

CHAPTER 2

In the final analysis, human security is a child who did not die, a disease that did not spread, a job that was not cut, a dissident who was not silenced. Human security is not a concern with weapons –it is a concern with human life and dignity... It is concerned with how people live and breathe in a society, how freely they exercise their many choices, how much access they have to market and social opportunities –and whether they live in conflict or in peace.¹

¹ United Nations Development Program, “Redefining Security: The Human Dimension” in *Human Development Report 1994*, ed. UNDP (New York, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994), 229.

HUMAN SECURITY: PROTECTING AND EMPOWERING THE PEOPLE

No shift in the way we think or act can be more critical than this: we must put people at the center of everything we do. No calling is more noble, and no responsibility greater than that of enabling men, women and children, in cities and villages around the world, to make their lives better.²

The words of United Nations' Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, resemble one of the main tendencies and challenges to face at the beginning of the new century: to place the person in the center of all national and international policies, including, of course, those related to security matters. What this claim implies is that the protection of the individual –the founding premise of human security– might eventually become the paradigm in the operationalization of all levels of security. FLACSO-Chile's researcher Claudia F. Fuentes suggests that one of the main elements contributing to the shift towards the protection of the person is closely related to the growing tendency of 'universalizing' the values and principles established in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the gradual acknowledgment of the individual as the subject of International Law. Accordingly, "the international order is no longer limited to the subjects related to the absence of war among states, but also to promoting the rights of the individuals, their welfare and their personal liberty."³ Another important element contributing to accelerate the process of centering on the person is the awareness of a noticeable change in the nature of international conflicts and threats. For instance, throughout the nineties, 97 out of 103 armed conflicts were

² Kofi Annan, "We the peoples, the Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century". *Millennium Report of the Secretary General of the United Nations* (UN Press, April 2000), 7.

³ Claudia F. Fuentes, *Cumbre del Milenio y Seguridad Humana* [Millennium Summit and Human Security], (Santiago, FLACSO-Chile: 2003), 1, [my translation].

internal and 70% of all war casualties since World War II have been civilians, rising to more than 90% in the 1990s.⁴

Ever since it first came out in 1994, the term ‘human security’ has been presented as a complex concept resulting from the current threats and necessities affecting people worldwide. In this sense, human security appeared in the international arena as an attempt to respond to two main factors: a generalized perception of insecurity and a state of basic human needs dissatisfaction. And even though it currently lacks of a general agreed definition (this is not unusual when realizing that the general concept of security has proved to be intrinsically complex and contestable), human security has been granted with some specific features such as: holistic, multidimensional, anthropocentric, global, interdependent, preventive, democratic, integrative and indivisible, with qualitative and quantitative connotations.⁵ Lately, human security has gained global acknowledgement between governments, international civil society and the academia as it has increasingly become the center of numerous debates regarding its interpretation, importance, connection with state and non-state actors, potential reach, measurement, operationalization and relation to other concepts. The aim of this chapter is to develop a thorough analysis of these debates in order to meet the pros and cons of the human security proposal as a whole and consequently be able to assess its possible accomplishments, limitations and repercussions for the international relations. It is also a task for this chapter to present and explore the basic arguments that would justify the importance of adopting human security in the Americas.

⁴ Michael Renner, “Kosovo and Beyond: Peacemaking in a Post-Cold War World”, *Common Dreams NewsWire* (May 1, 1999 [cited 8 Jan. 2005] WorldWatch Institute): available from <http://www.worldwatch.org/press/news/1999/04/29/>

⁵ These features will be explained throughout this chapter when addressing different facets of human security.

2.1. TOWARDS A DEFINITION OF HUMAN SECURITY

Human security bursted into the international context in the aftermath of the Cold War, in times when traditional paradigms were falling into crisis and the concept of security had just started a process of re-conceptualization. Since its beginnings in 1992,⁶ the concept has constantly struggled to achieve the already enormous advances on its notion and feasibility, although a clear free-of-question definition has not yet been established. However, in trying to reach consensus, many actors have devoted a large part of their time and efforts attempting to encompass new frameworks and plans of action for a human security agenda worldwide. Some of the most important will be presented next.

2.1.1. UNDP's First Step

The United Nations Program for Development (UNDP) was the first institution to widen the concept of human security. Its 1994 Human Development Report pointed out, for the first time, the concept's universal character as a global concern for life and human dignities, and stressed the interdependency of political, social, economic and environmental threats and their effects at local and international levels.⁷ Nonetheless, the Report's argument that probably provides a more conceptual precision is that in which affirms that human security must be seen as a category with an integrative approach moving away from defensive security concepts limited to territory or military power.⁸ The UNDP's conception of human

⁶ The concept of Human Security began appearing in some international documents in 1992, such as the 'Agenda for peace, preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping' report of the U.N.'s Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali adopted by the Security Council on 31 January, although it was developed for the first time in the Human Development Reports of the UNDP in 1993 and 1994.

⁷ Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo, *Informe sobre Desarrollo Humano 1994* [Human Development Report 1994] (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1994), 22, [my translation].

⁸ PNUD, *Informe sobre Desarrollo Humano 1994*, 22.

security proposes a shift of focus towards the safety of the people and includes the premise that development and security should include every person. This becomes substantially significant as it links the concept with a democratic element through which every person becomes a contributor in the accomplishment of their own minimum level of security and development. Under these conditions, human security is said to be a decisive component of participatory development and security. This is also one of the reasons why it is generally agreed that the human security approach provides two general strategies: protection and empowerment. “Protection shields people from dangers. It requires concerted effort to develop norms, processes and institutions that systematically address insecurities. Empowerment enables people to develop their potential and become full participants in decision-making.”⁹ Both strategies are mutually reinforcing and they function as the basic principles of the concept. Another premise of the concept relies on the importance of preventing conflicts and threats rather than reacting to them. This claim is supported by the 1994 Human Development Report when stresses the fact that human security is easier to ensure through early prevention than later intervention. In other words, it is less costly to meet threats upstream than downstream.¹⁰ The UNDP also develops a first framework for the concept by explaining that the criteria that must be met in order to guarantee the safety of the individuals and their communities is closely related to the perception of violence and the fulfillment of their basic needs. Consequently, the two types of freedom that the concept embraces are ‘freedom from want’ and ‘freedom from fear’.

⁹ Commission on Human Security, *Human Security Now: Protecting and Empowering People* (New York: Commission on Human Security, 2003), 6.

¹⁰ PNUD, *Informe sobre Desarrollo Humano 1994*, 23.

The distinction between both types of freedom has become fundamental as it originates two different ‘conceptual schools of thought’: the broad and the narrow. In a spectrum used to describe its possible definitions and operationalizations, human security can be seen

in its broad sense as incorporating a long list of possible threats, from traditional security threats such as war to more development-oriented threats such as health, poverty, and the environment. In its narrow sense... although still focused on the individual, and therefore incorporating many more threats than traditional security, [human security] is limited to violent threats such as landmines, small arms, violence and intra-state conflict.¹¹

It is noteworthy to say that the narrow school of thought, which limits human security parameters to only violent threats against the individual, has achieved larger agreement as it makes a clear distinction of the expansive field of development and envisions thus a much more focused definition as a policy instrument. Contrastingly, the broad school of thought, to which most human security definitions belong, has been the object of harsh critiques due to its ambiguity in scope. This expansive dimension of human security was firstly presented by the UNDP’s conceptualization, which included seven basic components with a special emphasis in economic, social, environmental and political subsystems. They read as following:

¹¹ Taylor Owen, “Challenges and opportunities for defining and measuring human security,” *Disarmament Forum [Human Rights, Human Security and Disarmament]* 3, (2004): 15–24.

1. **Economic security.** Requires an assured basic income, usually from productive and remunerative work, or in the last resort from some publicly financed safety net.
2. **Food security.** Suggests that all people at all times have both physical and economic access to food.
3. **Health security.** Attacks the insecurity produced by the existence and spread of infectious and parasite diseases in vulnerable zones, and the proper sufferings of industrialized countries.
4. **Environmental security.** Sustains that human beings rely on a healthy physical environment in order to achieve their most favorable development.
5. **Personal security.** Includes the phenomena that increase the factors of risk, vulnerability, and insecurity in societies (violence) and their impact over vulnerable groups.
6. **Community security.** Refers to the fact that a membership in a group –a family, a community, an organization, a racial or ethnic group– can generate a competence for the cultural preservation, which can lead to conflict situations, violence or discrimination.
7. **Political security.** Highlights the respect to basic human rights, the problems resulting from transition of political regimes and state repression.¹²

¹² PNUD, *Informe sobre Desarrollo Humano 1994*, 25-32.

As it can be clearly appreciated, the UNDP provides a very broad scope to target, considering that it practically entails all spheres of human activities and development when thinking of implementing a human security agenda. As said, the UNDP's criteria have been a source of opposition and critiques. However, it is important to acknowledge that it has also been a catalyst leading the debate towards the evolution of the concept and its future operationalization. It has also worked as the base for the formulation of new definitions, some of which are presented next.

2.1.2. Some Other Definitions

As chapter one may have made clear, the formulation of concepts implies a difficult task as they are never fully agreed by everyone and, contrastingly, they tend to be adopted in function of the interests of a specific actor. Similarly, the conceptions of human security vary widely.¹³

Of the thirty or more definitions in circulation, some focus on threats from wars and internal conflicts, sometimes including a focus on criminal and domestic violence; others focus on threats from preventable disease, economic hardship, or financial crisis – the threats of poverty and want; while a third group considers both types of threats –often described as ‘fear’ and ‘want’, or as first and second generation human rights– as well as the processes by which people protect themselves and are protected.¹⁴

¹³ Many others include: Adelman 2001, Annan 2001, Axworthy 1997, Bajpai 2000, Bedeski 1998, Bruderlein 2001, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade in Canada 2001, Chen 1995, Dorn 1999-2000, Edralin 2000, Edson 2001, Florini and Simmons 1998, Goulding 1997, Ginkel and Newman 2000, Hampson et al. 2002, Heinbecker 2000, Kay 1997, Kilgour 2000, Kim and Hyun 2000, King and Murray 2000, Kirton 2000, Leaning and Arie 2000, Leaning et al.1999, MacLean 2001, Nef 1999, Newman and Richmond 2001, Ogata 1999, 2001a and b; Matsumae 1995, McRae and Hubert 2001, O’Neill 1997, Paris 2001, Rothschild 1995, Sen 2000, Smith and Stohl 2000, Tehranian 1999, Thomas 2000, Tow et al. 2000.

