

Chapter 7

Security and Development Governance*

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Abstract: This chapter offers an exploratory analysis of governance as an effective public management tool, aimed at examining the harmonious interaction between security and development. These two dimensions are highly sensitive to national stability and prosperity, and their balance and effectiveness enable progress toward greater freedom within a framework of respect for human rights, the promotion of progress, and the guarantee of security. The complementarity between security and development must be assumed as a constant, framed within a symbiotic relationship. In this context, in addition to examining how inter-institutional capacities should be coordinated from a governance perspective, an analysis of the Security, Defense, and Citizen Coexistence Policy will be conducted in light of the principles of complexity science. This analysis will draw on theories of risk management, resilience, and complex adaptive systems to generate inputs that inform the understanding and application of risk-based security policies.

Keywords: Governance; security; development; public policy; risks; complexity

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Introduction

“We will not have development without security, we will not have security without development, and we will have neither security nor development if human rights are not respected” (Kofi, 2005, para. 17). This statement raises a crucial question: Does the disconnect between security and development policies constitute a strategic risk and a significant threat to national stability?

In the culture of government administration, particularly in public policy, a disconnect has persisted between security objectives and development projections. This separation can be attributed to a multitude of historical and conceptual factors, such as differences between disciplinary approaches; the ideological antagonisms that polarized the world during the Cold War; the tension between short- and long-term planning models; the coexistence of divergent visions among the actors involved; competition for resource allocation, and especially, friction between the political and military spheres in high-conflict contexts, where the armed forces have assumed a leading role in internal security.

Analyzing the link between public development policies associated with security and prosperity levels presents a complex, multifaceted challenge. There is no statistical indicator that establishes a direct causal relationship between these variables, given that development and security are conditioned by numerous economic, social, political, and institutional factors, whose influence varies by context.

This work aims to demonstrate that integrating security and development policies, through the harmonization of their respective capabilities, constitutes a fundamental governance tool for national stability. Disconnection or isolation between these two spheres can generate risks and threats of high strategic value, jeopardizing the achievement of national objectives.

Security and Development as Challenges

Security and development are determinants of the survival and well-being of any society. In Colombia, their integration is a major challenge for defending national interests and state stability.

A central characteristic of national interests is their orientation toward protecting and promoting a nation's objectives, values, and needs. These interests are intrinsically linked to the well-being and security of its citizens and include key aspects such as the defense of sovereignty, territorial security, economic prosperity, and political stability. In this regard, national interests play a decisive role in the formulation of public policies and government decisions and constitute a strategic line in the design of foreign policy, diplomacy, and international relations.

In the Colombian case, the legal basis for national interests is found in the Political Constitution, which establishes that the country must have a National Development Plan and a State Investment Plan:

The general section will set forth the long-term national purposes and objectives, the medium-term goals and priorities of state action, and the general strategies and guidelines for economic, social, and environmental policy that will be adopted by the Government. (1991, Art. 339)

Accordingly, the National Security and Defense Manual reaffirms this instruction by stating that:

For such objectives to be achieved effectively and promptly, it is essential that their pursuit take place within certain security conditions, that is, within a protected situation... which must be understood as a permanent necessity even after the respective goals have been achieved. Indeed, once the development objectives have been formulated, it is necessary to achieve them within a general security framework, and once achieved, to maintain them through adequate protection. (1996, no. 4)

For a nation, a security state represents the guarantee of comprehensive protection for its citizens, territory, and resources against internal and external threats. This protection encompasses multiple dimensions, such as physical security—which includes national defense, the maintenance of public order, and crime prevention—and economic security, understood as financial stability and the protection of critical infrastructure. Likewise, the concept of security extends to

areas such as food security, public health, and cybersecurity. In short, security is essential for safeguarding the nation's sovereignty and overall well-being.

National development refers to a nation's economic growth and social progress. This includes the continuous improvement of the living conditions of its inhabitants, achieved through poverty reduction, equal opportunities, quality education, accessible health services, and infrastructure strengthening. Development aims to boost a country's economy and increase overall well-being.

In developed countries, these advances are reflected in a population with higher standards of health, education, and quality of life, as well as a more dynamic and resilient economy. These conditions, in turn, allow for greater protection and influence in the international arena.

