

CHINA AND THE SECURITIZATION OF THE ARCTIC: CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY SECURITY

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Abstract

China has been actively involved in Arctic affairs, facing both opportunities and challenges brought by accelerated climate change in the Arctic. China also shows increasing security concerns in the Arctic, which is manifested in the incorporation of the polar regions “China’s National Security Law” in 2015 and indicated in the extensive connections between China and the Arctic mentioned in “China’ Arctic Policy” in 2018. However, how the Arctic and China’s national security have been connected and circulated in the wider Chinese discourses, and whether China has taken exceptional measures to successfully securitize the Arctic are still unclear. This chapter draws on Copenhagen School’s securitization to analyze China’s securitization of Arctic climate change and Arctic energy affairs, which are the most relevant Arctic issues to China and can reflect China’s efforts to address the “Arctic paradox”. By examining ‘speech acts’ in Chinese policy documents, politician speeches, scholarly publications, media coverages, and press releases of Chinese energy enterprises, we argue that China’s securitization of Arctic climate change and energy affairs is still shown as ongoing securitizing moves that are far from successful securitizations with exceptional measures beyond normal politics. In China’s securitizing moves of Arctic climate change and energy affairs, the securitizing actor (the state) adopts relatively ambiguous discourses linking the Arctic and China’s national security, compared to that of functional actors (Chinese academia, mass media and energy enterprises). We also noticed that both threats and potential benefits trigger China’s securitizing moves of Arctic energy affairs. Also, it seems benefits play a more critical role, which indicates a counterfactual logic. By attending to the role and interactions among the securitizing actor and the functional actors in China’s securitizing moves of climate change and energy in the Arctic, this chapter attempts to add nuances to China’s efforts in securitizing Arctic affairs and to shed light on the understanding of ‘securitization’ in the Chinese context.

Keywords: Copenhagen School of securitization; securitization of the Arctic; China; climate change; energy security

Introduction

China has been actively involved in Arctic affairs, facing both opportunities and challenges brought by accelerated climate change in the Arctic. China’s Arctic policies and practices have been underpinned by its wide interests in Arctic scientific research, resource exploration and development, Arctic shipping routes with growing navigability, and so on (Andersson, 2021; Dodds & Nuttall, 2015; Hong, 2020; Lu & Zhang, 2016). Among these interests, China has shown increasing security concerns over the socio-economic impact of Arctic climate change on China and the security of Chinese individuals, facilities, and investments in the region. Polar regions¹ have been incorporated into China’s national security agenda in Article 32 of “China’s

National Security Law”, stating that China persists in “preserving the security of our nation’s activities and assets in outer space, seabed areas and polar regions, and other interests” (Xinhua News Agency, 2015). Besides, “China’s Arctic Policy”, the first-ever published China’s Arctic White Paper, defines China as a “near-Arctic state” (近北极国家)² and addresses extensive connections between the Arctic and China in terms of geography, climate system, ecological environment, and economic interests (The State Council Information Office of the PRC, 2018), which also has security indications as the following parts demonstrate. However, how the Arctic and China’s national security have been connected and circulated in the wider Chinese discourses, and whether China has taken exceptional measures beyond general rules or normal politics to successfully securitize the Arctic are still unclear.

To answer these questions, this chapter draws on the Copenhagen School’s securitization theory to examine China’s securitization of the Arctic in relation to climate change and energy. Climate change and energy security are of increasing importance to China not only because of their significant impact on China’s economic prosperity and national security (Nyman & Zeng, 2016) but also the management of growing tension between energy access and tackling climate change is of critical importance to demonstrate China’s role in dealing with these issues in the global sphere. This tension has become ever more prominent in the Arctic considering the urgent need to address the ‘Arctic paradox’ facing accelerated climate change in the region- “the tradeoff between pursuing the economic opportunities arising from an increasingly ice-free Arctic and preventing environmental degradation in a region of central importance for the global climate.” (De Botselier et al., 2018), in which context China has become a critical actor shaping as well as being shaped by the geographical and geopolitical changes in the Arctic, including the security dynamics.

The Copenhagen School of international relations emerged in the late 1980s, expanded the ‘security’ concept to military, political, societal, economic, and environmental security sectors, not merely limited to the traditional military security sector (Buzan, Waever, & de Wilde, 1998), and introduced the key concept of “securitization”. Securitization refers to the process where securitizing actors construct that a valuable referent object is under existential threats through discursive practices- the so-called ‘speech acts’- and calls for exceptional measures beyond normal politics (Buzan, Waever, & de Wilde, 1998; Buzan & Hansen, 2010). Securitization theory has been widely applied in the analysis of interstate relations in the Arctic (Åtland, 2008; Dodds & Nuttall, 2015), Arctic governance (Greaves & Pomerants, 2017; Jacobsen & Strandsbjerg, 2017), and the shift of the ‘Arctic security’ concept from military and state sovereignty towards a more comprehensive definition incorporating environmental, economic, human, health and cultural dimensions (Jacobsen & Herrmann, 2017; Cambou & Hossain, 2019; Lassi Heininen et al., 2019). However, existing studies mainly focus on securitization practices of Arctic states, while China and other non-Arctic states and organizations haven’t received enough attention merely with few exceptions touching upon the securitization theory in the analysis of China’s Arctic engagement (Deng, 2020; Lanteigne, 2015; Wang, 2013). While analytically useful, the Copenhagen School’s approach was largely informed by the experiences of Western liberal democracies. This chapter explores China’s efforts in the securitization of the Arctic, which attempts to add nuances to China’s efforts in

securitizing Arctic affairs and to shed light on the understanding of ‘securitization’ in the Chinese context.

Following the call on a more contextualized analysis to approach securitization, especially in a non-Western context (Freeman, 2010; Nyman & Zeng, 2016; Zhang, 2010), this chapter aims to delve into the process of associating the Arctic and China’s national security in climate change and energy security sectors. By interrogating China’s securitizing moves of Arctic climate change and Arctic energy affairs from both traditional and non-traditional security perspectives, we found that they are still ongoing processes, far from being successful securitizations with exceptional measures beyond normal politics. We argue that in China’s securitizing moves of Arctic climate change and energy affairs, the securitizing actor (the state) adopts relatively ambiguous discourses linking the Arctic and China’s national security, compared to that of functional actors (Chinese academia, mass media and energy enterprises). We also noticed that both threats and potential benefits trigger China’s securitizing moves of Arctic energy affairs, and it seems benefits play a more important role.

