

## The Indian Ocean as a Security Problem: Four Perspectives from International Relations Theory

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The Indian Ocean presents a problem for the discipline of International Relations for a number of reasons, but it also points out the limitations of our own conceptions of security and strategy. As a region, the Indian Ocean includes some of the poorest countries in the world and also some of the world's most intractable conflict zones such as Indo-Pakistani problems, internal conflicts in Sri Lanka, sub-Saharan African near-failed states, and the numerous problems associated with the Middle East. The Indian Ocean has a history as a 'region', has a modern paradigm revival in the late period of the Cold War, and has a group of analysts supporting cooperation.

In this paper I will explore the problem of Indian Ocean security using four paradigms of international relations theory: realism, liberalism, social constructivism, and feminism. In each case I will analyse particular aspects of these security problems associated with the Indian Ocean states from perspectives that are traditional ones such as realism as well as those that might also present more radical and even post-positivist views. In this regard, I shall demonstrate some of the limitations of international relations theory as well as look at possible solutions to security problems in the region.

Key Words: Indian Ocean; International relations; Security problem; Social constructivism;

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