The ethical challenges of human security in the age of globalisation

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Human security: needs and ethics

The long debate on the meaning, nature and scope of the concept of human security has come full circle. Its epistemological pretences and methodological abilities have been discussed by analysts seeking to better grasp the world around them and to draw clearer and more meaningful conclusions about the security landscape as it is. Less well explored is the field of the actions the concept of human security calls on us to perform. For, like many concepts, human security is both a epistemological tool for describing empirical reality and a normative concept signalling the way the world should be and marking where change is needed.

The problem, long known to social scientists and in particular to philosophers of the social sciences is that the call to engagement implies a weakening of the concept's objective foundations. According to the doctrine formulated by Weber over 100 years ago, science that is normative is not objective and is thus not science at all. However, this opposition between the normative and the descriptive has since been deconstructed, and the necessity for a normative or quasi-normative power basis to science has been reaffirmed by many (Foucault 1994; Latour and Biezunski 2005; Latour and Guilhot 2006).

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The moral innovation of human security is also its terrible Achilles' heel. In a globalised world, where the values of the global view are imposed upon most people with the force of necessity, the concerns of individuals resist global action. At the very moment when individual concerns are put on the agenda, the possibility for achieving anything local is nearly erased by the weakness of individuals in a world of massive collective interests. What can the particular interests of individuality make claim to in such a strong environment of universality?

The purpose of this chapter is to approach the philosophical challenge posed by just such an engagement. If, as Chomsky once said, it is individuals that are moral, not states, then the imperative of human security to refocus the notion of security on individuals is well guided. At the same time, one cannot simply discard the state as custodian of security. The moral force of the human security is, following Chomsky, from individual to individual, not from state to state, nor even from state to individual. So, even once we have established what is to be done to strengthen the human security of humans where strengthening is needed, a second-order, normative question arises: through what institutional mechanisms can and should such changes be made? Given that we accept the challenge of acting, how do we get from here to there?

Definitional challenges

The aim of this chapter is to underscore the ethical dimensions of the concept of human security in as far as it relates to the principled discussions of ethics and international relations. The rich and engaged debate on international ethics that has taken place over recent years has, by and large, concerned the applicability of human security as a scientific concept (Burgess and Owen 2004; Owen 2004).

The other side of the coin of universal verifiability is universal applicability. If human security is a valid concept, should it not bear the same meaning and have the same scope and reach in any given setting? The challenge in answering such a question arises from the fact that different settings usually means different cultural settings. Different cultural settings relate to a different ethos, different values and ethical principles. Can one concept of human security then apply to the multiplicity of cultures, in particular when cultures differ fundamentally from one another? This approach opens up human security issues to their ethical consequences and presuppositions.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report formulation of "human security"

Most analytical and conceptual considerations of human security take the 1994 United Nations *Human development report* as more or less the source of human security thinking (UNDP 1994). Although the report is not the first to use the concept in general, the force of its impact on global discussion is undeniable.

In the wake of the Cold War, it has become clear that, for the developing world, "security" holds an entirely different set of priorities than when nationalised super-powers were concerned with "mutually assured destruction". The UNDP report is both provocative, in arguing that the long-standing tradition of using "security" to refer to geopolitical issues is entirely misguided, and reconciliatory, in the sense that it proposes human security as a supplement to existing terms.

The report notes that, in the developing world, the moments of insecurity arose from issues such as disease, hunger, unemployment, social conflicts, crime and political repression. This suggests that security studies have simply got it wrong and analysts need to retool and take aim at a new object. This simple methodological imperative is underpinned by the recognition that development has been neglected and over-shadowed by a certain use of the term "security". The UNDP report defines security as "freedom from fear, freedom from want". Here the notions of "fear" and "want" mark the transition from one understanding of security to another. The "fear" to which the UNDP refers is widely construed as fear from physical violence, from attack by a physical aggressor, be it individual or collective. The notion of security as protection from physical violence is thus designed to include the traditional notion of security. Absence from want tends to cover issues more traditionally the concern of development studies and developmental politics. It refers to poverty and lack of food, water or shelter. The agenda of human development is thus reflected. In this way, both continuity and novelty are embraced by the new concept of human security. The ethical imperatives of development studies are linked with the ethical imperatives of international relations and global geopolitics.

Fear and insecurity are imaginary, based on images of what could happen, what is likely, what is threatening, what is risky. The UNDP report suggests that a different scope of imagination is relevant for the two conceptions of security. For the global level, the threat concerns the collapse of an entire way of ordering facts and ideas, peoples and societies. Insecurity in the larger sense is related to the possibility of a general collapse, the possibility of a shift in the conditions for relating to the world at all. By reason of scale, these are always forcibly on a level that cannot be grasped by any one individual. It is supra-individual. A consensus on the shared experience of insecurity is difficult at best.

The UNDP report shifts from such imaginary constructions towards concrete individual relations in an individually determined world. The global dimension has not gone, but fear and insecurity remain connected to the imagined

possibility of what could go wrong, cause damage, pain or other suffering.

The UNDP report, like its successor, the Commission on Human Security's (CHS) *Human security now*, sets out the shape of an ideal world, one in which security on an individual level is generalised across all communities in all parts of the world. However, it also provides a powerful moral voice for the needs of those subject to human insecurity by locating security and insecurity on the personal and small group level. This location (or relocation) of the focus of security and insecurity is the foundation of an ethics of insecurity.

