**Introduction. Surveying the Seascape**

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**Abstract**

This introductory chapter to the Handbook of Maritime Security frames the approach taken by its editors towards its compilation. The introduction demonstrates the various theoretical perspectives and the emerging norms and practices that comprise maritime security. It argues that maritime security has come of age, it has outgrown its origins in national security. Embedded within the politics of everyday survival, maritime security remains a project of good order at sea. The sort of order and the means of attaining it have increasingly become open to contestation. The introduction visits individual chapters in the Handbook and contextualises the contribution each is making.

**Keywords**: maritime security; security studies; ocean governance; law of the sea.

“The sea”, wrote the novelist Joseph Conrad, “has never been friendly to man. At most it has been the accomplice of human restlessness”.[[1]](#endnote-1) In many ways, this study of maritime security serves as the chronicle of that restlessness. The book you are holding surveys the turbulent, vast and complex political seascape of the early twenty-first century. It was conceived as a sort of testament to the coming-of-age of maritime security. It would, it was hoped, create a place where the disparate knowledges that came together to form maritime security could meet. It would document the new connections made and the openings that formed when scholars from distant disciplines gather around a problem. The book, in short, sought from the outset to mark the arrival of maritime security, to celebrate its achievements and exhibit the body of knowledge it has built. The restlessness within its pages refers therefore not only to the moil of politics at sea, but also to the scholarship it has generated. As we read these chapters, each surveying its own part of an impossibly difficult problem, we encounter the efforts of men and women who seek to give form, or pattern, to the unfriendly, unexplored, and anarchic oceanic world. The project of seeking this form is ultimately, the project of maritime security.

As editors, we sought to define this project loosely, or broadly, as some might see it. Our working understanding of the term includes any scholarship that transforms the way humankind can know and experience seaspace. This seemed natural to us - from the earliest utterings of the phrase just over a decade or two ago, maritime security has been susceptible to being an open-ended category. It was described as a “nebulous concept” (Feldt et al., 2013, p. 2), a “buzzword” (Bueger, 2015a, p. 1), an “amorphous” expression (Kraska &Pedrozo, 2013, p. 6), or a phrase difficult to define as “it comprehends so much” (Till, 1996, p. 5). Its root noun, the word maritime, is itself somewhat inscrutable. It’s entry in the Oxford English Dictionary (2019) offers a broad array of signifiers, referring to “bordering the sea, living near the sea-coast”, “relating to or dealing with matters of commerce or navigation on the sea”, “intended for service at sea”, or generally “pertaining to, arising from, or existing in the sea”. To further complicate matters, the word to which maritime is conjoined, security, is so contested that there is a sub-discipline of International Relations (IR) devoted to researching its meaning and evolving practice.

With such semantic genes, maritime security was bound to always be a term open to interpretation and contextualisation. Yet, we must also take into account the time into which maritime security was first coined. Security Studies throughout the Cold War had been a sub-discipline of International Relations that was indistinguishable from strategic studies, and for that matter geopolitics. It was state-centric, land locked, militaristic, and was an object of study primarily in the northern hemisphere. Even defined in terms of the survival of the state, the concept of security had a reputation for being “ambiguous” (Wolfers, 1952). In any event, the sea, lying beyond the state, relatively unexamined, symbolised the material embodiment of anarchy. As a state of nature, a site of power but not national security, the maritime sphere did not come under the scrutiny of strategic studies. One might readily cite Richard Ullman’s (1983) article titled, “Redefining Security” as the first attack on such reified constructions of security. Ullman’s study “proceeds from the assumption that defining national security merely (or even primarily) in military terms conveys a false image of reality” (p.129). His argument observed that firstly, the study of security focused only on military threats and ignored other dangers; and secondly, as an epistemology, it had led to a militarisation of international relations, which contributed to international insecurity. This was a period of revolutionary change in world politics. In 1987, a United Nations sub-organisation devoted to planning a post-Cold War peace dividend produced the Brundtland Report. “It’s study of environmental and development problems focused its attention on the areas of population, food security, the loss of species and genetic resources, energy, industry, and human settlements - realising that all of these are connected and cannot be treated in isolation one from another” (WCED, 1987, p. 27). A world no longer structured by the threat of nuclear annihilation would naturally release a range of insecurities long buried by the exigencies of national security.

