type of journal in our study: the percentage of nonparadigmatic security articles has steadily increased from 60.9 to 86 percent between 1980 and 2017. The proportion of realist articles in these journals, moreover, has declined steadily from peaks of 21.9 percent in 1988 and 1992 to 4 percent in 2017. In traditional security journals, however, a somewhat different picture of the security subfield appears. Since 1990, *International Security* and *Security Studies* have published more realist articles than the general political science journals, IR field journals, and peace science journals; and the

[35]Nonparadigmatic articles are those that advance and/or test a theory but not a realist, liberal, constructivist, or Marxist one, according to Maliniak et al., *TRIP Codebook*.

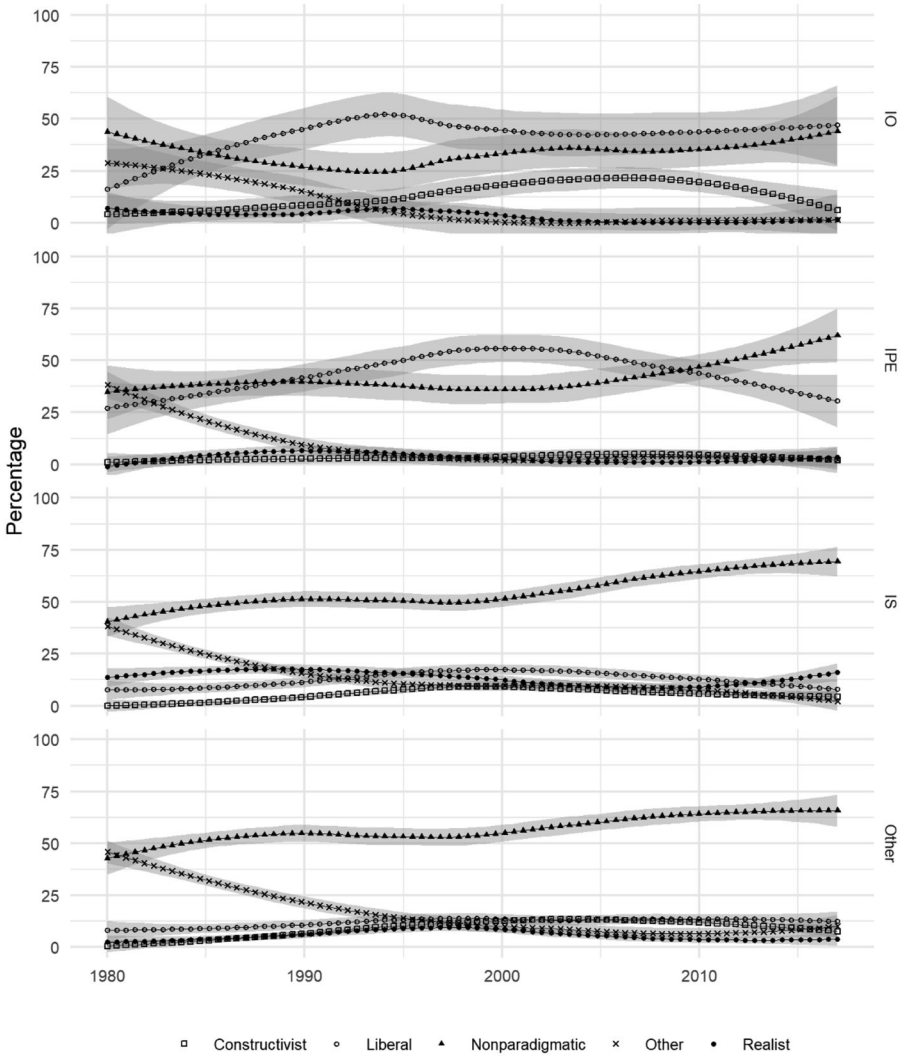

Figure 6. Paradigm by issue area for all articles, 1980–2017.

traditional security journals embraced nonparadigmatic research later. The share of articles that advanced the realist paradigm in these journals actually grew from about 20 percent of articles in 1980 to a high of 42.3 percent in 2001, before dropping to 22.2 percent by 2017. The proportion of realist articles is still larger in the traditional security journals, however, than in any other journal type after 1990. *Security Studies*, in particular, was a major outlet for realist work during the 1990s, with close to 40 percent of articles espousing the realist paradigm between 1995 and 1998. Indeed, during this period, *Security Studies* published nearly as many realist articles as nonparadigmatic ones. In the same period, no other journal type published work within a single paradigm at the same proportion as their

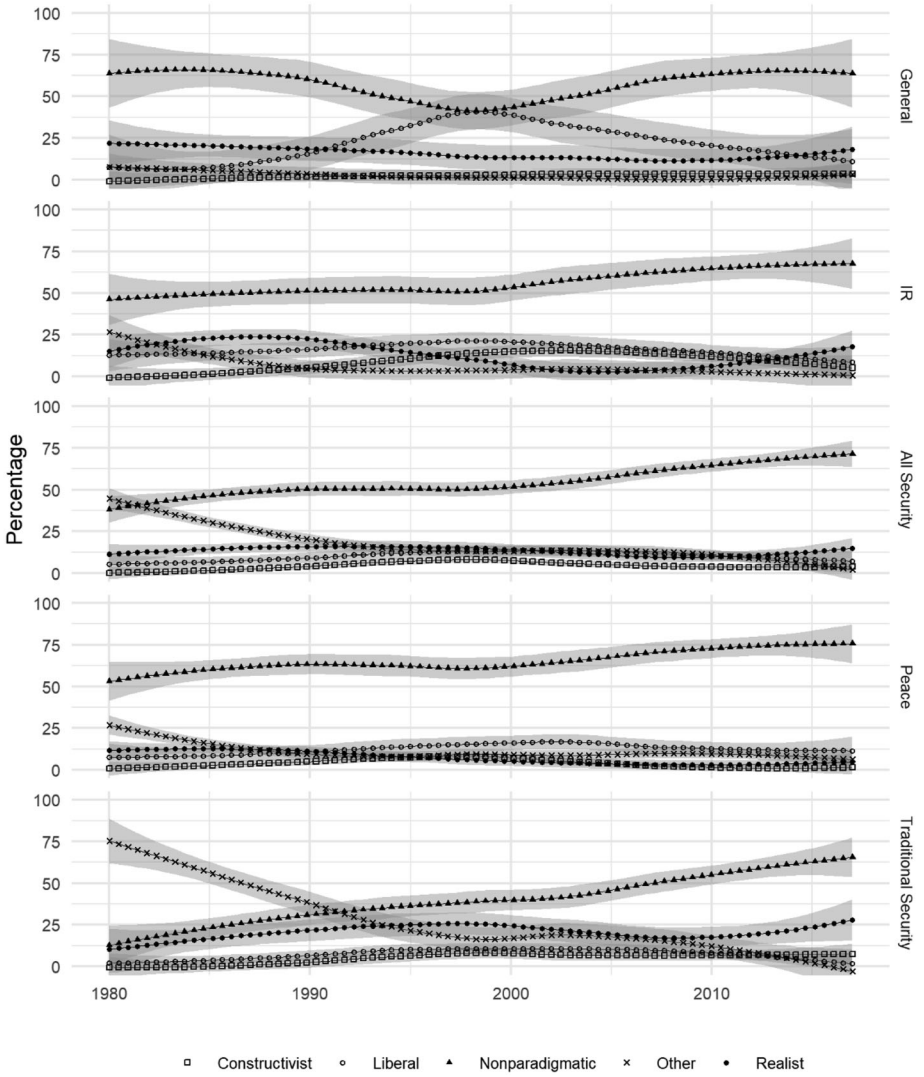

Figure 7. Paradigm by journal type for security articles, 1980–2017.

nonparadigmatic articles. Today, as well, both *Security Studies* and *International Security* publish more articles within the realist paradigm than any other paradigm (15.4 and 29.2 percent of articles between 2012 and 2017, respectively), making these journals unique in that regard. Thus, to the extent that the conventional wisdom is correct and realism is the dominant paradigm in the study of security, it is only in the two traditional security journals.

Even in these traditional journals, however, security-focused scholarship has followed the general trend in the IR discipline toward nonparadigmatic analysis. Before 2000, an average of nearly 30 percent of articles in

traditional security journals were nonparadigmatic, compared to more than 50 percent in other types of journals.[36] Nevertheless, nonparadigmatic research rose to more than 50 percent of articles in the two traditional journals in 2017.