Assumptions of the UNDP and CHS reports

In the debates on the concept of human security that have followed, the UNDP 1994 report has become associated with widening the concept to understand "violence" as physical violence, based on discrete and more or less quantifiable characteristics and capable of measurement. It is based on the changes in the reality of security threats and on the way we actually think about these threats.

First, the UNDP report sketches a picture of the historical evolution from a Cold War-oriented world in which the conditions of life of ordinary people simply fell under the radar of global attention. While there is, according to the UNDP report, little empirically new about the security situation of the societies of the developing world, our perception of the situation has changed. The weakness of this approach is that these perceptions are authored by the *We* of the developed world. There is thus no essential empirical basis for explaining the emergence of the concept of human security. Rather, it is a question of perceptions and of awareness. These perceptions lead to the second assumption of the UNDP report: an evolution in security thinking. There is a change in both the reality of threats in the real world and in the way we think about and experience threats in everyday life as well as in the way that the human and social scientists, as well as technology industries, conceptualise security and security threats. Second, it advances an activist, even ideological position about the appropriate coverage of the concept.

"Security", according to the UNDP report, is traditionally based on a territorial understanding of threat, whereby all that is threatening comes from "outside" the national boundary. Other sub-national spatial determinations of insecurity are either neglected altogether or toned down in importance. From the point of view of security or the ethics of violence, aggression itself takes a spatial, even linear, form. Violence in this model is discrete and identifiable, with a finite and limited origin. Its aim is linked with an intentionality, with a reasoned purpose or goal, namely harm, destruction or suffering of another human being.

In other words, even though its final object is human life, and it is therefore intersubjective in its character, physical violence is instrumental in a way that other kinds of violence are not. It inevitably involves a mediation, such as a tool or a weapon that exists in time and space and is discretely measurable. Even if it originates in human intention and a logic of intentionality, even if its ultimate aim is to obtain advantage through human suffering, it requires an instrumental middle, without which it falls.

The instrumental dimension is therefore also the pragmatic key to ending it. The practical consequence of this way of understanding violence is that it can be stopped by equally instrumental means. No matter how vicious are the intentions of the person or group that would cause violence, it is impossible without the knife, the gun or the rocket-launcher. Without these material means, the violence will not take place. This observation provides a means to differentiate threats to human security from other kinds of threats. It contributes to solving the categorisation problem by shifting the focus from the object to the means. It thus also enters the definitional debate around human security by suggesting that the meaningfulness of the concept is not based on its wideness or narrowness, but rather upon the nature of the means used to pursue it.

The classical concept of security

The analytical reach of the UNDP report places the emergence of human security in the

geopolitical lineage reaching back only to the Cold War. For this reason, its emphasis is less on conceptual issues, than on a concern for what happens in the field. The concept of human security, as it is used by the UNDP in 1994, is the sign of a change in politics and political consciousness, and is far more than a revolution in epistemology. It is a reference to the emergence of an authentic need for individuals, agencies and states to address a problem that has emerged in the geopolitical spotlight, but which has lain unnoticed for some time.

The state is traditionally regarded as the primary unit of security. The notion of "security" that is operative in this conception implies two principal dimensions: outwardly, it refers to the notion that the state should function as a unified, finite and clearly delimited body, both the actor of security concerns in relation to other, equivalently constituted states, and the object of the security regard of other states and internally, the state, according to the contractualist, Hobbesian perspective, has an implicit relation and responsibility to its citizens. The citizens of the Hobbesian state pledge their allegiance to it in exchange for security. This security is, however, not uniquely directed toward the external other, but rather also from other individuals. It is, as we have suggested, the basis of individual, domestic security as well.

The rarefied state and its limits

This statist version of security presupposes a rarefied, even idealised, notion of the state. In the conception of the state at the foundation of conventional security, the collective unity that it reflects has no corresponding cultural cohesion. The state has a primary prophylactic function. It provides protection unconditionally, regardless of the cultural composition of the citizens it encompasses. This original form of the state precedes historically the consolidation of the concept of "nation".

The idea of the "nation-state" of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was scarcely used at the time when the original theories of state itself were formulated. To the degree the nation is understood as an ethnically charged

entity, based on shared language, religion and cultural heritage, it should be expected to protect the cause of common interests, most obviously by preserving, among other things, the language and religion that provide cohesion to the group. The nation-state is self-preserving in a way that is quite different from the rarefied state. To put it inversely, if an identity-based collective group, a nation, is not supported and indeed driven by a force of self-preservation, then by definition it is not a nation. The substance of the rarefied state, however, consists precisely of not having any substance independent of the contract that gathers its members. It is pure contractuality, empty territoriality. Though we overstate the ideal form of the rarefied state, this is how it is conceptualised in the genealogy of modern state security.

Ethical starting points

Background concepts of human security

Globalisation involves a general evolution in the relation between inhabitants of the globe. It implies an interconnectedness, for better or worse, in terms of economics and information, a flattening of cultural differences in some areas and a radicalisation of differences in other ways. We are more universally involved in the value decisions attached to actions that will have knowable consequences for people far away. At the same time, our increased knowledge and awareness of the locally determined challenges and threats of individuals brings a great imperative for understanding and evaluating appropriately the premises and consequences of our actions for the security and insecurity of others.