Besides the reappearance of terms like food security, in the late 80s and 90s security swiftly became attached to the environment, to human rights, and to socio-economic development. Unlike the natural sciences, the social sciences rarely celebrate and publicise its achievements and discoveries. This is lamentable. One such achievement was the speed and rigour with which it analysed, explored, experimented with, and debated the semantic proliferation of security. The existential construction and the exceptional agency that had pervaded the term national security was imported into these formations of “new” security. Old school realists, to get a grip on the change, incorporated post positivist methods associated with the study of sociology and linguistics to IR (Buzan & Hansen, 2009). They concluded that the spread of security discourse could only lead to its omnipotence, at a cost to democracy and human rights. But others argued on the contrary, the change was emancipatory (Nunes, 2012). It promised a powerful channel through which long ignored legal, political and economic projects might be relayed. It is from this ether that the phrase maritime security emerged as a medium through which the political economic order of the sea would attract much needed attention. And yet, who first used the phrase remains an unsolved mystery.[[2]](#endnote-2)

Nonetheless, the most common narrative about the origin of maritime security emanates from a national security perspective. It posits that the phrase gained currency in the anxiety that gripped the United States following attacks perpetrated by *Al-Qaida* on 11th September 2001. In response the US government established the Department for Homeland Security as a global intelligence hub for a powerful network of policing agencies. It’s accelerated aim was to attain full domain awareness, which required real-time knowledge about everything that moved upon the planet, including the maritime domain. Homeland Security was particularly concerned about the incalculable number of container ships arriving daily to US ports. One of its first initiatives was to establish the Container Security Initiative, which dramatically altered the logistics and administration of containers shipping throughout the world. In the meantime, *via* NATO, a naval force was sent to the Mediterranean to secure it against the perceived threat of maritime terrorism. Quickly, this mission shifted to become one that policed the sea against human traffickers. Eventually, it would become an anti-piracy mission.

Since then, several regulatory and policy measures have been adopted at the national, regional, and international levels to improve the security of vessels at sea. While maritime terrorism was a rare occurrence, the perils posed by ship hijacking, weapon smuggling, and nuclear, biological and chemical attacks were suddenly brought into international consciousness. By the mid-2000s, a new international maritime security regime was set in place, underpinned by a broad *corpus* of regulations dealing with various aspects of safety and security in ports and at sea, notably featuring the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code, the amended Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Convention, and the revised Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation (SUA Convention).

From this perspective the upsurge in piracy off the coast of Somalia in 2008 provided maritime security its coveted global prominence and political urgency. Piracy became an exceptional matter for the global economy due to the strategic importance of the Gulf of Aden region: nearly 20,000 vessels, carrying as much as 12 percent of the world’s total oil supply, transit through this critical maritime route each year (Kraska &Wilson, 2011). These developments saw a heavy engagement of a broad constellation of governments, regional organisations and private entities in naval operations, information sharing and cooperation, as well as follow-up capacity-building programs both in Somalia and neighbouring states (Bosilca & Riddervold, 2018). Efforts to contain and arrest piracy also led to innovative maritime security governance forums and policy instruments in the region, such as the Contact Group for Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, the Shared Awareness and Deconfliction mechanism, and the Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor (Jacobsen & Larsen, 2019).

The decline in Somali piracy after 2012 gave way to other pressing developments at sea. Russia’s annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in 2014 and the subsequent escalations between Russian border guards and the Ukrainian navy in the Kerch Strait signalled a re-emergence of the great power politics agenda and a growing relevance of maritime “hybrid” warfare. In the global south, in the meantime, China has continued to actively pursue its claims of sovereignty in the contested waters of the South China Sea. As a direct causation of global warming, a growing number of maritime powers have now built up their military presence in the Arctic.