Based on the above, it can be concluded that security and development are fundamental to a nation's prosperity and stability. While security guarantees protection against internal and external threats, development promotes the sustained improvement of the quality of life and well-being of the population. Both components are deeply interrelated and are indispensable for ensuring the long-term success and sustainability of the national project.

Effortful Measures of Global Multilateralism

Since the beginning of the new millennium, the United Nations has recognized humanity's potential to advance peace, security, disarmament, demobilization, conflict resolution, human rights, democracy, and good governance.

In this context, the Secretary-General of the UN stated the following in his report A/59/2005:

[world leaders] vowed to protect the vulnerable and meet the special needs of Africa. And they agreed that the United Nations needed to become more, not less, actively engaged in shaping our common future. Five years later, a point-by-point report on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration would, I feel, miss the larger point, namely, that new circumstances demand that we revitalize consensus on key challenges and priorities and convert that consensus into collective action. (paras. 6–7)

In this report, the Secretary-General argues that development and security are intrinsically interrelated and that both depend on full respect for human rights. He emphasizes the need to act simultaneously in three fundamental dimensions: development, security, and human rights.

This means that, to achieve sustainable development and lasting security, it is essential to guarantee the unrestricted respect for and effective promotion of fundamental rights. A lack of development can lead to tensions and conflicts, while insecurity undermines efforts toward economic and social progress. In this sense, human rights constitute the foundation upon which peaceful and prosperous societies are built.

Furthermore, when considering the role of leadership in governance oriented toward security and development, it can be understood as:

An integrated approach that involves the coordination of public and private entities, government institutions, NGOs, non-state actors, international agencies, and ultimately, society, in the formulation and implementation of public policies aimed at promoting security and sustainable development within a socially organized community. (Echeverri and Sotomayor, 2010)

From this perspective, it can be inferred that security and development are interrelated and that effective public policy strategies require addressing both dimensions simultaneously. In this context, governance

implies collaboration and the coordinated management of resources and efforts to address security and development challenges comprehensively, ensuring the participation of multiple actors and promoting social stability and progress. (Krasner, 2001, p. 245)

In formulating modern public policies, it is essential to analyze the convergence between security threats and development opportunities, particularly in an increasingly interconnected and globalized world. Contemporary societies face an environment characterized by high levels of violence, profound inequalities, armed conflicts, poverty, terrorism, organized crime, and the actions of non-state actors. These phenomena have far-reaching effects, including forced displacement, mass migration, increased crime, and institutional destabilization.

However, this same global context is characterized by abundant resources, considerable technological potential, and broad access to international markets, the strategic exploitation of which can boost economic growth and contribute to wealth and well-being.

Nevertheless, despite the existence of numerous international reports and indices that assess levels of security and development in nations—such as the Global Terrorism Index, the Human Development Index, the Global Peace Index,

the Rule of Law Index, and the Human Security Index—most of these tools tend to address both dimensions separately. That is, they rate variables that appear to affect only one of the two areas (security or development), without considering cross-cutting factors whose characteristics can provide valuable information applicable to both spheres, given their combined impact on the stability and well-being of societies.

Even with a broad set of fixed variables used to measure levels of security or development, these would not be sufficient for a complete and accurate assessment. This is because security and development are distinct concepts with specific dimensions that often require different indicators.

For example, variables used to measure security levels include homicide and crime rates, the incidence of armed conflict, the degree of military control, objective conditions, and subjective perceptions of security. These indicators are also used to assess the political stability and physical security of a region or country.

Conversely, the variables used to measure development typically encompass a broader range of dimensions, such as economic growth, education, health, gender equality, access to essential services, quality of life, and poverty reduction. These indicators are designed to assess a society's well-being and sustainable progress.

While some security-related variables may be linked to certain aspects of development—such as political stability and investment capacity—they are insufficient to assess key dimensions, including education, health, and quality of life. Therefore, a comprehensive assessment of development levels requires specific indicators that enable adequate analysis of these areas.

In short, although security-related variables can provide valuable information on stability and control in a region, it is necessary to use a broader set of development indicators to evaluate a society's social and economic progress comprehensively. By complementing each other, the two sets enable an understanding of different dimensions of a nation's overall well-being.

In this context, the guiding question for this research is: Does the fragmentation and lack of integration between public policies on security and development pose risks and threats that compromise the nation's interests?