¹⁴ Sabine Alkire, “A Vital Core that Must Be Treated with the Same Gravitas as Traditional Security Threats,” *Security Dialogue* 35, no. 3 (September 2004), 359.

Emma Rothschild grounds human security by identifying linkages with security concepts at other points in history, and by articulating how human security extends the dominant approach to state security. Other authors develop multidimensional accounts of human security that are focused on individuals but differ in emphasis. For example, King and Murray leave violence aside and propose a human security index that measures the ‘years lived outside a state of generalized poverty’. Kofi Annan includes the enhancement of economic development, social justice, environmental protection, democratization, disarmament, and respect for human rights and the rule of law as the primary objective of human security. Ginkel and Newman relate human security to human dignity. Leaning and Arie argue that human security is a precondition of human development but include in their definition not only minimal standards of living but also cultural and psychological security that arises from social networks and attitudes towards the future. Chen proposes human survival, well-being and freedom as key values. Hampson et al describe human security as an underprovided public good which protects core human values. Thomas defends a wide definition of human security including basic material needs, human dignity, and democratic practice and Paris proposes that human security should be seen not as a concept but rather as a category of research into military and non-military threats to societies, groups, and individuals.¹⁵ (See Appendix A for more references on human security definitions). As it can be observed, since 1994 intellectuals, educational institutions, organizations and governments have worked hard to spread the meaning and importance of human security and to determine specific elements that could eventually lead to an agreed understanding of

¹⁵ References on these authors may be found on footnote #13.

it. It is precisely one of these recent organizations, the Commission on Human Security¹⁶ (CHS), the one that has given a noteworthy step towards the concretization of the definition.

2.1.3. The Commission on Human Security's Input

The CHS first defined human security as “protecting the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfillment.”¹⁷ This meant protecting vital freedoms –essential to human existence and development– referring to the inalienable fundamental rights and freedoms laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other human rights instruments. However, the amplitude in scope of this first definition led to a more specific one, included in Sabine Alkire’s 2002 paper ‘A Conceptual Framework for Human Security’.¹⁸ This document provided a similar but new definition: “[t]he objective of human security is to *safeguard the vital core of all human lives from critical pervasive threats, in a way that is consistent with long-term human fulfillment.*”¹⁹ Although this definition has not been necessarily accepted by everybody, well-known scholars and specialists such as Sadako Ogata, Kanti Bajpai, and Amartya Sen have reacted positively and acknowledged its significant contribution for constructing a basis for operational actions. This reason and the strong arguments supporting the employment of its

¹⁶ Established by the government of Japan’s initiative in response to the challenges acknowledged by the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan at the UN Millennium Summit in 2000. The goals of the Commission are: to promote public understanding, engagement and support of human security and its underlying imperatives; to develop the concept of human security as an operational tool for policy formulation and implementation; and to propose a concrete program of action to address critical and pervasive threats to human security.

¹⁷ Sadako Ogata, “Human Security – Protecting and Empowering the People,” *Global Governance* 9, no.2 (Jul-Sep 2003): 273-282.

¹⁸ Sabina Alkire is member of the Secretariat of the Commission on Human Security. Her paper was presented at the Kennedy School of Harvard University during a Seminar on Human Security and Human Rights, February 4, 2002.

¹⁹ Sabina Alkire, “A Conceptual Framework for Human Security,” *CRISE Working Paper 2* (Oxford: CRISE, 2001), 2, [my emphasis].

composing terms are what make this definition one of the most accepted at present and thus the one that will be used as the working definition in this project.

Once that Alkire's definition has been presented and adopted in this project, it becomes necessary to consider the set of ideas behind such definition so that a full understanding of the terms it is composed of and their meanings can be made. The following table introduces the arguments and explanations behind such terms²⁰:

TABLE I: Alkire's Human Security Definition Examined

"The objective of human security is to safeguard the vital core of all human lives from critical pervasive threats, in a way that is consistent with long-term human fulfillment"	
Safeguard	It recognizes that people and communities are fatally threatened by events beyond their control. Safeguarding human lives implicates not only those institutions that intend to promote human security openly, but also institutions that unintentionally undermine it.
Vital core	Human security is limited in scope. It does not cover all necessary, important and profound aspects of human living. Rather, it identifies and protects a limited vital core of human activities and abilities.
All human lives	This emphasis on human beings distinguishes human security from the objective of protecting state territories that dominated security policies years ago. Human security shifts that focus to persons, regardless of gender, race, religion, ethnicity, citizenship, or other distinguishing characteristics.
Critical and pervasive threats	Threats to human security are <i>critical</i> – that is, they threaten to cut into the core activities and functions of human lives. Such threats may be sudden, but they need not be; for what defines a threat as critical is its tragic depth rather than its suddenness. Furthermore, the threats are <i>pervasive</i> – meaning (i) the threat is large scale; and/or (ii) the threat may come repeatedly over time; it is not a strange event for which strategic preparation is impossible.
Human fulfillment	People's lives must not only be protected; they must be protected in a manner that is consistent with their long-term wellbeing. The attention to longer term individual and group commitments does not threaten the focus of human security, because as the first part of the working definition clarifies, the priority of human security is to be effective –to protect human security in fact and not intention only.

²⁰ Basically all the following arguments are presented by Sabine Alkire in her paper "A Conceptual Framework for Human Security," 2-5.

Despite the large variety of definitions, many of which have been presented here, there are few elements that appear to be shared by all conceptions on human security. These include a shift to the individual as the subject matter of security; a re-orientation of threats away from traditional and exclusive concerns with territorial and armed conflicts; and perhaps, if the analysis is taken further, the need to recognize the role of non-state actors as agents for the attainment of security. The CHS and this project's working definition is characterized over the others for: preserving the people-centered approach nature of the UNDP conception; keeping a multidimensional scope (including the cultural sphere, which the UNDP puts aside in its seven categories); maintaining the joint focus on 'freedom from want' and 'freedom from fear' in contrast to other definitions; and narrowing prior definitions by focusing only on 'critical and pervasive threats to the vital core of people's lives'.

Perhaps the most debatable element of this definition lies precisely beneath the conception of the 'vital core'. This term's subjectivity and lack of specificity to what exactly it includes could make the whole definition be graded as ambiguous. However, there is a strong reason behind this lack of concreteness. Just as Sabine Alkire suggests, "the 'vital core' is a non-technical term that may be defined in the space of capabilities, the freedom that people have to do and to be."²¹ In this sense, the elements to which the vital core refers to are the *fundamental human rights* which all persons and institutions are obliged to respect or provide. Said in other words, the 'freedoms that are the essence of life'²² and that are relevant to survival, to livelihood, and to basic dignity. The reason why neither this project nor Alkire's definition detail such rights and freedoms is based on the

²¹ Alkire, *A Conceptual Framework for Human Security*, 3.

²² Alkire, "A Vital Core," 359.

fact that providing a hierarchy between such freedoms and rights can result in a very subjective task that can be better performed by the proper means. The author states it clearly by arguing that “the task of prioritizing among rights and capabilities, each of which is argued by some to be fundamental, is a value judgment and a difficult one, which may be best undertaken by appropriate institutions.”²³ At the present time, nobody has been able to establish or construct a universal itemized list of the specific threats that jeopardize human security or, the other way around, the precise values and rights that are to be defended, although many attempts have been made and several projects aiming at this are still in process. It is important to emphasize though that institutions willing to undertake the protection of human security would not be able to promote every aspect of human wellbeing, but at the very least, they must protect this core of people’s lives, whatever it is defined as by any country, region, etc. This is where the concept of ‘vital core’ finds its essence and importance.

Even though the project has now been provided with a working definition, the process of understanding human security adequately can be more easily achieved by defining what this concept is not like and establishing clear differences from other notions concerned with the welfare of human lives, such as human development and human rights.

2.1.4. Human Security and Human Development

The UNDP simply defines human development as “a process of enlarging choices [and capabilities].”²⁴ However, it is also seen as an outcome. Human development is concerned

²³ Alkire, *A Conceptual Framework for Human Security*, 3.

²⁴ United Nations Development Program, *Arab Human Development Report: Creating Opportunities for Future Generations*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 15.

with the process through which choices are enlarged, but it also focuses on the outcomes of enhanced choices.²⁵ Generally speaking, the human development approach is concerned with removing the various barriers that restrain and limit human lives and prevent its growing not only in terms of income, as it is usually believed, but also in areas such as health, education, technology, the environment and employment, just to mention a few. With a people-centered approach, human development clearly implies the design and application of socioeconomic policies focused on people and their well-being as the final objective, rather than focusing on economic growth or any other similar index. Human security shares the conceptual framework of human development, which is likewise, people-centered and multidimensional, and is defined in the field of human choices and freedoms. However, they are not to be used interchangeably.

[I]t is important that human security not be equated with human development. Human development is [...] a process of widening the range of people's choice. Human security means that people can exercise these choices safely and freely –and that they can be relatively confident that the opportunities they have today are not totally lost tomorrow.²⁶

In other words, human security is the condition that provides the environment for human development, the social peace and freedom from fear that can make development a practical matter. But it is at the same time the outcome of a successful development process –freedom from want. A conclusion that stems from this is that human development is only possible in a secure context, and human security is reinforced by human development and ultimately realized through it. They both serve and strengthen each other. However,

²⁵ UNDP, “Arab Human Development Report,” 15.