This narrative, it must be repeated, is perspectival. It tells one version of the origin of maritime security. A different perspective would observe that this narrative merely renames a very long custom of seignorial powers seeking to enforce their political, military and legal hegemony over oceanic space. Naval historians would see very little that is novel in the series of encounters and alliances that are forming under this version of maritime security’s development. Crucially, its claim to novelty omits the very long intellectual history of order construction at sea. The first great period in modern political writing about the sea concerned debates in Europe between the great legal and strategic minds of the 16th and 17th century about its annexation, through *imperium* or *dominium*, and the possibility of creating rational rules to govern military and civilian maritime traffic. Some of the jurists who contributed their learned opinion even used the language of security. William Wellwood, for instance, writing in his *Abridgement of Sea Lawes* in 1613 explicitly referred to fishermen safety and food security in an argument that sought for sovereign stewardship of the maritime space around Britain. Van Bynkershoek (1930), writing in 1737, sought to create buffer zones at sea that would supplement coastal land defences and keep neutral ports immune from war at sea (Ryan, 2019)

Moreover, in the twentieth century, the effects of the three Conventions on the Law of the Sea are not included in the national security perspective on maritime security. The third United Nations Conventions on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS III) for instance resulted in the High Seas proximate to coastal states and islands being zoned and sub-zoned in order to bring a global rules-based system to the management of the maritime space, on the surface, and on the seabed. The scientific, diplomatic, and legal issues that arose during this Conventions and its precursors reawakened political scientists and legal scholars to the problems of good order and security at sea, resulting in an unprecedented number of publications (Wenk, 1972; Prescott, 1975; Sanger, 1986). The Conventions additionally saw pollution and weapons of mass destruction added to the objects of security at sea that had occupied the minds of 16th and 17th century European scholars; fishing rights, conservation, foreign vessels and warships, piracy, and migration (Ryan, 2019).

UNCLOS III dramatically reanimated scholarship on the challenges of imposing a rational legal order at sea. The legal perspective addresses phenomena as diverse as piracy, hijacking, and armed robbery (Kulyk, 2016); military uses of the sea (Ronzitti, 2016); maritime terrorism (Hamza, 2016); ship and port security (Kraska, 2016); smuggling and trafficking in arms, drugs, and persons (Papastavridis, 2016; Mallia, 2016); the legal regime applicable to people at sea such as seafarers, pirates, stowaways, migrants and refugees (Papanicolopulu, 2018); marine pollution and environmental protection (Argüello, 2020; Harisson, 2017); and large scale illegal fishing (Palma et al., 2010). Recently, the interest of international law scholars in maritime security has gained momentum, following the widespread media attention and growing number of cases before international courts concerning topics such as piracy and migration by sea. A prolific body of literature has examined, for instance, the international legal framework for countering piracy (Kraska, 2011), the legal constraints on the use of force against pirates (Proelss, 2011; Murdoch & Guilfoyle, 2013), as well as the international human rights law underpinning the arrest, detention, and transfer of suspected pirates (Geiss & Petrig, 2011; Petrig, 2014). At the same time maritime security has come to define the practices of coastal communities seeking to protect their traditional livelihoods and cultural heritage. For their part, environmentalists drew on the phrase as a means to conserve the oceanic flora and fauna (Germond, 2015, p. 15). Works addressing the migration and refugee crisis have focused on the tensions between security concerns and human rights law obligations (Klein, 2014), the securitisation, militarisation, and criminalisation of international responses (Guilfoyle, 2014), or the contradictions between migration control policies and the application of international law (Mann, 2017). A discrete body of work on maritime security law has emerged as a “hybrid” subspecialty of international law in the borderland between various areas of legal studies (Kraska & Pedrozo, 2013, p. 2). This *corpus* has been growing since UNCLOS, clarifying and expanding duties in safety of life and search and rescue conventions, refugee law, human rights law, labour law, criminal law, and environmental law.

