

*New Threats to Human Security in the Era of Globalization**

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Abstract This paper makes a case for analysing the new insecurities introduced or worsened by globalization from a human security perspective. The author examines the ways in which globalization is changing the world — economically, politically, and in terms of information and communications technology — and then reviews the new insecurities that require policy attention. The paper specifically tackles the issues of global crime, trafficking in humans, instability in financial markets, threats to job security, the spread of disease and internal conflicts.

Key words: Globalization, Human Security, Human Development, Poverty, Inequality, Human Rights, Crime, Human Trafficking, Conflict, Crisis

Introduction

The last decade of the twentieth century has been a historic period of rapid and dramatic changes in the world. Many of these changes are part of the process of 'globalization'. This paper argues that the concept of human security can offer a useful perspective for assessing policy priorities to make globalization better for people, adding value to existing perspectives such as poverty, inequality, human rights and conflict resolution and prevention.

The human security concept differs from these other perspectives by focusing more sharply on the 'downside risks' that can threaten the well-being of all people, both affluent and poor. Furthermore, it focuses on the well-being and dignity of people rather than on the protection of national borders. It also offers a more complete set of criteria for assessing the impact of globalization on human well-being, encompassing as it does socio-economic aspects and personal safety from the consequences of violent conflicts. Both these aspects of well-being are essential for people to enjoy human security.

*This paper reflects the personal views of the author and is not a statement of United Nations Development Programme policy. It draws on the 1999 Human Development Report, chapter 1, which was also authored by Fukuda-Parr.

Understanding globalization

Globalization is the defining trend in the world today, intensifying interactions among people and integrating markets. Its outcomes are not accidental, but are driven by clearly identifiable political, economic and technological changes that have removed barriers to contact across national borders. The process is not entirely new, but intensified in the 1990s as a result of three new driving forces.

Economic liberalization

The 1994 Marrakech agreement that ended the Uruguay Round was a significant leap in integrating world markets. It brought not only unprecedented reductions in barriers to trade, but the introduction of multilateral rather than bilateral agreements and the extension of trade rules beyond traditional areas to issues such as intellectual property and services. It also led to institutional arrangements for enforcement of the agreements with the creation of the World Trade Organization. These new arrangements foresaw more far-reaching global impact on national economies than trade agreements had ever experienced before.

Over the past 30 years, world exports of goods and services almost tripled in real terms. The daily turnover in foreign exchange markets increased from around US\$10–20 billion in the 1970s to US\$1.2 trillion in 2001 (Bank for International Settlements, 2002). Foreign direct investment has grown seven times, reaching US\$735 billion in 2001, while short-term capital flows have grown three times in the past 20 years, settling in gross terms to a total of more than US\$2 trillion (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2002). International bank lending went from a total of US\$265 billion in 1975 to \$9.4 trillion in 2002 (Bank for International Settlements, 2003). Annual cross-border mergers and acquisitions peaked to US\$601 billion in 2001. In the early 1990s, they accounted for about US\$151 billion only (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2002).

Liberalization of external trade has been part of greater liberalization of economies overall, accompanied by a shrinking of the public sector, particularly in production and services. Strongly supported by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, an ever-growing number of developing countries adopted an open trade approach, shifting away from import substitution policies. By 1997, India had reduced its tariffs to 30% from an average of 82% in 1990, Brazil to 12% from 25% in 1991, and China to 11% from 43% in 1992. Furthermore, country after country undertook deep unilateral liberalization not just in trade, but also in foreign direct investment. Developing countries also started their own financial deregulation: Argentina, Mexico and Thailand opened their capital market (Whalley, 1999).

These changes opened up many market and job opportunities for people but, by exposing national economies to the fierce competition of global markets, they affected human security in areas such as job insecurity. Many also argue that the new environment of economic liberalization narrowed

the policy options for national governments in terms of social security, including social safety nets, unemployment benefits, training and schooling, and medical services.