Methods

Many of the strongest critics of the use of mathematical methods in IR study international security, thereby reinforcing the conventional wisdom that the security subfield is more qualitatively oriented than the rest of the IR discipline.[37] Again, however, we find one's "truth" about the nature of the subfield depends on which subset of journals one tends to read. Like students of IR more generally, scholars of international security increasingly employ quantitative research techniques to study their subject. Even so, security-related articles are less quantitative and more qualitative than those in other IR subfields, and research published in the four security-specific journals appears more likely than articles, in general, political science or IR field journals to employ qualitative methods. Nevertheless, this pattern hides a significant split between the peace science journals, which resemble the general political science and IR journals, and the heavily qualitative traditional security outlets.

Security scholars use qualitative approaches at higher rates, and they are far less likely to employ statistical methods than their counterparts in the IPE subfield, although they do so at only slightly lower rates than scholars in IO. In the 2017 TRIP Faculty Survey, 61.3 percent of security scholars reported that their primary methodological approach is qualitative, and 87.4 percent list qualitative approaches as either their primary or secondary method. This result compares to 51 and 81.8 percent, respectively, among students of IPE and 66.2 and 92.1 percent among IO scholars. As Figures 8 and 9 show, security scholars' use of qualitative approaches as their primary method has declined over time, but so has their use of statistical approaches, and they remain less likely to employ quantitative approaches as their primary or secondary method than their counterparts in IPE.[38]

[36]As Figure 7 shows, the theoretical approach for many articles in the security subfield journals was coded as "other." During the 1980s, 58.4 percent of security articles published in *International Security* and *Security Studies* were "atheoretic," meaning they were "purely descriptive or test inductively derived hypotheses not related to any theory or paradigm," Maliniak et al., *TRIP Codebook*, 9.

[37]For an argument that the security field, or at least one part of it, has "gone quantitative," see Erik Gartzke and Matthew Kroenig, "Nukes with Numbers: Empirical Research on the Consequences of Nuclear Weapons for International Conflict," *Annual Review of Political Science* 19 (2016): 397–412. For critiques of mathematical methods in IR, see Avey and Desch, "The Bumpy Road"; Desch, *Cult of the Irrelevant*; Desch, "Technique Trumps Relevance"; Gallucci, "How Scholars Can Improve"; Mearsheimer and Walt, "Leaving Theory Behind"; and Walt, "The Cult of Irrelevance." For more on the conventional wisdom that security is more qualitative, see Goddard, "Introduction."

[38]This finding is consistent with an article by Benjamin J. Cohen and an article by Daniel Maliniak and Michael Tierney, which depict the American school of IPE as overwhelmingly quantitative. Benjamin J. Cohen, "The

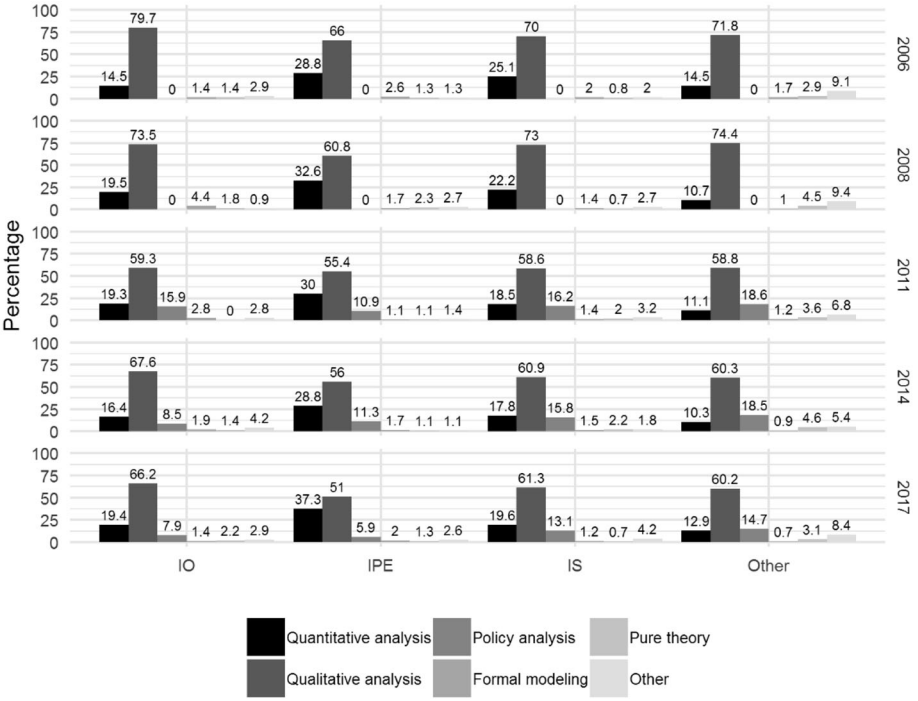

Figure 8. Primary methodology by issue area among IR faculty respondents. (In 2004, we asked respondents to report all methodological approaches they employed in their research. In all subsequent surveys, we asked respondents to identify their primary methodological approach, and a second question asked respondents to report any secondary approaches. Because of the differences in the questions, we do not report 2004 data in Figures 8 and 9. Additionally, "Policy analysis" was added as a response option in 2011).

Published IR research reflects similar trends. As Figure 10 shows, 34.2 percent of security articles published between 2004 and 2017 are qualitative, whereas 52.4 percent use statistical approaches. During the same period, only 23.1 percent of IPE articles employ qualitative approaches, whereas 75.5 percent use statistical methods.[39]

Although security is a more qualitative subfield than IPE, like the rest of the IR discipline security is becoming more quantitative over time. Figure 11 illustrates the percentage of IR articles that use various methodological approaches within each subfield by year. We see that quantitative methods now dominate every major IR subfield. This shift occurred somewhat earlier and more dramatically in IPE than in the security subfield. There has

Transatlantic Divide: Why are American and British IPE So Different?" *Review of International Political Economy* 14, no. 2 (2007): 197–219; Daniel Maliniak and Michael J. Tierney, "The American School of IPE," *Review of International Political Economy* 16, no. 1 (2009): 6–33.

[39]We include only 2004–17 here to highlight the distinction between security and IPE, which has become more quantitative over time.

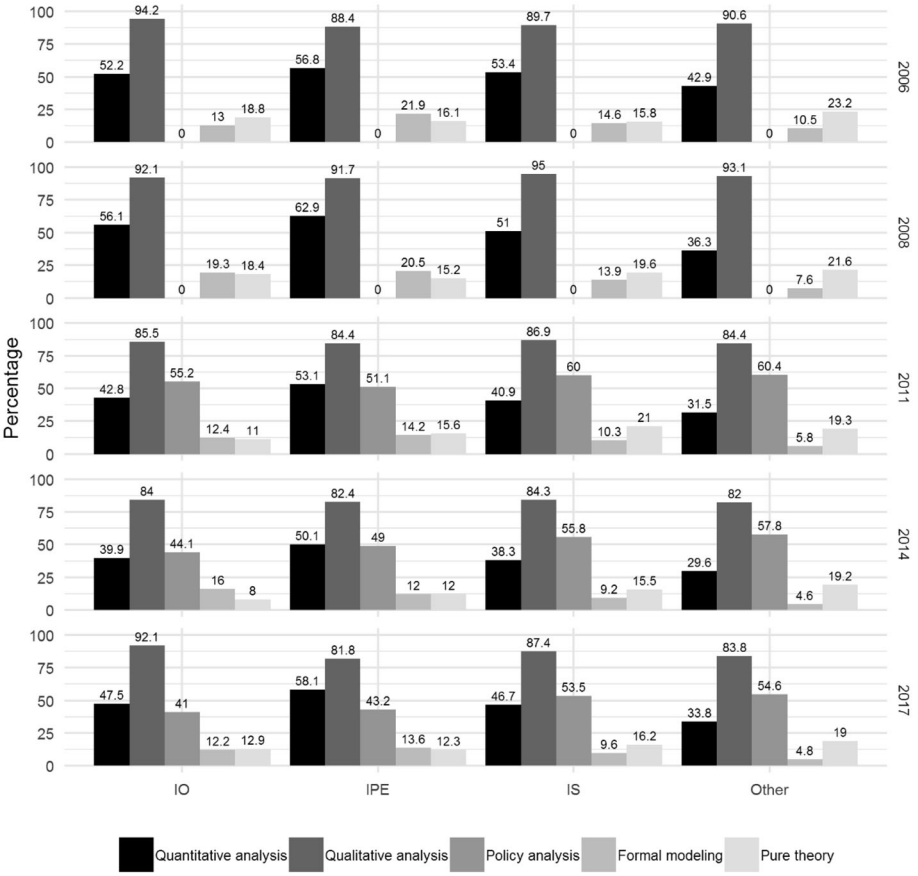

Figure 9. Primary and secondary methodology by issue area among IR faculty respondents.

been an upward trend in quantitative methods in IO, but as yet we see no definitive shift in that subfield.