Too often the politics of the sea written by scholars from the global north focuses on the restless exploits of Europeans and North Americans. Maritime security, as a narrative that arises from 9/11, is often found to be guilty of this. It needs to be said then, that long before *Al Qaida*, it was newly decolonised states in the 1960’s that advocated the most vociferously for UNCLOS III in the first place. Postcolonial states had been arguing from protections against commercial and military incursions by powerful northern Atlantic littoral states for decades (Ryan 2013) South American and East African states, in particular, were supportive of a regime that extended sovereign powers to protect their coastal waters and resources. A postcolonial narrative on maritime security can demonstrate how old colonial tensions resurface in the way new concepts like maritime security are interpreted and practiced. In important studies of the long history of efforts in Asia, South America and on the African continent to shape their proximate seas undertaken on the South China Sea (Odgaard, 2002), the Indian Ocean (Bateman, 2016), the Gulf of Guinea (Ali, 2015), the Black Sea (Sanders, 2009), or the South Atlantic (Vaz, 2015), maritime security attains an attachment to postcolonial political economy. China was one of the first states to transform its coastal seas into a “managed” blue economy. Japan has always been only too aware of the destructive power of the sea itself. Unlike European states, Japan’s problematic of order at sea invokes tsunamis, earthquakes and the powerlessness of humankind in the face of climatic forces. Thus, there are different trajectories available to maritime security and these add to an origin story that foregrounds pollution, global warming, fish stock levels, transnational crime, maritime commerce, coastal community cultures and livelihoods, and many other everyday governance issues (Germond, 2015; Bueger, 2015a; Bueger & Edmunds, 2017; Bennett et al., 2018). The defining aspect of the discourse associated with security governance practices is that it spreads our understanding of maritime security beyond rigid associations with war or legal regimes towards a more liquid rationale of risk management (Ryan, 2019). Security at sea can present us with a complex environment in which conventional and non-state maritime actors interact in non-linear configurations, decentralised structures, and informal networks to manage a general condition of global turbulence. Bueger and Edmunds (2017) have suggested that maritime security comprises four characteristics – it’s interconnected nature; its transnationality; its liminality and its national and institutional cross-jurisdictionality. Political geographers, and sympathetic scholars from IR, adopt a spatial approach to maritime security to describe ocean space segmented into fungible domains, mapped according to routes and interests, and vigilantly patrolled. Security arises where humans strive to make seaspace more homogenous, tangible, and amenable to their interests (Ryan, 2015; Lambach, 2021; Peters 2020)

**The Structure of the Handbook**

The most difficult question facing us as editors was how we were to organise, to curate even, the diversity of opinions that lay claim to the phrase maritime security? Reading the submissions, it became clear to us they were divisible into studies that describe the various *perspectives* that have emanated from maritime security, and studies that described the *practices and norms* that are emerging around it. We therefore decided to lightly partition our framing of maritime security into these two broad sections, the first which contains perspectives or approaches, and the second which is more empirical and contains the everyday politics of good order at sea. From conversations that unfold between authors within, and between, these sections, the Handbook presents its survey of the early twenty-first century global seascape.

***Section One – Perspectives***

Contributors to the first section, on *perspectives*, demonstrate the variety of approaches available in the study of maritime security. Each perspective reveals itself to be different, yet connected, to other perspectives. From different epistemological positions we are presented with a range of vantage points, each with its own version of maritime security. Although different expectations arise, there is agreement among nearly all the authors that the politics of the sea holds transformative possibilities. There is also agreement that ultimately what is at stake in maritime security is the future of planetary capitalism as it endures the dramatic effects of climate change, the rise of China, pandemics and chasmic global inequalities in wealth. All authors, from every perspective, also agree that the sea is at the centre of this turbulence. The sea is *the* political problem of the twenty-first century.

Perhaps, however we suffer from presentism with regards to the sea, so long overlooked by the field of IR. Maybe, the sea has always been at the centre of our politics? Certainly, Benjamin de Carvalho and Halvard Leira, in the opening chapter of the Handbook, would agree. Their chapter points to the pivotal role played by the sea in the evolution of European modernity. In what is certainly a theme running throughout numerous chapters, they show how public and private interests at sea together shaped the politics of land. Until the nineteenth century, de Carvalho and Leira observe, the seapower produced by these hybrid interests shaped the formation of states and empires. In chapter two, taking a near-historical perspective, Barry J. Ryan demonstrates how contemporary tension and cooperation between state and non-state actors at sea is embodied in the practices and norms we refer to as maritime security. Employing assemblage theory, and advocating a radically pluralist, critical epistemology, he traces a novel genesis for maritime security. It is born, he argues, on the night of 10th July 1985, in Auckland harbour, at 23h45, when the Greenpeace flagship, the Rainbow Warrior was bombed. This terrorist attack by a state on a non-state actor reveals tensions in the 1980s that would eventually shape the politics forming around the post-Cold War oceanic environment.

