

SECURITIZATION OF ENERGY THROUGH THE LENSES OF COPENHAGEN SCHOOL¹

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Paper prepared for the 2013 Orlando International Conference, 21-23 March, 2013, West East Institute, Orlando/USA.

ABSTRACT

'Security' is considered one of the most significant concepts within International Relations (IR) studies, prompting much serious debate around it. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, broad literature has emerged on the concept of security and the field of Security Studies. New definitions of security emerged following the Cold War, and the debates moved beyond military issues through to other fields such as economic, environmental and societal issues. In this context, the theory of securitization, which is contributed to the IR literature by the Copenhagen School as a mode of analyzing security processes, has also emerged within Security Studies. The theory represents a new and alternative approach applied by many scholars in their analysis of security politics in all sectors. It fundamentally analyses how an issue is brought up to the level of security by the speech act, namely explaining how issues are securitized, and what methods are involved.

Within such a framework, this paper is dedicated to discussing the security approach of the Copenhagen School (CS), and particularly the theory of securitization, in order to form a theoretical framework to analyze the issue of energy securitization. With the security approach of the School, the framework enables analyzing the issue of energy (particularly oil and natural gas) through the perspective of securitization, and to discuss how the issue of energy has moved into security issues. In defining the concept of securitization, the evolution of Security Studies and the meaning of 'security' in general will be addressed as a first step. At the end of this paper, the relationship of energy within the theory of securitization will be highlighted.

Keywords: Security Studies, Copenhagen School, Securitization Theory, Energy Security.

1. Evolution of Security Studies and Concept of Security

'Security' is one of the most fundamental and evolving concepts within IR literature, representing a crucial term both for state policy makers and society. Parallel to that, Security Studies is a relatively new discipline, with its related literature only dating back to the 1940s.² Walt evaluates the history of Security Studies as a gradual evolution toward an objective and scientific discipline.³ Throughout history, the concept of security has been considered in the content of power politics with military means, which is more related to states than human beings. As explained by Smith, "Security is what states make it."⁴ Traditionally, Security Studies has largely become the focus of both military security and states as central security actors, owing to the dominance of the traditional realist understanding of security over International Relations (IR), which mainly placed national security issues at the top of Security Studies' agenda. For traditionalists, security understanding is only considered in military terms, and they do not wish to accept a broadening/widening of the concept. From their perspective, "security policy consists of the use of armed

¹ This is a work in progress. Please do not cite or quote. The author welcomes all comments, questions and suggestions.

² Ole Waever and Barry Buzan, "After the Return to Theory: The Past, Present and Future of Security Studies", in Collins, Alan, (ed.) *Contemporary security studies*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, 2004, p.383.

³ Krause and Williams, "From Strategy to Security: Foundations....", p. 36.

⁴ Steve Smith, "The Contested Concept of Security," in *Critical Security Studies and World Politics*, edited by Ken Booth, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005, p.87.

forces -the military and the police- to free the state and its citizens from threats.”⁵ In that sense, the concept of security has always been related with the state and threats directed to its sovereignty, with national independence, the maintenance of territorial integrity and sovereignty representing the primary values in traditionalists’ state-centric understanding.⁶ Accordingly, military and political issues are considered as high politics requiring greater attention in the lenses of this traditional security understanding. During the Cold War, security was crucial to the study of international politics, largely focused on political-military issues and the use of force, with constructivist and critical approaches coming to the fore in the late 1980s. In fact, the chaotic global system prompted the critical perspectives to respond to the needs of Security Studies. In this respect, Critical Security Studies particularly took an enormous step forward, predominantly emphasizing human security over state security. According to the critical security scholars, global threats such as environmental degradation, economic recessions and population growth cannot be dealt with the traditional ways. Put differently, Security Studies has developed and broadened in the 1980s, with the efforts in widening security understanding possibly resultant from the end of the Cold War. The concept of security has been significantly debated by scholars after the Cold War. Traditional understanding of security has become inadequate in securing the sovereignty of the state, and consequently the supremacy of realism and its security perspective have been questioned by scholars. Given that the state was considered the only referent object before and during the Cold War, other referent objects have subsequently emerged in the global system, with Ovali emphasizing that realist assumptions could not respond to the necessities of a new era.⁷ Furthermore, Buzan also emphasizes that: “the term security was too narrowly founded, thus, the main purpose is to offer a broader framework of security.”⁸ Through such broadening, it is claimed that new areas should be added to the military dimension of security, with Buzan highlighting: “Since the ending of the Cold War, there have been a lot of changes. The military agenda, the traditional security agenda, dropped down in salience very greatly and various other sorts of things emerged and got more prominence. There were a lot of talk about societal security, identity, nationalism, religion and all of those kinds of things. There were more talks about economic and environmental security. So during the 90s, there was a considerable broadening out of the agenda - which had been visible before - a move away from security as being principally about military things, and a move towards accepting a wider range of things as being part of what the security discourse was about.”⁹ This broadening understanding within the security dimension was also declared during the NATO Summit in Rome, 1991: “With the radical changes in the security situation, the opportunities for achieving Alliance objectives through political means are greater than ever before. It is now possible to draw all the consequences from the fact that security and stability have political, economic, social, and environmental elements as well as the indispensable defense dimension. Managing the diversity of challenges facing the Alliance requires a broad approach to security.”¹⁰ Another important aspect was the declaration of the United Nations Security Council on January 31, 1992, that threats to international peace and security could come from “non-military sources of instability in the economic, social, humanitarian and ecological fields.”¹¹ In addition, the Human Development Report of 1993 declared that: “the concept of security must change from an exclusive stress on national security to a much greater stress on people’s security, from security through armaments to security through human development, from territorial security to food, employment and environmental security.”¹² In that context, significant alternative approaches to security have emerged, with the field of Security Studies becoming the subject of considerable debate. Much of this debate centers on four critical questions: “Firstly, the question of whether to consider the state as the only referent object. Secondly, the question of whether to include the internal as well as external threats to the study

⁵ Jef Huysmans; ‘Revisiting Copenhagen: Or, On the Creative Development of a Security Studies Agenda in Europe’, *European Journal of International Relations*, vol.4, no:4, 1998, p. 487.

⁶ Benjamin Miller; ‘The Concept of Security: Should it be Redefined?’, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol.24, no:2, June 2001, p. 17.

⁷ Sevket Ovali, “What is to Be Done: A Complementary Security Architecture for the Balkans”, the Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on Security, Challenges to Balkan Security and Contribution of the International Organizations, 14-15 May 2008, (İzmir: Dokuz Eylül University Press, 2009), p. 118.

⁸ Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post Cold War Period*, Brighton, Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991, p.14.

