

RECONCEPTUALISING SECURITY FROM NATIONAL TO ENVIRONMENTAL AND HUMAN SECURITY

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Summary

As a result of the end of the Cold War (1989-1991) security has been reconceptualized. The security concept has widened beyond the traditional military and political dimension, to include economic, social/ societal and environmental dimensions, and it has deepened, including beyond the traditional referent, the nation state (national security) as new referents both the individual and humankind (human security), the communal or societal, as well as the international and regional and the global or planetary level. While during the cold war period the classical concept of national security prevailed, since 1990 concepts of human, environmental, societal and gender security have become the focus of the scientific and political debate.

In the scientific debate on environmental and security linkages, since 1990 three stages may be distinguished: a) a conceptual one, b) an empirical one, and c) a debate going into many different directions with little synthesis (see: *Four Phases of Research on Environment and Security*). On the political realm environmental security has been suggested by the Brandt, the Brundtland and many other high level commissions, and by UNEP, UNDP, OSCE, OECD and the European Union.

On human security two tracks have been discussed aiming at “freedom from want” (UNDP, Human Security Commission, Japanese approach), and “freedom from fear” (Human Security Network, Canadian approach). A third focus on “freedom from hazard impact” has been suggested by this author. In the social sciences no consensus exists on the definitions and the goals of human security. This author has argued for a mainstreaming of environmental with human security concepts.

In addition, this chapter reviews the sectorialization of security concepts focusing on energy, food and health security. The debate on a reconceptualizing of security has not been limited to Europe and North America; in the new millennium it has spread globally. A global debate on human security has been promoted by UNESCO.

1. Introduction

Security (lat.: *securus* and *se cura*; it. *sicurezza*, fr.: *sécurité*, sp.: *seguridad*, p.: *segurança*, g: *Sicherheit*) was introduced by Cicero and Lucretius referring to a philosophical and psychological status of mind. It was used as a political concept in the context of ‘Pax Romana’. Today ‘security’ as a political value has no independent meaning and is related to individual or societal value systems (Brauch 2003).

As a social science concept, “*security* is ambiguous and elastic in its meaning” Art (1993). Wolfers (1962) pointed to two sides of the security concept: “Security, in an objective sense, measures the absence of threats to acquired values, in a subjective sense, the absence of fear that such values will be attacked”. According to Møller (2003) this definition ignores: Whose values might be threatened? Which are these values? Who might threaten them? By which means? Whose fears should count? How might one distinguish between sincere fears and faked ones?

For Art: “to be secure is to feel free from threats, anxiety or danger. Security is therefore a state of the mind in which an individual...feels safe from harm by others.” While objective factors in the security perception are necessary they are not sufficient. Subjective factors influence security perceptions. Due to the anarchic nature of international relations, “a concern for survival breeds a preoccupation for security”. Security also involves “protection of the environment from irreversible degradation by combating among other things, acid rain, desertification, forest destruction, ozone pollution, and global warming” (Art 1993).

The *perception* of security threats, challenges, vulnerabilities and risks (Brauch 2003, 2005, see *The Model: Global Environmental Change, Political Process and Extreme Outcomes*) depends on the world-views or traditions of the analyst and on the mind-set of policy-makers. Three basic views have been distinguished by the English school

(Bull 1977, Wight 1991) that of a *Hobbesian* pessimist (realism) where *power* is the key category; a *Kantian* optimist (idealism) where *international law* and *human rights* are crucial; and a Grotian pragmatist model where *cooperation* is vital (Brauch 2003, 2004). From an American perspective, Snyder (2004) distinguished among three rival theories of realism, liberalism and idealism (constructivism) referring only to American authors as “thinkers”. Booth (1979, 1987) argued that “old mind-sets” often have distorted the assessment of “new challenges”. These mind-sets include ethnocentrism, realism, ideological fundamentalism and strategic reductionism, and they “freeze international relations into crude images, portray its processes as mechanistic responses of power and characterize other nations as stereotypes”. Many of these old mind-sets have survived the global contextual change of 1989/1990 (Booth 1998). The goal of this chapter is to discuss whether the global change triggered by the end of the Cold War in 1989/1990 or by the terrorist attack on USA of 11 September 2001 has resulted in a reconceptualization of security; by widening the scope from the narrow political and military dimension during the East West conflict to the economic, societal and environmental dimensions, by deepening the level of analysis from the national and alliance levels to both the individual, local, as well as to the global and planetary level of analysis; and by shifting the primary referent from the nation state and military alliance (national vs. alliance security) to the individual or to humankind. Already prior to the global turn of 1989 a sectorialization of security had occurred with regard to energy, food, water, health, gender and livelihood security in different parts of the world.

