Human and Water Security in Israel and Jordan

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Chapter 2
The Concept of Security

2.1 Conceptualization and Re-Conceptualization of Security

Security is of vital importance. The term is frequently used to help raise consciousness of the importance of particular issues, which are then so labelled in the minds of the population at large (Buzan 1991, p. 370). However, security is an 'essentially contested concept' (Gallie 1956, p. 184; Buzan 1983, p. 6); a concept on which no consensus exists. This conceptual vagueness makes it difficult to find a common ground for discussion. A feature shared by most definitions is some form of threat to cherished values (Williams 2008, p. 5), especially those threats that endanger a particular referent object's survival in the near future. Accordingly, concern for survival entails a preoccupation with security (Art 1993, p. 821).

Security is not an independent concept. It is always related to individual or societal value systems (Brauch 2003, p. 52). Every actor talking about security assigns different meanings to the term. Based on the assumptions of the realist theory of international relations—that security is the dominant concern for states, that force is the major instrument, that governments preserve their unity as they interact with one another—security is achieved once threats to security can be prevented or at least managed (Nye 1988, pp. 6–8). Contrary to realist theory, social constructivism perceives security as resulting from the interactions of various actors, with social values and identities shaping these relations. Security is accordingly intersubjective; constituted by a process of interaction and negotiation. Once the perception of security has changed, and the fear of one another is overcome, security is achieved (Ulusoy 2003, p. 161). Especially noteworthy in this context is the distinction between security in an 'objective sense' (absence of threats) and in a 'subjective sense' (absence of fear)[1] (Wolfers 1962, p. 149). Security is achieved once both components exist.

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[1] "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" (Wolfers 1962, p. 149).

Security cannot be achieved at the expense of others. Actors deprived of security are possible threats. Security can only be achieved by combined efforts (Booth 1999, p. 41). In this view, security means that a certain degree of trust between actors—originating from a certain level of predictability—needs to be achieved by sharing commitments. The 'common security'[2] approach reflects this view: "International security must rest on a commitment to joint survival rather than on the threat of mutual destruction" (Palme 1982, p. ix).

There have been various interpretations of security. In general, security has been understood to be synonymous with the accumulation of power. It has been regarded as a commodity, and power[3] as the means of achieving it (Van Buuren 2010, p. 4). Most strikingly, the interpretation of security has changed with the end of the systemic antagonism between the Soviet Union (SU) and the United States (US). The traditional goal was to defend national sovereignty in terms of territory, people, and the system of government. Two principal assumptions supported this view: the state was seen to be relatively absolute, and the conflict between capitalism and communism was unresolvable (Allenby 2000, pp. 10–13).

Within the organizational framework of the UN the focus has shifted away from a state-centred to a more human-centred approach. The concept of human security was included in the agendas of UN component organizations (UNDP 1994; FAO 2003), and incorporated into the studies of the academic security community (Brauch 2005, p. 18). Despite a widening of the concept of security, a large number of states still adhere to a state-centred, militarized approach (Møller 2003, p. 279). Since the 9/11 attacks and the declaration of the 'war on terror', however, it has been possible to observe a shrinking of the concept of security. Military security, concentrating on state actors, has gained importance once more (Liotta 2002, p. 173).

This study will be based on a definition of security as 'survival-plus'. Since those threats in particular that endanger a particular referent object's survival in the near future are of vital importance, concern for survival entails a preoccupation with security (Art 1993, p. 821). Yet, the terms security and survival are often used in a similar way and present a confusing ambiguity. Defining security as 'survival-plus' removes this flaw. Here survival is understood as an existential condition, while security additionally comprises the ability to pursue cherished political and social ambitions; the ability to make "life-choices" (Booth 2007, p. 106).

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[2] In 1982 the Palme Commission led by Olof Palme issued the report on *Common Security*. It argued that both sides in the Cold War have legitimate security needs. Unilateral security for one block based on superior military resources is seen to be impossible (Palme 1982).

[3] 'Power' is understood in a Weberian sense as: "the chance of a man, or a number of men to realize their own will in communal action, even against the resistance of others" (Weber 2005, p. 28).

