Human Security: A critical review of the literature

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1. Introduction

Human security is a concept that identifies the security of human lives as the central objective of national and international security policy. It contrasts with, and grew out of increasing dissatisfaction with, the state-centered concept of security as an adequate conceptual framework for understanding human vulnerabilities in the contemporary world and military interventions as adequate responses to them[2]. As Mary Kaldor (2007) explains in her introduction to her volume *Human Security*, human vulnerability is pervasive, threatened by 'new wars' where actors are no longer states, that do not follow the rules of conduct of 'old wars', and that cannot be won by the means of old wars. Moreover, these new wars are intertwined with other global threats including disease, natural disasters, poverty and homelessness. "Yet our security conceptions, drawn from the dominant experience of the Second World War, do not reduce that insecurity; rather they make it worse.' (Kaldor 2007 p. 10). Similarly, Mahbub ul Haq proposes human security as a new paradigm of security: '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 p. 115)

The concept has become increasingly widely used since the mid 1990s (Gasper 2010). While initially used primarily with reference to state policies and the search for new international security and development agendas after the end of the Cold War, it is increasingly being used in policy advocacy by civil society groups on a broader range of contemporary issues from civil war to migration to climate change[3] (O'Brien and others 2010; Gasper 2010). Academic institutions have developed research programs and degree programs in human security[4]. Yet human security is a contested concept. There are multiple formulations of its definition and divergent efforts to evolve associated global agendas. Efforts to promote human security for foreign policy of states and institutionalize it at the UN have generated controversies. A large literature has emerged challenging, defending, or explaining the meaning and the added value of the concept. Many practitioners in international affairs, in both security and development fields, remain skeptical of its practical usefulness and political relevance. Often criticized as ambiguous, and subject to as many interpretations, questions remain as to exactly what function it is serving. Is it a full scale conceptual paradigm, a doctrine for a new global security policy, a norm, or just a term – or as Paris (2001) asks in his article 'Human Security: Paradigm Shift or Hot Air?' A rich literature aiming to answer these questions has emerged as later sections of this paper will review.

In this paper we review the concept, its use in policy debates and the academic literature on the concept as an idea in international relations. We argue that in spite of

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[1] The authors gratefully acknowledge very helpful research assistance from Victoria Webbe.
[2] For origins of the concept, see Bajpay, Kanti, 2003, "The Idea of Human Security',
International Studies vol 40:3 pp. 195-228; and MacFarlane and Khong 2006 Chapter 2)
[3] See for example Truong and others 2010, O'Brien and others 2010
[4] For example, programs and degrees have been introduced at the University of Tokyo,
University of Massachusetts Boston, and The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy to name a few.

the controversy, human security is an important concept not be ignored as a significant discourse in contemporary debates about the world order. It opens up new lines of analysis, gives voice to new actors. Its value added in the security field is that it focuses attention on human beings and integrates non-military mechanisms as means to security. Its value added in the development field is to focus attention on downside risks. We consider human security to be an idea that is part of the capability approach. For that reason, human security is closely related to human development and to human rights[5].

This paper reviews the concept and its applications, focusing on those areas most relevant to violent conflicts and fragile states. The first section reviews human security as a concept, exploring alternative definitions currently in circulation and their historical antecedents. The second section identifies the major policy applications to promote 'human security' and their diverse objectives and mechanisms. The third section surveys the critical debates, particularly in the academic literature. The final section concludes with commentary on its relevance for violent conflicts and fragile states.

1.1. The Concept

While human security is now used as a general term with a wide range of meanings in many contexts from domestic violence to migration, it originated in the many debates about 'collective security' around the end of the Cold War. The central idea is the primacy of human life as the objective of security policy – or the referent object. This is a claim that has major implications for almost all aspects of thinking and acting on security which had for decades been built around the primacy of the state. The concept of human security expands the scope of analysis and policy in multiple directions. According to Rothschild, it extends downwards "to the security of groups and individuals;" upward, "to the security of international systems;" horizontally, from military security "to political, economic, social, environmental, or 'human security;'" and in all directions "upwards to international institutions, downwards to regional or local government, sideways to nongovernmental organizations, to public opinion and the press, and to the abstract forces of nature or of the market" (Rothschild 1995, 55).