Liberalisation refers to the consolidated evolution of one axis of globalisation through the ideology or discourse of economics. In order to increase the efficiency of the national and transnational systems, there is a general trend in global economics and politics to bring value decisions to the individual level. Universal protection systems, be they social welfare or economic support, are prioritised less, since they are taken to be at odds with the economic and social advantages of a free flow of capital,

services and individuals. This tends to give a common basis for a strengthening of the individual in the moral sense of the term. Both the focus of human security and the emphasis on the question of what and whose responsibility it is, is implicated in it.

The globalised, liberalised world has at the same time become more democratic. More people have more access to representative political institutions. Political representation implies the ability and the responsibility to participate in the process of political representation. Democracy is considered by most to be a participatory active process. Thus, the liberalist dimension of democratic representation engages a responsibility to take one's voice seriously, to take responsibility for self-expression. The individualised notions attached to the doctrine of human security are easily associated with a certain spirit of political liberalism.

Social and cultural differentiation of human security issues

Social and cultural conditions determine security and insecurity in two distinctly different ways. On the one hand, there is an absolute and immediate insecurity caused by poor social and cultural living conditions such as poverty, poor health, environmental dangers and exposure to violence on a personal level. On the other hand, such social conditions and their consequences do not constitute insecurity in the proper sense of the word. Social and cultural ills and their derivatives are direct causes of suffering, but poverty itself is not insecurity. Insecurity, as we have underscored above, is the experience of openness in the future to dangers and suffering. Poverty causes immediate suffering without either ambiguity or speculative moment. At the same time, as with all aspects of insecurity, the fragility of socially, culturally, naturally and economically based suffering raises the threshold for future crises, exposes one to dangers to which other would more easily resist. The threat of human insecurity, it must be remembered, is not based on discomfort whose cause one feels, nor by the threat we know; it is caused by the experience of the unknown, by the calculus of unknown danger, based only on the robustness of the present.

Historical aspects of the concept of security

The long history of the concept of security has seen considerable changes over the course of the centuries, but more radical changes in the twentieth century. Before the twentieth century, the concept of security was only seldom applied in international relations, even as late as the 1940s. The turning point in the contemporary evolution of the concept of security is its mutation into its own sub-category: national security.

Security and the nation

This condensation of security around the concept of the "nation" itself corresponds to a shift in the very concept of nation. Like security, the perceptions and realities of the nation vary widely in time and space and the actual character of the nation-state is far from unitary in both historical and geographical terms. Moreover, they do not share a common or ideological political form.

While in ancient Greece "security" was primarily associated with the spirit and spirituality, in classical Rome concept of *securitas* meant something close to what we today call "safety", that is, firmness and solidity. The Roman notion had a distinctive and objective character. Yet the concept remained, in a narrow sense, subjective in the moral or psychological sense retained by the Greeks. If one is in a situation of security, one is without care, without concern. The thread of moralism thus remains present even today in interpretations of the concept.

At the same time, we can understand security in a different way. For, if we are in a situation of security in the sense of being without care, we are equally care-less or lacking in vigilance, either with respect to ourselves or with respect to others. Security is also a lack of need to be aware of our environment, those close by, and ourselves. In this way another moral dimension is introduced in the historical evolution of the concept. Security is the equivalent of lassitude, an entirely negative spin on a notion that was primarily construed as favourable. To have *securitas*, in this sense, means not having

any doubt in the belief in God. Indeed, "belief" is no longer the appropriate notion: something more like "knowledge" characterises the relation between the individual and God. For someone with *securitas*, in this regard, the Christian notions of doubt, despair and uncertainty fall away and are replaced by the un-Christian notions of arrogance, hubris and arrogance.

Finally, the historical divorce between *securitas* and *certidudo* brings the last major dimension to the evolution of the concept of security. *Certitudo* replaces the religious meaning of *securitas* with a sense that differentiates between the notion of arrogance associated with certitude in the existence of God and the security measure in terms of a certain secular relation to the world, its risks and dangers. *Securitas*, freed from this negative connotation, evolves towards a situation where one benefits from protection.

Security and politics

This new mutation precedes the association of security with politics. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries security took on a political form, referring to the protection of material objects against enemies, understood simply as those who would steal them. The introduction of a notion of political power corresponds to the return of the objective side of security: safe-making and safe-keeping of material things.

The objective turn gradually adopts a certain phenomenological aspect about the position of the object with respect to the threats it encounters or confronts. Thus, in English we differentiates between safety and security, in Italian between *sicurità* and *sicurezza* and in French between *sûreté* and *sécurité*. In each case, the former refers to an objectively identifiable threat, foreseeable, and for which a defence can easily be planned. The latter refers to more vaguely definable, less foreseeable danger.

Institutionally speaking, the early form of political security probably arose in the form of feudal princely states, in which security concerns were articulated and services provided according to politicised economic models. Security, understood as service provided by the prince, and later by the state in its more institutionalised forms, first arose in this way. Historically, a certain notion of security service became increasingly

implicit in the early understanding of the state. Service is associated with efficiency and the state is, for purely technical reasons, because of the economies of scale, by far the most efficient provider of security. This efficacy becomes thoroughly engrained, as we know, in the course of the evolution of the modern state. The notion of the obligation to provide security as a service is further nuanced through its association with the notion of the "people". The people – the collective identity whose basis is its affiliation with the state – becomes, in one sense or another, associated with the notion of protection from dangers, both profound and incidental. The people are also the identification point for the individual as a member of the state. This constellation of actors in the security field is first outlined in the work of the early political philosophers, most notably Hobbes.