⁹ Interview with Barry Buzan regarding the security issue. Available at: <http://www.international.gc.ca/cip-pic/discussions/security-secure/video/buzan.aspx?lang=eng&view=d>

¹⁰ NATO, “The Alliance’s New Strategic Concept”, July 1990. Available at: <http://www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/b911108a.htm>

¹¹ Michael Sheehan; *International Security: An Analytical Survey*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005, p. 100.

¹² Human Development Report 1993. For further information, see the website: www.undp.org/hdro/e93over.htm

of security. Thirdly, the question of whether to expand security beyond military concerns. And finally, the question of whether to see security as inescapably tied to the dynamics of dangers, urgency, and threats.”¹³ Accordingly, Security Studies is currently engaged in dealing with four essential issues: ‘whose security’, ‘who provides the security’, ‘what kind of threats’ and ‘what kind of measures’ are some of the questions disputed among scholars. Moreover, three important contributions challenged the dominance of the traditional approach during the Cold War: ‘Peace research’, ‘Third world security approach’, ‘Alternative security thinking.’¹⁴ Peace researchers believe that war might be unnecessary through understanding the structural causes of the violence. On the other hand, the Third World Security approach criticizes the one-sided security notion of the traditional realist understanding, implying that traditional discourse cannot define third world security issues by paying no attention to its own internal dynamics. Finally, Alternative security thinking stresses the need for the notion of ‘common security’. Briefly, all such approaches declare that the agenda of the Security Studies should be expanded to overcome the international security problems. Accordingly, the security context has been widened by various Schools’ approaches with the changing conditions in the global system. The scope of security has increased to include referent objects other than the state, such as societal security, political security, environmental security and other sectors. In that sense, Security Studies has been gradually developed from its traditionalist and military-centered ways of thinking towards a broader focus on the security of people.

On the other hand, in order to answer the question of ‘what is security?’ it should first be decided what is understood by the concept. There are two basic approaches to the English notion of ‘security.’ In the first approach, “the term security is deriving from Latin *securus* safe, secure, from *se* without + *cura* care - the quality or state of being secure or as a freedom from danger (freedom from fear or anxiety). In that sense, the term conventionally has been defined as being free from danger physically.¹⁵ In the second interpretation, the English word ‘security’ originates from the Latin word ‘*se-curus*’. ‘*Se*’ means ‘without’ and ‘*curus*’ means ‘uneasiness’. That is, ‘security’ originally meant liberation from uneasiness, or a peaceful situation without any risks or threats.”¹⁶ Additionally, the term security can be used in three meanings, namely: ‘the traditional meaning’, defining security as an absence of military conflict; ‘military security’, referring to the phenomena taking place within international relations; and finally, security as a public good, considering security in a universal sense of a unit and social entity, and human security.¹⁷ As stated by Buzan, there are two ways of considering security: “The more traditional objective threat analysis – which can be military, but it can also be environmental and societal, depending on what you want to designate as a threat and what you are concerned about the security of; and then there’s the social side of it – what’s the process by which threats get constructed: who speaks it, who listens to it, how does something get put together and accepted as a threat.”¹⁸ As a social science concept, security is defined as unclear and elastic in its meaning,¹⁹ with Smith emphasizing that: “there is no neutrality in the meaning of the concept of security because all definitions are theory-dependent and all definitions reflect normative commitments.”²⁰ According to Buzan, there are ‘moral, ideological and normative’ features of security, which makes it difficult to achieve a universally agreed security definition.²¹ In fact, throughout history, the term security was supported by, or conducted through, three kinds of concepts: first, through complementary concepts such as ‘strategy’, ‘deterrence’, ‘containment’, or ‘humanitarianism’, which point to a more specific and narrow set of questions; second, through parallel concepts such as ‘power’, ‘sovereignty’, or ‘identity’, which adopt a broader, Political Theory or wider International Relations frame of reference; and third, oppositional concepts that work through security yet argue that it should be replaced, such as ‘peace’ in Cold War Peace Research or ‘risk’ or ‘the exception’ in the twenty-first-century widening debate.²² As a consequence of these various approaches, it is evident that there is no limit to the definitions of security, although it can be briefly clarified that security is a level of dealing with the issues above politics that warrant urgency and further attention.

¹³ Barry Buzan and Lene Hansen, *“The Evolution of International Security Studies”*, Cambridge University Press, 2009, p. 2.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.9.

¹⁵ David A. Lake and Patrick Morgan, *“Regional Orders: Building Security in a New World”*, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997, p.53.

¹⁶ Czeslaw Meszjasz, “Complex Systems Studies and the Concepts of Security”, *Kybernetes*, vol.35, no: 3/4, 2006, p.475.

¹⁷ Barry Buzan, *op. cit.*, p.4.

¹⁸ Interview with Barry Buzan regarding the security issue, *op. cit.*

¹⁹ Hans Günter Brauch, P.H. Liotta, Antonio Marquina, Paul F. Rogers, and Mohammad El-Sayed Selim, *“Introduction: Security and Environment in the Mediterranean and Environmental Conflicts”*, Springer-Verlag, 2003, p.53.

²⁰ Steve Smith, *op. cit.*, p.28.

²¹ Barry Buzan, *op. cit.*, p.7.

²² *Ibid.*, p.14.

Consequently, there are presently many different approaches concerning how to study and analyze security, with continuing debate among scholars on the meaning of security and the scope of Security Studies. Accordingly, 'Security Studies' is still considered an underdeveloped discipline. Moreover, it is not possible to provide an actual security definition that is suitable for everyone, and it remains a contested concept with no easy answer, as claimed by Morgan.²³ While there are various definitions of the concept, analysts and policy-makers have been unable to agree upon a common definition through an examination of empirical data. This variety results from security being a dynamic and developing concept. However, in attempting to define the main purpose of the new security understanding, no longer simply refers to preventing wars and engaging with military issues, but is rather to ensure the happiness and welfare of people.