By focusing on the individual, the concept must necessarily include all aspects of human rights including the need for meeting basic needs and the demands of political and social freedom – both 'freedom from fear' and 'freedom from want'. According to the South African political leader Frene Ginwala, "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

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[5] Sen and Nussbaum have written extensively about the close connections between human rights and capabilities, emphasizing overlapping concerns and priorities for setting social objectives (see for example Nussbaum 2011; Sen 1999; and Vizard and others 2011 for a review of the literature on the relationships and complementarities between human rights and capabilities). Human rights and capabilities share common motivations and focus on overlapping aspects of human well being. See Gasper 2005 for exploration of human rights, human development and human security as overlapping and complementary concepts.

well as the security of the state.' (Ginwala in Commission on Human Security 2003, p.3)

A departure from the realist, state-centered concept of security that has dominated academic research as well as foreign policy thinking of major powers, this conceptual reframing of security 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:

- 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;
- 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;
- Development and ending poverty as important means to achieve human security, and international cooperation for development as a priority;
- 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;
- Actors other than the state as sources of threat and as holders of obligations to protect;
- Global inter-connectedness of security threats (such as terrorist networks, global financial crises and global diseases) and necessary responses.

The state and individual in the conception of security in historical perspective

The idea of the individual as the referent of security is not new. The 20th century conception of the state as the referent of security was not crystallized until the 18th century when, following the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, threats to the state emerged as most important security issue; "the reification of the state was the product of specific historical circumstances" (MacFarlane and Khong 2006, 246). Previously, the concept of security was broader, referring to both the state and individual (Rothschild 19995). For the Greeks, the city-state provided the order and protection prerequisite for human endeavors and well-being (MacFarlane and Khong 2006, 246). For the Romans *securitas* denoted an inner state of tranquility and freedom from care (Rothschild 1995, 61).

Though the term was not used, human security is at the heart of the purpose of the United Nations. In the aftermath of the horrors of the World War II, the framers of the 1945 United Nations' Charter were motivated by the need for nations to act collectively to protect freedom and dignity of individuals and recognized the tension between the individual and the state, and required states to respect human dignity and fundamental freedoms as human rights. The international conventions on human rights established these norms[6]. Collectively, these agreements accord international legal recognition to

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[6] These include the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the 1950 Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War; the 1951 Convention Against Genocide; the 1974 Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict; the 1976 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the 1976 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the 1981 Convention on the

the rights of individuals and provide individuals with a legal basis for challenging "unjust state law or oppressive customary practice" (Michael Ignatieff quoted in MacFarlane and Khong, 2006, 18). The Charter also recognizes the link between development and peace, seeing the social and economic turmoil following World War I as a factor behind the rise of Nazism. The Charter articulated concern for economic and social progress alongside peace, security and human rights. These have since served as the central objectives of the United Nations.

In the 1970s and 1980s several commissions produced reports that challenged traditional notions of state-centered national security and served as precursors to an idea of human security (Bajpai 2003). For example, in 1972, the Club of Rome Group issued *The Limits to Growth* and asserted that "men of all nations" face threats from economic disruptions, environmental degradation, and erosion of traditional values (Bajpai 2003). In 1982, the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues chaired by Olof Palme issued *Common Security*: *a Blueprint for Survival* that called for cooperative approaches to the threat posed by nuclear weapons and discussed how security involves not just military but also economic and political cooperation (Rothschild 1995).

Contemporary definitions of human security

A multiplicity of actors (governments, international organizations, researchers, NGOs), use the term for different purposes (agenda setting, advocacy, analysis) and in diverse contexts (foreign policy, international diplomacy, analytical framework for evaluating the state of the world and proposing appropriate policy priorities, as a field of study and research in international relations). There is no single consensus definition of human security[7], which in itself is a source of criticism of the concept as lacking a common definition and therefore ambiguous[8]. The competing definitions are broadly categorized into two groups: broad and narrow, around each of which two parallel discourses have evolved.

'Broad formulation'

The broad conception is concerned with human vulnerability overall, and therefore encompasses all forms of threats from all sources. This includes, in addition to organized political violence recognized in the narrow concept, other forms of violence, as well as threats of natural disasters, disease, environmental degradation, hunger, unemployment and economic downturn.

The broad formulation has been proposed by a number of authors, including UN documents on human security since 1994, the 1994 UNDP *Human Development Report* (HDR), the European Council and the Barcelona Group, the Commission on Human Security, Government of Japan, as well as academics such as Beebe and Kaldor (2008), Chen and Narasimhan (2003), King and Murray (2001), Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy (2007), Thomas (2000) and several others. While some take a more reductionist approach to focus on threats from disease and natural disasters (King and Murray 2001), others take a broader approach to include all threats and vulnerabilities

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Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; the 1986 Declaration on the Right to Development; the 1987 Convention Against Torture; and the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child.