Findings from research and analyses examining the relationship between development and security policies across contexts often use indicators such as the Human Development Index, violence rates, peace indices, or political stability indicators to measure progress in these areas.

In light of the above, academic institutions dedicated to the study of security and development should promote a culture oriented toward formulating

comprehensive public policies. To move in this direction, it is essential to consider the following key aspects: i) adopting a holistic approach that recognizes the interdependence between the components of security and development; ii) fostering the participation of stakeholders in the design and implementation of public policies, including directly affected communities; and iii) maintaining a perspective focused on achieving sustainable results.

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first addresses *governance* as an effective tool of public management, considering genealogical features, a brief epistemological foundation, and lines of inquiry focused primarily on security and development. This analysis demonstrates how governance, in addition to fostering coherence and coordination among various institutions, helps avoid duplication of effort and ensures the efficient allocation of public resources.

In the context of security and development, effective governance contributes to conflict prevention and management, promotes citizen security, facilitates access to justice, and strengthens citizens' trust in state institutions. Furthermore, the practice of good governance in the formulation and implementation of public policies creates favorable conditions for economic and social development, poverty reduction, and the sustained improvement in quality of life.

The second part evaluates the Security, Defense, and Citizen Coexistence Policy using risk theory and complexity science. This section begins with an introduction to the risk equation, conceived as a representation of the interplay among threat, vulnerability, and exposure. Based on this conceptual framework, a policy analysis is developed using a risk- and complexity-based approach to examine its coherence, effectiveness, and adaptive capacity in the face of the country's strategic challenges.

Theoretical Framework

The content of this work is analyzed in light of the proposal formulated by the UN in its report, *In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all*. From this comprehensive perspective, this document is a relevant precedent supporting the research hypothesis.

The UN report A/59/2005 highlights the need for a comprehensive approach that brings together development, security, and human rights as fundamental pillars of a broader vision of freedom and well-being.

The report focuses on theorizing the interdependence between development, security, and human rights. It also advocates a broader perspective on the

development agenda, orienting it not only toward improving economic conditions but also toward strengthening security and effectively protecting human rights. Lastly, it emphasizes the need to address the structural causes of insecurity, recognizing that it can stem from a lack of opportunities, inequality, social exclusion, and human rights violations.

Integration of Public Policies on Security and Development

Security and development are fundamental pillars of a nation's well-being and stability. Security is defined as the State's capacity to protect its citizens, territories, and resources from both internal and external threats. This protection encompasses multiple dimensions, including national defense, effective law enforcement, crime prevention, cybersecurity, public health, physical security, economic security (including financial stability and the protection of critical infrastructure), and food security. Together, these elements constitute an essential state that safeguards national sovereignty and guarantees collective well-being.

On the other hand, national development refers to economic growth and social progress, aimed at the sustained improvement of the population's living conditions. This dynamic includes poverty reduction, the promotion of equal opportunities, and access to quality education. Development seeks to consolidate a robust economy and increase overall well-being.

In this sense, a developed country is characterized by a healthier, better-educated population and greater productive capacity, which enhances its projection and influence in the international arena.

Based on these considerations, it can be stated that the integration of public policies on security and development constitutes a substantial contribution to strengthening governance. This assertion is supported by several reasons, including:

- It enables a comprehensive approach: The coordination of public policies on security and development allows for a joint and holistic approach to the challenges facing contemporary societies. This approach implies considering not only physical security, but also its interrelationships with economic, social, and political factors inherent in development. Thus, a comprehensive approach is more effective in mitigating the structural causes of insecurity.
- It contributes to conflict prevention: The coordination of public policies on security and development promotes conflict prevention by addressing

the structural conditions that often give rise to violence and instability. Promoting inclusive development and reducing social tensions decreases the likelihood of armed conflicts or violent demonstrations.