2.2 Human and National Security

As it was impossible to predict the end of the Cold War, the realist assumptions of security studies faced a severe crisis (Fierke 2007, p. 22). This stimulated reflection within the academic community about the meaning of security. The major shortcomings of the state-centred security paradigm were highlighted, especially that it did not provide an explanation for states threatening their own citizens or for state collapse (Mack 2004, p. 48). As a result, the need for a human-centred perspective was identified (UNDP 1994, p. 22).[4]

2.2.1 Human Security

Human security moves the focus away from states and towards individuals. It emphasizes human rights, safety from violence, and sustainable development (Paris 2001, p. 88). Although the term was coined by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in its 1994 *Human Development Report* (UNDP 1994), it emerged from the fusing of a number of different concepts (Hampson et al. 2001, p. 152):

- The first concept is human development. The first UNDP report of 1990 called for a people-centred approach to all forms of development. Accordingly, there was a demand that the development of national production and its impact on human development must be further investigated (MacFarlane et al. 2006, p. 143; UNDP 1990, p. iii).
- A second concept underlying human security is sustainable development. The *Brundtland Commission's* report of 1987 argued that protecting the environment is a prerequisite for the survival of humankind. Sustainable development was accordingly identified as a necessary long-term development strategy (WCED 1987).
- The third important emergent point for human security is the *responsibility to protect*. This thematizes tensions between the claim for universal human rights and the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign state. If a state is unable to fulfil its obligation to protect its citizens, or if the state itself becomes a danger, the *responsibility to protect* is transferred from the sovereign state to the international community (Tajbakhsh et al. 2007, p. 27).

Especially interesting is the connection between human security and development. In order to better distinguish between the concepts, human security has been

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[4] "The concept of security has for too long been interpreted narrowly: as security of territory from external aggression, or as protection of national interests in foreign policy […]. It has been related more to nation-states than to people […] For many of them, security symbolized protection from the threat of disease, hunger, unemployment, crime, social conflict, political repression, and environmental hazards" (UNDP 1994, p. 22).

defined as "a necessary but not sufficient precondition" for human development, with a suggestion that "If human security could cover the most urgent threats, development would then address societal well-being" (Owen 2004, p. 381). Seven dimensions of human security are distinguished by the UNDP:

- *Economic security*—assuring every individual a minimum requisite income.
- *Food security*—the guarantee of physical and economic access to basic foodstuffs.
- *Health security*—the guarantee of minimum protection from disease and unhealthy lifestyles.
- *Environmental security*—protecting people from the short- and long-term ravages of nature, man-made threats in nature, and deterioration of the natural environment.
- *Personal security*—protecting people from physical violence.
- *Community security*—protecting people from loss of traditional relationships and values and from sectarian and ethnic violence.
- *Political security*—ensuring that people live in a society that honours their basic human rights (UNDP 1994, pp. 24–33).

By conceptualizing human security in the political context of the United Nations, three pillars of human security have been identified:

- *Freedom from fear*—protecting the physical integrity of human beings.
- *Freedom from want*—providing access to the goods and services needed to satisfy material and non-material needs.
- *Freedom of future generations to inherit a healthy environment*[5]—environmental protection (Annan 2000a, pp. 1; Owen 2004, pp. 384).

In addition, the need for a fourth pillar has been identified and it has subsequently been conceptualized: *freedom from hazard impact*.[6] This implies that people are able to mobilize their resources and concentrate on sustainable development goals instead of not being able to escape the 'survival dilemma' (Brauch 2008).[7] Currently three different forms of conceptualizing human security can be identified.

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[5] "Freedom from want, freedom from fear, and the freedom of future generations to inherit a healthy environment—these are the interrelated building blocks of human—and therefore—national security" (Annan 2000a, p. 1).

[6] 'Hazard' is defined as: "A potentially damaging physical event, phenomenon and/or human activity, which may cause the loss of life or injury, property damage, social and economic disruption or environmental degradation" (UN/ISDR 2002). Hazard is not related to the persons or objects that could be affected. It describes only the threat emanating from an event. Hazards can be single, sequential, or combined in their origin and effects (UN/ISDR 2002).

[7] At this point we shall introduce the definition of 'crises'. Crises are defined as "specific, unexpected, and non-routine events or series of events that [create] high levels of uncertainty and threat or perceived threat to high priority goals" (Seeger et al. 1998, p. 254). The defining characteristics of crises are: they are unexpected, create uncertainty, and are seen as a threat to important goals (Seeger et al. 1998, p. 254).

- Firstly, it can be conceptualized as a level of analysis where the referent object is the individual affected by hazards, migration, crises, or conflicts (Brauch 2005, p. 22).
- Human security can also be understood using a mainly normative orientation and from a political perspective where human security is conceptualized in close relation to human rights. The two concepts still do not converge, as they employ separate ideas and separate functions. While the literature on human security acknowledges the importance of human rights, there has been little evidence that human rights theory has responded accordingly (Brauch 2005, p. 22; Boyle et al. 2004, p. 3).
- The third way to conceptualize human security is to understand it as an encompassing concept, including all five dimensions of the widened concept of security: economic, societal, environmental, political, and military security (Brauch 2005, p. 22; UNDP 1994).