[7] See Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy 2007 chapter 2 for an excellent synopsis of the debate over definitions, especially the classification of academic definitions in box 2.1 (p.42-47) and mapping in figure 2.1. p. 47)

[8] See for example King and Murray (2001).

to human freedom and dignity including threats of hunger, disease, natural disasters, economic downturns, political repression. In UN documents and debates, human security is often characterized as incorporating the two pillars of the UN charter which are the foundations of human rights instruments: "freedom from want" and "freedom from fear" (Ogata 1998, Thakur 1997, Frechette 1999, Annan 2000).

HDR 1994 (UNDP 1994), often credited as the source of the contemporary use of the term[9], notes that it is difficult to formulate a rigorous definition of human security because 'like other fundamental concepts, such as human freedom, human security is more easily identified through its absence than its presence, and most people instinctively understand what security means'. It offered the following definition. 'Human security can be said to have two main aspects. It means first safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression. And second, it means protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life- whether in homes, jobs or in communities.' In this conception of security, the threats or causes of insecurity can be from the forces of nature or manmade, from wrong policy choices. It identified seven important dimensions of human security: (i) *Economic security* (an assured basic livelihood derived from work, public and environmental resources, or reliable social safety nets); (ii) *Food security* (ready physical and economic access to basic food); (iii) *Health security* (access to personal healthcare and protective public health regimens), (iv) environmental security (safety from natural disasters and resource scarcity attendant upon environmental degradation); (v) *Personal security* (physical safety from violent conflict, human rights abuses, domestic violence, crime, child abuse, and self-inflicted violence as in drug abuse); (vi) *Community security* (safety from oppressive community practices and from ethnic conflict); (vii) *Political security* (freedom from state oppression and abuses of human rights).); (ii) *Food security* (ready physical and economic access to basic food); (iii) *Health security* (access to personal healthcare and protective public health regimens), (iv) environmental security (safety from natural disasters and resource scarcity attendant upon environmental degradation); (v) *Personal security* (physical safety from violent conflict, human rights abuses, domestic violence, crime, child abuse, and self-inflicted violence as in drug abuse); (vi) *Community security* (safety from oppressive community practices and from ethnic conflict); (vii) *Political security* (freedom from state oppression and abuses of human rights).

In its 2003 report, *Security Now: Protecting and Empowering People,* the Commission on Human Security (CHS), offered a definition that overlaps considerably with the 1994 HDR, but also attempted to bridge the gap between the 'narrow' and 'broad' versions. It refrained from itemizing threats to human security, referring instead to a broad set of "elementary rights and freedoms people enjoy" forming a "vital core". Nonetheless, it gives examples of important 'menaces' from environmental pollution, transnational terrorism, massive population movements, infectious diseases, and long term conditions of oppression and deprivation (p.24). It emphasizes the involvement of multiple actors beyond the state – NGOs, regional organizations, civil society in managing human security, and empowerment of people as an important condition of human security and emphasize that state security and human security are 'mutually reinforcing and dependent on each other'. (p.6) And the report devotes chapters to people who are vulnerable to threats of violent conflict, poverty and economic security, health, knowledge; areas that overlap with the 7 areas enumerated in the 1994 HDR.

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[9] Although the term had been used in the literature for decades, (see Rothschild 1995), including in international security debates in the decade prior to the publication of HDR1994, this report was the first to articulate the concept in a comprehensive way and link it to contemporary policy challenges. It was also highly influential in bringing the concept into public discourse, particularly into international security and development debates in the UN and within some governments.

The broad conception is closely related to, and reflects the intellectual roots in, the theories of capabilities and of human rights. Not surprisingly, the articulation of human security in the 1994 HDR and in the 2003 CHS report conceptualizes human security in terms of Sen's capabilities approach[10]. According to this approach, human freedoms are the ability of individuals to be and do the things they value, and the choices they have to lead their lives accordingly. The concept of human security considers the down-side risks: 'human security means people can exercise these choices freely-and that they can be relatively confident that the opportunities they have today will not be lost tomorrow.' (UNDP 1994, 23).

Other authors who use the broad human security concept do not draw so explicitly from the theory of capabilities but nonetheless come to human security as a necessary element of a life with dignity and freedom. Leaning and Arie (2000b) emphasize the psychological sense of well-being that is attendant upon material aspects of human security. Their concern is not merely for access to reliable shelter, but also for "a sustainable sense of home;" not merely for political freedom and lack of repression but also for "constructive group attachment;" not merely for safety from sudden downward dislocations but also for "an acceptance of the past and a positive grasp of the future" (2000b, 38). Caroline Thomas writes about "personal autonomy, control over one's life and unhindered participation in the life of the community" (2000, 6-7). Using these broad criteria, human security encompasses a life lived with dignity as well as one free from fear.

