

International Collaboration on Societal Security: NATO, the EU, the UN and Norway

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Standardized Security?

In 2007, Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel declared that there is no longer any demarcation between internal and external security. The **globalization of threats** and subsequent demands from international organizations to **standardize responses and preparedness** may lead to an assumption that there exists an international consensus concerning the frame, scope and reach of today's security issues.

The drive for standardization and extensive cooperation in the international arena may create the impression that states view the same risks as being relevant for their respective societies. Such an impression, however, is not at all borne out in the **value premises** of differing states. In what follows, we will examine the scope and limits of the assumption of an international security consensus and focus on differences in understandings of societal security at the international level – particularly between Norway and other states. By examining these issues, we will be able to discern how far globalization has stretched Norwegian **national security** into a continuum that is standardized to fit an **international security and risk agenda**, and whether there exists a delimited national conceptualization that reflects unique national concerns.

This brief will consider the similarities and differences that exist between international and Norwegian conceptions of societal security; how differences in the actual societal challenges facing individual nation-states affect such conceptions; and the possible levels of and degrees of cooperation between Norway and international organizations in relation to societal security.

As much security-related work is classified, the Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection and Emergency Planning (DSB) becomes one of few sources on security by the state establishment. In DSB's mandate, it is made clear that Norwegian involvement with international organizations must contribute to Norwegian societal security. This may be indirect contributions, such as democracy in general, or they may be of direct consequence, such as improved climate conditions. DSB's contributions to international cooperation are additional to those provided by the Norwegian military through some of the same channels. DSB has a clear agenda for **internal security** and **regional response** to regional events. Still its focus on the importance of international cooperation and the priority that it gives its work with NATO, the EU and UN programmes on civil protection, mirrors the statement that national and international security are intertwined.

Both the EU and the UN aim to standardize civil protection and crisis management among their members. It is often stated that experiences shared between members are meant to contribute in a common strategy on matters such as terrorism (international) and environmental/natural disasters. For the EU programme initiatives, the aim is to assist EU citizens in *and outside* the EU, giving the initiatives a global arena. International standardizations are included in DSB's portfolio and agenda. In this sense, the reality of national security demands that one move beyond traditional conceptualizations of the national as something that is constricted by territorial borders. Yet even the newly updated Norwegian approach to 'total defence' does not escape traditional geopolitical understandings of national security.

International vs. Norwegian Conceptions of Security

The UN strategy for disaster prevention features a broad focus on natural disasters, in addition to efforts to combat international terrorism. Despite significant signs of aging – not to mention the UN's considerable emphasis in recent years on the 'responsibility to protect' – the principle of sovereignty remains an important pillar of UN security thinking.

In addition to natural disasters, NATO, while building on the Article 5 principles of member co-protection, opens up for intervention outside the territories of NATO member-countries and more inter-organizational cooperation. In the Balkan conflict, for example, NATO forces cooperated with the EU and performed a number of policing and administrative tasks, in addition to traditional military operations. This form of mixed operation is increasing within both the UN and NATO. EU, on the other hand, does not have the type of traditional military standby force that the UN and NATO each have hosted, yet are eager to cooperate. From the early 1990s, the increasing role of the EU in foreign policy issues led to discussions over whether such a force should be created. However, EU tends mostly to rely on tools of **soft power**, such as diplomacy, workshops, economic sanctions and humanitarian relief. EU has embraced the concept of societal security in a manner where security is understood normatively as part of European identity. Common standards for response are established and while task forces are maintained by individual states the structure is regulated by EU. EU is also engaged outside the territory, but on the behalf of its member-states, such as in the case of the imprisoned Bulgarian nurses in Libya 2007. Yet, EU tends also to express its 'normative power' in ways that suggest more a civilizational than a military project. So, while EU, like the UN recognizes the priority of sovereignty, it works on Europeanizing common normative understandings and approaches among member-states.

