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*Human security within the context of globalization  
– the individual as international (global) actor<sup>1</sup>*

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ABSTRACT

In the middle of the 1990s the concept of human security is introduced as a reflection of general change of the stress from the military state-centric issues (assumed by the realist and neo-realist orthodoxism) towards those non-military. This new *narrative* consists in the transformation of the individual into the reference object of security, due to the fact that, under the pressure of globalization, the state is moved away (at least partially) from the epicenter of policy making. So, the concept of security is extended from the security of the nations to the security of the individuals, from the nation to the international system, is extending by supplementing the military perspective with the political, economic and environmental ones and thus, the range of security can basically receive human dimension. By the mechanisms and the normative principles of such a perspective it is possible to identify some important arguments that human security can be fundamental in the justification of the ethics of interventions and by by-passing the state to offer the ultimate argument for *just war theory* (used to address the moral and legal aspects linked with the use of military force).

**Key words:** security, human security, Cold War, individual, human rights.

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## INTRODUCTION

Against the background of the globalization process, the security ensuring issue is obviously no longer a genuine military question. The end of the Cold War, the way in which it happened (stressing the fact that the Soviet Union's security was compromised by the socio-economic weakness and by the lack of the institutional political legitimacy and not by the deficit in the level of military capabilities) ultimately determining the failure of the *traditional* manner of understanding security, intensified the debate concerning security studies in view of determining its object and study domain. As a "peace dividend", security and the issue of security study, focused on the strictly military aspects and structures, as a result of its sub summation to the (neo)realist point of view, can be conceived beginning with the end of the Cold War outside the *raison d'état* politics, outside the state-centric approach.

The end of the Cold War brings into foreground and overlaps the globalization discourse, the discourse concerning the (human) development along with the publishing in 1990 of the first UNDP *Human Development Report*, as an attempt at "enlarging people's choices" [UNDP 1990: 10]. Within such a context, opened by the human development debates implied by the implications of globalization, in the middle of the 1990s the concept of human security is thus introduced. As a reflection of general change of the stress from the military state-centric issues (assumed by the realist and neo-realist orthodoxism) towards those non-military, *The Human Development Report 1995* stated "the real point of departure of human development strategies is to approach every issue in the traditional growth models from the vantage point of people" [UNDP 1995: 123]. Such an approach projected upon the space of security becomes responsible for what we name human security because "*people-centered* approach to formulating and evaluating policy is the key conceptual contribution of human development to human security" [Tigerstrom 2007: 15].

Thus, the globalization processes, of which effects are exponentially intensified alongside with the end of the Cold War, create the conditions and shape the necessity to define human development and security adding normative priority to the impact different policies have on the individual. In other words, against the background of globalization, "human development and human security could therefore be described as parallel concepts, particular instances of a more general approach that is referred to, for lack of a better phrase, as *people-centered* or *human-centered*" [Tigerstrom 2007: 15]. The international space, transformed under the pressure of globalization that moves away (at least partially) the state from the epicenter of policy making and implementing, gains consistency to the degree in which an alternative discourse that takes over and develops this transformation constitutes – or, this new *narrative* is represented by the transformation of the individual into the reference object of both development and security.

## SECURITY AND HUMAN SECURITY

The traditional view of understanding the international space staked on the state as the single explicative variable and therefore, placed the responsibility to protect individual security to the state. From these positions it is claimed that the international system is an anarchical one that determines major implications in the behavior of the states. The impact of this axiom is that the “pacifist” behavior of states can never be guaranteed and also, that the possibility of force threatening/deterrence can never be excluded. “The history of international relations exhibits clearly the fact that states can be, and often are hostile to each other, that they can resort to violence and threats for various reasons. No state can be absolutely certain that another state or other states will not resort to force and this is why they refuse to limit their liberty of action [Terrif et al. 1999: 36]. Therefore, the *realist world* built on power and anarchy has a series of characteristics among which we can name: the major actors are not the individuals but the groups, especially the conflict groups, the most important of such being the nation-state; as common implication of this the two core elements are constituted: international relations are characterized essentially by conflict, and, on the other hand, the fundamental premise in (international) politics is power and closely linked to it – security. Within such a context, security becomes synonymous with the state’s capacity to ensure that the premises are met for avoiding or rejecting any attack, for minimizing the consequences of any threat, and for administrating and using its own armed forces. This perspective on security has a significant role in the theory and pragmatic analysis of the concept, and had become during the Cold War the only manner of relating to the bipolar international context.