'Narrow' formulation

The narrow formulation focuses on threats of violence, particularly organized political violence, and is used by the Human Security Network at the UN, the annual *Human Security Reports,* and academics such as MacFarlane and Khong. They specify human security as "freedom from organized violence," that is (1) committed by an identifiable perpetrator and (2) is not random but rather is organized in a way that "makes that violence potent" (MacFarlane and Khong 2006, 245).

The proponents of the narrow definition criticize the broad definition as being too broad to be useful (MacFarlane and Khong 2006; Mack 2002). They defend the narrow definition for the reverse reason: "This narrower focus on human security emphasizes the more immediate necessity for intervention capability rather than long-term strategic planning and investing for sustainable and secure development" (Liotta and Owen 2006, 43).

2. International Policy Debates

Since the mid 1990s, a number of policy debates have revolved around human security in several contexts. First, Japan and Canada took political initiatives to promote the concept and to institutionalize it within the UN. Second, it has been used as part of the European Union's effort to rethink and redefine its common security policy. Third, it has sometimes been adopted as official government policy. Fourth, it has been used in policy analysis and advocacy as a normative and conceptual framework over a number of issues – particularly climate change in recent years.

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[10] This is not surprising since Sen was cochair of the CHS, and the HDRs are dedicated to expanding the capability approach. Note that Mahbub ul Haq was the chief author of the 1994 HDR.

Diplomatic initiatives to promote the human security concept and it institutionalization in the UN

The 1994 HDR stimulated new debates within the UN and related fora around human security as a new paradigm of development and security. Canada, Japan and Norway in particular took initiatives to promote the concept, which developed along two separate, parallel trajectories. Canada and Norway created the Human Security Network[11] of foreign ministers in 1999 to meet annually to dialogue over priorities for common security. The group includes Austria, Canada, Costa Rica, Greece,Ireland, Jordan, Mali, Netherland, Norway, Slovenia , South Africa (observer), Switzerland, and Thailand. Their vision aligns with the narrow definition of human security, emphasizing threats of violence, repression and human rights abuses; they have championed some specific initiatives, such as: the international ban on anti-personnel mines; the international criminal court; the control of small arms and light weapons; the protection of children and women from violence; climate change; the promotion of women, peace and security; human rights education; and some poverty related issues.

Japan took up human security as a broad concept, and has championed the use of development cooperation as an instrument to promote it through country level activities. In 2001 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs set up an independent Commission on Human Security, an international panel of high level personages co-chaired by Sadako Ogata and Amartya Sen, and in 2005 created the Friends of Human Security[12]. Japan has also led diplomatic efforts to introduce debates about human security in the General Assembly[13]. Other members of the Commission from different parts of the world have taken initiative to promote the concept in their own regions. In 1999, Japan established the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS) with the UN Secretariat to promote a human security agenda as something that can be operational and implemented on the ground, and to finance community development in health, education, and agriculture; landmine removal; and post-conflict reconstruction and peace-building (Atanassove-Cornelis 2006, United Nations 2010)[14]. This strand of initiative contrasts with the Human Security network in the formulation of the concept, definition of threats, and policy response. While the Human Security Network promotes global policy initiatives, this initiative promotes national development programs supported by development cooperation.

In 2008, the United Nations General Assembly embarked on a thematic debate on human security and its implications for member states and the United Nations. In April 2010, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon presented to the General Assembly the first

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[11] See http://www.emb-norway.ca/Embassy-and-Consulates/norwaycanada/Initiatives1/humansecurity/ last accessed March 17, 2011

[12] The commission included 12 internationally prominent personages from across the world. The commission's 2003 report, *Security Now: Protecting and Empowering People* promulgated an expansive definition of human security that addressed the humanitarian impact of violent conflict and human rights abuses; the pervasive insecurities of poverty, inequality, gender disparities, and disease; and the disempowering effects of political oppression and lack of educational opportunity. Over the course of two years, the commission convened hearings, meetings, and symposia on human security that informed its final report. In 2003, based upon recommendations of the CHS, an Advisory Board on Human Security was established under UN auspices to guide disbursements of the UNTFHS within a human security perspective and to carry the work of the CHS forward.

[13] Including the 2008 thematic debate in the UNGA, 2010 SG report, and 2010 formal debate in the UNGA.

[14] The fund receives support from Slovenia, and Thailand. As of December 2009, the UNTFHS has allocated $323 million to 187 projects in over 60 countries (United Nations 2010, 16).

official report on the concept. Titled *Human Security,* the report broadly defined the concept as "freedom from fear, freedom from want and freedom to live in dignity"[15] (2010, 2). In May 2010, UN General Assembly held its first formal debate on human security as presented in Ban Ki-moon's report and in July the General Assembly passed its first resolution on human security, which was to continue debate[16].