The large number of possible definitions has often led to criticism and doubts about the usefulness of the concept of human security. About the referent object of human security there can be little debate. The focus is the individual human being or humankind, even if the referent object is conceptualized in a social context. Accordingly 'community security'—as part of human security—refers to individuals finding shelter in a community (Krause and Williams 1997, p. 47).

As for possible threats, conceptions differ greatly. Depending on which dimension is accentuated, the main threats to human security range from economical to environmental and societal security threats. In order to separate a danger to human security more accurately from other dangers, a distinction between *threats to human security*—hunger or disease—and *specific threats*—single actions that have an immediate effect on the safety or welfare of victims and demand immediate remedy—has been introduced (Thomas et al. 2002, pp. 183–185).

Human security's definitional flexibility makes it appealing for decision-makers, as various interests and goals can be projected on to human security (Chourou 2005, p. 12). Accordingly, policymakers in several countries have embraced the concept as the foundation of their foreign policy. Thirteen states have founded the *Human Security Network* (HSN), organized at ministerial level, in order to promote a human security perspective. Their individual ideas still differ to a great extent. In the Canadian context, human security is based on *freedom from fear* and humanitarian interventions are seen as a strong measure for its promotion. In Japan, *freedom from want* is stressed and much effort is put into economic development (Sato 2007, pp. 83–84).

As the concept grew in importance, Kofi Annan established a *Commission on Human Security* whose final report led to the establishment of the permanent *UN Advisory Board on Human Security* (CHS 2003). Human security received further international attention when the *Barcelona Report* of the *Study Group on Europe's Security Capabilities* called for a *Human Security Response Force* (Study Group on Europe's Security Capabilities 2004).

2.2.2 Convergence of Human and National Security?

It has been argued that human security has an increasing impact on national security (Thomas and Tow 2002, p. 179). Often a blurring of issues involving national and human security can be detected (Liotta 2002, p. 173), or it is even stated that ultimately, one concept—national security or human security—would gain a dominant position (Henk 2005, p. 101).

National security and human security are interlinked. For example, outwardly aggressive and inwardly repressive regimes can be a major source of human insecurity (Lodgaard 2004, p. 4). Underdevelopment in particular has been identified as a link between human and national security Mack 2004, p. 2).[8] Over the years a convergence of national and human security perspectives can be observed. The main reason stated for promoting a human security perspective is that of an "enlightened self-interest" (Barcelona Report 2004, p. 7). In order for a state to survive, it has to respect the security of its citizens, and the security of citizens of other states. This demonstrates one possible connection between human security—especially aspects of livelihood security[9]—and how these interact with national security issues. For example, predicted climate stresses on livelihood systems may lead to upheavals for those already vulnerable and incapable of adapting. This food and livelihood pressure might motivate populist or military coups (Wisner et al. 2004, p. 18).

2.3 Threat, Challenge, Vulnerability and Risk

One of the main tasks for security analysts is to investigate how some threats come to have priority over others and become the focus of security. More broadly speaking, this is a question of how specific objects come to be constituted as one type or another. The scope of relevant categories is large: probably the prevalent category is that of *threats*. Other possible categories are, for example, those of *crises* (Weldes 1996, p. 276), and *risks* (Beck 1986, 1992, 1999). The main idea behind distinguishing between different categories is to be able to estimate the process by which, under certain circumstances, objects are given meaning as threatening, while in a different environment they are understood to be non-threatening. An attempt to grasp this categorization that conceptualizes *threats*, *challenges*, *vulnerabilities* and *risks* as the categories for judging a new situation is presented in Brauch (2005, 2011).

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[8] "It is impossible to explore causal relationships between violence, on the one hand, and indicators of underdevelopment, on the other, if all are subsumed under the rubric of human insecurity" (Mack 2004, p. 2).

[9] "… The adequate and sustainable access to income and other resources to enable households to meet basic needs. This includes adequate access to food, potable water, health facilities, educational opportunities, housing, and time for community participation and social integration". (Frankenberger 1996, p. 3).

