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# Security, control and deviance: Mapping the security domain and why it matters

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## **Security, Control and Deviance: Mapping the security domain and why it matters**

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Security is one of the foundations on which a stable and cohesive society is built. It is this security that allows citizens to go about their daily lives with freedom and certainty,affording them the ability to make their own choices as to what they do. Yet it may be argued that security is a concept that is misunderstood and perceived in a myriad of ways by the various stratum of society. Since the tragic events of 9 September 2001, security has become a much used and abused term. Law and legislation have been changed and enacted to protectand control the community. Personal rights and freedoms have been given up, wars have been waged and it may be argued by some, police states have emerged out of democracy in the name and pursuit of security. In this period,the global community has witnessed massive growth of global security organisation and the rise and legitimization of its cousin the global private military company. Yet there is remarkably little consensus as to what security is, what constitutes the security domain and just how much freedom should be traded in a free and democratic culture in pursuit of this nebulous concept that issecurity. The purpose of this paper is to establish a roadmap for domain exploration which focuses attention on the complex and often contradictory nature of security.

Notwithstanding scholarly difference and interpretation of the context of security, and the lack of a singularly acceptable definition of security and ignoring the argument that security is so broad as to lack meaning, the authors will assert that security is a legitimate and necessary construct, with specific concerns.This position is framed within the argument that the alternative of non-security(Manunta, 1998) is not acceptable in the context of a civilised world.This paper is presented in four parts, beginning with a discussion of the domain in general. In the second part the concept of security deviance will be discussed before finally proposing a way forward for domain research and discourse.Then, the structural relations, indicating the depth and embedded nature of security in a modern society, will be presented to articulate the opportunities for security deviance in a modern society.

### **Security: definition and context**

Whilst various definitions of security which have emerged over the years, andsome of these will be explored further in this paper, in order to anchor the reader contextually the following definition represents the authors view of security for this paper: security is the application of sufficient control mechanisms to ensure a safe environment which enables a nation, organisation, or individual the freedom of action to engage in an activity in a specific context.

When scholars, professionals or the lay community define security it is usually done so within an individual or group contextual paradigm. Throughout the 80s and into the 90s, the scholarly discussion of security tended to be dominated by the cold war, national security and the concept of high security. However the last decade has seen much of the security dialogue (whilst still national security centric) framed within a context of terrorism. This period has also seen an increased growth of global security companies and a resurgence of private military power as a legitimised mechanism of security. Each of which has been the subject of significant debate(Cha, 2000; Drohan, 2003; Hough, 2008; Leander, 2005; Singer, 2003).In parallel there has also been an emerging security dialogue framed by climate and environmental concerns(Barnett, 2003; Cordell, Drangert, & White, 2009; Ehrlich, Ehrlich, & Daily, 1993; Myers, 1989). Such security dialogue is limited in scope and dominated by elites, and fails to account for the layman’s security context and concerns. Security is more than a philosophical construct. It is a reality that all people and organisations interact with throughout the course of daily activity even though that interaction may be beyond a sensed threshold.

What is the concept of security and is the concept of security equally understood by both layman and the elites? Wolfers(1952)suggested the concept of security could be explained by an “absence of threats to acquired values”.Baldwin,(1997) however suggests a modification of this phraseology in order to limit ambiguity and articulates the concept as “a low probability of damage to acquired values”. Baldwin further argues that once

we have an agreed concept of security, future dialogue is bounded by that common understanding and becomes meaningful to all participants irrespective of their contextual paradigm, i.e. national security, corporate security or one focused on food security. The concept of security therefore is a foundation on which the security domain is built and the domain is then described or maybe defined by the nature of the adjective applied. Manunta(1998) proffers an alternative perspective on security, arguing that security is a function of an antagonist, an asset and a protector in a specific situation. Whereas Baldwin seeks to broaden the context of security to account for threats posed by natural events such as flood and earthquakes, Manunta seeks to exclude such natural events and limit security to situations in which a protagonist with some form of intent exists. Whilst Manunta refers to assets suggesting a physical attribute requiring protection, Baldwin and Wolfers use the term acquired value suggesting things beyond the physical. For the purpose of this paper we will use the term acquired value to refer to both tangible and intangible assets.