The realist/neo-realist view on international relations is built around the concepts of power and security as grounding the relations between and among states. The central topic is the state or the state’s power, and, due to the anarchic environment, its (in)security. International politics and relations can thus be rendered in one word only: “insecurity”, as international politics is conflictual by nature, unlike domestic politics, where conflict only emerges occasionally (as a result of distortions). For the realists, power represents nothing else than the capacity to threaten with the use of force, while insecurity is defined as “vulnerability in front of others making deliberate use of force” [Walt 1991: 212]. Power or the evaluation of a state’s power depends on its military capacities, on the capabilities that have a direct contribution to sustaining and maintaining those capacities operational, and only ultimately does the equation of power include factors bearing an indirect influence on the military sector. It results that the most powerful actors (the actors with the highest level of security) are those who also hold the capacity to sustain significant armed forces and through this to ensure state defense; in realist and neo-realist terms, this involves self-help, statism and survival [Dunne, Schmidt 2001: 151–155].

States represent the key factors in the *realist world* as it is at their level that the highest concentration of power is found, especially since states have the largest ca-

capacity of using military force. A state's condition is defined by insecurity as the state acts in an anarchic environment that allows and even favors interstate conflicts; so, power and the insecurity it prompts and maintains dominate international relations. Hence, ensuring and maintaining security becomes a permanent preoccupation with the "units" that interact within an anarchical international environment, regulated imperfectly by international institutions [Roberts 2010: 10]. This traditional understanding of security – based on insecurity logic – means that state and its political tradition "encodes power and hierarchy, allocates competencies (who may speak), constructs forms (how one may speak, what forms of discourse are proper), determines boundaries (what may not be named or conversed about), and structures exclusion (denial of voice)" [Baxi 1998: 129]. So, the traditional view defines security as the state's capacity to protect its borders and sovereignty, as well as its ability to act to this purpose. Given such a perspective, realist security studies focused on the issue of the threat and use of force, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, on a model for states to administrate this vast source of insecurity. This caused the concept of security to lose much of its original comprehensiveness and to be confiscated by the middle of the 80s by what we call *strategic studies* – "The consequences of a poorly conceptualized but highly politicized concept such as 'security' did not go unnoticed. The domination of the concept by the idea of national security, as well as the militarizing interpretation of security this approach easily, though not necessarily, gave birth to was criticized by several authors for being excessively narrow and hollow" [Buzan 2000: 17].

Security, though, is much more comprehensive and bears a higher load of meaning than this reductionist view. In an essay entitled *Redefining Security* published in *Foreign Affairs*, Jessica Tuchman Mathews argues that security as concept must be rethought because "global developments now suggest the need for broadening definition of national security to include resource, environmental and demographic issues" [Mathews 1989: 162]. Thus, the majority of the threats, identified by those who choose the redefinition of security, are related to the health and wealth of the individuals, to the social problems, to the domestic sources for instability as well as to the implied social costs. Although the *strong* connection between state and security is altered by the new threats that appear against the background of globalization, still these transformations are not extremely visible for the (neo)realist theoretical mainstream, aspect identified by Ronnie D. Lipschutz when stating that "whilst these threats obviously affect security, cohesion and the stability of the individuals, families, communities, societies and even states, it is not clear at all why they don't represent threats to national security in the neorealist terms" [Lipschutz 1995: 6].

Nevertheless, redefining security becomes necessary from at least two points of view: on the one hand, because territorial security is replaced with individual security and, on the other hand, because military security is replaced with security built on sustainable development [UNDP 1994: 24]. That is why, human security needn't be conceived as a defensive concept, in the manner in which territorial or military secu-