2. Security Approach of the Copenhagen School

In the new security agenda, the traditional security understanding was unable to meet the challenges of the post-Cold War era, with the concept of security increasingly considered as a broadened concept through various approaches. One such important contribution towards the broadening of security concept is the multi-dimensional security approach, raised by the Copenhagen School,²⁴ exemplified by Smith stating that: "the Copenhagen School is one of the most interesting developments in the contemporary study of security."²⁵ In the early 1990s, a group of scholars came together under the Copenhagen Peace Research Institute (COPRI),²⁶ known as the 'Copenhagen School', attempting to develop a framework for the study of security from the constructivist perspective. Barry Buzan, one of the School's main theoreticians, challenged this case at the beginning of the 1980s, with other scholars including Ole Waever and Jaap de Wilde arguing for the superiority of military power and the position of state within the conceptualization of security.²⁷ They published a book in 1998 called '*Security: A new framework for analysis*', which aimed to represent a primary source for the ideas of the Copenhagen School, and was constructed around two important conceptual developments: Barry Buzan's notion of sectoral analysis of security, and Ole Waever's concept of 'securitization', which will be analyzed in detail in the following sections. The book stated that: "We argue against the view that the core of security studies is war and force and that other issues are relevant only if they relate to war and force ... Instead, we want to construct a more radical view of security studies by exploring threats to referent objects, and the securitization of those threats, that are non-military as well as military."²⁸ The main element of this approach is basically concerned with how security works in global politics, with the School proposing the broadening of Security Studies to focus on different sectors of the state and society beyond military. Moreover, in identifying significant new security threats with crucial security theories, these scholars have offered an innovative approach and developed new dimensions to the study of security, consequently altering the state-centric security understanding. The School attempts to tackle the question of 'security for whom?', with the answer to this question referring to the referent object, something threatened that needs to be secured, and thus representing the reason for the security action. The School argued that military is not the only referent object of national security; rather that it is simply one such aspect along with political, societal, economic and environmental sectors. This approach efficiently opens a way to securitize the new threats towards the referent object (mostly states) within the global system. Essentially, it extends beyond broadening the dimensions of security towards deepening the term by adopting the human being as the referent of security and accepting non-state actors as the agents of security.²⁹ Through this approach, the Copenhagen School has proposed an alternative notion to Security Studies.

²³ Terry Terriff, Stuart Croft, Lucy James and Patrick M. Morgan, "*Security Studies Today*", Polity Press in association with Blackwell Publishers, 1999, p.115.

²⁴ The term 'Copenhagen School' was first used by Bill McSweeney in 1996. David Mutimer, "*Critical Security Studies: A Schismatic History in Contemporary Security Studies*", A. Collins (eds.), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, p. 60.

²⁵ Steve Smith, op. cit., p.37.

²⁶ The Copenhagen Peace Research Institute (COPRI) was established as an independent institute by the Danish Parliament in 1985 aimed at supporting and strengthening multidisciplinary research on Peace and Security. In 1996 the status of COPRI was made permanent and changed to that of a Government Research Institute under the Ministry of Research and Information Technology. On January 1, 2005, the institute was combined with the Danish Institute of International Relations. Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, Jaap De Wilde, Lene Hansen, Egbert Jahn, Morten Kelstrup, Pierre Lemaitre and Elzbieta Tromer would be eventually identified as important names in this "School". For more information, see: www.copri.dk

²⁷ Barry Buzan, Ole Waever and Jaap de Wilde, "*Security: A New Framework for Analysis*", Boulder, CO; London: Lynne Rienner, 1998, p.5.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.4.

²⁹ Keith Krause and Michael Williams, "Broadening the Agenda of Security Studies: Politics and Methods", *Mershon International Studies Review*, vol.40, 1996, p.230.

At the same time, the School makes a connection between the two challenging approaches of Security Studies. The first such approach is the traditionalists, who still consider the state as a static body following the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. For them, security policy consists of the use of armed forces -military and the police- to free the state and its citizens from threats³⁰, and they consequently do not wish for a widening of the concept. The second approach is that of the wideners, who perceive human security rather than the security of states as a major issue. They highlight that end of the Cold War has altered the conventional security approach, changing the referent object from the state to individual, and bringing alternative thoughts into the field of security studies. In this respect, the security approach of the Copenhagen School does not only include states as the key referent object, namely something 'in whose name the security operation is conducted.'³¹ Indeed, their significant attempt in defining security extends beyond broadening the dimensions of security (from military and political to social, economic and environmental), towards deepening the term by adopting the human being as the referent of security and accepting non-state actors as the agents of security.³² Buzan attempts to explain the reason for widening the concept of security as follows: "Global capabilities make it difficult for any state or society or individual to escape from the increasingly large consequences of actions taken by others. And it becomes increasingly difficult to act without coordination with others. The first reason for adopting a broad conception of security is therefore simply that the realities of the policy environment call for it."³³ Furthermore, he states that: "what can be clearly observed is that the state is less important in the new security agenda than in the old one." The Copenhagen School primarily aim to assist the security policy makers by broadening the security understanding, not through identifying threats but rather by putting "an ethical question at the feet of analysts, decision-makers and political activists alike: why do you call this a security issue? What are the implications of doing this – or not doing it?"³⁴ This classification enables an understanding of what is or is not a security issue, and thus explains how the issues become securitized. Consequently, the Copenhagen School has managed to reach a common point between the traditionalists and wideners in terms of defining security. Within this framework, the Copenhagen School has developed new dimensions to the post-Cold War security approach, with a significant step marked by its contributions to International Security Studies (ISS). The scholars have stressed the priority of political issues, thus separating them from security. They argue that traditional security understanding is insufficient to describe and respond to the current security needs. Accordingly, the security approach of the School essentially goes beyond broadening the dimensions of security (from military and political to social, economic and environmental) to deepening the term by marking the human being as the referent of security and accepting non-state actors as the agents of security.³⁵ This explains the alteration of security studies from monopolized military concerns to a broader sphere. In this respect, the Copenhagen School does not concentrate on what 'security' means, but rather on what 'security' does. The growing importance of the School within the security approach is most likely due to its wide applicability to almost any empirical matter within the global system.

3. The Theory of Securitization

With the concept of security having been broadened after the Cold War, the forming of security issues has become a fundamental concern for the Copenhagen School. The scholars of the School basically argued that threats to national security should not only be conceived in military terms, rather they should be securitized by the relevant actor before it can be regarded as security issue.³⁶ In that context, the School has developed a framework that can be applied in all areas by focusing on the process of classifying a threat, named the 'theory of securitization.' The notion of securitization was first articulated in a working paper, '*Security the Speech Act: Analysing the Politics of a Word*', by Ole Wæver in 1989,³⁷ which he then further developed in '*Securitization and Desecuritization*' (1995) and in collaboration with Barry Buzan and Jaap de Wilde in '*Security: a New Framework for Analysis*' (1998). In these books, the scholars of the School first define the security issue as a problem presented as an existential threat to an

³⁰ Jef Huysmans, "Revisiting Copenhagen: Or, On the Creative Development of a Security Studies Agenda in Europe", *European Journal of International Relations*, vol.4, no.4, 1998, p. 487.

³¹ Ole Wæver, "European Security Identities", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol.34, no.1, 1996, p.107.

³² Keith Krause and Michael Williams, "*Critical Security Studies: Concepts and Cases*", Routledge, 1997, p.230.