While Norwegian national values are by no means unique in a global context, the selection and promotion of a certain set of values above others may be used to identify a national image and imagination of uniqueness. In Norway, the concept of egalitarianism is part of the national imagination, institutionalized in the standing principle of a **decentralized authority to act**. The principle is believed to generate a faster and more efficient response and may include non-state actors, such as private companies. Another part of this principle is that security is understood to be every citizen's responsibil-

ity. However, the institutional focus of security in Norway comes in conflict with this idea of individual responsibility on issues where military authority is involved in civil arenas where individual and non-state actors exist. A relevant example is IT security, an area where private companies to some degree are better-suited actors than the military. Despite this, IT security is as part of critical infrastructure, under military domain. When it comes to specific national defence and security-political issues Norway follows a traditional military hierarchical model. However, the ideational and normative part of security thinking is at the forefront in political articulations of state societal and national security.

Key Issues

Today, international organizations focus on international terrorism and environmental degradation or resource scarcity as major risks for societal security. Societal security has also been highlighted as an important part of national and international security.

Migration is another element within the societal security concept that has become a politically defined threat in EU member-states. The fact that the Schengen agreement allows visa-holders to travel freely within the Schengen area has contributed to standardization – and, in some cases, reorganization – of the immigration practices of member-states. In this regard, political views within Norway are similar to those found in some larger EU member-states, such as Britain and France. International terrorism is often tied to the potential threat of uncontrolled immigration or the presence of non-integrated migrant communities. The traditional countermeasures against international terrorism are border controls and airport security. The same measures are intended to control other risk factors tied to uncontrolled migration, such as the spread of disease and pandemics. Border control and airport security provide excellent examples of standardization of security procedures independently of the particular levels of risk that individual states face.

In conclusion one can say that like any nation, Norway faces particular security challenges stemming from specific, often local, risks, sometimes due to geology, climate or geography. At the same time, a typical set of international security concerns and concepts can be found within the Norwegian political security agenda, even when the threats they address do not pose an immediate risk to Norwegian society. The strain this puts on Norwegian security thinking moves in both directions of the internal and the external. In order to implement its own particular security measures, Norway some-

times has to work around the logic of international, globalized threat to accommodate, justify and legitimate security measures. Equally, internationally identified threats must be logically justified and integrated into Norwegian security planning. This is understood by the Norwegian authorities, and NOU 18 (2003) explicitly states the need to identify Norwegian **direct interests** as the primary concern of the national judiciary and to delimit them from international cooperative interests. The process may be eased by the understanding that there is a continuum between internal and external security and not a clear divide. Thus, while **international terrorism in Norway** may not seem a high risk to national security, it is defined politically in such terms.

Reflecting Societal Differences in International Organizations

Cooperation and standardization has its challenges when faced with individual values and concerns among states. This reflects, for example, the way in which the influence of particular states or political alliances within international organizations can effect neighbouring conceptualizations and policies. The social and cultural premises of stronger states or alliances of several states often have greater influence than those of weaker ones. As a result, international organizations may signal and emphasize a set of concepts and values that do not necessarily reflect the concerns of a majority of states. For instance, the threat of terrorism has a prominent place in the current security strategies of most international organizations, though the threat is not uniformly experienced on the social and cultural level, and it has higher salience for some states than for others. At other times, certain concerns are brought forward at the expense of others, recognizing that concentrating on a specific global issue increases effectiveness. Some states lack the resources to follow the focus of international concerns. Security costs and may not be available for everyone.

Arguments for a global societal security that would take into account both large and small actors on the international scene are far from developed. At the same time, international organizations such as NATO, EU and OSCE play a role in **negotiating key concepts** of security or risks, even if they reflect a bias toward the social and cultural values of the industrialized Western world. In the UN we can observe at times a considerable gap between international consensus and the values and interests of weaker members. If some states in the UN system do not view a question as having a high level of

international relevance – for example, whether environmental degradation is of immediate social or cultural concern – this may be due to the predominance of more local societal security concerns, such as internal violence or large-scale poverty. This, however, does not mean that the world's environment may not affect those states. In short, international organizations may identify concerns that individual states cannot or are not willing to handle on their own, yet which may represent future risks. Likewise, health taboos surrounding issues such as HIV/AIDS may benefit from international pressure when national authorities are unwilling to break such taboos.