Geoffrey Till, in chapter three pursues the role of the state at sea, and examines the influence played by maritime security on traditional naval conceptions of seaspace. Till concurs to a certain extent with Ryan in the previous chapter. Both agree that maritime security has created novel maritime actors and spaces. Till is a classical realist and, as such, is dubious about the transformative potential of maritime security. Ultimately, according to him, “cooperation in Maritime Security, simply becomes another arena in which interstate competition is conducted” (Till 2022, p. x). His conclusion continues through into chapter four, from the vantage point of Ian Speller, who takes a geopolitical perspective. A geopolitical perspective sees maritime security as an element of a broader field of military action known as maritime strategy. His chapter places new seagoing practices and actors into a historical geostrategic context. For Speller, maritime security has altered traditional naval roles at sea by creating a “contested joint operating space” (Speller 2022, p.x). It has evolved maritime strategy and it has revolutionised maritime surveillance technologies. But for Speller, as for Till, the state will forever dominate the sea.

The author of chapter five begs to differ. Rafael García Pérez is also aware of the ascendent position that seignorial navies enjoy in maritime space. In a chapter that seeks to identify and defend the liberalism that underwrites the project of maritime security, García Pérez argues that it represents a modern project. It is a project which seeks to govern maritime space, rather than allow it to be used as a chessboard for great power competition. Military competition will endure, but it will increasingly be deployed for policing purposes, to enforce international law through the international institutions of maritime security. Nonetheless, for so long as the persistence of sovereignty remains the “organising principle of maritime space”, there will also persist “fundamental disagreements about the core content of an assumed public security good”, according to James Sperling’s incisive account of maritime governance in chapter six (2022, p.x). Whereas Sperling is led to conclude lamentably that the regime of maritime governance remains embryonic, Joanna Mossop’s legal perspective, in chapter seven, is more optimistic. For Mossop, UNCLOS is the legal instrument which holds the greatest possibility to bring governance to bear on the maritime sphere. As the foundation of governance, maritime law is evolving rapidly around maritime security practices. She argues that maritime security law has made two significant contributions to the project of governing the sea, ‘reducing inter-state conflict in relation to maritime issues; and ‘a search for clear jurisdictional principles to allow states to respond to threats by non-state actors’ (Mossop 2022, p.x)

Juha A.Vuori, in chapter eight, sets out a case for the constructivist perspective on maritime security. The constructivist methodology examines language to isolate and analyse the political import of emerging norms in global society. Vuori views maritime security as a security continuum, where a feeling of general unease or tension bundles together a number of disparate problems and creates a linguistic field effect. Such is how, according to Vuori, piracy, terrorism, organised crime and migration are contrived together into one linguistic field in the norms that constitute maritime security. This occurred in the wake of an unease that circulated in the post-Cold War period, when the neat distinction between internal and external security was broken-down by seismic shifts in global political economy. Vuori calls for the desecuritisation of the maritime sphere, so that problems of order at sea might be taken from security discourse and returned to the realm of “normal” politics. One way to accomplish this might very well be to acknowledge that the sea has, since time immemorial, been surveyed from the perspective of the male gaze. In chapter nine, Jane Freedman takes on the prevailing gendered construction of the sea, which she argues has seeped into the practices and norms of maritime security. In a harrowing account, she reveals the hidden violence experienced by women on their migratory journey across the Mediterranean. Freedman is also able to reveal gendered violence among pirate communities in Somalia to show that the referent object of maritime security ought to be the individual. And further, she insists, the project of good order at sea, if it is to be successful, needs to realise, “that these individuals are located within gendered social structures and hierarchies, which will in turn influence the ways in which they experience these security issues” (Freedman 2022, p. xx). Jessica Larsen, in chapter ten, proffers a methodology tailored to incorporate the perspective of human security and gender revealed by Jane Freedman. Larsen gives us the anthropological and ethnographic perspective to maritime security. Constructivist perspectives open maritime security to new voices, stories, and meanings. Ethnography equivalates state with non-state, and foregrounds community and human relationships as sources of knowledge. The ethnographic perspective goes beyond language and examines the new norms of activity that emerge from maritime security. Larsen’s method observes and records the everyday “saying and doing, and the planning and producing” (Larsen 2022, p. x) that constitutes the practice of securing the sea. Hers is an argument for a cosmopolitan construction of maritime security, one that keeps the field open-ended and vibrant, attached to human needs and fears. Her chapter provides a technique to discover new understandings of security in the daily routines of men and women whose lives shape, and are shaped by, the contours of maritime politics.