Political liberalization

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 broke down barriers to the flow of ideas and movement of people for some 400 million people in Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Another 1.3 billion people in China and Vietnam became exposed to the global contacts and communications. Similar processes of political liberalization in Latin America and Africa also took place starting in the 1980s. In all, some 81 countries took significant steps towards democracy over the past two decades (United Nations Development Programme, 2002). Prohibitions on political parties were removed, censorship was lifted, civil society organizations flourished within and across national borders, and independent media multiplied and spread.

There were 37 000 registered international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in 2000, one-fifth more than in 1990. The biggest increases were in Eastern Europe and Asia. In Nepal, the number of registered NGOs grew from 220 in 1990 to 1210 in 1993. In Tunisia, the numbers grew from 1886 in 1988 to 5186 in 1991. In 1996, more than one million such groups were counted in India, and 210 000 in Brazil (Anheier, 2001). Today, 125 countries, with 62% of the world population, have a free or partly free press. Between 1970 and 1996 the number of daily newspapers in developing countries more than doubled, from 29 to 60 copies per 1000 people. In the same years, the number of televisions increased 16-fold (United Nations Development Programme, 2002).

New information and communications technology

The pace of technological progress began to accelerate to unprecedented levels in the past few decades. The introduction of Netscape in 1994 and its availability free to users meant that the Internet became a generalized method of communication for the public rather than a specialized method used only by researchers and businesses. Because information storage, access, processing and communications are a basic input to almost all human interactions, these technological breakthroughs altered the frontiers of what was possible in many fields. They made global market integration in finance, investment, services and trade much more of a reality. For example, without the information and communications technology that made possible long-distance trading in real time, extensive financial market integration would not have happened.

Between 1960 and 1990, the average cost of processing information fell from US\$75 per million operations to less than one-hundredth of a cent. During the same time range, airline operating costs per mile were halved. The cost of a 3-minute telephone call from New York to London fell from

over US\$300 in 1930 (in today's prices) to about 20 cents in 2001 (United Nations Development Programme, 1999). In 2001, more information could be sent over a single cable in a second than was sent over the entire Internet in 1 month in 1997. Transmitting a trillion bits of information from Boston to Los Angeles dropped from US\$150 000 in 1970 to 12 cents in 2001. The fax revolution in the 1980s, and subsequently the introduction of the e-mail in the 1990s, further reduced the time and cost of communication flows. In 2001, e-mailing a 40-page document from Chile to Kenya cost less than 10 cents, faxing it about \$10, sending it by courier \$50 (United Nations Development Programme, 2001).

Interactions among economic, political and technological forces

These three drivers interact, often in mutually reinforcing ways. Because all three break down the political, economic and technological barriers to interactions across nations and distances, they are driving globalization by 'shrinking space, shrinking time and disappearing borders' (Giddens, 1990). Events on the other side of the globe affect people's jobs, incomes and health. Unprecedented speed characterizes the exchange of ideas, as well as goods and services. Trade, capital and information together with norms, cultures and values circulate beyond their national borders. Today, there are more than 500 million Internet users, and this number is expected to nearly double by 2005 (United Nations Development Programme, 2002). Between 1980 and 2002, tourism more than doubled, going from 260 million to over 700 million travellers annually (World Tourism Organization, 2003). Despite increasing restrictions, migration flows have been constantly growing and in 1996 worker's remittances reached US\$58 billion. The time spent on international phone calls rocketed from 33 billion minutes in 1990 to 70 billion minutes in 1996 (United Nations Development Programme, 1999).

Shrinking time and space and disappearing borders create an environment of rapid change in multiple areas of national and individual life. External flows of capital suddenly rise and fall, creating ripples in financial markets; new diseases spread more rapidly to reach epidemic proportions; and the spread of new consumer goods leads to global shifts in market demand. An environment of rapid change is inherently unstable and insecure. The increasing global threats to human security are outgrowing national abilities to tackle them, and outpacing international responses.

The added value of the human security perspective

Such changes in the world have huge consequences for human lives, many of them positive but others negative. The pace of globalization is outpacing the policy responses that could make it work for people. Public policy can do more to facilitate the spread of positive effects and to tackle the negative ones, and to ensure that globalization is inclusive so that all benefit from and contribute to the process. Such policies require action by national governments. They also require international co-operation and global solidarity.