³³ Barry Buzan, op. cit., p 370.

³⁴ Francesco Ragazzi, "Critical Approaches to Security in Europe. A Networked Manifesto", published with the C.A.S.E. collective in *Security Dialogue*, vol.37, no.4, 2006, p.443.

³⁵ Keith Krause and Michael Williams, "Broadening the Agenda of Security Studies: Politics and Methods", *Mershon International Studies Review*, vol.40, 1996, p.230.

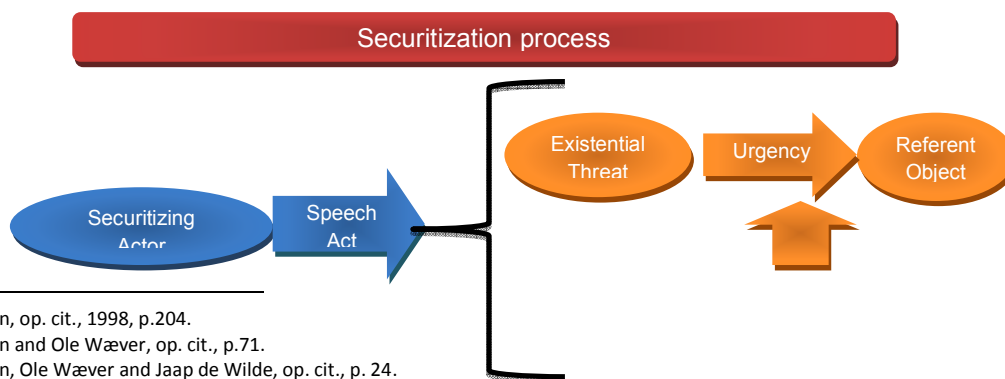
³⁶ Ibid., p.5.

³⁷ Ole Wæver, op. cit., 1989.

object to be determined. They subsequently widened the theory into the Security Studies, publishing several books and articles that broadly furthered the conceptual understanding of securitization. According to them, securitization is 'radically constructivist' and does not question what threat really is; rather, the constructivist approach takes a security issue as if made by acts of securitization, defining security as "a quality actors inject into issues by securitizing them..."³⁸ Accordingly, the Copenhagen School's goal of contributing the theory of securitization is defined as follows: "Based on a clear idea of the nature of security, securitization studies aims to gain an increasingly precise understanding of who securitizes, on what issues (threats), for whom (referent objects), why, with what results and, not least, under what conditions (what explains when securitization is successful)."³⁹ In other words, the scholars of the School underline that: "When a securitizing actor uses a rhetoric of existential threat and thereby takes an issue out of what under those conditions is 'normal politics', we have a case of securitization."⁴⁰

The theory of securitization is one of the most significant contributions to the narrowing-broadening debate within Security Studies, attempting to maintain the broadened meaning of security without losing the 'intellectual coherence' of the field, with Williams claiming that: "the theory of 'securitization' developed by the Copenhagen School provides one of the most innovative, productive, and yet controversial avenues of research in contemporary security studies."⁴¹ Furthermore, Buzan, Waever and de Wilde also state that: "we take seriously the traditionalist's complaint about intellectual incoherence, but disagree that retreat into a military core is the only or the best way to deal with such incoherence. We seek to find coherence...by exploring the logic of security itself, to find out what differentiates security and the process of securitization from that which is merely political. This solution offers the possibility of breaking free from the existing dispute between the two approaches."⁴² Additionally, in terms of securitization theory, the approach of the Copenhagen School differs from the traditional security studies, which focuses on 'discourse.' Buzan underlines that: "the way to study securitization is to study discourse (speech) and political constellations (gathering): When does an argument with a particular rhetorical and semiotic structure achieve sufficient effects to make an audience tolerate violations of rules that would otherwise have to be obeyed? If by means of an argument about the priority and urgency of an existential threat the securitizing actor has managed to break free of procedures or rules he or she would otherwise be bound by, we are witnessing a case of securitization."⁴³ Moreover, Waever argues that security is a kind of "discursive act" as a "speech act", by which a security issue is labeled as "important" and "urgent", that "legitimizes the use of special measures outside of the usual political process to deal with it."⁴⁴ In this respect, they both define securitization as a successful speech act, "through which an intersubjective understanding is constructed within a political community to treat something as an existential threat to a valued referent object, and to enable a call for urgent and exceptional measures to deal with the threat".⁴⁵ It is evident that the theory essentially analyses how an issue is brought up to the level of security by the speech act.

At the same time, securitization as a 'speech act' refers to the process, in which an 'issue is presented as an existential threat, requiring emergency measures and justifying actions beyond the normal bounds of political procedure. Accordingly, securitization normally only occurs if 'the securitizing actor' indicates an 'existential threat' and perceives a way out through 'extraordinary measures', subsequently highlighting 'the speech act' towards 'the audience.' This represents the clearest example of the securitization process as shown below (Figure 1).



³⁸ Barry Buzan, op. cit., 1998, p.204.

³⁹ Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, op. cit., p.71.

⁴⁰ Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde, op. cit., p. 24.

⁴¹ Michael C. Williams, op. cit., p.511.

⁴² Barry Buzan, op. cit., p.4-5.

⁴³ Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde, op. cit., p.25.

⁴⁴ Steve Smith, op. cit., p.85.

⁴⁵ Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, "Regions and Power", p.491.


 Extraordinary
Measures

Figure 1: Securitization Process

According to the Copenhagen School, securitization is "the move that takes politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue either as a special kind of politics or as above politics." In this context, the theory represents an analytical tool that assists in making sense of particular types of behaviours in global politics, with the major goal of providing a wider range of analysis regarding security. Accordingly, the Copenhagen School have specified securitization as a process that frames the issue either as a special kind of politics or as above politics. However, presenting something as an existential threat is not a securitization, but rather simply a securitization move. Indeed, only when the issue is accepted by the audience and emergency measures are authorized to fight that threat does the issue become entirely securitized. In order to convince the audience, the securitizing actor must demonstrate that the referent object is existentially endangered. As claimed by Buzan, "a discourse that takes the form of presenting something as an existential threat to a referent object does not by itself create securitization – this is a securitizing move, but the issue is securitized only if and when the audience accepts it as such... we do not push the demand so high as to say that an emergency measure has to be argued and just gain enough resonance for a platform to be made from which it is possible to legitimize emergency measures or other steps that would not have been possible had the discourse not taken the form of existential threats, point of no return, and necessity. If no signs of such acceptance exist, we can talk only of a securitizing move, not of ... (a) successful securitization."⁴⁶ Accordingly, a successful securitization consists of three elements, namely: 'existential threats', 'emergency action', and 'effects on inter-unit relations by breaking free of rules.'⁴⁷ However, if the threat is not dealt with by the securitizing actor, everything will be irrelevant, with the actor not free to deal with the threat in their own way.⁴⁸ Consequently, if there is no one to cope with that threat, it will be too late and the referent object might not survive. Therefore, the adoption of extraordinary measures is not a requirement for a successful securitization, and instead the audience's approval of such measures represents the most important factor. This allows the securitizing actor to decide whether to underline the existential threat through standard political procedure or extraordinary measures. Overall, all such definitions lead to the 'practice of securitization'.

