

# How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve: Prioritizing New Security Studies

In the realm of international relations, security has been a central concern for scholars and policymakers alike. Traditional approaches to security studies have primarily focused on military threats and state-centric responses. However, in recent decades, the concept of security has expanded to encompass a wider range of issues, including economic, environmental, and societal concerns. This article explores the emergence and dissolution of security problems, particularly in the context of the "new security studies" approach.

## Emergence of Security Problems

Security problems emerge from a complex interplay of factors, both internal and external to a given society. Some of the key factors that can contribute to the emergence of security problems include:



## Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve (PRIO New Security Studies)

by Akinyele Omowale Umoja

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- **Economic inequality and poverty:** Economic disparities can create social unrest and resentment, which can lead to violence and instability.
- **Environmental degradation:** Climate change, pollution, and resource scarcity can threaten livelihoods and destabilize populations.
- **Political instability:** Weak or corrupt governments, conflict-prone societies, and authoritarian regimes can all contribute to insecurity.
- **Technological advancements:** New technologies, such as weapons of mass destruction and cyber threats, can pose serious security challenges.
- **Globalization and interconnectedness:** Increased interconnectedness can facilitate the spread of security threats across borders, such as terrorism and pandemics.

It is important to note that security problems are not static. They can evolve and transform over time, as new threats emerge and existing ones diminish. For example, the end of the Cold War led to a decline in the threat of nuclear war, but it also gave rise to new security concerns, such as terrorism and ethnic conflict.

## **Dissolution of Security Problems**

Security problems can also dissolve or diminish over time, through various processes. Some of the factors that can contribute to the dissolution of security problems include:

- **Economic development and poverty reduction:** Improved living standards can help to alleviate social unrest and reduce the risk of violence.
- **Environmental conservation and sustainability:** Addressing environmental challenges can reduce the threat posed by climate change and resource scarcity.
- **Political stability and good governance:** Strong and effective governments can promote stability and reduce the likelihood of conflict.
- **Technological progress and innovation:** New technologies can also be used to enhance security, such as surveillance systems and early warning mechanisms.
- **Diplomacy and international cooperation:** Cooperation between nations can help to resolve conflicts peacefully and address shared security challenges.

It is important to emphasize that the dissolution of security problems is not always permanent. Factors such as economic crises, environmental disasters, or political instability can lead to the re-emergence of security threats.

## **New Security Studies**

The concept of "new security studies" emerged in the 1980s as a critique of traditional approaches to security studies. New security studies scholars argue that security should be understood in a broader sense to encompass non-military threats, and that it should focus on the well-being of individuals and communities rather than solely on the security of states.

New security studies scholars have identified a number of key features that distinguish new security studies from traditional approaches:

- **Broader definition of security:** New security studies expands the concept of security to include non-military threats, such as economic, environmental, and societal concerns.
- **Human-centered focus:** New security studies places a strong emphasis on the well-being of individuals and communities, rather than solely on the security of states.
- **Interdisciplinary approach:** New security studies draws on a wide range of disciplines, including political science, sociology, economics, and environmental studies.
- **Emphasis on collaboration and cooperation:** New security studies scholars argue that security problems can best be addressed through collaboration and cooperation between states, international organizations, and civil society groups.
- **Normative and critical approach:** New security studies scholars often approach security issues from a normative and critical perspective, questioning the assumptions and values that underlie traditional approaches to security.

New security studies has been influential in shaping the way that security is understood and addressed in international relations. It has helped to broaden the scope of security studies and to bring attention to a wider range of security threats.

Security problems emerge and dissolve through a complex interplay of factors. Understanding the dynamics of security problems is essential for

developing effective policies and strategies to address them. The new security studies approach provides a valuable framework for analyzing and addressing security problems in a broader and more comprehensive way. By adopting a human-centered focus, emphasizing collaboration and cooperation, and taking an interdisciplinary approach, new security studies scholars have helped to advance our understanding of security and to promote more effective security policies.



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