- It allows for the optimization of resources: Coordination among various government entities and responsible agencies contributes to more efficient management of public resources. This institutional coordination not only avoids duplication of effort but also promotes a more strategic and coherent allocation of funds, geared toward implementing projects that simultaneously address security and development objectives.
- It strengthens resilience and sustainability: Coordinating public policies on security and development can strengthen a society's resilience to threats and crises by promoting sustainable development systems. This approach entails strengthening the economy's adaptive capacity, protecting the environment, and ensuring access to essential services, including health and education.
- It encourages community participation: A comprehensive approach fosters the participation of local communities in decision-making and the implementation of public policies. This inclusion strengthens the legitimacy of government actions, enhances social ownership of interventions, and enables more contextualized and effective responses, particularly at the local level.
- It promotes long-term objectives: Coordinating public policies on security and development fosters long-term planning and sustainable development, moving beyond perspectives focused solely on immediate solutions. This enables lasting improvements in the population's quality of life and security levels.

In short, by enabling a more comprehensive and effective approach to social challenges, this integration makes a substantial contribution to governance. It also contributes to societal stability, well-being, and resilience, thereby promoting a safer and more conducive environment for the development of its citizens.

Promoting a Culture that Integrates Security and Development in Public Policy Formulation

Adopting an approach that recognizes the interconnections among security and development components entails formulating and implementing strategies and public policies.

The following are some ways in which it is possible to advance this integration:

- Multisectoral approach: Fostering collaboration and coordination among the various ministries and government agencies responsible for security and development.
- Participation of local stakeholders: Involving local communities in decision-making and the implementation of public policies. This participation ensures that policies are contextualized and effectively cater to the needs and concerns of each community.
- Combined indicators: Employing indicators and metrics that allow for the evaluation of progress in development and security. These measurement tools can provide a more holistic view of the situation and the progress achieved.
- Human rights-based approach: Placing human rights at the heart of strategies and public policies. This implies guaranteeing the effective protection and promotion of civil and political rights, as well as economic, social, and cultural rights.
- International cooperation: Fostering collaboration with the international community and multilateral organizations to address global challenges that affect both security and development. This cooperation can encompass areas such as combating terrorism and organized crime, and promoting initiatives for sustainable development.
- Evaluation and continuous learning: Establishing systematic evaluation mechanisms to regularly measure the impact of public policies on security and development. The analysis of results should enable the identification of best practices and areas for improvement, thereby facilitating the reformulation and adaptation of strategies based on the evidence obtained.
- Transparency and accountability: Guaranteeing a high level of transparency and accountability in the implementation of public policies. This is a fundamental condition for strengthening citizen trust in state institutions and ensuring the efficient and responsible use of public resources.
- Encouraging participation: Stakeholders can participate in the formulation and implementation of public policies on security and development, including affected communities.

In this regard, Bazúa and Valenti (1995) state:

the development and consolidation of a competitive and free political market based on equal conditions and opportunities for organizations or individuals with different government projects gives rise to genuine sociopolitical competition and the development of civic culture because it constitutes a kind of socio-systemic school in which the typical citizen tends to adopt a worldview of the public sphere and the state centered on the full application of the rule of law for their individual well-being and the public good.

Promoting a culture of participation in public policymaking offers significant benefits to citizens by empowering individuals and giving them a voice in decisions that directly affect their lives. This approach not only strengthens the transparency, accountability, and legitimacy of government policies but also helps develop more effective and satisfactory solutions.

Below are key considerations for encouraging citizen participation in public policymaking on security and development.

- Clear and open communication: Establishing communication channels with stakeholders is fundamental to fostering their participation. Informing them about the objectives, the policymaking process, and the expected outcomes of the public policy facilitates understanding and strengthens trust in institutions.
- Early involvement: Involving stakeholders in the formulation and implementation of public policies fosters a sense of ownership and commitment to the country's development.
- Active listening: Addressing the concerns, needs, and proposals of stakeholders, as well as fostering an environment where they feel heard, valued, and respected, not only builds trust but also promotes sustained involvement in the formulation and implementation of public policies.
- Training and education: Stakeholders, especially affected communities, should have access to academic programs that allow them to understand the issues and processes related to the formulation and implementation of public policies. This is essential to ensure informed and effective participation.
- Local facilitators: Appointing facilitators or mediators to act as a liaison between communities and government authorities can be a powerful strategy to boost citizen participation and overcome cultural or linguistic barriers.
- Meaningful participation: Ensuring that stakeholder participation is substantive, and not merely symbolic, so that their opinions are considered

in decision-making and contribute to the design and development of public policies.