Accordant with Manunta's(1998) view, security appears to revolve on three attributes. Firstly, there needs to exist a threat of some form where if no threat exists then damage to an acquired value is unlikely and therefore the context of security is not required. Secondly an acquired value must exist and it must be of interest to both the threat and the protector, without an interest or focus from both the threat and the protector the context of security will not exist. Finally the protector must exist and must be aware of the acquired value of interest and must have a genuine fear or belief that there is a threat to the acquired value. This model whilst adequate at a simplistic level is lacking when the situation becomes more complex. Ownership of the acquired value is rarely considered and there appears an assumption that protection and ownership have mutually understood perceptions of the threat.

An alternative construct may provide a better definition of security whilst also providing insight as to why security may be perceived as much in the negative as the positive by the community. For security to exist, a threat must also exist where the threat may be fully defined or have the potential to cause harm. An acquired value must exist and it must be known to exist. The value must have an owner and finally there must be a guardian. However, the owner and guardian may not be the same. In such circumstances difficulty arises in the security context when the owner and the guardian perceive the threat differently thereby perceiving differing needs in terms of response or applied control mechanisms. This it may be argued provides a useful lens through which to view government and community response to the perceived threat of terrorism. In this case the threat, terrorism, is recognised by both the government and wider community. The acquired value in this case is the Australian way of life. The guardian is the Australian government through its proxies, the national security community. However the owner of the Australian way of life is not the government, though it does have stake in such, the owner is in fact the Australian community. At this point the community as owner of the way of life must determine, what is an acceptable trade-off between freedom of action and a safe environment? An optimal outcome for the owner is sufficient protection whilst maintaining maximum freedom of action. Whereas the government, as the guardian of that way of life, will seek to influence and persuade the owner of the need for maximum security control mechanisms in accordance with its perception of the threat. In each case either stakeholder may exploit fear, or the absence of fear, through amplification or attenuation messages, to make the case for their optimal outcome.

## **Security as a Mechanism for Control**

Whilst there appears many different understandings of security, a common theme is emerging from the literature posing the question as to whether or not security can be used as a lulling term for control through the use of what Weiten(2002, p. 258) refers to as 'semantic slanting'. Semantic slanting refers to the use of language to deliberately choose words which create specific emotional meanings. In this case this is to imply a service rather than impose power over others. Drawing on such literature, the contention of this paper is that in reality all security is focused towards achieving a desired level of control within a context, be it globally, nationally, at a State level, organisational level or domestic –individual level.

Underwood (1984, p. x) identified the very construct of security as one of ancient need which was expressed as a psychological necessity for humans by Maslow(1970, p. 39). However, Brooks (2009, p. 12) highlights that, as a construct, security has defied singular definition, and can be found to be defined in many ways. For example, Underwood (1984, p. x) defined security as "confidence in the retention of belongings", "confidence in personal safety", whereas O'Block, Donnermeyer and Doeren(1991, p. 7) defined security as "freedom from fear of crime and the actual danger of being the victim of crime". Such views in principle are supported by Craighead's(2003, p. 21) definition which sees security as "free from danger" or "safe". Yet Fisher and Green

(2004, p. 21) expand the concept to define it as "a stable relatively predictable environment in which an individual or group may pursue its ends without disruption or harm and without fear or disturbance or injury". Such definitions focus the concept of security towards the inner workings of a nation state, but Brooks (2009, p. 12) points out, security must also consider national security and the defence of a nation, a context emphasised in the writings of Ullman (1983) and consistent with the earlier writings of Rothschild (1995). Thus, in the words of Rothschild (1995, p. 55), security can be extended downwards from the security of nation states within an international or supranational environment to include the security of groups and individuals. In addition, security can be extended horizontally to include contextual elements and encompasses military, political, economic, social, environmental or human concerns.

Whilst it is evident that many definitions and contexts exist, a common theme is that for there to be security, there must be a means of control. This point is emphasised in the physical security domain which has adopted the term access control (ASIS, 2009; Norman, 2012) and is supported in security focused texts such as the guidelines for security lighting (IESNA, 2003, p. 3) which articulates that for property the burden of security and safety is generally placed on those individuals who have primary control over the property, arguing with the right of control comes the responsibility of control. This point is evident when analysing the themes emerging across the various security contexts in relation to the various definitions of control. Definitions which include (a) to command or rule, (b) to check, limit or restrain, (c) to regulate or operate, (d) to regulate, (e) and to examine (Hanks, Makins, & Adams, ND). Such themes of control are embedded in the various discourses on security.