How should a constructivist scholar, or an ethnographer, or anyone seeking to expand our understanding of the politics of the sea, address the prevailing positivist epistemology that pervades the study of maritime security? This is the question posed by Katja Lindskov Jacobsen, in chapter eleven. Drawing upon the case study of piracy statistics in the Gulf of Guinea, Jacobsen’s critique exposes how “numbers serve as framing devices, contributing to the prioritisation of some issues over others” (Lindskov Jacobsen 2022, p. x). Numbers, she insists, are not apolitical, purely technical measuring devices; they are only the beginning of further political analysis that needs to examine the nuance and vitality of local relationships concealed within the universalism of incident reporting. The ethnographic perspective offered by Larsen and Jacobsen illustrate how maritime security is a local, historical and, above all, cultural phenomenon in the global south. Claire Sutherland, in chapter twelve, agrees. She demonstrates another method to read the political cultures that shape our understanding of maritime security. Hers is a cultural representation perspective. The material aesthetics of the sea, she observes, is replete with the political history that constructs and maintains our notion of seaspace. Focusing on the materiality of sea culture, Sutherland’s study demonstrates another dimension to the pragmatic constructivist perspective that is stretching and deepening our access to the ever-unfolding meanings of maritime security.

***Section Two – Practices and Norms***

In the second section of the Handbook we collated chapters that discuss the emerging *practices and norms* of maritime security, studies that enquire into how maritime security has shaped and, is shaped by, contemporary oceanic politics. In this section, scholars utilise maritime security to make sense of, and to simultaneously present their version of good order to the agitated politics of seaspace. Each chapter surveys a critical aspect of maritime security. Simply put, each chapter asks how we imagine oceanic order can come about, for whom that order serves, and what is required to make it happen. Moreover, they ask how humanity can itself institutionalise the ambiguity, the liquidity, and the power of the sea. The sea as it lifts and pours and lives, is materially antithetical to any mode of good order that emanates from a specifically land-based perspective. Maritime security is a mode of politics unto itself.

This point is reinforced by Anna Petrig in chapter thirteen, where she details the extraordinary absence of human rights at sea. Petrig argues that maritime security is evolving a constabulary approach to order that is drawing on the traditional exceptionality of seaspace to skirt international human rights law. Nowhere is this more evident than in what Mbembe (2019) might call the “necropolitics” of human migration. Susana Ferreira, in chapter fourteen argues that migration poses a problem for the traditional rubric of security which can only be overcome by reconceptualising security around individual human rights and needs. Concurring with Petrig, she argues that territorial-based responses that use the language and practices of invasion, control and repulsion to address this humanitarian crisis are failing. Ferreira advocates instead for a sea-based form of human security, that draws upon, and develops, international maritime legal instruments to protect lives at sea.

Robert McCabe, in chapter fifteen, examines the way a distinctly sea-based form of constabulary cooperation formed around the phenomena classified under the rubric of maritime piracy. McCabe, together with Joshua Tallis, in chapter sixteen, perceives maritime security as a response to “blue” criminality. Tallis’s chapter explores the various manifestation of maritime terrorism and its linkages to organised crime. Maritime terrorism, in terms of its strategic aims and operational considerations differs substantially from the practices associated with terrorist groups on land and requires a specifically maritime-led response. Maritime security in this sense is a process of identifying sea-based vulnerabilities to global political economy, Rupert Herbert-Burns reports in chapter seventeen on the maritime energy sector. Oil, gas and petroleum shipping are common victims of the types of “blue” criminality documented by McCabe and Tallis, according to Herbert-Burns. The catastrophic environmental consequences of such attacks, the casualties, the commercial loss, and the interstate tensions they produce, places this sector into the highest category of risk for the future of maritime security. In their contribution, Siraj Shaikh, Jeptoo Kipkech and Kristen Kuhn, in chapter eighteen, outline how the future of maritime security will be increasingly defined around cyber security. Cyber-attacks obviate traditional weaponry used to perpetrate maritime crime, while extending and accentuating existing forms of martial power. In an open domain such as the sea there has always been a dependence on technology. The authors argue that the more complex this technology becomes, the more pressing the need to incorporate cyber security as a dimension of maritime domain awareness.