2.3.1 Threat

An early definition of *threat* is: "capability coupled with intent" (Singer 1958, p. 94). Clearly applied to the possibility of a nuclear war between the Soviet Union (SU) and the United States (US), this definition mainly focuses on military capabilities. The assumed intentions of the Soviet Union were built into models of massive retaliation, deterrence, and mutually assured destruction. Basically, intentions appeared to be less important, as it seemed obvious that the SU would seek confrontation once the capabilities were in place (Flynt 2000, p. 32). While the systems of antagonism between the SU and the US continued, threats were conceptualized in a dual way, as a threat to state institutions by force (capabilities), and by ideas (ideology) (Buzan 1983, p. 57). The referent object of security remained the state, and accordingly threats were defined in close connection to the security of states.

Obviously military threats can pose major threats to the state and affect all its components, as the use of force is involved. Political threats also present a constant concern for a state. They can manifest themselves as competition amongst ideologies, or as an attack on the nation itself (Stone 2009, p. 5). In this respect it is important to distinguish between international political threats and those arising internally from the impact of alternative ideas about the form of government or about the legitimacy of state leaders (Buzan 1983, p. 120).

The drastically increased number of violent domestic wars after the end of the Cold War (Gantzel 2000, p. 305), an increase in asymmetric forms of warfare, as well as the important role of non-state actors—such as terrorist networks—have stimulated a change in the conception of threats (Stepanova 2008, p. 3). This conception now requires an element that is not controllable and raises the possibility of destroying an actor's key value or commodity. Since the early 1990s, a threat has also been defined as referring to the dangers due to the manifold destructive potential of the environment and its global consequences (Brauch 2005, p. 26). The United Nations has acknowledged the widening of the concept of security by identifying new security threats, such as poverty, infectious disease and environmental degradation, and war and violence within states (United Nations Department of Public Information 2004, p. 11).[10]

2.3.2 Challenge

Despite its regular use, the term *challenge* has rarely been defined. Challenge may basically be seen as similar to threat, except that an actor has a slightly firmer grip on a challenge and may be able to handle it in the future (Brauch 2003, p. 76). A security challenge may also refer to security issues that are not acutely

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[10] "[…] we know all too well that the biggest security threats we face now, and in the decades ahead, go far beyond States waging aggressive war. They extend to poverty, infectious disease and environmental degradation; war and violence within States; […] the threats are from non-State actors as well as States, and to human security as well as State security" (United Nations Department of Public Information 2004, p. 11).

time-critical or are non-violent. These challenges are primarily issues of the internal security agenda (Brauch 2005, p. 29). To address a security challenge the referent object has to be clearly defined, as a human security perspective will identify totally different security challenges from a national security perspective. As the range of security threats has shifted away from primarily military threats, so has the range of security challenges. As a human security perspective becomes more and more integrated into the agenda of the European Union, 'soft' security challenges, such as poverty, collapse of the environment and underdevelopment are being increasingly addressed (Barcelona Report 2004, p. 6).

2.3.3 Vulnerability

To affect security a threat to a cherished object has to be identified and the referent object must be vulnerable to this threat.[11] Accordingly the concept of *vulnerability* has achieved a high degree of recognition in different fields, such as disaster management and development studies. Vulnerability can be defined as "a weakness that makes targets susceptible to physical or emotional injury or an attack" (Gregory 2009, p. 406).

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) distinguishes vulnerability from sensitivity[12] and adaptive capacity,[13] and defines it in the context of global climate change as "the degree to which a system is susceptible to, or unable cope with, adverse effects of climate change including climate variability and extremes" (Smit et al. 1999, p. 885; IPCC 2001). The concept of vulnerability was widened so that it received a dual focus; susceptibility to a certain threat, and unusual difficulties in coping and recovering (Bohle 2009, p. 521). Two basic features of vulnerability can be distinguished. These are 'exposure'[14] and 'insufficient capacities'.[15]

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[11] "Insecurity reflects a combination of threats and vulnerabilities, and the two cannot meaningfully be separated. […] national security policy can either focus inward, seeking to reduce the vulnerabilities of the state itself, or outward, seeking to reduce external threat by addressing its sources" (Buzan 1991, p. 112).

[12] Sensitivity is the "Degree to which a system is affected by or responsive to climate stimuli" (IPCC 2001).

[13] Adaptive capacity is the "potential or capability of a system to adapt to climatic stimuli or their effects or impacts" (IPCC 2001).

[14] 'Physical exposure' is the presence and density of the people, habitat, networks, and goods and services in risk zones, defining potential losses or damages, both human and non-human (stakes). Physical exposure also is the socio-ecological: human-induced ecosystemic perturbations aggravating the natural hazard.