Ullman (1983) argues that for society to work there must be control, both externally and militarily, and internally through other mechanisms. Drawing on the early writings of Hobbes, Ullman (1983, p. 130) argues the point that regardless of whether threats to security stem from within or externally of one's own nation, a victim is still a victim and so citizens within a state seek protection against both types of threats, that is foreign and domestic. Citing Hobbes emphasise on the lack of control in one environment, regardless of the controls in others would still result in peril. Ullman focuses further attention on the writings of Hobbes to introduce security as an absolute value, where the state directs how much control it requires to provide a level of security (Ullman, 1983, p. 130).

A control thesis of security arguably means a reduction in freedoms, choices and privacy eroded through mechanisms of control which aim to provide a secure safe environment. For example, the very concept of a government security clearance imposes a level of control over an employee, reducing their civil liberties to engage in actions considered contextually deviant, it is accepted control, but control nonetheless. Ullman (1983, p. 130) notes that, total control is an extreme at odds with the desires of the wider community whom aim to balance security needs against others such as freedom and privacy. This creates the need for a trade-off between liberties and security, where in addition to protection against non-State threats, citizens also seek security against the State, or more specifically against the excess of controls enacted by the state to achieve its preferred level of security. This could also be argued to apply at an organisational level within the state. Thus, a discussion of security is really a discussion about control, real and perceived across all strata of society.

An alternative perspective is that security is not about control but rather one of safety. However without providing some mechanisms for control it is questionable as to how can we provide a safe environment. Evidence of control as a sub-text of the security discourse is evident in the broader literature on security (Baldwin, 1997; Hudson, 2005; Shearing & Stenning, 1983; Smith, 1999; Wolfers, 1952). However further specific evidence supporting the control thesis can be drawn from Ullman's (1983) writings where it is argued (pp. 134-136) that much of the nation's resources are focused towards military threats, yet minimum resources are steered towards managing those internal or natural threats which also threaten a nation. One argument could be that managing those external military style threats reduces the threat through expenditures which provide mechanisms of control, real and perceived. Yet those resources spent in preparing to respond to disasters whilst posing a severe threat with a higher likelihood do not provide any mechanisms for control, just preparedness, response and recovery. Newman (2010) considered security to be about the pursuit of policy, which if correct, is a policy to gain and maintain a level of control within an environment where security resources are aimed to achieve such control.

## Security Deviance

The inclusion of the concept of control into the security discourse requires the concept of deviance being introduced into the security literature. Deviance is a concept readily identified throughout all strata of society (Box, 1971; A. K. Cohen, 1966; Erikson, 1961; Garland, 2001; Innes, 2003). According to Cohen all societies, subgroups and institutions have rules which when violated draws emotive responses including disapproval, anger and indignation. If human beings are to do business together there must be rules, and people must be able to assume that, by and large, these rules will be observed (A. K. Cohen, 1966, p. 3). According to the Cohen where there are rules there will be accompanying deviance. This view supports the concept of security deviance, which within the context of this paper is considered the exploitation of security measures implemented to achieve a state of control within a specific context. However, that state of control is obscured by the use of the lulling term, security. Whilst most systems can tolerate a substantial amount of deviance according to Cohen (1966, p. 4) it can impact in three salient ways: it can be analogous to the loss or defect of a critical part in a delicately coordinated mechanism; or it can undermine an organisation by destroying people's willingness to play their parts, reducing their contribution to the ongoing activity; and it can destroy trust, destroying confidence that individuals will play by the rules. Nevertheless deviance may in some cases make a positive contribution to objectives. In some circumstances people acting defiantly can overcome barriers to objectives due to red tape (A. K. Cohen, 1966, p. 6), where emphasis may shift from actor based views of deviance to situational views of deviance depending on context (A. K. Cohen, 1966, pp. 43-44). Thus, Box (1971, p. 12) adds the point that deviance is more of a subjective label which must consider the quality of the reaction to it.