Throughout the last decade and a half, these diplomatic efforts to promote human security in the UN have met with political resistance and controversy. From the very start when the concept entered international debates, many states reacted to human security as a potential challenge to the principle of state sovereignty. If adopted as a doctrine for international security, it could build a culture of intervention. Thus, for example, in 1994 several developing countries protested at the launch of the HDR[17]. They reacted particularly to the idea that early warning of human security crises could be mounted by monitoring such indicators as inequality, human rights abuses, poverty, ethnic conflict and military spending, and if that were done, countries such as Afghanistan, Haiti, Sudan, Zaire would raise alarms. Human security debates have continued to raise questions from delegations about the role of the state and the potential conflict with sovereignty. Each debate on human security raises questions from several G-77[18] countries about the implications of human security and sovereignty. The negotiated language on human security emphasizes human security as a comprehensive framework for preventing and mitigating vulnerabilities faced by both people and governments. But this has been complicated as this approach was being negotiated simultaneously with the debate of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) which calls for international interventions, limited specifically to cases of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and gross violations of human rights. The human security concept has been separated from the R2P agenda[19]. The G-77 has not supported human security, even though the concept could be helpful for their interests, especially in promoting development as priority UN agendas (Tadjbaksh and Chenoy 2008). Lacking strong support, the initiatives to institutionalize human security as a framework for international security in the UN and elsewhere have not flourished; the resolution adopted in 2010 was to continue debate, the Trust Fund has not attracted many donors other than Japan, and the membership of the Human Security Network set up by Canada and Norway has not grown. The UN debate has focused on addressing two questions: the need to continue the debate, and the need to clarify the concept[20].

Nonetheless, despite the controversy,the core normative principles of the human security concept are entrenched in the UN's key policy documents since the 1990s on Post Cold-War common global security agendas. The 2004 report of the Secretary General's High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change articulated a new vision of collective security framed around the human security concept. It asserts that human beings bear the burden of security failures but states bear the responsibility of preventing and responding to security threats. The report called for UN member nations to arrive at a new consensus that recognizes the globalized nature of contemporary threats and accepts vigorous cooperative solutions. "Today's threats recognize no national boundaries, are connected, and must be addressed at the global

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[15] (http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/SG_Human_Security_Report_12_04_10.pdf)

[16] See http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2010/ga10944.doc.htm last accessed March 25, 2011

[17] SFP interview March 13,2011 with Saras Menon, member of 1994 HDR team.

[18] Group of 77 and China include 130 developing countries acting as a bloc in UN negotiations and voting. See http://www.g77.org/doc/ last accessed March 27, 2011

[19] This became institutionalized starting with the 2005 World Summit outcome document in which para 143 outlines the general objectives of human security and paras 138-140 focus on R2P.

[20] See

and regional as well as the national levels" (2004, 1) The report calls for strengthening funding mechanisms and collective security institutions and instruments. These are analytical documents of the Secretary General however, and not hard resolutions passed by member states.

The Responsibility to Protect

In 2000 the then Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy launched an International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) to "promote a comprehensive debate on the relationship between intervention and sovereignty, with a view to fostering global political consensus on how to move from polemics towards action within the international system."[21] It articulated the "right of humanitarian intervention" or the responsibility to protect (R2P) individuals from large scale and systematic violations of their human rights, committed by their own governments. A responsibility to protect shifts the focus from state sovereignty to the human rights of people residing in those states. Under R2P a state's sovereignty is no longer absolute but rather is contingent on whether residents are protected from gross human rights abuses; the international community has a legitimate duty to intervene in the domestic affairs of states to contain dire threats to human safety. According to the ICISS, "the protection of human security, including human rights and human dignity, must be one of the fundamental objectives of international institutions" (ICISS 2001, 6). The ICISS developed a three-part framework that emphasizes responsibility to prevent the outbreak of violence as well as to provide support for rebuilding and reconciliation after intervention (Jolly et al 2009, 175). Because states that govern under rule of law and human rights norms are best positioned to guarantee the safety of their citizens, implicit in R2P is the need to address the development dimension of human security with assistance to strengthen state governance and address economic and social inequalities (Jolly et al 2009). This articulation was endorsed by the 2005 World Summit[22], and by the UN Security Council Resolution 1674, and a GA resolution in 2009 (United Nations 2009b).