rity is defined, but as an integrative concept built on (human) development; it must be conceived as “an integrated approach to human well-being, one that emphasized the interrelationships between poverty, human rights, public health, education and political participation” [Battersby, Siracusa 2009: 3]. Similar to the case of human development, redefining the reference object of security stressing the protection of the individual, is determined by a series of structural factors, among the most visible being: the end of the Cold War (and of the ideological confrontation), the impact of the globalization, that often excludes from the global-local causality the national level, the more and more clear presence of the transnational actors, redefining the power relations and the emergence of new non-military nature threats as well as the increasing number of the intra-national conflicts [Fuentes, Aravena 2005: 22–23]. These transformations generated sufficient arguments in order to define human security as encompassing four fundamental characteristics: (1) human security is a universal challenge and concern; (2) the human security components are interdependent; (3) human security can be sooner accomplished using prevention rather than subsequent intervention; (4) human security is centered on the individual [UNDP 1994: 23]. On this foundation, human security faces two convergent perspectives: “safety from chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression” as well as “protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life” [UNDP 1994: 23].

The demilitarization of security doesn't imply the elimination of traditional strategic concerns but only the supplementation of these with some other that no longer can be solved through the exclusive focus on the state level. Therefore, the human security concern does not replace the state security concerns that continue to be important in managing the violent threats, but transforms into a complement of the latter: “such a strategy should be developed on the dual framework of protection and empowerment in which the state and civil society have a complementary role to play” [Fouinat 2004: 294]. Encompassing the optimism as well as the anxieties associated with the end of the Cold War human security analyzes aggression at the subnational, intranational and international levels constituting into an analytical discourse “disassembling the state into its smallest components (people) in order to *put it back together again*” [Weinert 2009: 154] just that the reconstruction brings in the foreground a state of whose sovereignty is “more and more conditioned – depending both on the domestic behavior and also on the international world approval” [Kaldor 2010: 186].

This conceptual reframing of security, on different basis than was constructed state-centered concept of security which dominated academic research as well as foreign policy thinking of major powers, has important policy implications. It brings new issues or vulnerabilities and measures or actions as priorities for global security that were not on the international and collective security agendas:

- a) Vulnerability to oppression and physical violence due to deliberate action and neglect by the state to its own citizens that results in mass displacement of people both within and across national borders, and the responsibility of the international community to protect people in these situations;

- b) Vulnerability to poverty and destitution as a factor inter-connected with threats of violence, and the need to recognize the inter-relationship between conflict and poverty as cause, consequence, and policy response to civil wars;
- c) Development and ending poverty as important means to achieve human security, and international cooperation for development as a priority;
- d) Vulnerability to downside risks from multiple sources including natural disasters, economic downturns and climate change as priority concerns for a wide range of public policy areas. Downside risks were neglected in dominant thinking about poverty and development which focused on progress, inequality, and deprivation;
- e) Actors other than the state as sources of threat and as holders of obligations to protect;
- f) Global inter-connectedness of security threats (such as terrorist networks, global financial crises and global diseases) and necessary responses [Fukuda-Parr, Messineo 2012: 4].

Such a discourse is thus possible only under a post-positivist perspective, a critical perspective that eliminates the traditional tension between rights and sovereignty through the fact that ethical arrangements resulting from our affiliation to the global civil society (built on the human rights principles) don't enter into collision with the arrangements we assume as citizens of a sovereign states' society (built on the law of states). In other words, from the position of the constitutive theory [Frost 1998; Frost 2009], the relation between the two arenas is "a sophisticated one such that certain ethical shortcomings we experience in one are remedied through our participation in the other" [Frost 2009: 104]. Without mutually excluding themselves, but shaping the structures of the actors especially through their simultaneous participation within the two, "we are both civilians and citizens" implying that "we value the ethical standing that we enjoy in these roles" [Frost 2009: 104]. Therefore, the new framework of analysis that shapes at the international level aims at the recovery of the normative aspects underlying the connection between an individual and society and "translates the stability, resilience and security of each in terms of the other" [Weinert 2009: 155]. Without denying the state and its importance in the context of the relation with its citizens – "states can be powerful custodians of human welfare, and thus worthy of contingent loyalty" [Harbour 1999: 80] – there can be conceived a simultaneousness of the two levels of analysis (apparently placed on contrary positions).