Hobbes as the first theoretician of human security

In the Feudal era of European political history the city-states were managed by local princes (Chélini and Riché 1991; Duby and Dalarun, 1996). As part of the management of economic and natural resources, the princes made security a natural task of the state. Through the intermediary of the prince, security was thus provided to the people. The need for the prince became associated with a need for the collectivity that was both the labour force for and of economic interest to the state. The logic of security of the feudal period culminated in an early form of the relationship between people and security, a popular group identity as the basis for a notion of collective values that in turn might form the basis of a need for collective security. The Thirty Years' War – which, for most conventional purposes, marks the conclusion of the feudal period – shattered the religious anchoring of the European political order. Emerging from this context was an unlikely theoretician of the basic principles of human security: Thomas Hobbes.

If we are to understand human security as the result of a particular relationship between the individual and the state, between threats, dangers and concerns on the personal level and those on the collective level, then Hobbes' theory of security is instructive. It is he who first

theorises the relationship between the individual and the state in European modernity. The point of departure of Hobbes' theory is the notion that the preservation of the self lies at the very foundation of individuality and the basic aim of all individuals. Moreover, and even more radically, individuality does not exist a priori for Hobbes. Instead, it emerges at the moment where the state announces itself as being preoccupied with the well-being of the collective. To the degree that the state seeks to preserve itself, it conceptualises the units that then make up the basis of that self-preservation. From the point of view of the newly formed individual, on the other hand, the pursuit of the preservation of the self constituted the very kernel of individuality.

At the same time, and somewhat paradoxically, the individuality is built upon a renouncement of individuality. The founding act of individuality in the philosophy of Hobbes is when individuals transfers the personal control of their life to the sovereign, the Leviathan. Individuality in Hobbes' perspective is a modality of choice. It is the moral ability of individuals to transfer their personal sovereignty to a sovereign authority. In other words, individuality is defined by the freedom to renounce individuality. The motivation for such a renouncement is, in the perspective of Hobbes, security. The direct purpose of sovereignty, and the motivation for any given individual member of society to turn over personal or individual sovereignty, is to enjoy the advantage of collective protection from the dangers posted to all members of society.

Thus, in a double movement of legitimating collective action, Hobbes theorises a system of collective security based on the particular fears of individuals. The particular security issues of individuals in their diversities are in this way condensed into a collective concern for general security. It is not the particular content of the security concerns of the individual that counts, but the fact that there are security concerns. All varieties of individual threat are transformed into a collective guarantee of security.

Security in international relations theory

The major changes in the structure of global security have effects on the scholarship which seeks to study them. Just as the late modern notion of security was born in the heat of the Cold War, security studies too arose in that same climate and with the aim of studying and understanding security as it was then practised. It is largely for this reason that the field of security studies has traditionally been dominated by a realist perspective. In the academic field of international relations these changes came through a number of significant methodological developments that took place during the Second World War and immediate post-war years. They took place in studies conducted from the standpoint of Anglo-Saxon political and intellectual perspectives, the techniques of objective measurement and the premises of rationality in international relations theory.

The ethical subject in realist theory

By necessity, the nationalisation of security studies through the Cold War structures of the East – West opposition oriented perspectives toward national interests, and primarily toward the interests of the major powers of the East – West axis. "National interest" was understood as primarily existential, in the medium-term or long-term. The national interest was all that contributed to maintain the integrity of the nation-state as it was (Morgenthau 1951). It is thus radically conservative in its basic premises. If one can speak of value at all, it can be a question of only one value, and that is the value of the nation-state.

Given the fact that "national values" belong to and apply to the nation-state alone in opposition to other national values, they can hardly be universalised in the same way as universal rights, "human" or otherwise. Moreover according to its core principles, the nation-state must by necessity oppose itself to ethical principles that might permit it to recognise rights, obligations and other values that support human security in its most universalistic form. The founding moment of modern security studies reflects the founding challenge of human security studies: not only do the political institutions and bureaucratic make-up of the nation-state tend to resist the novelty of a new geopolitical distribution of institutional task in the form of a human security agenda, but the value agenda of human security is also structurally opposed by the

nation-based nature of human values in late modernity.

Thus, the study of international relations bracketed the entire question of values and ethics, arguing that it is simply foreign to the decision-making processes that characterise international relations. This is true only under a relatively special set of methodological conditions. The actions of actors in the sphere of international relations are value-free, only on condition that the actor is perfectly rational, instrumental and strategic. In realist theory, the actor of international relations is reduced to an atom, a subject without interiority. None of the interior political, social or cultural processes are presumed to be present in the actual political processes of the subject.

Secondly, the premise of the value-free "real" political subject of international relations requires the notion of "interest" to be abstracted from ethics. The interest of states must be regarded as entirely instrumental, dissociated from values that might be reducible to any kind of ethical reasoning. National interest, the normative guideline for actions in international relations in the realist perspective, is at the heart of the matter.

Ethics and international affairs

The realist theory of international relations revolves around its premises about human subjectivity and the notion of agency it implies and supports. The logic of diplomacy has thus been profoundly motivated by realist thought. Its possibilities and limitations revolved around those of the relations between nation-states, as represented by the tasks and activities of the diplomat.