- Transparency in decision-making: This involves clearly communicating the criteria and rationale behind the decisions made, as well as ensuring that the relevant results and justifications are publicly accessible.
- Joint monitoring and evaluation: Designing and implementing, together with stakeholders, monitoring and evaluation systems that allow for rigorous and sustained tracking of policymaking, guaranteeing their participation in feedback and continuous improvement processes.
- Recognition and rebuilding of trust: When community trust has been affected by negative experiences, it is essential to implement tangible measures aimed at rebuilding it, prioritizing accountability and fulfilling commitments made.
- Celebration of achievements: Recognizing and celebrating the achievements and contributions of stakeholders not only reinforces their sense of accomplishment but also strengthens their commitment and continued participation.

To build a robust political culture on security and development, it is necessary to adopt a strategic vision that prioritizes the sustainability of results. In this context, the following aspects must be considered:

- Education and awareness: Strengthening civic education and collective awareness of the importance of security and sustainable development is a strategic component for consolidating active citizen participation. This strategy should focus on promoting an understanding of structural challenges, possible avenues for intervention, and the impact of public policies aimed at the common good.
- Continuous participation: To guarantee the legitimacy and effectiveness of government action, it is crucial to promote citizen participation in decision-making processes and the implementation of public policies. This requires establishing institutional mechanisms that allow citizens to regularly express their opinions, concerns, and proposals, ensuring their incorporation into the formulation, implementation, and evaluation stages of these policies.
- Transparency and accountability: Maintaining high standards of transparency in public management and policy implementation.

This implies disseminating relevant information, including budgets, expenditure, and results achieved, so that citizens can evaluate the progress, effectiveness, and impact of public policies.

- Focus on prevention: To address the challenges linked to insecurity and underdevelopment, it is necessary to prioritize preventive approaches over reactive or short-term solutions. This implies addressing the structural causes of these problems to design interventions that promote lasting, sustainable transformations.
- Investment in education and training: Investing in education and training programs that enable interested citizens to understand the issues and processes related to the formulation and implementation of public policies and, at the same time, enhance their leadership skills.
- Long-term strategic planning: Developing strategic plans that bring together concrete goals and objectives in security and development, accompanied by evaluation mechanisms that allow for adjusting and optimizing strategies according to the conditions and needs of the context.
- Partnerships and cooperation: It is essential to promote cooperation between the government, civil society organizations, the private sector, and the international community. By creating strategic and sustainable partnerships, a synergy is achieved that maximizes available efforts and resources to address long-term challenges.
- Continuous monitoring and evaluation: Implementing monitoring and evaluation systems that allow for measuring progress and adjusting public policies based on the results obtained.
- Promotion of accountability: Fostering the internalization of individual and collective responsibility, emphasizing the impact of human actions on the common good.
- Effective communication: Developing effective communication strategies to explain the benefits of public policies on security and development, and show citizens how they can contribute to their success.

Governance for Security and Development

Through a comprehensive participatory approach, it is essential to ensure effective integration between security and development. This aims to guarantee the effectiveness, sustainability, and positive impact of the policies and measures implemented. In this sense, good governance requires the inclusive participation of

diverse actors and the promotion of transparency, accountability, and respect for the principles of law and justice.

Addressing governance processes involves understanding a complex adaptive system. For this reason, we will analyze how, from an integrated security and development perspective, informed decision-making based on evidence and dialogue among the sectors involved can be ensured.

To achieve effective security and development, good governance practices require transparent decision-making and robust accountability mechanisms. These allow citizens to monitor and participate in public management. Furthermore, inclusion and equity in public policy design and resource allocation are fundamental to mitigating inequalities and strengthening social cohesion.

Inter-institutional collaboration and coordination, along with effective risk management, are essential for anticipating and responding to emerging threats and challenges in security and development. Together, these practices contribute to institutional stability and the sustainable growth of society.

Contemporary global challenges, such as terrorism, interstate conflicts, and environmental crises, have highlighted the interconnectedness of security and development. In response to this complexity, more recent approaches have adopted a comprehensive perspective that seeks solutions that address both dimensions. This approach recognizes that security and development are not antagonistic but complementary.

Governance, a fundamental tool for managing public affairs, is characterized by its comprehensiveness, meaning it can coordinate diverse actors, levels, and sectors. This characteristic requires complementarity, based on a symbiotic relationship among all system components. Through a well-structured governance dynamic, it is possible to chart a path toward long-term institutional stability and societal well-being.