Fear and the amplification or attenuation of fear messages has contributed to the all-pervasive nature of security in the lives of all people. Lianos (Lianos, 2000, 2003) introduces a concept of institutional control as a natural evolution from social control and one in which fear, suspicion and vulnerability all contribute to a greater desire for security. Whilst Lianos argues that to some extent the construct of 'dangerization' means an end to deviance in fact the authors would argue that the 'safety paradox' to which Lianos refers actually adds weight to the argument that security control mechanisms may be exploited in a deviant manner. "In terms of social organization, this can be represented by a vicious circle: institutional activity<sup>to</sup> control<sup>to</sup> predictability<sup>t</sup> ° safety/certainty<sup>to</sup> vulnerability<sup>to</sup> dangerization<sup>to</sup> new claim for control<sup>to</sup> new institutional activity...and so on" (Lianos, 2000, p. 275).

Given that the control expressed by either a nation state or institution is represented in the language of the security it provides towards managing those threats which pose a risk at either a global, national, State, organisational, or domestic-individual levels. Raises the question, how is the breadth of such control represented in any given society and where are the opportunities for security deviance? Given the breadth and multidisciplinary nature of the security domain, suggests control is pervasive and opportunities for deviance within the mechanisms of control are as broad as the domain.

## Mapping the Security Domain: Uncovering the mechanisms of control and deviance

Baldwin (1997) has suggested that once the context of security is understood a security dialogue can occur across thematic boundaries, and that those thematic boundaries are defined by the adjectives combined with security. It is asserted by the authors that teasing out the thematic contexts of security exposes both mechanisms of security control and opportunities for security deviance. In order to map out the domain, a variety of media forms ranging from print news media, popular audio visual media and a range of magazines and academic journals were analysed. Figure 1 is a map of sampled domains, themes and forms of deviance identified from the literature to date. This was derived from a review of the media forms and thematically coded. The authors have also noted that in explicating the themes there are those themes which are not simply the adjectival combination of security but rather terms in which security is implicitly embedded, in some cases it is simply the substitution of the word security with a term such as protection however the authors would also include terms such as counterterrorism.