²⁶ PNUD, *Informe sobre Desarrollo Humano 1994*, 23.

“[h]uman development is a broader, long term, holistic objective that can capture the aspirations of any society, whether rich or poor.”²⁷ The aim of human development is the fulfillment of individuals and the expansion and sustainability of their choices. In contrast, human security has a more delimited scope based on the protection of the vital core of the individuals. Human security also intends to develop a preventive aspect.

Several similarities and differences between both concepts can be clearly observed. Firstly, besides the multidimensionalism embedded in both concepts, human development seeks to provide a long-term objective of human fulfillment within any society, which is also an aim shared by human security, although its approach pursues a narrower agenda. Actually, the phrase ‘in a manner that is consistent with long term human fulfillment’ that appears in the working definition of human security could be changed for ‘in a manner that is consistent with long-term human development’. Secondly, the two concepts address chronic poverty, although it is not the only condition they aim to attack.

The first difference between human security and human development is their precise reach. The first aims to protect vital capabilities of the individual, like food access, while the latter includes concerns that are clearly not basic, such as infrastructure building and maintenance. In this sense “[h]uman security includes a delimited subset of human development concerns but it also excludes much of human development as lying outside of its own mandate.”²⁸ The second difference is that human security addresses other threats that human development does not, in a direct manner at least, such as violence. The last difference is that human security involves a preventive approach and may be undertaken in a short period of time, while human development generally entails long-term targets.

²⁷ Alkire, *A Conceptual Framework for Human Security*, 7.

²⁸ Alkire, *A Conceptual Framework for Human Security*, 37.

2.1.5 Human Security and Human Rights

There is also similar complementation between the concepts of human rights and human security. Perhaps the most important relation between them is that human security intends to provide a framework for the protection of essential human rights. It is important to bear in mind that although all human rights are important, they do not necessarily fall under the human security's mandate to safeguard the vital core of all human beings. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, for example, lists many conditions that, while certainly harmful, do not surpass the threshold of severity to be treated as security threats rather than criminal, political or legal issues. A suppression of religious freedom, for example, while it is indeed a concern, would not, in most cases, qualify as a human security threat.²⁹

At the International Workshop on Human Security and Human Rights Education, it was stated that human security aims at protecting human rights, e.g. by the prevention of conflicts and by addressing the root causes of insecurity and vulnerability.³⁰ However, human rights, besides being a critical instrument of conflict prevention, are also a key concept for governance building and for democracy. “[They] provide a basis for addressing social and global problems through active participation, increased transparency and accountability.”³¹ This is important to human security as it helps it to set up the necessary conditions for the enhancement of the individual and the community's well-being. While human rights help to portray the conditions in which all people are entitled to live, human security addresses the very survival of those people by assuring the safeguard of such

²⁹ Owen, “Challenges and opportunities,” 22.

³⁰ International Workshop Report, “International Workshop on Human Security and Human Rights Education,” *European Training Center for Human Rights and Democracy* (July 2000 [cited 11 Jan. 2005]): available from <http://www.etc-graz.at/human-security/activities/grazconf2000.htm>

³¹ Human Security Network, *Understanding human rights: manual on human rights education* (Austria: European Training Center for Human Rights and Democracy, 2003), 16.

conditions. Moreover, in the third Ministerial Meeting of the Human Security Network in May 2001, human rights were recognized as “a bridge between human security and human development.”³² In December 2001, The Commission on Human Security held a workshop on the relationship between Human Rights and Human Security in San Jose, Costa Rica, which elaborated a ‘Declaration on Human Rights as an Essential Component of Human Security’. Some of the most important aspects they agreed on were the following:

- 1) “We reaffirm the conviction that Human Rights and the attributes stemming from human dignity constitute a normative framework and a conceptual reference point which must necessarily be applied to the construction and implementation of the notion of Human Security [...].
- 2) We maintain that human rights and the effective application of mechanisms for their exercise and protection play a key role in preventing and resolving conflicts.
- 3) We renew our certainty that democracy is an indispensable condition for the effective exercise of human rights and to establish the foundations for harmonious social relations which foster Human Security. In this regard, we salute, in the Americas, the recent approval of the Inter-American Democratic Charter.
- 4) We affirm that protection of individual and collective security in the face of crime and violence is an essential component of the concept of Human Security, and it stems from the responsibilities of the state as guarantor of the rights of

³² Nicole Ball, “Report of a conference organized by the Programme for Strategic and International Studies,” *Human Security Network* (15 April 2001 [cited 12 Jan. 2005]): available from http://www.humansecuritynetwork.org/docs/report_may2001_3-e.php

those who are in its territory. In this same manner, we affirm that Human Security demands public policies which tend to eliminate all forms of exclusion.”³³

Just as in the case of human security and human development, several similarities and differences can be observed between the human rights and human security conceptions. Firstly and most evidently, part of the project of the human rights community has been to build consensus and public awareness around a set of universal and fundamental human rights that are argued to be held even when they are not in fact respected by state authorities or others. Human security likewise undertakes to address a set of rights or freedoms that it is unacceptable to ignore. Secondly, human security and human rights address both violence and poverty; their subject matter is therefore complex. The identification, protection and promotion of central aspects of human lives in the ‘freedom from fear’ and ‘freedom from want’ perspectives is the aim of human security as well as human rights.³⁴

Probably the most significant divergences between human security and human rights lie in the instruments and institutions that implement them. For example human rights promoters have generally used legal instruments to prevent human rights abuses, or to punish criminals; human security on the other hand uses economic, political, and perhaps military forces. Consequently, a gain for human security would be a gain for human rights and vice versa.³⁵

³³ Commission on Human Security, the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights and the University for Peace, “Declaration on Human Rights as an essential component of Human Security,” *Workshop on Relationship Between Human Rights and Human Security* (2 December 2001 [cited 14 Jan. 2005]): available from <http://www.humansecurity-chs.org/activities/outreach/sanjosedec.html>

³⁴ Alkire, *A Conceptual Framework for Human Security*, 38.

³⁵ Alkire, *A Conceptual Framework for Human Security*, 40.

2.2 THE CHANGING NATURE OF SECURITY THREATS

Human security is people-centered, not threat-centered. It is a condition that results from an effective political, economic, social, cultural and natural environment, and not necessarily from executing a set of bureaucratic procedures and/or military actions. But in order to understand and support human security effectively, a proactive attitude towards threats (non-traditional threats mainly) and their nature is essential.

Just after the Cold War ended, it became clear that despite the level of tense stability created by the balance of the bipolar system, citizens were not necessarily safe. Security for the majority of states had increased, while security for many of the world's people had started to decline. It is true that people were no longer worried about missile attacks or nuclear bombs, since bipolarity had come to an end and nobody wanted the consequences of World War II to be repeated, but instead they started fearing environmental disasters, poverty, diseases, hunger, violence and human rights abuses. Paradoxically, the over-attention on the state had neglected the protection of the person. In Taylor Owen's opinion, "[b]y allowing key issues to fall through the cracks, 'traditional security' failed at its primary objective: [securing] the individual."³⁶ Thus the emergence of new concepts such as cooperative, collective, and international security started challenging the traditional notion of security. Although these concepts started shifting the focus away from inter-state relations, that of 'human security' took the most decisive steps by moving the object of reference to the individuals. This actually meant a redirection of research and policy towards the issues threatening peoples' lives and not the threats questioning the state's continuity anymore. While some have refused to include such human security threats

³⁶ Owen, "Challenges and opportunities", 17.

within the security framework, “[t]hose concerned with preventing and ending conflicts”, argues Lawrence Freedman, “will have a responsibility to address these dangers at the same time as more traditional military threats.”³⁷ In the end, “[t]he nonmilitary tasks are likely to grow even more difficult to accomplish and dangerous to neglect.”³⁸

In the human security conception, threats must be considered as both direct and indirect; from identifiable sources, such as other states or non-state actors; and also coming from structural sources, that is, from invisible power relations among them. Authors such as J. Ann Tickner place a special focus on ‘structural violence’ which goes beyond physical violence to include “the indirect violence done to individuals when unjust economic and political structures reduce their life expectancy through lack of access to basic material needs.”³⁹ Another author, Bjorn Moller, addresses these kinds of threats when referring to them as non-violent. According to him, these types of threats may produce even larger number of casualties and even greater human suffering than the direct or violent ones. His non-violent categorization includes:

- “Firstly, the non-violent but nevertheless ‘intentional’ threats to human security, for which the state is to be blamed, i.e. the broad category of human rights violations.
- Secondly, structural violence perpetrated by one societal group against another.
- Thirdly comes the kind of structural violence which the global order that represents, either in the general shape of ‘imperialism’, ‘center-periphery relations’ or ‘globalization’ producing a relative deprivation of the peoples of the Third World (which is practically the one that Tickner makes reference to).

³⁷ Lawrence Freedman, “International Security: Changing Targets,” *Foreign policy* 110, (Spring 1988):48-63.

³⁸ Richard Ullman, “Redefining Security,” *International Security* 8, no. 1 (1983): 129-153.

³⁹ Ann Tickner, “Re-visioning Security,” in Ken Booth and Steve Smith, eds. *International Relations Theory Today* (Pennsylvania: State University Press, 1994), 180.

- Fourthly, threats from ‘nature’, some of which may surely be exacerbated.”⁴⁰

Climatic change is perhaps the best example of this.