In this context, governance is essential for achieving adequate levels of security and development. This perspective is theoretically grounded in the UN report, which maintains that development, security, and human rights are interdependent pillars, whose joint progress is indispensable for building more just and stable societies.

This essay aims to explore innovative processes for implementing good governance practices that, within the security and development framework, foster the development and implementation of public policies. These policies must be designed and structured to coordinate the capacities of all state bodies and structures, while also integrating the participation of the private sector, international agencies, and civil society.

The main benefit of treating security and development as a single unit is their ability to reinforce one another. Security, by creating a stable and predictable environment, drives economic growth and sustainable development. On the other hand, effective development helps reduce the structural causes of conflict and insecurity, such as inequality, poverty, and limited opportunities. This relationship establishes a solid foundation for achieving stability and social well-being.

Analysis of the Security, Defense, and Citizen Coexistence Policy

This section analyzes Colombia's Security and Defense Policy for the period 2022-2026, applying the concepts and risk approach previously discussed.

The analysis is divided into two parts. The first part introduces the risk equation, highlighting its function as a comprehensive model that integrates threat, vulnerability, and exposure. The second part focuses on the Security, Defense, and Citizen Coexistence Policy for the period 2023-2026.

This analysis also underscores the need to promote inter-institutional coherence and coordination, which are crucial for avoiding duplication of effort and ensuring efficient resource allocation. Within the framework of security and development, good governance fosters conflict prevention and management, strengthens citizen security, facilitates access to justice, and reinforces public trust in its authorities. Furthermore, effective management of public policy formulation and implementation creates an environment conducive to economic and social development, reducing poverty and improving the quality of life for the population.

The Security, Defense, and Citizen Coexistence Policy aims to guide the actions of the Colombian State and society to protect national sovereignty, territorial integrity, and collective well-being. This policy was developed by the Ministry of National Defense through a participatory and inter-institutional process that facilitated the formulation of diagnoses and strategies. The analysis focuses on identifying threats, vulnerabilities, and risk components, along with proposed strategies for managing them.

Topic 1 explores the risk-based approach, beginning with an explanation of the risk equation, which integrates the dimensions of threat, vulnerability, and exposure. Subsequently, each component is described, detailing the types of threats, the dimensions of vulnerability, and the degrees of exposure. The discussion is grounded in theories of risk management, resilience, and complex adaptive systems. The section concludes with an analysis of the applicability of this approach to the study of public policies in security and defense.

Topic 2 analyzes the Security, Defense, and Citizen Coexistence Policy for 2023–2026, using a risk-based approach and the principles of complexity science as a frame. Following a general introduction to policy, this section analyzes the threats, vulnerabilities, and levels of exposure that shape Colombia's security landscape. The interrelationships among these variables are then explored using conceptual frameworks derived from complexity theory. Subsequently, current policy strategies aimed at risk management and strengthening institutional and social resilience are examined. The section concludes with a reflection on existing limitations and challenges, as well as recommendations for implementing the proposed strategies effectively.

Risk-Based Approach

The Risk Equation

Risk can be defined as the probability of adverse events occurring that adversely affect a society, system, or population. From an analytical perspective, risk is conceptualized as a function of three elements: $\text{risk} = \text{threat} \times \text{vulnerability} \times \text{exposure}$.

A threat is understood as an external factor—natural, technological, social, or multifaceted—with the potential to damage or disrupt a system. Vulnerability, on the other hand, refers to a system's internal susceptibility to negative impacts and is conditioned by physical, social, economic, political, and environmental factors. Finally, exposure is defined as the extent of a system's contact with one or more threats.

The equation indicates that risk intensifies when any of its three components increases. Consequently, to minimize risk, it is essential to address each of these elements:

- Threat mitigation
- Reduction of structural vulnerabilities
- Reduction of exposure through strategies such as distancing or the implementation of barriers

Furthermore, it is crucial to analyze the interrelationships between threats, vulnerabilities, and exposure, as these tend to be reinforced by cumulative loops and cycles.