European Union – 'Doctrine'

While UN-related diplomatic initiatives promoted human security as a concept, with its policy implications left ambiguous, open to interpretation, they do not go as far as proposing human security as a 'doctrine' for international security policy. However the Study Group on Europe's Security Capabilities, known as the Barcelona Group (independent group created by the then EU High Representative Javier Solana) proposed human security as a doctrine for European security policy. This initiative builds on the new European Security Strategy adopted by the European Council (2003) in 2003 that identifies terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, regional conflicts, state failure, and organized crime as the key threats facing Europe. The Barcelona Group's 2004 report articulates a doctrine, especially concerned with the

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[21]ICISS website http://www.iciss.ca/progress-en.asp accessed 03.13.2011

[22]Article 138 of the *World Outcome Summit Document* states: "each individual State has the responsibility to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity This responsibility entails the prevention of such crimes, including their incitement, through appropriate and necessary means. We accept that responsibility and will act in accordance with it. The international community should, as appropriate, encourage and help States to exercise this responsibility and support the United Nations in establishing an early warning capability" (United Nations 2005b, 30). Article 39 affirmed the responsibility for the international community to take collective action to protect populations, even through military intervention, should peaceful means fail.

humanitarian emergencies and human rights crises related to these threats. For the Barcelona Group, "Human security refers to freedom for individuals from basic insecurities caused by gross human rights violations." (Study Group on Europe's Security Capabilities, 2004 executive summary) . The doctrine proposes: (i) seven principles: the primacy of human rights, clear political authority, multilateralism, a bottom-up approach, regional focus, the use of legal instruments, and the appropriate use of force. The report puts particular emphasis on the bottom-up approach : on communication, consultation, dialogue and partnership with the local population in order to improve early warning, intelligence gathering, mobilization of local support, implementation and sustainability; (ii) a 'Human Security Response Force', composed of 15,000 men and women, of whom at least one third would be civilian (police, human rights monitors, development and humanitarian specialists, administrators, etc.). The Force would be drawn from dedicated troops and civilian capabilities already made available by member states as well as a proposed 'Human Security Volunteer Service'; (iii) a new legal framework to govern both the decision to intervene and operations on the ground. This would build on the domestic law of host states, the domestic law of sending states, international criminal law, international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

Foreign policy of governments

Japan and Canada each embedded human security within its foreign security (Debiel and others 2006;). Propelled by a 1998 speech by Prime Minister Obuchi that articulated human security as a pillar of Japan's foreign policy[23], Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs adopted human security as a framework for their development cooperation[24].

Canada took up the narrow formulation of human security emphasizing the protection of individuals from violence (Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Canada 1999). Canada permits the use of military force for humanitarian intervention to protect civilians, and engages in peacekeeping operations, in conflict prevention and peace-building, in strengthening governance and accountability to foster democracy and human rights, and in countering transnational organized crime (Government of Canada 2001). Canada has been instrumental in establishing an International Criminal Court and in advancing the protection of children in conflict.

Human Security perspectives on diverse global challenges

Human security has been applied by to a number of thematic issues as an evaluative framework for assessing the state of affairs, and for critiquing and designing public policy. It can be useful for social, economic and environmental themes in focusing on the downside risks, complementing conventional analyses which focus on progress, deprivation or disparities.

Downside risks associated with globalization pose new types of challenges in the 21st century that require international cooperation to prevent or mitigate. Among these threats financial volatility associated with the rapid cross-border transfers of money; job and income insecurity due to global competition; pandemic disease; international migration as a result of violent conflict, political repression, poverty, and resource

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[23]See http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/asean/pmv9812/policyspeech.html last accessed March 27, 2011
[24]See http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/human_secu/index.html

scarcity; environmental degradation and global warming; organized crime and illegal trafficking; and transnational terrorism. Threats may exist at all levels of national income and, in an interconnected world, can ramify across borders to involve other countries and their populations (UNDP 1994; UNDP 1999; MacLean 2006). Glasius and Kaldor assert that in a globalized, interdependent world, "it is no longer possible to defend the interests of a particular nation or region unilaterally" (2005, 62). In an integrated world, mutual vulnerability exists for all nations, groups, and individuals (Nef 2006, 55). Systems are only as strong as their weakest link, creating shared and reciprocal vulnerability among all actors (Nef 2006, 60). This mutual vulnerability not only increases the risks to which all are exposed but also serves as a catalyst for challenges from below to repressive regimes, unjust regimens, and the orthodoxy that has guided trade and financial liberalization. The process of global integration creates winners and losers, particularly as the world market dominates local economies and resources (Hettne 2010).

The people-centered framework of human security provides a means of assessing globalization's social, economic, and environmental sustainability. This activism on a range of issues extends security sideways to nongovernmental organizations, to public opinion, and to the press (Rothschild 1995).