Cooperation between National and International Levels of Societal Security

Norway has traditionally had a focus on the role of the civilian sector in national security. This type of focus has reached a higher level of interest internationally after the end of the Cold War; and may also influence Norway's interest in international organizations. A number of different collaborative programmes managed by DSB illustrate how Norway as an individual state seeks to export and promote its own understanding of the premises, values and organization of security, building in particular on its particular experiences with civil–military cooperation.

SCEPC (Senior Civil Emergency Planning Committee) is the main NATO organ that coordinates the work in eight sub-groups on emergency planning for food, civilian air and ocean traffic, energy supplies, health, critical infrastructure, and civilian targets. SCEPC also heads CEP. The CEP (Civil Emergency Planning) is intended to cover a vast field, ranging from minor accidents to large-scale disasters and other undesirable events (including the outbreak of war and terrorist attacks). The goal of the CEP is to protect governance structures, populations and the values of society against unwanted events and developments caused by human action and to limit the negative consequences of natural disasters. The EADRRCC (Euro-Atlantic Centre for Coordinating Disaster Relief) was founded in response to a perceived need for a more concrete cooperative unit for disaster relief on the global arena.

The EU has several agencies active in different areas, such as coordination, cooperation and standardization. Most important are SEVESO II (Council Directive 96/82/EC of 1996 regarding major accidents involving hazardous substances) and the EU Action Programme for Civil Protection. The EU operates with three principles on prevention, pre-

paredness and response, and is legislatively based on having national civil protection services cooperating in the EU arena. The EU sponsors workshops and conferences on developing cooperation projects and coherence among member-states and in particular in view of enlargement with candidate countries. The UN has a number of institutions, such as Emergency Aid and the ISDR (International Strategy for Disaster Reduction).

In conclusion the organizational structures differ in the three most influential international organizations. NATO has an internal structure where member states contribute with finances and personnel directly. The EU tends to externalize both personnel and resources, projecting its normative influence outward. Finally the UN conforms more largely to the principle of sovereignty, leaving it up to national authorities to implement priority goals.

In tandem with a political focus, national militaries have been assigned or have themselves, assimilated the new security agenda. As pointed out in Policy Brief 9/2007, this opens up for numerous challenges. The military presence in traditionally civil domains such as humanitarian relief is not unproblematic – neither ethically nor operationally. There has been an increased use of international intervention, both under guise of “responsibility to protect” or as prevention against perceived threats to sovereign security from especially non-state actors. Both types of intervention involve military-led operations where the armed forces often are assigned control over areas such as relief, policing, and various forms of civil administration.

Civil protection is mostly organized through inter-institutional cooperation between different civil and military sections of national establishments or international organizations. To some degree, this mirrors the Norwegian approach to societal security, where civil-military institutional cooperation has been developed from 1945 under the various conceptualizations of “Total Defence”. Across the institutional cooperation on all levels lies a reliance on technological security through traditional state

control measures such as policing, surveillance, border controls, or on abrogating laws on civil liberties. The new security threats are identified as stemming mostly from natural disasters or individuals with harmful intents. Still measures to counter such threats have not been sought in the same areas; rather they have been sought in traditional fields of security and especially technology.

Conclusion: Societal Security on the Border of the National/International

It will prove vital in the future to chart and remain aware of the various tensions between the national and the international in relation to understanding societal security. Are these coming closer to each other through international collaborations, or is Norwegian social and cultural particularity becoming increasingly visible? Is there a security consensus that overrides national concerns in individual states? Norway’s conformity to certain security measures of international demands must be legitimized nationally. This may lead to an **internationalization of national security concepts**, which again reinforces the blurring of the territorial in the idea of the national. Yet, the fact that Norway is making efforts to export its conceptions of ‘total defence’ suggests that states act to influence the international landscape of ideas and values. However, other political strengths and capacities must be present if such influence is to be achieved. Norway may succeed in forums where its position is stronger. The general activity of the Norwegian state internationally is therefore of vital importance and is where Norwegian influence must be gauged.

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