A major focus of this chapter is to put environmental security challenges on the agenda of the human security community and to develop a human security perspective on environmental security challenges. The article addresses these questions: How has security been reconceptualized since 1990? How have the environment and security linkages been conceptualized so far? How has the human security concept evolved? How can the human security perspective be introduced into analysis of environmental security challenges? How could the environmental dimension of human security analysis be strengthened? How can these conceptual considerations be translated into action to enhance the potential for environmental conflict avoidance, early warning of hazards and conflicts and better disaster preparedness?

2. Contextual and conceptual change

Both in the Covenant of the League of Nations (1919) the guarantee of “international peace and international security” and in the United Nations Charter (1945) the goal “to maintain international peace and security” were emphasized. In 1945, “development” and “environment” were not political concepts. The UN Charter distinguished among three security systems:

- (a) A universal system of *collective security* contained in Chapter VI on pacific settlement of disputes (Art. 33-38) and in Chapter VII on “Action with respect to threats to the peace, breaches to the peace and acts of aggression” (Art. 39-50);
- (b) “*Regional arrangements or agencies*” for regional security issues in Chapter VIII (Art. 52 to 54), such as the Arab League (1945), OAS (1947) and CSCE/OSCE (1975, 1992); and

(c) A right of “*individual or collective self-defense*” (WEU, NATO) in Art. 51.

While the first two systems deal with threats to the peace from within, among member states, the third is oriented against an outside threat. They perform three functions: peaceful settlement of disputes, peace enforcement and peacekeeping. Art. 1.1 of the UN Charter calls on its members “to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace”, “to develop friendly relations among nations” and “to achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian nature”. The UN Charter relies on a narrow “nation”-centered concept of “international security” and a concept of “negative” peace, but Art. 1(1), (2), and (3) “indicates that peace is more than the absence of war”.

During the Cold War, collective self-defense prevailed while collective security was paralyzed (Brauch/Mesjasz/Møller 1998). After 1990, collective security was temporarily strengthened, but with the failure of the UN to solve the Gulf War (1990-1991) and to cope with the post-Yugoslav conflicts (1991-1999), NATO and the EU (re)emerged as the key security institutions.

The legal texts of the Covenant and of the UN Charter focus only on the classic peace and security linkage both in the preamble, in the purposes and principles and with regard to the three tasks: a) pacific settlement of disputes, b) action with respect to threats to the peace, and c) pertaining to regional arrangements. The new tasks of “development” and “environment” are not mentioned in the UN Charter but they have been derived from Chap. IX of the Charter on “international and social cooperation”.

With the widening of the scope of activities to “development” and “environment”, compared to the narrow focus on peace and security linkages in the UN charter, five new dyadic relationships must be added, two of them are linked to security: i) the linkage between security and development, and ii) the linkage between security and environment. Each of the four goals has become an area of analysis of highly specialized research programs in the social science and in international relations: a) peace and conflict research, b) security (war or strategic) studies, c) development studies, and d) environmental studies.

The conceptual quartet relies on four conceptual pillars (see Figure 1): a) on the classic Hobbesian “security dilemma” of the Cold War; b) on the “sustainable development” concept suggested by the Brundtland Commission (1987), an two still underdeveloped concepts of c) “sustainable peace” (Annan) and d) on a “survival dilemma” (Brauch 2004) that focuses on the challenges the security and environmental linkages pose for human security (both the individual and humankind).

During World War II, a new doctrine of “national security” developed in USA “to explain America’s relationship to the rest of the world” (Yergin 1977). Ever since, “national security” has become a guiding principle for U.S. policy. During the Cold War the concepts of internal and national, alliance and international security were used for a bipolar international order in which deterrence doctrines played a major role to prevent

a nuclear war. “National” and “alliance security” focused on military and political threats posed by the rival system. National security legitimated the allocation of major resources and constraints on civil liberties.

Influenced by the three ideal type world-views of Hobbes, Grotius and Kant and by the mind-sets of policy makers and their advisers, security is a key concept of competing schools of:

- (a) *War, military, strategic or security studies* from a Hobbesian perspective, and
- (b) *Peace and conflict research* that has focused on conflict prevention from a Grotian or Kantian view.