On the other hand, some scholars argue that the securitization of an issue can be applied when the political ways come to an end, meaning that securitization stands in an area above politics. However, some scholars take securitization as a part of politics, as a continuation when normal politics does not work. Thus, securitization can be considered as an extreme version of 'politicization' that comprises a scale starting from 'non-politicized' through 'politicized' to 'securitized', constituting the 'levels of securitization'⁴⁹ (Figure 2).



Figure 2: Levels of Securitization

As underscored by the Copenhagen School, there are three levels of dealing with security issues that threaten the existence of referent object in the securitization process, namely: 'non-politicized', 'politicized', and 'securitized levels.'⁵⁰ The non-politicized level is taken off the agenda of the state or government, and includes issues that are not concerned by the public and thus are unnecessary for the state to deal with. The politicization level is paid greater attention by the public and government than the non-politicized level, and is a part of public policy, which brings the

⁴⁶ Barry Buzan, op. cit., p.25.

⁴⁷ Buzan, Barry, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde, op. cit., p.26.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p.24.

⁴⁹ Barry Buzan and Lene Hansen, op. cit., p. 214.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

issues to the agenda of public and government. These issues are discussed by the public, before the government subsequently decides how to deal with them. Finally, the securitized level is not brought to the public agenda to be discussed, and includes top priority, immediate issues. This level involves an existential threat towards the referent object, with extraordinary means necessary in tackling such a threat.⁵¹ Thus, securitization is considered “the move that takes politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue either as a special kind of politics or as above politics.”⁵² In this respect, it is crucial to specify the difference between politicization and securitization, with the former identified as the assumption of facts from the security area to the public political process: “Politicization means to make an issue appear to be open, a matter of choice, something that is decided upon and that therefore entails responsibility, in contrast to issues that either could not be different (laws of nature) or should not be put under political control (e.g., a free economy, the private sphere, and matters for expert decision).”⁵³ Since the threats are realized, sufficient actions are taken and the issue is simply made part of public policy in the case of politicization. By contrast, when extreme measures are required, the issue is perceived with the next step of politicization, namely ‘securitization’. For instance, if Turkey changes regulations in the economic field in relation to Syria, this would be perceived as a security affair, given that Turkey controls the essential water tap and their mutual relation is tense owing to the Kurdish issue. However, if Poland changed the same regulations with respect to Czech Republic, this would likely be framed as an economic issue.⁵⁴ Additionally, the securitization of an issue is usually based on a security dilemma, concerning how to accept and interpret a security threat, and how to respond to it.⁵⁵ When something is determined as a security problem, it can be convincingly argued that this problem is more urgent than all other issues on the political agenda, and that it thus warrants highest priority.

It is consequently difficult to define the concept of securitization, owing to the lack of an agreed definition. The theory of securitization is considered the most influential contribution of the Copenhagen School to international security, aiming to analyse who securitizes (securitizing actor), what the referent objects are, and with what results and under which conditions.

4. Securitization of Energy through the Lenses of Copenhagen School

Energy has been a very essential dimension for the survival of the states since the end of the Cold War, used in almost every sector and thus having become the most important element influencing global politics and economics in our current international system. As highlighted by Roberts: “we live today in a world completely dominated by energy.”⁵⁶ It is predominantly believed that sufficient energy resources translate into economic and political strength in the international arena. Therefore, their absence (particularly oil and gas) causes an existential threat for the survival of the global actors in terms of their economy, transport and military needs. Besides, the issue of energy represents a highly significant tool in states maintaining their sustainable economic development and using it as political influence towards other states. Furthermore, energy issues have gained particular importance due to the various difficulties occurring within the energy market, including limited sources of supply, high energy demand among global actors (China, India and the US), energy dependency of the states (the EU), increasing energy prices, instability of energy-producing regions (the Middle East), and using energy as a political tool against the consumer countries (Russia). Accordingly, the International Energy Agency’s (IEA) World Energy Outlook of 2007 highlights that: “the current trends in the world energy system, with increasing global demand especially in developing countries, underinvestment in the energy industry, and instability in oil and gas producing regions, are unsustainable if one is to avoid an energy gap.”⁵⁷ For that reason, increasing attention is being paid to the issue of energy security within the agendas of national governments and international organizations, and thus policy-makers and scholars have predominantly ascribed that the issue of energy has been taken out of the agenda of normal politics.

Moreover, given that gaining control over energy reserves is very challenging, the rate of dependency on such resources is very high. Energy has increasingly gained the status of major concern at the global level, gradually viewed as a threat to security. Owing to increasing conflict within energy regions, limited sources of supply, and the large degree of state intervention into energy markets, the issue of energy has become gradually connected to security considerations and considered as an existential threat to the state sovereignty. As highlighted by Barroso:

⁵¹ Alan Collins, *Contemporary Security Studies*, Oxford University Press, 2007, p.111.

⁵² Barry Buzan., op. cit., p.23.

⁵³ Buzan, Barry, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde, op. cit., p. 29.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Booth and Wheeler, 2008.

⁵⁶ Paul Roberts, *The End of Oil: On the Edge of a Perilous New World*, Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004, p.5.