Types of Threats

There are multiple types of threats that can endanger a society's security. The most important are:

- Natural threats: Natural disasters—such as earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, or droughts—can have a significant social and economic impact.
- Environmental threats: Ecosystem degradation, pollution, loss of biodiversity, and climate change.
- Social threats: Various forms of violence, such as crime, terrorism, and social conflicts, threaten integrity, stability, and social cohesion.
- Economic threats: Financial crises, economic contraction, and speculative bubbles.
- Political threats: Institutional instability, corruption, polarization, and loss of legitimacy of public institutions.
- Technological threats: Industrial accidents, failures in critical systems and infrastructure, and cybercrime.
- Health threats: Infectious diseases and epidemics.

These threats can manifest themselves in an interrelated manner, causing cascading effects and feedback loops. Therefore, it is essential to analyze their interdependencies when assessing risks.

Dimensions of Vulnerability

The vulnerability of a society or system is determined by various internal factors that increase its fragility and susceptibility to potential threats. The main dimensions of vulnerability are:

- Physical and geographical vulnerability: Location in areas prone to natural hazards, fragile materials, or precarious construction.
- Environmental vulnerability: Degradation of ecosystems and overexploitation of natural resources.
- Economic vulnerability: Poverty, inequality, informal employment, and lack of productive diversification.
- Social vulnerability: Exclusion of groups, disintegration of the social fabric, and normalization of violence.
- Political vulnerability: Institutional weakness, corruption, lack of legitimacy, and polarization.
- Technological vulnerability: Fragile infrastructure, non-redundant systems, and uncritical technological dependence.
- Ideological and cultural vulnerability: Fundamentalism, intolerance, sexism, and racism.

Only through a comprehensive analysis of these dimensions is it possible to define actions to reduce vulnerabilities and enhance resilience.

Degrees of Exposure

Exposure refers to the degree to which a system is proximate to or in contact with specific threats. This can vary depending on geographic location, activities carried out, and the presence of natural or artificial barriers.

The categorization of exposure levels is established as follows:

- Negligible or no exposure: There is practically no interaction with the hazard.
- Low exposure: Natural, structural, or social barriers significantly limit contact with the system.
- Medium exposure: The hazard occurs with moderate frequency, and its impact is limited in scope or severity.
- High exposure: The hazard is constant and imminent, with severe impacts on the system and few mitigating barriers.
- Extreme exposure: Constant, direct, and intense contact with the hazard. There are no containment barriers.

It is crucial that territories, communities, and activities with high or very high exposure to certain hazards be the focus of priority actions aimed at reducing their vulnerability or controlling the associated hazards.

Conceptual Foundations

The risk approach is based on various theoretical frameworks from the social sciences, natural sciences, and engineering, including:

- Complex systems theory conceives of societies as complex adaptive systems, formed by multiple interrelated elements.
- Chaos theory analyzes how certain seemingly random behaviors depend on the initial conditions of dynamic systems.
- Resilience theory discusses the capacity of systems to absorb disturbances and reorganize themselves.
- Disaster risk management seeks to reduce risk through preventive and mitigation actions.
- Risk engineering evaluates the probability of failures or negative incidents in complex technological systems.

- Risk psychology studies how individuals and groups perceive risks, and how these perceptions influence their decisions and behaviors.

By considering elements of the system, society, and human behavior, the convergence of these disciplines provides a more complete and nuanced view of risk.

Application to Public Policy Analysis

This approach guides and strengthens various public policy areas by providing an analytical framework that links threats to vulnerabilities and exposure. Its application is especially relevant in areas such as:

- National defense and security policies aimed at identifying external and internal threats, as well as strengthening institutional capacities
- Natural disaster management policies aimed at reducing vulnerabilities, strengthening early warning systems, and optimizing response capabilities
- Public health policies focused on the surveillance of infectious threats and the mitigation of vulnerabilities
- Environmental policies that integrate climate and ecosystem risk assessments to guide adaptation strategies and increase resilience to climate change
- Critical infrastructure protection policies aimed at reducing its exposure to threats and its level of structural and functional vulnerability
- Social policies aimed at mitigating socioeconomic vulnerabilities that amplify risks

The proposed approach facilitates the identification of different types of threats, multiple dimensions of vulnerability, and intersectoral linkages, thus contributing to more effective governance of complex risks.

