

Revisionist approaches to security

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Outline

- Traditional vs. revisionist approaches
- Broadening / deepening
- Reflecting
- Normatizing
- Politicizing

Traditional approaches

- **State-centrism:** state as a referent object and actor of security.
 - **Anarchically organized** international system.
 - Emphasis on **military and political threats.**

 - **Liberals:** moderating effects of institutions and interdependencies.
- **narrow view of security.**

Revisionist approaches: incentives

- Krause and Williams (1996) identify three incentives for revision of traditionalist approach:
 - (1) Ongoing disagreement on definition of security.
 - (2) New, post-cold war security environment.
 - (3) Inability of security studies to reflect emerging issues.

Revisionist approaches: broadening / deepening

- Changing international environment brings new security challenges.
- **Broadening:** inclusion of other than politico-military threats.
- Ability of national states to ensure security is diminishing.
- **Deepening:** inclusion of referent object other than national state.

Revisionist approaches: broadening / deepening

	Broadening: source of a threat	
Deepening: referent object (preferred level of analysis)	military threats	military and non-military threats
national state (international system)	(neo)realism, geopolitics	(Copenhagen school, liberalism)
collective non-state actors (+ domestic, regional, trans-)	culturalism	Copenhagen school, liberalism
individuals, biosphere, complex systems (+ individual, global)	-	critical approaches, human security

Philosophical cleavages

	Objectivism	Interpretativism
Materialism	(Neo)realism (Neo)liberalism Marxism	-
Idealism	Conventional constructivism	Critical constructivism (critical theories) Post-structuralism

Revisionist approaches: reflecting

- (Security) research is always **situated and context-dependent**.
- Definitions of security and security issues are **never neutral** - always serve to certain purposes.
- The **academic understanding of security** influences understanding of security by political elites.
- A plurality of interpretations → **relativization of security**.

Revisionist approaches: normalizing

- **Normative statements:** statements about what **should be**.
- Robert Cox (1981): **problem-solving** vs. **critical theories**.
- Each definition of security has certain **normative consequences**.

Revisionist approaches: politicizing

- Security considerations **are integral part of politics.**
- Politicization **makes a given issue visible and important.**
- Politicization **promotes alternative voices and positions.**
- **Researchers should** abandon position of “neutral” observers and **actively engage in political struggles** over security issues.