Among the many variants on security theory since the end of the Cold War realist thinking dominates a certain understanding of ethics in the theory of international relations. A large variety of English language works have appeared in the last six years (for a critical review, see Walker 1994) but the traditional absence of ethical reflection in the field is, by and large, consistent with its predominantly realist orientation. A basic tenet of political realism is

that politics supplants ethics and that the political dynamics of security national interests on the international playing field contain no moral dimensions. Based upon a Weberian-inspired understanding of interest in international politics, the realist and neo-realist branches of international relations theory have built upon the more or less coherent conclusion that the resolution of differences between opposed international entities must be based upon questions of power, understood as a strategic, military and technological dimension and connected to the security of a given nation-state. Indeed, international politics is considered an device for translating the perilous metaphysics of all values into the universal language of military power. In other words, the essential differences between states may derive from metaphysical value differences, but they are negotiated on the secular field of international politics.

Security and international values

Since the high point of realist notions of security in international relations, the concept of security has undergone other changes that have consequences for the development of the notion of human security. The question of the meaning of the concept of security has thus become more and more associated with the question of what is under threat, what is in a situation of insecurity, and what is in need of security. This preoccupation has led to a kind of "neighbouring" effect. The conviction that the nation-state should stand as the sole beneficiary of security coverage or, inversely, that insecurity stops at the frontiers of the nation-state, gradually ceased to have universal currency.

This shift corresponds in a number of ways to the shift in subjectivity of the nation-state itself. Who speaks when the nation-state speaks, and who responds? The logic of state-to-state communication in the form of diplomat-to-diplomat contact has changed significantly. The changes brought about by globalisation in general, transnational economic arrangements and, more recently, transnational terrorism have brought a kind of porosity to the nation-state that has immediate consequences for the question of its security. Once the nation-state itself is divided, fragmented, and re-arranged into

overlapping unities that have, in some cases, only partial correspondence with the security and insecurity of the nation-state what is the object of security?

In this condition the "interior" dimensions of the nation-state became the concern of security. Institutions, infrastructures, subgroups and individuals became implicated in the insecurities of what was once considered only state-oriented. These new objects of security also became associated on an international level and the subsequent networks of sub-national groups and interests required a retooling of security thinking altogether. This is the deeper theoretical background for the emergence of a literature of human security. It complements the developmental issues that lead to the pragmatic emergence of the concept and explains in some sense the richness of ethical issues involved. The result of this evolution in the general theory of the security subject is that security became accepted across a variety of discourses, from psychology to biology, from economics to physics.

From security to securitisation

Buzan's 1983 *People, states and fear* is a milestone in the evolution of the concept of security, opening the concept of security to a more penetrating analysis. It was also the first in a long line of increasingly sophisticated work on the nature of security, generally taking its point of departure in a critique over the narrow interpretation of security as "military" security. Through the development of the Copenhagen School, the theoretical problematisation of the concept of security has become a field unto itself. The fundamental originality of the Copenhagen School is twofold. First, and in general, it has developed and systematised the notion of security as a system of reference, based in part on the semiotic theory of Greimas. According to this approach, the meaning of security lies in the use of its concept, in the act of securitisation, whereby, the exact definitional criteria of securitisation "is constituted by the intersubjective establishment of an existential threat with a saliency sufficient to have substantial political effects" (Buzan *et al.* 1998, p.25). This methodology of analysing the security discourse as extended strategies of securitisation redefines the concept "security" as a pragmatic function, as the transitive act, of "securitisation". Indeed, in latter years, it has become more strongly construed as a "speech act" carried out by a "security actor" (Buzan *et al.* 1998, p.40), inspired by Austin's speech act theory.

The semiotic structure of securitisation differentiates between "referent objects", "securitising actors" and "functional actors". A "referent object" of securitisation is something that is considered to be existentially threatened. In most cases the security referent is the state, though Wæver *et al.* (1993) recognise that this is not necessarily the case, as the semiotic system of analysis covers a much broader set of referent objects than is covered by conventional security analysis. A "securitising actor" is the actor who actually performs the speech act of securitisation by declaring the referent object "existentially threatened" (Buzan *et al.* 1998, p.36). A "functional actor" is a participant in carrying out the pragmatic consequences of securitisation.

The most important theoretical innovation of the securitisation approach of the Copenhagen School is its differentiation between the subject and the object of security. The subject of securitisation carries out an act ascribing security valence to the referent object. Security is never objectively given. According to the suppositions of constructivism, there is no implicit, objective or given relation between the subject – the security actor – and the object of securitisation. Rather, this relation is constructed intersubjectively through social relations and processes (Buzan *et al.* 1998, pp.30–31).

From security to human security: the path of political ethics

The human paradox of security

The continuity between conventional security and human security grows out of a tension at the heart of the historical concept of security. In its present use, security has both a subjective and an objective form, an indeterminate and determinate usage: on the one hand it can be used to designate "a security", a guarantee, a symbol of value, something not to be lost, not to be wasted and, moreover, presentable as the replacement

for something wasted or lost. On the other hand, it is used in international relations theory as a determinate object, as the security of a thing, individual or collective. In the broader end of the spectrum emanating from this determinate sense, security is understood as a negative thing. It is the mark of the absence of some kind of danger or another, be it threat or fear, known, imagined, or unknown. This absence is often conceptualised as liberty.