#### HUMAN SECURITY AND THE INDIVIDUAL

The realist traditional explanation, through its exaggerated attention conferred to the state, fails to foresee or even hides a series of real threats towards the individual and thus, the security fails even in its core objective: to protect (the individual) or, in other words, it could be said that "state-centric security has rarely been concerned

with the lives of human beings” [Roberts 2010: 9]. Therefore, overcoming the traditional approaches brings into foreground a series of new concepts such as societal security, comprehensive security, (global) international security and human security; this paradigmatic rethinking is reflected in *The Human Development Report 1994*, document within which the end of the Cold War represents the boundary between old/obsolete (traditional) and new. In the new international context – deeply marked by the implications of globalization – the exclusivity of national security is no longer possible due to the fact that a series of new concepts interfere in the realities with which we operate because “abstract concepts such as value, norms, and expectations also influence both choices and outcome of security” [Liotta, Owen 2006: 51]. Against the background of the mutations occurred at the end of the Cold War and as a direct implication of it “the ubiquitous idea of security in an *extended* sense” [Rotschild 1995: 55], meaning the defining of a “permissive or pluralistic understanding of security, as an objective of individuals and groups as well as of state” [Rotschild 1995: 60]. In this new principles’ geometry that shapes contemporary security, the enlargement of the concept is undertaken in several directions. Therefore, from the point of view of the entities to which security must be ensured, the concept of security is extended from the security of the nations to the security of the individuals. On the other hand, the concept is extended upwardly – from the nation to the international system. Third, the concept of security extends horizontally, supplementing the military perspective with the political, economic and environmental ones and thus, the range of security can basically receive human dimension. Forth, it also extends (as a natural consequence) the politic responsibility to ensure security from states to international institutions, subnational authorities, nongovernmental organizations, public opinion or markets [Rotschild 1995]. Therefore, the major transformations generated by the enlargement of security and the make-up of security under these conditions became easily observable; the road thus covered marks the profound differences between the traditional paradigm and the new approach, as well as the complexity of the expansion of the new concept.

Originated in the debates about “collective security” around the end of the Cold War, human security identifies the security of the individuals as the central objective of national and international security policy. It means that the individual becomes the main referent object of the security policy because “human security is about placing ordinary living human beings everywhere front and centre of the security question”, it is about “asking questions about our own personal security, rather than the security of an anonymous, bureaucratic entity we call *the state* or *the system*” [Roberts 2010: 15]. In a similar manner, Mahbub ul Haq considers human security as a new paradigm reflecting the fact that “the world is entering a new era in which the very concept of security will change – and change dramatically. Security will be interpreted as: security of people, not just territory. Security of individuals, not just nations. Security through development, not through arms. Security of all the people everywhere – in their homes, in their jobs, in their streets, in their communities, in their environment” [Haq 1995: 115].



So, the core of human security has been developed as an idea that could be contrasted with national security, because security “has for too long been interpreted narrowly: as security of territory from external aggression, or as protection of national interests in foreign policy or as global security from the threat of a nuclear holocaust” [UNDP 1994: 24]. Through this distinction, between human and national security, will be brought into attention a wider spectrum of (human centered) security issues which means that “thinking about security broadened from an exclusive concern with the security of the state to a concern with the security of people. Along with this shift came the notion that states ought not to be the sole or main referent of security. People’s interests or the interests of humanity, as a collective, become the focus. In this way, security becomes an all-encompassing condition in which individual citizens live in freedom, peace and safety and participate fully in the process of governance. They enjoy the protection of fundamental rights, have access to resources and the basic necessities of life, including health and education, and inhabit an environment that is not injurious to their health and well being. Eradication of poverty is thus central to ensuring the security of all people, as well as the security of the state.” [Ginwala in CHS 2003: 3].

Within such an atmosphere Barry Buzan will claim that “the security of human collectivities is affected by factors belonging to five main sectors: military, political, economic, social and environmental” [Buzan 2000: 31] and the *Human Development Report 1994* will identify seven components of the human security: economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security [UNDP 1994: 24–25]. From this general perspective, human security presents two fundamental dimensions: *freedom from fear* and *freedom from want* [UNDP 1994: 24] so, at the individual level this distinction is attenuated by the United Nations Commission on Human Security which defines human security as the protection of “the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and fulfillment” [CHS 2003: 4]. From this broad perspective, human security is concerned with human vulnerability overall, and therefore encompasses all forms of threats from all sources and such an enlargement of the analyzing perspective can be considered as a revolutionary initiative because, unlike the state-centric security perspective, “it brings what are traditionally considered *development* or *humanitarian* considerations into the security discourse” [Liotta, Owen 2006: 42]. From a more narrow perspective, the Canadian government, in a document entitled *Freedom from Fear* defines human security as “the freedom from the generalized threats to human rights, their safety and lives” [DFAIT 2000: 3] meaning that human security represents the focus on “protecting the individuals from violence and defining an international agenda based on this objective” [DFAIT 2000: 1]. The narrow perspective in defining security individualizes the security issue in relation with development underlying “the more immediate necessity for intervention capability than long-term strategic planning and investing for sustainable and secure development” [Liotta, Owen 2006: 43]. This view is also undertaken in *The Human Security*