Wherever these threats are classified as indirect or non-violent, the important and dangerous thing about them is that they are not easily traceable to the intentions of any actor and may even be unintended consequences of others’ actions or perhaps inactions. The Canadian and UNDP human security schemas have identified scores of direct and indirect threats. These can be reduced to the following:

TABLE II: Direct and Indirect Threats to Human Security

Direct Violence	Indirect Violence
<p>Violent Death Disablement: victims of violent crime, killing of women and children, sexual assault, terrorism, inter-group riots/genocide, killing and torture of dissidents, killing of government officials/ agents, war casualties.</p> <p>Dehumanization: slavery and trafficking in women and children; use of child soldiers; physical abuse of women and children (in households); kidnapping, abduction, unlawful detention of political opponents + rigged trials.</p> <p>Drugs: drug addiction and trafficking.</p> <p>Discrimination and Domination: discriminatory laws/ practices against minorities and women; banning/rigging elections; subversion of political institutions and the media.</p> <p>International Disputes: Inter-state tensions/crises (bilateral/regional) + great power tensions/crises.</p> <p>Most Destructive Weapons: the spread and trafficking of weapons of mass destruction + advanced conventional, small arms, landmines.</p>	<p>Deprivation: Levels of basic needs and entitlements (food, safe drinking water, primary health care, primary education).</p> <p>Disease: Incidence of life-threatening illness (infectious, cardio vascular, cancer).</p> <p>Natural and Man-made Disasters</p> <p>Underdevelopment: low levels of GNP/Capita, low GNP growth, inflation, unemployment, inequality, population growth/decline, poverty, at the national level; and regional/global economic instability and stagnation + demographic change.</p> <p>Population Displacement: (national, regional, global): refugees and migration.</p> <p>Environmental Degradation: (local, national, regional, global).</p>

Source: Kanti Bajpai, “Human Security, Concept and Measurement,” *Kroc Institute Occasional Paper No. 19* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 2000).

⁴⁰ Bjorn Moller, “National Societal and Human Security, a General Discussion with a case study from the Balkans,” *Paper for the First International Meeting of Director of Peace Research and Training Institutions on ‘What Agenda for Human Security in the Twenty-first Century?’* (Paris: UNESCO, 2000), 29-30.

An important conclusion that can be drawn from this table is that human security threats may acquire different forms, may come from different sources and may produce different kinds of consequences. At a global level, when asked about their conception of security or insecurity, people tend to relate them with conditions threatening their personal well-being. In a special survey undertaken by UNDP field offices, people's definition of security included absence of war, but also the liberty to pray, safety from rape, 'enough for the children to eat', and marriage itself.⁴¹ This diversity of security concerns also emerged in 'Voices of the Poor', a World Bank study of 336 pages that accompanied the World Development Report 2000/20001, where focus groups commented on their interpretation of insecurity. For them, insecurity meant dozens of different things including malaria, poor health and sanitation, police violence, fear of disability or chronic illness, domestic violence, unemployment and inflation.⁴²

As it has been seen, there is no disagreement in the fact that the nature of security threats has changed in the last decade to become more complex, multidimensional, and interdependent. This does not mean that traditional security has ceased to be important or necessary, as it will be discussed later, but the current international panorama has shown us the significance of broadening our conception of security and thus the variety of mechanisms to enhance it.

⁴¹ PNUD, *Informe sobre Desarrollo Humano 1994*, 23.

⁴² Deepa Nayanar, Robert Chambers, Meera K. Shah and Patti Petesch, *Voices of the Poor: Crying Out for Change* (New York: Oxford University Press for the World Bank, 2000).

2.2.1 Mutual Vulnerability

Perhaps one of the best works addressing this problem of multidimensionalism and interdependence is Dr. Jorge Nef's Mutual Vulnerability proposal. In his work, this author suggests that

[t]he principal threats to security surge as a direct consequence of the internal functions of environmental, economic, social, political and cultural regimes that affect both domestic and global spaces. These spaces are broadly related in such a way that dysfunctions in one subsystem tend to reproduce in other connected subsystems.⁴³

In other words, mutual vulnerability is constituted by the lack of stability in one regime and the connections that bind it to the others. The weaknesses of one subsystem are the flaws of the system.

For this author, a system can be conceptually seen as comprising of five major elements:

- A *context*, both structural and historical, which defines its basic parameters or circumstances.
- It possesses a *culture*, or various ideological perspectives, cognitions, feelings, and judgments which give the system value, meaning and orientation.
- The system has a *structure* of actors with resources that compete and unite in the pursuit of valued outcomes.

⁴³ Jorge Nef, "Seguridad humana y vulnerabilidad mutua," [Human Security and Mutual Vulnerability] en *Seguridad Humana y Prevención de Conflictos y Paz en América Latina y el Caribe*, eds. Francisco Rojas y Moufida Gaucha (Santiago: UNESCO y FLACSO, 2002), 51, [my translation].

- There are the *processes*, or dynamic cooperative and antagonistic relationships by which actors attempt to pursue their short and long-term goals.
- Finally, there are the *effects*: the intended and unintended consequences of actions, inactions and processes.⁴⁴

In this sense, the global system can be simply understood as a combination of five major subsystems: the environment, the economy, the society or sociodemographic system, the polity, and the culture. These subsystems, as the author claims, are linked through specific ‘bridges’: “natural resources between environment and economy; social forces between economy and society; mediators and alliances between society and politics; and ideologies connecting politics with culture.”⁴⁵ The following table is quite useful to understand the complex relations between the elements of the global system and its subsystems, and therefore to appreciate and locate the threats that surge from dysfunctions within them.

⁴⁴ Nef, “Violence and Ideology in Latin American Politics: An Overview,” in *Violence et conflicts en Amérique latine*, ed. Marcel Daneau (Quebec: Centre quebécois de relations internationales, 1985), 5-34.

⁴⁵ Nef, *Seguridad Humana y vulnerabilidad mutua*, 45.

TABLE III: The Global System Mutual Vulnerability

	Ecology (life)	Economy (wealth)	Society (support of well-being, affection, respect, rectitude)	Polity (power)	Culture (knowledge, skill)
Context	Natural setting (biophysical surroundings of social action)	Styles of development (economic models)	Social expectations and traditions	Internal and external conflicts (capabilities and expectations of the elite and the masses; sovereignty and dependence)	Images of the physical and social world and collective experiences
Culture	Ecoculture (place of environment in cosmivision)	Economic doctrines (ways of understanding the economy)	Social doctrines (values, norms, attitudes; identity and modal personality)	Ideologies (function of the state and its relation to the citizen)	Philosophy (axiologies, teleologies, deontologies); moral and ethical codes
Structure	Resource endowment and spatial distribution (relation between environment and resources)	Economic units (consumers and producers; labor and capital)	Status and roles (social structures, groups, classes, fractions)	Brokers and institutions (interest groups, parties, cliques, governments, bureaucracies)	Formal and informal educational structures (schools, universities, learning institutions)
Processes	Depletion or regeneration of air, water, land, flora, and fauna	Production and distribution of goods and services	Interactions (cooperation, conflict, mobilization, demobilization)	Conflict resolution (consensus, repression, rebellion, stalemate)	Learning (building of consciousness, cognitions, basic values, procedures, teleologies)
Effects	Sustainability or entropy	Prosperity or poverty	Equity or inequity	Governance or violence	Enlightenment or ignorance

Source: Jorge Nef, *Human Security and Mutual Vulnerability: The Global Political Economy of Development and Underdevelopment*, (Ottawa: IDRC, 1999).

The way in which culture, structures and processes are put into practice become the primary source of threats to human security:

- **“Environmental threats** trace their problems mainly to human and non-natural origins and their result is expressed in a dramatic deterioration of the biophysical surroundings and unsustainability.

- **Economic threats** come from an increased incapacity of the systems of production, trade and finance to solve the serious problems of inequity.
- **Social threats** have been entailed with environmental and economic crises in a chain of environmental deterioration, poverty and social disintegration. Hiper-urbanization and decline of communities have augmented the social dysfunctions.
- **Political threats** have arisen from the transformation of the system of global power since the end of the Cold War and a deep alteration of states as mechanisms of conflict resolutions and decision making processes. These conditions have been manifested in other dysfunctional tendencies such as intranational conflicts, generalized presence of extreme forms of violence and declination of legal order, expressed in increased criminality.
- **Cultural threats** expressed by a crisis of civilization rather than a clash of civilizations.”⁴⁶ According to Jorge Nef, “at the heart of the multiple environmental, economic, social, and, more importantly, political crises, there is a crisis of ideas. More precisely, there is a crisis of learning: an inability to link theory and practice and to correct errors.”⁴⁷ This claim derives from the idea that the crisis of thinking is closely connected to a deep global crisis in education, where instead of offering the people the tools to transform their world and be prepared for problem-solving

⁴⁶ Nef, *Seguridad humana y vulnerabilidad mutua*, 45.

⁴⁷ Nef, “Human Security and Mutual Vulnerability: The Global Political Economy of Development and Underdevelopment.” *The International Development Research Center*, ([Cited 17 April 2005]): available from http://web.idrc.ca/en/ev-9383-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html

situations, conventional education “has become a bureaucratic mechanism for human disempowerment and for the entrenchment of conformity.”⁴⁸

The Mutual Vulnerability proposal is a very important instrument for the human security approach as it helps deconstructing and analyzing the complex relations among the different spheres of human activity and tracing the threats that can emerge from these interactions. It is important as well because it helps in the drawing of some other conclusions:

a) Global insecurity is the result of complex threats to the security of all, in which dysfunctions at a ‘micro’ level can produce ‘macro’ repercussions and vice versa.

b) Insecurity is an effect composed of multiple factors: a changing context, a culture that grants the system with a purpose, and a set of structures and processes that function as a means to the accomplishment of such purposes.

c) The crescent problem of insecurity is trans-national, the reason why borders and sovereignties start losing importance and cooperation starts becoming a fundamental element for enhancing all levels of security.

It is exactly this last idea that will take us to the next point in which the traditional role of the state, as the only source for providing protection to its people, will be contested.

⁴⁸ Nef, “*Human Security and Mutual Vulnerability: The Global Political Economy of Development and Underdevelopment*”.