This double face of security finds its fullest expression in the study of its historical evolution. In order to make sense of human security, its relation to more conventional or tradition-bound notions of security must be clarified. What is the essence of "security" in human security? Is there one at all? And, inversely, what of the human can be derived from the notion of security? Security in its deepest roots is a human-oriented concept, a notion bound up in an individual, subjectively determined experience of the world. And yet the concept of security has undergone a transformation from the expression of subjective, even moral, well-being into a measure of objective threat or lack of threat. What does this transformation of the notion of security tell us about the human values and the ethics that is their expression?

In order to fully understand the implicit ethics of human security, the concept must be developed along a number of lines of inquiry. What are the variables involved in conceiving, understanding and practising security? From what intellectual and political traditions do they arise? What lines of authority serve to legitimate them? What actors use them, and to what ends? First, like any concept, the notion of security is historically determined, lying along a linear path of progress and development, past and future, between continuity and discontinuity. The parameters of security are thus determined by dimensions outside the security field. The very notion of security and its origins and aims grows out of a certain set of values and interests. Second, the relation between security and human security builds upon a complex relation between the security of the individual and the security of a collective unit. Collective security and individual security are different but tightly interrelated. Third, the relation between the individual or community and what philosophers call its ethos, its "ethical substance", rests on the

cultural, spiritual, religious or social values that determine its perception of the secure and the insecure. Fourth, since security itself rests upon stable notions of the subject and the object of security, a theory of the security subject is a decisive element for the security picture.

Continuity and discontinuity

The new notion of human security is a part of the development of the concept of security. This continuity between these concepts assures the salience of human security in general, and gives ethical meaning to the general notion of security. In human security the object of security is the individual. Can the individual express or embody the kind of human values that could form the basis for ethics? As discussed above, this is not the right question. The shift from the nation-state or collectivity to the individual as the object of threat does not entirely, correspond to a shift from an objectively experienced, verifiable, consensual threat to an individual, personal and purely subjective experience of danger or threat.

The ethos of security

A threat is not simply an unknown danger lying in wait, to be launched upon us in some unknown way at some unspecified time. Threats are not entirely incidental or accidental, nor is the effect of a threat independent it targets. Threats are co-determined by those who are under threat and those who threaten. Certain infrastructures creates threat by virtue of creating value as threats are implicitly linked to what has value for us and to the possibility that what we hold valuable could disappear, be removed or destroyed. The key to understanding threats therefore lies in understanding the value systems that link human interests and values and things, such as infrastructures.

How are values, threats and fear linked? The ideal threat against security seeks to a perfect fit between what we value, the fear of its loss implicit in that value, and the political interests sought by those who carry out the act, though this link is, however, never perfect or ideal. While infrastructure experts know and understand technical weaknesses in critical infrastructures, the threat analysis must also

take into account the potential destruction of both material things and the social, cultural, spiritual and even moral values they are associated with. It is less our physical security that needs assurance; rather, it is our *moral* insecurity.

The evolution of subjectivity

Human security does not only constitute a change in the object or the subject of security. While it is both these things it also constitutes a shift in the very notion of subjectivity and the point when threats enter subjectivity, contributing to the constitution of the subject. Subjectivity is henceforth defined as the experience of threat, in which the political subject becomes the subject of threat.

Which values for human security?

If it is the case that human security expresses a new set of values, what are these values? Human security not only focuses on the individual but it also opens the very notion of the individual, problematising the sovereignty of the individual. For, in order to focus on the individual as the primary unit of security, one must first ask what it is that makes the individual insecurity, what are the coordinates of its fragility?

Human security and responsibility

Ensuring human security does not mean taking away from people the responsibility and opportunity for mastering their lives. On the contrary, the concept of human security stresses that people should be able to take care of themselves: all people should have the opportunity to meet their most essential needs and to earn their own living. This will set them free. Human security is a critical ingredient of participatory development (UNDP 1994, p.24).

The report of the UN CHS, *Human security now*, underscores the need for a new conception of security by re-affirming the "vital core of human lives" (CHS 2003). It emphasises "empowerment" as a fundamental component of human security. This concept brings a variety

of practical issues to the individual level. Whereas rights provide the moral foundation for action, empowerment implies the ability to act upon rights. Empowerment is the practical capacity to deploy principles and to give them form and reality. Yet the ability to take action toward the realisation of a principle implies the oblique obligation to do so. Thus, when the CHS invokes the empowerment of the individual as the key to human security, it implies a shift of responsibility from the higher levels of social protection to the individual level. Human security is not only an ethics of the international organisations, NGOs and third-party states, it is an individual ethics. The basic premise that the nation-state no longer assumes its traditional responsibility to protect the individual shifts that responsibility to the individual.

Human security: from human rights to a new contractualism

Like identity-based security communities, human security appeals to a logic opposing the rarefied state. It not only resists territory, it also confronts the fundamental contractual presuppositions of the state by proposing a different contract: that of human rights, or natural law.

Types of human security

One axis of human security, namely the various kinds of violence that can be considered as causing insecurity and that must be averted to establish security, has been analysed and debated at length. Yet a series of interrelated questions is left undetermined. These are the questions of "who", "when" and "where". If social, cultural, ethnic and religious specificity is to be respected we need to examine whether the concept of human security covers these dimensions equally.