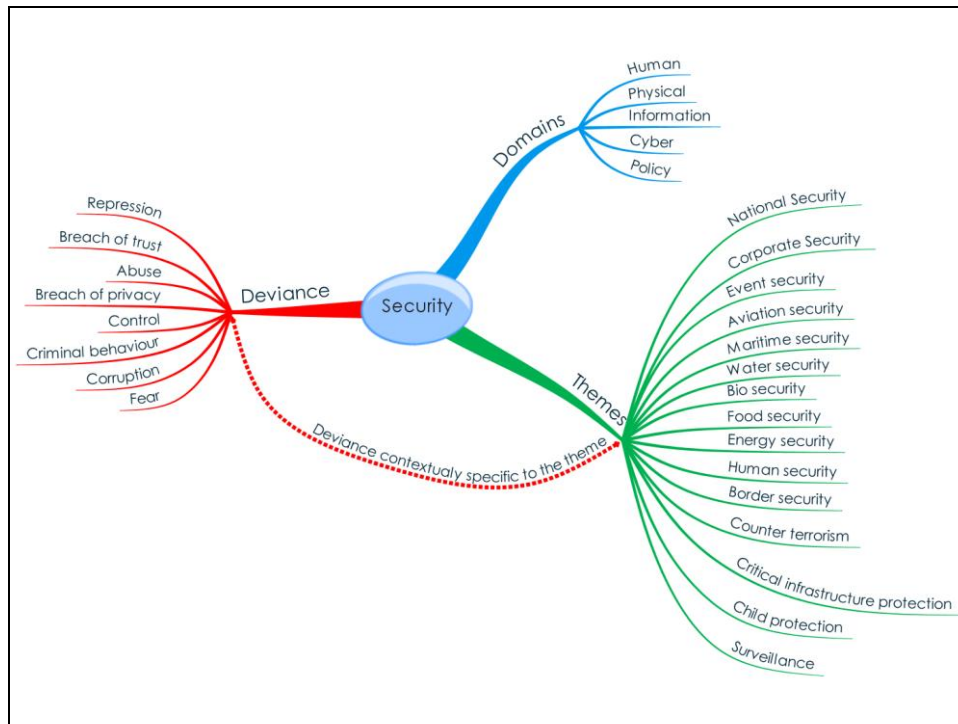


Figure 1 - Identified security domains, themes and deviance indicators

Initial analysis of the data identified the broad foundational domains of security existed, then we sorted the contextually specific thematic forms of security. For example, bio security is built on elements of human, physical, information and policy domains. The domains identified are broadly in keeping with security domain as identified in the literature (Brooks, 2009; Craighead, 2003; Fisher & Green, 2004). The next step identified the thematic forms of security, this was achieved in the first instance by finding the word security, observing the adjective conjoined with it and then determining the context in the sentences either side of its use. It was evident that this approach had a specific limitation in that it did not capture concepts such as counterterrorism or child protection. Therefore a second pass was undertaken and on this occasion synonyms for security such as protection were considered along with the contextually obvious terms such as counterterrorism. The themes shown in figure 1 are a representative sample at this time. It should be noted here that two forms of security themes that were specifically excluded, those being financial security and social security.

The data was then reviewed again to look for indicators of deviance, it should be noted that further data analysis is required in this area. Notwithstanding that a variety of forms of deviance were identified as having contextually specific links to thematic forms of security. Figure 2 conceptualises how the themes are impacted by deviance factors, yet both are shaped by the domains in which they exist.