The chapter unfolds in the following four sections. First, it outlines the development of the Copenhagen school’s securitization theory and the Arctic securitization trajectory. The subsequent two sectors analyze China’s securitizing moves of Arctic climate change and energy affairs by examining ‘speech acts’ in Chinese policy documents, politician speeches, scholarly publications, media coverages, and Chinese energy enterprises’ press releases and documents. In this process, the specific referent objects, securitizing actors, and functional actors in each securitizing move are identified, and their roles are analyzed. The concluding section reflects on the application of the Copenhagen school’s securitization theory on China’s securitizing moves of the Arctic. It puts forward further questions to consider, such as whether counterfactual logic is a more general tendency in China’s securitizing moves of international affairs.

Securitization theory and the Arctic securitization trajectory

International security studies came up after World War II (Miller, 2001) and developed during the Cold War. In this period, international security studies were literally strategic studies, focusing on military threats to the state and the use of force (Buzan & Hansen, 2017). Afterwards, the dominant focus on military security got challenged by Cold War peace research, the occurrence of oil crises of the 1970s, and post-Cold War critical approaches (Buzan & Hansen, 2009), and attention started to be paid to non-military sectors when understanding the concept of ‘security’. In this context, the Copenhagen School of international relations emerged and grew in the late 1980s and expanded the ‘security’ concept to military, political, societal, economic, and environmental security sectors (Buzan, Waever, & de Wilde, 1998). The Copenhagen School also introduced a key concept – *securitization* (Waever, 1995; Buzan, Waever, & de Wilde, 1998), which refers to a process by which a given issue becomes a security issue. Securitization is a process of constructing an urgent existential threat to a referent object, and such a threat calls for exceptional measures beyond the general rules/ above politics (Buzan, Waever, & de Wilde, 1998; Buzan & Hansen, 2017). “Political leaders, bureaucracies, governments, lobbyists, and pressure groups” are common securitizing actors

(Buzan, Waever, & de Wilde, 1998: 40) that can construct a referent object being existentially threatened in the discourses, namely, starting a *securitizing move*. In general, a state has concrete rules to define who can represent it. For example, governments, bureaucracies, and political leaders of the current government can usually speak on behalf of the state.

A securitizing move is a step of the process of securitization, and the Copenhagen School names the process of securitization a *speech act* that is performed by securitizing actors. As “an operative method” (Wæver, 2015: 122), speech act theory is the foundation of securitization theory. The core idea of speech act theory is “that people do things by talking, that they perform different kinds of acts by speaking” (Vuori, 2016: 4), and a security speech act is “by saying ‘security’”, securitizing actors “declares an emergency condition, thus claiming a right to use whatever means are necessary to block a threatening development” (Buzan & Hansen, 2009: 33-34). The securitization dynamics is also under the influence of different *functional actors*. Unlike securitizing actors, functional actors are not in the position to move a certain issue beyond the general rules (i.e., do not have the power to do so). However, they can significantly affect the dynamics of a securitizing move. According to Eroukhmanoff (2018), academia, media, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are common functional actors. A securitizing move will turn to a successful securitization only when a speech act becomes “a combination of language and society” (Buzan, Waever, & de Wilde, 1998: 32). Namely, internally, the speech needs to follow “the grammar of security” (Buzan, Waever, & de Wilde, 1998: 33); externally, the society needs to “authorize[s] and recognize[s] that speech” (Buzan, Waever, & de Wilde, 1998: 32), that is, the acceptance of an audience (Buzan, Waever, & de Wilde, 1998: 25).

From the Copenhagen School’s securitization perspective, the Arctic has experienced the “securitization - de-securitization - re-securitization” process (Deng, 2020: 3). During the Cold War, potential military conflicts between the Soviet Union and the US in the circumpolar north securitized the Arctic in both discursive and practical dimensions. The Arctic region was seen as a sensitive military theatre in which political, economic, cultural and other interests were subordinated to national security interests (Åtland, 2008: 290). The former President of the Soviet Union *Mikhail Gorbachev* in 1987 called out that “let the North of the globe, the Arctic, become a zone of peace. Let the North Pole be a pole of peace” (known as ‘Gorbachev’s Murmansk speech’). Following that, the Arctic was gradually entering into the stage of de-securitization in the post-Cold War era. ‘De-securitization’ here refers to the shift from “the emergency mode and into the normal bargaining process of the political sphere” (Buzan et al., 1998: 4). In other words, sovereignty disputes in the Arctic were generally contained or localized (Jacobsen & Strandsbjerg, 2017), the strategic value of the Arctic as the buffer zone between the superpowers was diminished (Lanteigne, 2015: 151), and a wide range of international and regional cooperation arrangements in the Arctic was generated (Åtland, 2008). In 1996, the Arctic Council, the leading intergovernmental forum of Arctic affairs, was established and self-consciously identified eight Arctic States and six Indigenous Permanent Participant organizations as members (Arctic Council, no year). The Arctic Council also accepts observer’s applications of other stakeholders outside the Arctic and aims to create a

circumpolar platform for collaboration, and constantly insists that traditional security affairs are out of its mandate (Arctic Council, no year).

In the 21st century, due to the acceleration of climate change, a series of new changes in the Arctic has occurred, such as the growing navigability of the Arctic shipping routes and the prospect of enormous oil and gas potentials, which have triggered global interests in the Arctic (Lanteigne, 2015: 151). The prospects of the Arctic, unsettled territorial disputes between Arctic states, rising military presence in the Arctic, and growing involvements of non-Arctic states, such as China, have raised increasing concerns over Arctic security. There is an increasingly popular standpoint: the Arctic has been portrayed as returning back to geopolitical conflicts, and the future of the Arctic would be characterized by competition and increased tensions and even military threats and conflicts, which were permeated throughout the Cold War (for example, Alec Luhn, 2020; Financial Times, 2007; Gross, 2020; Saxena, 2020). All these are the signs of re-securitization of the Arctic. However, it should be noted that this 're-securitization' tendency in the Arctic mainly stays at the discursive level, rather than actual practical attempts as in the previous securitization during the Cold War (Jacobsen & Strandsbjerg, 2017: 20). Additionally, the Arctic conflict narrative is more popular among the players outside the Arctic, particularly outside the European Arctic region. In fact, the narrative from the Arctic prefers to believe there is low conflict potential in the Arctic (for example, Käpylä & Mikkola, 2013; Olesen, 2014; Rosamond, 2011; Young, 2011).

