

# *Security Studies* Editor’s Annual Report—2023

## Editor-in-Chief

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This report covers manuscripts submitted to *Security Studies* between June 16, 2021 and June 15, 2022. It does not consider manuscripts submitted during that period as part of a special issue that began the external review process later in summer 2022

### Submissions

Between June 16, 2021, and June 15, 2022, *Security Studies* received 306 first-time submissions from 475 authors. 192 (~63%) of these submissions were single-authored. This represents a decline of 13.5% from 2020-2021, when *Security Studies* received 354 first-time submissions from 536 authors.

As part of the submission process, authors declare their current locations. Based on this country-level data, we have calculated authors’ locations by world region. The largest proportion of authors—just over 41%--hailed from North America, followed by Europe (20.6%) and Asia (17.26%). Table 1 shows the distribution of authors’ locations by world region.

**Table 1. Submitting Authors by Region**

Author Location (Region) & Decision	Authors	Authors (%)
North America	195	41.05%
Latin America	2	0.42%
Western Europe	98	20.63%
Rest of Europe	57	12.00%
Asia	82	17.26%
Africa	11	2.32%
Oceania	30	6.32%

In 2020-2021, the journal received a smaller proportion of its submissions from North America and Western Europe (~49%)—and more from all other regions.

*Security Studies* also gathers data on the gender of submitting authors. Our data indicate 73.25% of submitting authors were male, and 25.9% were female. Only 4 authors indicated that they would not like to report their gender and 1 author selected non-binary pronouns such as “they” to represent their gender. In 2020-2021, a slightly smaller proportion of authors identified as women (22.95%) and a slightly larger proportion identified as men (76.3%).

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<sup>1</sup> Produced with the assistance of Managing Editor Carl Graefe.

**Table 2. Submitting Author Pronouns**

Gender	Authors	Authors (%)
Him	345	73.09%
Her	122	25.85%
They/Ze/Other	1	0.33%
Prefer Not to Say	4	0.85%

Using this data we can investigate the interaction between gender and authorship. Per Table 3, most manuscripts submitted to *Security Studies* in 2021-2022 were solo-authored (roughly the same as in the previous year). With ~73% of submissions, but ~77% percent of single-author submissions, men were slightly more likely than others to submit single-author manuscripts. Men were significantly more likely to coauthor exclusively with other men than women were with other women: teams of all-men coauthors constituted 80% of gender-exclusive coauthored manuscripts (vs. 87.7% last year). Another 14.38% of all manuscripts were submitted by teams of authors that were gender-inclusive (just like last year).

**Table 3. Submitted Manuscripts, by Author Pronouns**

Manuscript type (Gender)	Submissions	Submissions (%)
Solo-authored (him)	148	48.37%
Co-authored (him)	52	16.99%
Co-authored (mixed)	44	14.38%
Solo-authored (her)	44	14.38%
Co-authored (her)	13	4.25%
Solo-authored (Prefer not to say)	4	1.31%
Solo-authored (They or other non-binary)	1	0.33%

Authors' accounts in ScholarOne—the manuscript management system used by *Security Studies*—also include their preferred titles (Dr., etc.), from which we infer their ranks. Table 4 displays the submission distribution by authors' self-declared titles. A large majority (68.71%) of submitting authors had doctoral degrees in 2021-2022 (vs. 73.9% last year). This is likely an underestimate, since it is quite possible, if not likely, that authors forget to update their titles once they receive their doctorates.

**Table 4. Submitting Author Rank**

Self-Declared Rank	Authors	Authors (%)
Doctorate	325	68.71%
Non-doctorate	148	31.29%

### Decision Timelines

First-time submissions are first reviewed internally: the Managing Editor processes manuscripts and then sends them on with recommendations (to desk reject or review) to the Editor-in-Chief, who reviews the manuscripts without knowledge of the authors' identity. Of the 306 manuscripts processed with a decision from the 2021-2022 year, the initial evaluation of manuscripts was completed on average within 9.688 days (vs. 7.12 days in 2020-2021). Manuscripts submitted during *Security Studies*' declared vacation periods are coded as having been submitted on the day the Managing Editor returned to work.

The *Security Studies* editorial team aims for timely review processes and hopes to produce decisions on reviewed manuscripts within 3 months. However, the length of the review process is to a significant degree outside our control. Consequently, the standard deviation for reviewed manuscripts' time to decision is quite large (37.23 days), and the median is more meaningful than the mean. The median time to decision for reviewed manuscripts during 2021-2022 was 83 days—still just within our guideline of 3 months.

### Initial Decisions

All manuscripts received between June 16, 2021, and June 15, 2022, have received initial decisions. We first present data on desk rejections and then on revised manuscripts. When reviewing the data below, please recall that the editor-in-chief conducts the initial review of all manuscripts without knowledge of the authors' identity.