*Report 2005*, according to which “the primary goal of security is the protection of individuals” [Human Security Centre 2005] (this aspect being of great importance for the reaffirmation of the change regarding the referent of security) and focuses on security from political violence. In a more general manner, the report entitled *In Larger Freedom* stresses the necessity of the interrelation of the various perspectives on security and highlights the importance of the development as a strategy for the fulfillment security. The combination of these two points of view must bring in the foreground the relation (not easy to identify and theorize) between security and development because “human security is part of human development, but it is placed at the extreme part of human development” [Kaldor 2010: 216].

This equals the necessity to sum the two perspectives – broad and narrow – premise assumed by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) when proposing an encompassing formula – “responsibility to protect” (R2P) that translates into the responsibility of some agents or even states to implement the principles of security that sovereign states owe to their own citizens. Only that such an approach can become problematic due to the fact that the “responsibility to protect” also involves the right to interfere, moreover since in the current power topography some of the (dominant) states can appeal to this anywhere and anytime. In order to avoid such a situation, ICISS considers that the sovereign states have the responsibility “to protect their own citizens from avoidable catastrophe – from mass murder and rape, from starvation – but what when they are unwilling or unable to do so, that responsibility must be borne by the broader community of the states” [ICISS 2001: viii]. This responsibility is in its turn constituted on “specific legal obligations under human rights and human protection declarations, covenants and treaties, international humanitarian law and national law” [ICISS 2001: xi]. “R2P” transformation into the fundamental principle of the collective security marks “a commitment to ethical progress in international relations” [Weinert 2009: 159] fact to become possible only to the degree that we understand the “indivisibility of security, economic development and freedom” [UN 2004: 1] as a way of securing the individual, as a way of securing human dignity.

## CONCLUSIONS

Human security model marks an extremely important perspective change: from the exclusive valorization of the state as the *per se* referent object of security, towards “safeguarding and improving the quality of life of those individuals and groups that constitute the state’s reasons of being” [Thomas, Tow 2002: 190]. By the mechanisms and the normative principles of such a perspective it is possible to identify some important arguments that human security can be fundamental in the justification of the ethics of interventions and by by-passing the state to offer the ultimate argument for *just war theory* (used to address the moral and legal aspects linked with the use

of military force). The ICISS report explicitly refers to the language of the just war theory when identifies the constitutive elements of the “responsibility to protect” such as the responsibility to prevent, responsibility to react and responsibility to rebuild [ICISS 2001: 11–47] and the resemblance with the just war becomes obvious and still the ICISS document “engages in only limited reflection on the ethical implications of its *responsibility to protect* agenda” [Holliday 2003: 119]. Nevertheless, Nicholas Rengger considers that “it would be a mistake to abandon the just war tradition” [Rengger 2002: 363], and Mary Kaldor goes beyond suggesting the transition from just war to just peace. This glide becomes possible since “the states remain the only authorities capable to sustain the legal use of force but this use of force is more circumscribed than ever by international regulation and norms” [Kaldor 2010: 204]. More, the writer argues, there can be identified three principles that mark the difference between a *jus in bello* approach (a state-centric approach) and an approach based on human rights (a human-centered approach): the task of human security operations is to protect civilians, the protection can be thus fulfilled through stability rather than victory and, last but not least, those who violate human rights are individual criminals and not collective enemies [Kaldor 2010: 206–208]. “Reflected in the lives of the people, not in the weapons of their countries” [Haq 1995: 116] human security can be approached as a normative project and from this perspective the glide towards the individual as core of the security concerns is remarkable.

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