In spite of the debate over the conflict potential in the Arctic existing, the Arctic has been on a re-securitization trajectory (Gricius, 2021), at least in a narrative sense, and more players are taking part in this re-securitization process, including China. Drawing on the Copenhagen School's securitization theory and keeping China's social and political systems in mind, this chapter analyzes the role of China in the re-securitization of the Arctic from both perspectives of traditional security and non-traditional security. The Copenhagen School's securitization theory has a strong "Western-centric nature" (Nyman & Zeng, 2016: 302), and most of the existing literature focuses on studying the securitization practices in "more or less democratic" (Vuori, 2008: 65) political systems where the wide acceptance of the audience, namely, the population, is necessary for a successful securitization. Thus, its usefulness in non-Western contexts (i.e., outside of the liberal-democratic contexts) has been questioned. However, the audience does not always need to be the "entire population" (Hansen, 2000: 289) or the "general public" (Vuori, 2008: 72) or "citizenry" (Waever, 2003: 11), the audience in the process of securitization could be restricted to "the power elite" (Hansen, 2000: 289; Vuori, 2008: 72) or "a group of fundamentalists" (Vuori, 2008: 72) in the countries with non-Western social and political systems. Also, some researchers, such as Wilkinson (2007) with the empirical study of Kyrgyzstan and Vuori (2008 and 2011) with the empirical study of China, have justified that the securitization theory can still be adopted in non-Western political systems, but extra attention has to be paid to social and political contexts where the securitization in question is happening.

Arctic climate change and China's national security

Climate security refers to linking climate change and security in a specific context, as the process legitimizes and delegitimizes actions, and empowers and disempowers actors (Trombetta, 2019: 102). The Arctic has warmed three times faster than the world as a whole over the past five decades (Arctic Monitoring & Assessment Programme, 2021), and climate change has become one of the key drivers of changes in Arctic physical and geopolitical landscapes. As Arctic sea ice melts, new shipping lanes and resource extraction become increasingly feasible, and the Arctic States' maritime and coastal boundaries disputes continue. It also attracts actors outside the region, including China, who has long noticed that Arctic climate change is of its economic, environmental, and scientific interests and has increasingly engaged in Arctic affairs.

Recent Chinese political and academic discourses on Arctic affairs illustrate an emerging security logic and reasoning that links Arctic climate change and China's increasingly active engagement. In other words, securitizing moves are ongoing in China, which has been used to explain and legitimize China's increased involvement in Arctic economic, scientific, governance and strategic affairs. In the process of securitizing the Arctic, China, the state, is the securitizing actor who raises the awareness of Arctic climate change among domestic audiences and responds to international suspicious and concerns over China's engagement (for example, Brady, 2017; Jakobson, 2015; MacDonald, 2018; Wishnick, 2019). As the following section illustrates, China's official discourses depict both China and the Arctic as referent objects facing security threats from climate change. Constructing China as a referent object enables to justify China's 'stakeholder' identity and increasing involvement in the Arctic, and portraying the Arctic as a referent object creates space for China to construct itself as a responsible and cooperative contributor to the vulnerable Arctic, which in turn further justifies its increasing participation in Arctic affairs. Chinese academia and influential mass media are the main functional actors that serve policymaking and bring the Arctic climate change and China's Arctic activities to the public attention. They portray China as the referent object facing wide existential threats from Arctic climate change from the perspectives of traditional security (such as homeland security) and non-traditional security (such as economic security, climate security, ecological security, and so on). The divergent referent objects constructed by the securitizing actor and the functional actors are the result of their respective audiences and the border context of China's securitization of climate change. This section begins with an overview of the progress of China's incorporation of global climate change into its national security agenda before delving into China's securitizing moves of the Arctic climate change.

Global climate change and China's national security

Global climate change has long been identified as a development issue rather than a security issue in China (Brauch & Scheffran, 2012; Nyman & Zeng, 2016; Trombetta, 2019a; Zhang, 2010). This is due to the priority of economic development in China's national agenda, China's distinct perceptions of security threats, and its concerns over restrictions, contaminants or even interference of other international actors resulting from securitizing climate change (Bo, 2016; Jakobson, 2015; Nyman & Zeng, 2016; Yu & Xie, 2015; Sahu, 2021). Initial discussions over

the connections between climate change and national security emerged in Chinese academic publications in the 2010s (for example, Zhang 2010; Zhang, 2017). Climate change gradually prevailed in Chinese official documents at the same time. One prominent example is the evolving discourses about the linkages between climate change and China's national security in "National Assessment Report on Climate Change", an authoritative report series compiled and published by the Ministry of Science and Technology, China Meteorological Administration and Chinese Academy of Sciences in 2006, 2011 and 2015. Compared with the reports in 2006 and 2011 that attended to the economic and social impact of climate change, the most recent report in 2015 explicitly articulated the relationship between climate change and China's national security that "climate change is related to China's economic security, energy security, ecological security and food security" in the preface (The Third National Assessment Report on Climate Change Committee, 2015: 1). Moreover, the third report noticeably included a separate section about polar regions pertaining to the influence of Arctic ice melting on China's sea-level rise and extreme weathers (The Third National Assessment Report on Climate Change Committee, 2015: 165). It is evident that the connections between climate change and China's national security have been gradually acknowledged in Chinese academic publications and official discourses.

Chinese academia plays a role as a functional actor in the securitization of global climate change. Generally speaking, Chinese scholars influence foreign policy from bottom to top, serving as an 'epistemic community' to provide insightful information to policy makers that directly influences China's foreign policy, or as a 'mirror' to reflect Chinese foreign policy orientations and even domestic politics' directions (Feng et al., 2020: 9,13). The 'epistemic community', according to *Peter Haas*, is "a network of professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain or issue-area" (Haas, 1992: 3). One primary avenue for Chinese academia to provide advice is through research projects. In 2012, Chinese scholars in International Relations (IR) from several renowned research institutions and universities collaboratively participated in a research project- "Key Technology Research on Climate Change and National Security Strategy" under "the 'Twelfth Five-Year' National Science and Technology Support Program Project" announced by the Ministry of Science and Technology of the PRC. The project was led by *Zhang Haibin*, a professor from the School of International Studies of Peking University, who published the first book systematically elaborating the impact of climate change on China's national security (Zhang 2010). The project attended to climate change issues within and outside the Chinese territories, including regions alongside the China 'Belt and Road Initiative' (the BRI), the Arctic, Brazil, Mexico, and so on. (School of International Studies, 2016). By extending the focus from domestic areas to global regions, this project was set to inform China in international climate negotiation primarily under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (School of International Studies, 2012), playing the role of the "epistemic community" to inform China's diplomacy practices. Some consultation reports were approved by Chinese top political leaders, such as President *Xi Jinping*, Vice Premier *Zhang Gaoli*, and the research team gained recognition from the National Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of

Environmental Protection. They also contributed to drafting the chapter “Climate and Security” in the third working group report of the sixth assessment report of the United Nations Panel on Climate Change (School of International Studies, 2016).