#### *Initial Evaluation/Desk Rejection*

Of 306 first-time submissions, 183 were desk-rejected (59.8%)—compared to 63% last year. Coauthored manuscripts were somewhat more likely to be desk-rejected (61.47%) than were solo-authored manuscripts (58.88%); in 2020-2021, coauthored manuscripts were somewhat less likely to be desk-rejected. Just like last year, more experienced authors (with doctorate) were less likely to be desk-rejected (57.85%) than were less experienced authors (65.54%). Per Table 5, and again like last year, authors located in North America were much less likely to be desk rejected than authors from any other region.

**Table 5. Author Region and Initial Evaluation Outcomes**

Author Region	Authors	Desk Rejections	Desk Reject (%)
North America	195	57	29.23%
Latin America	2	1	50.00%
Western Europe	98	72	73.47%
Rest of Europe	57	49	85.96%
Asia	82	72	87.80%
Africa	11	11	100.00%
Oceania	30	24	80.00%

Despite the anonymous nature of the initial evaluation process, there were nevertheless some notable differences by author gender. Per Table 6, male authors were more likely to be desk rejected than were female authors (62.32% and 53.28% respectively). This effect was driven in part by the relatively high desk rejection rate for manuscripts authored by exclusively male coauthor teams (69.23%). All-women teams were desk rejected at a lower rate (53.28%).

However, manuscripts with male solo authors were also more often desk rejected than manuscripts with female solo authors. Interestingly, these differences by gender were the reverse of our experience last year, when female authors were more likely to find their manuscripts desk-rejected and when all-men author teams were significantly less likely to be desk-rejected.

**Table 6. Author Pronouns and Initial Evaluation Outcomes**

<b>Pronoun</b>	<b>Authors</b>	<b>Desk</b>	
		<b>Rejections</b>	<b>Desk Reject (%)</b>
Him	345	215	62.32%
Her	122	65	53.28%
Them/Ze/Other	1	0	0.00%
Prefer Not to Say	4	3	75.00%
Solo-authored (Him)	148	90	60.81%
Co-authored (Him)	52	36	69.23%
Gender-inclusive	44	24	54.55%
Co-authored (Her)	44	23	52.27%
Solo-authored (Her)	13	7	53.85%
Solo-authored (Prefer not to say)	4	3	75.00%
Solo-authored (They or other non-binary)	1	0	0.00%

However, per Table 7, a multivariate regression analysis reveals that, once author rank and location are taken into account, these gender differences are not statistically significant. That analysis also shows that manuscripts in which at least one author has a doctorate were significantly less likely to be desk rejected, and manuscripts with at least one author from any region outside North America (the reference category) were more likely to be desk rejected.

**Table 7. Predictors of MS Desk Rejection: Logit Analysis<sup>2</sup>**

VARIABLES	Desk Reject
Her	-0.058 (0.543)
Doctorate	-1.204** (0.381)
Latin America	-15.82 (2399.5)
Western Europe	2.941*** (0.774)
Rest of Europe	2.559*** (0.667)
Asia	2.290*** (0.501)
Africa	16.57 (834.9)
Oceania	1.960** (0.688)
Constant	0.459 (0.315)
<i>N</i>	306
Robust standard errors in parentheses	
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1	

<sup>2</sup> The unit of analysis here is the manuscript. As a result, because manuscripts can belong to multiple categories simultaneously, some manuscripts are “double-counted.” The presence of the author of a certain gender or from a certain region tracked with boolean indicator variables. Thus the above predictors reflect the impact that the presence of at least one author with specific characteristics might have on a manuscript’s chance of being desk rejected. Note that the 2022 report set the author as the unit of analysis. Using manuscripts as the unit of analysis avoids inflating N while also bringing the analysis into better alignment with the actual processing of manuscripts at *Security Studies*.

*Reviewed Manuscripts*

Of 306 first-time submissions, 123 (40.19%) were sent out for review. The initial decisions on these 123 reviewed manuscripts appear below (Table 9). Overall, in the first round of evaluation, *Security Studies* rejected 86.93% of manuscripts, and granted a decision of revise and resubmit, or better, to 12.09% of manuscripts—roughly the same as in 2020-2021.

**Table 8. Submitted Manuscript Initial Decisions**

<b>Decision</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Desk Reject	183	59.80%
Reject after Review	83	27.12%
Revise & Resubmit	38	12.38%
Accept with Major or Minor Revisions	2	0.6%

Of the 38 manuscripts that received an initial decision of revise and resubmit, a final disposition has been reached in 28 cases. These manuscripts' final disposition appears below (Table 9). So far, 78.5% of resubmitted manuscripts have been accepted, and 21.5% have been rejected.

**Table 9. 2021-2022 Revised Manuscripts—Final/Current Status**

<b>Decision</b>	<b>N</b>
Accept	22
Reject	6
Still in process	10
Withdrawn	0

In last year's annual report, we promised to report the final disposition of all manuscripts submitted between June 16, 2020, and June 15, 2021. Table 10 reports the current status of all manuscripts invited for revision in 2020-2021. One manuscript remains in process, but, of all other manuscripts that had initially received an invitation to revise-and-resubmit for further consideration at the journal, 70.7% were eventually accepted.