3. Academic debates about the concept

Human security has fostered a large and growing academic literature. Interestingly, much of this literature is concerned with contesting and defending the concept itself, rather than on its theoretical coherence or associated policy agendas.

Concept lacking precision

One common theme among the critics of the concept is that it is ambiguous and vague, lacking the necessary precision for a useful theoretical construct, encapsulated in the title of a paper by Paris (2001) 'Human Security: Paradigm Shift or Hot Air?' Paris and other authors are particularly critical of the breadth of the concept and argue that it lacks the analytical and descriptive power of a robust theoretical construct to identify causal relationships, define appropriate responses[25]. As already discussed in the section on definitions, proponents of the narrow formulation argue that the broad formulation is an exercise in conceptual overstretch that diminishes its use as a *policy tool* (MacFarlane and Kong 2003; Mack 2002). Though security threats typically command top priority in the allocation of attention and resources, policy-makers cannot prioritize and allocate scarce resources among competing claims that are all tagged as equally compelling security threats, and historically "simply *declaring* that something is a vital security issue" has not led governments to fund it (Mack 2002, 6). Mack finds little analytical or practical utility in the laundry lists that characterize broad conceptions of human security, finding them mere "exercises in re-labeling phenomena that have perfectly good names: hunger, disease, environmental degradation, etc." (Mack 2002, 6). Moreover, the all encompassing formulation does not help understand the causes of threats, the mechanisms whereby they operate, and the means by which they may be remedied.

These critics further argue that the broad concept could have a perverse effect and encourage, inappropriately, the application of military solutions or the illegitimate use of

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[25] See Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy chapter 2 Box 2.2 for an excellent synopsis of the critiques and counter critiques of the concept.

force to political, social and economic problems (MacFarlane and Khong 2006, 228; Liotta 2002, 486). For example, the United States' drug interdiction program in South America is a militarized solution to narco-trafficking, one that has been both ineffective and disruptive to lives and livelihoods (MacFarlane and Khong 2006).

For some proponents of human security in its broad formulation, human security is not a policy tool but a 'foundational concept' (UNDP 1994), a paradigm (Haq 1995), that brings values and ethical norms to security debates (Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy 2007)--or at least an 'organizing concept' (King and Murray 2001). As explained in HDR1994 and CHS Report, such concepts are intangible and difficult to define in concrete terms since threats and vulnerabilities depend on context. For these reasons, the HDR1994 enumerated 7 components of human security with the proviso that this was only an indicative list while CHS Report resisted specifying them at all.

Like other foundational concepts such as capabilities and human development, human security as a policy approach is something to be developed as researchers develop its tool kit – the battery of concepts, measures, empirical and theoretical research. In fact, a nascent literature already exists. Jolly and Basu found evidence in the recent National Human Development Reports of 13 countries[26] that the concept of human security is already framing both analysis and policy making (Jolly and Ray 2007). The very breadth of the concept is its strength, allowing policy makers to adapt people-centered approaches that reflect their country's specific context, creating 'national sub-sets of human security.'[27] Priorities are identified "*after* exploring the concerns of people in specific situations rather than before" (Jolly and Ray 2007, 457). Furthermore, human security's methodology based upon analysis of causal processes, permits policy makers to establish linkages among traditional military threats, non-traditional human security threats, and human development and to create coherent policy responses that simultaneously mitigate insecurity and promote sustainable development. Policies developed in a human security framework may better reflect the insecurities of the post-Cold War world, where safety, health and livelihoods are threatened by crime, global pandemics and environmental challenges, while at the same time permitting a range of priorities based upon country context.

Politics and the trajectory of human security

Struck by the multiplicity of definitions and the ambiguity in its meaning and implications, some authors have analyzed the political dynamics behind the use of the term. The term is in fact a site of contestation (Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy 2007).

Several see human security as a concept deployed by the 'middle powers' (notably Canada and Japan) primarily as a diplomatic tool to promote their foreign policy goals (Suhrke 2001, Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy 2007). Thus within these countries, it was the Foreign Ministry that championed the term, and it did not penetrate further. Surkhe (1999, 2004) and Woodward (2010) argue that these middle powers attempted to take a lead in the debates about institutional rearrangements in the post Cold War era and to challenge the US position. Woodward (2010) argues that the window of opportunity to recast global debates about security closed with the 9/11 terrorist attack that brought state-centric thinking back to the fore.

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[26] Afghanistan, Bulgaria, East Timor, Estonia, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lesotho, Macedonia, Moldova, Mozambique, Philippines, Sierra Leone, and the Solomon Islands.
[27] Jolly and Basu carefully rebut each of the criticisms of the broad approach.