Arctic climate change and China’s national security

China’s securitization of climate change in the Arctic was unfolded in the extensive context of addressing global climate change. The Copenhagen School of securitization constructs certain referent objects under existential threats through speech acts. Chinese mass media is an influential functional actor in establishing the linkages between Arctic climate change and China’s security, especially in their coverage of China’s scientific research. China’s Arctic research activities mainly focus on climate and environmental change issues (Heggelund & Han, 2019: 142), aiming to understand the impact of Arctic climate change on China. Media coverage frames extreme weather, sea-level rise brought by climate change as existential threats to the socio-economic security of China and Chinese people’s safety. In reports of China’s first Arctic scientific expedition, *People’s Daily* (人民日报) - China’s largest state-affiliated newspaper- and *Guangming Daily* (光明日报) articulated that one of three major scientific questions about “the Arctic’s role in global change and its impact on China’s climate”, along with exploration of the North Pacific circulation and maritime ecosystem of the Arctic Ocean, contribute to improving China’s weather and natural disaster forecasting ability (Li, 2001; Ren, 1999). The media coverage of the second Arctic scientific expedition took a further step to address the socio-economic connections between Arctic climate change and China. According to *People’s Daily*, “(Climate) changes in the Arctic also have a significant impact on China’s climate and environment... Understanding these issues is a major issue related to China’s national economy and people’s livelihood (‘国计民生’)” (Xiang, 2003). In the latest coverage of China’s 12th scientific expedition in 2021, *Xinhua News Agency* (新华社) made clear that “the natural conditions and changes in the Arctic have a direct impact on China’s climate system and ecological environment, and in turn are related to China’s economic interests in the fields of agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and oceans” (Wang & Zhang, 2021). A more explicit statement of the possible security threats can be found in China Meteorological News’ interview with *Xiao Dong*, a researcher in Chinese Academy of Meteorological Sciences, when he called for actions to “prevent threats to the lives and property of Chinese from extreme weather and climate events caused by the warming Arctic” (Wang, 2020).

While Chinese mass media plays a critical role in disseminating the impacts of Arctic climate change on China from the economy, ecology and society perspectives, Chinese scholars in IR and International Law lead the securitizing moves of Arctic climate change so as to raise the Arctic onto China’s political agenda since the first decade of the 21st Century. Russian flag-planting on the seabed of the Arctic Ocean in 2007 and the accompanying international responses marked the beginning of this process. Chinese scholars in social sciences draw on scientific evidence to highlight the impact of Arctic climate change on China’s national security from various aspects. For example, some earlier discussions noticed

the impact of Arctic ice melting on China's national security from the non-traditional security perspective, including China's ecological security, food security and coastal areas (Lu 2010: 297; Xia, 2011: 130; Zhang 2010: 62), which was further expanded to other non-traditional security sectors, such as economic security, and traditional security sector, such as homeland security (Lu & Zhang, 2016: 22; Zhang, 2016: 58). By constructing a certain issue as a security issue, it is framed as more important than other issues and should take absolute priority (Buzan et al., 1998: 24). In this sense, Chinese academia acts as a functional actor who has significantly moved up Arctic issues in China's foreign policy agenda.

Chinese media and academia frame the state and Chinese people's livelihood as the referent objects under various existential threats imposed by Arctic climate change. By contrast, Chinese official discourses refer to both the Arctic and China as referent objects and deliberate security threats in a less straightforward way. On the one hand, there was no shortage of descriptions framing China as the referent object of Arctic climate change. For example, at the Third Arctic Circle Assembly in 2015 (Reykjavik, Iceland), *Zhang Ming*, the then Vice Minister of China's Foreign Affairs Ministry, delivered a keynote speech titled "China's Contribution: Respect, Cooperation and Win-win". *Zhang* highlighted the impact of Arctic climate change on China's climate, environment, agriculture, shipping, trade, and socio-economic development to portray China as 'an important stakeholder' (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC, 2015). Moreover, in the section of "China and the Arctic" in China's Arctic White Paper, it declares that "the natural conditions of the Arctic and their changes have a direct impact on China's climate system and ecological environment, and, in turn, on its economic interests in agriculture, forestry, fishery, marine industry and other sectors" (The State Council Information Office of the PRC, 2018). These discourses clearly underscore various connections between China and Arctic climate change from the non-traditional security perspective, whereas the linkage from the traditional military security is largely missing. This is understandable given the fact that military discourses might be incompatible with the aim of the white paper, which according to *Zhang Xia*, the then director of Polar Strategy Research Office of China Polar Research Center, seeks to clarify China's position and goals on Arctic affairs and eliminate international concerns over China's propositions (China News Service, 2018).

On the other hand, Chinese official discourses adopt security terms more frequently to describe the Arctic as a referent object under threats of climate change in a subtle way. For instance, at the opening ceremony of the Third Arctic Circle Assembly, China's Foreign Minister, *Wang Yi*, stated that "an Arctic that enjoys peace, security and sustainable development serves the interest of the Arctic region and people and the overall interest of the international community. China is ready to work with all parties to share opportunities, jointly meet challenges and strive for win-win results." (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC, 2015). Without directly associating 'security' and 'challenges' to Arctic climate change, these two terms echoed *Wang's* earlier description of the Arctic as "the 'indicator of global [climate] change'". The juxtaposition of 'peace' and 'security' was reiterated in China's Arctic White Paper that "as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, China shoulders the important mission of jointly promoting peace and security in the Arctic" (The State Council Information

Office of the PRC, 2018). However, a clarification of what can be categorized as ‘security’ issues in the Arctic is absent from the policy paper. Instead, the subsequent sections illustrate China’s contributions to protecting the vulnerable Arctic and developing this region by “addressing various traditional and non-traditional security threats [in the Arctic] through global, regional, multilateral and bilateral mechanisms” (The State Council Information Office of PRC, 2018)

All in all, by analyzing Chinese scholarly, media and official discourses, it is evident that China has constructed its national security under threats due to Arctic climate change via speech acts. However, securitizing Arctic climate change is still an ongoing securitizing move in China rather than a successful securitization, as so far there have been only ambiguous speech acts, which are far from exceptional measures beyond normal politics. In this securitizing move, the state is the securitizing actor, and the mass media and academia take the role of key functional actors. The state constructs both China (the state and Chinese people’s livelihood) and the Arctic as referent objects under threats due to Arctic climate change, targeting domestic and international audiences, respectively. Chinese mass media and academia are the main functional actors. They construct Arctic climate change as an existential threat to the state and Chinese people’s livelihood from both traditional and non-traditional security perspectives, raising the awareness of the Arctic among the general public and policymakers. Despite different approaches and audiences, these speech acts unanimously serve to legitimize China’s participation in Arctic affairs, facilitate international cooperation in the Arctic region, and provide an avenue for more active participation in Arctic governance (Dai, 2021: 86; Doshi et al., 2021; 14).