⁵⁷ The IEA World Energy Outlook of 2007. Available at: <http://www.iea.org/weo/2007.asp>

“Energy is not an issue in itself; it has impact on other sectors: If I am asked today what is the most important issue for global security and development, the issue with the highest potential for solutions but also for serious problems if we do not act in the right way, it is energy and climate change. Energy today is not only considered as a major challenge from an economic point of view but precisely for its implications for environment and climate. Because of increased competition for scarce resources, it poses serious concerns for global security... It is the great challenge of our generation.”⁵⁸ For instance, discourse from the EU institutions and member states (securitizing actors) has transformed the issue of energy security into the form of existential threat towards European people’s standards of living and the EU’s stability. As a non-traditional security issue and one of the most vital contemporary security problems, the issue of energy security has emerged in the international system, thus reflecting a significant effort in deepening and broadening security studies. In terms of the emergence of energy security, Walt underscores that: “the ‘60s was the ‘golden age’ of security studies, and it gained its resurgence during the 1970s. Initially, a change occurred in the label, from ‘strategic studies’ to ‘security studies’. The concept of security was broadened in the 1970s to include economic concerns, while a further redefinition in the 1990s included the issue of environment. Moreover, it can be argued that the issue of energy has started to be regarded in this realm since the turn of the new millennium.”⁵⁹ However, the issue of energy security is not an entirely new phenomenon, rather it is largely believed that the issue started with the 1973 Oil Crisis. Following the energy crisis, the link between energy and security has been progressively explored, and thus the concept of energy security entered the political agenda of international actors in the 21st century, become in parallel a fundamental aspect of security studies. Considering the existing literature on energy security, it stands as very confusing due to the various definitions of the concept. In its most fundamental sense, energy security relates to how one can be secure in energy issues, and it is sometimes connected to the concept of security of supply, which involves providing the safe and secure transfer of energy from producer to consumer countries. However, energy security is no longer merely a question of protecting existing energy supplies; it is largely defined as the guarantee of the ability to access the needed energy resources, with most energy security definitions commonly based on this definition. Furthermore, the European Commission has defined energy security as ensuring that future essential energy needs are satisfied by means of sharing internal energy resources and strategic reserves under acceptable economic conditions and making use of diversified and stable, externally accessible sources.⁶⁰ The most significant challenge here is that if one comes from the energy sector, energy security can be understood as security of supply, which is essentially linked with the technical questions. It doesn’t necessarily imply high politics for a state, but also relates to security of demand, and this is where the interdependence with suppliers is at stake. Moreover, there is another way of linking energy and security in which energy becomes a security issue.

Compared to the issue of energy security, securitization of energy is a recent subject in the IR literature. Global actors started to securitize the issue of energy following the first energy crisis in 1973, and thus it has become a part of high politics. Consequently, energy is taken out of the ‘agenda of normal politics’, and the ‘breaking of the established rules of the game’ have been justified to prevent any danger posed if no prevention had been taken.⁶¹ In other words, energy has started to be perceived in terms of existential threats, and in such a context, political rather than economic dimensions of energy have become significantly more considerable with the securitization of energy: therefore, energy relations consist of transactions such as ‘export’, ‘import’ and ‘the transit’ of energy. Security of demand holds importance according to the energy producers (export), and as the fossil fuels would deliberately continue to play a dominant role in the energy sector, they have approached the domination status and used their energy industry as a weapon for their own political interest. In terms of the energy consumers (import), they have used political and military power to maintain their energy needs as less expensive and more reliable. Owing to factors including increasing energy demand, decreasing proven resources of fossil fuels, increasing and inconsistent costs, energy importer countries must find continuous, dependable, clean and cheap energy, and also have to diversify such resources and moreover increase their domestic production. Accordingly, there is a need to achieve access to sufficient energy resources with affordable prices from stable sources. However, with increasing demand, consumer actors fear not being able to obtain sufficient energy, anticipating that the continuing increase in prices may reach a level of unaffordable prices. Thereafter, a dependency occurs between producer and consumer, placing both actors into the situation of distrusting each other’s reliability. For instance, following the 2006 and 2009

⁵⁸ Jose Manuel Barroso, ‘Our Energy Future in an Interdependent World’, World Energy Congress Rome, 12 November 2007.

⁵⁹ Stephen M. Walt, “The Renaissance of Security Studies”, *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 35, no.2, 1991, p.213.

⁶⁰ An EU-GCC dialogue for energy stability and sustainability, 2005. For more information, see the website: http://ec.europa.eu/energy/greenpaperenergysupply/doc/studies/2005_04_eurogulf_kuwait_en.pdf

⁶¹ Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde, op. cit., p. 23.

Russian-Ukrainian Gas Disputes, debates concerning 'energy security' reached the top of the EU's political agenda. The high level of EU members' dependence on Russian energy supplies, which is the main pre-condition of securitization, has prompted the EU to take extraordinary measures against this threat. Finally, there is the side of transit countries, according to which the security of supply routes, retaining and securing their transit status becomes increasingly important in contributing greatly to their economies. As a result of these market-related issues, I should underline that energy has started to be understood as an existential threat to the actors' survival, and is no longer only apprehended in economic terms, with a political dimension also present. Overall, the global actors have started to securitize the issue of energy towards furthering their own foreign policy interests.

Accordingly, energy has been presented by the global securitizing actors as an existential threat, while the securitization of energy has entered the international agenda in generating both concerns of a militarization of the response to the issue and expectations of effective change in energy policies. Therefore, it has become a top priority in the domain of the Security Studies, with the issue being increasingly conceptualized as a security matter by the Copenhagen School. Buzan states that: "energy policy should be securitized and has to be handled as a security matter."⁶² In fact, following serious energy crises such as the 1973 Oil Crisis and the 2006/2009 Russian-Ukrainian Gas Crises, it is argued that the issue of energy is no longer a question of economics, but rather a matter of politics. In this respect, the issue of energy has become a part of high politics and has been finally securitized by the actors. In other words, energy has been taken out of the 'agenda of normal politics' and it is increasingly perceived in terms of existential threats, in order to prevent any danger posed to the survival of the actor.

In the light of aforementioned characteristics of energy, this issue is a multidimensional and complex policy field, given that it can be theoretically framed within all sectors of security. With the broadened security approach of the Copenhagen School, energy securitization can be defined as a security type realized in different sectors (political, military, economic, societal and environmental), at different levels (international, regional, national and individual) and through different actors' (states, companies, non-governmental organizations, lobbies, international institutions, individuals, etc.) ability to maintain a secure and sustainable demand/supply of energy at affordable prices. The authors of the School emphasize that the analysis of security issues among states today must adopt a broader, extending research to the economic, societal and environmental sector beyond the traditional political and military sectors. If energy is conceived as an issue area representing a coherent set of specific values, sufficiently distinct from other value sets, energy can thus be conceptualized as a sector. However, literature to date has treated energy as a subset of economics, geopolitics and/or the environment, with corresponding securitizations. For instance, political security in international relations involves security relations with other states owing to the international anarchic order such as: limited energy resources, high prices, risks in energy regions, etc., and thus states are seeking energy self-sufficiency in the global energy market. Securing energy demands or supplies could be considered within political security, the sphere of which is directly participant in the formation of international relationships on the basis of power accumulation. The aim of energy security is to provide self-sufficiency, which would render such relationships less necessary to the survival of each individual state, consequently decreasing their interdependence and the possibility of external threats, and leading to greater national security. In terms of military security, energy accessibility also somewhat contributes to the military capabilities. When there is an energy crisis among the global actors, it is primarily perceived as a major threat to their survival, and thus, for security reasons, states consider acting in by military means. Likewise, economic security is defined by the complexity to predict the behavior of economic actors in a de-centralized capitalist economy. Therefore, insufficient energy resources might have an effect on military and economic securities through increasing the possibility of a war or heightening fears within an economy. From the perspective of economic security, the energy market is an unpredictable sphere and can thus be considered a threat to the financial stability of the state. Indeed, energy security can accommodate a greater predictability of energy markets and a more stable economic situation. Finally, environmental security relates to the incompatibility between high-speed economic development and natural resources protection,⁶³ while unsustainable energy resources can also affect the environmental security. Overall, energy should be recognized as a topic linked to all other security sectors.