New Threats to Human Security

They require commitment on the part of nations to contribute to global stewardship so that human well-being can be promoted and protected.

But why adopt a human security perspective? Well-established concepts of poverty, inequality, human rights, and conflict resolution and prevention are widely used in current debates on the impact of globalization on human well-being. How does human security differ from other concepts of poverty and inequality? There are several reasons why human security is a particularly useful perspective for understanding the impact of globalization on people and for setting global policy priorities for action.

Focus on sudden change rather than level of well-being

Human security shares with poverty, human development, and human rights a concern with protecting 'the vital core' of human life. But while poverty and human rights are concepts that focus on absolute levels of deprivation, human security focuses on the risks of sudden change for the worse. Risks of sudden change for the worse — whether financial market contagion or the spread of mad cow disease — are aggravated in the age of globalization. These threats affect not only those who are 'poor', but also those who are 'affluent'.

Understanding the human impact of globalization from the human security perspective requires a different agenda — of monitoring not only low levels, but also sudden changes. Thus, a policy agenda would focus on not only development, but also on early warning and prevention.

From the state to the people in security policies

The human security perspective challenges an assumption that has been implicit during much of the previous work on security — namely, the focus on state security. Threats to people's safety come from states themselves. The disarray of states in transition exacerbates the security of people within states. But the question of what is in the interest of the state and what is in the interest of people also shifts attention to the impact of states on people outside their national borders, and it extends to areas outside of military security questions. For example, one country's energy policy has an impact on global warming and the human security of people outside its borders.

A more holistic approach to human well-being

The human security perspective is more comprehensive than other frameworks used in understanding the human impact of globalization, and provides an opportunity to tackle linkages among diverse factors and to address neglected issues. It covers insecurities related to the failure to meet basic economic and social needs as well as those related to conflicts between groups and nations, and the failures of communities, nations and the global community to provide protection against threats. The broader framework of the human security perspective helps to map out policy priorities and action

plans that better account for these problems. Such a perspective can help policy-makers examine the relationships between the socio-economic and the conflict side of insecurity. It can also focus attention on threats that are not captured by either the poverty agenda or the conflict agenda, such as global crime.

New insecurities requiring policy attention

Many new threats to human security are emerging, or old threats are being intensified as the pace of globalization accelerates, outpacing the capacity of governments to develop policy responses. Appropriate policy responses are urgently needed to address some of the most acute threats for which the world is currently unprepared.

Global crime

Criminals have been some of the most entrepreneurial elements in exploiting the opportunities created by the shrinking time, space and disappearing borders of an integrating world. Criminal syndicates have spread their operations across borders, building worldwide alliances and networks, using open economic and political borders for human trafficking, money laundering, and other activities. Globalization facilitates many criminal operations. For example, money laundering is easier with globalized banking and financial services and the liberalization of currency controls. The Japanese Yakuza are financing pornography in The Netherlands. The Sicilian Mafia is selling drugs in New York. Lower trade barriers help legitimate trade but also the transfer of a hijacked car from Johannesburg to Moscow. New technologies open opportunities for jobs but also for crime. A computer hacker can steal millions from financial institutions. Terrorist networks have globalized and operate throughout the world, with cells in North America, Europe, the Middle East, and elsewhere.

World crime fighters have been slower to respond. National security actors face barriers from the pre-globalization era, and co-operation among them has a long way to go. Many countries maintain legislation that inhibits the fight against global crime, whereas this fight requires national police to take co-operative action as rapidly as the crime syndicates. Dismantling bank secrecy and providing witness protection for foreign investigations would dramatically improve the effectiveness of the global fight against global crime. The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime is an important first step that deserves support.