In chapter nineteen, Lisa Otto introduces the structural factors that give rise to the blue crimes described in previous chapters. Maritime insecurity, for Otto, arises from the poor governance of natural resources ashore. In an examination of maritime insecurity in Nigerian waters, she portrays the interconnection between land and sea as a complex and expanding embodiment of criminality thriving in a field of corporate greed, extreme poverty, social exclusion, radical ideology and profound corruption. Cornelia E. Nauen and Simona T. Boschetti, in chapter twenty, examine illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing from a similar blue crime perspective. Nauen and Boschetti point to a nexus of poverty, food insecurity, gender discrimination and weak governance to account for illegal fishing practices. They conclude that a two-pronged, land-sea, approach is required to create a more integrated and inclusive form of maritime security; the provision of health, education and other social services; and a more robust enforcement of maritime laws by littoral states.

In chapter twenty-one, Christian Bouchard explores the problems faced by small island developing states in attaining a measure of maritime security. Facing the same problems as larger littoral states, small islands aresurrounded by vast maritime domains, and often lack the capacity to address them. Generally, the more miltiary-inclined conceptualisation of maritime security is irrelevant to these states for whom, as Bouchard notes, the sea is more immediately the source of economic and societal well-being. The survival of these states is not only threatened by man-made climate change, but it is also depenedent upon their capacity to “participate in comprehensive regional maritime security frameworks”. Anja Menzel, in chapter twenty-two, delves deeper into the economic aspect of maritime security with the rise of blue economies. For Menzel, as for Bouchard, Otto, Nauen and Boschetti, socio-economic maritime development is in itself a mode of security, albeit one that is vulnerable to external shocks. Global warming is certainly increasing the potency of these shocks. Moreover, Menzel admits, blue economies often suffer from similar short-termism and social exclusion as their counterparts on land. Her conclusion echoes what many commentators in this Handbook have been observing; the oceans are an integrated space where good order is only possible with coordination and cooperation between diverse security and economic agents.

Eliseu Carbonell, in chapter twenty-three, adds further to a pluralist understanding of maritime security by apprehending it through a materialist perspective. In a further application of Claire Sutherland’s visual and repsentational epistemology in chapter twelve, Carbonell introduces the importance of cultural heritage to the problem of good order at sea. He concludes that heritage is vital for the rejuvenation of communal identities in the face of globalisation. Identity forms a bond around coastal socieities, which prevents them from fragmentation. Securing heritage therefore, seen in its most instrumentalist light, is a means towards supporting resilient coastal communities with a stakehold in good order at sea. It is a quite convincing argument.

Chapter twenty-four, by Brendan Flynn also resonates with themes found in section one of the Handbook. Flynn’s study of “hybrid actorness” at sea provides the reader with a contemporary empirical study of the intensity of relations between state and non-state actors at sea. Leira and de de Carvalho in chapter one, Ryan in chapter two, and Till in chapter three, to mention a few, all observed that maritime security is shaped and maintained by relations between state and non-state actors. Flynn’s study draws on rich examples to demonstrate the continuity of constant interaction between naval and non-governmental actors; sometimes in rivalry, sometimes in conflict and other times in cooperation. Eugenio Cusumano and Stefanno Ruza, in chapter twenty five, zoom-in on one of the most pressing issues that arise when non-state actors work with state actors. A uniquely maritime legal disparity arises where small flag states, such as Panama, with whom a high percentage of vessels are registered, have neither the military capacity nor the diplomatic leverage to secure their fleet. In response, private military contractors hired to fill this gap, initially to combat piracy, have since embedded themselves as a new norm in maritime security, even on board the ships of militarily powerful states. The privatisation of force at sea was an issue in the time of Hugo Grotius, whose rise to fame occurred while defending violence perpetrated by the Dutch East India Company upon a Portuguese carrack (Ryan 2013). However, its contemporary manifestation promises to dramatically alter the nature of maritime security, according to Cusumano and Ruza.