2.2.2. National Security and Human Security Addressing Non-traditional Threats

National security has been historically considered as essential to ensure the safety of people. Such condition remains valid these days, with the only difference that it has come to be one more –and not the only one– of the elements needed to guarantee human security. In other words, the security of the state is considered as a necessary condition for individual security, but it is not longer accepted as sufficient. Hitherto, the arguments supporting the new nature of international threats have alleged that state security can no longer be limited to protecting borders, institutions and people from external hazards. The main reason is that non-traditional threats have become the main source jeopardizing human security and, in turn, state security. The state may be apparently safe from other states, but it may also be gradually damaged from within as individual security declines. Under these circumstances, a time may come when the state is no longer able to resist its external enemies because it has lost internal strength. Therefore, human security seeks to “[shift] attention from securing states and their institutions to protecting people within and across state borders. In doing so, it reinforces the assertion of sovereignty as a responsibility.”⁴⁹ This does not intend to minimize the important place and role of the state in protecting people. On the contrary, human security and national security ought to be understood as complementary. “People are made safer by an open, tolerant and responsive state, capable of ensuring the protection of all of its citizens. At the same time, improving human security reinforces the state by strengthening its legitimacy and stability.”⁵⁰ The key argument deriving from this is that national security is FOR individual security. Accordingly, the state, as the provider

⁴⁹ Ogata, *Human Security – Protecting and Empowering the People*, 274.

⁵⁰ Louis Hamel, “Towards human security: a people-centered approach to foreign policy,” *Keynote address for the First International Meeting of Directors of Peace Research and Training Institutions on ‘What Agenda for Human Security in the Twenty-first Century?’* (Paris: UNESCO, 2000), 3.

of security for its people, must be seen as a means to achieve security, and not as an end. Kofi Annan has given voice to this emphasis by declaring that “the state is widely understood to be the servant of the people and not vice versa.”⁵¹ Another important relation between national and human security may result from the following. Just as it has happened several times in Latin America and still occurs in many countries of the world, a state may lose legitimacy and turn against its own citizens. In this case state security and individual security may become inversely related. The security of the state can no longer be a primary concern in this situation; rather its restructuring or even its dissolution is needed so that another state can be brought into being, one that better protects the individuals within its boundaries. As Rousseau believed, “[i]f and when the state ceases to represent the interests of its citizens, say when state security places individual security in jeopardy, the latter must take precedence.”⁵² It is in such cases that human security activists argue in favor of intervention by saying that humanitarian necessity ultimately outweighs any claim of sovereignty.

Just as national security is not a condition enough for protecting the individual, the state is no longer the only actor capable of providing the needed provisions for enhancing individual security. The current role that non-state actors play in the achievement of this very important task, especially under a human security perspective, could be seen as fundamental.

⁵¹ Kofi Annan, “Speech before the U.N. General Assembly,” *United Nations Organization* (20 September 1999 [cited 26 Jan. 2005]): available from <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/1999/19990920.sgsm7136.html>

⁵² Bjorn Moller, “National Societal and Human Security,” 28, citing Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “Du contrat social,” (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1966).

2.2.3. Non-state Actors Role in Providing Security

Non-state actors (NSAs) have become a constant factor in modern international relations and currently play a vital role in almost every field of national and international human activities. The lowest common denominator defines non-state actor as “any organization of private character whose existence is independent of state authority.”⁵³ It thus integrates a large number of very different parts with distinct roles in each society. This ‘category’ may include non-governmental organizations (NGOs), corporations, educational institutions, private donors, religious organizations, the scientific community, private individuals, armed groups and the media, just to mention some. Their few shared characteristics result from their “distinct ‘unofficial’ nature as compared to state actors, their greater flexibility and often unaccountability under national and international laws.”⁵⁴

The recent quantitative growth within the global non-governmental sector offers initial evidence of the emergence of these actors as new ‘global players’. After a steady growth period in the first half of the 20th century, growth rates began to increase dramatically a few decades after the end of World War II.⁵⁵ In a thirty-year period, the Union of International Associations (UIA) reported a more than twelve-fold increase in the number of non-governmental organizations worldwide, from 3,318 organizations in 1968 to 40,306 by 1997.⁵⁶

⁵³ Hans Peter Schmitz, “Being (Almost) Like a State: Challenges and Opportunities of Transnational Non-Governmental Activism,” in *Comparative Foreign Policy Analysis*, eds. Margaret G. Hermann and Bengt Sundelius (NJ: Prentice Hall, forthcoming), 1.

⁵⁴ Claude Bruderlein, “The Role of Non State Actors in Building Human Security. The Case of Armed Groups in Intra-State Wars,” *Executive Summary for the Human Security Network’s Second Ministerial Meeting* (25 June 2000 [cited 28 Jan. 2005]): available from <http://www.humansecuritynetwork.org/meeting-s.php>

⁵⁵ John Boli and George M. Thomas, *Constructing World Culture. International Non-Governmental Organizations since 1875* (Stanford: Stanford University Press), 23.

⁵⁶ Peter Schmitz, “Being (Almost) Like a State”, 1.

With regards to human security, non-state actors can and do play many roles in the protection of the individual. For example, organizations such as the ICRC (Red Cross) act as relief agencies when governments are unable to respond to emergency needs; NGOs such as Amnesty International care for the protection and respect of human rights, while Greenpeace is concerned with promoting environmental sustainability. There are non-state actors participating directly in practically all fields concerning human security. But NSAs do more than helping directly in the solution of the problems they address. Aware of the complexity and interdependence of the conflicts they face, non-state actors also seek the building up of networks in order to mobilize public opinion and policymakers. These networks create new opportunities for implementation, help in the construction and clarification of norms, and monitor progress and performance. In such a way human security “could serve as a catalytic concept that links many existing initiatives.”⁵⁷ Claude Bruderlein, Director of the Harvard Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research, argues that non-state actors are particularly well suited to promoting human security in the new world context. These actors, he says, “function without the constraints of a narrow foreign policy mandate of state institutions, with increased access to areas inaccessible to official actors”⁵⁸. In addition, he claims, “they can talk to several parties at once without losing credibility and can deal directly with grassroots populations and operate without political or public scrutiny.”⁵⁹ The critical role played by non-state actors can actually be appreciated in various key areas of human security, including the banning of the use of landmines and the creation of an International Criminal Court. This is clearly a

⁵⁷ Canadian Consortium on Human Security, “Outline of the report of the commission on Human Security – Human Security Now,” *Human Security Bulletin* (May 2003), 4.

⁵⁸ Bruderlein, “The Role of Non State Actors in Building Human Security.”

⁵⁹ Bruderlein, “The Role of Non State Actors in Building Human Security.”

reflection of how increased collaboration among NSAs and national governments and the elaboration of common goals between them has enabled the international community to address more dimensions of human security. In this sense, a country that is distinguished for its strategic alliances and commitment towards the advancement of human security is Canada. This country's prominent personalities, such as former minister Lloyd Axworthy, and a decisive foreign policy centered on the individual have placed it at the head of the states promoting this concept worldwide. Due to this, it is important to explore and learn about the Canadian experience with the concept and its efforts to export it to other countries, especially in the Americas.

2.3. CANADIAN CONTRIBUTIONS TO HUMAN SECURITY

Canada's foreign policy of human security begins with two very simple premises: that nobody is safe from the violence that threatens the security of people and that the safety of ones is inevitably associated to the safety of others.⁶⁰ In the words of Bill Graham, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada,

Events in recent years have reconfirmed that, in an increasingly interdependent world, the safety and security of Canadians at their own territory are linked to the safety of those living beyond our borders. In this context, our work to endorse Canadian values abroad –human rights, democracy, conflict prevention and humanitarianism– at the same time enhances the safety and protection of Canadians.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y Comercio Internacional de Canadá, *Vivir Sin Miedo, Política exterior de Canadá sobre Seguridad Humana*, [Freedom from Fear, Canada's Foreign Policy on Human Security] (Ottawa: DFAIT, 2004), 1.

⁶¹ Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y Comercio Internacional de Canadá, *Vivir Sin Miedo, Política exterior de Canadá sobre Seguridad Humana*, 1, [my translation].

However, this idea of placing the individual at the center of Canadian politics and policies did not start recently. It was former foreign minister Lloyd Axworthy who introduced the concept of human security to Canadian foreign policy almost nine years ago. Axworthy proposed the concept of “sustainable human security” at a speech to the UN General Assembly in September 1996:

[I]n the aftermath of the Cold War, we have re-examined and redefined the dimensions of international security to embrace the concept of sustainable human security. There has been recognition that human rights and fundamental freedoms, the right to live in dignity, with adequate food, shelter, health and education services, and under the rule of law and good governance, are as important to global peace as disarmament measures. We are now realizing that security cannot be limited to the state’s domain, but must incorporate civil society.⁶²

Since then, Canada has taken a leading role in the promotion of human security. As already explained, there are two dimensions embedded in the concept: the freedom from fear (violence) and the freedom from want (basic needs). For Canadians, human security is simply defined, “it means freedom from pervasive threats to the rights, the safety, or the lives of people. It is the threat of violence that distinguishes the human security objectives of Canadian foreign policy.”⁶³ Although they recognize that violence is not the only threat to human well-being, they have structured their plans of action based on this approach. A concept paper on human security prepared by the Canadian government for the launch of

⁶² Lloyd Axworthy, “Notes for an Address by the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs to the 51st General Assembly of the United Nations,” *Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade* (24 September 1996 [cited 1 Feb. 2005]): available from http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/english/news/statem~1/96_state/96_037e.htm

⁶³ Hamel, “Towards human security: a people-centred approach to foreign policy,” 3.

the Human Security Network in 1999 left aside the economic dimension and distinguished human security from human development as “mutually reinforcing though distinct” concepts, and noted that “development assistance complements political, legal and military initiatives in enhancing human security.”⁶⁴ Thus, with a focus on freedom from fear, Canada has put its concept of human security into practice mainly through diplomatic means by encouraging the setting and implementation of norms and by funding numerous international programs.⁶⁵

Specifically, Canada has identified five foreign policy priorities for advancing human security:

- **Protection of civilians.** Reduce the human costs of armed conflict, with particular attention to the threat posed by landmines, the plight of war-affected children and the internally displaced. The Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel landmines is a successful example.
- **Peace support operations.** Help provide peace support operations with combinations of military and civilian expertise.
- **Conflict prevention.** Improve international capacity, and develop local institutions, to prevent conflict and build peace.