Examining the methods used to conduct research reinforces our findings about the security subfield: it manifests very differently across journal types. Figure 12 illustrates the percentage of all security-related articles in each type of journal that employs each methodological approach. It shows that a large majority (71.2 percent) of all articles coded as addressing security topics and published, in general, political science journals employ statistical methods, as do a near majority of publications in IR field journals. If we remove *EJIR*, the only IR field journal that is primarily qualitative, a majority (56.8 percent) of articles in those journals are quantitative as well. In contrast, the four security journals in our study include a smaller percentage (35.9 percent) of articles using quantitative methods.

Again, however, grouping all security journals together masks a significant difference in publication patterns in the peace science and traditional

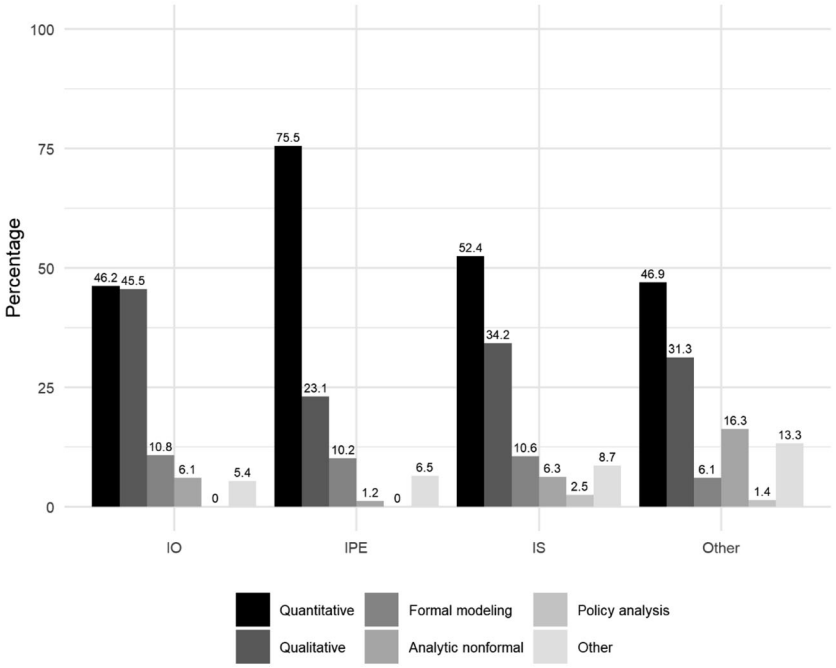

Figure 10. Journal article methodology by issue area, 2004–2017. (The category "analytical/non-formal" refers to works that "illuminate features of IR or IR theory without reference to significant empirical evidence or a formal model." Maliniak et al., *TRIP Codebook*, 18).

security journals. *JCR* and *JPR* are similar to the IR field journals: 58 percent of security articles in the peace science journals employ statistical tools. In contrast, the overwhelming majority of articles in the traditional security journals is qualitative, and a scant 8.73 percent of security articles in these journals employ quantitative approaches.

Breaking down the TRIP journal article data by journal type produces another surprising result. Regardless of whether we measure the field's methodological tendencies by scholars' survey responses or the research methods used in published articles, we see the study of international security, like the IR discipline, becoming more quantitative over time. Indeed, as Figure 13 demonstrates, the security-related articles, in general, political science journals and IR field journals have become more quantitative. At first glance, the security journals seem to follow a similar trajectory in which quantitative articles have overtaken qualitative, even if a bit later and by a smaller margin than in other journal types. If we break out the peace science journals from the traditional security outlets, however, we see that peace science journals have become steadily more quantitative, while the percentage of articles in *International Security* and *Security Studies* that use qualitative research methods continues to increase over time.

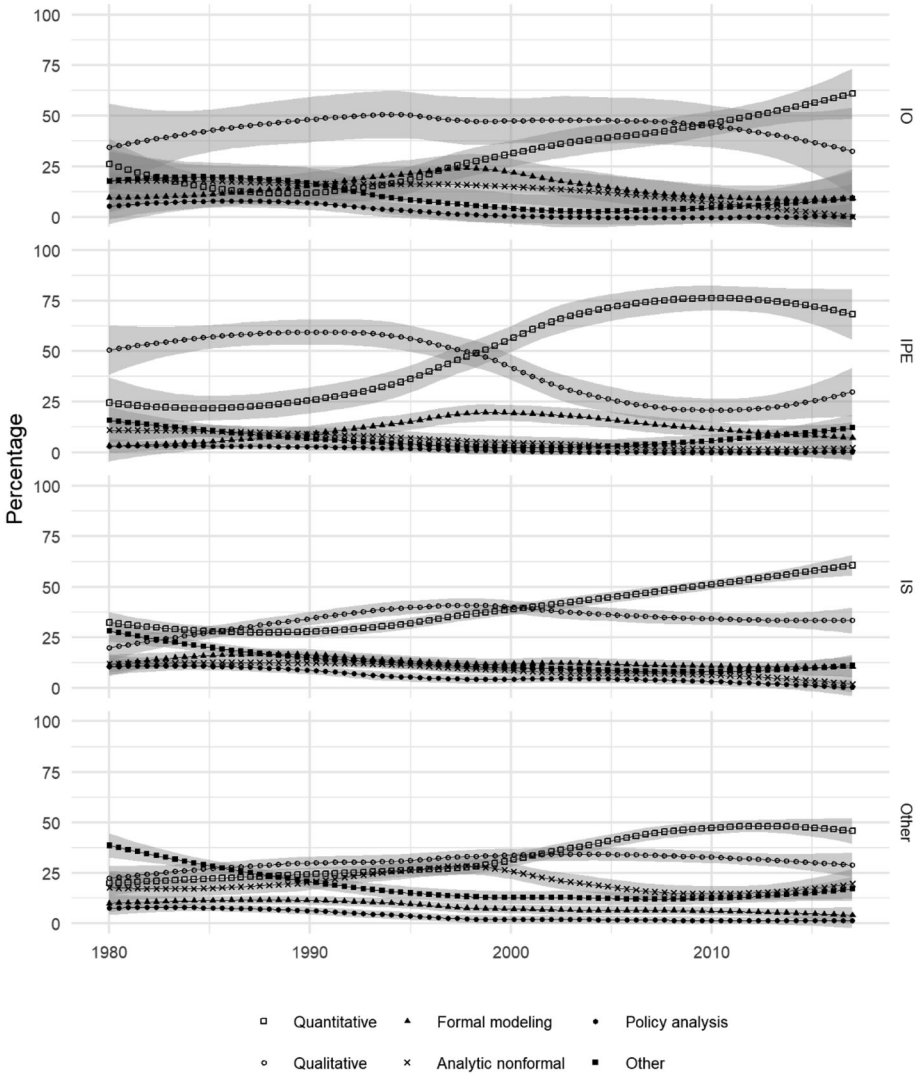

Figure 11. Journal article methodology by issue area, 1980–2017.

If we look more recently at the 2004–2017 period, we find both starker methodological differences across types of journals and considerable methodological consistency across the individual journals included in each type. Among the general political science journals, *BJPS* is the most quantitatively oriented; 84.9 percent of all security articles published in that journal use statistical methods. *JOP* is second with 81.7 percent, as Figure 14 shows, and 78 percent of all security articles in *AJPS* use statistical methods. In fact, security is something of an outlier in *AJPS*; more than 91 percent of nonsecurity articles in *AJPS* are quantitative. *APSR* is somewhat less quantitatively oriented than the other general political science journals. This finding may be the result, in part, of the perestroika movement within