On the other hand, in comparison with energy security, the issue of energy securitization is an entirely different concept that can be defined in the broadest sense as a security type occurring in different sectors to maintain the secured and sustainable supply of energy at affordable prices. While the economic side of energy is more concerned than the political side within the issue of energy, greater prominence has been given to the political side of the securitization of energy. In terms of energy securitization, the most important element is the increasing demand and dependence of the actors on limited energy resources. In order to ascertain the process of energy securitization, it is

⁶² Barry Buzan, op. cit., p.52.

⁶³ Barry Buzan, "People, States and Fear", p.237.

essential to consider the period of energy supply, which is divided into three main elements: 'production', 'transportation' and 'consumption.' Therefore, the uneven supply of energy and demand for energy products creates a situation of dependency among 'producers', 'consumers', and 'transit countries.' The process of energy securitization is connected to the political behaviors of states towards the unbalanced energy markets, which can be considered as an existential threat to the referent object regarding the energy policies of the producer, consumer or transit countries. Accordingly, the security of the supply and security of demand become highly significant for both sides. From the perspective of the producers, security of demand represents a main concern, with Yergin highlighting that: "sufficient access to the markets and consumers, for the resources they are exporting, which in most cases constitute the bulk of their government revenues."⁶⁴ Regarding the consumer perspective, there is a need to access sufficient energy resources with affordable prices from stable sources. It was claimed by the EU in the 2006 Green Paper on 'European Strategy for Sustainable, Competitive and Secure Energy' that energy security can be described as having stable, regular and sustainable energy supplies at reasonable prices, while also respecting environmental concerns.⁶⁵ However, with increasing demand, consumers fear not being able to obtain sufficient energy, and are also concerned about the increasing trend of prices that will continue and may reach a level of unaffordable prices. Finally, in terms of the perspective of transit countries, the security of supply routes and retaining and securing their transit status become more important, significantly contributing to their economy. For instance, the transit dependence of the EU is the issue of being dependent upon the transit countries located on the route of gas import pipelines from Russia, with the Gas Dispute between Russia and Ukraine in 2006 highlighting the importance of the transit countries. In that context, the IEA highlighted the following risks on energy supply in its World Energy Outlook of 2007: "increasing dependence for oil supplies on a decreasing number of producer countries; ever greater risk of disruptions to supply due to the growing international trade with oil and gas; danger of political instability in producer and transit countries."⁶⁶ Consequently, energy-importing countries want security of supply from energy-exporting countries, and in turn, energy-exporting countries want security of energy demand from energy-importing countries. This implies mutual dependency, and therefore the anxiety of energy dependency and energy demand gradually initiates the process of securitization.

Moreover, the rates of world energy demand, particularly concerning oil and gas, would be helpful in understanding the reasons for energy securitization. Statistics show that the world faces major problems in producing sufficient energy to meet future demand, with current global trends in energy supply and consumption blatantly unsustainable, according to the IEA.⁶⁷ It is projected that energy demand will increase by 50% by 2030, even if resources are efficiently used. Moreover, a great majority of that increase (70%) will occur in developing countries, which will mostly use fossil fuels owing to lower prices.⁶⁸ The Agency expects 1.5 percent annual growth in global energy demand up to 2030, largely driven by the rising economies of Asia and the Middle East.⁶⁹ Therefore, fossil fuels will continue to dominate the world's energy demand in 2030.⁷⁰ (Figure 3)

⁶⁴ Daniel Yergin, "Ensuring Energy Security", *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 85, no.2, March/April, 2006, p.71.

⁶⁵ The 2006 Green Paper on 'European Strategy for Sustainable, Competitive and Secure Energy' Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/energy/strategies/2006/2006_03_green_paper_energy_en.htm

⁶⁶ International Energy Agency (IEA), (IEA) World Energy Outlook of 2007 available at:

<http://www.iea.org/w/bookshop/add.aspx?id=365>

⁶⁷ International Energy Agency, World Energy Outlook 2008, p. 3. Available at:

<http://www.iea.org/weo/2008.asp>

⁶⁸ For more information please see: http://www.iea.org/subjectqueries/keyresult.asp?KEYWORD_ID=4139

⁶⁹ International Energy Agency, World Energy Outlook 2009, p. 4. Available at:

<http://www.iea.org/weo/2009.asp>

⁷⁰ IEA World Energy Outlook 2006, available at:

<http://www.eurekalert.org/multimedia/pub/3221.php?from=90668>.

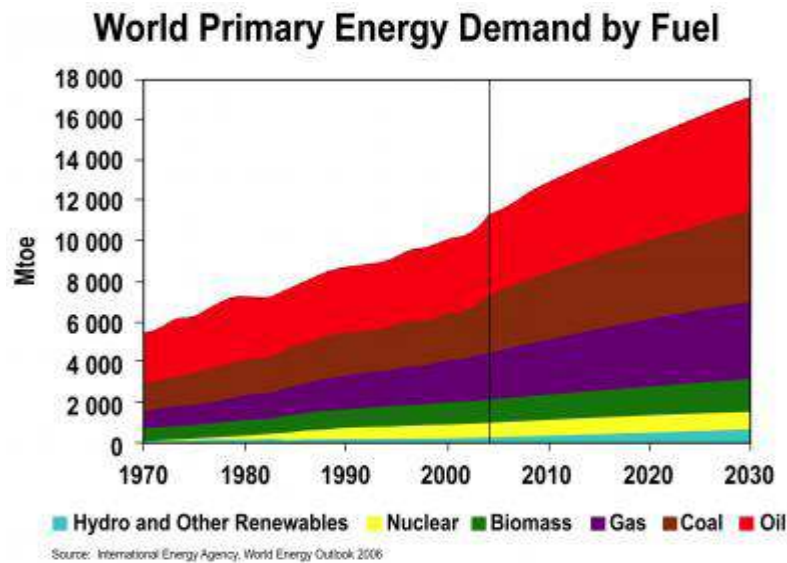


Figure 3: World Primary Energy Demand by Fuel

According to the Green Paper on ‘Towards a European strategy for the Security of Energy Supply’ in 2000,⁷¹ current energy demand comprises 41 % oil, 22 % gas, 16 % coal (hard coal, lignite and peat), 15 % nuclear energy and 6 % renewables. If nothing is done, the total energy picture in 2030 will continue to be dominated by fossil fuels: 38 % oil, 29 % gas, 19 % solid fuels, 8 % renewables and barely 6 % nuclear energy. Similarly, the Energy Information Administration (EIA) published a report for international energy markets until 2035, entitled ‘the International Energy Outlook 2011 (*IEO2011*).’ According to the Outlook, world marketed energy consumption will grow by 53 % from 2008 to 2035, with total world energy use set to rise from 505 quadrillion British thermal units (Btu) in 2008 to 619 quadrillion Btu in 2020 and 770 quadrillion Btu in 2035.⁷² (Figure 4)