⁶⁴ Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, *Safety for people in a Changing World*, (Ottawa: DFAIT, 1999), 6.

⁶⁵ This behavior, consistent to middle powers, has been analyzed by authors such as Andrew Cooper who argues that it surges as a strategy of the way in which Canada wants to be perceived internationally. This point will be addressed further ahead.

- **Public safety.** Building international expertise and capacity to counter the growing cross-border threats posed by terrorism, the trafficking in illicit drugs and the spread of organized crime
- **Promotion of good governance.** Avoid social exclusion, inequities, discontent and civil strife and foster improved accountability of public and private sector institutions.⁶⁶

Under this plan of action, Canada has been active in providing protection to refugees, internally displaced peoples, war-affected children, and child soldiers. Canada has also promoted security sector improvement through judiciary reforms, correctional services initiatives and civilian supervision mechanisms.⁶⁷

The Canadian human security policy has been primarily based on the use of ‘soft power’⁶⁸. What can be called its national power is then applied through the setting of international connections and coalitions with countries having a similar perspective.⁶⁹ At a domestic level, Canada has recognized, since it first established the human security concept as the core of her foreign policy, the importance of non-state actors in the achievement of national and international goals. Scholars such as Dr. Maria Cristina Rosas argue that “[i]n Canada, NGOs perform a very active role in the formulation of proposals and initiatives in

⁶⁶ Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, “Human Security Program in Brief,” *Canada’s Human Security Website* (last updated 24 December 2004 [cited 6 Feb. 2005]): available from http://www.humansecurity.gc.ca/psh_brief-en.asp.

⁶⁷ For more specific results see: Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y Comercio Internacional de Canadá, *Vivir Sin Miedo, Política exterior de Canadá sobre Seguridad Humana*, [freedom from fear, Canada’s foreign policy on human security] (Ottawa: DFAIT, 2004).

⁶⁸ According to Joseph Nye, soft power is the ability to get what you want by attracting and persuading others to adopt your goals. It differs from hard power, the ability to use the carrots and sticks of economic and military might to make others follow your will.

Joseph S. Nye Jr., *Propaganda Isn’t the Way: Soft Power* (The international Herald Tribune: Jan. 10, 2003).

⁶⁹ Such as the Human Security Network constituted by Austria, Canada, Greece, Ireland, Jordan, Mali, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, Switzerland, Thailand and South Africa (as an observer).

foreign affairs issues.”⁷⁰ In this sense, the Canadian government has developed a Consortium (Canadian Consortium on Human Security) that brings together academic communities, civil society, and officials from governments and international institutions to promote research on human security. Founded in 2001, this Consortium seeks to further develop and link the human security research community in Canada and internationally, and to deepen domestic and international support for human security policy goals.⁷¹

The Canadian foreign policy’s approach to human security has currently gained a high level of acknowledgment and support around the world. It is evident that the concerns showed by this country are shared by many, a condition that has granted it global legitimacy. In the end, these concerns reflect those necessities that can be found in any society. Canada has done a great job in promoting human security worldwide. It is seen both as an example and as a leader by those countries who share its values and interests. However, the Canadian case has not been effortless and would not easily be applied to any country. It is important to bear in mind that Canada is made up of a diverse society perceptibly open to all levels of coexistence, but particularly to the free flow of people, ideas and assets. Besides that, the Canadian society has characterized itself for participating and being supportive at international events. “The Canadian people are firm internationalists that wish their country to raise waves at the international level.”⁷²

⁷⁰ María Cristina Rosas, “Las Amenazas a la Seguridad Canadiense y los Límites de la Política Exterior de Ottawa en la Posguerra Fría,” [The threats to Canadian security and the limits of Ottawa’s foreign policy in the aftermath of the Cold War], *Revista Mexicana de Estudios Canadienses* (Septiembre de 1999): 31-55, [my translation].

⁷¹ The CCHS can be reached on-line at: http://www.humansecurity.info/CCHS_web/ABOUT/en/index.php.

⁷² Jonathan Ortiz Navarrete, “La Doctrina de la Seguridad Humana en la Política Exterior Canadiense. La contribución de Lloyd Axworthy al estudio de la política mundial,” [The Human Security Doctrine in the Canadian Foreign Policy. Lloyd Axworthy’s contribution to the study of world politics]. *Revista Cidob D’afers Internacionals*, 60 (dic. 2002 – enero 2003): 43-60, [my translation].

2.4. HUMAN SECURITY REVISITED

Until now, this chapter has sought to explore and examine the concept of human security as part of a world tendency to enhance the protection of the individual and not only of the state. By doing so, this concept's theoretical implications and relation with other concepts have been clearly established. The importance of human security as a process of adjusting security policies to the current and dynamic international conditions, especially to the new antagonisms and threats jeopardizing people over the world, have also been presented and discussed. Generally speaking, the theoretical contributions of the concept have been analyzed.

This thesis' main task has been to provide the justifications of why human security represents a better alternative to fulfill the human and insecurity needs of the peoples in the Americas, especially in Latin America. However, it would be fruitless (and perhaps incoherent) to propose something that could not actually be applied. The justifications of this concept would automatically become invalid. This is why this chapter will devote this final part to analyze and revise the possibilities of taking human security into practice, to counter-argue the different claims against this concept, and draw attention to some of the most important contributions of the concept to the fields of security and strategic studies.

2.4.1 Measurement and Operationalization

The notion of human security has undoubtedly taken huge steps in the field of theoretical understanding; however, its practical and material aspects continue to be scarcely developed. The amplitude of the concept and its involvement with other abstract conceptions, such as 'fear' and 'want', have made it very difficult for scholars,

policymakers and researchers to design a clear methodology for measuring and operationalizing human security. Due to the obvious lack of bibliography in this regard, the present segment will be totally based on the contribution of three very well known and respected promoters of human security: Taylor Owen, Jennifer Leaning, and Kanti Bajpai.

According to Owen, it is accepted that certain conditions exceed a certain limit, or what is better known as a ‘threshold of severity’, and become not only human rights’ violations, environmental problems or isolated violent acts, but instead threats to human security. It is therefore logical to think that we must have a very clear idea about what these threats are and where these exist. This, by nature, requires a method of empirically assessing, or measuring, human security.⁷³ Nevertheless, it is not the same at all to say that individuals face a certain amount of risks coming from multidimensional threats than actually trying to identify, measure and examine such possible harms.

Central to this issue are the parameters from which human security threats are selected. If, for example, a broad definition of human security is used, all threats that could potentially jeopardize an individual should be included. A complete assessment using these criteria on a global scale would be just about impossible. Taylor Owen makes an interesting proposal on this matter. He suggests that one way to overcome an unmanageable record of possible human security threats is to simply list which threats should and should not be included in the research design. However, this method would be subject to the political, institutional and cultural tendencies of the research designer.⁷⁴ According to his thought, a better way around the broad nature of human security would be to let data availability drive

⁷³ Owen, “Challenges and opportunities,” 21.

⁷⁴ Owen, “Challenges and opportunities,” 21.

the assessment parameters.⁷⁵ “One could compile all available datasets depicting conceivable threats to human security.”⁷⁶ The idea behind this thought is that if a threat is serious enough (lets say critical and pervasive), measures of it must surely exist. Yet, the problem with this, as Owen himself argues, is that it takes a considerable institutional capacity to compile a global scale data set. There are few institutions capable of doing this, and their mandates almost certainly dictate the types of threats they prioritize. But the other problem is how to address every threat harming individuals, while at the same time trying to limit the included threats to a manageable and measurable list?⁷⁷ The answers to those questions could lie in the threshold set by the ‘vital core’ component of the proposed working definition and by using a regional focus. On the one hand, the list of all possible threats to human security in the world is huge, while the list of relevant harm for a particular region or country is considerably more limited, as will be observed in the case of Latin America. On the other hand, using regional relevance as the criterion for threat selection means that no serious harm will be excluded and also improves the chances of acquiring significant data. But Owen goes further with his proposal. He explains that once data depicting the relevant human security threats are collected, they can then be spatially analyzed through a Geographic Information System (GIS). “Layering human security data in a GIS allows for innovative aggregation of information and powerful spatial analysis. Furthermore, spatial analysis can find ‘hotspots’ of aggregated human insecurity (regions

⁷⁵ Owen, “Challenges and opportunities,” 21

⁷⁶ Owen, “Challenges and opportunities,” 21.

⁷⁷ Owen, “Challenges and opportunities,” 21.

suffering from multiple security threats) and can help understand the spatial relationships between these threats^{78,79}.

This tendency to measure by regions the threats that place people's life at risk can also be observed in the proposal to create a Human Security Index. For Jennifer Leaning, the world has become accustomed to the use of measures and composite indices since the UN first introduced the Human Development Index (HDI) ten years ago.⁸⁰ Since then, such index has been used to rank countries and regions and follow trends in human development over this past decade.⁸¹ The current international emphasis on human security suggests that a measurement framework for human security, similar to the HDI, would be helpful to develop an operationalization agenda for the concept. Although this idea has also been the center of large discussions,⁸² Bajpai acknowledges that a Human Security Index (HSI) would have at least five uses:

- “Developing a social early warning system
- Focusing attention on problem areas
- Redefining national and international policy priorities

⁷⁸ The author actually developed such a methodology using Cambodia as a case study.⁷⁸ This methodology has been tested and the threat data has gone through rigorous statistical analysis. The result was an interdisciplinary spatial database of broad ranging Cambodia-specific human security threats. These thirteen identified threats include landmines, flooding, HIV/AIDS and domestic violence. When spatially analyzed,⁷⁸ Owen, “Challenges and opportunities,” 22.