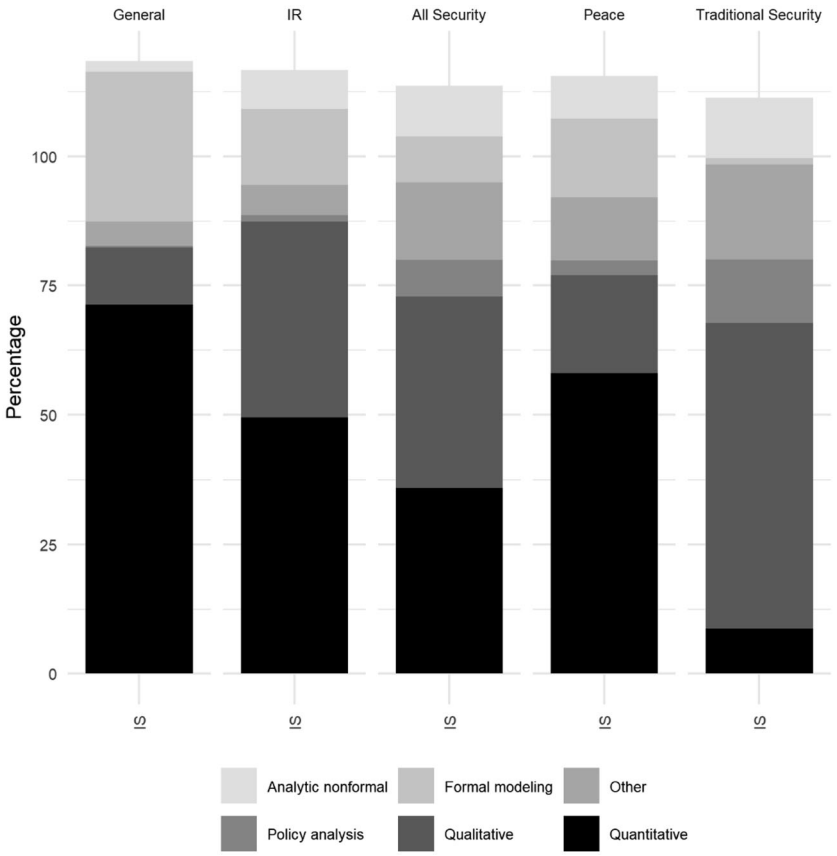

Figure 12. Methodology by journal type, 1980–2017. (Because coding rules allow coders to select multiple methodological approaches, the total for each column exceeds 100 percent).

political science, which specifically sought to bring greater methodological pluralism to the American Political Science Association and its flagship journal, *APSR*. Between 2004 and 2017, 59.2 percent of security articles published in *APSR* use statistical approaches.

In this sense, *APSR* is closer to an IR field journal than to some of the other general political science journals. Around 65 percent of all articles on security topics in *International Organization* and *WP* over the same period employ quantitative methods, while the same is true of 69.5 percent of security articles in *ISQ*. The real exception is *EJIR*, which is primarily qualitative. (*EJIR* is one of only two journals among the twelve leading IR journals that was founded and is edited outside the United States.)

The two subtypes of specifically security-oriented journals, peace science and traditional security journals, are so different as to again suggest distinct representations of the international security subfield. Large majorities of the security articles published in *JCR* (75.3 percent) and *JPR* (68.6 percent) use quantitative research methods. In the two traditional security journals,

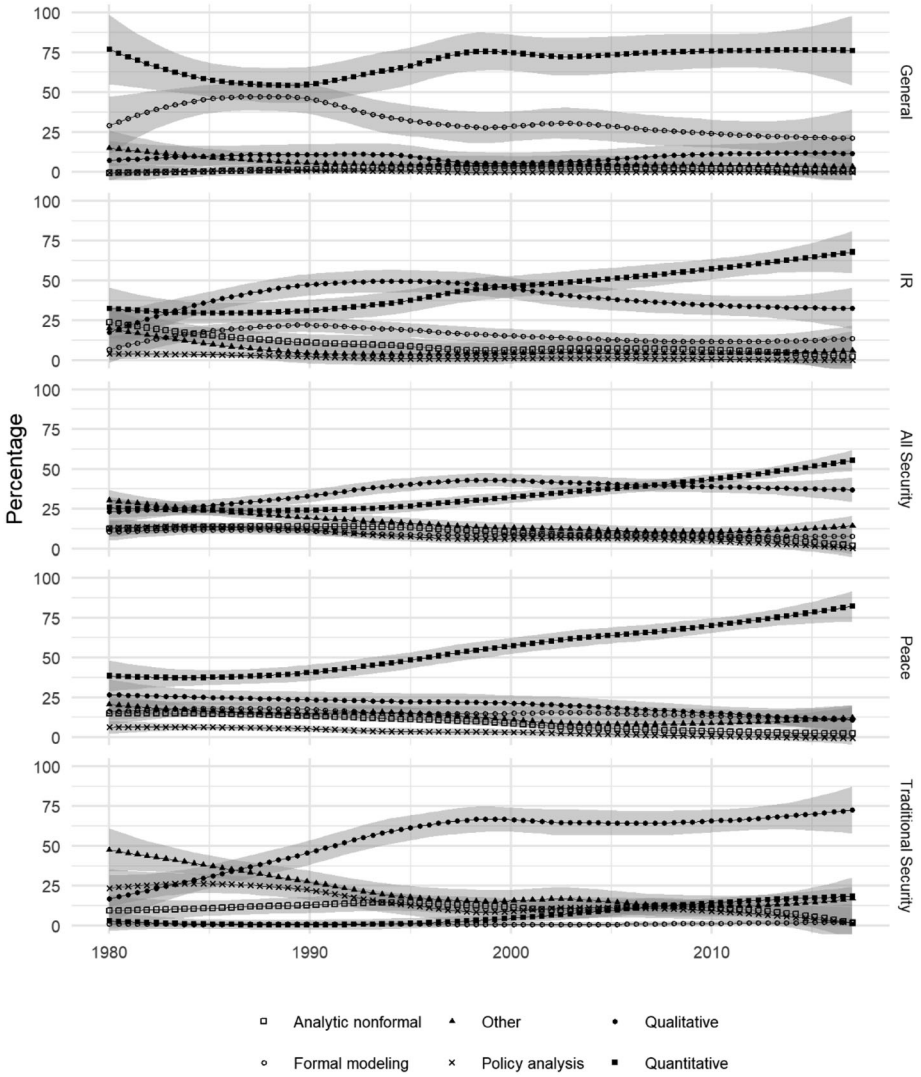

Figure 13. Methods in security articles by journal type, 1980–2017.

Security Studies and *International Security*, 13.5 and 15.8 percent of the publications, respectively, use statistics as their main method. *Security Studies* is slightly more qualitatively oriented than *International Security*, but the two journals are far more similar than they are different. Together, they constitute quite a different look at international security issues than do the peace science, general political science, or IR field journals. In fact, 56.9 percent of qualitative security research between 2004 and 2017 is published in the two traditional security journals.

Our findings highlight clear divisions within the international security subfield, particularly between journals that are outlets for quantitative security research and those that primarily publish qualitative research,

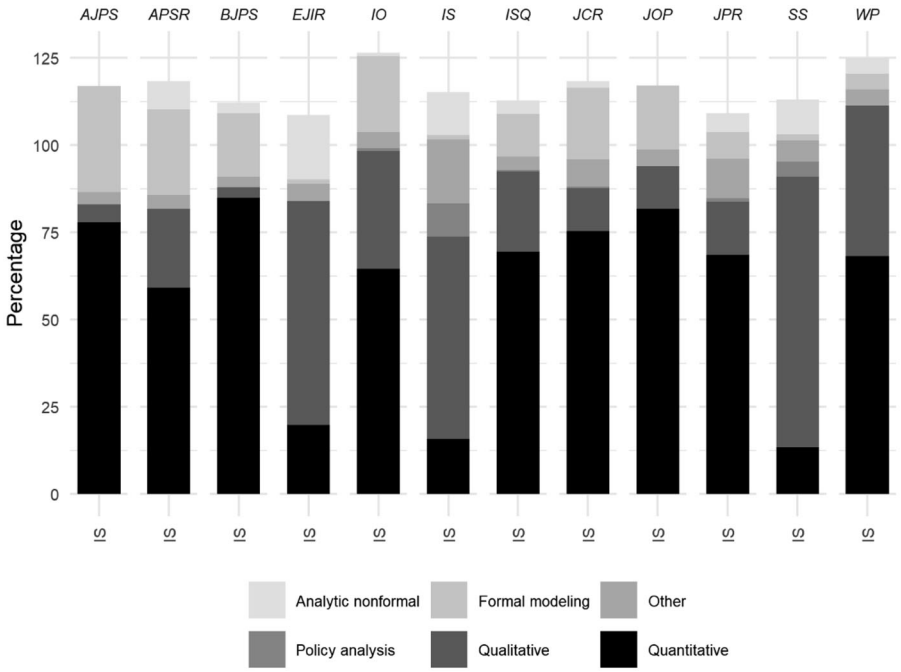

Figure 14. Methodology by journal, 2004–2017. (Because a single article may use multiple methods, the bars in this graph may total more than 100 percent).

namely *EJIR*, *Security Studies*, and *International Security*. If one reads only *Security Studies* and *International Security* to follow the security subfield, one could easily assume security research has not made the shift toward quantitative analysis evident in IPE and other scholarship. If we examine the security subfield as it is practiced across all the top journals, however, security research, like other IR research, is increasingly quantitative. In particular, an ever-greater share of articles on international security published in the general political science, IR field, and peace science journals uses statistical analyses.

