
Hybrid Regional Security in a Fractured World: The Red Sea and Beyond

Convenors

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The Red Sea has reemerged as a pivotal and contested geopolitical arena, characterized by the intersection of fragile states, transnational conflicts, and global rivalries. This maritime space has been traditionally analyzed through the lens of Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT), which conceptualizes regions as clusters of proximate states with interlinked security interests. However, the evolving dynamics of the Red Sea increasingly defies the theory's terrestrial bias and its presumptions of distinct regional boundaries. Persisting with territorially bounded and domain-specific frameworks risks obscuring how contemporary security dynamics emerge through cross-domain and multi-scalar interactions. Hybrid regional security denotes configurations in which land-sea dynamics and state and non-state actors are structurally intertwined across regional and extra-regional scales. Recent developments reveal how both state and non-state actors operate seamlessly and fluidly across terrestrial and maritime domains, thereby obscuring conventional distinctions conflict formation and security regimes, as well as between regional and global scales. This workshop seeks to interrogate the emergent logic of hybrid regional security, emphasising interdependence between land-based and maritime security logics.

The Red Sea serves as a paradigmatic case for rethinking the conceptual foundations of hybrid regional security. This workshop encourages scholars to transcend geographic determinism and reevaluate the analytical boundaries separating “regional” from “global,” and “terrestrial” and “maritime” spaces. While the Red Sea serves as the empirical anchor where terrestrial instability and maritime militarization are evident, the workshop aims to extend this inquiry through a comparative lens. Similar hybrid configurations can be observed in the Eastern Mediterranean, the South China Sea, the Gulf of Guinea, and the Indian Ocean—spaces where infrastructural connectivity, global trade, and local insecurity intersect. The workshop has two interrelated objectives. First, it seeks to critically engage with existing theoretical frameworks studying regional security, with particular focus on the Red Sea, while fostering the debate for novel theoretical contributions incorporating multidomain interdependence, non-state agency, and feedback loops between regional and global processes. Second, the workshop encourages comparative empirical and theoretical inquiries across diverse regional security contexts to advance a more nuanced understanding of hybrid security dynamics.

We invite papers that explore, without being limited to, the following points:

- Theorizing hybrid regional security across domains;
- Maritime infrastructures, connectivity, and regional order;
- Non-state and sub-state actors operating across land-sea boundaries;
- Extra-regional overlays and great-power competition in hybrid spaces;
- The implications of hybrid security for governance, solidarity, and survival in fractured regions.

The workshop aims to promote cross-disciplinary dialogue among scholars specializing in regional security, maritime politics, and global-regional interconnections. The goal is to develop a theoretically informed, comparative understanding of how regional security is being reconfigured. The workshop aspires to establish a collaborative research network on “hybrid regional security” with the intention of developing a collective publication.