Arctic energy resources and China’s energy security

Energy security is a key element of China’s national security, consisting of both traditional and non-traditional security concerns (China’s Public Communication Office of National Security, 2021). According to the well-known assessment by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) in 2008, energy potentials in the Arctic are significantly rich. The Arctic may hold approximately 22 percent of the planet’s technically recoverable but undiscovered oil and gas resources. Wide interests from international actors are triggered by the newly-found abundant energy potentials and the increasing availability of these energy resources in the context of the accelerated climate change in the Arctic. China has been paying more attention to Arctic energy resources gradually due to its rapidly growing domestic energy demand (Hsiung, 2016; Sun & Ma, 2018) and its systematic energy transition to carbon neutrality (Spivak, 2021; Shanghai Institutes for International Studies, 2021). These two reasons for China’s growing interests in Arctic energy resources are linked to traditional energy security and non-traditional energy security, respectively. On the one hand, traditional energy security analysts focus on energy supply, its impact on (traditional) national security (for example, “maintaining the existence of the state”) (Cornell, P. E., 2009: 64) and other strategic significance of energy resources (Mulligan, 2010; Nyman & Zeng, 2016), which is still the mainstream in energy security studies. On the other hand, emerging non-traditional energy security studies adopt “a human security lens”, attending to the “well-being of states and societies” as well as “the linkage

between energy security, climate change, health, environmental degradation, and energy sustainability” (Caballero-Anthony & Putra, 2012: 3). Following that, this section analyzes China and the securitization of the Arctic from the perspectives of traditional energy security and non-traditional energy security, respectively.

Arctic energy resources and China’s traditional energy security

China has been the largest oil and gas importer in the world (US International Trade Administration, 2021). Based on the International Energy Agency (IEA), China has been a net energy importer since 1997, and its consumption of crude oil and natural gas, even coal, is heavily dependent on imports (IEA, no year). A stable energy supply is a key to ensuring the development of the world’s second-largest economy. The energy security concern has been raised and spread quickly in China (Ellinas, 2020; Wang, 2021) due to the growing domestic energy demand (Sandkelf, 2004; Yang et al., 2015; Zhang, 2013) and the heavy reliance on importing foreign energy resources (Chen, 2012; Kiesow, 2004; Zhang & Li, 2010).

As the significance of Arctic oil and gas resources stands out, Chinese academia, major energy enterprises, and influential mass media play a role as functional actors to facilitate the securitizing move of Arctic energy affairs in China. Chinese academia acts as a critical functional actor who seeks to offer policy advice regarding Arctic energy resources to the state. For instance, some Chinese scholars strongly advocated that Arctic energy resources are a key source of China’s energy supply and can contribute to the diversification of its energy supply, which is pivotal for China’s economic development, social stability and national security (Lei & Yin, 2014; Liu & Hu, 2016; Pan, 2014; Sun & Wu, 2016; Xiao, 2016; Yang et al., 2013; Yang & Guo, 2017; Yang et al., 2015; Zhang & Li, 2010). Russia plays a dominant role in the Arctic hydrocarbons (more than 53 percent of crude oil reserves and around 95 percent of natural gas are in the Russian territory) (Devyatkin, 2018; Gautier et al., 2009). The close Sino-Russian relationship, expected to be strengthened further (Radin et al., 2021), guarantees China’s stable energy supplies from the Arctic. Besides that, some Chinese scholars, such as *Lei* and *Yin* (Lei & Yin, 2014) and *Pan* (Pan, 2014), pinpointed that China’s energy security also benefits from the emerging Arctic shipping routes, which provide safer and more cost-effective transportation of Arctic energy resources, compared to the traditional energy shipping routes, such as the Strait of Malacca and the Suez Canal, that are geopolitically sensitive and vulnerable to pirate attacks.

As a functional actor in China’s securitizing moves of Arctic energy affairs, some Chinese academic opinions have been well noticed by the securitizing actor (the state). For example, *Jia* (Jia, 2017) called on the state to incorporate the Arctic energy resources into its overseas oil and gas development strategy and more actively march in exploring and developing Arctic energy resources without any delay. Interestingly, this article was reprinted by the then Ministry of Land and Resources of the PRC (replaced by the Ministry of Natural Resources of the PRC in March 2018) on the same day when this article got published on July 14, 2017. Drawing on *Feng* and *He*’s (Feng & He, 2019) analytical framework on the role of Chinese scholars in China’s foreign policy making, it is unclear whether *Jia*’s (Jia, 2017) understanding of Arctic energy resources directly informed China’s foreign policy or whether

it was a policy signaling “before new policies or policy changes are formalized” (Feng & He, 2019: 4). However, the immediate reprinting action indicates the close relationship between the state as the securitizing actor and Chinese academia as a functional actor.

Although seeking economic interests is an important motivation for China’s major energy enterprises to participate in Arctic energy affairs (Sørensen & Klimenko, 2017: 12), they also attend to the security and other strategic significance of Arctic energy resources. For instance, the state-owned and China’s largest oil and gas enterprise, China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), underscored that the successful operation of the Yamal Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) project with China’s key involvement incorporated the Arctic region into China’s BRI, in particular, strongly promoted the development of the emerging Polar Silk Road (PSR) in the Arctic as a new expansion of China’s BRI (CNPC, 2017). Yamal LNG project is a mega energy project based on the Yamal Peninsula in Russia with a joint venture of NOVATEK (Russia), TOTAL (France), CNPC (China), and Silk Road Fund (China), encompassing natural gas production, liquefaction and shipping (TotalEnergies, no year). Stable and sufficient LNG shipped from the Yamal LNG project to China can facilitate national economic development and strengthen national energy security in China (CNPC, 2017).