Policy Relevance

The security subfield was born at the dawn of the nuclear age in response to the political problem of how to strategize about the use of nuclear weapons. "'Academic strategists' such as Bernard Brodie, Albert Wohlstetter, Herman Kahn, and especially Thomas Schelling reputedly exercised such influence that the period between 1945 and 1961 is regarded as the 'golden age' of academic national security studies."[40] Not surprisingly, the conviction grew that security was among the most policy-relevant areas of

[40]Avey and Desch, "The Bumpy Road," 207.

IR.[41] Recently, some security students have begun to question this conventional wisdom, arguing that the contemporary subfield has moved far from its policy roots. The columnist Thomas E. Ricks famously asked why *International Security* is "so damn boring" and pointed out the "extraordinary irrelevance of political science."[42] TRIP data partly support the conventional view: security scholars are more likely than their colleagues in other subfields to want to pursue, and say they undertake, policy-relevant research; security articles are more likely to use policy analysis and contain policy prescriptions; and security scholars are more likely to work as consultants. At the same time, security scholars do not conduct more contemporary research, and they tend not to focus their research on strategically important areas. We find much of the perception that security remains more policy relevant than other IR subfields is driven by trends in a single journal, *International Security*.

Security scholars want their research to be policy relevant. In 2011, 91.5 percent agreed that "there should be a larger number of links between academic and policy communities."[43] Nearly 90 percent of respondents in other IR subfields agreed. Large numbers (42.2 percent) of security scholars also report that policy relevance is the primary motivation for their research. In fact, they are second on this measure only to faculty who study US foreign policy (47.5 percent).

Security scholars are more likely than those in other IR subfields to describe their research as applied—that is, "done with specific policy applications in mind"—rather than basic—research "for the sake of knowledge, without any specific policy application in mind."[44] In 2017, among IR scholars who identified their primary research focus as international security, 39.1 percent said their work was either "more applied than basic" or "primarily applied," compared to 27.5 percent of IPE scholars and 26.3 percent of IO faculty. Only scholars who study US foreign policy and human rights report in higher proportions that their research is more applied than basic (41.1 and 39.9 percent, respectively). It is worth noting, however, that US foreign policy and human rights scholars make up only 5.2 percent and 5.3 percent of respondents, respectively, compared with roughly 20 percent of respondents who identify their primary focus as international security.

[41]Avey and Desch, "The Bumpy Road"; Jervis, "Security Studies," 101.

[42]Thomas E. Ricks, "Given All That Is Going On, Why Is 'International Security' So Damn Boring?" *Foreign Policy*, 15 September 2014, http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/09/15/given-all-that-is-going-on-why-is-international-security-so-damn-boring/.

[43]The most recent survey on which this question was asked was the 2011 survey, which included twenty countries. Although the sample of countries is smaller in the 2011 survey, that survey's regional coverage is similar to the larger cross-national surveys conducted in 2014 and 2017. Maliniak, Peterson, and Tierney, *TRIP 2011 Faculty Survey*.

[44]Daniel Maliniak, Susan Peterson, Ryan Powers, and Michael J. Tierney, *TRIP 2017 Faculty Survey*, Teaching, Research, and International Policy Project (Williamsburg, VA: Global Research Institute), https://trip.wm.edu/.

Students of international security, therefore, comprise the largest group of scholars who indicate they do applied research.

When attempting to measure the policy relevance of security scholarship, the more important question is not whether faculty believe their work is relevant to policymakers but whether practitioners find the scholarship useful. The only direct evidence we have on this question is Avey and Desch's study of current and former US security and defense policymakers' views on academic research.[45] These officials report that the work produced by historians, economists, and area studies specialists is more valuable than that of political scientists and international affairs scholars. These practitioners also find theoretical analyses, formal models, and quantitative analyses less valuable than area studies, historical case studies, and contemporary case studies. The Avey and Desch survey has a relatively small number of respondents, but it is the best evidence to date on what policymakers want from IR scholars.[46] In 2017–2018, TRIP researchers surveyed current and former security policymakers across three issue areas: security, trade, and development. Preliminary analyses of the results suggest trade and development practitioners use social science arguments and evidence in their work more frequently and find quantitative analyses more useful than do their security counterparts. Most important, security practitioners report finding quantitative analyses more useful to their work than they did in 2011.[47]

Despite limited evidence on policymakers' views on the usefulness of security scholarship compared to other IR subfields, TRIP data allow us to draw conclusions based on several measures of the policy relevance of academic work published in the top twelve peer-reviewed journals. First, international security scholars report they use policy analysis as their primary or secondary methodology at higher rates than scholars in the other two largest IR subfields (Figure 8). Security scholars are more likely to identify policy analysis as their primary methodology—13.1 percent compared to 5.9 percent of scholars in the IPE subfield and 7.9 percent of scholars in the IO subfield. Similarly, 53.5 percent of security scholars said they employ policy analysis as either their primary or secondary methodology,

[45]Paul C. Avey and Michael C. Desch, "What Do Policymakers Want from Us? Results of a Survey of Current and Former Senior National Security Decision Makers," *International Studies Quarterly* 58, no. 2 (2014): 227–46.

[46]Avey and Desch's study also is limited because it surveys only relatively senior policymakers, both current and former. See Michael Horowitz, "What Is Policy Relevance?" *War on the Rocks*, 17 June 2015, http://warontherocks.com/2015/06/what-is-policy-relevance/.

[47]Paul C. Avey, Michael Desch, Susan Peterson, Ryan Powers, and Michael J. Tierney, "(How) Do Policymakers Use Academic Knowledge and Data? Results of a Survey of Current and Former National Security, International Trade, and Development Policy Officials" (unpublished manuscript, 2019).

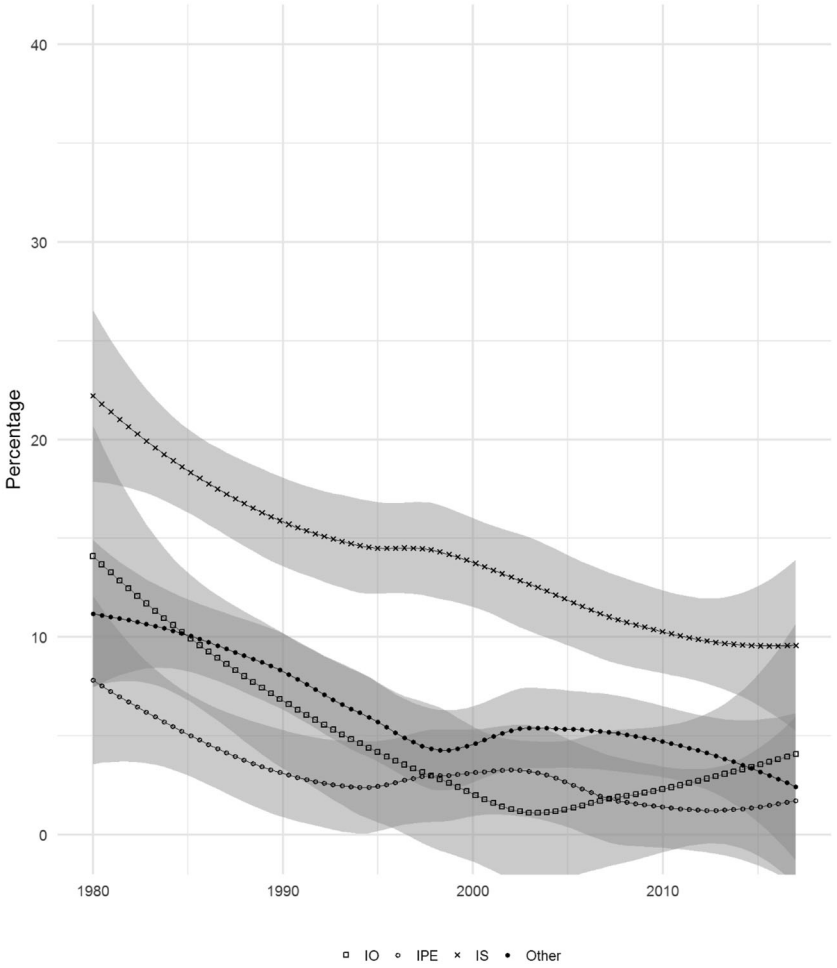

Figure 15. Issue area by prescriptive articles, 1980–2017.

compared to 43.2 percent of IPE scholars and 41 percent of IO scholars (Figure 9).[48]

Second, the results are more mixed if we look at whether articles published between 1980 and 2017 contain explicit policy recommendations.[49] Among the IR subfields, international security has the highest percentage (13 percent) of articles that include policy recommendations. By comparison, articles outside the security subfield contain prescriptions only 5.3

[48]At the same time, fewer security scholars than IPE or IO scholars claim policy analysis as their primary method. See Figure 8 above.