Recognition

The concept of human security has a special character, based on the fact that it emerged from the media-shaped and geopolitical shadow of the Cold War. Human security is thus only a new phenomenon in the sense that it was not hitherto perceived. While there is little new about the

individual needs that is revealed by the discourse of human security, what is new is the need to focus on the individual in general. This is the new-found status of the individual, with all that might characterise or be associated with the individual.

The needs relative to human security of the individual that is the subject of human security, from a farmer in rural China to a factory worker in urban India, are distinct from each other. Human security is a concept that reflects needs that are never the same, that vary from person to person. Paradoxically, if human security was a reflection of the same needs for all, it would simply not be human security. If needs were the same for all, they would be a collective matter, a sub-state collective concern.

Tolerance

The issues of tolerance surrounding human security are many. Toleration is the action of allowing something, which in essence is not allowed, which is discredited, devalued, or frowned upon. Toleration is a response to difference; to something that is not me, not us, not this, something that is implicitly in opposition to, or possibly in open conflict with, my identity. This opposition can range from a simple perception of difference to an existential conflict. Tolerance is not just the experience of the something that we might find difficult to accept. It is the experience of the difference between my religion and the other, my music and the other. The ethical burden of tolerance is the need for recognition of the validity of the cultural particularities of another. In this way, toleration always lies in a paradoxical place, between full recognition of the other and full rejection. Toleration is both an expression of the right of something else to exist, and the assertion of the right to oppose it.

Toleration takes place on many levels, from the individual to the global. The precondition and guarantee of toleration is simple: the existence of another subject. In any given community, certain political interests and desires must coexist with others. In religious settings – the historical origin of the very concept of toleration – certain sub-groups must tolerate others. Ethnic groups coexist in different settings.

Human security and political ethics

Realism and idealism

Prior to the general academic evolution of the mid-twentieth century on, international relations were the domain of diplomats and international politicians and competing interests and political compromise were seen more as modes of action, or the tools of a certain professional activity. Idealism as a practice was launched in the USA in the 1940s. In international relations theory, "idealism" is a blanket term for a number of approaches to the link between ideas and empirical reality, emphasising the norms and values of political action in the international arena. Idealism refers to normative international thinking, generally referred to as "moralism", "utopianism", "revolutionism" and, in some cases, "liberalism". In general, idealism builds on claims that ideals do exist about how international politics should be carried out, and a public policy driven by principles is a realistic alternative to one that is not (Hutchings 1999, p.13).

The term can be related to a more philosophical kind of political idealism with its roots in Enlightenment political and ethical philosophy. The obligatory station in this immense literature is Kant's 1795 essay "On perpetual peace" (Kant 1991). Kant provides a model for conceptualising the opposition at the root of idealism between politics and morality. Politics, according to Kant, is a response to the laws and necessity of nature and to the facts of the world. Morality, on the other hand, concerns to the capacity of human reason to understand right and wrong. Schematically put, morality is a question of doing what one should, based on reason and force of will, politics is a question of what one is constrained to do by force of necessity (Hutchings1999, p.13; Kant 1991).

The concept of realism springs from the historical debate which opposes it to idealism. It, was first and best formulated by Carr in 1939, though repeated and nuanced subsequently Morgenthau, 1948). Political realism focuses on the nation-state as the central actor and subject of politics, the aim of politics is the survival of the state, and this imperative supersedes any other normative imperative. Power is

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both the means and the end of politics. States are seen as autonomous, as are the foundations of their principles.

The concept of human security intersects both of these debates

The human security concept represents an idealist approach to international relations although qualifications need to be made. The ethical imperative behind human security is far from clear. There is little consensus concerning what the protection implied by human security means, nor is there consensus concerning who the objects of ethical consideration should be. Concrete criteria have not been produced to determine when human security crises exist and who should determine at what level the object of human security should be placed (an exception is Owen 2004).

On the side of realism, human security admits the primacy of the nation-state as the primary security provider. As internationalist as it may be, human security understands the nation-state as the fundamental reality, as the challenge for which operational solutions must be found. As the state is the reality that drives the need for human security, human security adopts the principles of realism.

In terms of power, the other essential pillar of realist thought, human security possesses still another focus. In the human security focus, power determines the formation of the concept of the individual and is the axis around which human security revolves. But individuals and their rights and obligations are situated at a level below state authorities who organise and control their status in political and social systems. Indeed, the contentiousness of the concept of human security lies in its struggle for control of that status, for the right and political position to define rights and obligations of individuals in society. Power is thus, from one point of view, the crux of the human security debate, not, in terms of the power to act, but instead to conceptualise and categorise human security.

In the tradition of Hobbes, a general scepticism towards any universal principles of international relations expresses itself in two ways. First, for the classical realists, international relations precede principles of right, which are thus inapplicable to international relations. Second, realists claim that assertions of normative principles are not necessarily universal, but rather contingent and particular (Hutchings 1999, pp.19–20). The latter distinction has clear consequences for the condition of cultural, social, economic or ethnic particularity at the heart of the problem of human security. The object of security is clearly a sub-state entity, thus a sub-state ethics or even sub-international humanitarian law, in as much as it is construed as a trans-state phenomenon. The novelty and force of the doctrine of human security depends largely on this dimension of particularity in the eyes of traditionally universal principles of humanitarian international law.

It is for this reason that the particularity of human security as an ethical concept must be displaced into a different domain. It is meaningful only when the universality of international humanitarian law, a common support mechanism for humanitarian efforts, if not human security efforts, is compromised by the particularity of locally determined needs, wants and fears.