Identified Threats

The policy establishes a set of threats considered relevant to the security and defense of Colombia:

- Persistence of illegal armed groups and criminal networks linked to drug trafficking, illegal mining, and other illicit economies
- Growth and proliferation of transnational structures engaged in drug trafficking, arms trafficking, human trafficking, and various related criminal activities

- Institutional weakness and corruption that facilitate the infiltration of criminal organizations into state structures
- Environmental degradation and significant loss of biodiversity as a result of deforestation and other associated environmental crimes
- Escalation in the severity and incidence of extreme weather events, such as hurricanes, floods, and prolonged droughts, with adverse effects on ecosystems and food security
- Emergence of new threats, such as cyberattacks targeting critical state infrastructure and the economic system

An Adequate Vulnerability Analysis

Among the main vulnerabilities that amplify the risk from these threats, the policy identifies the following:

- Structural poverty, social inequality, and economic insecurity that particularly affect populations in remote rural areas, where the state's presence is limited
- Absence or weakness of government institutions and the rule of law in various areas of the national territory, which limits the institutional capacity to confront illegal activities and criminal dynamics
- Insufficient protection for vulnerable populations, such as social leaders, human rights defenders, and ethnic communities, who are generally victims of forced displacement, confinement, and other forms of violence
- Deforestation in jungle areas, driven by unsustainable practices and the consolidation of illegal economies
- High economic dependence on extractive industries, vulnerable to climate change, such as agriculture and livestock farming
- Lag in digital security in the face of the increase and sophistication of cyber threats

Exposed Territories and Populations

The policy identifies the following territories and population groups as especially exposed to the threats described:

- Border municipalities, hard-to-reach rural areas, and coastal areas are used as corridors for drug and arms trafficking.

- Jungle regions are affected by agricultural activities and illegal mining.
- Intermediate-sized cities are vulnerable to the expansion of micro-trafficking and the consolidation of criminal gangs.
- Young people in situations of unemployment or precarious employment, particularly in contexts of high social exclusion, are highly susceptible to forced or voluntary recruitment by illegal armed groups or criminal gangs.
- Social leaders and human rights defenders become targets of threats.
- Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities located in strategic territories face high risks due to the presence of illegal armed groups.

Strategies for Resilience

Given this scenario, the policy proposes strategies to strengthen resilience—defined as a positive adaptation process that enables the absorption, response, and recovery from disruptions. Among these strategies, the following stand out:

- Strengthening institutional legitimacy through the promotion of transparency, accountability, and the fight against corruption.
- Reinforcing coordinated intelligence, interdiction, and prosecution capabilities with the aim of dismantling criminal networks.
- Designing and implementing academic programs aimed at the substitution of illicit crops and the elimination of illegal economies.
- Progressively expanding state institutions in highly vulnerable areas.
- Developing policies that reduce poverty and expand opportunities for advancement.
- Protecting high-risk populations, such as social and community leaders.
- Updating doctrine and strengthening operational and institutional competencies to address current and emerging challenges.

Challenges and Limitations

To develop viable, realistic plans, it is essential to recognize the multiple challenges and limitations involved in implementing these strategies.

- Complex inter-institutional coordination given the cross-cutting nature of the problems
- Budgetary constraints and a shortage of qualified personnel
- Difficulties in strengthening the state's presence in areas controlled by illegal groups

- Community distrust of institutions perceived as illegitimate or corrupt
- Deeply entrenched criminal interests, which hinder their dismantling
- Effects of environmental degradation and climate change
- Plurality of divergent interests
- Difficulties in coordinating the responses of national and territorial authorities

The identified constraints require progressive strategies focused on concrete, achievable objectives, including continuous learning and the capacity to adapt to contextual changes.

Conclusions

The Security, Defense, and Citizen Coexistence Policy, analyzed from a risk-based perspective, reveals a diverse range of multidimensional threats and the territorial vulnerabilities that exacerbate them, especially in specific communities.

The policy brings together essential strategies to strengthen systemic resilience. However, it also acknowledges the significant challenges to effective implementation stemming from fiscal, institutional, and political constraints.

Therefore, it is necessary to adopt a strategic, gradual, and adaptive approach that prioritizes viable short-term goals while integrating a long-term, transformative vision. Likewise, it is crucial to monitor results and impacts, incorporating lessons learned to continuously adjust strategies in response to changing environmental dynamics.

Finally, effective risk management demands high levels of coordination among multiple actors and sustained political will, recognizing the systemic and multidimensional nature of security and defense challenges.

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