[49]An article is only coded as having a policy prescription if there is an explicit recommendation to national and/or international policymakers. "The fact that a model has implications that are relevant for policymakers does not count as a policy prescription. A throwaway line in the conclusion does not qualify as a policy prescription." Maliniak et al., *TRIP Codebook*, 13.

percent of the time. But as Figure 15 shows, the percentage of articles that contain policy prescriptions is small and declining over time.

Third, we expect work that focuses on strategically important regions to be more relevant to policymakers' work than articles that examine less strategically important areas. The 2017 TRIP faculty survey asked respondents, which "area of the world do you consider to be of greatest strategic importance to [respondent country] today?" Response options included nineteen world regions and correspond to the areas of the world TRIP researchers used to code the empirical content of journal articles. By far, the largest percentages of respondents indicated they believed that East Asia (37.5 percent), Western Europe (18.4 percent), and the Middle East and North Africa (13 percent) were the most strategically important regions to the respondent's country today. This ranking of the top three most important regions holds across the major IR subfields. Nevertheless, security scholars do not study the regions of the world they identify as important for policy reasons. When asked what region would be the most strategically important to the respondent's country in 20 years, 58 percent of scholars of international security (like IR scholars more generally) identified East Asia. But only 9.8 percent of security specialists report that East Asia is the main region they study. By comparison, 12.1 percent of IPE scholars and 5.1 percent of IO specialists report that their main region of study is East Asia.

Fourth, the TRIP Journal Article Database includes a variable that measures whether each article uses evidence from the ten years immediately prior to publication. Admittedly, this is an imperfect measure of policy relevance, or even contemporaneousness, of an article's content. An article written in 2013 about 9/11 would not be considered contemporary, for example, whereas an article that uses data from 1500 to 2012 would be. Nevertheless, as one of several measures of the usefulness of scholarship to policy practitioners, the timing of articles' data can provide valuable information. Security articles in the top twelve journals are less contemporary in their empirical focus than articles in the nonsecurity subfields. Fifty-nine percent of security articles use contemporary data, compared to 73.8 percent for IO and 76.8 percent for IPE.

Finally, security scholars are more likely to consult for the government than are IR scholars who teach and do research in other IR subfields. In the 2017 TRIP Faculty Survey, 40.7 percent of security respondents reported that they had consulted for their government in the previous two years, compared to less than 20 percent of IPE and IO scholars. Security scholars also were more likely to consult for think tanks or private foundations, while respondents in other IR subfields were more likely to have consulted for international or nongovernmental organizations.

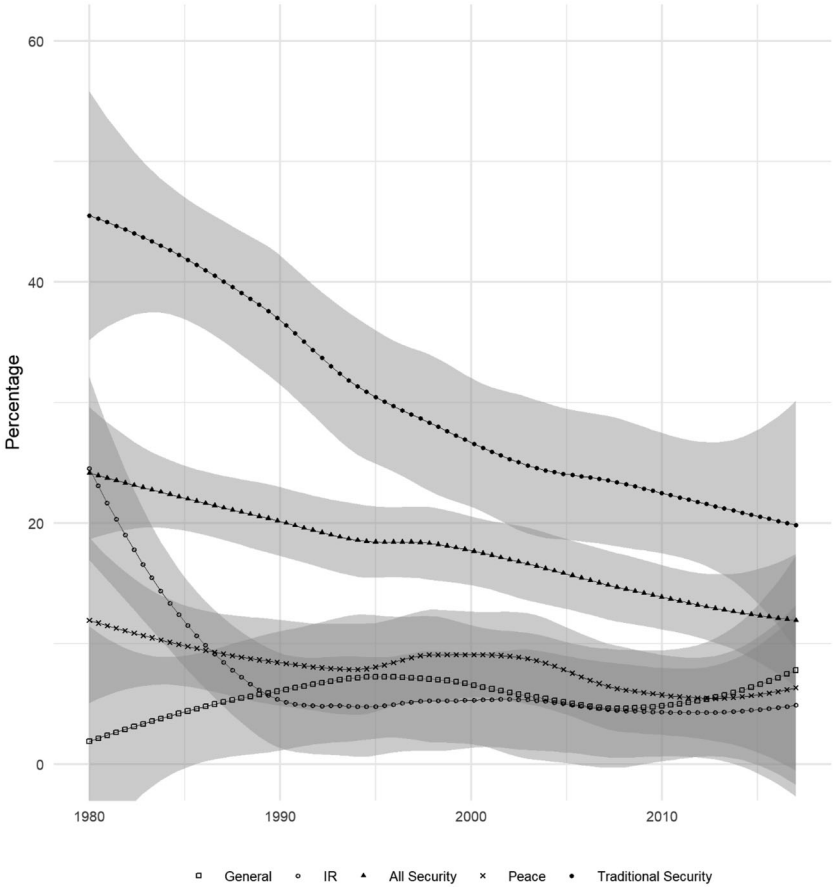

Figure 16. Policy prescriptions in security articles by journal type, 1980–2017.

By many measures, then, the conventional wisdom is correct: security is the most policy-relevant subfield of IR. Our data suggest, however, that much of the impression within the discipline that security is a policy-relevant field, and the data showing that security articles contain more specific policy prescriptions than other publications may be driven by trends in a single journal, *International Security*.

In general, we find articles in security journals are more likely to contain policy prescriptions than articles, in general, political science and IR field journals. Like these other journal types, as Figure 16 demonstrates, security journals have exhibited a steady decline in the percentage of published articles that include policy prescriptions. Indeed, the major differences across the security studies subfield seem to manifest between the traditional security journals, *International Security* and *Security Studies*, on the one hand, and the peace science, IR field, and general political science journals, on the other. We know, for instance, that 72.8 percent of all security articles published between 1980 and 2017 using policy analysis were

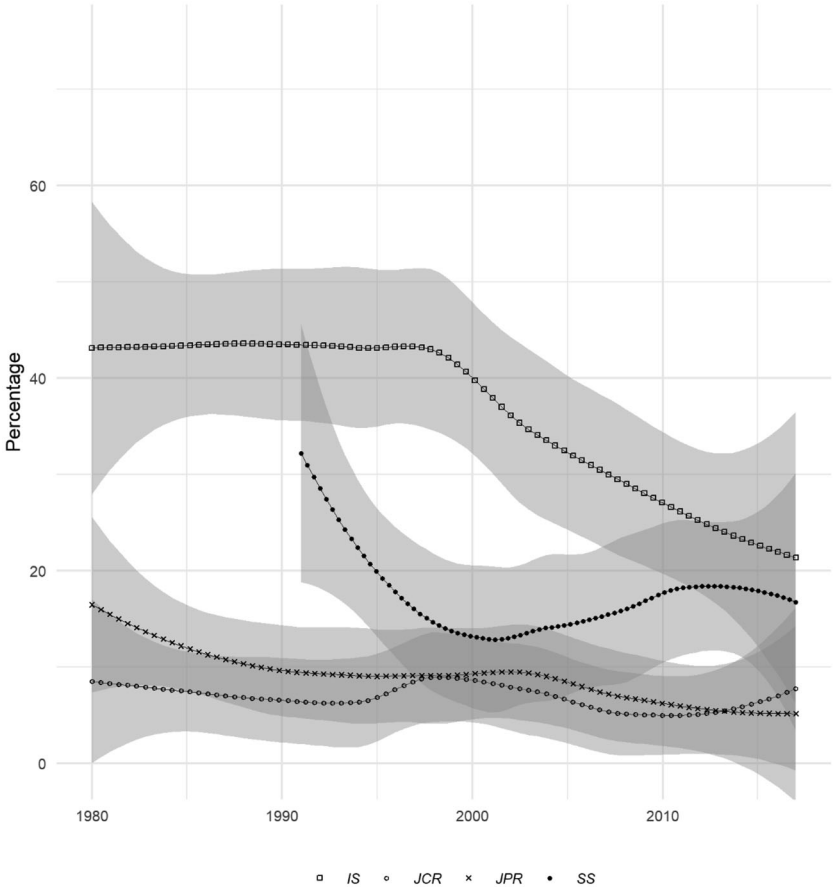

Figure 17. Policy prescriptions in security articles by journal, 1980–2017.

published in the two traditional security journals in our study. If we look only at the most recent ten years represented in the data, *International Security* and *Security Studies* have a virtual monopoly on the publication of security-focused policy analysis—97 percent of such articles were published in these two journals. As Figure 16 shows, moreover, the general political science, IR field, and peace studies journals consistently publish few articles that contain specific policy prescriptions. Between 1980 and 2017, less than 7 percent of security articles in those journals contained specific policy advice, compared to 27.9 percent of articles in the traditional security journals.