CNPC also argued that the successful operation of the Yamal LNG project in which China has been actively involved symbolizes promising progress of China’s “march to Arctic energy resources” (An et al., 2018). Additionally, CNPC reprinted some journal articles focusing on Arctic energy and energy security, such as Wang’s 2020 article “Oil and Gas Resources in the Arctic” (Wang, 2020; reprinted in CNPC, 2020). In this article, Wang (Wang, 2020) called the state to pay close attention to the strategic opportunities generated by Arctic energy resources. For example, Arctic energy resources can help the state cope with its domestic energy crisis and enhance energy security. Besides CNPC, another key state-owned energy enterprise - China Petroleum & Chemical Corporation (Sinopec) - also shows its concern about energy security issues related to Arctic energy resources, although it has not been directly involved in major Arctic energy projects. For instance, Lei and Yin (Lei & Yin, 2014), from the Sinopec Exploration and Production Research Centre, firmly highlighted that Chinese energy companies must put national energy security in the first place when participating in the exploration and development of Arctic energy resources.

Moreover, China’s influential mass media, such as *People’s Daily*, *Guangming Daily*, *Xinhua News Agency*, *Reference News* (参考消息) and *Beijing Youth Daily* (北京青年报), share closely similar arguments with Chinese academia and China’s major energy enterprises regarding the impacts of Arctic energy resources on China’s energy security. The Yamal LNG project is also the core of their media reports. The most common arguments are as follows: the active involvement in exploring and developing Arctic energy resources is significant for China to expand energy reserves (Lin, 2016), diversify and stabilize energy supply (Luo, 2018; Ran, 2018), ensure energy security or national security in general (Jiang, 2018; Wu & Qu, 2017; Xu, 2018; Zhang, 2017), improve discursive power in international energy governance (Wu & Qu, 2017), and prompt the development of the emerging PSR or the BRI in general (Guan et al., 2018; Li, 2018; Luo, 2018; Zhang, 2017). Evidently, the security and other strategic significance of Arctic energy resources are the common key concern of

Chinese academia, China's major energy enterprises, and China's influential mass media. Thus, we can argue that all of them are crucial functional actors in China in the securitizing move of Arctic energy affairs and have already made great efforts to promote this securitizing move discursively. Furthermore, it is worth noting that all the aforementioned major energy enterprises and mass media are state-affiliated, and their opinions are generally consistent with that of the state.

According to China's "Holistic View of National Security" ("总体国家安全观") and China's "National Security Law", resource security, including energy security, are integral parts of China's national security (China's Public Communication Office of National Security, 2021). China, the state, plays a role of the securitizing actor in securitizing Arctic energy resources in China, although the term "energy security" ("能源安全") or more broadly "resource security" ("资源安全") has never been directly mentioned in the state's official discourses. In China's most important Arctic White Paper, the state pointed out the potential vital influence of Arctic energy resources on China's domestic energy policy and economic vitality: as "a major ... energy consumer in the world", the "exploration and development of the resources in the Arctic may have a huge impact on the energy strategy and economic development of China" (State Council Information Office of the PRC, 2018). The State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council also pinpointed that China's involvement in Arctic LNG projects can offer more cost-effective gas and diversify the state's energy supply (State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council, 2019). It is worth noting that these arguments indicate the strategic importance of Arctic energy resources for the state, despite mentioning the exact 'security' is missing.

Besides its relatively subtle official discourses, the state has been actively involved in exploring and developing Arctic energy resources in practice via international cooperation, which is a key pillar of China's PSR. The state has made noteworthy financial investments via state-owned energy enterprises and state-owned investment funds in large-scale Russian LNG projects – Yamal LNG and the Arctic LNG 2, occupying 29.9 percent of the share and 20 percent of the share in these two LNG projects, respectively. Also, the state has signed huge purchase agreements with these two LNG projects, and CNPC made full value chain participation in the Yamal LNG project, not limited to investments and purchases (Liu, 2017). The Copenhagen School of securitization claims a securitizing move turns to a successful securitization when the state as the securitizing actor manages to apply exceptional measures beyond normal politics in practice. However, it is clear that none of the above-mentioned actions can be categorized into exceptional measures.

Although the 'vagueness' of energy security can be noticed in the state's official discourses, the state has taken concrete actions, such as the noteworthy financial investments in Russian LNG projects, to obtain increasing energy supply from the Arctic and diversify its energy supply. This matches the core of the energy security concern highlighted by the functional actors, but these actions are far from exceptional ones beyond the general rules. In this sense, we argue that the state plays a role as a securitizing actor and is trying to construct

China's energy supply as the referent object with functional actors together to securitize Arctic energy affairs, although it does not strictly follow the grammar of the Copenhagen School's securitization theory. Also, it seems the state's relatively 'vague' speech acts can still be effective to initiate and promote actions in China's political and social contexts. Such a 'vagueness' in the official discourses related to Arctic energy affairs may reflect China's general circumspect position when participating in Arctic affairs (Wang, 2020). Most of the main players in the Arctic are Western states and the members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which creates a sensitive political environment for China's participation, especially being a non-Arctic state and a rising non-Western great power.

The above-mentioned arguments on China's circumspect position may be challenged by so-called China's "wolf warrior" diplomacy, particularly increased and sharpened during Xi's presidency (Dai & LuQiu, 2021; Dettmer, 2020). However, it should be noted that China's "wolf warrior" diplomacy is largely limited to "defending China's core interests" (Dai & LuQiu, 2021: 2), such as "terrorism and human rights" and "Taiwan/One China" issues (Dai & LuQiu, 2021: 20-22). Arctic-related affairs are not a part of China's core interests yet. Additionally, although China's diplomatic languages have been getting more assertive and hostile to some extent, Chinese diplomacy has been historically shaped by traditional Chinese cultural traditions, such as Confucianism highlighting the importance of circumspection in interactions. Also, the traditional Chinese cultural traditions still play a role in China's official discourses in international affairs, including Arctic affairs (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2015).

In the speech acts, the referent object (China's energy supply) has been clearly constructed under existential threats, but the securitizing actor (the state) and the functional actors (Chinese academia, China's major energy enterprises, and China's mass media) do not present that it is Arctic energy resources that make China's energy supply an alarming issue or under threat. Instead, their speech acts created a clear image that Arctic energy affairs are of security and other strategic significance for China, which reveals a somewhat counterfactual logic: if China does not react to the emerging Arctic energy affairs timely and seriously, China's energy supply and the diversification of its supply cannot be improved, and China's energy crisis would worsen. Interestingly, such logic seems to be effective enough in China as a starting point to convince the audience – the power elite, since China has been actively involved in exploring Arctic energy resources and promoting its PSR proposal.

In other words, China's energy security can benefit from Arctic energy resources. This seems to suggest China's securitization process of Arctic energy resources in the traditional energy sector is triggered by both threats (domestic energy crisis/ the lack of energy supply) and benefits (enormous energy supply and diversification of energy supply), and benefits play a more important role in this securitizing move. We may argue that Arctic energy affairs have become a priority of the state's political agenda, and the state has been taking actions to actively participate in Arctic energy security affairs to secure its domestic energy supply, such as strategically proposing the PSR and being largely involved in Arctic LNG projects. Although these actions may not be regarded as exceptional measures based on the Copenhagen School's securitization theory, we can still argue that there is an ongoing securitizing move of Arctic

energy resources in the traditional energy security sector in China triggered by both threats and benefits, led by the state as the securitizing actor and facilitated by various functional actors in China.