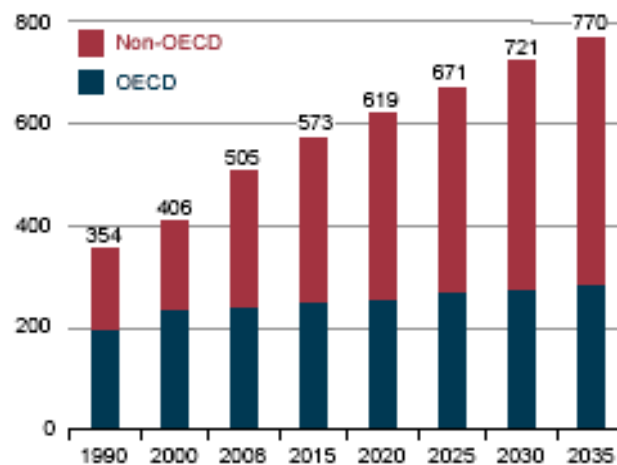


Figure 4: World Marketed Energy Consumption

Moreover, members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development⁷³ (the OECD) have assumed the largest share of the world energy consumption. However, energy use among the non-OECD nations in 2008 was

⁷¹ The Green Paper 2000 on ‘Towards a European strategy for the security of Energy Supply’ , available at: http://ec.europa.eu/energy/green-paper-energy-supply/doc/green_paper_energy_supply_en.pdf p.3

⁷² International Energy Outlook 2011, available at: <http://www.eia.gov/forecasts/ieo/index.cfm>

⁷³ Current OECD member countries are the United States, Canada, Mexico, Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom, Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand and Chile.

higher than in OECD nations. In the Outlook of IEO 2011, energy use in non-OECD nations will increase by 85 %, compared with an increase of 18 % for OECD economies.⁷⁴ This difference in energy use between OECD members and non-OECD members is expected to further grow in the future, yet strong growth in energy use is also projected for most non-OECD regions. With fast-paced population growth and access to rich resources, energy demand in the Middle East will increase by 82 % over the projection period, while energy consumption is predicted to increase by 63 % in Central and South America and Africa. The slowest projected growth among non-OECD regions is for non-OECD Europe and Eurasia, including Russia and the other former Soviet Republics.⁷⁵ Additionally, strong economic growth among non-OECD nations will accelerate such increases. Petroleum and other liquid fuels will remain the largest energy source worldwide in 2035, although projected higher oil prices are likely to erode their share of total energy use from 35 % in 2007 to 30 % in 2035. World natural gas consumption is predicted to increase by 1.3 % per year, from 108 trillion cubic feet in 2007 to 156 trillion cubic feet in 2035.⁷⁶ (Figure 5)

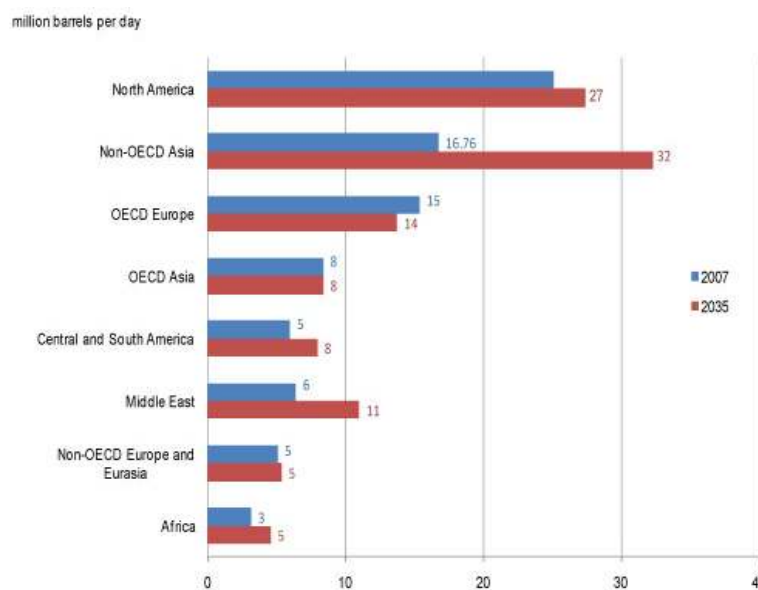


Figure 5: World liquids consumption by region and country group, 2007 and 2035

Following the aforementioned assumptions, the multi-dimensional security approach of the Copenhagen School fits into the main purpose of this paper, named ‘energy securitization through the lenses of the Copenhagen School.’ Regarding the example of energy, the Copenhagen School recommended broadening the strategy of taking the issues and relations out of security (de-securitization) and continuing to accept existential security issues concerning the survival of state (securitization). The School also suggests only being concerned with urgent issues threatening the survival of the referent object within the concept of security. Given that the Copenhagen School emphasizes that there would be various ‘referent objects’ during the securitization process depending on the relevant security sectors, such sectors include both traditional and non-traditional issues to be securitized. Accordingly, as a non-traditional security issue, energy has broadly been accepted as a significant dimension of Security Studies in recent decades. With the economy, military and technology highly dependent on energy, the issue of energy securitization has gained greater importance within the new security framework. Consequently, the application of the Copenhagen concept of securitization to energy remains underexplored. However, some authors have used the concept of securitization as an analytical tool to examine the energy politics. In this context, the fundamental reason behind the use of securitization theory in reference to energy is the actors’ increasing demand and dependence on finite energy resources with the issue of energy mainly securitized in line with this growing dependency.

Biography of the Author

⁷⁴ International Energy Outlook 2011, available at: <http://www.eia.gov/forecasts/ieo/index.cfm>

⁷⁵ U.S. Energy Information Administration, available at: <http://www.eia.gov/>

⁷⁶ Ibid.

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