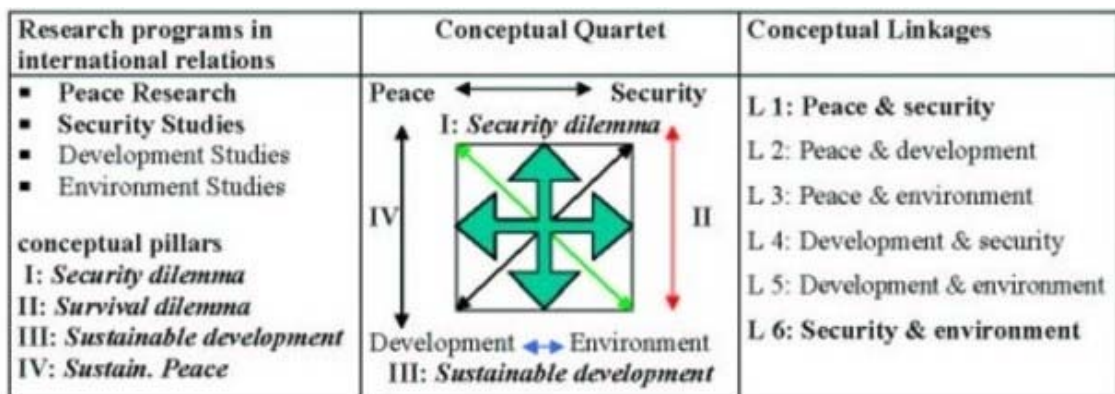


Figure 1. The Conceptual Quartet: Security, Peace, Development and Environment

The political context for the security concept has fundamentally changed since 1990, and in USA partly after 11 September 2001. Instead of the narrow Hobbesian military security concept, in most postmodern OECD countries an extended or wider security concept was adopted, partly as a recognition of new emerging security challenges, and partly due to legitimate new missions for armed forces in a transition period. During the Cold War, in the West the threat was perceived as coming from the Soviet Union or Communism, in the East as coming from the U.S. or imperialist countries, and in the South coming from former colonial powers and capitalist or socialist countries. The challenges were perceived in the West and the East as primarily of a military and ideological nature but in the East partly also as an economic issue. The vulnerability was often reduced to nuclear forces but also to population centers to a massive nuclear attack, while the concept of vulnerability has also been widened after 1990, referring to all five security dimensions. The concept of risk was fundamentally transformed with Beck’s (1986) risk society or world risk society (1998).

The terrorist attack on the U.S. symbols of power in New York and in Washington demonstrated the extreme vulnerability of highly complex developed countries to an unsophisticated attack with carpet cutters by terrorist fundamentalists and the transformation of civil airplanes into weapons, killing 3000 people. The shock of 11 September 2001 (the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington) and 11 March 2003 (the terrorist attack on a train in Madrid) illustrates the high vulnerability of critical infrastructure (transport systems: airplanes and trains, but also bridges, dams, nuclear

reactors and chemical plants that could release highly toxic material. Thus the events of 11 September 2001 triggered a fundamental rethinking of threats posed by non-state actors in new asymmetric conflicts. However, the new threat legitimated a revival of Cold War mind-sets, a major military build-up, and constraints on civil liberty: impact of laws on homeland security in the U.S. and in some European countries as well.

The events of 9 November 1989 (the fall of the Berlin Wall) and 11 September 2001 triggered two different and asynchronous reconceptualizations of security: a widening of security after the fall of the Berlin wall and a shrinking in the U.S. and some other countries after the attack on the twin towers, while many other countries—especially in governments dominated by the military or guided by military rationale—have never given up their narrow focus on “national military”, which was often rather “regime security”.

The global contextual change fostered this reconceptualization of security both in the political and scientific realm. However, in addition a paradigmatic shift occurred to constructivist and decon-structivist approaches in the social and political sciences, in international relations and the four research programs of peace research, security, development and environmental studies that stressed that perception and ideas structuring perception matter. Thus, the security debate in the early 21st century is influenced by adapted neo-conservative Hobbesian mind-sets and neo-realist perspectives in strategic studies and constructivist approaches in peace, environment and development studies. Thus both contextual political change and a paradigmatic shift in the social sciences have impacted on a reconceptualization of security.

Since 1990 the distance between both schools has narrowed but since 2001—at least in USA—it has widened again. New inter-paradigm debates relevant for security have emerged between traditional and constructivist approaches and critical security studies. While intensive research has evolved on environment and security linkages and policy efforts on the environmental dimension of security have been launched, the dialogue between the security and the development community is still in the early stage of development.