It might also be worth noting that the current dynamics of China's securitizing move of Arctic energy resources in the traditional sense may be challenged by the new EU Arctic policy: the EU seeks a ban on all new fossil fuel projects in the Arctic (European Commission, 2021). In reality, China's access to Arctic energy resources mostly depends on Russia, which strongly criticizes the EU's call. Russian Deputy Prime Minister *Alexander Novak* pinpointed that the EU "is not motivated by anything, except political reasons" to propose this energy ban (TASS Russian News Agency, 2021), and Russia will keep exploring and developing Arctic energy resources (interview 3, 2021 in Reykjavik, Iceland). Still, it is doubtful that China will entirely ignore the call to ban new energy exploitation in the Arctic made by the leading world "normative power" (Manners, 2015) with three member states (Finland, Sweden, and Denmark) in the Arctic.

Arctic energy resources and China's non-traditional energy security

On this basis of ensuring a sufficient and stable energy supply, China's energy security also highlights the sustainability of energy and environmentally friendly energy usage (China's Public Communication Office of National Security, 2021). This section focuses on exploring how China securitizes Arctic energy affairs in terms of non-traditional energy security. It argues that the state, as the securitizing actor, and China's influential mass media and China's major energy enterprises, as the functional actors, are making a securitizing move of Arctic energy affairs in the non-traditional energy security sector and constructing the sustainability of China's national energy system as the referent object.

At the Climate Ambition Summit 2020, President *Xi Jinping* announced that China "aims to have CO₂ emissions peak before 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality before 2060" (Xinhua News Agency, 2020), and the '2030 carbon peak and 2060 carbon neutrality' goal was clearly stated as the major national strategy and would become a key part of China's overall economic and social development strategy in the newly-published White Paper on China's Policies and Actions for Addressing Climate Change (State Council Information Office of the PRC, 2021). Achieving this ambitious goal means a thorough energy transition to a clean and sustainable energy system in China. In the Arctic context, China has been closely involved in investing in Arctic LNG projects and purchasing LNG from the Arctic region. LNG is commonly considered as "a cleaner fossil alternative" (Gasum, no year) and "a reliable support and back-up for renewable energy" (The Center for Liquefied Natural Gas (CLNG), no year). Compared to other fossil fuels, such as coal and petroleum, LNG can greatly reduce carbon emissions (Elengy, no year), although inevitably, an environmental footprint still exists (CLNG, no year). There is debate regarding if LNG is really clean and can contribute to carbon neutrality (Horne & MacNab, 2014; Swanson et al., 2020), but LNG is still generally considered "the cleanest fossil fuel" (Elengy, no year) and the best bridge to renewable energy and carbon neutrality (Kovachich, 2021). In China's context, LNG has been widely described as clean energy, although some Chinese experts argue that LNG can only be called "clean fuel"

rather than “clean energy” (for example, Pang, 2014). Since this section aims to showcase how China securitizes Arctic energy affairs in the non-traditional energy security sector, the following arguments will follow the common ‘clean energy’ description of LNG in China’s context, which does not mean we endorse this expression.

There are three main functional actors facilitating the traditional energy securitizing move, namely, Chinese academia, China’s influential mass media, and China’s major energy enterprises. However, the dynamics are not the same when China securitizes Arctic energy affairs in the non-traditional energy security sector. When Chinese academia actively stressed the traditional security significance of Arctic energy resources, some Chinese scholars also mentioned that Arctic LNG could effectively support the clean energy supply, but they merely mentioned this point rather briefly (He & Yu, 2020; Li, 2016; Sun & Wu, 2016). In other words, the traditional strategic understanding of energy security is predominant in Chinese academia. Compared to Chinese academia, China’s influential mass media, such as *People’s Daily*, *Xinhua News Agency*, *Guangming Daily*, and *Beijing Business Today* (北京商报), paid more attention to the significance of Arctic LNG on adding domestic clean energy supply and facilitating domestic energy transition (Beijing Business Today, 2021; Lin, 2016; Liu, 2018; Ran, 2018; Yang, 2018; Zhang X. D., 2017; Zhang, Y., 2017). In a similar vein, China’s major energy enterprises, mainly CNPC with the full value chain participation in Arctic LNG projects, also articulated the same opinion: Arctic LNG can provide China with clean energy supply and promote China’s green energy transition (see CNPC, 2017; CNPC, 2018; Ding, Wu, & Xu, 2019; Meng & Liu, 2017). Moreover, in the discourses, China’s influential mass media and major energy enterprises recognized the importance of Arctic clean energy resources to China’s national energy system in which energy sustainability and the ongoing energy transition are challenged. However, no exact ‘security’ expressions can be noted in the discourses when highlighting Arctic clean energy resources’ significance, although clean and low-carbon energy transition has been a great priority on China’s political agenda.

The state, the securitizing actor in the traditional energy securitizing move, also stressed the importance of the Arctic clean energy resources and proposed action plans in a less straightforward way. For example, China’s White Paper on Arctic Policy attended to the abundance of clean energy resources in the Arctic and highlighted that China “will work with the Arctic States to strengthen clean energy cooperation, [...] explore the supply of clean energy and energy substitution and pursue low-carbon development” (State Council Information Office of the PRC, 2018). What is more, as *Nyman and Zeng* (Nyman & Zeng, 2016) pointed out, there has been a new focus in China’s Five-Year Plans (FYP) on optimizing energy production and consumption structure, in particular greatly developing clean energy and renewable energy, since the 11th FYP (2006-2010) (p.308). In the most recent 14th FYP (2021-2025), clean energy and low-carbon development were mentioned quite frequently. Developing the PSR and enhancing cooperation with the Arctic states is also a part of the 14th FYP (Xinhua News Agency, 2021). Since energy cooperation is the most important pillar of the PSR, these statements in the 14th FYP indicate that China will keep closely participating in the exploration and development of Arctic energy resources, especially clean energy resources, at least in the following five years.