Details on the methodology can be found in Taylor Owen and O. Slaymaker, *Human Security in Cambodia: a GIS Approach*, (AMBIO: The Journal of the Human Environment, forthcoming); and in Taylor Owen, clear hotspots of human insecurity were identified and strong spatial correlations between threats emerged.

⁷⁹ Owen, “Challenges and opportunities,” 22.

⁸⁰ Jennifer Leaning and Sam Arie, “Human Security: A Framework for Assessment In Conflict and Transition”, *Working Paper* (Cambridge: Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies, 2000), 35.

⁸¹ To learn more about the Human Development Indices visit <http://hdr.undp.org/statistics/indices/>

⁸² Andrew Mack, UBC's Human Security Center Director, launched a project in 2002 to create an Annual Human Security Report developed primarily for the policy community (including NGOs), but also for researchers, educators and the interested public. The report, modeled in part on the UN's Human Development Report, has not been published yet but will map the incidence, severity and consequences of global violence, exclusively.

- Setting national and international standards
- Generating new social scientific knowledge”⁸³

The author of ‘Human Security: Concept and Measurement’ also recognizes some other benefits:

1. “An HSI could be used to produce trend lines of human security for all societies. An HSI, measured over time, could be used to produce a picture of the rise and fall, the highs and lows, the direction and amplitude of change in human security.
2. Given that the HSI would consist of a number of components, it would be possible to disaggregate the overall HSI score and identify those elements of human security that are most responsible for a rising or falling score.
3. The HSI would be an aid in defining –or re-defining– national and international priorities.
4. More controversially, an HSI that has widespread acceptance could be a tool in setting national and international standards. Various incentives and disincentives might be directed towards governments or government agencies whose behaviors or actions are held to be responsible for HSI scores that are deemed unacceptable.
5. An HSI might serve to generate new social scientific knowledge. A valid and reliable measure of human security would take its place alongside measures of human

⁸³ Bajpai, *Human Security: Concept and Measurement*, 55.

development and human governance, the Human Development Index and Human Governance Index, respectively, in mapping the human condition and relations.”⁸⁴

In spite of all these advantages, it is important to bear in mind that no system for measuring human security will be absent of imperfections. Kanti Bajpai also notes the following limits or challenges to an HSI:

1. “First of all, an HSI, as other indices, will encounter the dual problems of validity and reliability. Constructing an overall index that adequately represents the concept of human security is the challenge of validity. Also, the various component measures of human security must be valid representations of what they are each intended to represent. In addition, and perhaps more seriously in an operational sense, the various measures should be reliable, that is, they should be constructed in the same manner cross-nationally and cross-temporally so that the measure of human security is “stable” and therefore comparable across space and time.”⁸⁵ As it was mentioned above though, it could actually be easier to face both challenges if it is done by regions.

2. “Another important problem is that the HSI is an ‘objective’ measure of human security and suffers from the limits of such interpretations of social reality. It will need to be supplemented by other methods of assessing human security. One supplement would be public opinion surveys.”⁸⁶

Leaning also addresses these uncertainties. She provides further information by mentioning that some of the metrics of indicators of human security would be quantitative,

⁸⁴ Bajpai, *Human Security: Concept and Measurement*, 56.

⁸⁵ Bajpai, *Human Security: Concept and Measurement*, 57-59.

⁸⁶ Bajpai, *Human Security: Concept and Measurement*, 57-59.

such as numbers of people in flight from home, presence of and number of small arms in the population, and distribution of landmines, while other metrics would undoubtedly need to remain qualitative (although this aspect does not mean that the indicator or the condition it is measuring is therefore unreliable).⁸⁷ She also argues that when the outcome we wish to detect relates to an individual's feelings, such as a sense of fear, or inclusion in a community, that person's report of his or her own state can be thought of as objective in a non-trivial sense. "In fact, when it comes to pain and suffering there may be no other way to specify these conditions."⁸⁸ "Economic measures need to be complemented by narratives, ethnographies and social histories that speak to the complex [...] human side of suffering."⁸⁹ Just as Kanti Bajpai suggested, objective measures must be complemented by subjective interpretations of social reality.

Webb summarizes the reasoning behind this approach:

Vulnerability analysis is not based on standardized algorithms – indicators and benchmarks will never be fixed. The challenge is therefore to determine when and for whom local conditions are becoming untenable, and what the appropriate response should (or should not) be. This requires more than assumptions about the characteristics of people thought to be in harm's way; and it cannot be achieved in a short space of time or at short notice. It must be based on an investment that yields incremental understanding of the context that frames people's lives in the daily process of development.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Leaning and Arie, *Human Security: A Framework for Assessment In Conflict and Transition*, 36.

⁸⁸ Leaning and Arie, *Human Security: A Framework for Assessment In Conflict and Transition*, 36.

⁸⁹ Sherryl Kleinman, *Emotions and Fieldwork* (Newbury Park: Sage, 1993), 15.

⁹⁰ Patrick Webb, "Drawing Lines in Water: The Challenge of Vulnerability Analysis in Developing Countries," *Fletcher Forum of World Affairs* 24, no.1 (2000): 33-46.

2.4.2. Voices that oppose

The human security concept has logically received significant criticism as a security approach on a great number of issues. Most of these criticisms implicitly treat human security as a policy agenda, while a number of others are more deeply critical of some of the basic principles upon which the concept is founded. The majority of these opposing voices have come from experts writing in strategic or security studies, but they have also been heard from participants related to the study and/or development of the human security notion. When the concept was first introduced in the 1990s, it was argued that human security contradicted state security. Authors such as Seizaburo Satoh considered this a fundamental flaw in the idea.⁹¹ Nevertheless, after more than a decade, human security has answered these critics. As it was argued earlier, there is currently a significant level of agreement that state security is to be complemented by human security. This implies, for example, that both state and non-state actors must take the necessary policy initiatives in order to protect the individuals and the state they live within too.

The fact that a conceptual definition has not been yet concluded or been commonly accepted produces a long list of questions and challenges when trying to interpret human security or actually put it into practice. However, the concept has gained better shape since it was first conceived, and such list has been gradually decreasing. One of the persistent critiques though is the concept's 'vagueness'. For authors such as Boer and Koekkoek this means that it is difficult to see how human security could be operationalized, particularly

⁹¹ Akiko Fukihima, "Human Security: Comparing Japanese and Canadian Governmental Thinking and Practice," 39, citing Seizaburo Satoh, "Why has national defense become security?," *Gaiko Forum*, Special Issue (November 1999): 4-19.

within present configurations of power and decision-making processes.⁹² To those addressing the possibility of human security implementation, the approach seems to generate negative effects. Mohammed Ayoob notes that the “all inclusive definition of security [...] runs the risk of making the concept so elastic as to detract seriously from its utility as an analytical tool.”⁹³ Roland Paris has written that

[h]uman security is like sustainable development – everyone is for it, but few people have a clear idea of what it means. Existing definitions on human security tend to be extraordinarily expansive and vague, encompassing everything from physical security to psychological well-being, which provides policymakers with little guidance in the prioritization of competing policy goals and academics little sense of what, exactly, is to be studied.⁹⁴

Stephen Sachs goes even further to question the concept’s aims by suggesting that “while [it] may be useful in indicating the variety of human needs that must be satisfied, it is far too expensive to be an effective goal, and does not offer an appealing alternative to traditional conceptions of security.”⁹⁵ However, this whole issue on the operationalization and measurement of human security has already been discussed and, as it was mentioned earlier, innovative proposals that offer new alternatives for applying the concept, like focusing only on a threshold of severity and collecting data by regions, are now emerging. Advances in this field are being achieved systematically.

⁹² Leen Boer and Ad Koekoek, “Development and Human Security,” *Third World Quarterly* 15, no. 2 (1994): 519 – 522.

⁹³ Mohammed Ayoob, “The Security Problematic of the Third World,” *World Politics* 43, no. 2 (January 1991): 257 – 283.

⁹⁴ Roland Paris, “Human Security: Paradigm Shift or Hot Air,” *International Security* 26, no. 2 (2001): 87-102.

⁹⁵ Stephen E. Sachs, “The Changing Definition of Security,” *International Relations Merton College*, (Week 5, Term 2003 [cited 2 March 2005]): available from http://www.stevesachs.com/papers/paper_security.html

Another common criticism is ‘arbitrariness’. This may be better explained by asking: when the potential set of critical and pervasive threats is too wide, by what criteria is a small subset chosen for consideration?⁹⁶ So often threats tend to be analyzed or approached separately from others and it is commonly said that the criteria of selection is just in response to the interest of those responsible or affected. It also seems that sometimes the criteria for selecting could include a wide range of consideration. Paris complains about those who seek to narrow human security but do so in a subjective way, without providing ‘a rationale for highlighting certain values’.⁹⁷ It is important to bear in mind though that if human security is firstly to be achieved locally or by countries and then regionally, each geographic area is supposed to be proficient in the selection of the threats that place the people within it into deeper danger. Sometimes this selection has to be accompanied or even based on empirical labor.

A third criticism is incoherence. Within this issue, an area of concern is how human security would allow for the settlement between competing claims and objectives. For example,

[M]uch of the deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon is caused by shifted cultivators and landless peasants who cut down virgin tropical forest in order to sustain their families in the short term. In cases such as this, where different components of [h]uman [s]ecurity (environmental and economic) appear in opposition, whose security is to be addressed, and which types of concerns have priority?⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Alkire, *A Conceptual Framework for Human Security*, 22.