On closer inspection, however, we see that the difference between the security journals and the rest of the field is driven by a single journal, *International Security*, which emphasizes policy relevance far more than does any other journal or set of journals. Thirty-five percent of security-related articles (as opposed to articles on other topics, such as IPE) published between 1980 and 2017 in *International Security* contain policy

prescriptions, compared to 17.4 percent of security articles in *Security Studies*. At the same time, however, the finding on the share of policy-relevant articles in *Security Studies* is deceptive. At the journal's creation in 1991, as Figure 17 illustrates, one-third of *Security Studies* articles contained explicit policy advice. This percentage declined rapidly, however, and after 1998, there were only five years in which more than 20 percent of articles were prescriptive. On average, still, *Security Studies* contained more policy-relevant articles than the peace science journals over this period. Policy-relevant articles in *International Security* have dropped sharply since the early 2000s, whereas those in *Security Studies* have risen, to the point that *Security Studies* published a higher percentage of prescriptive articles in 2013 and 2014 than *International Security*, though not in the most recent years covered by the database (2015–2017). Historically, *International Security* has defined the gap between the security subfield as it is represented in traditional security journals and the subfield as it is represented in other types of journals, including *JCR* and *JPR*.

Implications

Conventional wisdom holds that the security subfield is still largely dominated by men and the long shadow of its realist origins and that security remains more qualitative and policy relevant than other IR subfields. At the same time, observers increasingly disagree about trends in the security subfield. Where some see a field losing its relevance, others see a narrowing gap between the theory and practice of international security. Such divergent assessments may be explained by the fact that the top twelve IR journals publish security research that differs significantly on several key dimensions, including author gender, theory, methods, and policy relevance. In this sense, existing analyses of the subfield may be misleading—revealing only part of the metaphorical elephant explored by the blind men—if observers do not consider the marked variation in security research across journal types.

At first glance, our findings suggest similar trends across the three types of journals we study—general political science, IR field, and security journals. All three types exhibit a steady increase in the representation of female authors and the use of quantitative methods, although the security journals have been slower to make these shifts. Articles published in security journals follow a similar trend away from paradigmatic work as the other types of journals. The largest difference between security and other journals concerns the policy relevance of published articles; since 1980 security journals have consistently published significantly more articles with

specific prescriptions, although the trend line is steeply downward in all journals.

When examined more closely, however, our findings identify a significant difference between the traditional security journals, *Security Studies* and *International Security*, and the rest of the top journals, including the other two security-related journals, *JCR* and *JPR*. Indeed, much of what we think of as conventional wisdom about international security describes only the two traditional security journals. First, these two journals include fewer articles by women and have evidenced less change in women's representation than the other journal types. Second, realist research remains more prevalent on the pages of *International Security* and *Security Studies*, and these journals have been considerably slower to embrace nonparadigmatic scholarship. Third, in contrast with articles published in other types of journals, only a small percentage of articles in the traditional security journals use quantitative methods. There are some noteworthy exceptions to this general finding. A majority of articles published in *EJIR* from 2004 to 2017 are qualitative, and *APSR*, *WP*, and *International Organization* are more methodologically pluralist than the other general political science and IR field journals. Finally, the two traditional security journals are more policy prescriptive than the general political science, IR field, and peace science journals. This gap, however, is driven largely by *International Security*. Generally, 20 to 40 percent of articles published in that journal include explicit policy recommendations.[50] Although *Security Studies* also published more prescriptive articles over the same period than did journals in other categories, its emphasis on policy relevance varied and its policy recommendations dropped precipitously between 1998 and 2005.

This study gives us a better understanding of the security subfield, but it has several limitations. First, as we note above, we study security as a subfield of IR, which is itself a subfield of political science. Both "international relations" and "international/global security," however, also refer to broader, interdisciplinary fields of study. Surveying faculty and including journals from disciplines outside political science likely would produce different findings. Second, we examine articles published in the top twelve peer-reviewed journals. Our findings likely would differ if we expanded our analysis to include additional journals and/or books. To get a fuller picture of the security subfield, we might examine articles published in *Critical Studies on Security*, *Journal of Global Security Studies*, *Orbis*, *Security Dialogue*, *Strategic Studies*, *Survival*, and other journals. Third, citation patterns in the discipline provide another important measure of the academic practice of security. As every scholar knows, some articles get cited more

[50]The percentage of articles published between 1980 and 2017 that contained policy prescriptions dipped below 20 percent in only five years—1989, 1999, 2009, 2014, and 2016.

frequently than others and therefore become more important in defining the field. Future work might compare citation patterns with publication patterns across the dimensions explored here to round out our picture of the security subfield.[51] Finally, our research highlights the question of whether and to what extent the security subfield is divided along other important dimensions in addition to the four examined here. We might find, for example, that some journal types are more likely than others to publish articles that adopt a positivist rather than a nonpositivist or postpositivist epistemology. Some journals might value theoretical synthesis more than others. Similarly, scholars who publish in different types of journals may teach or have been trained at particular types of schools or in particular countries or regions. These topics represent important issues for future research. Nevertheless, despite this study's limitations, it represents the most comprehensive analysis available to date of the security field.

Our research also raises the question of why the security subfield has evolved so differently across the different journals. Although this issue is beyond the scope of our work, the patterns identified here suggest at least parts of an explanation. Journals are created at particular times with particular goals, and their content may reflect this context. We see differences, for example, even between the two traditional security journals. *International Security* was founded in 1976, and its first issue introduced "a combination of professional and policy-relevant articles that [its editors] believe will contribute to the analysis of particular security problems."[52] The first editors indicated their intent was "to balance articles of assessment and opinion with those of analysis and research."[53] In short, the journal was always intended to speak more directly to policy and policymakers than many of the other top IR journals. By comparison, *Security Studies* was founded in 1991. Its contributors often shared a similar theoretical commitment to those publishing in *International Security*, but the newer journal was intended from its founding to provide an outlet for more theoretical and qualitative historical, rather than applied, research.

It is not surprising that journals outside the security subfield evolved in different directions. *APSR*, *JOP*, and *AJPS* all represent regional or national political science associations in the United States, and, like these journals, *BJPS* also draws from, and must appeal to, contributors in all fields of political science. This may help explain why these journals have become more quantitative and less paradigmatic over time and have published more articles by women, as the broader discipline they represent has changed. As

[51]For the argument that women are systematically underrepresented in citations in the IR discipline more generally, see Maliniak, Powers, and Walter, "The Gender Citation Gap."
[52]Albert Carnesale and Michael Nacht, "Foreword," *International Security* 1, no. 1 (1976): 2.
[53]Ibid.

the field has professionalized and defined itself as a science of politics, moreover, it makes sense that these journals would include fewer explicit policy prescriptions compared to a security journal that attempts to address both policy and scholarly audiences.

Our most important contribution in this paper is a systematic and comprehensive description of the security subfield, specifically four aspects of that subfield that have received attention in previous works: gender representation, theory, methodology, and policy relevance. The purpose of the paper is not to make normative judgements about any of the issues studied. Certainly, we share a normative commitment to gender diversity in the field, and we believe methodological and theoretical diversity is necessary for the field to thrive. Some of us have been publicly associated with efforts to make the discipline more policy relevant. Rather than make judgments on the appropriate characteristics of published research, however, we seek to understand patterns in the study of international security, particularly differences across journals that can inform normative assessments of the field.

To the extent that greater representation of women, a range of quantitative and qualitative methods, theoretical variety, and enhanced policy relevance contribute to a more intellectually diverse discipline, the results we describe are troubling: there remains a significant corner of the security subfield which, while it is more open to policy-relevant research, is less likely to include quantitative analyses, nonparadigmatic articles, and work by women. This corner of the subfield is not a random journal or two at the periphery of the discipline; it involves the two core, traditional journals, *International Security* and *Security Studies*, which have been central to the study of international security since their founding.