Since 1990 the UN Security Council decisions on humanitarian interventions and the debate on “environmental” and “human” security have moved beyond the constraints of the classic peace and security dyad. The Report of the Secretary General’s High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (2 December 2004) reflects this widening of the “security” concept pointing to new tasks for the UN system in the 21st century. In the new emerging security consensus, collective security rests on three basic pillars (Synopsis of Report):

Today’s threats recognize no national boundaries, are connected, and must be addressed at the global and regional as well as the national levels. No State, no matter how powerful, can by its own efforts alone make itself invulnerable to today’s threats. And it cannot be assumed that every State will always be able, or willing, to meet its responsibility to protect its own peoples and not to harm its neighbors (p. 1) ... Differences of power, wealth and geography do determine what we perceive as the gravest threats to our survival and well-being. ... Without mutual recognition of threats

there can be no collective security.... What is needed is nothing less than a new consensus ... The essence of that consensus is simple: we all share responsibility for each other's security. The High-level Panel distinguished among six clusters of threats, ranging from economic and social threats (including poverty, infectious disease and *environmental degradation*, inter-state and internal conflict, weapons of mass destruction, terrorism and transnational organized crime. Thus, for the first time “environmental degradation” is listed among the threats confronting the UN that require preventive action “which addresses all these threats”. Development “helps combat the poverty, infectious disease and environmental degradation that kill millions and threaten human security”. The High-level Panel claims:

53. Environmental degradation has enhanced the destructive potential of natural disasters and in some cases hastened their occurrence. The dramatic increase in major disasters witnessed in the last 50 years provides worrying evidence of these trends. More than two million people were affected by such disasters in the last decade, and in the same period the economic toll surpassed that of the previous four decades combined. If climate change produces more flooding, heat waves, droughts and storms, this pace may accelerate. The High-level Panel notes that “rarely are environmental concerns factored into security, development or humanitarian strategies” and it points to the lack of effective governance structures to deal with climate change, deforestation and desertification, as well as to the inadequate “implementation and enforcement” of regional and global treaties. In the discussion of the legitimacy of the use of military force, the High-level Panel distinguishes between “harm to State or human security”. Two of 101 recommendations deal with environmental issues:

10. States should provide incentives for the further development of renewable energy sources and begin to phase out environmentally harmful subsidies, especially for fossil fuel use and development. (71)

11. We urge Member States to reflect the gap between the promise of the Kyoto Protocol and its performance, reengage on the problem of global warming and begin new negotiations to produce a new long-term strategy for reducing global warming beyond the period covered by the Protocol (2012). (72)

While the High-level Panel mentioned “human security” several times in passing, its main focus nevertheless remained on the “state” as the cause and as a key actor in dealing primarily with military and societal threats. The environmental dimension of human security was noted in § 53 above that explicitly focused on the linkage between climate change and disasters.

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Biographical Sketch

Hans Günter Brauch, Since 1999 PD Dr. habil. (equiv. of Adj. Prof.) at the Faculty of Political Science and Social Sciences, Free University of Berlin; since 2004, Member of the College of Associated Scientists and Advisers (CASA) of the UNU Institute on Environment and Human Security Institute (UNU-EHS), Bonn; since 1987 chairman of Peace Research and European Security Studies (AFES-PRESS). He was guest professor of international relations at the universities of Frankfurt on Main, Leipzig, Greifswald and at the Teachers Training College in Erfurt. From 1976-1989 he was research associate at Heidelberg and Stuttgart university, a research fellow at Harvard and Stanford University and he was also teaching at the universities of Darmstadt, Tübingen, Stuttgart and Heidelberg. He holds a Dr. phil. degree from Heidelberg University and a habilitation from Free University of Berlin.

He was a member of the Council of the International Peace Research Association (1992-1996), of the Board of Editors of UNESCO Yearbook on Peace and Conflict Studies (1990-). Membership: Institute for Strategic Studies, Pugwash Movement for Science and World Affairs, International Studies Association. He is editor of: *Hexagon Series* (Springer); *Frieden - Sicherheit - Umwelt - Klima - Energie* (Lit); *AFES-PRESS Report; Rüstungskontrolle aktuell*.

He has published more than 30 books and 20 research reports in English and German on issues of security policy, climate and energy issues and on the Mediterranean. Books on this topic:

- Liberalisation of the Energy Market for Electricity and Gas in the European Union: a Survey and implications for the Czech Republic (2002), (Co-ed.);
- Climate Change, Environmental Stress and Conflict (2002): 9-112;
- Lead editor of: Security and Environment in the Mediterranean. Conceptualising Security and Environmental Conflicts (2003);
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