

From Risk/Security Analysis via Timespace to a Model of Human Vulnerability and Human Security

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Abstract : For us humans, risk and insecurity are intimately linked to vulnerabilities - where there is vulnerability, there is potentially risk and insecurity. Reducing vulnerability through compensatory measures means decreasing the likelihood of a certain external event be qualified as a risk/threat/assault, and thus also means increasing the individual's sense of security. The paper suggests that a meaningful way to approach the study of risk/ insecurity is to organize thinking about the vulnerabilities that external phenomena evoke in humans as perceived by them. Such phenomena are, through a set of given vulnerabilities, potentially translated into perceptions of "insecurity." An ontological discussion about salient timespace characteristics of external phenomena as perceived by humans, including such which potentially can be qualified as risk/threat/assault, leads to the positing of two dimensions which are central for describing what in the paper is called the essence of risk/threat/assault. As is argued, such modeling helps analysis steer free of the subjective factor which is intimately connected to human perception and which mediates between phenomena "out there" potentially identified as risk/threat/assault, and their translation into an experience of security or insecurity. A proposed set of universally given vulnerabilities are scrutinized with the help of the two dimensions, resulting in a modeling effort featuring four realms of vulnerabilities which together represent a dynamic whole. This model in turn informs modeling on human security.

Keywords : human vulnerabilities, human security, immediate-inert, material-immaterial, timespace

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