[15] 'Insufficient capacities' to prevent, prepare for, face and cope with hazards and disasters can be separated into: physical weakness, legal vulnerability, organisational vulnerability, technical vulnerability, political vulnerability, socio-economical vulnerability, psychological vulnerability, and cultural vulnerability (Nathan 2009).

Vulnerability to a hazard is to a large extent created by the relevant social order. The division of labour, cultural values and legal rights strongly influence the vulnerability of a referent object to security threats. Vulnerability can be understood as an estimate of the potential scale of destruction and is therefore a function of a society's ability to adjust to a new set of circumstances (Barnett 2001, pp. 132–133). Often vulnerabilities are cumulative, causing disasters which in turn further aggravate those vulnerabilities. Vulnerability is both hazard-related and subject-related. The level of analysis (individual, group, society) has to be made clear, as the vulnerabilities at one level are totally different from the vulnerabilities at another level. Furthermore, different subjects—even those at the same level—have different vulnerabilities (Nathan 2009).

The factors influencing vulnerability can be divided into external and internal. The internal factors are those of coping with and anticipating a threat, while the external factors are those involving an exposure to risk and shock (Bohle 2009, p. 521). Often vulnerability is described as the "internal side of risk" (Birkmann 2006, p. 16). This highlights vulnerability's dependence on certain characteristics, for example of an individual, an environmental system, or a social structure (Birkmann 2006, p. 16; Wisner et al. 2004, p. 12).

2.3.4   Risk

Risk is described as the leitmotif of contemporary society. It is the combination of the likelihood of a future event and its possible impact. As a concept, risk represents our "desire to control the future" (Giddens 1998, p. 101). Risk presupposes some form of uncertainty that cannot be removed, but with a possibility of managing this uncertainty. By framing future events in the form of risk, these can be either measured or prioritized (Gibson 2005, p. 23). Risk has a dual nature. This means its perception may not necessarily be equal to its empirically measurable impact (Slovic 2000, p. 17). Duality presents a dilemma for managing risk, as the task is that of managing the risk itself as well as managing the fear of that risk.

Before the beginning of modernity and the industrial age, risks were perceived to be induced by non-human forces; so-called 'external risks'. Modern societies are exposed to a number of man-made risks that are a product of modernization itself: "manufactured risks" (Giddens 1998, p. 99). As the nature of risk shifts away from external to manufactured risks it is possible to assess the level of risk being produced. By reflecting on the way a risk is manufactured, the method of manufacturing this risk can be changed as well (Beck 1992, p. 23). With the notion of manufactured risks and human impact on the environment, a number of environmental risks have gained attention. These include possible disputes arising from human-induced local environmental degradation or scarcity-induced conflict over resources such as water (Kasperson et al. 2001, p. 45).

2.4 Security Goals

There are various categories into which the perception of security can be classified, but the envisioned goals of security must be taken into account as the perceived end to which security efforts should lead. Based on the 'sectoralization of security' (Brauch 2009), the goals of security can be conceptualized as the guiding rationale of the actors involved in each sector. Each sector has its own primary concern—which closely mirrors the guiding rationale—and until it has been satisfied, the security of the sector is at peril. Security goals are closely related to the capacities an actor can rely on to achieve these goals. Strong actors can be expected to employ various methods to try and reach their goals. Moderately strong actors may be assumed to constantly try and improve their position, while weak actors can be expected never to reach their prime concern and to struggle for survival from day to day. The various prime concerns and particular capacities lead to a complexity concerning security goals. Accounting for this complexity and in order to reduce it to a level at which it can be handled more easily, three security goals have been distinguished (Zeitoun 2006, pp. 2–5):

- First-order goals are the bare primary concerns. Their main characteristic is a notion of base values or bottom lines which might trigger defence mechanisms. Actors who have not been able to achieve first-order goals are forced to deal with threats to their survival. Behaviour concerning first-order goals is guided by a perceived need for protection. Actors who have achieved a first-order goal, particularly those who have struggled to do so, tend to take a conservative approach in order to maintain their achievement.
- Second-order goals are more beneficial, higher-risk achievements. A certain amount of risk is required to achieve these goals. Hence the goals can be considered as risk ceilings. The dominant characteristic governing behaviour at this level is accumulation, or the acquisition of resources, allies etc., enabling improvement or consolidation of the actor's position.
- Third-order goals may be considered irrational maxima. The overriding characteristic governing behaviour is supremacy, where the goal of preservation of a position is seen to justify the means used against and suffering endured by competing actors (Warner 2006, pp. 17–20).

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