SÄKER: Project on Integrated Security

The Security Concept in Transformation: Adjustments by Assessments Dispatch no. 4 (10)

Recent decades have seen a shift in the perception of security and notions of corresponding threats. We therefore need to attune to strategic security thinking with practical implications for policy analysis. In this brief we suggest that this adjustment could be guided by an integrated security analysis framework approach that builds on recent advances in assessment tools.

The Security Concept in Transformation

Since the end of the Second World War, and propelled by the end of the Cold War, a noticeable shift in security studies has emerged. From being traditionally state-oriented, the security studies discourse has increasingly begun to include a wider notion of security beyond state security. Nowadays security often entails human security, societal security and the like. Furthermore, corresponding threats to security are seen as arising from multiple sources of various kinds, including threats from conventional armies, cyberspace, climate change and extreme weather events, epidemics, etc. In essence, one can summarise this as a far-reaching securitisation process. That is, conventional notions of the security of the state, including its conventional corresponding sources of threat ("hard security"), have broadened to cover non-conventional forms of security.

In practice most contemporary security challenges are neither agency- nor structurally-based, but somewhere in between. Although different elements of security analysis, such as human security, energy security, food security, water security, climate security and gender security, can be highlighted in isolation for analytical purposes they do often interact in a complex web of causes and effects. Thus, knowing how they interact is pivotal in security studies in order to develop adequate decisions that can support durable policy measures in areas such as conflict prevention measures, conflict resolution, peace-building, reconciliation, resilience and adaptation.

From a practical point of view, an integrated approach to security could therefore be an important approach to deal with short-, medium- and long-term processes having direct or indirect security implications. A combination of state, societal and human perspectives in the study of security could therefore be needed. However, to integrate different perspectives on security one needs to recognise how these different approaches are interlinked. To start this one needs to outline the purpose of the security analysis. What remains thereafter is to develop an analytical framework that bridges the different approaches to security and different security challenges, in other words, a framework for "an integrated comprehensive security analysis".

Widening our Understanding of Security through Various Technologies and Assessment Tools

An integrated security approach to the study of security allows for the use of various supporting tools according to need. Many kinds of tools have for instance been developed in the broad area of environmental, vulnerability and risk assessments, conflict analysis manuals, satellite image intelligence, etc. Apart from providing policy- and decision-makers with environmental information, these tools can also inform security analysis in areas such as human security, water security and food security. Great specificity in applications can be achieved through the large number of tools available. The environment and security are interlinked and numerous militaries have for instance developed applied tools for military activities that reflect this.

Environmental data and statistics are important for assessing the state of the environment and the humans who reside in it. Although environmental data, such as measurements of air, soil and water quality, is collected by both public and private sources in most countries, overall data quality often remains poor, as does information dissemination among different actors interested in security. For instance, average national statistics often hide the most serious deprivation in different regions and there are generally stark regional disparities in terms of economic performance, human development, social welfare provision and the prevalence of poverty. Results may also be contradictory for reasons connected with issues such as poor governance or corruption. Shortcomings like these present a serious challenge to measuring the consequences of e.g. environmental change and ultimately the understanding of complex security phenomena. Other issues, on the other hand, such as land use and forest cover, can be assessed on a broad scale using remote sensing by commercial satellite picturing. Remote sensing, combined with sufficient validation using actual measurements in the field, usually provides high-quality data for environmental statistics.

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For an integrated security approach, security studies indeed require access to a wide range of information. Satellite data analysis is a technology that can provide security researchers with a global instrument adapted to the requirements of these studies. Satellite data shows the situation on ground "as is" regardless of national borders, political conditions, communications or the speed and time of the crises. Satellite-based earth observation has the capacity to provide the analyst with the data needed when it is needed. Advanced processing and classification methods are powerful and sensitive tools for mapping and monitoring environmental changes at an early stage of longitudinal processes or as information in an ongoing security challenge. Both sensor and processing technologies are under continuous development, which means that the influence and potential use of this type of information will increase in the future.

Challenges and Opportunities

Moving from theory to practice has however proved to be tricky, which may be why few organisations currently do so. In fact, combining traditional state-centric security analysis with analysis of other forms of security requires strong motivation, considerable practice, and a truly integrative focus. There has furthermore been little full-scale commitment to following through theoretical analysis to operational implementation.

The idea behind the SÄKER project is therefore to attempt to further develop the "doing" phase of integrated security to support robust solutions to comprehensive security issues that combine the broader theoretical perspectives with the plethora of tools and technological advances to address the complex security challenges facing the increasingly interconnected contemporary world.

Further Reading

Granit et al. 2015. *Integrating sustainable development and security – an analytical approach, case points from Middle East and North Africa, Central Asia and the Arctic regions*. Working paper. Stockholm: FOI and the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI).

Scott Andersson, Å., Dreborg, K-H., Waleij, A., Wulff, M-E. 2007. *Environmental security: an overview*. FOI-R--2287--SE. Stockholm: FOI (in Swedish).

Buzan, Barry, Waever, Ole and de Wilde, Jaap. 1998. *Security: a new framework for analysis*. Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner.

Meadows, Donella H., Meadows, Dennis L., Randers, Jørgen, Behrens, William W. III. 1972. *The limits to growth: a report for the Club of Rome's project on the predicament of mankind.* New York: Universe book.

This brief was written by an interdisciplinary team of scientists at FOI, the Swedish Defence Research Agency. It could be read as a stand-alone document but can also be read in the context of connected briefs on integrated security of which this particular topic is a cohesive part.

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For further information on related activities of this project please consult www.foi.se.

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