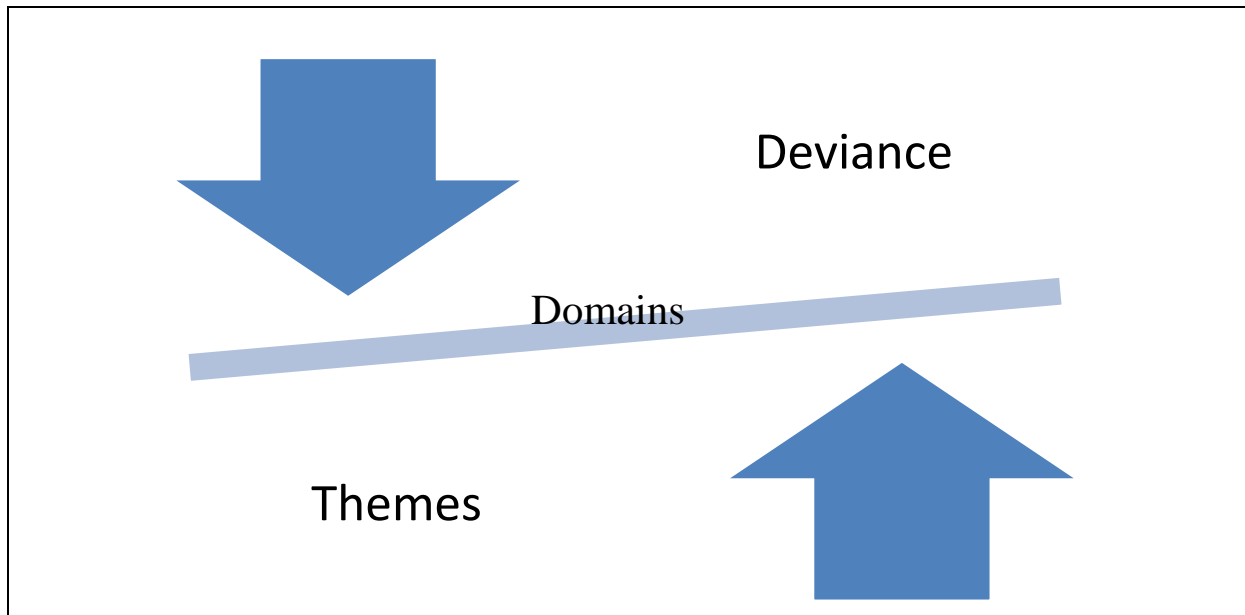


Figure 2 Interrelationship between deviance and security themes

In order to understand the interaction of the domains, themes and resultant deviances, and to provide a context for further investigation social control is a lens through which we can examine deviance. The social contract refers to the means where citizens and the state agree on the provisions of protection in exchange for traded freedoms. A theory of social control according to Johnson(1995, p. 258) seeks to explain the origins and binding force of mutual obligations and rights in society, protection for the submission of authority. As Abercrombie, Hill and Turner (1986, p. 194)point out, in a pre-social state of nature people enjoy absolute freedom (freedom of action), which as a consequence exposes them to threats of harm, removing safety. To achieve a safe environment, mitigate the threat, people enter into a social contract where absolute individual freedoms are surrendered to a third party (the state) that becomes the agent of guaranteeing social order and stability producing a safe environment. It is accepted within many sociology forums that social control is the means of providing such a secure environment which according to Abercrombie, Hill and Turner (1986, p. 195) is achieved through a combination of compliance, coercion and commitment to social values. As such, deviance is considered as any behaviour or appearance which violates societal norms (Johnson, 1995, p. 78). From a functional perspective deviance is a cultural creation as it is through norms that societal benchmarks are set to be violated. However, through a conflict approach power defines norms and therefore defines deviance (Johnson, 1995, p. 78). Thus, it is argued that one of mechanisms for social control is what is generally referred to as security, which is as previously noted essentially a lulling term for control.

The concept of deviance is a significant concern within the sociological literature with much of the focus steered towards the unintended consequence of police control (Abercrombie, et al., 1986, p. 67). These authors point out the sociological approach in a broader sense sees deviance as a socially prescribed departure from normality where many different, even non legal forms of deviance may be condemned taking a more heterogeneous category of behaviours as its lens of enquiry towards deviance within any given society. According to Abercrombie, Hill and Turner (1986, p. 68) deviance studies have embraced a great diversity of behaviours including drug abuse to football hooliganism where it is argued that extending the concept into the security domain is a natural, and given the embedded nature of security in modern society, logical extension of previous works. As Anthony and Cunneen(2008, p. 148)explain,directing a lens of purview towards the systematic abrogation of people's rights is not new for critical criminologists, especial in the manifestation of social injury through the violation of legal rules or cultural, moral norms. However, this discourse is often directed to deviance of the state.Yet security deviance can be those actions against the state, or actions committed by the state or its agents or private parties at both a national and international level. In addition, security deviance or potential actions for such deviance can be amplified through the various media forums by shaping content and language within transmitted messages (Abercrombie, et al., 1986, p. 67 ; Johnson, 1995, p. 78).

Security deviance is framed within a human rights approach to security where the ever complicated trade-offs between societal safeties as afforded by control versus reduced freedoms of choices or actions must be considered against the conceptions of social injury (Anthony & Cunneen, 2008) in terms of harms inflicted against people in its pursuit. It is important to note that in terms of exploiting the mechanisms of control implemented to provide a secure environment, collectively a coalition, state, organisation, group or individual can engage in deviance within the context of a social harm model. However, security deviance must not be limited to purely social harms. Consistent with Anthony and Cunneen(2008) it must also embody deviance which results in fraudulent materials gains or serious human rights abuses which can again be manifested by a coalition, state, organisation, group or individual, resulting due to the pursuit of, instrumental gains, the maintenance of influence or control, justified through rationalizations. Security deviance as a concept relates to Cohen's(1993) expressed concerns where the very agents responsible for providing societal security are actually responsible for various acts of deviance facilitated by exploiting accepted mechanisms of control.

## Conclusion

Security allows us as individuals, organisations, nations and humanity freedom to act in appropriate ways within a specific context at a specific time. However in order to exercise that freedom control mechanisms can and will be applied across a spectrum from the individual domain to that of the national. Security control mechanisms may be explicit or they may be implicit irrespective of that they are contextually specific. Contextual specificity is determined by the selection of adjectives linked to the term security or security synonym. This in turn allows the breadth of the security domain to be determined which enables security controls and deviance to be clearly identified. Security control mechanisms may include, legislation and law, rules and regulation, and policy security deviance it may be argued occurs at that point where such mechanisms extend beyond sufficient control. Security deviance represents a threat to effective and necessary security control mechanisms through its potentially corrosive impact on community trust. Whilst this research is still in its early stages it is the authors view that carefully mapping the security domain with an aim to identify and catalogue forms of security deviance will enable a better balance to be achieved in the trade-off between liberty and security.

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