The spread of crime exposes people to threats to personal safety and financial ruin, among other consequences. The economic power of organized crime is estimated to account for US\$2 trillion a year (Schoettle, 2002), rivalling multi-national corporations. In 1995 the illegal drug trade was estimated at US\$400 billion, about 8% of world trade, more than the trade in motor vehicles or in iron and steel, and roughly as much as textiles, gas and oil. In the past decade the production of opium more than tripled and

that of coca leaf more than doubled. In Belarus, drug-related crimes increased from four per 100 000 people to 28 between 1990 and 1997, and from 1.4 per 100 000 to almost eight in Estonia. Between 1985 and 2002, increases by over 10-fold were reported in Greece and Portugal. The weapons trade feeds street and civil strife. Light weapons have caused 90% of war casualties since 1945. In South Africa, machine guns pouring in from Angola and Mozambique are being increasingly used in crimes. In Albania there were five times as many murders in 1997 as in 1996, a rise attributed to the illegal arming of civilians (United Nations Development Programme, 1999). These issues have not been on the top of either the development or the conflict agendas. They need to be tackled urgently on the human security agenda.

Human trafficking

A growing and particularly exploitative category of global crime is human trafficking, in which most victims are women and children from poor countries and communities. It has been estimated that between 700 000 and two million women and children are trafficked across international borders every year (International Organisation for Migration, 2001). In Western Europe alone, about 500 000 women and girls from developing and transition economies are forced into this slave trade each year. In 2002, the overall people trade has become a multi-billion dollar business, replacing the drugs trade as the world's largest illegal business. It is a severe violation of human rights, yet human rights legislation and strong enforcement mechanisms in receiving countries do not help because the victims fall outside of national legal systems. Only 14 countries have special legislation with respect to human trafficking. Studies argue that official policies and action reflect not only neglect, but effectively collude with the perpetrators of this crime.

Bureaucratic and time-consuming legal procedures drive immigrants to illegal channels to cross borders. Corrupt government officials often collaborate and provide protection for traffickers since state authorities rarely consider trafficked persons as victims. Rather, they are treated as criminals and, as a result, trafficked people fear arrest and incarceration if they contact local authorities or representatives of their country of origin. This means not only that perpetrators usually go unpunished, but also that they are simply unknown. Trafficking in women and children is considered easier and more profitable. They are mainly used in forced labour, particularly sexual exploitation. It has been estimated that trafficking in women and girls accounts for US\$7 billion (United Nations Development Programme, 1999). Some governments are complicit with traffickers by covertly, if not openly, promoting sex tourism because of the returns in foreign exchange.

In the countries of origin, prevention should start with enhanced opportunities in employment, access to education, representation in power structures and, crucially, birth registration. Protection in the countries of transit and destination should focus on better border control (including anti-corruption measures), non-criminalization of the victim, access to health, employment and shelter, recognition of victim status, institutionalization of

protection programmes, institutionalization of benefits and access to witness protection in case of release. Pioneering initiatives have been undertaken by Italy and Thailand, among others. The need to come up with a clear definition of victims of trafficking in domestic legislation is also extremely important (Clark, 2002).

Instability and contagion in financial markets

Capital market deregulation brought about not only a huge expansion of capital flows, but also volatility, as evident in the recurrent crises that emerged, from Mexico to East Asia and now in Latin America. The term 'contagion', used to characterize the spread of capital market collapse, captures the sudden threats that can emerge, and it can have extensive impacts on the economy and people's lives. Financial volatility accompanies the opening of capital markets, but agreement on how to curb volatility is slow to emerge. Institutions and policies for emergency rescue operations were made for an earlier era. Debates about the new financial architecture are slow to produce real change (Eatwell and Taylor, 1998a; Eatwell and Taylor, 1998b).

Net financial inflows to Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand totalled US\$93 billion in 1996. In 1997, as turmoil hit financial markets, these flows reversed in just weeks to a net outflow of US\$12 billion, a swing of US\$105 billion, or 11% of the pre-crisis Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the five countries. In Indonesia, the country that experienced the most extreme reversal of economic and social achievements in just one year, GDP growth fell from 4.7% in 1997 to a negative 13.2% in 1998. Bankruptcies spread all over the region. Over 13 million people lost their jobs. Real wages fell sharply, down to 40% or even 60%. Economic difficulties triggered or exacerbated social tensions between ethnic groups as well as rich and poor, resulting in erosion of the social fabric, rise in crime, violence and conflict. The global repercussions of the East Asian crisis meant an estimated US\$2 trillion drop in global output between 1998 and 2000.