Similar to the discourses of China's influential mass media and major energy enterprises, there are also no direct security expressions in that of the state. However, it is worth noting that their statements related to Arctic clean energy resources are all consistent with the non-traditional energy security understandings in general, especially with the understanding of energy security in China's holistic view of national security - valuing the sustainability of energy and the environmentally friendly use of energy (China's Public Communication Office of National Security, 2021). In this securitizing move of Arctic energy affairs in the non-traditional energy security sector, the sustainability of China's national energy system is constructed as the referent object under threat. Generally speaking, despite the declining ratio, coal still plays a dominant role in China's energy system, which is difficult to change thoroughly in the short-term (Pang, 2021). The heavy dependence on coal puts the sustainability of China's energy system under threat. However, more importantly, the Arctic energy resources can offer a stable supply of clean energy to China, which can promote China's domestic clean energy transition and improve the struggling sustainability issue of China's energy system. Thus, we argue that both threats and benefits triggered China's securitizing move of Arctic energy affairs in the non-traditional energy security sector, but much more attention was paid to benefits in the discourses of the securitizing actor and the functional actors. Similar to the securitizing move in traditional energy security, a counterfactual logic can also be noted here. If China does not react to the affairs related to Arctic clean energy resources timely and seriously, the sustainability of China's national energy system will stay under threat, and the carbon neutrality goal will turn out to be more difficult to achieve. Last but not least, although we argue China's securitizing moves of Arctic energy affairs are happening in both the traditional energy security sector and the non-traditional energy security sector, there is a long path ahead for such securitizing moves to be successful securitization cases (if they even could be successfully securitized), given that there is no space for China as a non-Arctic state to exert measures beyond normal politics towards Arctic energy affairs.

Conclusion and discussion

Drawing on Copenhagen School's securitization theory, this chapter delves into China's securitization of Arctic climate change and Arctic energy affairs. By analyzing the speech acts of the securitizing actor (the state) and functional actors (Chinese academia, mass media, energy enterprises), we argue that China's securitization of Arctic climate change and energy affairs from both traditional and non-traditional security perspectives is still shown as ongoing securitizing moves, which are far from successful securitizations with exceptional measures beyond normal politics. This chapter also looks into the interactions among the securitizing actor and functional actors in each securitizing move, further showcasing nuances and dynamics of securitization practices of the Arctic in the Chinese context.

With regards to Arctic climate change, the securitizing actor (the state) and the functional actors (Chinese academia, Chinese influential mass media) co-construct China (the state itself and people's livelihood) as the referent object under existential threats of Arctic climate change. This enables China to establish connections with the Arctic in an array of areas, such as scientific research, economy, energy environment, and so on, and therefore,

establishing its identity as a key ‘stakeholder’ and justifying its increasing involvement in Arctic affairs. Meanwhile, targeting international audiences, the state also constructs the Arctic region as the other referent object threatened by the accelerated climate change and portrays itself as a responsible contributor to the vulnerable Arctic under threats. In this way, the state could mitigate international suspicions and doubts towards its Arctic participation as a non-Arctic actor and a rising non-Western power.

In the realm of Arctic energy affairs, the securitizing actor (the state) and the functional actors (Chinese academia, Chinese influential mass media, and Chinese major energy enterprises) construct China’s energy supply as the referent objects together in the traditional energy security sector. In the non-traditional energy security sector, the same securitizing actor and functional actors, except for Chinese academia, co-construct the sustainability of China’s national energy system as the referent object. In Chinese academia, the traditional strategic logic plays a dominant role in understanding energy security. It should be noted that the logic behind the securitizing moves of Arctic energy affairs in China is different from that of Copenhagen School’s securitization theory. We noted that both threats and potential benefits trigger such securitizing moves. Also, it seems benefits play a more important role, which indicates a counterfactual logic: China’s energy supply and the sustainability of its national energy system are under threat but not because of Arctic energy affairs. Instead, the situations of the referent objects would worsen if China does not act on Arctic energy affairs timely and seriously.

Moreover, although securitizing moves of Arctic climate change and Arctic energy affairs are ongoing in China, they are not close to being successfully securitized. No exceptional measures beyond normal politics can be found, although some actions have been undertaken in China in response to its securitizing discourses, such as increasing active involvement in Arctic LNG projects. More importantly, China, as a non-Arctic state and a rising non-Western power, does not have space to exert any measures beyond general rules or normal politics in the Arctic. Since the Arctic is not a part of China’s core interests (its discourse style towards Arctic affairs is far from its more assertive and hostile discourses when defending its core national interests), we could not see a possibility that China may adopt exceptional measures in an indirect or a hidden way to securitize Arctic affairs, at least in the foreseeable future.

Shedding light on an array of research that applies the Copenhagen School’s securitization theory on analyzing the securitization of the Arctic, this study highlights securitization dynamics in the non-Western Chinese context. Different from most examinations of the Copenhagen School of securitization in the West, where the general public is the typical audience, the main audience of the speech acts in the securitizing moves of the Arctic is the Chinese power elite, even though the Chinese mass media and the state also attempt to convince the general public and the international audience, respectively. Another key finding is the counterfactual logic in China’s securitizing moves of Arctic energy affairs. However, it requires more case studies and in-depth analysis to find out whether this is a rare case or a more general tendency in China’s securitizing moves of international affairs.

Notes

1. The Polar regions include the Antarctic and the Arctic, but the Arctic has more effects on China's holistic national security. This is because the Arctic has more geographical proximity for China (the main basis of China's 'near-Arctic state' identity construction) and is experiencing more considerably intensified game-playing among international participants, compared to the relatively stable Antarctic regulated by the Antarctic Treaty System.

2. The term "near-Arctic state" was initially proposed by *Zhang Xia* in 2010, the then director of Polar Strategy Research Office of China Polar Research Center, and it addresses the geographical proximity between China and the Arctic and separates China from the wider non-Arctic states (Lu, 2010: 339). It first appeared on an international occasion in November 2012, when the former Chinese ambassador to Sweden, *Lan Lijun*, delivered a speech at an observer meeting held in Sweden (Xu & Wang, 2021: 145). The "near-Arctic state" has caught much less attention in international discussions over China's Arctic engagement in the early 2010s (for example SIPRI, 2012; Rainwater, 2013) compared with that in recent years, especially after the publication of China's White Paper in 2018 where this identity was officially adopted and the Pompeo's speech on the Arctic Council ministerial in 2019, where he denied the third category between 'Arctic States' and 'Non-Arctic State' (Radio Canada International, 2019). Generally speaking, the "near-Arctic state" intends to highlight the wide connections between China and the Arctic, in terms of geographical proximity, economic connections in shipping and energy areas, climate change, geopolitical impact, and so on, (for example: Lu, 2010; Liu, 2012; Xinhua News Agency, 2013; Lu & Zhang, 2016), to legitimize China's interests and participation in the Arctic.

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