Viewing the subfield through the lens of agent-structure literature suggests the process of encouraging greater diversity in these journals may be a slow one. As Colin Hay sums up the agent-structure issue, "Strategic action is the dialectical interplay of intentional and knowledgeable, yet structurally-embedded actors and the preconstituted structured contexts they inhabit. Actions occur within structured settings, yet actors have the potential (at least partially) to transform those structures through their actions."[54] Security scholars operate within the structured context of the security subfield. Those who seek wider audiences and professional success aim to publish their work in the leading outlets for IR research. These journals then set the "rules of the game" within which scholars must operate; that is, they control what types of research are most likely to be

[54]Colin Hay, "Structure and Agency," in *Theories and Methods in Political Science*, ed. David Marsh and Gerry Stoker (London: Macmillan, 1995), 200–1. See also David Dessler, "What's at Stake in the Agent-Structure Debate?" *International Organization* 43, no. 3 (1989): 441–73.

published.[55] Our findings suggest there may be a different set of rules for general political science, IR field research, and peace science journals. Authors whose research conforms to the conventional wisdom of the security discipline, for instance, may have a better chance of publishing in the leading traditional security journals, *International Security* and *Security Studies*.

Given the structure within which scholars operate—one with distinct sets of publishing rules across different journal types—there may be self-reinforcing processes that limit change or even produce greater divergence over time in security research, namely between *International Security* and *Security Studies*, on the one hand, and all other top IR journals, on the other. This may occur for any of several reasons. First, scholars perceive the rules of the journals and consciously or unconsciously adapt their work to fit those rules. Security scholars who want (or need for professional reasons) to publish in, say, the traditional security journals may be more inclined to situate their research in relation to the extant realist literature or include qualitative analysis. Second, scholars read and publish in journals that are proven outlets for their preferred theoretical or methodological approaches, sometimes to the exclusion of the other journal types. Those whose research is mainly quantitative, for example, may engage primarily with the general political science, IR field, and peace science journals, paying relatively less attention to literature in the traditional security journals. Third, journal editors' conscious or unconscious choices about what to publish may affect what scholars teach their students. Which journals academics tend to read is reflected in their syllabi. These patterns shape how we train graduate students in the security subfield, with important consequences for how we produce and reproduce our discipline.[56]

Our findings on the gender gap highlight how these trends have shaped and likely will continue to shape the security subfield. We know, for example, that women study different things, and they study them differently than men. Women place less emphasis on realism and more on transnational actors and nongovernmental organizations.[57] Similarly, although the study of security is overwhelmingly positivist, women are more likely

[55]For further discussion of how structure or "field" defines the "rules of the game" that consciously or unconsciously shape agents' behavior, see Didier Bigo, "Pierre Bourdieu and International Relations: Power of Practices, Practices of Power," *International Political Sociology* 5, no. 3 (2011): 225–58; and Pierre Bourdieu, *La distinction: Critique sociale du jugement* [*Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*], trans. Richard Nice (London: Routledge; Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1979).

[56]For the argument that many aspects of IR are socially constructed—that is, that agents' interests and identities are shaped by structures in world politics and that those structures, in turn, are shaped by agents' shared ideas—see, for example, Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[57]In the 2017 TRIP Faculty Survey, 30.4 percent of male IR scholars describe themselves as realist, compared with 19.7 percent of women, and 3.1 percent of men reported that they study transnational actors and nongovernmental organizations, compared with 9.1 of women.

to describe their epistemological approach as postpositivist or nonpositivist.[58] Finally, women are more likely to use qualitative research methods and at least somewhat less likely to use quantitative approaches.[59] When women are underrepresented on the faculty and in the pages of top journals, the topics and approaches they favor also will be underrepresented, perpetuating a gender gap.

Several recent efforts to highlight and redress the gap seem to be bearing fruit. Studies of the status of women in the profession through efforts by the International Studies Association (ISA)—including the Women's Caucus for International Studies, the Committee on the Status of Women, the Pay It Forward: Women Helping Women in International Relations mentoring program, and other initiatives—have brought attention to gender issues within that organization and the larger profession. ISA's International Security Studies Section Diversity Task Force is exploring women's role in the security field.[60] A number of journals have taken steps to increase the citation of articles by women and other underrepresented groups, and they encourage reviewers to consider the citation issue.[61] The data presented in this paper clearly indicate positive change in the representation of women in the security subfield. In the 2017 TRIP Faculty Survey, 30.8 percent of international/global security respondents were women, compared with only 19.7 percent in 2004, when the TRIP survey began. We observe a similar trend in the percentage of security articles published with a female author or coauthor: 35.8 percent of articles were authored or coauthored by women in 2017, compared with only 21.3 percent in 2004.

Despite these changes, there may be significant obstacles to dramatically increasing the representation of women in traditional security journals. In their contributions to the 2017 ISSF Policy Forum on the Gender Gap in Political Science, former *Security Studies* editors Desch and William C. Wohlforth admitted "the bottom line remains that the journal's content is male dominated"; former *International Security* editor Sean Lynn-Jones

[58]In the 2017 TRIP Faculty Survey, 64.5 percent of international security scholars described themselves as positivist, but men were more positivist (66.2 percent) than women (60.5 percent).

[59]The gender gap on methods has been closing over time, but female security scholars remain more likely to employ qualitative methods. In the 2017 Faculty Survey, 91.4 percent of women reported using qualitative approaches as their primary or secondary method, compared to 85.6 percent of men. Moreover, 45.7 percent of female scholars employ quantitative approaches, compared to 47.1 percent of male respondents.

[60]See Maria Rost Rublee, Emily B. Jackson, Eric Parajon, Susan Peterson, and Constance Duncombe, "Do You Feel Welcome? Gendered Experiences in International Security Studies," *Journal of Global Security Studies* 5, no. 1 (2020): 216–26.

[61]The *ISQ* editorial team notes in its guidelines that "before submitting a manuscript, authors should ensure that it conforms to the highest standards of proper attribution. We strongly recommend that authors check their references to ensure inclusion of authors from disadvantaged groups. ISQ is committed to ensuring that scholars receive appropriate intellectual acknowledgement regardless of race, gender, class, professional standing, or other categorical attributes." "*ISQ* Guidelines and Policies," https://academic.oup.com/isq/pages/General_Instructions.

acknowledged that "the percentage of women authors in *International Security* … has essentially leveled off in the past decade."[62] That these two journals remain significant outlets for realist research, and their reputation persists as publishing even higher proportions of realist research than they actually do, may explain part of the continued gender imbalance. Women may choose to submit to these journals less frequently because of concerns that rejection will slow the process of publishing their work. Simply encouraging women to submit articles may not be enough; increasing the representation of women authors might necessitate greater openness at these journals to a range of theoretical perspectives. As Goddard notes, "time is unlikely to remedy the gap on its own."[63]

Where should we go from here? First, the gatekeepers at the top journals should continue and redouble their efforts to change the rules shaping security scholars' behavior by issuing a call for—and publishing—more diverse research.[64] To the extent that existing rules are the result of unconscious choices, our research may help illuminate differences across general political science, IR field, traditional security, and peace science journals, enabling editors to consciously act against type. Second, as scholars publish more security research in a larger number of journals, the relative influence of some journals may decline, and this, in turn, may begin to shift our view of the field. The share of all security articles published in the traditional security journals declined between 1980 and 2017: the percentage of articles in *International Security* dropped from 30.6 to 11.9, and in *Security Studies* the percentage dropped from a high of 24.4 in 1995 to 11.9 in 2017. As an increasing share of articles is published in outlets outside the traditional security journals, we may see the conventional wisdom begin to erode. This change, in turn, could alter how we train graduate students, leading to a further evolution of the subfield.

Substantial differences across journals in the types of articles they publish means some of the conventional wisdom about the field may persist and reproduce itself. Researchers reading and publishing within one corner of the field may feel conscious or unconscious pressures to conform to a set of expectations, creating increasingly concentrated research silos. Such pressures within certain parts of the discipline may distort our picture of the field by hiding significant intellectual diversity outside the traditional security journals. How scholars of international security define our field and what we pass to the next generation of security scholars depend to a significant degree on which parts of the metaphorical elephant we investigate.

[62]Desch and Wohlforth, "Essay in ISSF Policy Forum"; Lynn-Jones, "Essay in ISSF Policy Forum."
[63]Goddard, "Introduction."
[64]For a discussion of recent efforts by the editors and editorial boards of *International Security* and *Security Studies* to increase representation by women, see Desch and Wohlforth, "Essay in ISSF Policy Forum"; Lynn-Jones, "Essay in ISSF Policy Forum."

This paper is an attempt to step back and take a good, if preliminary, look at the entire beast.

Acknowledgements

The authors thank Cullen Hendrix, Mike Tierney, Dennis Smith, two anonymous reviewers, and the editors of *Security Studies* for comments that dramatically improved the paper, and Vera Choo, Emily Jackson, Elizabeth Martin, and Hannah Petrie for their extensive data, research, and editorial assistance.

Funding

The authors also thank the Global Research Institute at William & Mary and the Carnegie Corporation of New York for financial support.