The financial crisis in East Asia destabilized the lives of millions and reduced the prospects for growth in that region and in the world. In Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand human costs were severe. In Thailand, for example, many Thai and foreign investors lost their capital, and the financial crisis led to job losses, crises in health care and, in some cases, the collapse of community life.

The escalating price of essentials such as food and medicine were accompanied by increases in unemployment, suicides, domestic violence and other consequences. Poverty rose dramatically and nearly doubled in Indonesia. Women's health risks increased by one-quarter in the same year. School dropout rates increased and school enrolment still stagnates. The poor, especially in rural areas, bore most of the cost of crisis. The fiscal approach recommended by the International Monetary Fund further deepened the recession (Griffith-Jones and Kimmis, 2002). While output growth and macro-economic balance after an economic crisis usually take 1 year to

recover to pre-crisis levels, employment and wages take longer (Lee and Rhee, 1999). While the economies affected have made a recovery, the fact remains that the global economy remains vulnerable to similar crises, with severe consequences for people's lives.

Labour market instabilities and threats to job security

The fast moving economy and the re-structuring of production into 'global value chains', the competition for global markets and rapid technological changes all open new opportunities for jobs. But they also put pressure on labour markets to be more flexible and to increase job insecurity for workers. To be competitive in today's markets requires workers to have much greater flexibility to take on new activities, to train and re-train, and means that employers will shed and recruit new workers. Threats to human security come not from high levels of unemployment, but from the ever present threat of re-structuring. The employment impact on globalization is not necessarily on the level of employment and unemployment, but on the rapid change in demand for labour, leading to job insecurity.

Mergers and acquisitions have brought corporate re-structuring, down-sizing and massive layoffs. Countries have weakened worker dismissal laws both within the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) region and in the developing world. Sustained economic growth has not reduced unemployment in Europe, which has remained at 11% for a decade, affecting 35 million people. Temporary jobs today represent a large share of the composition of the global workforce. Such contracts rarely provide social security coverage. By 1996 the share of workers without contracts or with new, less secure contracts increased to 30% in Chile, to 36% in Argentina, to 39% in Colombia and to 41% in Peru. In Egypt, an increasingly common practice is to require new recruits to sign a resignation letter before taking the job.

With ever-changing technology, people need ever-changing skills — yet, even in the richest countries, many lack the basics. Despite universal primary and secondary education in OECD countries, one person in six is functionally illiterate, unable to fill out a job application and excluded from the rapidly changing world that demands new information-processing skills. With unemployment a luxury few can afford, people who cannot get formal employment end up in the informal sector. In Latin America, informal employment expanded from 52% to 58% during the course of the 1990s, and 85 out of every 100 jobs created were informal sector jobs.

A 2003 report by the International Labour Organization warns that the informal economy in developing countries is no longer able to absorb formally unemployed workers. The International Labour Organization estimated that, between 2000 and 2002, global unemployment rose by 20 million people. It believes that at least one billion new jobs are needed over the next 10 years to absorb new entrants into the labour market and to reduce working poverty and unemployment (International Labour Organization, 2003).

In addition to new jobs, a shift in national labour market policies is urgently needed. Most policies have been more responsive to employers' needs for a more flexible labour force. They have been slower to respond with alternative forms of social protection. Social security in the global era requires a shift in national social protection strategies. The welfare approaches of earlier eras may not be appropriate for the public finance priorities of today. New strategies — such as stronger support for training and re-thinking education policies — need to be devised in all countries.

Spread of diseases

The spread of disease through the world is not new. But greater global interactions exacerbate the problem and make containing the disease more difficult. The spread of HIV/AIDS is a case in point. Today, 42 million people live with HIV/AIDS, over 95% of them in developing countries and 75% in sub-Saharan Africa. It was estimated that 5 million people were infected in 2002, one-half of them young people, with young women and girls particularly affected. In that same year, over three million people died. The children orphaned by AIDS number 11 million in the sub-Saharan region only (UNAIDS, 2002). It has been estimated that one adult death corresponds to a reduction in food security by 15%. In urban Côte d'Ivoire, food consumption dropped 41% per capita, and school outlays halved. In Burkina Faso, life expectancy has fallen by 8 years.