⁹⁷ Paris, *Human Security: Paradigm Shift or Hot Air*, 95

⁹⁸ Astri Suhurke, “Human Security and the Interests of States,” *Security Dialogue* 30, vol. 3 (1999): 265-276.

Since human security is preventive by nature, perhaps a good way to address this dilemma would be to analyze the cause-effect relation and attack firstly the one that gives origin to the conflict. Another approach could be based on the threshold of severity. The one being the most harmful or the origin of the other would be given priority.

Perhaps the strongest and most controversial critique has been generated by the concept's clear support to humanitarian intervention. Even though human security policies intend to go beyond alleviating human suffering in times of crises, some states have offered resistance to the concept, considering it an excuse for trespassing on their own sovereignty. This fear is based on the principle that "when human security basic values are threatened, the presumption is that by intervening, a public good will be defended and promoted even if this means jeopardizing the international order and violating the sovereignty of individual states in the process."⁹⁹ This claim can be especially noted in regions like Latin-America, where the concepts of sovereignty and self-determination represent basic and traditional historical values.

Another criticism of human security is concerned with its universalism and its foundation on Western values. Nonetheless, the universality of the concept should be understood as the importance of shifting towards targeting people's needs and fears worldwide and not on establishing the same values or levels of threats for the different countries or regions. The universalism of human security thus relies on the approach and the object of reference and not on the means of achieving or implementing it.

⁹⁹ Jonathan Ortiz Navarrete, "La doctrina de la seguridad humana en la política exterior canadiense," 49, citing Fen Osler Hampson "The many Meanings of Human Security," in *Madness in the Multitude: Human Security and World Disorder*, eds. Hampson et al. (Ottawa: Oxford University Press), 14-61, [my translation].

Finally, the potential for states to benefit from ‘talking the talk’ of human security, without ‘walking the walk’ is also an issue of distress and criticism. In this sense, the experience of the Canadian government with human security has raised questions about the potential for influencing other states, for two reasons. First, Canada’s middle power status and position in the international system means that the adoption of such a security approach is also largely consistent with Canada’s immediate national interests.¹⁰⁰ As a number of authors have argued¹⁰¹, international perceptions of Canada as a ‘good international citizen’ are central to Canada’s conception of itself and its ability to influence international politics.¹⁰² Secondly, as Jockel and Sokolsky point out, the adoption of human security by Canada has not meant that the political nature of intervention has been addressed.¹⁰³ The Canadian government is still in a position to pick and choose where and when it will intervene in the name of human security, and thus the potential for human security to be addressed only when converging with immediate national interests is particularly apparent.¹⁰⁴ Realism keeps on playing an important role in the way states act and interact, and that is a fact. It is my thought that as long as the whole system remains functioning with a Realist emphasis, countries intending to develop new behavioral approaches will

¹⁰⁰ Matt McDonald, “Human Security and the Construction of Security,” *Global Society* 16, no. 3 (2002): 277-295.

¹⁰¹ For more information on this regard consult: Andrew F. Cooper, Richard A. Higgott, and Kim Richard Nossal, *Relocating Middle Powers: Australia and Canada in a Changing World Order* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1993); Ronald M. Behringer, “Middle Power Leadership on Human Security,” *Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Canadian Political Science Department of Political Science* (Nova Scotia, May 30-June 1, 2003); Olav Stokke, ed., *Western Middle Powers and Global Poverty: The Determinants of the Aid Policies of Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden* (Uppsala, Sweden: The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1989); Gerald K. Helleiner, ed., *The Other Side of International Development Policy: The Non-Aid Economic Relations with Developing Countries of Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

¹⁰² Evan Potter, “Niche Diplomacy as Canadian Foreign Policy,” *International Journal* 52, no. 1 (1997): 25-38.

¹⁰³ Joe Jockel and Joel Sokolsky, “Lloyd Axworthy’s Legacy: Human Security and the Rescue of Canadian Defense Policy,” *International Journal* 56, no. 1 (2001): 17-18.

¹⁰⁴ Edward Newman, “Human Security and Constructivism,” *International Studies Perspectives* 2, (2001): 239-251.

remain using the traditional mechanisms to fit into the international system, while also developing new parallel agendas. In this case, countries promoting human security must currently try to advance the concept as much as possible, but under certain convenient conditions. If the international system fully agrees on this approach, new standards of action can then be set up. In the end, just as Matt McDonald argues, “[t]he success of a particular policy agenda is usually based on a number of factors, including accuracy of the paradigm’s perception of the real world, its consistency with national interests, and its ability to be implemented or operationalized.”¹⁰⁵

2.4.3. Conclusions and Contributions

Several conclusions can be drawn from this review on human security. Firstly, the human security notion is by no means conclusive and agreed. On the contrary, it is still under research and implementation in different circles. Workshops, panels, projects, publications, colloquiums and meetings discussing human security are continuously taking place in almost every region of the world, with the final purpose of enhancing the concept and overcoming its current limitations. It is important to realize though, that “an adequate conception of human security must include not only a clear working definition, but also an account of the processes by which actors can adapt and operationalize the concept to a form that is relevant to their own capabilities and contexts.”¹⁰⁶ Secondly, the attempts to operationalize human security have necessarily narrowed its original conception from the 1994 description of it to a more specific and detailed notion, focused on the protection of a vital core. The concept of a ‘threshold of severity’ has also become a landmark in the

¹⁰⁵ McDonald, *Human Security and the Construction of Security*, 284.

¹⁰⁶ Alkire, *A Conceptual Framework for Human Security*, 23.

understanding of the human security concept and its eventual application. Moreover, the origins of human security through the United Nations and the adoption of it as a security approach by countries such as Japan and Norway and especially Canada has added validity to the values upon which the human security approach is constructed. This acceptance of the human security discourse has led to a greater willingness among all actors in the international system to slowly engage with the discourse and therefore with the concepts and issues with which it is concerned. Some tangible examples of this are the progressive creation of international networks (such as the Human Security Network), the institutionalization of research centers (i.e. the Fletcher School Institute for Human Security and the Program on Human Security at Harvard University) and the publications of hundreds of articles and books related to human security. Furthermore, even though many countries have chosen not to adopt the human security approach, major powers need to be involved in taking initiatives, participating in debate or in formulating and implementing norms. They need to realize that in an interdependent world as ours, the weaknesses and insecurities of some are linked to the security and protection of others, and this could eventually affect them (and their people) directly. After all, human security is also a preventive action. In addition, human security has made important contributions. The opening up of the role of political agency to non-state actors in the human security discourse has been a relevant one. The idea that security can come from a variety of sources is also a contribution that seems more consistent with 'reality' and allows a greater capacity for security to be realized in a number of contexts. But perhaps the most important contribution has been its input to the normative change of the international context, at least through questioning the appropriateness of traditional conceptions and practices of security. Putting people at the centre of security policy has been seen as a coherent way to enhance

national and international security and promote human development and well-being. The security of individual states and the broader international system ultimately requires the prevention and resolution of conflicts within states. Let's remember that human security is strengthened when responsive states work to ensure the safety of the people within their borders and, at the same time, human security reinforces the state by strengthening its legitimacy and stability. There is still a very long way to go though. Despite the fact that human security has not been clearly grounded, several governments and institutions are already working on the establishment and application of a high-priority agenda to protect people from the most severe threats. The Commission on Human Security suggests that this agenda should be developed through mainstreaming human security in the work of global, regional, and national security-related organizations. This implies "broadening the scope of issues being considered and expanding the range of actors who can participate in decision-making. It also requires overcoming the compartmentalization of security, humanitarian, human rights, and development strategies by focusing on the protection and empowerment of people."¹⁰⁷

The Commission formulated several policy line actions; some of the most important being:

- "Protecting people's rights and freedoms, especially when combined with extreme economic and social deprivations. Integrated strategies that link political, military, humanitarian, and development aspects are essential. There are critical gaps in how human rights and humanitarian law in conflict situations are upheld.

¹⁰⁷ Ogata, *Human Security – Protecting and Empowering the People*, 276.

- People must be protected from the proliferation of weapons. Efforts must also be redoubled to strengthen the nuclear nonproliferation regime, as well as to supervise and promote the implementation of other treaties and agreements banning the use of biological and chemical weapons.
- People on the move must be protected. The movement of people across borders and continents reflects, among other things, the phenomena of globalization and violence. Today, except for the case of refugees, there is no agreed upon international legal framework to provide protection for people on the move.
- Markets and trade are basic to economic growth and have led to unprecedented wealth for some. Extensive use of markets is necessary to generate rates of growth and overcome extreme poverty. Market reforms aimed at protecting economic growth and foreign investment must be balanced with investment in social services and human development if the goals of human security are to be realized.
- Poverty-related health threats, in addition to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, are among the most critical and pervasive human insecurities.”¹⁰⁸

These lines of action remain fundamental for advancing the human security agenda worldwide. However, simultaneous to this, two other fundamental and reinforcing strategies must be followed: strengthening legal norms and building the capacity to enforce them. There is little point in defining new norms and rights if societies have no capacity to enforce the existing ones or to protect already recognized rights. On the other hand,

¹⁰⁸ Commission on Human Security, *Human Security Now: Protecting and Empowering People* (New York: Commission on Human Security, 2003), 134-139.

building institutional capacity without strengthening respect for norms based on the individual would undermine a human-centered standard of security.

Very few countries and regions in the world are equipped with the necessary resources for applying these strategies. Latin America is unfortunately one of those which lack of the required means to implement them, while the U.S. and Canada have proven to be more efficient in building up norms and putting them into practice. This asymmetry has characterized the security relations in the continent, where some of the world's richest and poorest countries coexist. The second part of this project, starting with Chapter III, will explore how the security framework in the American Continent has gradually evolved and if it is currently suitable for adopting a human security model as the base.