The final five chapters in the Handbook describe new norms and practices in maritime security from a regional point of view. In chapter twenty-six, Gavin E. L. Hall and Mark Webber outline NATO’s efforts to exert its influence over the increasingly contested space in the North Atlantic. In chapter twenty-seven, Érico Esteves Duarte’s study of the South Atlantic describes a maritime region that is profoundly insecure. Michela Ceccorulli, in chapter twenty-eight, analyses the Mediterranean as a maritime region filled with tensions. She points to the tensions between environmental and human security phenomena and militarised statist responses to external actor’s incursions to the region, refugees fleeing conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa and energy disputes. In chapter twenty-nine, Kwa Chong Guan and Collin Koh, survey maritime security in southeast Asia. Taking a postcolonial perspective, Guan and Koh demonstrate the centrality of maritime boundary marking to the causes of insecurity in the region. Chris Rahman, in chapter thirty, focusses on the South China Sea, which he defines as the world’s most politically contentious body of water. This representative sample of regional maritime politics is rounded off by Marianne Riddervold and Amund Botillen in chapter thirty-one. Physically emerging from global warming, this maritime region contains the potential to witness great power strategic cooperation in the field of maritime security, according to Riddervold and Botillen.

**The Seascape of Maritime Security**

This Handbook was complied during the Covid-19 pandemic. At the time of our writing this introduction, 4,55 million people have died of the virus. Each chapter was written under conditions of uncertainty, tragedy and lockdown. Indeed, we have decided to dedicate the book to Profesor Sam Bateman, a veteran of oceanic politics, and Vale Commodore Professor at the University of Wollongong, Australia. Professor Bateman was preparing a chapter for this Handbook when he died in October 2020.

While the effects of the pandemic on global politics are still undecided, one can say with a measure of certaintly that it has transformed humanity’s understanding of threat. It has enlarged our sense of insecurity. A virus makes military power obsolete. It demands every community to act in concert against an existential danger which thrives in the closeness of human life. Undoubteldy, it has made us rethink the very nature of security. Many of the authors in the Handbook, writing during this historical caesura in the flow of global political economy, are preparing us for a world where security is a far more complex aspiration than traditionally conceived. At sea, threats come from all directions. The unpredictability of the climatic conditions, the degree of visibility, the pitch and roll of wave, and even the seaworthniess of the craft constitute a security threat as much as the potential for piracy or hijack. Covid-19 has revealed to us that insecurity falls upon us differentially. It is not a universal blanket of evil. It is relative experience and some are more vulnerable than others. Maritime security, as a scholarly pursuit and as a practical application of politics, has similarily outgrown it’s military origins and, in a mark of its becoming, has enmeshed itself within the politics of everyday survival. It remains a project of good order at sea, but the means to this order, the various way of defining it and the forms it may take have become open to contestation. Pressing upon our shores is an ocean embodying the effects of climatic changes that will determine the fate of life on the planet. It is the hope of the editors, that in compiling this Handbook, we contribute to security thinking that engages with the panoply of phenomena that face us as a life form. While it may never have been friendly to us, humankind in all its restlessness, must be more attentive than ever to the politics of sea.

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1. The full quote is more political. ‘For all that has been said of the love that certain natures (on shore) have professed to feel for it, for all the celebrations it had been the object of in prose and song, the sea has never been friendly to man. At most it has been the accomplice of human restlessness, and playing the part of dangerous abettor of worldwide ambitions’ (Conrad, 1906, p. 226-227). [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. We can trace to this time the first use of the term ‘maritime security’, coined by Michael Pugh (1994) in a book that argued the UN needed to create a maritime peacekeeping naval force. However, Pugh’s conception of the term differs substantially from its contemporary usage. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)