It has been estimated that 11 people are infected each minute. HIV is also spreading fast in areas thought to be relatively free of the virus. In China, one million people are now living with HIV, while nearly four million people are HIV-positive in India, second only to South Africa. Eastern Europe and the CIS had appeared to be spared the worst in the early 1990s, but new surveys show fast-rising infection rates, especially in Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine. The latter accounts for 240 000 people now infected (UNAIDS/WHO, 2002).

Furthermore, every year there are more than 300 million cases of malaria and 60 million people are infected with tuberculosis. Tuberculosis causes two million deaths each year, thus remaining, with HIV/AIDS, the leading infectious cause of adult mortality in the world. Without much more effective control, by 2020 nearly one billion people will be infected and 35 million will die from tuberculosis. High malaria prevalence can lower economic growth by 1% or more per year. Ebola is another virulent disease that causes death in 50–90% of the cases (World Health Organization, 2000). Gabon and the Democratic Republic of Congo have witnessed the most recent outbreak. And yet, no cure exists.

Current medical technologies can prevent these diseases from being fatal, but the logic of economic liberalization goes against the imperative of a response. Strong profit incentives drive investments in research and development for treatments and cures, but this also restricts access to those with purchasing power. A tiny fraction of people living with HIV/AIDS now has access to retroviral therapy because of the cost of drugs and their

protection under the intellectual property rights regime. Lack of access means that tuberculosis kills two million people a year, and malaria kills one million. Policy-makers must respond to ensure access to the global technological advances when human security is at risk.

Conflicts within national borders

Uneven globalization also divides communities, nations and regions, impacting on human security. Social tensions and conflicts are ignited when there are extremes of inequality between the marginalized and the powerful. Indonesia shows what can happen when an economic crisis sets off latent social tensions between ethnic groups — or between the rich and poor. More people have died or suffered from violent conflict between groups within countries than in wars between countries in the past two decades. In the 1990s, almost 3.6 million people died in conflict within states, while 220 000 have died from wars between states. The number of internally displaced persons has increased dramatically, accounting for six million people by the end of 2000 (United Nations Development Programme, 2002).

Recent research on complex humanitarian emergencies concluded that ‘horizontal inequalities’ between groups — whether ethnic, religious or social — are the major cause of the current wave of civil conflicts (Stewart, 2002). It is not only a matter of inequality — and insecurity — of income, but also of political participation (in parliaments, cabinets, armies and local governments), in economic assets (in land, human capital and communal resources) and in social conditions (in education, housing and employment).

There is an important, although complex, relationship between three areas of life that have until now been mostly considered to be independent — violent political conflicts, poverty in social and economic areas, and democracy, civil and political rights. In countries experiencing conflict situations, these three areas of activity must be dealt with simultaneously. However, they are dealt with separately in current arrangements for international co-operation. This leads often to ‘gaps’, most visibly between conflict resolution (political), relief for people (humanitarian), and development (longer term socio-economic and political development). New types of institutional arrangements would help to fill such gaps.

Taking a comprehensive approach

Conflict resolution perspectives focus on politics and humanitarian relief, the poverty eradication framework focuses on economic and social areas, and the human rights framework focuses on denials of human dignity. Adopting a human security framework of analysis provides a more complete view of people’s well-being. New insecurities related to the process of globalization are by no means the only important threats to human security today. Many other long-standing threats continue, such as global warming. But the new threats that have emerged or intensified due to globalization are among the most prominent requiring urgent attention.

The rapid expansion of global markets creates an environment in which human security can be easily neglected, as individuals, corporations and nations compete globally and privatize and downsize in search of economic efficiency. More investment is necessary to equip people against the vulnerabilities of a globally competitive economy and a globally networked society.

Financial volatility, global crime, lack of job security, violence and conflict need not just new, but stronger policies to protect and promote human security, including policies often called 'social protection'. Many problems of human security go beyond what nations can tackle on their own and require more forceful international cooperation, not only from nations, but also from communities, NGOs and corporations.

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