It is the use of the term for diplomatic, rather than analytical purposes, combined with the intuitive appeal of the term that has led to the proliferation of meanings attributed to it (Farer 2010). Dubbing human security 'a rogue term' like 'self determination', Farer (2010, 43) notes 'the lack of uniform definition or use stems …not from intrinsic incoherence but from the way in which, from their first appearance, the phrases seemed to challenge the views, values and interests of the practitioners of traditional diplomacy, powerful actors who then had a choice: resist them absolutely as rogue concepts threatening the very structure of international relations or neuter their revolutionary potential through an interpretation rendering them compatible with, even a reinforcement of, the basic structure of the status quo.'

Calling human security "the dog that doesn't bark" David Chandler (2008) claims that despite its widespread use in international policy discourse, the human security paradigm has had little impact on policy outcomes because it has "reinforced, rather than challenged, existing policy frameworks" (Chandler 2008, 428). He contends: "…in the post-Cold War world, human security approaches have been easily – and willingly – integrated into the mainstream because they have sought to (1) exaggerate new post-Cold War security threats, (2) locate these threats in the developing world, and (3) facilitate short-term policymaking in the absence of clear strategic foreign policy visions" (2008, 428).

On the other hand, Gasper (2010) argues that it is short-sighted to see states as the only actors utilizing the human security concept. He shows that although human security was primarily a discourse used by states in the UN and associated fora, NGOs and other civil society actors have begun to use the concept. While the G-77 has been resistant to the concept, the civil society of the Global South has not. The concept is gaining traction in debates about a wide range of development and security issues, both local and global.

4. Conclusions

Paradoxically, despite being frequently criticized in both academic and political debates, the use of human security is increasingly widespread. This 'rogue term' has been harnessed in inter-governmental debates and has not been free to drive the revolutionary change that Mahbub ul Haq predicted in 1994 in launching the HDR. Yet its influence on the discourse and the discourse and practice of foreign policy has not been insignificant. MacFarlane and Khong cite four conceptual innovations:

1. It has placed human beings at the core of security and the state is no longer privileged over the individual;
2. It has provided a vocabulary for understanding the human consequences of violent conflict;
3. Some state and regional organizations have incorporated human security concerns into their foreign policy;
4. Securitizing such issues as health and the environment has resulted in more policy attention and resources for these issues (2006, 228-230).

The foreign policy of Japan and Canada, the International Criminal Court, the International Campaign to Ban Land Mines, and the ICISS and the Responsibility to Protect are solid achievements indicating that since 1994, human security has played a significant role in foreign policy (Werthes and Debiel 2006). In 2010, Ban Ki-moon reported to the UN General Assembly(United Nations 2010) that the human security agenda had gained ground as reflected in statements released by the ASEAN Defense Ministers, the Asia-Pacific economic Cooperation forum (APEC), and the Organization

of American States (OAS). In January 2011, the UNTFHS and the Inter-American Institute for Human Rights launched a website28, Human Security in Latin America, to promote and foster human security research and initiatives (United Nations 2010). The Barcelona Report has proposed human security as a doctrine for European security policy. An incipient concept of human security may be emerging in the United States; the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review, refers to a mandate to promote human security, which the document does not define, and calls for the creation of a new under secretary to oversee "all major operational bureaus that support the State Department's mandate to promote human security" (US Department of State 2010, 42-43). And as noted above, the core normative principles of human security are firmly reflected in the UN approach to security and development, and the attempt to integrate the two objectives into a more coherent, human-centered framework.

Paradoxically, the very ambiguity and breadth of this concept is a target of criticism yet is in fact a source of its strength and appeal (Atanassove-Cornelis 2006; Werthes and others 2006). Critics see human security as a policy agenda. This is a misinterpretation of the concept which its proponents propose as a definition of ends, not means, of an international security agenda. Like other broad agendas based on ethical values, human security is not amenable to an unambiguous action plan. Policy strategies need to adapt to the specific challenges of a given time and place, as the CHS report and the 1994 HDR explain. So, as Gasper (2010) concludes, civil society finds the term useful because it can play five roles, namely: to provide a shared language to highlight a new focus in investigation; to guide evaluations; to guide positive analysis; to focus attention in policy design; and to motivate action.

Debates about human security have been mired in confusion over what it is – a concept? A paradigm? A doctrine? A theory? An ideology? We understand it as a concept that is normative, describing what kind of security for whom the world should strive. As Thadjbakhsh and Chenoy ask 'It works in ethics, does it work in theory?' The normative concept opens up questions about causative ideas – what are the threats, from whom, and how can they be defended against? But these are questions for a rich research agenda that has only begun to be tackled.

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[28] http://www.iidh.ed.cr/multic/DefaultIIDHSeguridadEN.aspx

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