**Table 10. 2020-2021 R&Rs Current**

<b>Decision</b>	<b>N</b>
Accept	29
Reject	8
Still in Process	1
Withdrawn	4

As one would expect, once articles were accepted for review, discrepancies across gender, location, and rank disappeared, reversed, or were at least reduced. Although men authors were somewhat more likely to be desk-rejected than were women authors, this was not the case with respect to reviewed manuscripts, as Table 11 shows: men authors whose articles were accepted for external review received a rejection decision over 65% of the time, but over 74% of women authors whose articles were accepted for external review received a rejection decision. Among

reviewed manuscripts, the most successful by far were those coauthored by men alone, with nearly 44% of reviewed manuscripts receiving an invitation to revise and resubmit, and those coauthored by women alone were surprisingly unsuccessful (with just 19% of reviewed manuscripts receiving an invitation to revise and resubmit), but other manuscript categories were, with respect to author gender, indistinguishable with regard to outcome. We would advise not making too much of these results at this time, because (1) the number of manuscripts in any one category can be quite small, and (2) these outcomes are not in line with last year's findings and thus do not represent a worrisome sustained pattern of gender bias. That said, the editorial team will be attentive to the possibility of gender bias in our decision-making processes and will monitor these decision outcomes moving forward.

**Table 11. Author Pronoun and Reviewed Manuscript Outcomes<sup>3</sup>**

Gender	Reject after review	% of Reviewed mss Rejected	R&R	% of Reviewed mss R&R
Him <sup>4</sup>	85	65.38%	43	33.08%
Her	43	74.14%	15	25.86%
They/Ze/Other	1	100.00%	0	0.00%
Prefer Not to Say	1	100.00%	0	0.00%
Solo-authored (Him) <sup>5</sup>	37	63.79%	20	34.48%
Co-authored (Him)	9	56.25%	7	43.75%
Gender-inclusive	14	70.00%	6	30.00%
Co-authored (Her)	17	80.95%	4	19.05%
Solo-authored (Her)	4	66.67%	2	33.33%
Solo-authored (Prefer not to say)	1	100.00%	0	0.00%
Solo-authored (They or other non-binary)	1	100.00%	0	0.00%

As during the initial evaluation/desk reject stage, more senior authors of manuscripts sent out for external review were more successful in the review process than more junior authors, but the discrepancy was smaller. Among these reviewed authors, authors with a doctorate were rejected at 58.1% clip, and those without a doctorate received a rejection 65.54% of the time.

Among reviewed manuscripts, outcomes by region were quite unpredictable—like last year. Per Table 12, a relatively small number of manuscripts whose authors were located in Eastern Europe were externally reviewed, but, of those that were, 62.5% received a decision of R&R or better—exceeding the 29.7% rate among authors located in North America. North American authors received an R&R decision or better less often than last year (40.2%). Authors from Western Europe this year fared better, with nearly 27% of reviewed manuscripts receiving a decision of R&R or better, compared to 15.8% last year.

<sup>3</sup> A chi-square test shows no statistically significant relationship between gender and reviewed ms outcome.

<sup>4</sup> Roughly 1.5% of our data for this category is incomplete.

<sup>5</sup> Roughly 1.7% of our data for this category is incomplete.

**Table 12. Author Region and Reviewed Manuscript Outcomes<sup>6</sup>**

Author Region	Reject after review	% of Reviewed mss	
		Rejected	R&R
North America	95	68.84%	41
Latin America	1	100.00%	0
Western Europe	19	73.08%	7
Rest of Europe	2	25.00%	5
Asia	3	30.00%	2
Oceania	0	0	0

### Editor-Controlled Website

In summer 2020, the new editorial team established an editor-controlled website, [securitystudiesjournal.org](http://securitystudiesjournal.org). This website hosts the journal's mission statement, information on the editorial team, journal policies, and extensive guidance for authors. The journal's Taylor & Francis publisher-controlled site directs prospective authors to the editor-controlled website.

Between January 1, 2021, and December 31, 2021, [securitystudiesjournal.org](http://securitystudiesjournal.org) had nearly 9,600 visits, over 6,900 unique visitors, and over 13,000 page views. Monthly visits ranged from a low of 684 (June) to a high of 2,138 (August). Visits originated in 99 different countries, with the top 10 accounting for around 73% of visits (Table 13).

**Table 14. Website Visit Origins**

Country	Visits	Visits (%)
United States	4,664	48.50%
United Kingdom	715	7.43%
Germany	342	3.56%
Canada	224	2.74%
Poland	189	2.33%
Nigeria	165	1.96%
Australia	165	1.72%
France	165	1.72%
India	159	1.65%
Turkey	149	1.55%

The journal homepage garnered the most hits (5,833), but our most recent special call, on “Legacies of Violence and War,” announced in summer 2022, drew a very large number of visitors to the website: 2,405. Our extensive guidance for authors received a nearly equal number of views: 2,286. Our previous special call, on “Climate Change and Security,” released in summer 2021, had 443 views in 2022.

<sup>6</sup> A chi-square test shows no statistically significant relationship between author region and reviewed ms outcome.