The notion of realism was revised in neo-realism through Waltz's *Man, the state and war* (Waltz 1959), among other works. Waltz nuances the idealism – realism opposition by underscoring the need for a theoretical opposition between domestic and international politics. The opposition between morality and politics at the heart of the realist view, is somewhat variable, according to levels, in the system of Waltz. For the question of ethical foundations of human security, this nuance opens for the calibration of moral guidelines specific to individual levels and thus groups that do not fall along the discrete lines of nation-state politics (cf. Telhami 2002).

Cosmopolitanism

Cosmopolitanism is not a moral theory in and of itself, but a class of theories. It grows out of the stoicist tradition (the same tradition as theories of national law). In its broadest articulation, it implies that the standards for human conduct are innate, inscribed in nature and available to human rationality. Ethical substance, according to this point of view, is both universal (it covers

the cosmos) and independent of any human institutions, including state forms. The ethical properties of individuals cannot depend upon the laws or regulations of states or other international organisations. Though the consequences of embracing moral cosmopolitanism are openly political, its origins are not. By the same token, moral cosmopolitanism can be used to argue for (or against) particular political orders that might more or less embody its doctrines (Pogge 1992). Cosmopolitanism instead embodies a form of global ethics whose political determinations are unspecified (Dower 1998).

The status of cosmopolitanism, implicitly disconnected from political institutions, is essential to clarifying its relation to the notion of human security. Indeed, the fact that cosmopolitanism encompasses an entire class of notions about the commonality of human values makes particular state-based arrangements difficult to justify. In this sense, one might also say that cosmopolitanism is not forcibly at odds with the notion of realism. For cosmopolitanism the state need not be a moral entity, nor must it be concerned with deploying any given arrangements designed to realise any given principles. If one may talk about the purpose of cosmopolitanism, it would be to articulate standards that are not necessarily related to human institutions, to establish "truths about humanity that transcend political debates, while at the same time providing guidelines for them" (Amin 2004; Anderson-Gold 2005; Beck 2002; Brennan 2001; Brown 2005; Dallmayr 2003; Dobson 2006; Fine 2003, 2006; Foster 2003; Hutchings 1999: 40–41; Hutchings and Dannreuther 1999; Nagel 2006; Robbins 2003; Sivaramakrishnan 2005; West 2002.)

The difficulty posed by cosmopolitanism for human security is its transcendentalism, the very source of its power. Its most important contribution to the debate is the fact that it nourishes a kind of idealism in its most general form. Unfortunately, this also constitutes its primary weakness. By principally lifting itself above the fray of both domestic and international politics, it must sacrifice its capacity to grasp and engage the baseline issues involved in the differentiation within the human community. It is precisely this differentiation that lies at the heart of the notion of human security. The

problem is that differentiation occurs along lines that are not state-based and layers that coincide with state-based political and non-political issues. Cosmopolitanism exemplifies the paradox of cultural particularity by both justifying its existence and denying its particularity.

Communitarianism

According to communitarianism, moral values exist only in one type or another of public or shared space. It thus opposes most forms of liberalism, which see the individual as the cradle of values; it opposes realism, which regards morality as something utterly foreign to political community; it opposes idealism, which considers the sphere of values to be autonomous from contingent empirical references and it opposes cosmopolitanism, which regards all individuals as part of one, unified community.

In the communitarian philosophical perspective, the principles upon which social, economic and political arrangements are legitimised are based on actual community-based practices, traditions and historically determined facts (Hutchings 1999, pp.42–43). While communitarians differ on a wide variety of perspectives, they essentially share the view that one form of community or another is the basis for morality and, in political terms, legitimacy. Where they tend to differ is on what constitutes a community, how legitimacy is derived from community and the limits and scope of the moral community beyond the borders of the "actual" community (Archibugi 2004; Bellamy and Castiglione 1997; Bellamy and Warleigh 1998; Brown 2002; Cochran 1996; Hayden 2005; Irwin 2001; Kaufmann 2000; Lacroix 2002; Makinda 2005; Melchior 1999; Parker and Brassett 2005; Stychin 2000; Thaa 2001; Woodhouse and Ramsbotham 2005).

Communitarianism opposes not only the idealist position that moral laws and guidelines are universally available, but also, regardless of the actual situation, it does not accept such a universal position, moral or otherwise. Just as with people in all regards, so it is also impossible that moral standards can be universally established, provided on a universal basis, and accessible to all people and peoples.

Communitarian ethical theory permits Waltz, for example, to argue that the nation-state

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has a primacy in terms of the ethical foundation. The robustness of the community, its internal cohesion and its external solidity give it a privileged status as an author of its own moral virtues through processes of internal consensus. The people possess an extraordinary moral substance, which makes it, in the analysis of Waltz, the source of what is right.

The implication of this ethical position for the project of human security is somewhat ambivalent. Something like individual security cannot be supported by a communitarian approach, since the ethical foundation, the cohesion between individuals, would be absent. The human security of certain minority groups would, in some sense, be protected by a communitarian approach. The moral robustness of the collective would be determined in part by its size, and by the breadth of its collective foundation. This would provide considerable moral impetus for larger minority groups, but would leave smaller groups exposed, perhaps more exposed than without the approach.

Rethinking Human Security

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